THE KENNET AVENUE   OGS Crawford

The Kennet Avenue began at the southern entrance to Avebury and terminated on Overton Hill above the village of East Kennet, where stood formerly the two small concentric stone-circles. Its length was about 1 mile, 880 yards, and it ran approximately straight as far as the village of West Kennet. Beyond this point it curved gradually to the left up Overton Hill. The portion between Avebury and West Kennet was not quite a straight line but consisted of two straight sections, one of about 1000 ft from the rampart to the top of the rise, and the other from here to the Bath road. Between Avebury and the enclosure of West Kennet the course of the Avenue is parallel with, and in places identical with, that of the modern road between those two places.

At the present time only 21 out of the 200 stones are in existence. Of these seven are still standing; of the remaining fourteen, all except one are visible. The first (No. 3b) is that standing close to the cottage at the crossroads at the southern (or Marlborough) entrance to Avebury; it is on the right, or south-western side of the road. The next (No. 21) stands on the brow of the hill, on the left, or north-eastern side of the road. The road between these two stones passes down what was once the middle of the Avenue. By far the best existing section of the Avenue is a group of eleven stones in a grass field on the right, or south-western side of the road, half a mile from the village of Avebury. Four pairs remain, and the real character of the Avenue as it was, can be seen better here than anywhere. The last five are in the bank on the south side of the Bath road immediately west of West Kennet. They are in the side of the bank away from the road, and cannot be seen from it. It is easy however, to enter the field by a gate near the turning to East Kennet. The average width of the Avenue seems to have been about 40 ft and the average distance between the stones about 70 ft.

In the 17th century the avenue seems to have been almost perfect. Aubrey describes it as a "solemne wallke" running from Avebury to Kennet. He likens it to "a noble walke of trees" * - a simile which could only be applied to an avenue in a fairly perfect state. Moreover we have the testimony of the far more reliable Stukeley that in the school-days of a certain Mr Smith – which can hardly have been before Aubrey's visit in 1663 – "the Kennet Avenue was entire from end to end." Stukeley himself records the existence of 84 stones, all of which were visible in his time except two which were buried (Nos 35 and 52). Of these 84, 21 were still standing. In the two centuries which have passed since Stukeley did his work here, 63 stones of the Kennet Avenue have disappeared. Apparently the destruction all took place, however, during the first century, since Sir Richard Colt-Hoare on his plan of 1819

(*Ancient Wilts, ii.70. {Plate 10} reproduced by Long. WAM iv.309*) marks only the 19 which are still visible.

* He is wrong in saying that "from Kynet it turnes with a right angle eastward crossing the river." It does neither. The curve, which begins at the Kennet is very slight and takes at avenue, at its terminus on Overton Hill, only 250 yds out of the straight.

It will for over be a source of the deepest regret that the dawn of interest in the stones of Avebury should have coincided so exactly with the period of their destruction. For at least forty centuries the Kennet Avenue and most of the rest, remained practically as it was in the Stone Age. Away back in the Early Iron Age Avebury was already an "ancient monument"; and the grey stones must have been regarded with awe by the villagers at All Cannings Cross, and the pit-dwellers at Oldbury. They watched unmoved the making of the Roman road past Silbury and up Seven Barrows Hill, and the constant stream of traffic along it for four centuries. * They saw the Saxons establish themselves in villages alongside the Kennet, and build the shrine of a new religion at the very gateway of the old one. Yet a fourth invasion passed and left them unscathed and with perhaps much of their old sanctity remaining. It was left for the contemptible heirs of all the ages – Griffin, Robinson, Green and the Turnpike Commissioners and other nonentities – to make away with the oldest and most magnificent monument which their country possessed.

In the following detailed account of the Kennet Avenue, the stones on the north-east side are given simple figures, those on the south-west are described by the same figures with *b* added. Thus 51 describes a stone on the north-east side and 51b is the corresponding stone opposite it.

* The Roman road crossed the Kennet at West Kennet between stones 75 and 78; and Nos 76 and 76b were both visible in Stukeley's time.

THE STONES

1. This stone and its pair (1b) stood on either side of the natural chalk causeway or bridge (29 ft wide) left at the southern entrance of the Great Circle. Against it on the MS original of Stukeley's plan of Avebury is written the date of the its destruction, 1722. It is marked by Stukeley by the symbol of a fallen stone, and he may therefore have seen it.

1b is marked as fallen by Stukeley. Possibly this may be the stone described as follows by Aubrey (Long. P.316):- "The great stone at Avebury's towne's end, where this Walke begins, fell down in autumn 1684, and broke in two or three pieces; it stood but two feet deep in the earth. From Mr Walter Sloper of Munckton, Attorney."

2. Between 1 and 4 plan 2 marks only one interval; this is wrong, and on the large plan of Avebury, Stukeley has corrected the error by inserting two intervals. The correct double interval is also marked on a fragmentary plan on the back of a small wash-drawing of one of the trilithons of Stonehenge. The symbol is missing, but would appear to have been a dot.

2b is marked as fallen.

3 is marked by a dot. Midway between 2 and 3 in the middle of the road is the spot level 529 ft.

3b is marked as fallen.

4 is marked by a dot.

4b is still standing. It is ten ft high at the NW (Avebury) end and 11 ft wide on the outer (SW) side. Its thickness is about 3 ft.
Between 4 and 16 is a wide gap of twelve intervals shown by dots only. Nothing whatever is known of those stones. Stukeley shows the road running down the middle of the avenue, and the remains of some of the stones may perhaps still exist in the banks on each side. Stone 10 falls exactly on the spot line 549, and stone 14 is on 558, the highest point in the avenue. The variant begins at stone 15.

16 is marked by a dot.

16b is marked as fallen, and against it Stukeley has written the note "bury'd in the road."

17 is marked as fallen.

17b is marked as fallen.

18 is marked as fallen.

18b is marked as fallen. The position of this stone when plotted in the 25 inch map agrees closely with that of the buried stone re-discovered when a pipe was being laid in February 1913 to the top of Windmill Hill (Waden Hill). This pipe crosses the NE side of the road at a distance of 243 ft NW of stone 21; and the stone re-discovered by Mrs Cunnington was said by her to be 80 yards from stone 21. "The water pipes actually pass under its (SE) end nearest Kennet at a distance of 12 ft from the (SW) edge of the road." (*WAM xxxv111. 1913-14. p.13*). Fragmentary human bones were found when the pipe-line was being laid, to account for which Mrs Cunnington suggests that "a burial at the foot of, or near, the stone was disturbed when the hole in which it was buried was dug, and that the bones were thrown in again with the rubble in filling up the hole."

19 is marked as fallen.

19b is marked by a dot. Between 19 and 19b Stukeley marks the letter B, but I cannot find any note explaining its meaning.

20 is marked by a dot.

21 is still standing on the left (NE) side of the road, on the brow of the hill. A bench-mark 545:2 is cut in the stone. It is the stone on the extreme right of Stukeley's

Tab.xxxii (Abury) p.42. Its height is 8 ft, measured on the NE face and its width 9ft. Its thickness is 6 ft 6 in.

21b)
)
22) are marked by dots. Stukeley marks the road as
)
22b) leaving the avenue between 22 and 24 and passing
)
23) along the NE side of it.

23b is marked as fallen.

24 is marked as fallen. (Between 24 and 25 Stukeley adds the note on the variant "turns here." This appears correct)

24b)
)
25)
) are marked by dots. Between 25 and 26 is the spot level 529
25b)
) in the middle of the road.
 26)
)
26b)

27) are marked by dots. (This interval is omitted
)
27b) by the variant).

28 is marked as fallen.

28b is marked as fallen. (On the variant plan it is marked by a dot)

29)
) are marked by dots.
29b)

Between 29 and 30 is the spot level 519 in the middle of the road.

30 is marked as fallen.

30b is marked by a dot.

31)
) are marked as fallen.
31b)

The still-existing group of eleven (32 to 38)

32 is still in existence but fallen, and is so marked by Stukeley. This is the first of the group of eleven which form the most perfect surviving section of the avenue. The field in which they now stand is under grass but has been ploughed at some past date. It is described on Stukeley's plans as "meadow," the word "pasture" being crossed out on the variant. Stones 30 to 38 stood in this meadow which *may* not have been under plough since Stukeley's day. If so, it is probably due to this that so many of the group have been preserved. Some of the measurements given of these stones are taken from Long (p.324) who had them made for him by Mr Shepherd of Avebury; others I took myself.

Nos 32 to 38b are shown on Stukeley's *Tab.xxxii. (Abury, p.42)* but Nos 35 and 35b are omitted; the positions of 36 and 37 are reversed and 37 is shown on the wrong (SW) side of the avenue.

32b is marked as standing by Stukeley, but it has now disappeared and left no trace.

33 is still in existence but fallen, and is so marked by Stukeley. It lies 68 ft from 32.

33b is still in existence but fallen (apparently inwards or NE'wards) and is so marked by Stukeley. It is 39 ft from 33, which gives us the first evidence of the width of the avenue.

34 is still in existence. It is now standing, having fallen and been re-erected by Mr and Mrs Cunnington in August 1912. (*WAM xxxviii, pp.7,8.*). It is marked as standing by Stukeley with the word "leaning" written against it in the main plan. It is 72 ft from 33. the distance between it and 34b is given as 48 ft by Stukeley, and as 53 ft by Long. The actual distance now that 34 has been re-erected is 56 ft, measuring between the inner faces of each stone. The distances disagreed rather curiously. It is quite clear from the newly-discovered MSS that in Stukeley's time only two of the surviving members of this group were standing. No 34 *must* be the one which fell about 1899, and it was therefore standing when Long and Smith wrote their accounts. Either Long's measurement (53 ft) or Stukeley's (48 ft) must be wrong. If Long's was right the distance between the stones after the fall of 34 would have been 53 ft minus 8 ft 9 in. (Long's height for 34) = 44 ft 3 in. which is so close to the distance given by Mr Goddard (*WAM xxxviii, p.11*) 44 ft, as to prove that Long's was right. (My own measurement of its height was eight feet, but I may not have taken it from the highest point, which is difficult to spot from below). This is the conclusion suggested by Mr Goddard's lengthy critique of the situation in 1914.

The distance between these stones seems inseparable from error. They must be the two described by Stukeley (*Abury, p.30*) as "standing opposite to each other. I measured them near 60 ft asunder," which is 34 cubits. He is probably speaking from memory – or giving an unusual latitude to the word "near."

34b is still standing and has never fallen. It is marked as standing by Stukeley. It is 9 ft high; its distance from 33b is 71 ft and from 34 (as said above) 56 ft.

35 is still in existence but fallen and so marked by Stukeley.

35b has gone but is shown by the symbol for fallen by Stukeley, and on the main plan the word "buryed" is written against it.

36 is still in existence but fallen (apparently inwards) and is so marked by Stukeley. It is 39 ft from 36 according to Long. (*WAM iv,329*).

37 is still in existence but fallen and is so marked by Stukeley.

37b has gone and had already gone in Stukeley's day; but he saw a cavity there and marked it on his plan by the usual symbol.

38 is still in existence but fallen and is so marked by Stukeley.

38b is still in existence but fallen and is so marked by Stukeley. Its shape is triangular and the pointed end is to the SW. It would therefore appear to have fallen *outwards*. It is 11 ft long, and therefore if originally set in a hole 2 ft deep it would have been 9 ft high. It is 36 ft from 38 according to Long. (*WAM, iv,329*)

Here follows a long break without any stones recorded by Stukeley. The number of intervals between 38 and 47 is correctly fixed as nine on the variant plan, one being omitted on the main plan. (See note on discrepancies, p.)

39 to 46 shown by dots on Stukeley's plans. Nothing more is known of any of the stones.

47 is shown by a dot on the variant, and by a cavity symbol on the main plan.

47b is shown as standing in both plans, but is no longer in existence. It appears on *Abury, Tab.xxii*.

49 is shown as a dot in the variant and as a cavity on the main plan.

Between 49 and 51 on the NE side of the avenue Stukeley marks on the variant a "core" of three stones standing back a little from the line of the avenue; and he writes against the avenue at this point the word "apex". But he nowhere produces any evidence of the existence of this core. The spot is the one which he took to correspond, as regards distance from the circle, with that of the Beckhampton core; and the core owes its existence solely to Stukeley's love of symmetry.

On the main plan "the core" is written between 52 and 53; and various stones are suggested in dotted outline. It should be noted that Stukeley differentiates quite clearly, here and elsewhere, between fact and fancy.

49b is described as "leaning" on both plans.

50) are shown standing on both plans. Amongst
)
50b) these were probably those removed about 1823
)
51) by the Trustees of the Turnpike road (Long, *WAM, iv,328,9*)
) Let it be recorded here to his honour that Mr Butler of Kennet "did all
51b) he could to dissuade the magistrates and farmers from destroying them, but
      they were inexorable."

52. To this on the main plan is attached the note "just bury'd." on the variant it is marked by a dot; and from this one would infer that the variant is a slightly earlier and rougher edition of the main plan, and that the information about the burial of this stone was obtained between their execution.

52b is marked by a dot on both plans.

53 is marked by a dot on the variant and probably also on the main plan, but on the latter this spot is obscured by the imaginary "core".

53b is marked by a dot on both plans.

54 is marked as standing on both plans, on the NE side of the road. On the main plan the letter D refers to a marginal note to the effect that 54 and 54b are "above 45 ft asunder", the actual distance "48 ft" being also added. This is valuable as giving the width of the avenue at his point.

54b is still standing in the bank on the SW side of the road. It is 5 ft 6 in. high, but a large part of its lower portion is probably covered up in the accumulation from the road. According to the main plan it was 75 ft from 55b.

55 is marked by a dot on both plans.

55b is marked as standing on both plans.

56 is marked as standing on both plans.

56b is still standing in the bank on the NE side of the road. It is 4 ft high, but like 54b and for the same reason is probably higher in reality. On the main plan a marginal note says that it was 73 ft from 55b. As 55b was said to be 75 ft from 54b we get a total distance of 148 for Stukeley's distance between the two. In order to check his accuracy I measured the actual distance with a tape and found it to be 153 ft. If, as is most probable, Stukeley took his measurements from opposite sides of stone 55b (the sides nearest to 54b and 56b respectively), there would be a deficiency of at least 3 ft which would make his measurements and mine agree to within 2 ft; so that in this instance his maximum probable error amounts to only 1.3%.

57) are marked by dots on the variant and as fallen on
)
57b) the main plan, the difference being probably due to

)   additional information or more careful later scrutiny.

58)
) are marked as fallen on both plans.
58b)

59 is marked by a dot on both plans.

59b is marked on the variant by an indeterminate symbol over a dot, and on the main plan by the symbol for a fallen stone.

60 is marked by a dot on both plans.

60b is shown as standing on both plans.

61) are shown by open rectangles on the variant (a
)
61b) symbol which is not explained, but which may be
Merely hatched rectangles with he hatching omitted) and by the
Symbol for fallen stones on the main plan.

62 and 62b are both omitted on the variant, but are shown by dots on the main plan. Their former existence is a hypothetical necessity.

63 is shown by a dot on both plans.

63b is shown as fallen on both plans.

64 is shown by a dot on both plans.

64b is shown as standing on both plans

65)
)
65b)
) are shown by dots on both plans.
66)
)
66b)

67 is shown by a dot on the variant and as fallen on the main plan.

67b is marked as fallen on both plans.

68 is shown as a cavity on both plans. A letter 'a' on the main plan refers to a marginal note "taken away 1720." Stukeley refers to this in *Abury p.30*. "In the year 1720 I saw several stones just taken up there, and broke for building, fragments still remaining and their places fresh turf'd over, for the sake of pasturage." This account and Note a on the plan probably refer to 69.

68b is shown as fallen on both plans. If my plotting is correct this stone must have stood at the NE corner of field 300 of the 25-inch map (edition 1900). On the bank at this point there are now a number of fairly large fragments of broken sarsen.

69 is shown as a cavity on both plans.

69b is shown as fallen on both plans. The letter 'f' (=fallen?) is written against it on the variant.

70 is marked as fallen on both plans. On the variant the letter 'F' is attached to it.

70b is marked as fallen on both plans, and on the variant the letter 'f' is written against it.

Nos 68b, 69b and 70b would appear to have stood in the bank separating fields 300 and 301. There is a good deal of sarsen in it now, but since this is the bottom of the dry valley these are probably in part the broken fragments of *natural* sarsens which still occur beneath the surface in the open ploughed field immediately to the North. At the time of my visits (December 1921 and March 1922) they were being uncovered and broken up, because they were an obstruction to steam-ploughing. One which appeared to be in the line of the avenue was buried instead of being broke, in case it might have been an avenue stone. The pit, however, which was dug for this purpose showed quite clearly that it was not artificially placed. The grateful thanks of all archaeologists are due to Captain Edwards, Lord Manton's agent, for the care he has taken in this matter, and indeed, in all others, that nothing of archaeological interest should be touched.

71. on the main plan this stone is marked as lying at an angle to the line of the avenue; on the variant plan it is marked in the same way as the rest, and the letter 'f' is attached to it.

71b. on the main plan this is distinctly shown as a cavity in the hedge on the west side of field 301. on the variant it is marked by a dot.

72 falls just within field 302 and is marked as a cavity on both plans.

72b is shown by a dot on the variant, and by a solid rectangle on the main plan. The latter symbol is probably that for a fallen stone which has 'gone wrong' in the drawing. On the main plan it is shown lying at an angle, parallel to 71.

73 is marked as fallen on the main plan, and on the variant by an open rectangle with a cross through it to erase it. A letter 'f' written near it may apply to it or to No. 74.

In field 302 immediately above No. 72 (in the main plan) and No. 73 (in the variant) is a circular symbol referring to a note "where the Roman was bury'd, lying when I was here first." On the variant the word 'standing' was written first, and was erased and 'lying' substituted. It refers presumably to 72 or 73. the erasure and the appearance of the later corrected version unerased in the main plan, is another indication that the variant was drawn first.

73b is marked by a dot on both plans.

74 is marked as fallen on both plans, and as standing in the hedge running N. to S. and forming in Stukeley's day the eastern boundary of a small enclosure in the south-western portion of field 302. the hedge has now disappeared, but the bank can still be traced.

74b is marked by a dot on both plans.

75 and 75b are marked by dots on both plans.

76 is marked as fallen on both plans.

When Stukeley made his plans, the only building on the south [*crossed out*] **north** [*pencilled in*] side of the Bath road here was a small shed or cottage standing by the side of the southern hedge of the small enclosure in field 302 already referred to. This building is still in existence and is immediately opposite the brewery, the westernmost of all the houses on the south side of the road. Between the point where the Avebury road enters the Bath road and the large arable field on the east (a distance of 200 yards) (No. 136) ran a hedge. This hedge either coincided with the frontage of the existing houses, or ran parallel with it a few feet to the north. But its eastern end has been altered by the erection of a house (the westernmost). The hedge originally ran immediately in front of this house, and the garden and shrubbery now taken in between the house and the Bath road, have been taken in from the road since Stukeley's time.

At this point the Roman road entered the line of the Bath road which coincides with it westwards as far as Silbury. The Roman road must have gone over the ground immediately in front of the house, and it may still be seen in field 136 arriving at this point. The bend southwards of the Bath road was caused doubtless by the desire to avoid the needless hill climbing which the directer course of the Roman road involved.

76b is marked as fallen on both plans. This and the preceding stone are probably those recorded as buried on Mr Butler's premises (*WAM iv.328*).

77 is marked by a dot on the variant and as fallen on the main plan. On the main plan, which here is almost certainly the correcter, its position is shown as in the hedge on the N. side of the Bath road – or possibly between the hedge and the road. From the way in which it is inserted, it has the appearance of being a latter addition. This is probably the stone "over which the Bath road passes". (*WAM iv.328*).

77b is marked by a dot on both plans.

78 and 78b are marked by dots on both plans. They are shown as lying in field 309 immediately east of the brewery. The line of the avenue makes it impossible to fit both stones into this field on the 25" map and I strongly suspect that the north-eastern side of the field has been shaved off since Stukeley's time. This was probably done at the time when the shrubbery opposite was made. In this way the portion of field 309 taken for the road might have been regarded as compensating the loss to

the road caused by the enclosure of the shrubbery; and the result was undoubtedly an improvement, since an awkwardly sharp corner was thereby done away with. This hypothesis is strengthened by the curious shape of the field, which suggests a rectangle with the N.E. corner rounded off. Stukeley's plan shows the N. and S. hedges of the field as approximately parallel for most of their course.

79 is marked by a dot on both plans.

79b is marked as a cavity on the variant, and by a dot on the main plan.

Between 79 and 80 now stands a small cottage which was not in existence in Stukeley's time. S.S.W. from it runs a bank in a grass field, the remains of the hedge shown in Stukeley's plans.

80 is marked by a dot on both plans.

80b is marked by a dot on the variant and as a cavity on the main plan.

81 is marked by a dot on both plans.

81b is marked as fallen on both plans.

82 is marked as fallen on both plans. It is represented as lying on the S.W. side of the Bath road, between it and the hedge which passes down the middle of the avenue according to Stukeley.

The still visible stones in the road-bank

82b is still in existence standing (probably) in the bank of the hedge. It is marked as fallen on both plans. Here begins the series of distances of 75 or 150 ft entered by Stukeley on the main plan against stones 82 to about 92. I have not measured the distances apart of the existing stones, but from the 25" map they appear all to be about 75 ft apart.

83 is marked as fallen on both plans.

83b is still in existence in the bank of the hedge, fallen, and is so marked on both plans.

84 is marked by a dot on both plans.

84b is still standing in the bank of the hedge, and is so marked on both plans.

85 is marked as fallen on both plans.

85b is still in existence in the bank of the hedge, fallen, and is so marked on both plans.

Between 84 and 85 is he spot-level 494 ft in the middle of the road. Nos 82b to 85b can only be seen by entering the grass field (308) on the south side of the road; they are not visible from the road itself.

86 is marked by a dot on both plans.

86b is marked by a dot on the variant and as fallen on the main plan. Its existence was not known until quite recently when it was located in the bank of the hedge by Mr Passmore by means of prodding with an iron bar. It lies a few yards east of the gate in the field.

87 is marked by a dot on both plans. (the symbol on the main plan, at first a hatched rectangle, seems to have been scratched out and a dot substituted).

87b is marked by a dot on both plans.

88 is marked by a dot on both plans. (there is the same uncertainty as in the case of 87).

88b is marked by a dot on both plans.

89 is marked as fallen on both plans.

89b is marked as fallen on both plans.

Between 88 and 89 the modern road to East Kennet now comes out into the Bath road. In Stukeley's time it came in 100 yards to the S.E. between stones 92 and 93; and this was the course followed as late as 1910 as can be seen from Colt Hoare's map. A tradition of the former existence of a road still survives; I was told by an old woman who lives in the cottage marked by B.M. 507.9 that an old man had said it used to go through a certain part of the garden where now the plants grew differently.

90 is marked by a dot on the variant as a fallen on the main plan.

90b is marked as fallen on both plans.

91 is marked as fallen on both plans. The site is now occupied by a fowl-yard.

91b is marked as fallen on both plans. I was able (March 11th, 1922) to recover the exact site of this stone by observing the nature of the soil in the allotment gardens immediately west of the cottage. At this spot is a circular patch of lighter coloured soil containing a larger admixture of chalk than the adjacent ground. I fixed its position by taking several measurements with a tape; and when I came *afterwards* to plot the position on the 25 in. map it fell exactly where I had already marked the position of Stukeley's 91b. Thanks to his measurements and to the straightness of the avenue, it was possible to plot these stones by dead reckoning south-eastwards from 35b (still in existence) with considerable accuracy.

92 is marked by a dot on both plans. It must have stood close to the western corner of the cottage, where according to the plans, was the eastern corner of field 308.

92b is marked as fallen on both plans. It stood in the western hedge of the road already mentioned, which is rather absurdly called by Stukeley, on the main plan, the 'way to Stonehenge.' The position of this stone also is clearly indicated by the nature of the soil in the garden, and when plotted from measurements taken on the spot, was found to fall within about five feet of the position allocated to Stukeley's 92b. the distance apart of the patches indicating this and 91b is 70 ft.

93 is marked by a dot on both plans.

93b is marked as standing on both plans in the eastern bank of the Kennet road hedge. Stukeley refers to this *Abury, p.31*: "One stone is still standing by a little green lane going down to the river." This appears to be the stone marked by Hoare on his plan of 1810 and also by Smith on his map of 1884 (*H.vi*). it is very unlikely however that it was in existence in Smith's time, and he probably inserted in on Hoare's authority. I conjecture that it was broken up in the first part of the 19th century to build the cottage.

94 is marked by a dot on both plans. Its position however, is very clearly visible by a patch of lighter yellow soil (due again to chalk admixture) in the arable field, at a point a few feet S.E. of the garden boundary (shown by a dotted line in the 25-inch map) and 85 ft S.W. of the road (measuring parallel with the garden boundary)

95 is marked by a dot on the variant and as fallen on the main plan.

95b is marked by a dot on both plans. Its position is indicated by a patch of discoloured soil 56 ft S.E. of that indicating the position of 94b.

96 is marked as fallen on both plans.

96b is marked by a dot on both plans. Its position is indicated by a patch 69 ft S.E. of 95b.

97 is marked by a dot on both plans.

97b is marked by a dot on both plans. Its position is indicated by a patch 64 ft S.E. of 96b.

98 is marked by a dot on both plans. (there are suggestions of a patch 49 ft from 98b but they are not as clear as the rest)

98b is marked as standing on both plans. Its position as indicated by a patch is 61 ft S.E. of 97b. this is probably the standing stone on the left of Stukeley's *Tab.xxi* , under the words "Ro. Camp." This is the last avenue stone shown on either plan. He gives it a bare mention in *Abury,p.31,line 16*.

99 and following. On the variant dots indicate the position of stones 99 to 101 inclusive, and their corresponding 'b's. On the main plan an extra pair (102 and

102b) is shown, and the distance from the 'sanctuary' to No.98 is stated to be 300 ft. this distance demands 4 intervals of 60 ft each, so that Stukeley's second estimate (on the main plan) is probably correct, allowing one interval between the last avenue stone (102) and the entrance to the 'sanctuary' circle.

We are fully justified in reducing the estimated intervals between the successive avenue stones by two facts:-
(1) the observed intervals between the patches on the south-west side between 94b and 98b, which average 64.5 ft;
(2) the decreasing interval shown in Aubrey's plan *WAM vii,225 facsimile*). This decrease begins at No. 94 on Aubrey's plan, if we call the last stone next to the circle No. 102; and this again tallies very well with the facts, since the distance between 91b and 92b is much closer to the normal 75 ft (70 ft). the decrease appears to begin at the foot of the hill.

The destruction of stones 090 to 96 or thereabouts is thus described by the Rev, Charles Lucas, quoted in *WAM xvii,333*: the facts related all took place before 1795. "The stones from the neck (of the serpent) were taken by a Mr Nalder by order of the landlord, Mr Grubbe, to build the farmhouse, now Mr Tanner's; and most of the [West] Kennet houses are built from that part of the avenue. In 1794 Mr Tanner destroyed seven, eight of nine, and the only regular part, six or eight pair, are on the new-ploughed lands (late downs) the property of Richard Jones Esquire, a minor."

We may conclude this lengthy *post mortem* enquiry by a few remarks about the breadth of the avenue and the interval between the stones.

Its breadth can now be approximately ascertained only in the case of stones 33, 36, and 38, omitting 34 which has been erected. At 33 the breadth as given by Long is 39 ft, at 36 it is also 39 ft; and at 38 it is 36 ft. since both 33b and 36b appear to have fallen inwards the length (originally height) of the stones themselves should be subtracted from these figures, which presumably record the distance between the present nearest points of the stones. This gives a breadth of less than 39 and more than 30 ft for the avenue at this point. Our next evidence comes from Stukeley who records that 54 and 54b (which were then both standing) were "48 ft asunder" (main MS plan). There is no more evidence until we get to the termination of the avenue on Seven Barrows hill. Here a patch of discoloured soil indicating the position of 98b is 49 ft from another patch which *may* represent the position of 97, but the evidence is not conclusive. Speaking of this part of the avenue, Stukeley says (*Abury, p.33*);- "I observed the breadth of the avenue here is narrower than elsewhere, as being the neck of the snake. 'Tis 45 ft or 26 cubits, equal to the diameter of the inner circle here." As we have no means of checking Stukeley's statements at this point, it must be sufficient to say that the breadth of the avenue seems to have varied between about 36 ft and 48 ft; and that there is no evidence that the breadth decreased towards its eastern end, in spite of Stukeley's biased statement to the contrary.

There is more evidence as to the intervals. Of the two existing groups (32-38 and 82-86) the following intervals have been recorded above:- (a) 68 ft; 72 ft; 73 ft; 69 ft; 73 ft; 69 ft; (b) about 75 ft. in addition, we have Stukeley's measurements of the intervals between 54b and 55b (75 ft) and 55b and 56b (73 ft) which I have proved to

be accurate within a foot or two. The distance of 18b and 21 given by Mrs Cunnington as 240 ft makes an interval of 80 ft between each, not allowing for the width of the stones themselves. If we take this as about 5 ft we get an average interval of 230 divided by 3 = 76.6 ft; and as the stones are on opposite sides of the avenue this will be a shade in excess of the true figures.

Again, we have Stukeley's recorded measurements of the intervals between stones 82 and 92 which is 75 ft in each case. We may therefore take 75 ft as a very close approximation to the distance between the stones from Avebury to the foot of Seven Barrows hill. Here, as has been pointed out, the intervals seem to diminish slightly, my measurements from patches for stones 94b to 98b being 56 ft, 69 ft and 61 ft. Obviously there is less certainty about these last measurements, but the lessening of the intervals was observed by Stukeley (*Abury, p.33, line 10*) and may be inferred from Aubrey's plan, where it appears to begin at No.94. the distance between 91b and 92b (whose sites are most clearly visible as patches of discoloured soil) is 70 ft.

THE CIRCLES ON SEVEN BARROWS HILL

The Kennet Avenue ended in two circles (concentric) which have been completely destroyed. The hill on which they stood is called Overton Hill on the Ordnance Map, but when I was at school at Marlborough at the beginning of the present century, I knew it by the name "Seven Barrows Hill." This name had not therefore been lost as has been stated. * A windmill formerly stood here, as is proved by the name of the field – Mill field – given by Long (*WAM, iv.328*) ¶

Aubrey was the first to mention these two circles. He gives a plan of them, and of stones 90 to 102 of the Kennet Avenue in *Monumenta Britannica(Plate IId, facsimile in WAM, Mag.vii,224)*. According to this plan the outer circle had a diameter of 45 paces, measured from north to south, and consisted of 22 stones; and the inner circle had a diameter of 16 paces and consisted of 15 stones. There appears to be some attempt to distinguish between fallen and standing stones by means of different symbols, but it is not a successful one, and since the plan differs from Stukeley's in other respects, it is hardly worth while considering.

The next mention of them occurs in a pamphlet appropriately called "A Fool's Bolt shot at Stonage," which according to the bibliographer of Stonehenge § was written about 1666 (by Thomas Gibbons?). he mentions the name "Seven Burrows Hill," and says that the outer circle consisted of 40, and the inner of 16 stones, all fallen. ^

* *WAM, vii,227.*
¶ This must not be confused with Overton windmill which stood on the hill S.S.W. of West Overton Church, and E. of the East Kent (*sic*) Long Barrow)
§ W Jerome Harrison, *WAM,xii,55.*
^*WAM,vii,227*

In 1678 the circles were discussed by a Marlborough doctor (R.Toope). he does not say how many stones there were, but gives the diameter of the outer circle as 40

yds and of the inner as 15 yds. His account is preserved in a letter to Aubrey, dated "Bristol, 1ˢᵗ December, 1685" and it is worth quoting again * it runs as follows:- "In Wilts, between Kinnet and Overton, in the lands of one Captayne Walter Grubb, I approached workmen digging not far off the roade; I inquir'd heir digging, who answered 'making new boundaries to enclose for French grasse or 5 foile.' Said the men, "We throw up many bones here, but know not of what creatures." I quickly perceived they were humane, and came the next day and dugg for them, and stored myself with many bushels, of which I made a noble medicine that relieved many of my distressed neighbours; the bones large and almost rotten, but the teeth extreme and wonderfully white, hard and sound. (No tobacco taken in those daies)". He then describes the circles, and continues:- "Round about this temple is a most exact plaine superficies, under this superficies layd the bones soe close one by another, that soul toucheth soul. I expose 2 or 3, and never took up a bone of them to observe and see in what manner they lay. I perceived their feet lay towards the temple, and but little more than a foot under the superficies. At the feet of the first order, I saw lay the heads of the next, as above, their feet intending the temple; I really believe the while plaine on that even ground, is full of dead bodies." Aubrey adds:- "This was discovered in 1678, and Dr Toope was lately at the Golgotha again to supply a defect of medicine he had from thence." The digging which brought such relief to the distressed Marlburians was probably along the present parish boundary.

In 1688 the observant Pepys passed by and duly recorded "seeing one place with great high stones pitched round, which I believe was once a particular building in some measure like that of Stonehenge." ◊ From this it would appear that some at least of the stones were then standing; it is certain that they were not all fallen, as the author of the 'Fool's Bolt' implies, since three were still standing in Stukeley's time.

In 1723 a reference is made to the circles by Thomas Twining, who says that the Kennet Avenue "halted at the two circles of stone one within another, standing not long since entire. Some remains of the greater circle are yet to be seen. * but for these closing years in the life of the circles Stukeley is our best authority. In fact he is the best authority for all of them; and his plans and account are by far the fullest and most accurate records which survive. His plan, given in *Abury, Tab.xx*, shows an outer circle consisting of 19 ¶ stones (3 standing and the rest fallen). According to his plan the outer circle consisted originally of 40 stones: the diameter was a little over 130 ft from north to south ("90 cubits"). The inner circle consisted of 12 stones still surviving out of a total of 18; the diameter north to south was a little over 40 ft ("26 cubits"), and east to west 50 ft ("30 cubits").

The following is what Stukeley has to say about it:- "This Overton Hill from time immemorial the country people have a high notion of it. It was (alas, it was!) a very few years ago, crown'd with a most beautiful temple of the Druids. The y still it the sanctuary. It had suffered a good deal when I took that prospect of it, with great fidelity, *anno* 1723, which I give the reader in *Plate xxi*. Then, about 16 years ago [*Abury was published in 1743*] farmer Green aformention'd took most of the stones away to his buildings at Bekampton; and in the year 1724 farmer Griffin ploug'd half of it up. But the vacancy of every stone was most obvious, the hollows still left fresh; and that part of the two circles which I have drawn in the Plate [xxi] was exactly as I

have represented it. In the winter of that year [1724] the rest were all carry'd off, and the ground plough'd over.

"the loss of this work I did not lament alone; but all the neighbours (except the person that gain'd the little dirty profit) were heartily griev'd for it. It had a beauty that touch'd them far beyond those much greater circles in *Abury* town. The stones here were not large, set pretty close together, the proportions of them with the intervals, and the proportions between the two circles, all being taken at one view, under the eye, charm'd them. This Overton Hill, whereon was the elegant temple we are speaking of, is a very pleasant place. 'Tis the southern end of that ridge call'd the Kakpen (*sic*), broken off by the River Kennet….. The temple that stood here was intended for the head of the snake in the huge picture; and at a distance, when seen in perspective, it very aptly does it." Speaking of his plan (*Plate xx*) he says it represents the temple "just as I found it for three years together, before it was demolish'd." These were perhaps the years 1720 – 22. he also says (p.32):- "everybody here remember (*sic*) both circles entire, and standing, except two or three fallen."

* It is quoted in full by Long *WAM,iv,327, note 1*, from where the above extracts are taken.
◊ *WAM,iv,319*
* *Avebury in Wiltshire, 1723*
¶ On p.32 he says "15" but the number of those shown on the plan is clearly 19.

Marked with the same accession code AVBAK 78510456
Three type-written sheets, and the original hand-written sheets.. Attached by paperclip, a small sheet of brown tracing paper showing West Kennett village and roads, with 4 stone positions in fields S of the A4. Roughly drawn in black ink, probably traced from the Ordnance 6" map. Field boundaries and measurements are indicated in faint pencil.

Discrepancies between Stukeley's MSS. plans 1,2 and 3 and the variant and actual distances on the 25" map

1. **The Kennet Avenue**

1. Between 1 and 4 only one interval shown on the main plan. There are really two, as Stukeley shows in his large plan of Avebury.
2. Between 26 and 28 only one interval is shown in the variant this is corrected on the final plan (No.3) where 27 and 27b are shown by dots. The latter appears to be correct.
3. between 38 and 47 the correct number of intervals (Nine, all dots) is shown in the variant, but only eight on the main plan. The position of 47 can be determined with fair precision by means of 'dead reckoning' from 54b, still in existence, 550 feet further south, assuming an interval of 75 feet in each instance. If this estimate of 75 feet is correct, and there can be little doubt of this, there must have been nine intervals between 38 and 47. this makes the

interval between each average 77 feet whereas nine intervals would make it 87, certainly too high a figure.

4. No.47 is shown by a dot on the variant and by the cavity symbol on the main plan.
5. No.48 is shown by a dot on the variant and as fallen on the main plan.
6. No.49 is shown by a dot on the variant and as a cavity on the main plan.
7. The imaginary 'cove' is shown between 49 and 51 on the variant, and between 52 and 53 on the main plan.
8. No.52 is marked by a dot on the variant and described as "just bury'd" on the main plan.
9. Nos.57 and 57b are marked by dots on the variant and as fallen on the main plan.
10. No.59b is marked by an indeterminate symbol over a dot on the variant, and on the main plan by the symbol for a fallen stone.
11. Nos.62 and 62b are omitted from the variant, but are hypothetically necessary.
12. No.67 is shown by a dot on the variant and as fallen on the main plan.
13. No.71 is shown by a dot on the variant, and on the main plan as a cavity.
14. No.72b is shown by a dot on the variant and by a solid rectangle on the main plan.
15. No.77 is shown by a dot on the variant, and as fallen on the main plan.
16. No.79b is shown as a cavity on the variant and by a dot on the main plan.
17. No.80b is marked by a dot on the variant and as a cavity on the main plan.
18. No.86b is marked by a dot on the variant and as fallen on the main plan.
19. No.90 is shown by a dot on the variant and as fallen on the main plan.
20. No.94 is marked by a dot on the variant and as fallen on the main plan.
21. No.95 is marked by a dot on the variant and as fallen on the main plan.

Notes on 'THE KENNET AVENUE' by OGS Crawford (1923?)

Several days were spent in the Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury, in June 2011 investigating how OGS Crawford had derived his numbering system for the stones of the West Kennet Avenue. An 8,000 word type-written manuscript by Crawford was transcribed as a Word Document; it seems very likely to have been intended as chapter for Crawford's book on Avebury that never materialised. Although undated, the manuscript was likely written around 1923, as the text makes reference to a stone position determined on March 11th 1922. Crawford's annotated maps of the Avenue were examined, as well as two large reproductions of drawings made by William Stukeley in the 1720s and referenced by Crawford in his manuscript.

Crawford's numbering system for the stones of the West Kennet Avenue was the model for Keiller's, which was modified by Isobel Smith in 1965 and has become standard. There are two differences though. Crawford identified the stones in pairs, with those of the NE side as "simple figures" – 1, 2, 3, etc - and their partners on the SW side as 'b' stones – 1b, 2b, 3b etc. In the Smith system these become *1a, 2a, 3a* etc and *1b, 2b, 3b*, etc respectively and are italicised. The numbering begins at the Henge, and increments along the south-east route to the Sanctuary. The other difference is the numbering itself, which does not always match, and is inconsistent even within Crawford's paper. In his second paragraph Crawford describes the first remaining stone of the Avenue as '3b' – but later in the paper under 'THE STONES' he describes it as '4b', which it is currently known as.

Crawford based his route on the stones that were visible in the 1920s when many were still buried; he filled in some of the gaps by referring to two Stukeley plans. One is a very large L-shaped 'scenographic' panorama of Avebury, which shows both avenues. The actual plan was owned by Alexander Keiller and eventually donated to the Bodleian Library, where it is identified as: *Bodl. MS Eng. Misc. b.65 f.43r*. Part of the plan is featured as Plate 13 in *William Stukeley – an Eighteenth-Century Antiquary* by Stuart Piggott (revised edition, 1985); a small reproduction of the full plan is included in *Avebury Revisited* by P. Ucko *et al* (labelled *Panorama* in the folder of plates). Both versions are far to small to show any detail but the Keiller Museum, Avebury, has a very large reproduction made of several photocopies taped together.

Crawford also refers to 'the variant plan' - another drawing of the West Kennet Avenue in aerial perspective, made by Stukeley in the 1720s. Today dozens of Stukeley's plans of Avebury are known, but Crawford refers only two: if both were owned by Keiller, then Crawford would have ready access to them. Crawford believed the variant had been made before the panorama, which seems likely. A large 2-sheet photocopy of this drawing is in the Keiller Museum. The photocopy has been annotated with stone numbers in pencil by an unidentified hand: the last pair of stones before the Sanctuary are numbered 100. The original drawing must now be in the Bodleian collection but has never been reproduced in print, so its catalogue details are presently unknown. The drawing has many interesting details, one of which is Stukeley's representation of the West Kennet Cove. This feature is thought by many to have been entirely fictitious – it is doubtful whether it existed in Stukeley's day. Yet on the drawing, Stukeley has added a 3-stone Cove around stone pair 53: it is identical to John Aubrey's drawing of 'The Devill's Coyts' made a century earlier and has very likely been copied.

Working on large-scale Ordnance maps at 25" to the mile, Crawford took measurements between actual stones and sockets in the field and extrapolated the likely original course of the Avenue. He used an average distance of 70 ft between stone pairs, but in reality there is much variation from this, which must have produced errors. Isobel Smith's revised stone-numbering system (*Avebury,* Smith p.175-6) removed three pairs of stones somewhere between Crawford's nos 60 and 70, in the light of Young's work in West Kennett, 1959-61. Consequently, the stones 75b to 86b in Young's report became 72b to 83b. It is curious that Smith reports "No more stones are known to exist between 83b and the Sanctuary" as Crawford lists three more fallen stones (84b, 85, 86b) all fallen and buried in the bank of a ditch. This may indicate that the Crawford/Smith numbers are out of synch again, and that Crawford's 82 is Smith's 79. If this is so, then the total number of stone pairs in the Avenue would be 99, not 102.

There are two maps in the Keiller Museum on which Crawford has marked his projected course of the Avenue: north and south. The maps are both the Ordnance 1900 editions, at a scale of 25" to the mile. Crawford's stone positions are finely drawn onto the maps in black ink, with additional notes and stone numbers, which stop just short of the Sanctuary at pair 98. The Sanctuary itself is not shown, but Crawford has added Faulkner's Circle. The many round barrows north of the Sanctuary have been assigned Greek letters, drawn in red ink: Crawford has added, in black ink, notes on the finds recorded by early archaeologists such as Thurnam and Hoare. The barrows have also been labelled in pencil with the 'G' numbers used today – the handwriting is Isobel Smith's so these may have been added around 1960. Smith has added more pencil notes, particularly around West Kennet village and also shows the position of stones found in the middle of the A4 road by Maude Cunnington which are not part of the Avenue. The distances in feet between stone pairs are marked in fine pencil – it is not clear whether this was done by Smith or Crawford.

Only one afternoon was spent studying the actual maps, but the table below shows some preliminary work on the correlation between Crawford's and Smith's stone numbers.

Crawford Notes	**OGS Crawford**	**Isobel Smith**	Smith Notes
	1	1	
	2	2	
	3	3	
4b standing	4	4	4b standing
	5	5	
	6	6	
	7	7	

	8	8	
	9	9	
	10	10	
	11	11	
	12	12	
	13	13	
	14	14	
	15	15	
	16	16	
	17	17	
18b burial found by Maud Cunnington	18	18	
	19	19	
	20	20	
21a standing, NE roadside – "with benchmark"	21	21	
	22	22	
	23	23	
Stukeley "turns here" between 24 & 25. OGS: "this is correct"	24	24	
		25	
	Somewhere in this section OGS has an extra pair of stones (based on Stukeley drawing)		
		26	
		27	
		28	
		29	
		30	
32a exists, fallen	32	31	
Both exist, fallen	33	32	
34a re-erected by Maud, 34b standing	34	33	
35a exists, fallen. 35b "buryed"	35	34	
36a exists, fallen	36	35	
	37	36	

Both exist, fallen	38	37	
		38	
		39	
		40	
	OGS adds another stone somewhere in this section	41	
		42	
		43	
		44	
		45	
		46	
		47	
		48	
		49	
		50	
		51	
54b standing by road SW side	54	52	
	55	53	
56b standing by road NE side	56	54	
		55	
		56	
		57	
		58	
		59	
		60	
		61	
		62	
		63	
		64	
		65	
		66	
		67	
		68	
		69	
		70	
		71	
		72	72b position found by Young?

	75	73	73b not found
	77	74	74b not found
	76		
	78	75	75b position found by Young?
	79	76	76b position found by Young?
	80	77	77b position found by Young?
	81	78	78b position found by Young?
82b exists "probably" in bank of hedge	82	79	79b S of road - standing
83b exists, fallen, in bank of hedge	83	80	80b S of road – fallen, covered. 80a N of road – 5ft fragment
84b fallen, in bank of hedge	84	81	81b S of road – standing
85b exists, fallen, in bank of hedge	85	82	82b S of road – fallen, covered
86b buried in bank of hedge (found by Passmore, by probing)	83	83	83b intact, covered in soil
	84		"No more known to exist between 83b and Sanctuary" Smith
	85		
	86		
	87		
	88		
	89		
	90		
91b position found by OGS	91		
92b position found by OGS	92		
	93		
94a position found by OGS	94		
95b position found by OGS	95		
96b position found	96		

by OGS			
97b position (& poss 97a) found by OGS	97		
Both position found by OGS (98a not so clear)	98		
	99		
	100		
	101		
	102		

Steve Marshall 2nd July 2011