

XC. *An Account of a remarkable Monument found near Ashford in Derbyshire: In a Letter from the Reverend Mr. Evatt, of Ashford, to Mr. Whitehurst, of Derby. Communicated by Benjamin Franklin, LL. D. F. R. S.*

Dear Sir,

Ashford, October 5, 1761.

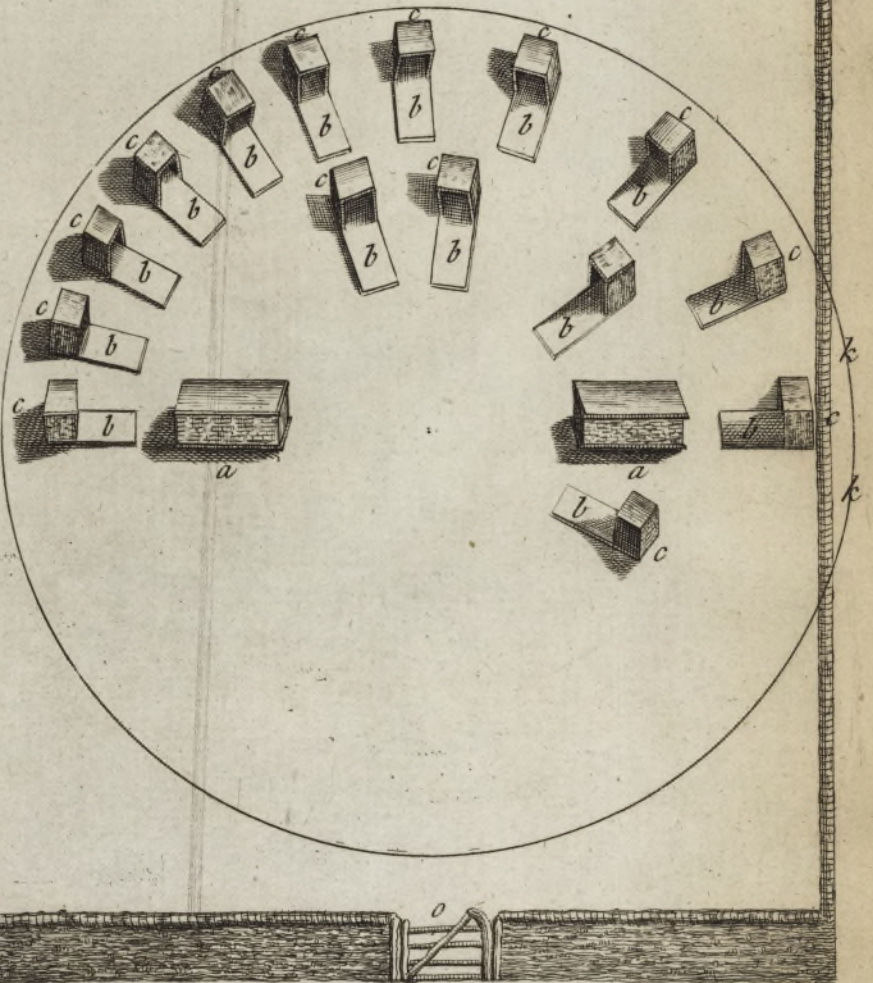
Read May 13,
1761.

THE following is the best account I am able to give you of the curiosity I told you of, discovered some time ago in our neighbourhood; to which I have added, an imperfect drawing, that, I hope, will, notwithstanding, give you a tolerable idea of it.

In the year 1759, as some people were making a turnpike-road through the village of Wardlow, near this place, they thought proper to take out of an adjoining field, a heap of stone, that had lain there time immemorial, and without any tradition, that I could find, why it was thrown together in that place, although it was manifest it was a work of art. Here, to their great surprize, upon removing the stone, they found a monument, to the memory of seventeen persons, or more, who had been there interred, in the manner expressed in the drawing annexed. [*Vide Tab. XV.*]

The bodies appeared to have been laid upon the surface of the ground, upon long flat stones, and their heads and breasts protected from the incumbent weight of stone, by small walls made round them, with a flat stone over the top, as I have endeavoured

- a. a. The two chief Monuments about $7\frac{1}{2}$ long and $2\frac{1}{2}$ high.
c. c. The lesser ones about the same length and height, but the
Chest part only about a Yard long and open before?
b. b. b. The large flat Stones upon which the Body's were laid.
k k That portion of the Circle which was wanting to make it complete
E. E. The great Road now made Turnpike?
o. The Gate thro' which the Stone was Drawn for Repair of the
Turnpike Road?



to express in the figures, excepting the two capital ones, marked *a*, *a*, which were walled up, and covered from head to foot, in the form of a long chest, with a stone cover over each.

Upon removing the rubbish, many bones, such as jaw-bones, teeth, and the like, were found undecayed; but none at all of the larger bones of the body, that I could learn. The heap of stones, that covered them, was 32 yards in diameter, and about five feet high; and the stones, of which the coffins, or tombs, were composed, appear, very plainly, to have been taken from a stone quarry, above a quarter of a mile distant. In the drawing, you see a part of the circle is vacant; but it is probable it was not so, as there were found several bones and teeth in that space; the cause might be, that as part lay next the road, it might have met with an accidental disturbance; or, what is yet more likely, the people that came to lead the stone away, beginning on that side of it, destroyed that part, before they were aware that it was any-ways remarkable, or worthy note.

There is one circumstance, that seems to denote the monument to have been rather modern; which is this. It appears, from the best observations I could make, that the wall, marked *d*, was erected before the monument was made, as I think it hardly probable, that the persons, who built it, would be at the trouble to remove that part of the circle, that was without, for the sake of building a field-wall, entirely level; which is the case, for all that portion of the circle, from the inside of the wall, was as level as any other part of the field: and as walls, I apprehend, are not of very antient date here, (if the above

be a fact) I cannot help concluding, that the monument must have been erected in some or other of the wars of the houses of York and Lancaster, or later. But this is only conjecture, and must be submitted to the judgment of the more curious, or those who may have heard of, or seen, some similar ones; for my part, in my reading, I have not met with any thing at all like it. The several coffins were about two feet high each; the two complete ones about 7.6 long each; and the others had the flat stone nearly the same length; but the covering extended only as far as the breast.

These are all the particulars I am now able to give you, of this remarkable monument. It is now totally destroyed. If any of your friends, to whom you may, possibly, communicate this, could ascertain, in any measure, the date of it, should be extremely glad to hear it from you, as, I think, it would greatly assist me in tracing some other remarkable curiosities in our neighbourhood, by way of preparation for a natural history of this part of our county.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your sincere friend,

and humble servant,

Samuel Evatt.

XCI. *Descriptio*