

Notes on Propped Stones by David Shepherd

The term propped stone refers to large boulders that have been elevated, with one or small smaller rocks placed underneath. They may appear to be natural features - glacial erratics, outcomes of landslip, and so in - but in places where there is no natural process that can account for the feature. Propped stones are now firmly included in the canon of reinterpreted dolmen-like constructions (Cummings V and Richards C, 2021, *Monuments in the Making*, Windgather Press, Oxford.)

Shepherd D. 2013. Propped stones: the modification of natural features and construction of place. *Time and Mind*. Vol 6 Issue 3 November 2013. pp 263-86. Bloomsbury.

Also see the Megalithic Portal for more examples of Propped stones identified by David. This link will save you searching, though it doesn't show all the examples:

<https://www.megalithic.co.uk/user.php?op=userinfo&uname=DavidShepherd&desktop=true>

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Sleights Pasture SD7579578018

This propped stone is located in the Yorkshire Dales, north east of Weathercote and Chapel-le-Dale, south of the B6255 (Low Sleights Road) and around 970m east of the Philpin Sleights Propped Stone. It is one of several ice-wedged boulders moved between 5m and 10m from the nearby low scar; this one seems to have been selected for its elevation.

The top stone/slab is made of Great Scar Limestone and is 67cms thick, 80cms wide and 145cms long. There are two propping stones, one of which is itself propped into position; this "double propping" is difficult to conceive as the outcome of a natural process, and occurs also at Holme Park Fell 1. The slab is angled at around 17° with a direction of 025°. There is an apparent small, kerbed and paved area immediately on one side. (125 x 60cm).



Philpin Sleights SD7486677760

This propped stone is located in the Yorkshire Dales, north east of Weathercote and Chapel-le-Dale, south of the B6255 (Low Sleights Road). Raised almost in situ, there is a gap in the limestone pavement 4m from this feature, with the slab matching this space. The top stone/slab is Great Scar Limestone, 45cms thick, 125cms wide and 150cms long. The single prop is a portion of fretted limestone similar to the raised slab and the pavement underneath. The prop has two points of contact with the slab, which is angled at around 15° with a direction of 285° . [Whilst the top stone is likely to have come from the adjacent space in the limestone pavement, it might be considered to be associated with nearby pavement quarrying.]



Keld Bank SD7475977253

This propped stone is located on the west bank of Ingleborough. The boulder appears to have come from the top layer of a post-glacial collapse on a scar 30m (98ft) away. The top stone measures 55cms thick, 100cms wide and 200cms long. It is tilted at an angle of 23° and a direction of 345° and is made from Danny Bridge - Great Scar Limestone.

As with Golden Stones near Todmorden, this example has been apparently placed as precariously as possible, demonstrating an unusual degree of organised strength, skill and risk taking.

