

## The Devils' Stone Shebbear



**Turning the 'Stone' 2005**

***Turning the Devil's Stone  
Shebbear, near Holsworthy,  
Devon 5 November***

While everywhere else in the country on 5 November people are commemorating the memory of Guy Fawkes and his perfidious gun-powder plot, the villagers of Shebbear in Devon are preparing to turn the Devil's Stone. The bell-ringers go to the church at about 8 o'clock in the evening, where they ring out a violently discordant peal of bells. That done, they make their way out of the church and, with the aid of crossbars, apply themselves to the task of turning the Shebbear, or Devil's Stone nearby. After this considerable exertion, they can rest from their labours, secure in the knowledge that Shebbear is safe from harm in the coming year.

While it is not known for how long the practice of turning the stone has been going on, there is a wealth of legend surrounding it and as to how it arrived. The stone itself is about six feet long and is said to weigh a ton. It is not from a local rock formation and is, in fact, an erratic - that is, a stone from elsewhere, such as those deposited in the Ice Age. One theory is that it may have been an altar stone brought by a pagan cult, in the way that the Druids brought stones from Wales to Stonehenge in Wiltshire, though there is no evidence for this. Another is that it was dropped by the Devil himself when he was cast out of heaven by St Michael, hence the clamour of discordant bells to frighten him away. Finally, there is the theory that it was quarried as the foundation stone for Hanscott Church nearby and was moved to Shebbear by the Devil or some supernatural force, and that every time it was retrieved, it mysteriously turned up at Shebbear again, so was finally left there.

It is said that the turning was neglected once in the First World War, when misfortune immediately descended on the village. Again, in 1940, when most of the able-bodied men were away they failed to turn the stone and the war news suddenly became so threatening that it is unlikely that it won't be turned again in the future.

Source <http://www.geocities.com>

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At 8pm on 5<sup>th</sup> November each year, while the rest of the country is burning an effigy of Guy Fawkes, Shebbear has its own unique celebration. The one tonne lump of rock known as the Devil's Stone (or Devil's Boulder) which lies on the village green is turned over by the village bell-ringers. The stone is a glacial erratic- not from a local rock formation. According to local tradition the stone needs to be turned over every year or a disaster will fall on the village. (Supposedly the Devil is imprisoned beneath it.) After the stone has been turned the celebrations continue in the nearby Devil's Stone Inn. [Source](#)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shebbear,\\_England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shebbear,_England)

## **THE DEVILS STONE**

On November the 5th of every year the villagers of Shebbear prepare to turn the Devils stone which is over 6 feet long and weighs in at over a ton. The stone is not local and no one really knows how it found its way to Shebbear. The bells are rung at the local church in discord at 8pm which signifies the turning which once complete will ensure the safety of the village for yet another year.

[Source http://haunted-devon.co.uk](http://haunted-devon.co.uk)

**Shebbear** submitted by bec-zog

Standing stone in Devon

The stone made from a type of quartz not found in the area, measures about six feet by four feet and weighs about a ton. It is a possible remnant of a standing stone and may have been an original foundation stone for Henscott Church.

Map ref: SS 4409 Directions: The village can be reached from a series of minor roads off the A388, the A3072 or the A386 from Great Torrington.

[Source http://www.megalithic.co.uk](http://www.megalithic.co.uk)

Chunky stone by the oak and just outside the churchyard. Usual stories by the locals about the Devil trying to throw/carry it elsewhere. Also said that it is a "Sarsen" ie. a foreign stone and not from the immediate area. I'm not a rock expert but it looks to me as being a granite with a pinkish hue. Are there any sources close by? The oak is pretty venerable and has been looked after well including the rotten core being filled with concrete.

Apparently it takes about a dozen guys with crowbars to flip the stone on Nov. 5th.

[Source http://www.themodernantiquarian.com](http://www.themodernantiquarian.com)

Shebbear's centre lies round the village square, dominated by the large oak tree with the Shebbear Devil Stone underneath. This stone, said to weigh about a ton is "turned" every year on the 5th of November and is said to be one of the oldest customs in Europe.

Shebbear is principally a farming area, with a relatively small community. [Source http://www.therubycountry.com](http://www.therubycountry.com)

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The stone that lies in the village square to the East of the church is turned every year on November the 5th by local people. The stone is made from a type of quartz not found in the area, measures about six feet by four feet and weighs about a ton.

Legend suggests that the Devil lies under the stone, or that it was the original foundation stone for Henscott Church, moved by supernatural means every night across the river Torrage. Another story suggests that the Devil threw the stone at the church but missed.

The ritual may predate to pagan times when stones were often revered. Many villages had a mark stone or dobbie stone, which was venerated with libations and other offerings. Its location near the church and an ancient Oak may add weight to the idea.

[Source http://www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/england/devon/devon5.html](http://www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/england/devon/devon5.html)

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The stone, a large lump of non-local quartz, sits in the village square. It measures 6 ft by 4 ft and weighs about a ton. Allegedly, it was dropped by Lucifer on his way to Hell and the devil lies under it. If the villagers don't move it, then the devil might escape and run amok. So they ring the church bells to confuse any lurking spirits and then shift the stone.

[Source http://witchcraft-shop.livejournal.com](http://witchcraft-shop.livejournal.com)