Leskernick: Stone Worlds; Alternative Narratives; Nested Landscapes

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The first season of an on-going project focused on Leskernick Hill, north-west Bodmin Moor, Cornwall, entailed a preliminary settlement survey and limited excavation of a stone row terminal. Leskernick comprises a western and a southern settlement situated on the lower, stony slopes of the hill and including 51 circular stone houses constructed using a variety of building techniques. Walled fields associated with these houses vary in size from 0.25–1 ha and appear to have accreted in a curvilinear fashion from a number of centres. Five small burial mounds and a cist are associated with the southern settlement, all but one lying around the periphery of the field system. The western settlement includes 'cairn-like' piles of stones within and between some houses and some hut circles may have been converted into cairns. The settlements may have been built sequentially but the layout of each adheres to a coherent design suggesting a common broad phase of use. The southern settlement overlooks a stone-free plain containing a ceremonial complex.

The paper presents a narrative account of the work and considers not only the form, function, and chronology of the sites at Leskernick but also seeks to explore the relationships between people and the landscape they inhabit; the prehistoric symbolic continuum from house to field to stone row etc, and to investigate the relationship between archaeology as a discourse on the past and archaeology as practice in the present. It considers how the daily process of excavation generates alternative site histories which are subsequently abandoned, forgotten, perpetuated or transformed.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is the outcome of the first season of an on-going project focused on Leskernick Hill, on north-west Bodmin Moor, Cornwall. Our work entailed a preliminary settlement survey, and excavations of a very limited scale at a stone row terminal. The text is not an interim report, but a narrative, which we hope will raise questions about the way current archaeological fieldwork scripts are written: rarely recognising a plurality of conceptual perspectives and the importance of accounting for the development of different interpretations during the *time* of fieldwork.

The Leskernick settlement is described in the National Monuments Record as 'Centred SX 1828799. An exceptionally well preserved Bronze Age settlement of approximately 21 hectares ...'. 'Leskernick', in spite of its exceptional preservation, is

filled with insecurities relating to its chronology and sequence. We came to the site with a purely 'typological' date. It had no previous excavation or recorded artefact finds. Excavation of similar houses, nearby on Stannon Down, produced small quantities of pottery and flintwork which provided a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date (Mercer 1970). Pollen evidence from the vicinity of Rough Tor, associated with comparable settlement and field systems, indicates a marked decline in tree cover and a date centring on 1690–1440 cal. BC (3275±50 BP; OxA-6008) associated with the settlement (Gearey & Charman 1996, 110, table 9).

Leskernick is made up of a western and a southern settlement, both being situated on the lower stony slopes of the hill (Figs 4 & 15). The circular stone houses (51 in total) vary in size from 6 m in diameter with stones up to 0.4 m high to over 10 m in diameter with 0.7 m high stones. The tallest facing stones suggest that the house walls originally stood up to a height of 1.5 m. Just under half of the house walls are double-faced with large upright orthostats or massive blocks,

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filled with rubble cores. Other house walls are unfaced, and simply constructed of drystone walling. A few of the walls consist of large blocks laid in flat courses (eg. Fig 15: 9 & 12). This admixture of building techniques (sometimes with different methods having been used for the outer and inner wall facing) has no real chronological significance. Choices were governed more by the symbolic significance of the stone shapes, their positioning in the house walls, and the locales of specific categories of stone. Some of the walls 'ride-over' and encapsulate large earthfast boulders.

The fields associated with the houses appear to have accreted in a curvilinear fashion from a number of centres. They vary in size from 0.25–1 ha. Their walls comprise linear banks of boulders and upright orthostats, which variously link large natural boulders, rocky outcrops, and concentrations of hill clitter. Today, the walling ranges from 0.6–2 m in width and up to 1.2 m in height, There are numerous 'entrance' gaps.

Five small round burial mounds (c. 2–3 m diameter and 0.5 m high) and a cist are associated with the southern settlement, four of them and the cist lying around the periphery of the field system. The western settlement has 'cairn'-like piles of stones within and between some of the houses. A number of hut circles may have been converted into cairns, as Butler (1994, fig 44: 1) has suggested for the Bronze Age settlement of Dartmoor. There are radiocarbon samples from nine round cairns on Bodmin Moor providing a date range of 2450–1550 cal. BC (Christie 1988, 164, 2–11; Pearson & Stuiver 1986), and we presume the Leskernick cairns to have similar dates.

While the components of each settlement may have been built sequentially, the layout of each adheres to a coherent design, suggesting that they belong to a common broad phase of use. Potential clues to the internal chronology of the settlement sites include: i) a cairn incorporated into field walls opposite a gap in an enclosed wall (Fig. 15: C2); ii) houses built against pre-existing compound or field walls (Fig. 15: 8, 29); iii) compound or field walls abutting onto pre-existing houses (Fig. 15: 36),

The southern settlement overlooks a stone-free plain in which a ceremonial complex is situated, made up of a stone row, two stone circles, and a large cairn (Fig. 4). Only two stone circles and no stone rows on Bodmin Moor have been excavated. There are still no radiocarbon dates or other datable finds. Based on other parts of Britain, the Bodmin stone circles and rows probably date to the end of the Neolithic or the beginning of the Bronze Age (Burl 1976).

The rest is narrative ...

THE BIRTH OF A PROJECT

Once upon a time there used to be a little black box labelled 'ritual'. In it the archaeologist put anything that did not have a 'sensible' explanation, anything surplus to everyday requirements. This little black box was at the top of Christopher Hawkes's (1954) *in*famous ladder of inference. It contained, he thought, the ambivalent evidence, the least easy to uncover, and the most subjective to interpret. He felt, fortunately, that being far removed from the economic necessities of 'making a living', this top of the ladder stuff was not dreadfully important. It was the icing on a technological and economic cake. And, of course, Lewis Binford in his own inimitable way, came to rather the same conclusion (Binford 1972). He argued that what we had to worry about was what people *did*, not what they *thought*. What people *did* was adaptive, and conformed to cross-cultural norms, what they *thought* about the world was particular, quirky, historical, and not open to generalisations. And so the 'new archaeology' was born with 'ritual' as a little subsystem of a wider functioning whole. And so, too, with 'landscape'. The conventional approach developed in archaeology emphasised topography, technology, resources, and land-use: what was 'done' to the land, rather than how people engaged emotionally, subjectively, and variably. The emphasis was on individual sites and their catchment areas or, more recently, on the relationship between sites. Very rarely did archaeologists lift their eyes from the ground and consider how site, field boundary, monument, and stone row related to the wider landscape. Curiously, when, on occasion, archaeologists *did* look beyond the site, they by-passed the landscape to consider relationships to the sun, moon, and stars.

The past 15 years of discussion, debate, and research in archaeology have led most of us to reject such a position. It is not possible to divorce *doing* from *thinking*; ritual cannot be marginalised. Indeed, it now seems very obvious that, in all societies, past or present, the ritual arena is central to the reproduction of power and authority. Consequently ritual, ideology, and symbolic meaning have been pulled back from the margins and granted an important position in our interpretations.

This shift of emphasis has been most keenly felt in the study of ceremonial monuments. There is now a rich and varied literature on the roles that monuments played in the past, and on the construction, offerings, ceremonies, and patterns of movements in and around and between ritual sites. Archaeologists have spent a lot of time thinking about cemeteries, megalithic monuments, enclosures, henges, and ceremonial ways. Latterly an exploration has begun of the ways in which processions and formal patterns of movement link ritual sites across the landscape. (eg Barrett 1994; Bender 1992; 1993; Hodder 1990; Thomas 1991; Tilley 1993; 1994). Crucial to all these studies has been the understanding that people don't just *think* and *see* things, they experience them physically and emotionally, from a particular point of view. They move around, go in and out of places, congregate, and disperse. They can move in certain directions, but not others, and at certain moments, but only when the time is right. Places and pathways, public and private places, 'backstage' and 'frontstage', and all the places in between, help to shape this world of ritual experience. Much of what happens is constituted by the past, by tradition, by what is already there. Ancient places are reused and transformed as people, through their physical encounter with particular places, rethink the past.

A great deal of the discussion of monuments and ritual practice still focuses on questions about the reproduction of *authority* and *hierarchy*. Despite our best attempts, there has still been a pre-occupation with leaders and regional elites, with *vertical* distinctions between people. The other more *horizontal* distinctions that animated life within and between communities in the past have tended to be neglected. These are the kinds of distinctions based on family and kin affiliation, whether you are a woman or a man, and all the different grades of child- and adulthood. All these social differences, and a person's sense of what would be expected of them, would have been brought into sharp relief in the course of activities conducted at the ceremonial monuments. A person's understanding of the world would be shaped by their varied and particular participation in, and understanding of the significance of, the events going on around them, and would be linked to the reproduction of power and authority.

But the great ceremonies would only punctuate the rhythm and flow of daily life. The formation and maintenance of beliefs about the world, acceptance of and resistance to authority, would be constituted in such seemingly mundane activities of collecting water from the spring, walking through a village, chatting with a neighbour over a field boundary wall, tending flocks, planting and harvesting the fields, being able to see distant hills and remembering the myths and stories about them. Archaeologists have long appreciated that building or entering a house, and the internal divisions of dwellings and their relationship to each other are imbued with symbolism. They are no less 'ritual' and 'symbolic' than stone circles or stone rows. The symbolism is just *less* obvious and overt, *more* embedded. A house may embrace, in its construction, morphology, and use, an entire cosmology of the world, an intricate network of social distinctions, an elaborate schema informing every social practice, in which the realms of 'ritual' and 'making a living' are not separated, but form part and parcel of each other.

Yet archaeologists have neglected domestic spaces and there have been few attempts to integrate an understanding of them with the use of the ceremonial monuments. Ian Hodder's (1984; 1990) work on the significance of house spaces in prehistoric Europe and Colin Richards's work on Orkney (1993) are notable exceptions. In part the reason is pragmatic. In large areas of lowland Britain and Europe settlement traces do not survive or the sheer scale of excavation required to provide even a minimal ground plan of buried post-holes and structures is enormous. But there is also another background realm of assumptions and prejudices at work. Recent approaches, mentioned above, still tend to maintain a distinction between sacred or ritual landscapes, and secular or mundane landscapes. In both conventional and more avant-garde work in archaeology there lurk, even at the moment of their denial, unwarranted distinctions, which we have used already in this paper: sacred/profane; ceremonial/everyday; public/domestic. We may try to escape these binary oppositions, but somehow they remain. Hence although we might acknowledge that houses and settlements are imbued with ritual and symbolism, we still, characteristically, tend to regard them as *more* profane, *more* 'normal', *more* 'practical' and *more* 'functional' places than stone circles or cairns.

This says a lot about 'us' and rather little about 'them', the prehistoric inhabitants. We create in our own lives a distinction between the 'religious' and the 'secular', the 'symbolic' and the 'functional'. We

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compartmentalise the world. But these categorisations are a chimera. In the contemporary world every aspect of our daily routines are imbued with symbolic meaning — from the food we eat to the way we dress, to the way we *act* when we go shopping, or go to work, or conduct an archaeological excavation. Symbolism, 'ritual', 'ceremony' do not form *dimensions* of our lives but fill every aspect of them. There is an unbroken continuum from the act of purchasing a shirt to going to a wedding. During the wedding ceremony the symbolism will be highlighted through the words used and the material culture (rings, costumes, formal movements) employed. But it is everywhere else as well, so much part of the structuring of our consciousness, that we take it for granted. It becomes 'common-sense', a daily routine, that is all the more powerful precisely because it happens every day and is taken for granted.

Understood in this way, there is no part of a prehistoric landscape that is not mediated by people's understanding of their world. Landscapes are not inert matter sitting 'out there', waiting to be exploited, houses are not built simply to provide shelter. They are conceptualised, seen, smelt, touched, used, avoided, near or far away, in terms of people's identities and cognitive understandings.

In the work that we are undertaking at Leskernick, on Bodmin Moor, we want to explore the prehistoric symbolic continuum from house to field to stone row and stone circle to distant cairn on the hill on the horizon. That is one of our objectives. Another is to move beyond the reconstruction and reinterpretation of the past to think about the *process* of doing archaeology — the conduct of research at both the level of the excavation trench and that of field survey. We want to try and investigate the relationship between archaeology as a discourse on the past and archaeology as a practice in the present. Archaeology is a *contemporary* practice. It is not just about what went on in the past, but the experiences we have of the traces of the past today, and the contemporary social shaping of our accounts. There have been a growing number of criticisms of the accounts of the past archaeologists provide in general (eg. Bapty & Yates 1990; Hodder 1986; 1992; Shanks & Tilley 1987a; 1992; Tilley 1990), and of the process of writing-up the results of field surveys and excavations in particular (Hodder 1989; Tilley 1989). The boundaries between archaeology as text, and literature as text, have been challenged. The standard type of distan-

ciated third-person 'authoritative' narrative in which archaeologists 'cover the traces' of what they actually do, to produce a 'polished' version of the past for professional consumption has been called into question. Nonetheless, whilst there have been criticisms, there has been little attempt to develop alternatives.

The excavation that we undertook was small in area, short in duration, produced no portable finds, and only a small number of features. The standard approach would be to produce a brief, formulaic, interim (to use the standard jargon), report on our work. The daily process of excavation, however, generates alternative site histories which are subsequently abandoned, forgotten, perpetuated, or transformed.

The usual excavation account eliminates this process of reconstruction and interpretation, and in so doing jettisons much that is of value to an understanding of both the site itself and the manner in which some conclusions and interpretations, rather than others, become the final report. It needs to be recognised that the intensely detailed procedures of excavation have the potential to be time-consuming to the detriment of interpretative thinking. If excavation is not interpretation, and presented as such, it is nothing. All excavation, from the identification of a feature, to the manner in which this feature is recorded, and meaning assigned, involves different levels and types of interpretative debate. We need to find a means to highlight this in order to provide a counterpoint to the spurious fixedness of both excavation reports, and archives with their context sheets allowing minimal space for the interpretative process to be recorded.

A further aim of the Leskernick project is to explore similarities and differences between the confined world of excavation and the large-scale settlement survey. What are the effects of differing research environments? There was a definite tension between what was happening *up* on the settlement survey and *down* in the excavation trench. We tried to make sure everyone moved *up* and *down*, but inevitably there were fields of knowledge and passionate interests inhibiting movement (note the landscape metaphors (Salmond 1982)).

The excavation was more conventional, more disciplined, the settlement survey much freer, apparently more anarchic. But we could afford to be less restrained around the houses because we weren't

destroying anything. How do we 'free-up' excavation while providing an acceptable empirical record? Who and what is the guardian of acceptability? In this paper, we attempt to present both the excavation and the field survey work at Leskernick in terms of a *process* in the conviction that the act of 'getting there' is as important as whatever temporary conclusions we might arrive at through that process. We want, during the Leskernick project, to try and create methodologies and ways of writing that more truthfully reflect the process of discovery, uncovery, intuition, and interpretation.

Thus far we have attempted to provide some elements of the intellectual background to our programme at Leskernick. We now want to explain some of the personal and pragmatic reasons for choosing to work at this place in the heart of Bodmin Moor, Cornwall, south-west England (Fig. 1). Between 1978 and 1935 an intensive archaeological survey of Bodmin Moor took place using both air photographs and field survey. It was undertaken by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME). The result (Johnson & Rose 1994) was a meticulous documentation of the archaeological landscape. The results were spectacular both in terms of the monuments and sites that were identified for the first time, and the fact that it was possible, from the maps, plans, and documents provided, to obtain a coherent impression of the prehistoric and medieval landscapes. It was possible to assess relationships between houses and field boundaries, settlements and cairns and monuments such as stone circles and stone rows in detail. In part, this was because large areas of Bodmin Moor have been relatively little disturbed by modem agriculture. Some areas, such as that around Leskernick Hill, have not been permanently settled since the end of the Bronze Age, although there was later intermittent peat-digging and tin-streaming. The combination of a uniquely valuable high-quality modern archaeological survey in an area that is as close as we are likely to find to a 'fossil' prehistoric landscape made working on Bodmin Moor an exciting prospect. And, as important, the landscape:
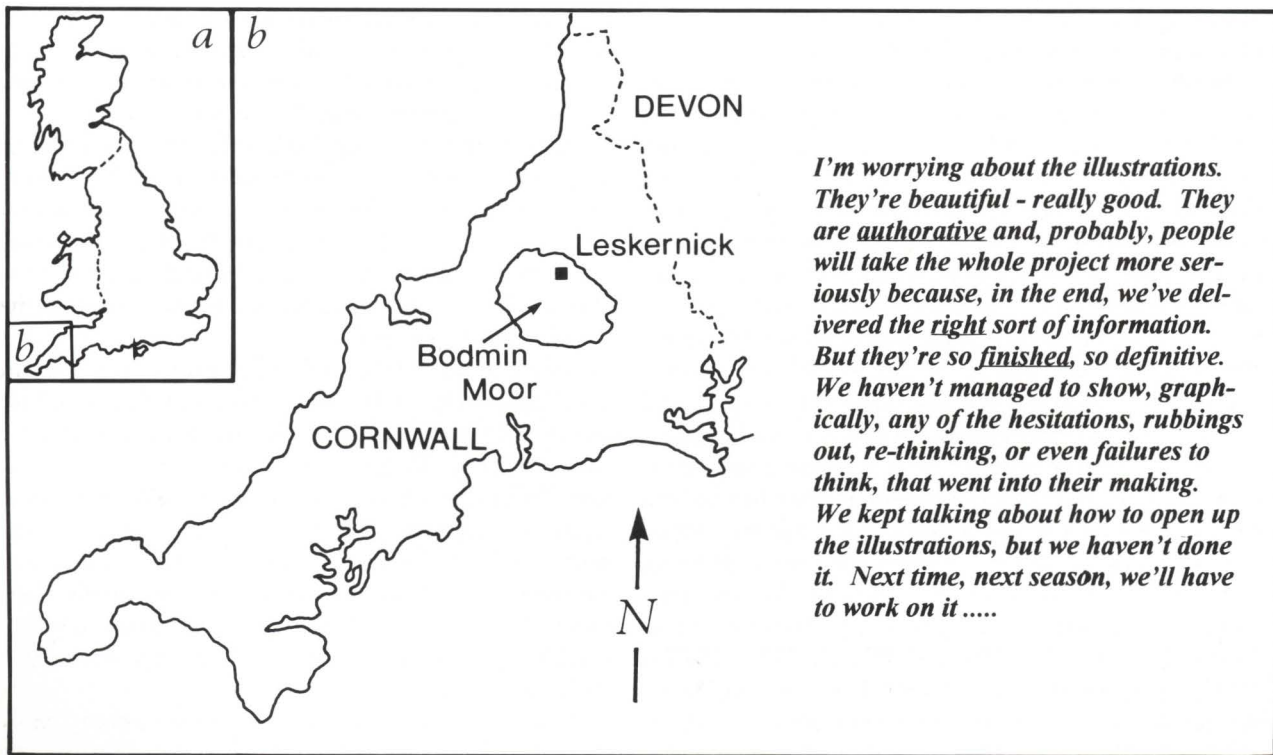
I'm worrying about the illustrations. They're beautiful - really good. They are authorative and, probably, people will take the whole project more seriously because, in the end, we've delivered the right sort of information. But they're so finished, so definitive. We haven't managed to show, graphically, any of the hesitations, rubbings out, re-thinking, or even failures to think, that went into their making. We kept talking about how to open up the illustrations, but we haven't done it. Next time, next season, we'll have to work on it .....

Fig. 1
The location of the study area

the rocks, hills, tors, and grassy plateau areas invite, at least for us, a deep emotional and personal attraction and response.

Chris Tilley, survey in hand, and in the wake of having written *A Phenomenology of Landscape* (1994), was the first of us to spend time on Bodmin Moor. The results of this initial work are reported elsewhere (Tilley 1996). This work forms a direct background to the Leskernick project and the research reported here. We would like the reader to look at it first because our own present work attempts to both extend and build on this paper, and rectify clear weaknesses.

Tilley's paper is about the changing relationship of monument to topography from the Mesolithic to the end of the Bronze Age. It emphasises the importance of the high tors and the manner in which prehistoric populations, through time, developed alternative strategies of 'capturing, appropriating and controlling the power of the rocks'. It argues that access to these sacred places became more and more restricted during the Bronze Age. The emphasis is on elites and the reproduction of their power through controlling knowledges of the landscape. But settlements are almost excluded from the account. Everyday life is, if not missed out, largely unexamined in relation to an interpretation of stone circles and stone rows and cairns. The reason for this was partly practical: at a pinch it is possible for an individual to walk in and around stone circles, along stone rows, and between cairns, but trying to understand large settlement areas is to think and work on an altogether different scale of things. But it was not just that: a distinction was still been drawn between the sacred and the secular ... So, we decided to look at Leskernick, and ponder this relationship.

Stone worlds

Leskernick hill is located in the heart of the northern part of Bodmin Moor, According to Padel, the name is a compound of *lys* and the adjectival *carn*. *Lys* means either 'court' or 'ruin' and *carn* is 'rockpile' or 'tor'. This name is likely to be old, *lys* as a prefix, being usually pre-Norman (Padel 1985, 38–40, 150–1). A hill with lots of rock piles and ruins: the name fits very well. From even a short distance away to the south it seems to be entirely covered in a great grey clutter of stone (Fig. 2). The hill, rising to a maximum height of 329 m is relatively low, oval in form, and flat-topped,
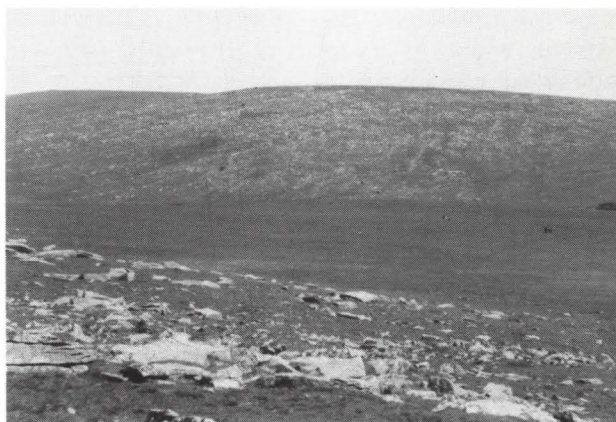

Fig. 2
The western part of Leskernick Hill seen from Codda Tor

with a long axis running roughly north–south. Walking up and around the hill it becomes clear than the boulder and stone areas, known locally as clitter, are not uniform. There is none on top of the hill, rather little on the northern and eastern sides, a fair amount on the southern slopes, and a dense mass on the western side. The land dips away, gently or more steeply, from the hill summit to an undulating moorland plain broken up by the line of the River Fowey and its tributaries to the west, and smaller streams to the north and east.

There are, on this hill, about 50 round Early Bronze Age house circles. They form two discrete settlements, separated by a long corridor leading up to the top of the hill. One is on the southern side of the hill, set among a fair amount of clitter. The other is on the western side in among a dense mass of stones. Both settlements have associated enclosures and compounds marked by low sinuous stone walls, which are somewhat different in shape, size, and form. The enclosures are also on the hillside, in among the clitter.

On the edge of the southern enclosures are four small cairns and a cist. A fifth cairn is found further up the hill, beyond the houses but still within an enclosure. On the top of the hill, out of sight of nearly, but not all, the houses (see below) is a large flat-topped stone, propped up on the top of an earthfast boulder, resembling a Neolithic quoit or dolmen (Fig. 3). The dying rays of the sun, on the Summer solstice, shine through the hole in this 'quoit' just before they slip below the skyline. We are uncertain of its antiquity but, in view of other evidence we have recovered, believe it to be as old, if not older, than the

Fig. 3
The 'quoit' on the top of Leskernick Hill

Bronze Age settlement. Also on top of the hill, but deliberately located out of sight of both settlements, is a very large cairn probably, on the basis of analogies with other excavated examples elsewhere on Bodmin Moor and beyond, covering timber and/or stone-post settings, acting as a focal point for ceremonies and offerings.

Below the hill, to the south, is an undulating plateau area. In among the springy turf and the remains of the old peat drying stacks and disturbances created by medieval and later tin-panning, at a short distance from the hill, are the remains of a modest Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age stone row. The stones are less than 0.5 m high except at the western end where there are three large recumbent stones. Associated with the western end of the stone row are two stone circles and a much disturbed large cairn (Fig. 4).

Leskernick is surrounded by a series of ridges and hills in all directions, all at a distance of just over 2 km. Standing on the top of Leskernick Hill, next to the large cairn on its summit and looking out, one has the feeling of being in an enclosed world, with only hints of a wider landscape beyond. Leskernick is the *omphalos* of the saucer, the Beacon, Tolborough Tor, Catshole Tor, Brown Willy, High Moor, Buttern Hill, Bray Down, and Carne Down form the rim. Rough Tor (4 km to the north-west) and Brown Gelly (7 km away to the south, down the line of the Fowey valley) and the blue haze over the horizon to the north-east, are glimpses of a more distant world (Fig. 5).

The hills to the north-east, east, and south-east are smooth contoured. Occasionally they are broken by a

large outcrop such as Black Rock and Elephant Rock. The hills on the western side are more dramatic. Codda, Tolborough, and Catshole are punctuated by rocky tors, while Brown Willy forms a long, gaunt spinal ridge.

Nearly every one of the encircling hills has a large cairn or cairns on their summit. In some cases the cairns encircle, build upon, or incorporate rock stacks and tors (Tolborough; Catshole; Brown Willy). In other cases, the piles of stones forming the cairns break the smooth contours of the hills to create, in effect, artificial tors (Fig. 6). There are, in total, 21 such large cairns and *all* are visible from Leskernick. They seem to mark out and delimit a universe that centres on the hill, its settlement, and nearby ceremonial complex. On the eastern side of the circle the hills, with their cairns, also delimit the edge of this part of Bodmin Moor. Beyond them, to the east, the land falls away.

Within this encircled territory there are only two other large cairns and they are both associated with Leskernick. One is on the top of the hill, the other close to the stone row terminal. Within the territory there is also a scatter of small cairns. Apart from five and a cist intimately associated with the Leskernick settlement, there are another ten or more possible cairns on the lower slopes of Codda Tor, and another three a kilometre north-west of Leskernick on a flat, lowlying area near a stream confluence. From these small cairns many of the large hilltop ones are visible, but they themselves are only apparent from a short distance. This distinction between large prominent cairns on the hilltops and small cairns in lowlying and more hidden locations fits the general pattern known elsewhere on Bodmin Moor. It seems likely that the large prominent cairns acted both as boundary markers and as ceremonial foci whereas the small constructions probably covered simple cremation burials.

Within the circle formed by the hilltop cairns not only is there an absence of large cairns but also of traces of prehistoric settlements and field enclosures. The only traces of prehistoric settlement within the cairn circle are some small concentrations of hut circles lacking fields and enclosure walls at Codda, Catshole, and on the western slopes of Brown Willy. It seems quite possible that these hut circles were seasonally used by the inhabitants of Leskernick. More extensive settlement and enclosure areas are usually found just beyond the large cairns on other

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Leskernick

Beacon

Codda

0   500m
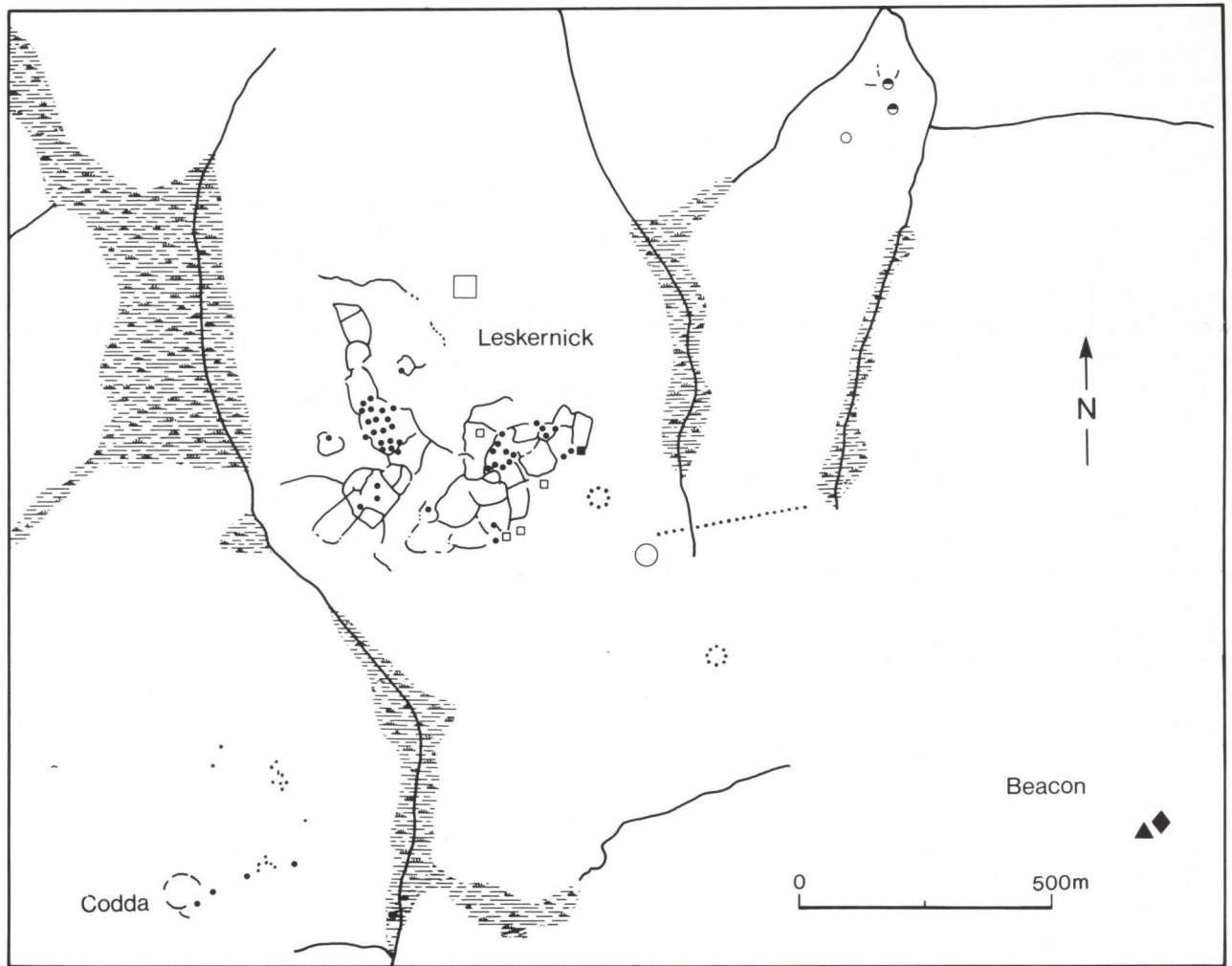
KEY   ○   Small simple cairn   ◯   Large simple cairn

        ◉   Small simple cairn with cist   ☐   Large kerbed cairn

        □   Small kerbed cairn   ⦂⋮⦂   Stone circle

        ■   Small kerbed cairn with cist   ·····   Stone row

        ▲   Rimmed platform cairn   •   Hut

        ◆   Rimmed platform cairn with kerb(s)   ⸫⸪   Clearance cairns

        ▱   Bog and stream

Fig. 4
Leskernick Hill and associated prehistoric monuments (after Johnson & Rose 1994)

hillslopes out of sight of Leskernick. It would seem that these neighbouring settlements hold their distance from Leskernick and at the same time their inhabitants built their ceremonial cairns in places that link them one with another, and with the central focus of Leskernick. From the vantage point of Leskernick,

the hilltop cairns create a bounded universe, but they are equally points of contact with people in these distant out-of-view settlements.

From the southern settlement at Leskernick an observer looks down on a stoneless, almost level, plateau area, in which two stone circles, a large cairn,

and a stone row are just discernible. The close association between the stone row, stone circles, cairn, and settlement complex is exceptional on Bodmin Moor. Elsewhere stone rows and stone circles are spatially separated, often by considerable distances. What was the 'role' of these monuments, and their associated rituals, in the routine experiences of everyday life?

All the monuments are very ruined today and would have been fairly modest constructions even when first built. The distance, a few hundred metres, and the walking time between the settlement area and the stone monuments is small. The obvious source of the stones used to construct the monuments was the clitter accumulations on the southern slopes of Leskernick Hill. In the absence of excavation the architectural morphology of the settlement and its topographic location indicate an Early Bronze Age date (Johnson & Rose 1994, 55; 76; Mercer 1970). This, and the substantive evidence for a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age dating and use of stone settings, stone circles and stone rows (Miles 1975, 10–12; Burl 1976; 1993; Barnatt 1980; 1982; 1989) in south-west England, indicate possible concurrent use of the settlement and the ceremonial monuments.

Our initial interpretation is that the stone row and circles out on the plain began to be constructed towards the end of the Neolithic, ie. the early 3rd millennium BC and were used by populations who visited and used the area on a seasonal basis, probably during the summer months. The houses, enclosures, and small cairns on the southern slopes of Leskernick were then built at a somewhat later date. This represents the first permanent settling of this area of Bodmin Moor. The houses were set at a reserved distance above the earlier stone monuments which remained in use. The first inhabitants of the settlement on Leskernick Hill thus created and maintained links with the past. We think that the settlement on the western side of the hill, situated away from the Late Neolithic monuments, may be later in date.

The stone row is just over 300 m in length, oriented ENE–WSW and terminates at a 'U'-shaped formation of three substantial, part turf-covered, recumbent stones just short of the cairn. The rest of the row consists of 47 small, low, and square-topped stones, mostly less than knee-height. The eastern part of the stone row is irregular with gaps, and clusters of stones lying out of axis of the alignment. Approximately two-thirds along the length of the stone row, walking


Fig. 5
The large cairn on the top of Leskernick Hill looking north-west to the Rough Tor ridge

towards the terminal, the row crosses a boggy area which has been modified by tin-streaming. The land surface then gently rises up to the terminal at the south-west end and the stones have a more regular alignment. Two questions which arise are whether this disalignment was original or something which the row had subsequently suffered? Was the topographic point at which the disalignment took place significant? It is only immediately after crossing the boggy area, moving west towards the terminal setting, that the tip of Rough Tor first comes into view in the far distance, becoming more and more visually dominant as one approaches the terminal (Fig. 7). It seems, therefore, that both the disalignment of the row at this point, and the place at which it crosses water, are of great significance in relation to what is undoubtedly one of the most important tors and prehistoric settlement areas on Bodmin Moor (see Tilley 1996; in press).

The row is not directly aligned on either of the two stone circles or the cairn, but all are intervisible. The two circles and the cairn are more or less directly in alignment with each other and the (invisible) large cairn, on the top of Leskernick Hill. Since the stone circles are probably earlier than the cairn on the top of the hill the position of this cairn must have been fixed in relation to that of the circles. This might, in turn, suggest that the hilltop cairn and that built down below near to stone row terminal were both contemporary with each other and at some stage the stone row, stone circles, and cairns all formed components of an interconnected group of monuments.

KEY
△ Rock outcrop
■ Large cairn
▲ Tor cairn
⋯⋯ Stone row
● Small cairn
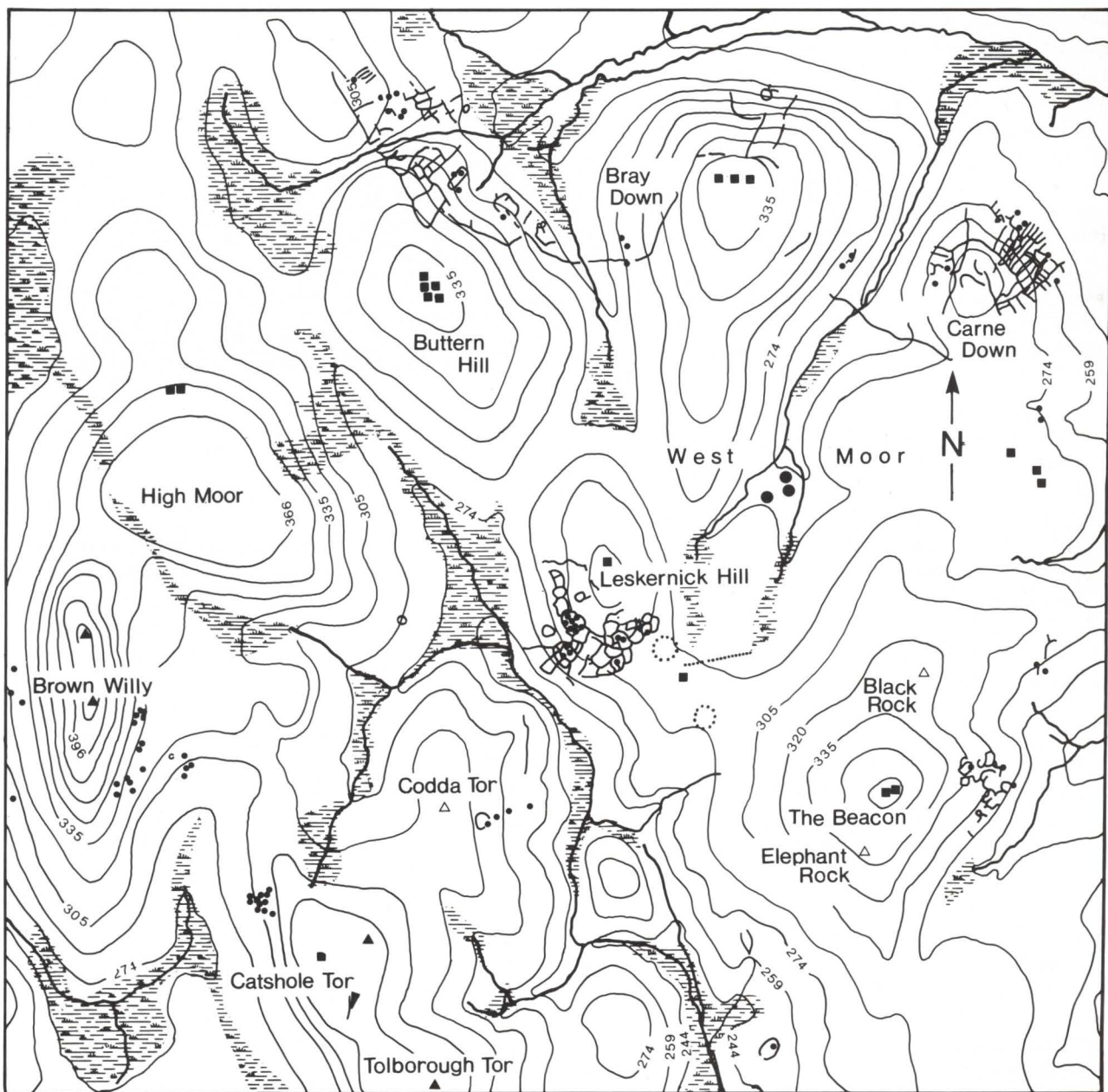
⊙ Stone circle
• Hut circle
◐◑ Field enclosure boudary
▼ Long cairn
▤ Marshy area

0   1km

Fig. 6
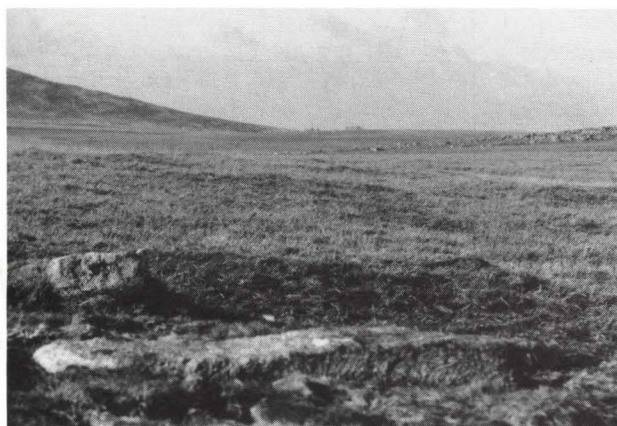The prehistoric landscape around Leskernick Hill (after Johnson & Rose 1994, map 1)

Fig. 7
View of the tip of Rough Tor from the stone row terminal

The two stone circles are *c.* 350 m apart. The shapes of the stones appear similar to those used to construct the stone row. The southern circle, slightly better preserved, has a diameter of 30 m and consists of 20–22 stones, with possibly originally as many as 30. One is a low stump, the rest have fallen (Barnatt 1980, 17). The northern circle is marginally smaller. There are 14–15 visible fallen stones and low stumps around its circumference. Other stones, in the middle, may have been dislodged from their original positions. In the middle of this circle is a massive recumbent stone. If it ever stood, it would have been over 2 m in height and would make a quite dramatic impression on the prehistoric landscape. However, on close inspection it appears to be an earthfast boulder. The incorporation of this stone within the centre of the northern circle complements the evidence, discussed below, that 'natural' stones, their position, and shape, constituted an extremely important part of the ideology of the inhabitants of Leskernick.

The location of the stone circles beneath a hill and settlement area to the north is typical for Bodmin Moor as a whole. From the circles there are wide ranging views encompassing the surrounding hills and tors. In relation to the sudden visibility of Rough Tor as one walks west down the stone row it is of interest to note that the tip of Rough Tor is clearly visible from the southern stone circle, and as you walk between it to the cairn and stone row. It disappears from view at precisely the point at which an observer enters the northern stone circle. This tor, with its spiky, fugitive silhouette, its encumbrance of tor cairns and ritual enclosures, must, we think, have been of special importance to the people of Leskernick. It is notable that the one house with an entrance that is oriented towards this tor (house 3) lies above and isolated from the western community and is associated with a number of special features (see below). But the connection with Rough Tor is only one among many forged by the people of Leskernick between the stones of their own hillside and elements of their wider landscape.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: FRAGMENTS FROM DIARIES

I found myself trying to cross and re-cross the Fowey with some difficulty. Eventually I emerged from the 'newtake' land onto the unimproved moor. The first objective was to find the southern stone circle. I looked out for rocks emerging from the grassland and, following several false leads, found myself on the western slopes of the Beacon. I realised now that I was in completely in the wrong place and decided to locate the cairn that would give me an orientation and reference point for both the southern and northern circles, and the stone row. Working back from the cairn I found the southern and northern circles, eventually, definitely the worst preserved and inconspicuous of those I had visited on Bodmin Moor ... In the distance I could see a lone horseman cantering across the moorland to the east, followed by two dogs. He was bare-chested in the sun. This was the only person I had seen since leaving the road, and I felt somewhat uneasy. His presence broke the solitude of the moor and returned me to the 'present' from having been in the 'past'.

I could see the settlement area from the cairn — a massive tangle of stones — and decided to avoid it. It seemed impenetrable, aloof, impossible to investigate compared with the stone circles and stone rows where I had a methodology and knew what I was to do. I took pity on a solitary wind-blown hawthorn tree eking out a solitary existence on the lower slopes of the hill among the clitter spreads. Why should anyone want to live in this desert of stone? (CT)

Our walk to Leskernick Hill was via the long mound just below Catshole Tor. The small tors, Codda and Tolborough seemed more visually potent than the larger massives of granitic outcrop. Surrounded by voids of undulating moor, they provided discrete points of orientation for our walk. As we came over Codda Hill Tor, the southerly slopes of Leskernick Hill came into view. The prehistoric settlement

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appeared as a patterned mass of stones merging into scree-strewn hillside where loose clitter and earthfast boulders were anarchically juxtaposed. This hillside looked fractured and grey against the smooth yellow-green moor below. It was easy to feel 'lost' in the stone row area ... I felt at home in the settlement area. We searched for some cairns on the perimeter of the settlement. Without a large scale plan it was difficult. The 'natural' clitter played tricks, mimicking mounds and enclosure boundaries, or was it vice versa? (SH)

In the afternoon we walked up on the moors. A warm milky day, the path worn into the granite. Chris inducting us into the names of places. Leskernick: a gentle hill, with a great rock tumble, just possible, from a distance — knowing what to look for to see the occasional enclosure wall. On the lower slopes and the 'plain' in front, no stones, just tussocky grass. Occasionally, as we walked, we'd stumble over slightly elevated grassy square shapes, 'medieval' Chris said. Most times I didn't notice them. Equally, I guess I wouldn't have noticed the stone row. Such very small stones, and half covered with matted grass. Chris showed us the mound and then the stone row which led off and away across a gully (tin mining ...). A strong sense of not 'seeing' much ... Sue worries about how to tie an excavation trench to the three stones which make up the terminal of the row. Chris shows us the way in which, at a certain juncture as you walk the stone line, Rough Tor comes into sight. The Elder inducting the juniors. Up to the settlement. Slowly bits of wall become clearer ... and a small cairn with a cist ... then three round small hut floors. We talk about entrances and what they would have seen. Of wooden structures, water availability. Sense that Chris becomes uneasy if the conversation becomes too 'functional'. (BB)

THE BIOGRAPHY OF AN EXCAVATION

(see Appendix for detailed context descriptions)

For me, the femaleness of the group was striking: Henry surrounded by Barbara, Gill, Cath, Helen, Mary and Pippa ...

I'm glad there are so few men. We can avoid the macho types who are so often attracted ...

We decided to excavate part of the terminal area of the Leskernick stone row because: i) it was a small entity; ii) an interesting number of ritual and landscape features were visible from it; iii) it was situated approximately half-way between the stone circles and might be considered as a focal point in the overall zonation of the ritual monuments in the landscape. We chose to investigate an area between one of the terminal stones and the first stone of the stone row because the final stages of the approach to the terminal may have been a zone of special significance, in the passage along the row and access to the terminal. The trench boundaries incorporated one of the three recumbent stones of the terminal setting, and was oriented ENE along the axis of the stone row (Fig. 8).

Sue has brought four of her own fairly massive 2" grid pegs that form the initial basis of the grid. These seem ridiculously thick and cumbersome to me, but I'm told they won't be easily knocked over, or dislodged, unlike my own ...

An area excavation, rather than test pits was chosen to maximise the possibility of revealing the types of features and activities which we thought would be probable in the vicinity of a stone row terminal. These possible features included post-settings, the stone-holes of the now recumbent stones, evidence of human or animal burials or cremations, and artefact deposits or scatters.

Ian and I set up the site grid, with Chris occasionally holding the end of a tape with a lost look in his eyes. Having got this underway Chris started setting up the fence around the trench area. It amused me that the person who least liked the 'rules' of excavation had fenced us in ...

Back at the camp site the warm sun had brought out the midges in droves. An unpleasant hour was spent battling with them before I retired to the bar ...

Tuesday 13 June

We deturfed the trench taking off grass root mat layer which was *c.* 70 mm thick.

It felt as if we were disturbing (mutilating) a landscape at rest ...

At the same time, the locations of each of the stones in the row, together with the centre of each of the stone circles, were marked out using white flags.

These flags drew our eyes out of the fenced-in trench and facilitated the consideration of wider sets of relationships between the 'trench' area, the rest of the 'ritual complex', and dominant focal points in the landscape. The waving flags made the 'trench people' feel part of a wider landscape and helped us
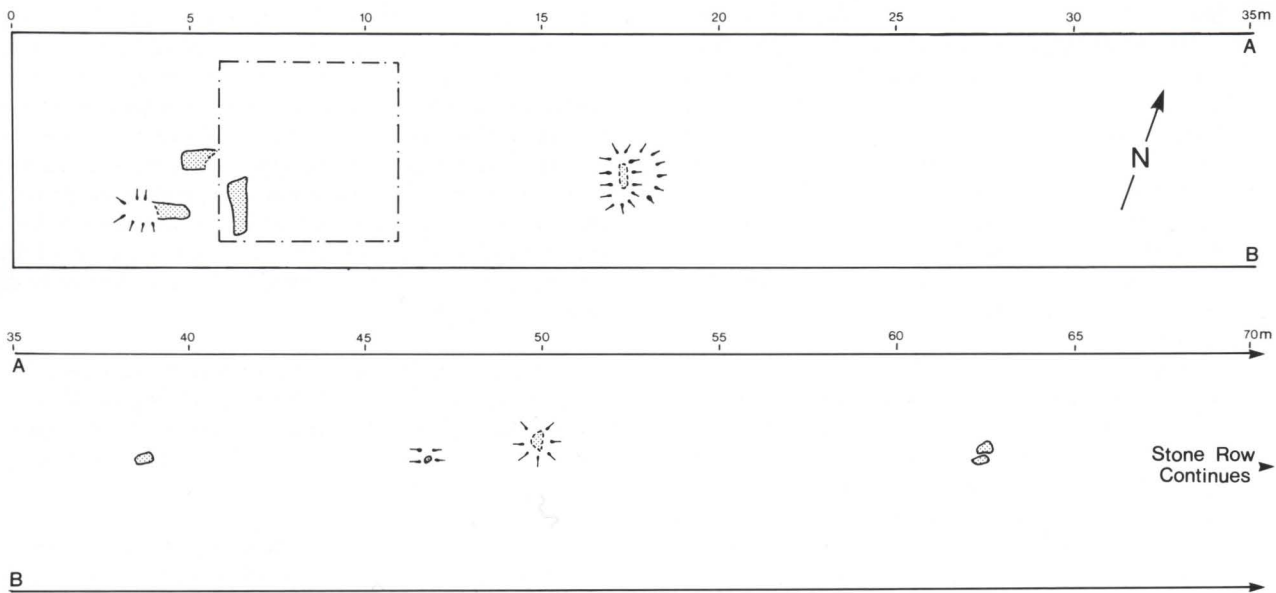
Fig. 8
Leskernick stone row terminal: location map of excavation trench

focus upon the inter-relationships between the terminal setting and the other stones. The wild horses were magnetically attracted to the flags and completely ignored our trench, which we had specifically wired them out of ...

Wednesday 14 June

I am amazed at the neatness of the turf stack outside the trench, the obvious aesthetics of the straight lines and neatly numbered grid pegs. I remark on the professionalism of it all to Ian and Sue: 'It looks just like an excavation should look'. Eyebrows are raised. There is a green baize door through the fence into this interiorised little world. Highly incongruous in the middle of nowhere, little figures huddling behind it, peering down at stone and soil. The creation of another reality, dark and secret. Inside the door there is discipline: you cannot smoke in there, there are places one must not walk, lines, pegs, tapes, objects which should not be disturbed ...

Under the grass mat layer there was a dark brownish–black soft, silty horizon (Context 1), which stained the hands. Mixed in with this were coarse elements of occasional granite pieces and, in the south-east corner of the trench, some slate fragments. This silty layer (*c.* 0. 10 m in depth) was removed down to the top of a bleached soil horizon (Context 2), which comprised a friable mid greyish–black coarse sand.

Two features quickly became apparent (Fig. 9). One was the top of an 'incomplete' circular arrangement (*c.* 0.30 m internal diameter), of five granite pieces (Context 4) with a 'missing' stone on the north part of its circuit, This 'circle' was just 0.20 m east of one of the recumbent terminal setting stones (Context 14). The other feature was a sub-circular concentration (*c.* 0.60 m across) of thin pieces of slate (Context 8). This concentration disappeared into the east edge of the trench and corresponded to where we had noted the presence of slate on deturfing. The slate fragments included tile-sized pieces and, due to its proximity to the surface, was interpreted to be a relatively modern dump of building material (see Appendix). Slate is not local to the site but slate stone occurs north of Bodmin and is widely-used for roofing,

Spent the afternoon helping at the excavation. Henry mattocked, I shovelled and barrowed. Tiring and fairly tedious. Not much for the imagination to work on, though Pippa discovered that one of the recumbent stones was 6 ft plus ...

The pre-excavation plan (Fig. 9) of the trench was commenced by planning the three recumbent stones of the terminal setting. The dimensions of two of these stones are evident since the stones lie wholly on, or very near, the present day land surface. The third stone lay about one metre outside the west edge of the excavation trench, aligned along the axis of the stone row, with its western end

KEY

◎ Granite

◙ Slate
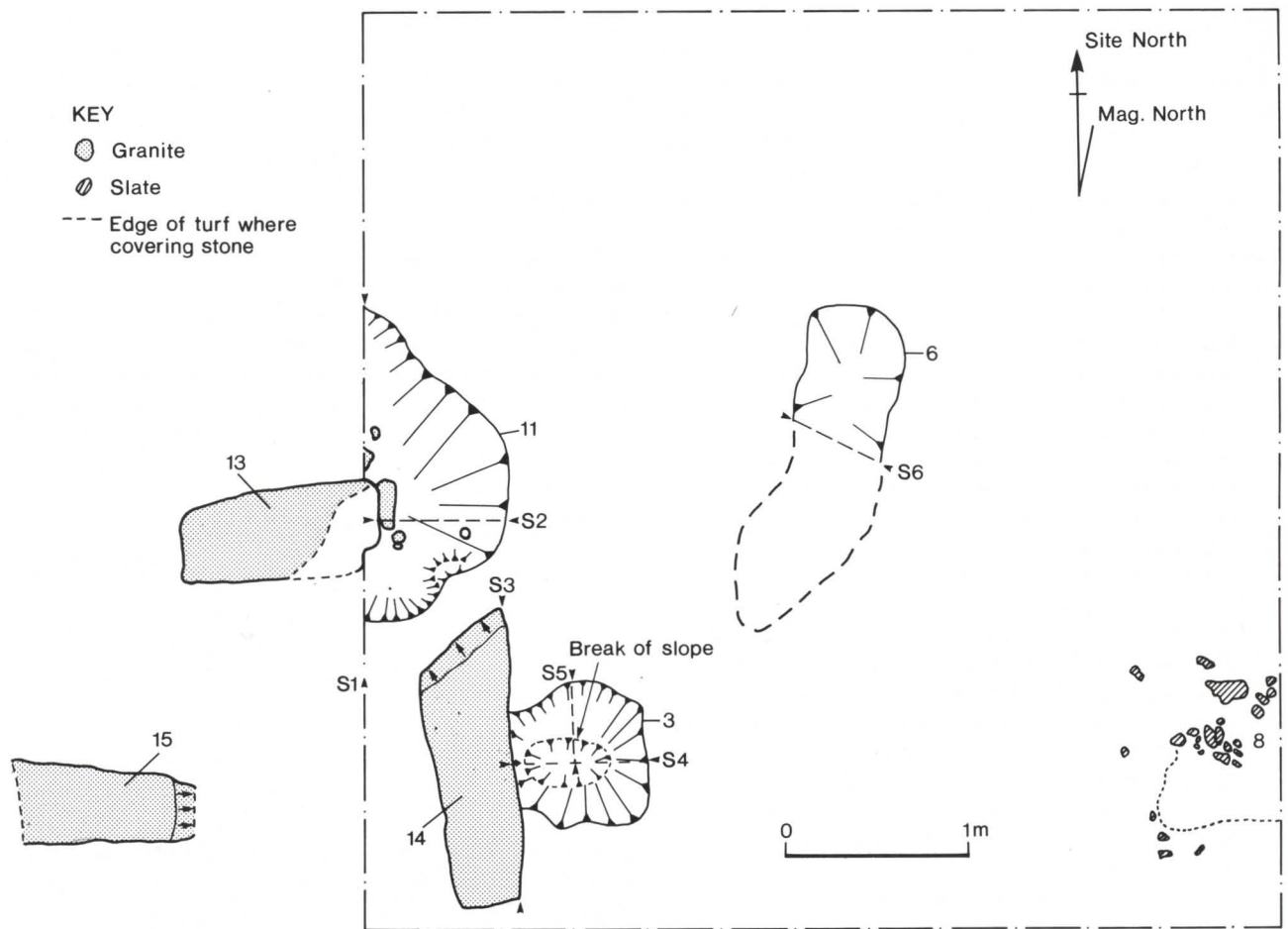
- - - Edge of turf where covering stone

Fig. 9

Leskernick stone row terminal: plan of excavated archaeological features and locations of sections

deeply buried. Probing established its length to be at least 1.95 m. This is 0.50 m higher than the other stones and it would have been the most spectacular of the stones in the terminal setting,

Thursday 15 June

The houses were being identified on the ground. This activity involved constant movement across the landscape, which created a sense of freedom which was difficult to achieve on the excavation. Indeed, by contrast the excavation was creating a sense of unnatural fixedness ...

With further trowelling, two more features became evident. The first was a large 'sausage-shaped' area of dark brownish–black sandy silt (Context 6) situated in the middle of the trench, north-west of the slate concentration and

oriented NNE–SSW (Fig. 9). The second was a semicircular area (Fig. 9) of mid-brown friable silt (Context 7), which continued into the west edge of the excavation trench at the point that it cut across the end of one of the recumbent stones (Context 13). We thought that the sausage-shaped area might be either a natural depression which retained moisture or a footing trench for a semicircular structure such as a windbreak, but much more recent in date than the stone row. The two areas (Contexts 7 and 4), next to the recumbent terminal stones, remained the most interesting. The mid-brown silt (Context 7) was full of rooty material. We interpreted it as having accumulated in a waterlogged hollow (Context 11). The circle of granite pieces (Context 4) was clearly deliberately placed, and in alignment with the stone row. Perhaps we had a stone-lined hearth? Or a cremation pit? But the stones were not affected by heat. Alternatively it might be a specially lined pit for the deposition of offerings: pieces of white quartz, charcoal

from non-local oak timbers — material known to be deposited under cairns in the area. The uppermost fill (Context 5) within (and possibly encircling: we were not sure yet) the circle of granite pieces (Context 4), was all that was revealed (Fig. 9). This fill was dark and of soft consistency, A new possibility emerged: we might have the post-pipe of a substantial rotted post, *c.* 0.30 m wide, which could be part of a post alignment preceding the stone row. Perhaps the terminal area had incorporated timbers as well as standing stones?

Some of the rust that had been gradually accumulating on my new trowel was now worn away. I noticed how large it was compared with other trowels in use and was duly informed that all their trowels had started out this way. The more diminutive the size of your trowel the greater your status as an archaeologist since years of scraping were required to reduce the blade to an area little larger than a postage stamp. The trowel was a prized personal possession and a lengthy discussion ensued about the best place to carve one's initials, or name, on the wooden handle. This also would show signs of longevity — a sleek oiled surface produced by being pressed into the palm of a sweaty hand for months on end. Another quaint archaeological fetish. This ageing of objects, through appearance, and the clear relationship between use, time and status reminded me very much of Kula valuables but while these are given away it would be horrific for an archaeologist to give up a trowel as it was so obviously entangled with personal identity. I should have spent several days gradually filing down the blade of my trowel before the excavation commenced. But even if I had done that the handle would have given the game away. Taken to its logical extreme, the greatest status symbol of all would be to have no trowel at all. How foolish I had been to purchase one! ...

Friday 16 June

The southern half of the fill of Context 11 was emptied to produce a west–east section (Fig. 10). Under the root-filled layer (Context 7), there was a dark brown silty clay (Context 9) abutting the sides and base of the hollow. We interpreted Context 9 as a primary inwash into a cut or depression (Context 11) in the bleached soil horizon (Context 2), which had subsequently become waterlogged (the interpretation of the previous day), causing the build up of the rooty mass of Context 7. The fill thus came about by natural processes, but how the hollow had been formed in the first place remained unresolved.

It was good to walk across the settlement and feel the freedom of moving through a landscape. The

lack of ambulation in an excavation trench closes down some of the senses, and also concentrates others, slight changes in texture, compaction, sound etc. as the trowel blade scrapes along and slices through fills. The excavation trench seemed part of a secret world which could not be seen from the western settlement ...

The edge of the cut (Context 3) in which the granite pieces had been placed was finally located. The cut was now seen to be wide of the outer edge of the packing by *c.* 0.20 m. This suggested a pit with an internal circle of stone pieces and not, as we had thought, a post-hole with stone-packing. We now believed that we had located the original stone-packed hole of one of the fallen terminal stones.

Sunday 18 June

Here one worked within a structured, overtly hierarchical environment. While the fencing off of the pit is, of course, necessary it gave the whole process of the excavation a certain alien character. The fence around the pit was like a metaphor for the divisions in attitude towards archaeology among the team ...

The sausage-shaped feature was half emptied to create a west–east cross section (Fig. 10). It was surprisingly shallow (*c.* 40 mm max. depth) with rounded irregular sides, concave profile, and no perceptible break of slope (Fig. 9). It contained a single fill (Context 6). We think that it is a relatively modern scuff-hollow created by animals.

The smallness of people in the landscape. Looking up from the prehistoric stone row, people on the settlement seem tiny. Skylarks, yellow flowers, fluffy cloud ...

Excavation of the exposed part of Context 11 was completed to reveal a north–south section (Fig. 10) in the edge of the trench. This feature had to be earlier than the fall or removal of the recumbent stone (flat-topped at both ends), which projected over the point that the feature continued into the edge of the trench. Parts of this stone (Context 13) had broken away to rest at the interface between the two fills (Contexts 7 and 9), while the stone itself was resting at the interface between the 'topsoil' (Context 1) and the uppermost fill (Context 7). Our interpretation was that while it was still standing, a hollow had been created around the standing stone, perhaps by animals, and this had become waterlogged and silted up. There was no evidence of an original stone-hole, suggesting that we possibly had the uppermost end of the standing stone exposed in the north–south section, The hollow was oval-shaped indicating that the stone originally stood on a
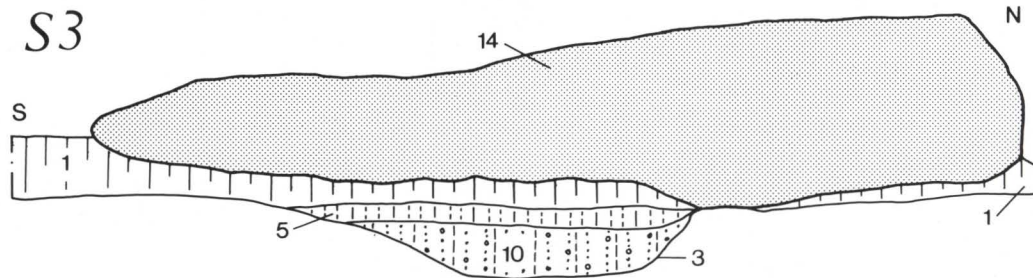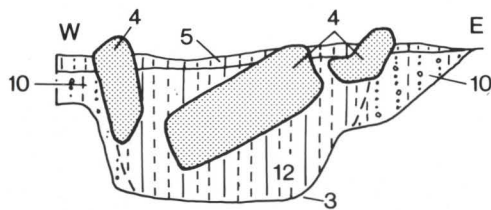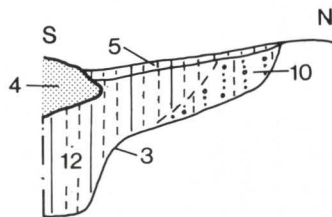
KEY

‖‖‖	Silty clay
‖‖‖	Clayey silt
‖‖‖	Silt
‖‖‖	Sand and silt
‖o‖o‖	Silty sand

0   1m
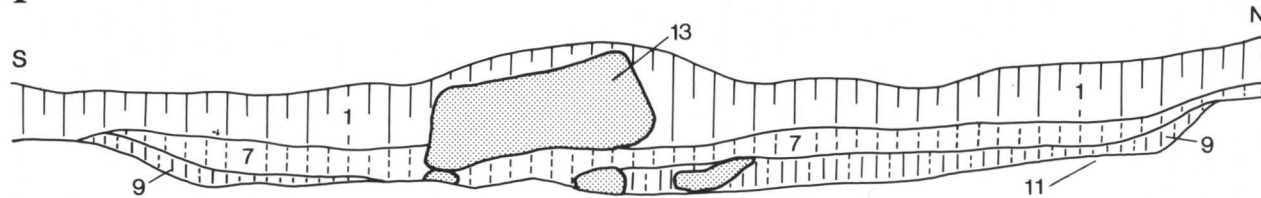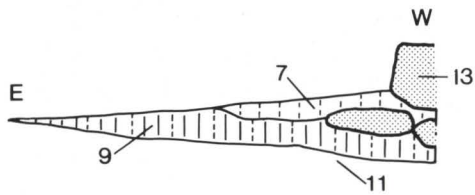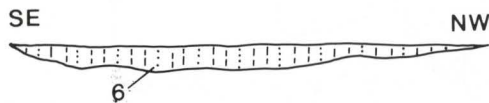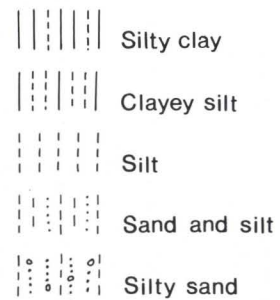
Fig. 10
Leskernick stone row terminal: sections. See Fig. 9 for locations

north–south axis (Fig. 9). The recumbent position of the stone reflects this supposed original alignment.

Monday 19 June

> *The ignorant, including myself, are kept well away to minimise damage to certain areas …*

A west–east section (Fig. 10) was created across Context 3 by removing the southern half of the fill. The edge of the feature was still extremely difficult to define. The bluish fill of Context 5 (first thought to be a post-pipe fill) now seemed to be a shallow silting across the feature. Underneath this it gradually became clear that the fill (Context 12) within the granite circular arrangement of stones also continued for *c.* 0. 10 m on the outside of its southern circuit, where it adjoined the compacted edge of a different fill (Context 10; Fig. 10). On the south-west side of the circuit the compacted edge was seen to mirror the projected imprint of three of the granite stones, if their uppermost ends were sloped further backwards to meet it. This indicated that the granite stones had shifted. As the sectioning continued, the 'missing' stone from the granite circular arrangement appeared in the middle of the fill (Figs 10 & 11). Neither the movement of the stones, nor the

Section underlying stone

Fig. 11
Leskernick stone row terminal: plan of the stone-hole packing-stones

position of the 'missing' stone, suggested that they had been caused by a fallen standing stone. The stone must have been carefully removed with the packing stones shifting marginally, and the one stone loosened from the circuit being placed (deliberately?) in the void left by the removed terminal stone. A new, and exciting interpretative possibility now emerged: a deliberate, but careful, dismantling of the terminal setting in the Bronze Age.

This decommissioning of the site had been done in such a way as to preserve the essential character of the monument by: 1) only destroying its distant visuality, by taking down the conspicuous stones of the terminal setting; and 2) by selective disalignment of parts of the stone row only beyond a specific point — the boggy area marked by the leat created by later, post-medieval, tin-streaming.

Tuesday 20 June

> *This is the first day I have spent most of the time on the excavation and it does provide some relief from shouting out 'Fowey valley and hut 20 straight out, Brown Willy and hut 24 to left' …*

The difficulties in understanding the relationships between the fills in the stone-hole (Context 3) were further resolved by quarter-sectioning (Fig. 10) the remaining fill. Context 10 was a grey–brown silty sand, *c.* 0. 10 m in depth and wholly rested on a ledge. The abutting Context 12, a mid greyish–black clayey silt, partly lay on this edge, but towards the centre of the fill of the granite setting the edge of the ledge was reached, and the fill deepened considerably, Context 10 was interpreted as the silting or backfill around the granite packing which kept a stone upright in place. Context 12 was understood as the backfill after the stone had been removed. It became clear that the stone-hole was surrounded by a ramp (Fig. 10) probably to help set up the stone, but the orientation of the stone-hole and its dimensions remained unclear.

> *There is a distinction between the excavation and the settlement work. The excavation, because it is destructive, has to be more detailed, more obsessional. There are other differences. About looking down in an excavation, as opposed to looking out. About the specificity of the small area under excavation. The 'box' that one has created, and that, if one is not very careful, is divorced from the multiplicity of nested scales of action, movement, thought, sight, understanding …*

We began taking off the bleached soil horizon (Context 2). Because of little remaining time, we decided to concentrate on the western 3 m of the trench (an area of 3 x 5 m). This means that the slate concentration (Context 8) is unexcavated.
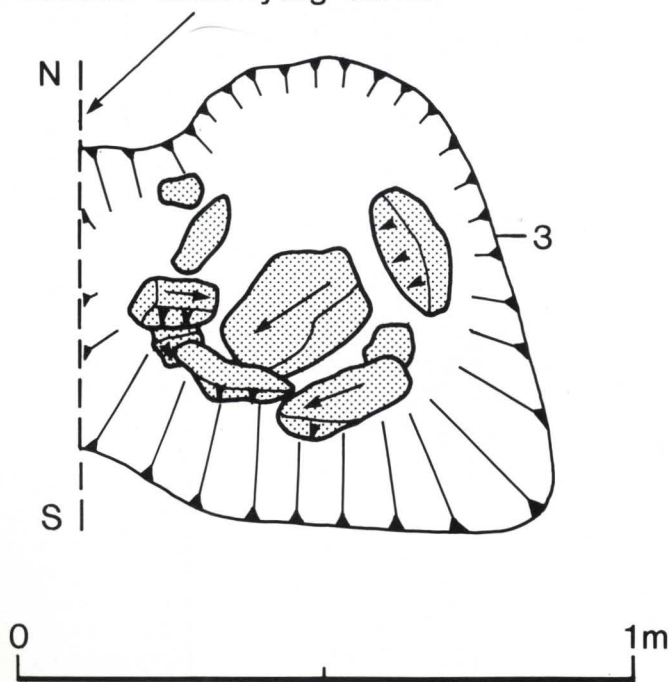
Fig. 12
Leskernick stone row terminal: stone-hole, half-sectioned.
Scale: 0.50 m

Wednesday 21 June

The excavation was proceeding at a snail's pace and I am longing to see what is at the base of the stones ...

Mattocking of the western part of the trench was continued down to a mottled dark orange, sandy, iron-rich soil horizon (Context 16) known locally as 'rabb'. No other features were discovered.

The excavation of the stone-hole was completed. Underneath the displaced stone from the granite packing circle there was a thin (*c.* 3 mm thick) layer of bright orange iron pan. Once the hole was entirely excavated it was possible to establish the original orientation of the long axis, west–east (Figs 9, 12, & 13). The stone which it held would, therefore, have been aligned along the axis of the stone row.

Fig. 13
Leskernick stone row terminal: stone-hole, post-excavation. Scale: 0.50 m

This stone-hole cut through the Context 2 horizon and penetrated the 'rabb' (Context 16) horizon to a depth of 0. 17 m. The weight of the stone had compacted the 'rabb' and gave some indication of the shape of the base of the stone that had originally stood in it. This corresponded with the square-edged southern end of the adjacent (Context 14) recumbent stone, So, the pointed end of the stone would have been uppermost end. It was now also evident that the west side of the stone-hole ledge went under this recumbent stone (Figs 9, 10, & 13). The section created at the point this stone crossed the ledge or ramp showed that a final silting (Context 5) and a turfline (Context 1) had formed over the ledge/ramp before the stone came to be in its present position (Fig. 10). At the thickest part of the stone its weight had pushed it through the turf to rest on top of the final silting. Three interpretations remain possible:

1. The stone seals a Bronze Age turfline which had already formed around it while standing;

2. During the Bronze Age the stone was dismantled and placed in some unknown location, and at some time after a turfline formed over the pit, the stone was moved to its present position; or

3. The stone was dismantled in more recent times and the stone seals a 'modern' turfline.

Pollen analysis might tell us whether the turfline is prehistoric or more recent, and sampling will be undertaken next year.

I went down and looked at the trench where the turfing had been finished in my absence. The excavation hole was hardly visible. It, and I, felt lost in the landscape ... The different axis of each terminal stone is interesting. It became too dark to think it through. It was a wrench to leave the place ...

Conclusion: August 1995

It seems very unlikely that the stone fell itself because of both the lack of disruption to the setting such a fall would cause and its present position, which could only have been achieved by lifting and placing the stone. It is now possible to reconstruct the original configuration of the terminal setting. A pointed-top stone stood at the end of the stone row with its axis oriented directly along the stone row alignment. The shortest terminal stone, which was flat-topped, would have stood just to the north of it on a north–south axis. If we presume that the tall stone, with one end still deeply buried, fell, or was dismantled, along its axis of gravity, as has happened with the other two terminal stones, it would have been transverse to the axis of the stone row, ie. north–south. This arrangement of the three stones would have created a 'cove', or a triangular space *c.* 2.6 x

2.6 x 4 m, with a terminal stone at each corner. The positioning of two of the stones on axes at right angles to the stone row alignment would have created a space in which the stone could act as 'backdrops', both partially concealing, and focusing attention on the activities performed within the setting. This configuration of stones would have allowed unobstructed access from the south-east side and the southern stone circle, with a visual focal point being created by the flat-topped stone being aligned along this path of movement. There would also have been unobstructed access from a north-westerly direction, from a spur of land with three small cairns (invisible from the stone row terminal), *c.* 1 km. away. Approach from the northern stone circle, and the southern settlement area at Leskernick would have been visually disrupted by the transverse orientations of two of the stones. An approach along the stone row would not only have been blocked by the terminal stone on the axis of the row, but additionally, beyond it, by a terminal stone placed transverse to the axis of the stone row. What the stone row, in fact, appears to be doing is *dividing two zones of access to the terminal setting.*

THE SETTLEMENT SURVEY

The excavation was all worry, the settlement survey a laugh ...

The excavation was dominated by technological procedures, a rhetoric of recording. In the settlement work there was no obvious starting point or procedure to follow, no standard context sheets. But we rapidly tried to create standardization in recording and got very concerned if things were not being done in the 'right' way. At one stage we even had someone shouting out where we were to stand next and what we were to look at ...

There was this strange thing about temporality. In the excavation people seemed to be doing the same thing all the time, yet they were recording and doing different things every day. In the settlement work there seemed to be continuous variety, yet we were doing pretty much the same thing all the time ...

It is one thing to be told the names, to be *initiated* into the naming of places and the connections between the prehistoric monuments and the distant tors. It is quite another to begin the process of *familiarisation*. For us, the process of familiarisation and discovery is entirely different from how it would have been for the prehistoric people of Leskernick. They would have been socialised into ways of knowing that we can only try to recreate from a familiarity with the material culture that they left behind them. Initiation is rather like what Alfred Gell calls mental mapping, whilst familiarity is closer to what he called physical mastery (1985).

I find the process of map reading and walking very interesting (Gell's practical mastery, though not much of that!). From slight elevations, certain angles, the walls become very clear, but then they swim out of focus again ...

Our attempts to move between the two are embedded in *our* way of doing things. Our first move was to use the map prepared by the RCHME. This was an amazing map and incredibly detailed. It was produced from aerial photographs and they are able to define the clitter and to show the dense concentrations, thin spreads, large boulders, relatively clear areas etc, as well as the house locations. What the map did not show was the contours of the land (it was only after the first field season that we were provided with an overlay which did mark the contours). It was curiously flattened. There was no way of orienting oneself in terms of slopes or hollows, uphill or downhill. The map nullifies the topography and makes it a non-element in the reading. It becomes something we had to find out for ourselves so that we can relate the house floors and the enclosures to an intimate topography. On the first, and subsequent days, we tried to move from this rather mysterious settlement map that looked so precise and knowledgeable, to a mass (morass) of rocks in the landscape, and tried to locate house floors.

I was convinced that very little was to be gained by looking at the huts, and the tangled jumble of stone on Leskernick hill filled me with trepidation. It was somehow the equivalent of a tropical jungle, with stones substituting for trees, in which the huts looked like stones and the stones like huts, a seamless web of the cultural and the natural. It occurred to me we would be lucky enough to find the huts, let alone do anything with them ...

There was another small problem. The RCHME survey had numbered-off the houses and given coordinates and brief descriptions but, unfortunately, the numbers were not on the map. So we had to collate description and coordinate numbers with what was on the ground and on the map. We moved from the description to numbering the map, then to

locating and pegging the house floors. The numbered pegs gave us a sense of security: we now knew where the houses were. Although, of course, if there were houses *they* had missed, we would miss them too! It took us three days to find all the houses.

We had been using a compass to check door orientations and after tea Sue and Helen came up to join us in locating more huts. Having seen us stumbling around they decided the compass might well be employed to help us find the right direction in which to walk. With this method we did find some huts. But in other cases the compass proved a dismal failure with Barbara's tried and proven semi-random stumbling method being far more effective, It was with a great sense of satisfaction that I found a hut before the compass did. The compass seemed to destroy all the spontaneity of the process and represented an intrusion of what was going on in the excavation trench into the world of the settlement survey ...

We wanted to think about the house entrances and what the people of Leskernick would have seen as they moved out of their doors. Where to start? One problem was the general lack of visibility of the stone row and the stone circles and turf-grown distant cairns from the settlement areas. We solved this problem by the use of white marker flags. We built a portable doorway (height: 1.40 m, width: 0.5 m). The width was a rough average for the house doorways. It was Sue's height, more like they were in the Bronze Age we surmised, and she was chosen because she was the shortest person on the project: *I was only measured to shoulder height. I'm not so sure about everyone stooping to go through the house doors.* With this doorway we framed the landscape (Fig. 14). We stood it up at the entrance to each house. We checked the orientation, took photographs, and noted down on record cards, what could be seen as you looked straight out. We had some problems. What, we solemnly asked, constituted 'seeing'? Must we, as Chris at first maintained, only look straight ahead, or might we swivel our eyes? How much 'swivel' was reasonable? Use of a video camera allowed us to capture for posterity an agreed swivelling effect! Most of our time was spent peering through this door frame. We recorded: i) the hut door orientation; ii) all the names of the distant hills and tors that could be seen through the frame; iii) the numbers of all the other houses that would have been visible; iv) whether

the stone row, stone circles, and cairns could be seen. In so doing we had to try and take into account that the views from some hut doorways would have been blocked by other huts. Since Mercer's (1970) excavations of houses at the Stannon settlement, north-west Bodmin Moor, had revealed that some may have had external wooden porches, entered from the side, we repeated the recording procedure moving the frame to the left and then to the right of the doorway. Finally we recorded everything that would have been visible standing around outside the door to contrast a 'framed' from an unframed view.

The greatest practical problem in recording was the proximity of other huts blocking the view. We might start recording the view straight out through the hut doorway only to realise that another hut was immediately in front of it. This problem was resolved by people walking over to the other huts, standing on the walls, and becoming huts themselves. 'You go over and be hut 23 and I'll be hut 24'; 'Which hut are you?'; 'O.K. Can you now go over and be hut 27' and so on. Looking out of the door in all these different directions, with people metamorphosing into hut walls, took an incredibly long time. It might take an hour or more to record the views from one hut doorway and everyone was rolling around with laughter at the madness of it all. Weather would create difficulties. If the mist came down the exercise would be impossible. Wind was another problem. You simply couldn't hear what hut someone was supposed to be in if it was any distance away. This had to be resolved by relay signalling ...

Fig. 14
Framing the landscape

In looking through the doorways we got confused and elided two rather different questions. One question was about what could be seen and here the question of eye swivel etc. was germane. The other was about house door orientation. Entrances seem to have been orientated towards certain features like the stone rows or specific tors and hill top cairns. Where orientation is concerned it really doesn't matter whether other huts got in the way of the view or not ...

The southern settlement

Twenty hut structures are found on the southern slopes of Leskernick. There is one main cluster of nine or ten huts, forming a rough semicircle, loosely linked, rather like beads on a string, within an enclosure in the eastern part of the settlement. A group of three huts occur in another enclosure 25 m to the east of this. Four more simple structures, all of which adjoin enclosure walls, are found downslope from the two main hut clusters. In addition two isolated huts stand within their own enclosures in the western part of the settlement. Near to one of them is a small stack stand (Fig. 15). All the huts are circular in form possessing a single entrance, apart from those which occur along the enclosure boundaries which are irregular in form, generally smaller, much less carefully built, and almost certainly not dwellings. The two isolated huts (Fig. 15: 28 & 45) are the largest with internal diameters exceeding 8 m. The other dwelling huts range between 4–7 m in diameter. Most have been carefully levelled into the slope so as to create a smooth floor surface.

Five small cairns, no more than 3 m in diameter and 0.5 m high, and a cist are associated with this southern settlement (Figs 15 & 16). One cairn, high up the slope, stands isolated within an enclosure to the north of the main hut cluster. The other four and the cist mark the extreme southern periphery of the enclosed area of the hill. The cist and two of these cairns are incorporated into enclosure walls, The other two stand just outside gaps through which the enclosures were entered. A small droveway, 5 m wide and 20 m long, which at some point got blocked off, originally led up to the large hut cluster.

Our impression is one of a small community, perhaps no more than 50 people, houses going into and out of use, enclosures being added. A mixed economy — patches of cultivation, small herds of sheep, goats and cattle, movement out beyond the settlement for grazing, with the valley of the Fowey providing water, wood, reeds, fish, fowl, and game.

I guess I had assumed that the doorways to the houses in the little semicircle would face into the central area, that people would come out and chat to their neighbours, watch the kids, chop the wood etc. in this communal space. My blueprint, I suspect, was a neat little village green. But it wasn't like that ...

The doorways of these huts resolutely face south or south-east. One, with a possible corridor-like annexe, may have faced east. People would have had to walk round their houses in order to talk and meet each other. As they did so, they would not have been able to see the small northern cairn set in its own enclosure, any of the houses in the western settlement, or the large cairn and quoit-like structure on the top of Leskernick Hill. Looking straight out through the doorways of those huts situated highest up the hillslope it would only have been possible to see the back walls and thatch of a few huts below, their entrances hidden. The view from those further down the slope would not have been even partially impeded by any other domestic structures.

This leads on, naturally, to a consideration of Bronze Age personality types: those who constantly swivelled their eyes, and those who did not, the nosy snooper, more interested in what was going on next door than a view towards the peaks of Brown Willy, the withdrawn hermit, who might venture rarely out of the hut, and the self absorbed dreamer unlikely to see anything at all ...

One or two of the small cairns on the boundary of the settlement were visible from each of the hut doorways, except from the isolated house 28, and in a number of other cases in which a hut in front blocked the view. The northern and southern stone circles, the terminal setting of the stone row, and the nearby large cairn, were visible from the majority, either through the doorways or standing around outside their entrances. The beginning of the stone row, by contrast, was only visible from one.

In the distance, on the skyline, there were no dramatic tors but cairns would be visible capping every significant hill. The main focus of view was towards the nearby Beacon with its two large cairns (Fig. 17), out down the Fowey valley towards Brown Gelly, with its arc of five cairns, and Tolborough with its massive tor cairn. Rough Tor was invisible, and so was Brown Willy, except when standing around outside the house entrances.

Fig. 15
The Leskernick settlement, C1–C5; cairns; Sp: spring. Houses are numbered after RCHM(E)

Fig. 16
Cairn 1 along the edge of the southern settlement

Chris, before the ten days on Bodmin, had what I came to recognize as a Wordsworthian sense of landscape: a place of sublime Nature, of isolation, a place for solitary walking and for recuperation. A romantic landscape. There was the moment when we were up on Codda Tor and he said 'Look at these tors, it's obvious that people would have wanted to walk between them', and I remember thinking that it wasn't obvious at all, and that I didn't feel any desire to walk between them. In contrast, I had, I suppose, a typically gendered gaze which wanted to root itself in, and work out from, the settlement. Mine was a domesticated landscape. When Jan arrived he provided a third way of looking. He looked through one of the doorways and said to Chris: 'You keep noting the distant tors, but what about the Fowey valley? You're not making enough of it'. Jan's vision of landscape, and mine too to some extent, was a pastoral, a Virgillan one, a landscape of sunny, woody valleys with some cultivation. We're tapping different aesthetic traditions of aesthetics, appreciation, involvement ...

Chris: striding, gazing, distance ...

Barb: Pottering, negotiating ...

Sue: small steps, peeringly ...

What these people saw, and what they oriented their hut doorways towards, was a nested landscape. Closest, and most immediate was the lived space of their own settlement. Beyond this were the margins of their domestic world, an ambiguous liminal space of their own dead in the small marker cairns along the margins of the settlement, ritually 'strengthening' the enclosure boundaries and marking out entrances. Then out across the undulating plain were the Late Neolithic ritual monuments. Links created with the past: a space for dancing and ceremonies, initiations and rites. Beyond, high up on top of the hills, were the large cairns: effective visual and spatial markers of the limits of their day-to-day life-world, sites of different myths and stories.

Brief tea. Put the flags up in the western compound and did a few more huts, Finish sixish. Still twelve to go ...

The western settlement

There was a time, at the beginning, when Chris said 'everyone must do everything, we must all excavate, survey, go up on site. We must all be familiar with everything because then there'll be an egality of knowledge' ...

Can you imagine Giddens being the hut and Bourdieu looking out of the door frame past him? ...

The final part of our procedure was to make a few brief descriptive notes of our own about each hut 'Well preserved doorway, large stone outside, fine view down Fowey valley'. Mary commented that we sounded exactly like estate agents writing dubious particulars ...
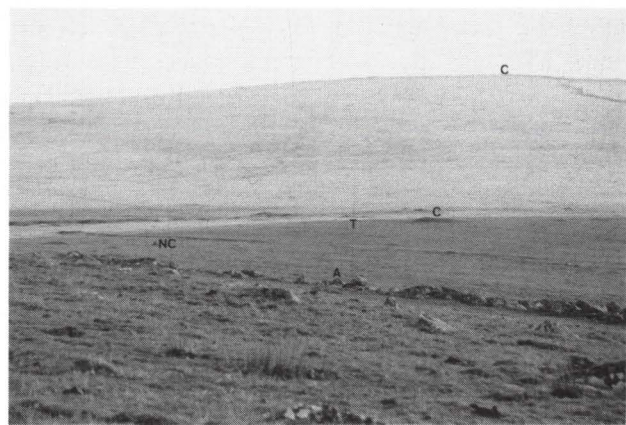

Fig. 17
View straight out from the doorway of house 29 (Fig. 15) in the southern settlement. The southern boundary of the settlement is visible (A); large cairns (C); the stone row terminal (T); the northern stone circle (NC)

The western settlement is divided from that on the southern slopes of Leskernick Hill by a wide corridor. It is walled at its northern end, leading up to the top of the hill. It consists of 31 huts. Eighteen of these are loosely arranged in one large compound, four others occur in another compound, of similar size, to the south. Other, more isolated huts, occur to the north. An enclosure to the west has a single, small peripheral house, perhaps for animals or storage. At least six of the huts, irregular in form and construction, and adjoining enclosure walls, were not domestic structures. The rest are circular, with single or double stone walls, and range in size from 4–9 m (internal diameters). The very largest huts tend to be isolated and/or highest up the hillslope, looking down on the others and allowing a much more extensive view over the surrounding landscape (Fig. 15).

The process of finding the hut doorways, finding that other huts are blocking the views, what can be seen and what cannot, in many ways is identical to recording colour changes in the soil profiles of a feature ... but there is more of an illusion of freedom ...

The western group chose to live within an area of dense clitter and natural rock outcrops. They built onto, and almost into, the rocks.

Huts 1 and 2 are lovely. almost conjoining, with their small flat enclosure in front ...

The major concentration of the huts lie tight together within a circular compound about 50 m in diameter. The compound is ringed around with a wall that picks up, builds on, and emphasises the contours of the hill and the rock outcrops. Just outside its western entrance is a spring, the source of water for the settlement, and a path leading down to a ford over the fast-flowing Fowey. The people who lived here were out of sight of the southern community. There were no associated cairns except, probably, the large one on top of the hill, which was invisible. The ceremonial monuments, the stone circles and stone row were out of sight.

Many of the doorways are marked by portal and threshold stones. As in the southern settlement, the doorways do not face each other but face very consistently to the west and south-west. As they went out people would have seen the Fowey valley (Fig. 18) then, raising their eyes, hillsides dotted with occasional settlements and then the silhouetted tors of

Codda, Tolborough, and Catshole and the great spinal ridge of Brown Willy (Fig. 19), all capped with tor cairns (Fig. 6). The perspective on the landscape was entirely different than in the southern settlement. These people experienced the setting, rather than the rising of the sun. They lived in among the rocks and the distant view from their huts was not one of subdued rounded hills capped with cairns but oriented towards rocky outcrops surrounded by, and built over, with tor cairns. Only two houses, the finest and largest in the major compound, and another isolated house to the north, had views that embraced the spiky silhouette of Rough Tor, also visible from the terminal setting of the stone row and the southern stone circle, but not from the southern settlement.
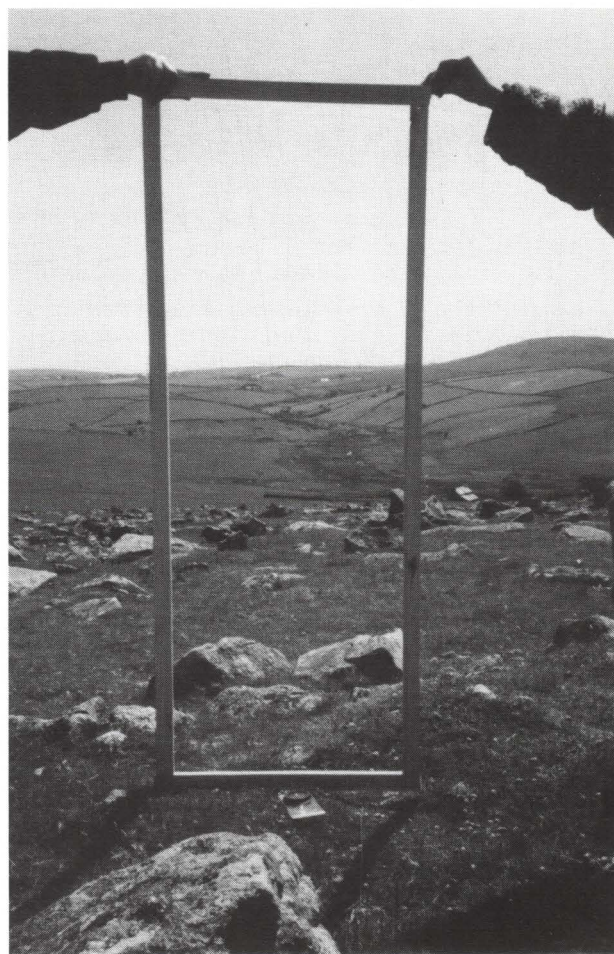

Fig. 18
View down the Fowey valley from the entrance of house 33 in the western settlement (Fig. 15)
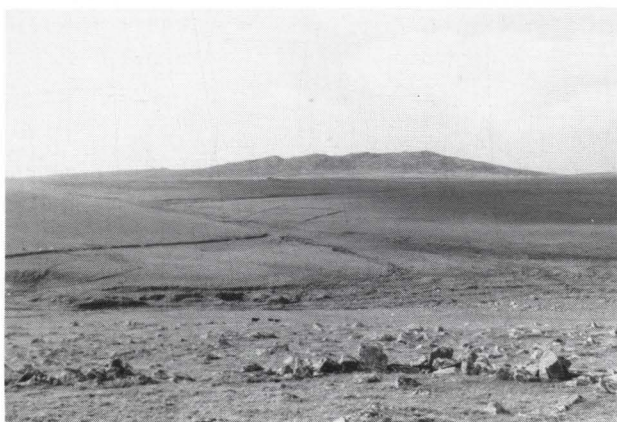
Fig. 19
View from the doorway of house 18 in the western
settlement towards Brown Willy (Fig. 15). The edge of the
compound is visible in the foreground with the course of
the river Fowey below

*I see Rough Tor the wound, the laceration, behind
me I feel the valley of the Fowey water woods and
healing ...*

That was the experience of going out of the houses.
Going into their interiors the people would often have
come face-to-face with a large backstone that formed
part of the wall opposite the entrance. In the largest
house in the main compound, and highest up the slope
of the hill, the backstone was a large natural outcrop
(Fig. 21). In other cases people had selected a
triangular, pyramidal, or oblong shaped stone (Fig.
20). Sometimes these are set into small niches into the
back wall. Where the wall is double, the backstone
may have been partly hidden by the inner wall. In a
number of cases these backstones and niches have
small platform areas set in front of them. We suggest
that these are domestic shrines and offering places.
These 'shrine' stones and niches occur in both larger
and smaller houses so it is not possible to make out a
case that larger houses had a specialised ritual
function. Shrine areas within the domestic interiors
were an integral part of the cosmologies of these
people, the rituals associated with them intimately
associated with spinning and weaving, eating and
drinking, keeping warm and placating ancestral
forces. These shrines occur both in houses in which
the floor has been carefully levelled into the hillslope
and others in which the hut floor rises up towards the
backstone. This rise in floor level may, in some cases,

be the simple product of an erosion profile. In some of
the houses, however, it is probably deliberate and
seems to emphasise further the importance of the back
area of the hut in relation to the entrance. Height, on
Bodmin Moor, seems to have an especial association
with spiritual power and potency, and is more
generally associated with rocks, especially those of
unusual shape and large dimensions. In the rising
interiors of some of the houses, leading up to the
backstone, the microcosm of the house interior may
be a mirror image of those ideas shaping an
understanding of the wider landscape.

While the internal spaces of *all* the houses was
almost certainly intensely ritualised, differentiation also
occurs, This seems to relate both to house size and
location. The smaller houses seem to have had only one
shrine, always opposite the entrance. Some of the larger
ones may have possessed multiple shrines situated
elsewhere along the walls. For example, hut 20, the
largest and highest in the compound with its massive
whale-like natural backstone, also possesses a
pyramidal shaped stone, similar in form to those placed
in niches opposite the entrance to smaller huts, but
placed here to the left of the natural backstone (Fig.
21). Future excavation and survey work may provide
other evidence to support this idea of single and
multiple domestic shrines within the house interiors.

Walking around the settlement, tripping over stones
and getting disorientated emphasised the sensory
nature of our survey. We 'felt' the place rather than
just 'looked' at it.

Fig. 20
House 23 in the western settlement (Fig. 15), looking
through the entrance area with the 'shrine' stone opposite
in the back wall

Fig. 21
Looking through the entrance of house 20 in the western settlement (Fig. 15). an enormous whale-like boulder forms the back of the house. 'Shrine' stone to the left.

House 3 (see Fig. 15) has a number of unusual features that set it apart from others in the western settlement. It is the most isolated, one of the largest huts in the settlement, has complex traces of internal divisions, and may have been rebuilt several times. The entrance is aligned on Rough Tor. It is the only hut through which the peak of this Tor is visible looking straight out through the entrance (Fig. 22). Behind it, and out of sight of the rest of the western community, is a small compound from which stones have been cleared to create its walls, hugging the clitter and rock outcrops.

Fig. 22
Looking straight out through the entrance of house 3 (Fig. 15), with the tip of Rough Tor visible on the skyline, lower slopes of Brown Willy to the left

Later, over supper, Jan suggested that house 3 was the shaman's, his view restricted to the wounded silhouette of Rough Tor ...

Only from this very small compound can the quoit-stone on top of the hill be seen. Touching onto the small compound of this special house is the end of a long northerly wall. It seems to define the edge of the settlement's world of stone (see Fig. 15). Perhaps defining grazing ground, it is not a 'sensible' wall. It zig-zags and hip-hops from clitter mass to rock outcrop.

I was also learning about the supposedly non hierarchical nature of the project. What we had I think was a good and creative discursive process but at the end of the day there was a latent hierarchy that usually became manifest around tea time. This is not a bad thing as obviously those with more knowledge and experience are bound to have a certain authority over those who are basically students ...

Ten metres to the south of this house is a large natural rock pile (Fig. 15: B). It looks just like a small tor, has uprights placed around it, a cleared area in front of it, and may have an associated offering platform. From below, standing in the area of grass cleared of stone, the arrangement of rocks give the impression of being in an amphitheatre (Fig. 23). We suggest that this is an important shrine within the settlement area and the occupants of house 3 were probably closely associated with its guardianship. The people of Leskernick had created, within their settlement, a tiny replica of the great tors with their surrounding encairnment. This shrine is situated high upslope on the eastern margin of the western settlement. Beyond it, but still out of sight, is the sacred hilltop of Leskernick with its massive cairn.

The powers of stone

We're trapped in the hierarchy of knowledge: however much we try to democratise, we nonetheless end up validating and invalidating the perceptions of the students and subtly appropriating them. We are nervous of their interpretations. However much we accept the subjectivity of knowledge and the reflexive nature of our interpretations, we want to find ways of validating our findings. The students are less inhibited, they would look at 'interesting' rocks or potential structures and surmise their meanings. We'd back off — if we weren't careful

anything might become 'meaningful'! It was only towards the end that we felt safe enough to incorporate some of their discoveries into what seemed like a more coherent understanding of Leskernick's stone world. There is an inequality. It was something we talked about a lot, and we didn't resolve it ...

There were four main ways in which the inhabitants of Leskernick enhanced and emphasised the importance of the rocks and boulders amongst which they lived:

1. By incorporating them into their houses.

2. By joining up dense areas of clitter and large boulders and rock outcrops with enclosure walls.

3. By clearing away stones from around important rocks.

4. By encasing boulders with uprights and surrounding them with smaller stones at their bases.

These means of emphasising stones were often employed simultaneously. Houses incorporating boulders into their internal walls may be linked by adjoining external walls both to each other and to boulders beyond them. The same rock may be emphasised by piling up stones immediately around it and simultaneously clearing part of the surrounding area. We will briefly discuss a number of examples.

Behind house 26 in the western enclosure (Fig. 15) there is a great rash of clitter and rock outcrops, encased by a wall, with five small walls radiating out from it, like a star-setting. Walking out of the same enclosure on the south-east side, through a fine entrance marked by a pyramidal and an oblong stone, you enter the corridor between the western and southern settlement areas. At the southern end of this is another outcrop of large boulders and clitter with a wall that joins it to the enclosure wall like an umbilical cord (Fig. 15: A). In the same corridor, which, we believe, may have been the main ceremonial route for the populations of both the western and southern settlements up to the top of Leskernick Hill, there is a great flat outcrop with a cleared space downslope and a pyramid stone upslope. In the enclosure furthest to the south, there is another great flat stone with a cleared area in front.

Fig. 23
The small tor, with cleared area in front of it, just to the south of house 3 in the western settlement area (Fig. 15, B)

Having appreciated, for the first time really, the significance of the enclosure boundaries, it seemed wrong somehow to have been clambering all over them during the past ten days, rather than tracing and following through the distinctive spaces they were demarcating ...

The tentative understanding that we are beginning to reach is that the inhabited slopes of Leskernick Hill were filled with shrines. Just as the houses had interior shrines we think that the fields and enclosures also had shrines, sometimes along the enclosure boundaries, in other cases out in the fields.

While we had been looking, we had been unable to see. It was almost as if the process of systematic recording of various features of the huts themselves had blocked us from looking at them or attempting to understand them. Partly it was just pure ignorance. We simply did not know what to look for, or record ...

We discovered both the 'shrine' areas in the huts and those outside in the fields and enclosures of the western settlement two days before the very end of our first field season at Leskernick. At first we thought this clearly differentiated it from the settlement on the southern slopes of the hill. We briefly checked some of the houses in the southern settlement and found that in some cases they too had platform areas, niches, and unusually shaped stones in the back walls opposite the entrance but the character, and in particular the

shapes of the stones, appeared to be rather different. Our work has now moved on to investigating, principally by means of field survey, the similarities and differences between the two settlement areas in much greater detail.

What, of course, is missing today at Leskernick is the network of pathways that must have run up through the enclosures and to the huts, as well as a patchwork of tilled and grassy areas. Today we are only left with a contrast between grass and stone. By examining all the large boulders carefully we hope to be able to identify which were chosen as shrine foci and which were not, possible pathways, and whether particular types of stones, singled out by virtue of their shape and size, were being differentially emphasised. Small excavations might help to establish whether these were offering places.

Throughout the discussion we have emphasised visuality and connections/non-connections between things. In this first season the eyes took precedence over movement, communication, and action. In future field seasons we wanted to try and think much more about movement, congregation, and dispersal, places and points that are difficult of access or out of view: restricted, secret places.

The settlement survey, and the excavation, revealing the pairing of flat-topped stones with triangular or pointed stones at the stone row terminal, have made us sensitive to the shapes of stones, their juxtaposition and location: the 'barren' stonelessness of the landscape of the stone row and the 'fertile' stoniness of the settlement. Thinking about where these stones were taken from in order to construct the stone row and the stone circles may provide further clues to their meanings. It is interesting to note that the stones forming the small rock outcrops, or small tors, on Leskernick Hill are generally flat-topped and reminiscent of the square, flat-topped stones in the stone row. The square-edged stones may have been more readily obtainable from around the tors than amongst the clitter where most of the houses are found. There is the strong possibility that the tors were imparted with added significance because they were the sources of the rocks for the stone row and circles and, conversely, part of the power and spiritual meanings of the stones used to construct the ceremonial monuments was derived from their sources on Leskernick Hill.

In the most easterly of the small cairns along the edge of the southern settlement, one of the stones, probably part of a central cist, is almost identical in form to the triangular-shaped shrine stones found in the western settlement area. On Dartmoor the occurrence of triangular and flat-topped stones at the terminal settings of stone rows, often associated with cairns, is a recurrent feature (Burl 1993). The two shapes have sometimes been suggested to represent male and female. One very interesting possibility is that the practice of deliberately selecting and juxtaposing specific shapes of stones was subsequently transformed, or appropriated away from the context of the stone row and stone circles and into rituals occurring within the houses and the fields with 'shrines' centred on selected large rock outcrops.

Nested landscapes

Leskernick is a Bronze Age settlement where we feel that we can begin to understand another way of living, another way of engaging with the world, creating and sustaining a sense of identity, and identities. Nested identities — family, kin, community, age-set, gender, within a world of nested landscapes linking the smallest house and the furthest hill top. Life in this settlement, 4000 years ago, was one in which every movement in and around and about it, and beyond, was imbued with a sense of ritual. In these people's engagement with the stones there was a cosmological reiteration that worked to and fro between the most intimate house interior, the compounds and enclosures, out to the ceremonial monuments, and up across the landscape to the punctuated skyline of the tors and cairns. The practices of everyday life, feast day, and ceremony bled into each other. While there may have been shamans and leaders in the community, what struck us, working at Leskernick, is that much of the ritual and knowledge was dispersed throughout the houses and fields, visible and available to all: *communal* rather than individual empowerment.

Of course there were special occasions, ceremonies that had to be organised with leaders and the led. The hilltop and the area around the stone circles and stone row was undoubtedly sacred. Perhaps only sometimes would the entire community make its way up the corridor between the two settlement areas, to the quoit and the large cairn. People may have been led in a ceremonial procession, slowly up to the cairn on the hilltop. Perhaps on special occasions fires would be lit not just on the top of Leskernick Hill, but also at

other cairns, on the encircling hills. Sacred, in this social context, did not necessarily mean reserved, controlled, and apart, a place reserved *only* for ceremonies and secret knowledges, available only to a few. The sheep would still, as they do today, graze among the stones.

Knowledge in this small community, even if controlled and linked to differential power and access to resources, would leak like water through a sieve. Stonehenge was being built 250 miles to the east and there were powerful chieftains, drinking from gold cups, wearing gold lunulae, much closer to hand; perhaps even as close as Rough Tor. It is indeed highly likely that the people of Leskernick were panning for local metals, had close contacts with distant chiefdoms, but, so far at least, our sense is of a limited vertical hierarchy. We have a sense, here, of a modest community who acknowledged through their activities their sense of community, their closeness to the natural world and the spirit powers among the rocks. For the people of Leskernick, Leskernick was their hill, the navel of their world, linked on ceremonial occasions with the topmost points of other hills.

At some point, probably towards the end of the Bronze Age, the people abandoned their hill. As part of this process they may have decommissioned not only the stone row but also their houses: some of the entrances in the western settlement have peculiarly placed door stones. In at least one instance the stone door jambs are deliberately crossed against each other, blocking entry into the interior (Fig. 24). In other cases 'shrine' stones at the backs of the houses seem to

have been broken or pushed over. The houses and the stone row were not to be used by others and not to be returned to. The act of removing and toppling the stones was the symbolic closure of their world, the final act before departing from it.

After coffee we remove all the flags, and then the pegs. It now seems very sad to be doing this and to be leaving Leskernick. We are removing our markers from the landscape. The flags fluttering in the breeze seemed to bring life into the settlement and simultaneously turned it into a somewhat surreal contemporary work of art. Our flags, and their ephemeral appearance, apart from the practical reason for their existence were, in essence, little different from Christo's Umbrella's art project of 1991, involving the simultaneous erection of 1,340 blue umbrellas in Ibaraki, Japan and 1,760 yellow umbrellas in California. Each umbrella was surrounded by a small platform, an invitation for people to sit beneath them and experience the light rippling through the fabric. The position of our white flags was predetermined so as to presence the hut circles of the past and make one more attentive to their interrelationships. Christo's umbrellas made people see the landscape in a new light (quite literally). Our flags made a presence out of the past: a kind of consolation for the failure of the prehistoric architecture. The fabric moving with the wind created a kind of continuous dynamic, the dynamic of movement of people, of all that was now lost amongst the stones. With their removal what our flags had revealed was gradually slipping back again into the wider landscape. The cairns and the stone circles and huts all disappeared one by one.

Fig. 24
The blocked entrance to house 9 (Fig. 15) in the western settlement area

The notes to the survey map of Leskernick were written by Martin Fletcher. The southern stone circle was first found by the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey in 1973 and published by John Barnatt (1980). The northern stone circle, and the stone row, were discovered by Peter Herring. Peter pointed out the significance of the 'quoit' on

the top of the hill to us, and predicted the setting sun would shine through it on the summer solstice, which we were all able to watch.

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APPENDIX: LESKERNICK STONE ROW TERMINAL, DETAILS OF THE SITE AND EXCAVATED CONTEXTS

1. LESKERNICK STONE ROW: SITE DETAILS

The terminal setting

Parish: Altarum, NW Bodmin Moor.

NGR: SX 18707986.

Height OD: 290m.

Topography: slightly sloping ground descending to the NE.

Geology: granitic upland.

Ownership: commonland.

Landuse: rough grazing.

Present day configuration: three recumbent stones (lengths 1.50 m, 1.60 m, 1.95 m forming a 'U' (Figs 5 & 6).

Archive site code: LSR95.

Location of archive: the records will be deposited at County Museum, Truro.

The stone row
NGR: SX 18707986–SX 19017991.
Length of row: 317 m.
Alignment of row: ENE–WSW.
Average height of stones: 0.2 m
Average distance between stones: 4.5 m.

LESKERNICK STONE ROW: EXCAVATION CONTEXTS

The soil horizons (Contexts 1, 2, 16)
Grass root mat: Thickness: *c.* 70 mm.

Context 1: Very smooth amorphous deposit underlying the grass root mat and comprising soft, very dark brownish–black, slightly stony silt with abundant fine fibrous roots, fine subrounded quartz pebbles (5%), occasional angular fragments of granite (average 30 mm) and occasional fragments of slate (max. 200 mm, av. 25 mm). Thickness: 70–110 mm. Boundary with Context 2: sharp.

Context 2: Bleached horizon underlying Context 1 comprising friable, mid greyish–black coarse sand with fine (2–4 mm) angular pebbles (40%) of weathered granite. Thickness: 120–130mm. Boundary with Context 16: sharp.

Context 16: Friable, slightly brittle, mid yellowish–brown coarse sand (with occasional fine, rusty mottles) underlying Context 2 and containing 15–20% angular coarse sand (*c* 2 mm) granite inclusions. Thickness: >180 mm (base not reached).

The terminal stones (Contexts 13–15)
Context 13 (Figs 8–10: S1, S2): Recumbent granite monolith lying on an W–E axis with its partially buried eastern end protruding from the west baulk of the excavation trench. The base of the eastern end of the monolith partly overlies the uppermost fill (Context 7) of the stone-hollow (Context 11). Both ends of the stone are flat-topped. Monolith dimensions: 1.07m (length) x 0.30–0.48m (width) x 0.12–0.26m (thickness).

Context 14 (Figs 8–10: S3): Recumbent granite monolith lying on a N–S axis just south of the stone-hole (Context 3) with its eastern side sealing the turfline (Context 1) where it passes over the edge of the uppermost fill (Context 5) of the stone-hole. One end of the monolith is rounded, the other pointed. Monolith dimensions: 1.30–1.58 x 0.40 x 60 mm (thickness, pointed end) –0.64 m (thickness, rounded end).

Context 15 (Figs 8, 9): Recumbent granite monolith lying on a N–S axis with its eastern end 1.32 m west of Context 14 (recumbent monolith). Its western end is deeply buried. Its partly exposed eastern end is square-ended. Monolith dimensions: 1. 90 x 0. 42; thickness not ascertained.

The stone-hole (Contexts 3–5, 10, 12)
Context 3 (Figs 9, 10: S3, S4, S5i; 12 & 13): The feature cut through Context 2 and partly into Context 16. It contained

a circular arrangement of granite stones (Context 5) and three fills (Contexts 5, 10, 12). The cut comprises an oval hole (with its long axis oriented W–E) with sharply sloping sides and a gradual break of slope at its base. The hole has a depth of 0.17 m and its base measures 0.3 x 1.12 m. The upper edge of the hole is surrounded by a ramp (0.12 m deep) which is vertical-sided and flat-based on its northern edge and sharply sloping with a gradual break of slope on its other sides. Interpretation: ramped stone-hole for a monolith (Context 14).

Context 4 (Figs 9, 10: S4, S5; 11–13): Six flat-faced granite stones averaging 0.25 m in length. Each stone lay at a vertical to oblique angle. The stones formed a circuit (ext. diam. 0.44 m, int. diam. 0.30 m) within the upper part of the stone-hole fill. The circuit was incomplete on its northern side, with the 'missing' stone resting within the centre (Context 12) of the circuit. Interpretation: stone-hole packing-stones.

Context 5 (Figs 9, 10:S3, S4, S5): Uppermost fill of Context 3 (stone-hole) extending across the whole feature and overlying Contexts 10 and 12 (fills). The deposit comprises a soft, dark bluish–brown clayey silt of 20 mm depth. Interpretation: Inwash deposit post-dismantling/fall of the monolith (Context 14).

Context 10 (Fig. 10: S3): Fill of Context 3 underlying Context 5 (fill) and encircling Context 4 (packing stones). The deposit comprises a soft dark grey–brown silty sand with occasional granite fragments (*c.* 20 mm) and 2% medium sand size (*c.* 0.20 mm) quartz and mica inclusions. The deposit has a depth of 0.12 m where it abuts Context 4 and, thins out to 2–3 mm where it meets the edge of the cut (Context 3). Interpretation: sedimentation around stone-packing (Context 4).

Context 12 (Fig. 10: S4, S5): Fill of Context 3 under Context 5 (fill) and within the stone packing (Context 4). The deposit comprises a firm, mid greyish–black clayey silt of 0.22 m depth. Interpretation: infill deposit after dismantling/fall of stone monolith (Context 14).

The stone-hollow (Contexts 7, 9, 11)
Context 7 (Figs 9, 10: S1): Fill of Context 11 (stone-hollow) under Context 1, and partly overlaying Context 13 (recumbent monolith) and comprising a moist, friable, mid brown silt full of root matter. The fill extends across the whole stone-hollow feature and has a max. depth of 60 mm, thinning out to virtually nothing at the edge of the hollow. Interpretation: deposit formed in waterlogged hollow created by animal trampling around a standing stone (Context 13 prior to dismantling/fall).

Context 9 (Fig. 10: S1, S2): Fill of Context 11 below Context 7 (fill). Context 11 comprises a friable, dark brown silty clay with some root penetration. The deposit abuts the sides and much of the base of the hollow (Context 11) and

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has a max. depth of 60 mm, thinning out to <4 mm at the edge of the hollow. Interpretation: initial inwash deposit into a depression cause by animal trampling around a standing stone (Context 13 prior to dismantling/fall).

Context 11 (Figs 9, 10: S1, S2): Irregular oval hollow which continued into the west baulk of the excavation trench. The hollow is cut into Context 2, and lies below Context 1 and partially under Context 13 (recumbent monolith). The hollow has its long axis oriented N–S with a max. length of 1.90 m. The max. exposed width is 1.00 m, max. depth 80 mm. Break of slope — top: sharp at the north and south ends of the feature and a gradual break of slope on the eastern slide; — sides: steep, concave slopes occur on the north and south sides and a smooth gradual slope on the east side; — base: sharp on the north and south sides, gradual on the east side. Interpretation: depression created (by animal trampling?) around an originally standing stone (Context 13). and subsequently infilled with an inwash layer (Context 9) and then a waterlogged deposit (Context 7).

The animal scuff-hollow (Context 6)

Context 6 (Figs 9, 10: S6): Shallow, sausage-shaped hollow under Context 1 and cut into Context 2. The feature measures *c* 1.94 x 0.50 m, x 0.04 m (deep) and oriented NNE–SSW. The feature has a single fill comprising a friable, dark brownish–black sandy silt with 5% angular, medium quartz sand (*c*. 0.10–0.20mm). Interpretation: an animal scuff-hollow.

The slate concentration (Context 8)

Context 8 (Fig. 9): Not excavated. Irregular, circular area of roots and flat slate fragments (0.90 x 0.46 m) directly under Context 1 in the south-west corner of the excavation trench and disappearing into the eastern baulk of the excavation trench. The slate pieces are *c*. 4 mm thick with the largest pieces measuring *c*. 0.22 x 0.08 m and the smallest *c*. 60 x 60 mm. There is possible evidence of a cut delimiting the rooty area on the south edge of the feature. Interpretation: 'modern' (ie. 19th or 20th century) dump of roofing slates (eg. relating to local 19th century farm buildings).