

# **COTHELSTONE HILL**

## **Education Information Pack.**



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## **WHY VISIT COTHELSTONE HILL?**

- **Because it is such a special site!**

...not only for the beauty of its surroundings, its rich plant and animal life, but because of the story it tells of Somerset's prehistoric past. It is one of only a few sites with such a wealth of historic features, and is protected as a nationally important archaeological site.

- **Because it is a challenge!**

Cothelstone Hill is big, dramatic, a stunning location that looks across the whole of Somerset. You have to work hard to find it, and then the adventure can begin.

- **Because it is mysterious!**

There are a lot of features, emerging from the landscape, stories to tell which interleave and weave throughout history. There are no visitor notices up there to tell you what to think, just plenty of clues for the landscape detective.

- **Because it is adaptable!**

Successful visits can be made by any age group from **Key Stage 2** to adults. It is, of course, ideal for an investigation in History or Geography, but you can plan your visit around more or less any National Curriculum subject.

- **Because it opens the door to the Bronze Age!**

Its size, the number and scale of the heritage features show that Cothelstone Hill must have been a place of great significance to the ancient Dumnonii people of the South West.

**So, let your class become 'landscape detectives' for the day.  
Plan a visit to Cothelstone Hill and give them an experience of  
Somerset's past that they will remember.**

# PLANNING A VISIT:

## Introduction:

Cothelstone Hill lies in the heart of the southern Quantock Hills, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This site contains woodland and open grassy areas leading up to the hilltop, which features the Seven Sisters, a beech tree clump and a number of heritage features. From the top of Cothelstone Hill there are wonderful panoramic views across the whole of Somerset and beyond.

Cothelstone Hill contains a number of heritage features from cairns and barrows to tree rings and more recent follies. The site is important for plants and animals and you can regularly see red deer, buzzards, yellowhammers, foxes and badgers.

## Directions:

From the north: Drive to the village of Enmore. From Enmore follow the main road past the school, heading towards Taunton. You will head up hill and approximately 2 ½ miles after leaving Enmore you will come to '5-ways crossroads'. Continue to follow the road around to the right and head up hill for a further ½ mile. Cothelstone Hill car park can be found on your left.

From the south: Drive to the village of Bishops Lydeard (just off the A358). From Bishops Lydeard follow the road through the centre of the village towards Cothelstone. Continue along this road, past Cothelstone Manor on your left, before heading up a steep hill. Continue a further 2 miles past the junction for West Bagborough and the car park will be on your right.

The lanes approaching Cothelstone Hill and the car park **are not suitable** for coaches. However access by minibus is easy.

## Time on site:

The AONB Service would advise allowing 1 ½ to 2 hours on site. This allows enough time to walk to the hilltop and undertake some activities.

## Facilities:

There are **no toilets** at the site therefore we advise using toilets at school beforehand. The nearest toilets can be found at Fyne Court, Broomfield, TA5 2EQ, approximately 2 miles away. This is a National Trust property.

## SITE HEALTH & SAFETY REVIEW

<b>Leader's Name:</b>	
<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Cothelstone Hill Site Visit</b>
<b>Date of visit, time, duration:</b>	
<b>Grid Reference / Post code:</b>	<b>ST 200 328 / TA4 3DX</b>
<b>Site Contact:</b>	<b>Quantock Hills AONB Service 01823 451884</b>
<b>First Aid Provision:</b>	<i>Who is first aider, where will 1<sup>st</sup> aid kit be kept</i>
<b>Emergency Procedures:</b>	<i>Make a note of what will be done in case of emergency e.g. who to phone</i>
<b>Incident Reporting</b>	<i>Use existing school procedures.</i>  <b>Please also report any incident to the Quantock Hills AONB Service 01823 451884.</b>

<b>Identified Hazard</b>	<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Level of Risk</b>	<b>Controls</b>
Uneven / slippery ground	Slips, trips, falls	Low	Safety talk to be given at start of activity Recommend no running unless specifically told it is ok Participants put into groups when necessary for activities and supervised by an adult.
Other site users	Collision with pedestrians Encounters with dogs	Low	Safety talk to be given at start of activity – mention car parks, trails, other users Warn group of oncoming, bikes, horses Be calm and quiet when around horses Don't pet unknown dogs
Dog poo / mud / dirty hands / litter	Infections, cuts etc	Low	Provide wet wipes and water Ensure hand cleaning before eating / drinking and at end of session
Falling branches	Head or other injury	Low	Cancel visit in excessive wind
Insects, plants, fungi	Possible allergic reaction, poisoning, choking	Low	Find out about known allergic reactions within group. Warn children about stinging insects Discuss poisonous plants and fungi – warn children not to eat anything or put fingers in mouth Everyone to wash hand before eating / drinking Carry antiseptic wipes
Medical conditions	Asthma, diabetes, epilepsy etc	Medium	Find out about known conditions before session
Lost children	Getting lost, panic attack, potential abduction	Low	Group stays together at all times Adult at front & back of group Count children regularly.
Weather	Sunstroke, sunburn, hypothermia, cold	Low	Ensure children wearing appropriate clothing Ensure children wearing sun cream Check that children are war enough – encourage lots of jumping around if cold
Land management	Fall from stacked timber, trips and slips, collision with machinery	Medium	Safety talk to be given at start of activity Don't climb on stacked timber Warning signs to be read and followed when operations occurring Ensure adequate adult supervision Inform AONB Service about visit in advance

Timbercon

MS

Buncu

Cothelstone Hill 332

Cumuli

Paradise

Badger Copse

Cothelstone Hill ownership boundary

Emergency off-road vehicle access

Mobile phone signal coverage (most carriers)

Access gate (locked) Phone emergency phone numbers for access

Car Park Grid Ref ST200 328

Grid Ref ST198 329

Grid Ref ST190 326

Postcode of nearest adjoining property TA4 3DX

Emergency Access phone numbers  
office hours 01823 451884  
out of hours 07919 540175

Nearest Hospital:  
Musgrove Park Hospital  
01823 333444  
TA1 5DA

Ball Cover

Cothelstone Hill

Old plantation

226

275

300

315

250

200

150

100

50

0

Compass rose

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Quantock Hills  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Drawn By iporner	Scale 1:7500
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File / Pathname / Project / Drawing No.

Date 19/05/2015

[www.quantockhills.com](http://www.quantockhills.com)

**‘The Big Question’:** planning grid showing possible questions, tasks and resources.

	<b>The Big Question</b>	<b>Suggested Tasks</b>	<b>Possible Resources</b>
<b>ON SITE</b>	What has been built here?	Investigate the different historic features.	Plan of site Measuring equipment Map of area Source 1, 2 Cameras MP3 recorders
	Why was it built here?	Note natural features than may have affected choice of location. How far can you see from the hilltop? Role Play	
	Has the use of the hilltop changed over time?	Identify other man-made features in the vicinity e.g. field boundaries, tracks, footpaths. Also managed woodland and grassland. How do they related to the story of the hill	
	What about the future?	Look for evidence of present activity on the hill (visitors, walkers, mountain bikers, animals) and associated problems: Litter, erosion, damage by vehicles. Start to consider issues e.g. public access vs. conservation. What is the essential character of the area?	
<b>DESKTOP RESEARCH</b>	Who built the features?	Find out as much as possible about the site itself, other investigations of it, and different interpretations that have been put forward over the years	Reference material in the teachers pack. Visit Local History section of library Visit local museum such as Taunton Museum or Rural Life Museum (Glastonbury)
	What were they for?	Use the Historic Environment Record (HER) to start with, and follow up other reference to research the site	
	When were they used?		
	Are there any stories about the site?	Recognise that some of these questions cannot be answered by focusing solely on Cothelstone Hill.	
<b>WIDER RESEARCH</b>	What were they for?	Discover more about the historic pas by finding out about other site where more work has been done e.g. Glastonbury Lake Village, South Cadbury	
	What was life like when the features were built	Look at artifacts from the different time periods, such as Iron Age	
		Study maps of Iron Age Somerset to see Cothelstone Hill in the context of other sites. Decide what can be inferred about Cothelstone Hill from this wider picture.	

## Pre History Factsheet:

### **Palaeolithic (First People): 500,000 years ago – 9,500BC**

- First people arrive in Britain half a million years ago
- They make tools of stone and wood for hunting animals

### **Mesolithic (First Monuments): 9,500 – 4,000BC**

- Hunter gatherers: people hunt animals and collect plants, fruit and nuts for food
- They live in temporary camps along rivers
- They start to mark the landscape with monuments

### **Earlier Neolithic (First Farmers): 4,000 – 3,000BC**

- First pottery is made. Bowls are used for cooking and storing food
- Polished flint axes are new tools used for cutting down trees
- People begin farming. They grow crops and keep animals like cattle, sheep and pigs
- New monuments; causewayed enclosures (meeting places) and long barrows

### **Later Neolithic (First Henges): 3,000 – 2,500BC**

- First henges start to be built at Stonehenge, Avebury and locally in Somerset at Priddy in the Mendips
- Feasting and ceremonies take place in the henges

### **Beaker (First Metals): 2,500 – 2,200BC**

- Major stone structures erected such as Deerleap Standing Stones
- Newcomers arrive in Britain, bringing new beliefs and the first metals of gold and copper
- New burial practices. People are buried in round barrows in beaker burials

### **Earlier Bronze Age (Rich Burial): 2,200 – 1,500BC**

- Priests and leaders are buried with remarkable objects
- Powerful women are buried with exotic gold, amber, shale and jet jewellery

### **Later Bronze Age (Hoards): 1,500 – 800BC**

- Farming settlements are now the focus of daily life
- New beliefs are suggested by the practice of burying object hoards (Edington hoard)
- People are cremated and buried in urns

### **Iron Age (First Iron): 800 – 43AD**

- Iron replaces bronze as the main source of metal
- Tribal groups emerge across Britain
- Hillforts are built to defend land

Source: British Museum / Wiltshire Museum

## **The Bronze Age:**

Around 2500 BC a new culture, known as the Beaker culture, arrived in Britain via cross-channel connections with mainland Europe. This culture brought with it new burial rites, people, objects and technology including the skills of copper and gold metal working. At first items were made from copper, but from around 2200 BC bronze, which was much harder than copper, was made by mixing copper with a small amount of tin. Bronze gradually replaced stone as the main material for tools and by 2000 BC the period known as the Early Bronze Age had begun in the British Isles. Tin was mined in south-west England and from about 2100 BC copper, gold and lead were all being mined in Ireland and Wales. This changed after 1600 BC when the majority of the metal used in Britain was imported from mainland Europe. The Bronze Age in Britain ran until around 800 BC when bronze began to be replaced by iron as the principal metal used to make tools

## **The Bronze Age landscape of the Quantock Hills**

Stand anywhere on the open heath of the Quantock Hills and you will never be far from a Bronze Age barrow or cairn. There are over 100 of these monuments on the hills, marking the burial places of people who used the land 4000 years ago. Many of the monuments were placed along the western edge of the hills and are still dominant features in the landscape, like the platform cairn on Hurley Beacon. This flat-topped cairn was used as a site for beacon fires in historic times and is part of a group of Bronze Age burial monuments which form a linear barrow cemetery, stretching for nearly 2km from Hurley Beacon to Dead Woman's Ditch.

Although none of the barrows and cairns on the Quantock Hills have been the subject of modern excavations, studies of the monuments themselves, together with artefacts and other evidence from excavations elsewhere, provide us with the material to recreate the landscape, rituals and atmosphere of these sites during the Bronze Age.

## **The Archaeology of Cothelstone Hill**

The summit of Cothelstone Hill contains an outstanding group of extant archaeological remains, including four scheduled sites, a probable cross-ridge dyke, two tree ring enclosures, a pillow mound, and a further earthwork enclosure. The hill-top was the subject of a survey by English Heritage in 2003.

The hill has been in use since prehistoric times, Neolithic flint was recovered during the construction of the hilltop bridleway in the 1970's, and there are a number of prominent Bronze Age barrows. The hill is bisected by a low earthwork bank, which is suggestive of a later prehistoric cross-ridge dyke. The later history of the hill is associated with the medieval and post medieval Cothelstone Manor estate; features present are associated with both parkland and agriculture – tree rings, pillow mounds, boundary banks, ridge and furrow, and the folly, which is thought to have been demolished at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Source: Historic England / South West Heritage Trust
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## Activities:

### In the classroom:

Create stories base on the people buried in the barrows.

- Source 8
- Source 9
- Source 10

Creating replicas: Make Bronze Age incense cup using air dry clay. Decorate with similar tools to those used in the Bronze Age. Replica clothing: Textile production had also got under way by this time. Women would wear long woollen skirts and short tunics. The men wore knee-length wrap-around skirts, or kilt-like woollens, as well as tunics, cloaks and even one-piece garments. They were also clean-shaven, long-haired and wore round woollen hats.

- [http://www.ancientcraft.co.uk/Archaeology/bronze-age/bronzeage\\_living.html](http://www.ancientcraft.co.uk/Archaeology/bronze-age/bronzeage_living.html)

Create a prehistoric roundhouse in the classroom to look at prehistoric life in more detail, using boxes, sheets, tents etc. Alternatively using blocks create a model burial mound (barrow) and explore the different types of burial mounds

- <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/iha-prehistoric-barrows-burial-mounds/prehistoricbarrowsandburialmounds.pdf/>
- Source 9
- Source 10

### On site:

Transition from Neolithic to Bronze Age: Discuss the changes that led from the Stone Age to Bronze Age. Look at farming and clearance of the land, monuments and introduction of metal. How would the land use differ from what you can see today? What changes happened thousands of years ago, which happened more recently? How can we decide when change occurred?

- Source 5
- Source 6
- Pupil Sheet 1

Bronze Age religion: Discuss religion through a burial re-enactment with costumes and various artefacts, replica weapons, tools, jewellery, clothes.

- Source 9
- Source 10

Heritage detectives: Look at the location of the heritage features such as the barrows and cairns. Why are they found on the hilltop? How can we learn more? How would you undertake an archaeological investigation? Plan an archaeological investigation.

- Source 1
- Source 4
- Source 5
- Source 6

- Source 7
- Pupil sheet 1
- Pupil sheet 2
- Pupil sheet 3

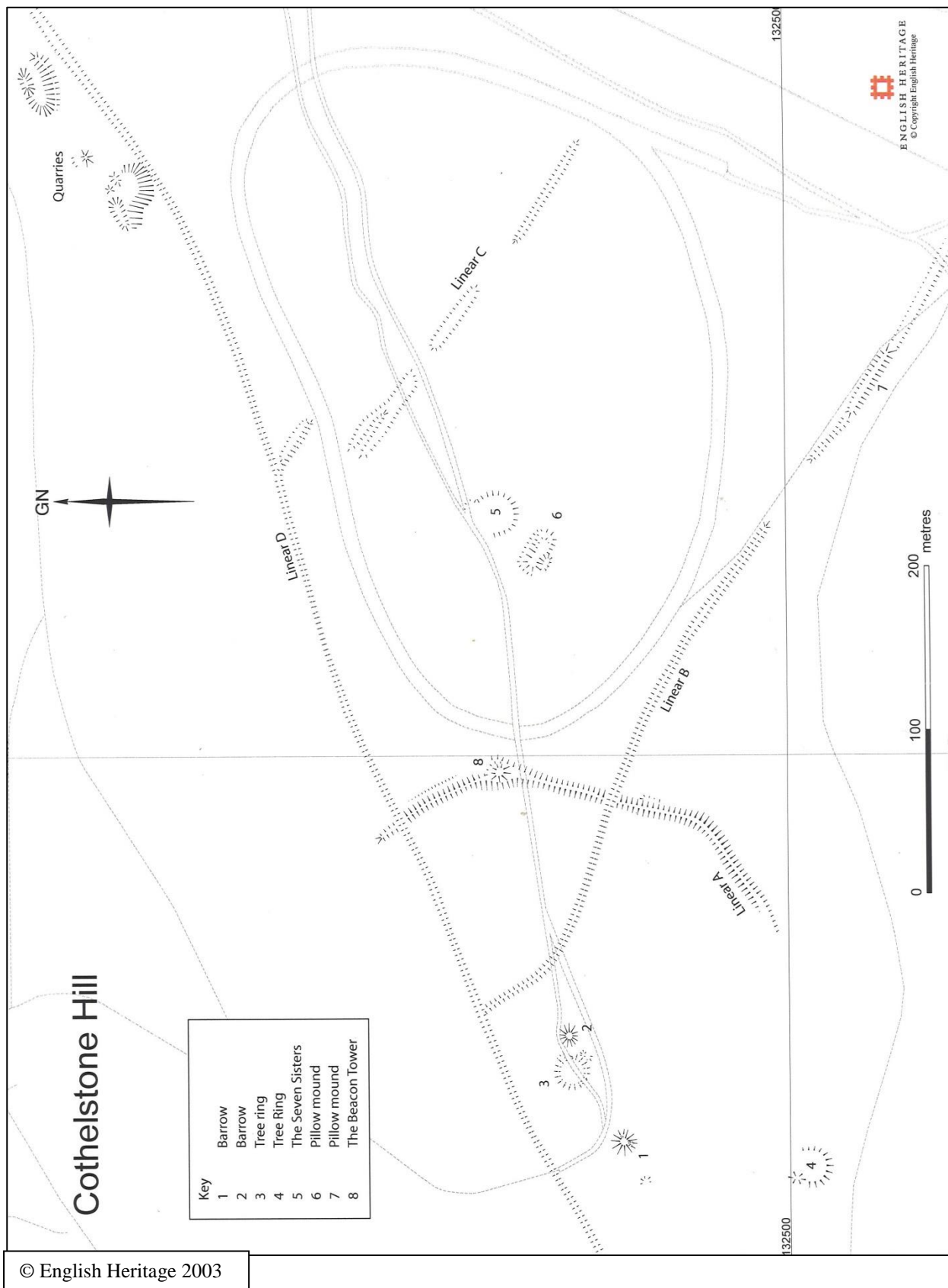
Striking a balance: How is the land managed now? Are there any potential conflicts that may occur as people use the countryside for different reasons?

- Pupil sheet 4

## Useful Sources.

<b>Source 1</b>	Cothelstone Hill site plan showing heritage features.
<b>Source 2</b>	Somerset sites and monuments record, 2000
<b>Source 3</b>	Excerpts from archaeological investigation report series A1/23/2003
<b>Source 4</b>	Photograph. South West Heritage Trust undertaking archaeological investigation 2015.
<b>Source 5</b>	Aerial Photograph 2003.
<b>Source 6</b>	Aerial Photograph 1947
<b>Source 7</b>	Oblique Aerial Photograph 1998
<b>Source 8</b>	Photograph: Flint arrowhead from archaeological investigation 2015.
<b>Source 9</b>	Ring Cairns and rituals
<b>Source 10</b>	Re-creation of a Bronze Age burial ceremony at the platform cairn on Higher Hare Knap

## Source 1. Cothelstone Hill Site Plan with Heritage Features



## Source 2. Somerset Historic Environment Record Listings (2015)

Site No.	Site Name	Details
43026	Barrow or pillow mound, Cothelstone Hill	<p>Two confluent mounds 13 paces diameter and 3.5ft high and 12 paces diameter and 1.5ft high (Cothelstone 4a and 4b). {1}</p> <p>One elongated mound maximum height 1.5m with an incomplete ditch 0.3m deep. It has recently been planted with trees and mainly enclosed within a fence. Appears to be of comparatively recent construction and unlikely to be a barrow, and may even be a pillow mound. {3}</p> <p>A long mound 1m high and 20m in length, fenced and planted with beech trees. Orientated NW-SE with a slight ditch either side. {4}</p> <p>Round mound with low but broad encircling bank, probably a barrow. 40m SW of tree ring enclosure. {5}</p> <p>Scheduling revised with new national number (was Somerset 411) on 7 Feb 1997. {8}</p> <p>The mound is oriented north-west to south-east and measures 27m by 12m and 1.3m high. It is flanked by a ditch on its north-west and north-east sides. A deep sub-rectangular hollow on its south-west edge is a relatively recent quarry pit. Aerial photographs taken in 1947 show that the ditch originally extended along the south-west side. The surface of the mound is rather irregular. The morphology of the earthwork and the presence of the ditch strongly suggest that it is a pillow mound. {9}</p> <p>The mound has been recorded on aerial photographs and appears as a rectangular mound, measuring 25m by 10m, with an amorphous mound, measuring 12m across, attached to the south east end. The thick vegetation in the vicinity obscures the exact form of the site but it appears to have changed in the years between the earliest photographs of the site, when it appears as rectangular, and the OS mapping carried out in the late 1970s which depicts the site as a circular mound. A number of other features were visible in the vicinity of the pillow mound but these are too obscured by vegetation on the aerial photographs to say if they are archaeological or not. {10}</p> <p>Damage consistent with the use of metal detectors was observed across Cothelstone Hill, including within the Scheduled areas. {11}</p>
43027	Seven Sister tree ring enclosure	<p>The circular earthwork marked as tumulus on OS maps, is a tree ring enclosure, probably of the C18. {1}</p> <p>Platform 22m diameter and c0.75m above the surrounding ground surface, bounded by a bank 3.5m wide and rising 0.25m from the interior. Interior more or less flat and planted with 13 beech trees. {4}</p> <p>Tree ring enclosure identified by circular clump of trees on the summit of Cothelstone Hill. {5}</p>

		<p>Was scheduled as AM 411c as an unclassified earthwork but descheduled on 7 Feb 1997. {9}</p> <p>The tree enclosure ring has been recorded on aerial photographs and appears as a ring bank with a diameter of 28m. The thick vegetation in the vicinity means that the exact form of the tree ring is obscured and there appears to be a break in its east facing side but it is unclear if this is an original feature or not. A number of other features were visible in the vicinity of the tree enclosure but these are too obscured by vegetation on the aerial photographs to say whether they are archaeological.</p> <p>Close to the summit of Cothelstone Hill, at ST 1915 3267, lies the Seven Sisters, a clump of beech trees, visible from the Vale of Taunton. The feature comprises a partially embanked platform cairn, 24m in diameter and 1.2m high. The platform is composed of earth and stone, some stone is exposed in small areas of erosion. On the platform are 5 beech trees, 6 tree stumps and 3 small hollows which represent the remains of tree throws. A small pond has been built into the northern side of the platform. The platform is surrounded by the earthwork remains of vehicle tracks; on the northern side these give the appearance of a very slight ditch. The beech trees are part of an ornamental planting scheme. The circular platform could well represent the remains of a large prehistoric platform cairn. On the Quantock Hills, similar examples occur on Great Hill and West Hill. One of these cairns on West Hill has also been re-used for ornamental planting. The highly visible location of the Seven Sisters on a hilltop is also typical of other platform cairns on the Quantock Hills. The feature was recorded at a scale of 1:200 using differential GPS as part of the EH archaeological survey of the Quantock Hills AONB. {11}</p>
43034	Flint scatter, Cothelstone Hill	<p>In 1972 the removal of the turf for a roughly circular bridleway around the summit of Cothelstone Hill exposed a scatter of flint and chert, with a marked increase in density at ST 1920 3250. Over 200 pieces were collected of which 25 had been retouched into implements - convex scrapers, piercers, complete and fragmentary arrowheads, and a few rather shapeless pieces which may have been knives. The material belonged to both Neolithic and Bronze age with the former predominant. {1}</p> <p>A flint arrowhead from ST 190 427 and a barbed and tanged arrowhead from ST 192 327 are also recorded. {2}</p>
43025 SM29360	Barrow and folly ruins, Cothelstone Hill	<p>A tower was erected on Cothelstone Hill between 1768 and 1780 by Lady Hillsborough, the owner of the estate, for the purpose of viewing the surrounding country. It was destroyed a few years prior to 1919. {1}</p> <p>The site of the tower is marked by a circular mound, but only the footings survive. {2}</p> <p>Mound 14 paces diameter and 4ft high (Cothelstone 3). Ruined masonry on perhaps what was a sepulchral cairn. {3}</p> <p>Mound 11m diameter and 1.25m high Site of folly until 1910. Some masonry survives. Stone slabs in mortar with stone dressings. Some erosion of the mound around the upstanding masonry Covered with long grass etc. Footpath to the S side. {5}</p> <p>The folly site was scheduled was AM 411f and the barrow as AM 411b but this was later revised so that both were scheduled as AM</p>

		<p>411b. {6}</p> <p>Irregular round mound on the summit of Cothelstone Hill. Ruined barrow. {8}</p> <p>Scheduling revised with new national number on 7 Feb 1997. {10}</p> <p>Contained within barrow cemetery (<a href="#">PRN 43292</a>). {11}</p> <p>See PRN <a href="#">17907</a> for details of a survey undertaken in 2003. {12}</p> <p>The site has also been recorded on aerial photographs and is visible as a slightly squared off mound, measuring 10m across, with another amorphous mound, adjacent to the north west which measures 7m at its widest point. They are centred at ST 1899 3267 and ST 1899 3268 respectively. The latter mound may simply be where part of the other mound has collapsed or possibly part of the access, perhaps a ramp, up to the tower. In common with all the Bronze Age round barrows identified by L.V. Grinsell on Cothelstone Hill there is no firm dating evidence to suggest an early origin for the mound and it is possible that it is simply a foundation for the Post Medieval folly. The remains were recorded at a scale of 1:200 using differential GPS as part of the EH survey of the Quantock Hills AONB. {13}</p> <p>Damage consistent with the use of metal detectors was observed across Cothelstone Hill, including within the Scheduled areas. {15}</p>
43028 SM29361	Post-medieval tree ring enclosure, Cothelstone Hill	<p>The circular earthwork, marked on maps as a barrow, is a tree ring circle. {1}</p> <p>A post-medieval tree enclosure ring is situated near the top of Cothelstone Hill. It has been recorded on aerial photographs and appears as a ring bank with a diameter of 22m. It appears to have a break in its east facing side which is partially blocked by a bank which is 5m long. The vegetation at the site is too dense to ascertain the exact form of the tree ring and whether the break in the bank is an entrance or not. It is centred at ST 1880 3263.</p> <p>A circular embanked enclosure lies just to the west of a small bronze burial mound (PRN <a href="#">43029</a>). The enclosure is 22m in diameter, 1m wide and 0.9m high, with a small section of ditch on its NE edge. Two gaps to the NE and SW are caused by a track which cuts through the feature. A hollow and spoil mound on the SE side are relatively recent. A single conifer is depicted on this feature on the 1st edition OS map. It is a post-medieval tree ring enclosure and dates from the 18th century. The enclosure was surveyed at a scale of 1: 200 using differential GPS as part of the archaeological survey of the Quantock Hills AONB. {5}</p>
43029 SM29359	Bronze Age barrow, Cothelstone Hill	<p>Cairn 12 paces diameter and 3ft high (Cothelstone 2). {1}</p> <p>Bowl barrow 0.9 high. {3}</p> <p>Mound 11m diameter and 1.5m high. S part under dense bracken and bramble. N part crossed by trackway where there is good turf cover. Vehicles run to the N of the mound. Some unevenness of surface. {4}</p> <p>Scheduling revised with new national number (was Somerset 411)</p>

		<p>on 7 Feb 1997. {5}</p> <p>A grass covered mound 14m E-W, 12m N-S and 1.1m high. It is clipped on the N side by a track. {6}</p> <p>A flat-topped mound lies on the summit of Cothelstone Hill at ST 1883 3262. The northern edge of the mound has been clipped by a track, giving it an ovoid appearance. The mound is grass covered and measures 14m east/west, 12m north/south and is 1.2m high. The mound is a Bronze Age burial mound and was recorded at a scale of 1:200 using differential GPS as part of the EH archaeological survey of the Quantock Hills AONB. {7}</p> <p>Damage consistent with the use of metal detectors was observed across Cothelstone Hill, including within the Scheduled areas. {9}</p>
43031 SM29358	Barrow, west end Cothelstone Hill	<p>Barrow 18 paces diameter and 4.5ft high (Cothelstone 1). {1}</p> <p>1.7m high. {3}</p> <p>18m diameter and 2.25m high. Closely cropped turf covering a stone cairn. Small area on top only 0.5m square where the stones are exposed Footpaths pass each side and people stand on top to admire the view. {4}</p> <p>Round mound on the SW spur of Cothelstone Hill. Small barrow. {5}</p> <p>Scheduling revised with new national number on 7 Feb 1997. {9}</p> <p>A grass covered stony mound, 16m in diameter and 1.3m high. The base of the cairn has the appearance of having been ploughed over, particularly apparent on the N and S sides. Two hollows on the S and E sides of the mound are relatively recent and may represent the locations of unrecorded excavations. A small depression 30m to the SW of the cairn is probably a quarry, perhaps for cairn material. {10}</p> <p>The mound was recorded at a scale of 1: 200 using differential GPS as part of the EH archaeological survey of the Quantock Hills AONB. {11}</p> <p>Damage consistent with the use of metal detectors was observed across Cothelstone Hill, including within the Scheduled areas. {13}</p>

## Source 3. Excerpt from Archaeological Investigation Report Series AI/23/2003

### THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

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#### Cothelstone Hill

The summit of Cothelstone Hill contains an outstanding group of extant archaeological remains (Fig 4). These range in date from prehistoric burial mounds through to features from the Second World War. The context of the later features can only be understood with reference to the history of the Cothelstone estates. There are two Bronze Age burial mounds on the western edge of the hill (Fig 5). The best preserved of these lies at ST 1876 3260. The cairn comprises a grass covered, stony mound, 16m in diameter and 1.3m high. The base of the cairn has the appearance of having been ploughed over, this is particularly apparent on the north and south sides. Two hollows on the south and east sides of the mound are relatively recent and may represent the remains of unrecorded excavations on the mound. A small depression 30m to the southwest of the cairn is probably a quarry scoop, possibly for cairn material. Such quarry scoops have been identified close to some of the major cairn groups on Exmoor, for example on Robin and Joaney How near Dunkery Beacon and Cosgate Hill (Riley and Wilson-North 2001; Jamieson 2002a).

The second burial mound lies to the east, at ST 1883 3262. The northern edge of this mound has been clipped by a track, giving the mound an ovoid appearance. The mound is grass-covered, it measures 14m east/west, 12m north/south and is 1.1m high.

A certain amount of confusion has arisen over the classification of some of the earthwork features on Cothelstone Hill. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ordnance Survey surveyors mapped three features which they called tumuli (OS 1888). One of these is a circular embanked feature which lies just to the west of the burial mound described above, at ST 1818 3263. The bank is 22m in diameter, 1m wide, 0.9m high with a short section of ditch on its northeastern edge. The two gaps to the northeast and the southwest are caused by a track which cuts through the feature. A hollow and spoil mound on the southeast side appear to be relatively recent. More recent interpretations (for example Grinsell 1970, 58) suggest that this is not a tumulus but a tree ring. This is supported by the depiction of a single conifer inside the bank on the Ordnance Survey map of 1888. The possibility that this is a Bronze Age ring cairn should also be considered. In its favour is the close association of the feature with the burial mound described above. Similar groupings of ring cairns and burial mounds occur on Wills Neck and Black Hill for example. The size of the feature also argues in its favour, at 17m in diameter it compares with the small ring cairns on Wills Neck (11m and 15m) rather than the tree ring enclosures along Weacombe and on Great Bear (30m and 40m respectively). The presence of a short length of ditch, however, suggests that it is not a ring cairn. None of the the ring cairns identified on Will's Neck, for example, have ditches, nor do ditches seem to be a feature of those published on Bodmin Moor and Exmoor (Johnson and Rose 1994, fig 37: 24-26; Riley and Wilson-North 2001, figs 2.24, 2.25).

Much of the summit of Cothelstone Hill has been subject to ploughing in the post-medieval period (below). It would be expected that a small ring cairn would show signs of damage

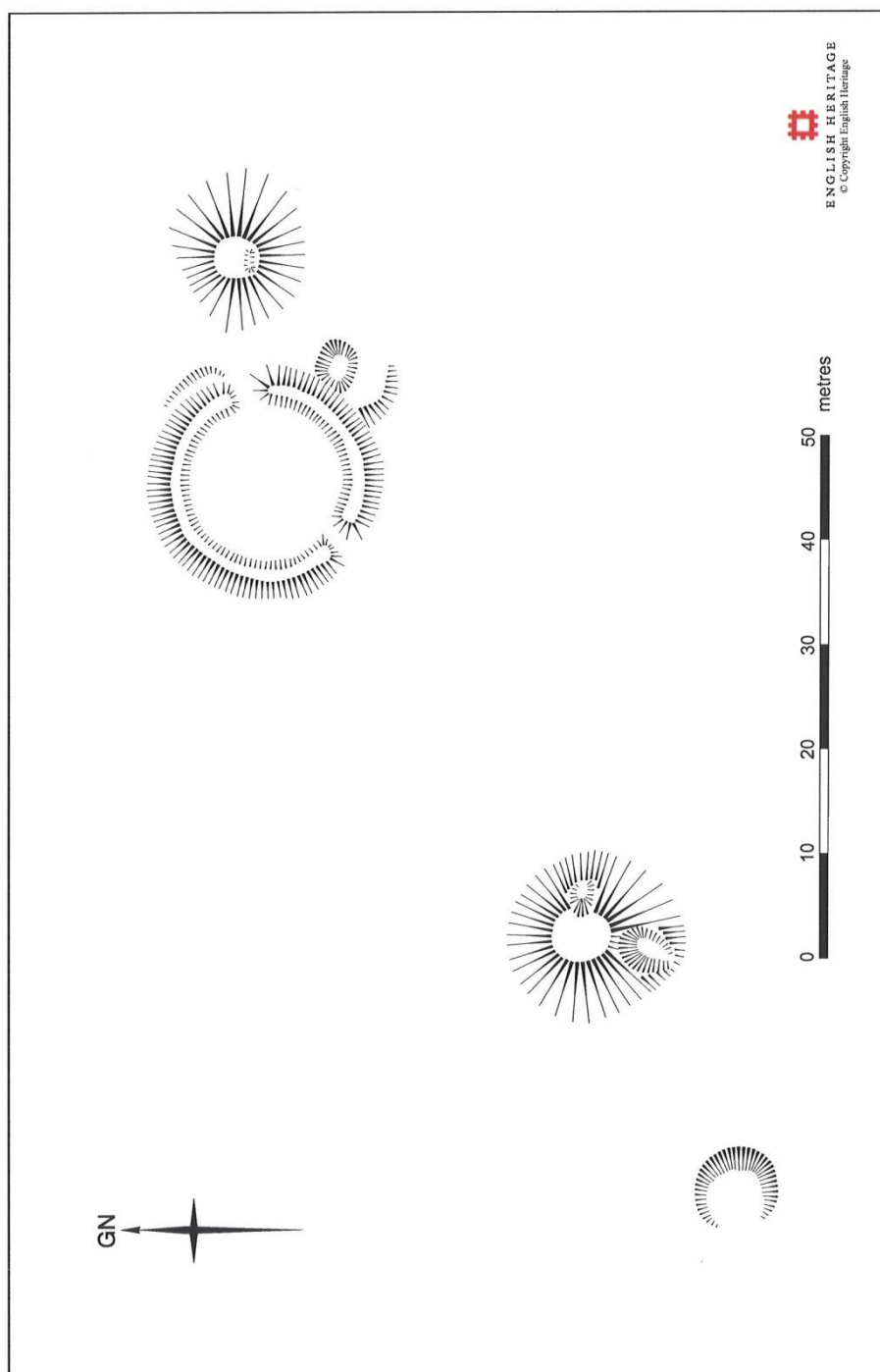
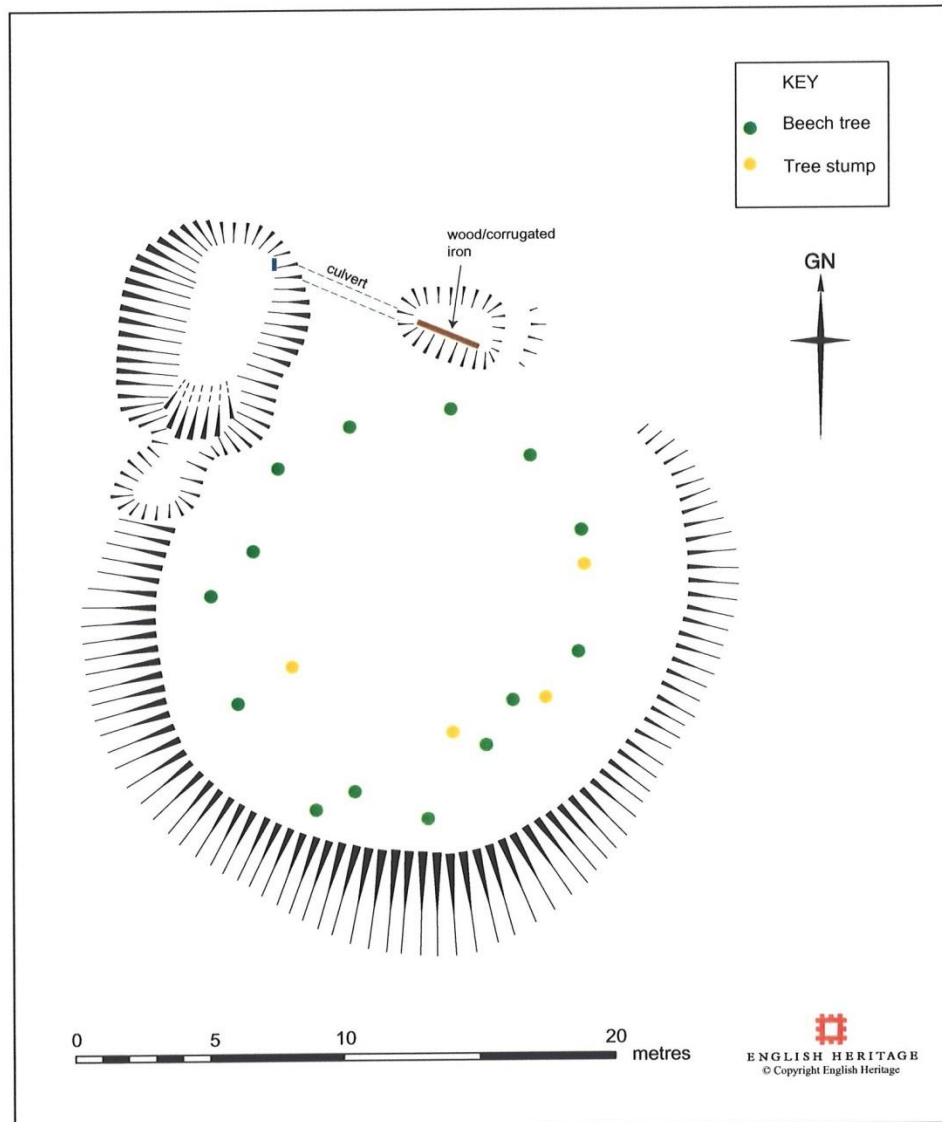


Figure 5. Cothelstone Hill: English Heritage 1:200 earthwork survey of barrows and tree ring enclosure (reduced).

from this period of cultivation. The feature is, however, relatively fresh in appearance and this, together with the lack of any plough encroachment and the presence of a ditch suggest a post-medieval tree ring rather than a Bronze Age ring cairn.

Figure 6.  
Cothelstone Hill:  
English Heritage  
1:200 earthwork  
survey of tree ring  
enclosure and WWII  
bunker (reduced).



Some 160m to the south, now on the edge of scrubby woodland, is the second feature classified as a tumulus on the Ordnance Survey map of 1888, located at ST 1875 3249. This is a sub-circular platform, some 24m in diameter, defined by a scarp with a maximum height of 1.2m (Fig 6). On the platform are 14 beech trees, arranged in a circle, together with four tree stumps. Its morphology, together with its location on a slope below the summit of the hill, argues strongly for its interpretation as a tree ring. On the northern edge of the platform are two large hollows, linked by a culvert, representing the remains of an underground bunker or storage chambers, dating from the Second World War (C Tilley, pers comm).

The third feature previously interpreted as a tumulus is the well known Seven Sisters. This name refers to a clump of beech trees, visible from the Vale of Taunton. The feature, at ST

1915 3267, comprises a partially embanked circular platform, 24m in diameter and 1.2m high (Figs 3 and 7). The platform is composed of earth and stone, and some stone is exposed in small areas of erosion. On the platform are five beech trees, six tree stumps and three hollows which represent the remains of tree throws. A small pond has been built into the northern side of the platform. The platform occupies a prominent position on the summit of Cothelstone Hill and is surrounded by the earthwork remains of vehicle tracks; on the northwestern side these give the appearance of a very slight ditch.

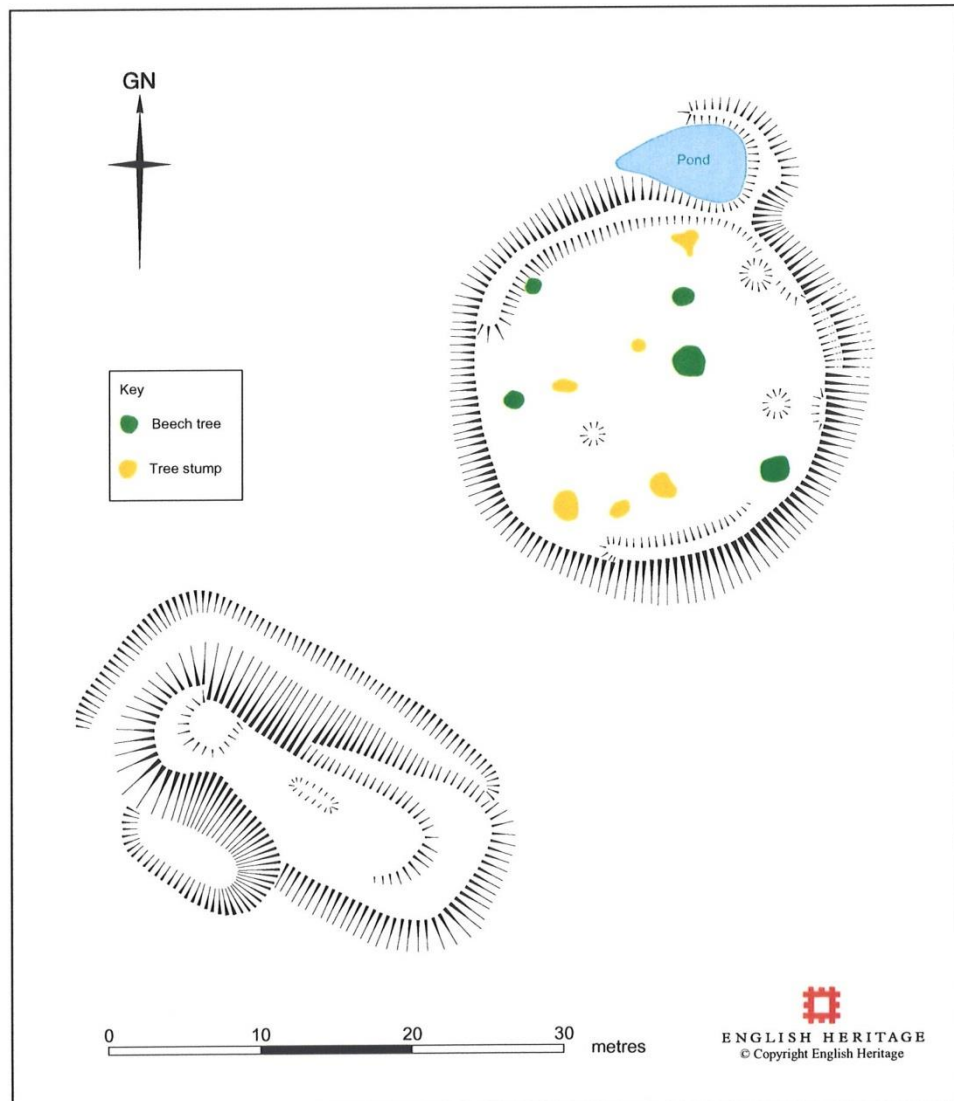


Figure 7. Cothelstone Hill: English Heritage 1:200 earthwork survey of the Seven Sisters and pillow mound (reduced).

The beech trees are very obviously part of an ornamental planting scheme. The circular platform, however, could well represent the remains of a large prehistoric platform cairn. On the Quantock Hills, similar cairns occur on Great Hill and West Hill, for example. One of these cairns on West Hill has the remains of ornamental planting around its edge. Published examples on Bodmin Moor compare in size and profile (Johnson and Rose 1994, fig 37: 18,19). The highly visible location of the Seven Sisters on a hilltop is also typical of other platform cairns on the Quantock Hills.

Some 40m to the south of the Seven Sisters is a rectangular mound, at ST 1912 3265 (Fig 7). This mound has been variously interpreted as two confluent burial mounds, a pillow mound or of recent origin. The mound is orientated northwest/southeast and measures 27m by 12m, it is 1.3m high. It is flanked by a ditch on its northwestern and northeastern sides. A deep sub-rectangular hollow on its southwestern edge is a relatively recent quarry pit, air photographs taken in 1947 show that the ditch originally extended along the southwestern side. The surface of the mound is rather irregular. The feature was planted with beech trees in the latter years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The morphology of the earthwork and the presence of the ditch strongly indicate that this is a pillow mound, generally dated to the medieval or early post-medieval periods and constructed as an artificial rabbit warren (Williamson 1997).

A further rectangular mound lies on the southern side of the hill at ST 1923 3244. This is much larger than the pillow mound described above. It is some 54m long, 8m wide and up to 1.3m high. The top of the mound is quite irregular in appearance, at least some of this is due to animal activity. A ditch may lie along the northern side of the mound, but this is difficult to ascertain due to the presence of scrubby vegetation and a modern track which runs along the northern edge of the mound. The mound overlies a linear feature (described below). The mound's origin and function remain unclear. It does not appear on any of the Ordnance Survey 19<sup>th</sup> century mapping. It could be a pillow mound, and if it is it represents a large example of this type of monument. Its position, towards the head of a combe, could suggest the mound was associated with the sporting/recreational use of the hill, which developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the estate was increasingly used for shooting. However, it is difficult to see the mound functioning as, for example, a shooting butt, and on balance the mound is most likely to be a very large pillow mound. It compares in size to examples on Minchinhampton Common, Glos, which were interpreted as post-medieval in date (Smith 2002).

The summit of Cothelstone Hill is criss-crossed by linear earthworks of varying forms. Their interpretation is hampered by areas of vegetation which remains dense throughout the year.



Figure 8. Cothelstone Hill: air photograph looking southwest (NMR 15859/22).

However, a combination of field observation and air photographic interpretation has allowed the following sequence to be postulated (Figs 4 and 8).

Linear A: A bank with an intermittent ditch runs for some 280m across the western edge of Cothelstone Hill, cutting off the western end of the hilltop. Both the northern and southern ends turn out to the west as the linear runs off the hilltop. The bank is 2.5m wide, 1.4m wide and the ditch 0.8m deep. The northern end of the bank has been damaged by ploughing, and both ploughing and tracks have slighted the central portion of the linear. The southern section survives as a good earthwork but the southernmost part is difficult to discern in scrubby woodland. Linears B and D both overlie this earthwork, and the Beacon Tower is built on its northern angle. The form of this earthwork, together with its relationship with Linear B and the episodes of ploughing, strongly suggest that this is a later prehistoric linear earthwork, cutting off the western edge of Cothelstone Hill, and as such is a significant new discovery. Cross-spur and cross-ridge dykes are relatively common on the Quantock Hills, most are associated with Iron Age enclosures or hillforts. A recent systematic study of the extensive linear ditch systems of Wessex showed them to have their origins in the Late Bronze Age (Bradley *et al* 1994).

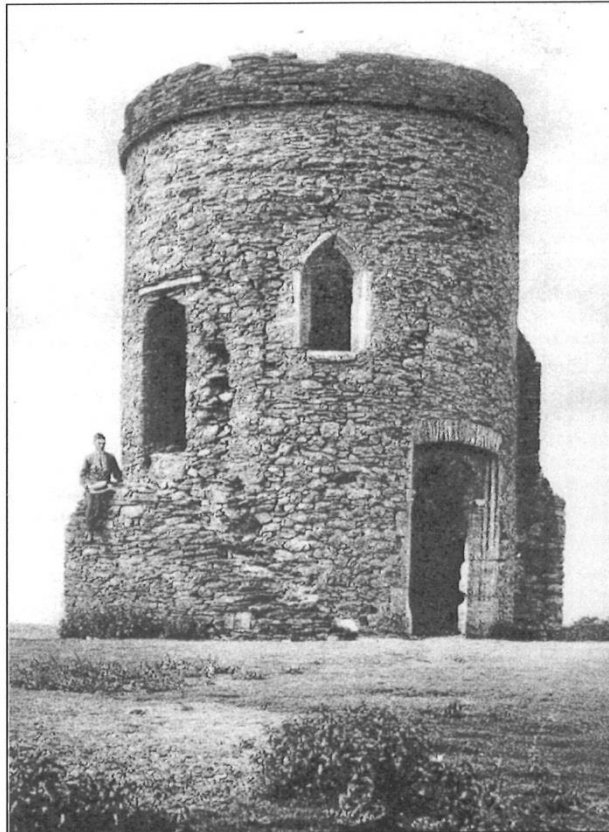
Linear B: This a broad, spread bank which runs for some 500m across the southwestern edge of Cothelstone Hill, it is some 7m wide and 0.6m high. A post-medieval pillow mound has been constructed on this bank, and parts of it have been ploughed over.

Linear C: A very degraded bank, some 7m wide and 0.5-1m high, runs for 240m across the northeastern edge of the hill. It runs parallel to Linear B and has also been ploughed over.

These two banks (Linears B and C) probably represent the remains of some of the earliest field systems on Cothelstone Hill, with phases of later cultivation effectively removing all but the fragmentary remains of this episode.

Linear D: A bank, 6m wide and 1.2m high, runs for some 800m across the northern edge of Cothelstone Hill. For much of its length it is sharp in appearance, and this portion is marked as a boundary on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century maps. The bank is much more spread at its northeastern end, and this part is not depicted on those maps. Part of this bank seems to have functioned as a boundary until quite recently. Traces of ploughing can be observed both to the north and south of this bank.

The remains of a circular building, known as the Beacon Tower, lie at ST 1899 3267. The remains comprise a circular mound 11m in diameter and 1.4m high, with much stone scattered around. The remains of a doorway survive on the southeastern side. The tower was built by Lady Hillsborough, later Baroness Stawell of Somerton, in the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, between 1768 and 1780 (Kemeys-Tynte 1920, 296). Some photographs of the building taken in the 19<sup>th</sup> century show it as a robust circular tower, built of randomly coursed stonework and about 10m high. A doorway and two windows can be seen on the southern side of the tower (Fig 9). The tower was evidently substantially complete at the



*Figure 9. Cothelstone Hill: the tower in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century*

beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but was badly damaged by a gale in 1917 or 1918 (Kemeys-Tynte 1920, 295).

A small area of stone quarrying lies on the northeastern edge of Cothelstone Hill at ST 1935 3290. These quarry pits were for limestone – Roadwater Limestone outcrops along the northern edge of the hill. A lime kiln lies close to the road at ST 1880 3297, this is in a rather ruinous state but appears to date from the earlier part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **Cothelstone Manor in the medieval period**

Although Cothelstone Manor is well known as a medieval manor, the principal residence of the Stawell family, it was used for some 350 years as the estate farm. This has resulted in the scant survival of extant archaeological remains. What does survive, however, is a rich source of documentary evidence, together with the buildings themselves. The story is one of a high status medieval manor, followed by its abandonment by the family in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the manor became the home farm of the Stawell's Cothelstone estates.

The complex today consists of Cothelstone Manor, the gatehouse, the gateway, Manor Cottages, the church of St Thomas a Beckett, the Banqueting Hall, a summer house and a group of farm buildings (Figs 10 and 11). The dates of Cothelstone Manor, the gateway and the gatehouse have been the subject of some debate: Pevsner suggests a date of before

**Source 4. Photograph. South West Heritage Trust undertaking archaeological investigations 2015.**



Image: Quantock Hills AONB Service

**Source 5. Aerial Photograph 2003.**



**Source 6. Aerial Photograph 1947.**



**Source 7. Oblique Aerial Photograph 1998.**



NMR 1587819 © English Heritage

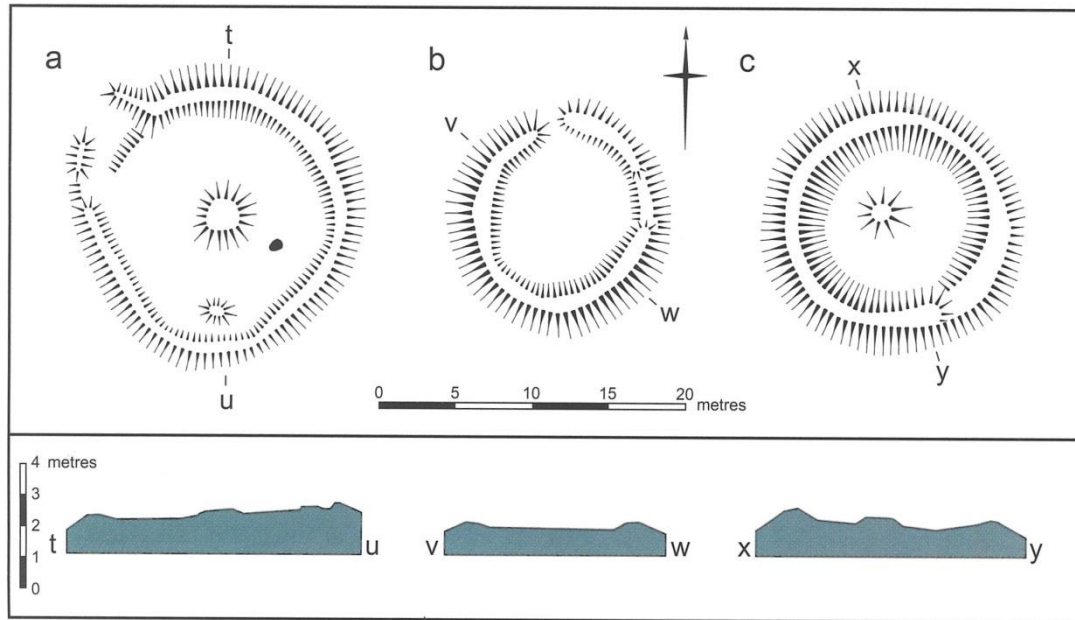
**Source 8. Photograph flint arrowhead from archaeological investigation 2015.**



Image: Quantock Hills AONB Service

## Source 9. Ring Cairns and Rituals

The Quantock Hills contain many examples of special types of Bronze Age funerary monuments, such as the triple barrow overlooking Hare Knap, the great platform cairns of the western scarp and ring cairns. These are circular banks of earth and stone which sometimes enclose a small mound.



*Ring cairns on Wills Neck (a,b) and Withyman's Pool (c). (© English Heritage)*

Excavations elsewhere in the south-west have shown that ring cairns were not used for burial but some other ritual connected with the funeral ceremony was carried out at these sites. Did they mark the site of the funeral pyre itself? Cremation burial was the usual form of interment during the Bronze Age and the cremated remains were often placed in urns like the one found in a ploughed field near Broomfield.



*The Broomfield urn.  
(Elaine Jamieson)*

**Source 10. Re-creation of a Bronze Age burial ceremony at the platform cairn on Higher Hare Knap.**



© Jane Braye

## **PUPIL SHEETS**

1. EXPLORING COTHELSTONE HILL: 10 THINGS YOU MIGHT SPOT.
2. SITE IN DANGER! – HERITAGE
3. INTERVIEW WITH RANGER REBEKAH
4. STRIKING A BALANCE

## **RANGER REBEKAH SAYS**

**Here are 10 things you might notice when you explore Cothelstone Hill for yourself. Tick the box if you can verify my statements.**

<b>1</b>	There are six historic features on the hilltop.	
<b>2</b>	The circular bank of the Seven Sister tree ring is 22m in diameter.	
<b>3</b>	There are signs of bad erosion on some of the heritage features on the hilltop.	
<b>4</b>	A number of ponies graze Cothelstone Hill. This breed is called Exmoor Ponies	
<b>5</b>	Most of the heritage features on Cothelstone are at or very near the top of the hill.	
<b>6</b>	The hilltop is mainly grass and low scrub species such as bramble but the hill is surrounded by woodland.	
<b>7</b>	Five of the historic features are roughly circular, one is rectangular.	
<b>8</b>	Some trees may have been planted more recently than the Seven Sisters.	
<b>9</b>	Though the tree clump at the top of the hill is called Seven Sister there are not seven trees	
<b>10</b>	At the heritage feature right at the top of the hill there are stone blocks which are only 150 years old,	

**Use your feet, eyes and brain! – They are the best tools.**

**Other things I noticed**

## SITE IN DANGER - HERITAGE - SITE IN DANGER

<b>Codename</b>	<b>Cothelstone Hill</b>		
<b>Mission</b>	<p>You have noticed the ancient heritage features on the top of Cothelstone Hill, hidden under the surface. There is a fear that because of changing land management these features could be lost forever.</p> <p>You are the only people who are able to gather evidence of the heritage features of Cothelstone Hill. Without your evidence no one will ever know it existed.</p>		
<b>Task</b>	<p>You must therefore produce the best possible field record in limited time with only the resources you have with you.</p>		
<b>Strategy and equipment used</b>		<b>Team members</b>	
<b>We want to discover more about:</b>		<b>To do this we need more evidence from:</b>	

## INTERVIEW WITH RANGER REBEKAH

**I am trying to find out about Cothelstone Hill from the Bronze Age, but I don't know where to start. There doesn't seem to be anything written down from the Bronze Age. Is that right, Ranger Rebekah?**

That's correct. There's very little written evidence. The Bronze Age people themselves didn't read or write. There are a few descriptions written by Roman writers who were here later, but we don't know how accurate they are.

**Are there any other clues to help us?**

Oh yes. They left us other sorts of evidence, like the things they made. The biggest clues are the places they lived and visited.

**Do you mean the hilltops? Like Cothelstone Hill?**

Yes, the hilltops were where Neolithic and Bronze Age people built Barrows. These were monuments to their dead and would contain bodies or sometimes the bodies were burnt and the ashes placed in pottery urns. The barrows would have a chamber for the body or ashes which would have stones or earth piled over it to create a circular mound.

**What other clues are there from the Bronze Age?**

Well, there are all the other things they made, or at least the objects that have survived, which is not the same thing. Farming implement are a good example, because they doesn't rot away in the ground. We have found plenty of pieces of Bronze Age implements, weapons and jewellery such as amulets and finger rings.

**What does all this evidence tell us?**

Well, for one thing, we have started to work out a broad time framework for Bronze Age Somerset. When and where people were living, whether they were all the same or in different groups with different customs, whether these groups had anything to do with each other.

**After the Bronze Age did people stop using Cothelstone Hill?**

Not as all! The hills were used by Iron Age people and romans most likely for hunting and later were used for agriculture, mainly for grazing but sometimes for crops, such as rye. People also started to be interested in how landscapes looked and plant ornamental tree rings, such as Seven Sisters or build small buildings such as the tower, built in the 1770s. There is even evidence of World War 2 defences on Cothelstone Hill in preparation of an invasion. Now the hilltops are used for agriculture and as a place for relaxation and peaceful exercise.

## STRIKING A BALANCE.

Those responsible for looking after Cothelstone Hill have to strike a balance between letting visitors come and explore the ancient site, and protecting it from too much wear and tear.

A few years ago, a problem started to be noticed. This passage describes the problem. When you visit the site now, look out for evidence of what was done to improve things.

The top of Cothelstone Hill is covered with rough grasses and low scrub vegetation. This protects the hill from erosion. There are also some areas with small trees, such as hawthorn or oak

Several paths cross the hill. Most visitors use the path which leads directly up to the top of the hill. These paths are well-used, but stable. Other paths are less-used.

Everyone likes to come and see the Beech trees on top of the hill, which can also be seen from miles around. In the 1970s the landowner knew the original Seven Sister trees were getting old and would soon start falling down. He with help from others planted a new clump of trees next to the Seven Sister to become a landmark in the future. Recently people became aware that the replacement trees are planted on a scheduled monument. Tree roots can damage scheduled monuments but the trees are a key landscape feature that people enjoy. If the trees are left they will cause further damage, but if they are cut down there will be the loss of a landscape feature that people love to see.