

Serpent Mound

served: 'Finding ourselves thus unconsciously in the very presence of the Great Dragon, we hastened to improve our acquaintance, and in a couple of minutes had scrambled on the ridge which forms its backbone, and thence perceived that we were standing on an artificial mound 300 feet in length, forming a double curve, a huge letter S, and wonderfully perfect in anatomical outline.

'This we perceived more perfectly on reaching the head, which lies at the western end, whence diverge small ridges, which may have represented the paws of the reptile. On the head rest a circle of stones, supposed to be emblematic of the solar disk, and exactly corresponding with the solar circle as represented on the head of the mystic serpents of Egypt and Pheonicia, and in the Great American Serpent Mound.'

At the time of Dr Phene's first visit to this spot there still remained in the centre of the circle some traces of an altar which, thanks to the depredations of cattle and blasting have wholly disappeared.

Two cairns are incorporated into the broad back of the barrow. The west cairn is 120 metres south of Dalineun Farm and is circular on plan, it measures about 19.7metres in diameter and 1.3metres in height.

In the centre the excavation revealed a massively built cist, triangular on plan, containing a cremation deposit, a flint knife and hazelnut shells.

Dr Phene considered the west cairn to be an ancient altar; the head of the snake being surrounded by a circular cairn which he supposes to answer to the solar disc above the head of the Egyptian Uraeus.

The east cairn of the Serpent Mound is mostly covered by grass and measures 12.5metres by 11 metres across.

North and south of the Serpent Mound are ten Bronze Age cairns stretching in a line over a distance of two kilo-

The cairns of the Glen Feochan Cursus probably date back to 1,500 BC and all were plundered in the past. However a scientific investigation of the one at Moleigh yielded flint flakes and a bronze riveted dagger. The two most southerly cairns can be seen in an open field, from the single track public road to Kilmore House. One of them is crossed by a field-dyke and measures 27metres in diameter and 3.4 metres high.

Across, or rather up Loch Nell, looking east, the peaks of Cruachan show above the lower range of hills on the south side of the loch. There are some who suggest that the number 'three' is sacred to the Saurian cult, and in that in Cruachan the three peaks that may be discerned from the mound, add corroboration to this.

The legendary creation deity Cailleach Bheur (one of whose mountains is Ben Cruachan) had influence here. So it seems plausible then that the Bronze Age people of the Glen Feochan area added their own palimpsest to the former Neolithic cursus to fashion their own 'avenue of the dead' culminating in the Serpent Mound which wriggles from the shores of Loch Nell.

of Loch Nell, was once claimed to be
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metres forming a cursus. Cursus are a Neolithic structure and are remarkably straight, though some have curved lengths-these usually link straight segments which may derive from different periods of time. Many seem associated with nearby rivers or streams, and most seem associated with pre-historical burial mounds.



The broad back of the serpent. t02ser1 d