



The Druid's Circle

Just to prove that Para.Science have bad days, we present the story of the mysterious Druid's Circle.....

Following a successful visit to a haunted castle, two Para.Science members decided to spend the rest of the day visiting the picturesque and mysterious Druid's Circle above Penmaenmawr in North Wales. The first hint that things might not be going to plan was the slight mistiness that greeted our intrepid investigators as they ascended the steep hillside in the trusty ghosthunting Mondeo. As the track became, well, a track as opposed to a road, and the mist became, well, a thick fog, the fearless investigators pressed on through potholes and round sheep. On reaching the end of the track, memories of Landrovers-gone-by flitted through the duo's minds. But not to be outdone, they decided to press on on foot, through the descending pea-souper (not sure that's what you call hill fog, but it was THICK!).

Consulting the map, the first landmark should be a ruined hut. So that would be over there in the fog somewhere? Ah, that must be it, behind the locked gate. Okay, a minor inconvenience, we'll follow the stone wall around and just climb up this bit of a hill. And down the other side. And up the next bit of hill. And down the other side. And.... well you get the idea. (I should point out at this juncture that of the two members, one is allergic to exercise and one sports a very fetching titanium leg, not an ideal combination for hill-walking).

But what's that through the fog - if you squint hard that pile of stones looks rather circle shaped. Could this be our destination? If only the GPS system wasn't back at home on the desk. Oh. Is that it? Well, it's a circle, and those stones could align to the rising sun (or was it the setting sun, hard to tell in all that fog). But it is a bit small, and those small stones are very easy to trip over in all this fog - oof! (Especially for the team member with glasses - visibility was about 3 inches with unwiped specs). There's a lot of charred gorse bushes around here as well - perhaps something mysterious has been occurring? No photos I'm afraid - the fog was so thick that water was dripping off my forehead and onto the camera, not even good for atmospheric photography.

Feeling slightly disappointed, at least the stones had been visited, time to head back. But what is that smell of burning? Another gorse bush on fire? Fighting through the fog and smoke, our trusty team headed back along the track, following a trail of horses hoofprints back to civilisation. But the smoke is very thick, and as this is the way back, the track doesn't seem familiar anymore. Okay, let's consult the GPS. That would be the one back at home then. Okay, no need to panic, we can head up to the higher ground over there. Or we could if it wasn't for the wall of flame that has mysteriously appeared. Or we could go the opposite way - if it wasn't for the large wall with barbed wire on top. In the true spirit of investigative phenomenon hunting, our members stared death in the face, lit a cigarette, and waited to see if the voice of god spoke from the burning bush. It didn't. Following a small break for hysterical giggling and regrouping, the only option was to carry on the way we were going and hope to find a recognisable landmark. Stumbling through the fog and smoke, mobile phones poised to alert the emergency services to the possibility of two charred bodies being found on the hill, our intrepid duo found... the car! 40 feet away from where we'd been standing.

So the moral of the story is... don't leave the GPS at home, and don't climb Welsh hills in the fog.

But just to top it all, on consulting maps and the trusty Modern Antiquarian, it turns out we had reached

an outlying circle, and the real circle was in fact 200 yards further on.

But the legends state that two stones in the main circle were held in awe by the locals - if anyone cursed in front of the Deity stone it would "bend its head and hit the offending person". And one night, a disbeliever went to sneer at the stones, but he did not live until the next morning. So maybe we had a lucky escape after all...