**Where did the name “Hurley” come from?**

Hurley is the name of a prehistoric funerary monument fire beacon on the Quantock Hills, Somerset.

The view from the the beacon

<http://www.quantockonline.co.uk/quantocks/gallery02/index.html> (image four).

The area of the Quantock Hills, although small in extent, is one of the few remaining expanses of open moorland in southern Britain. Its archaeological importance lies in the existence of a landscape displaying examples of monuments tracing the exploitation of the hills from the Bronze Age onwards. Well-preserved monuments from the Bronze Age and Iron Age, including round barrows, cairns, settlements, hillforts and a trackway, as well as later industrial remains, give insights into changes in the pattern of land use on the hills through time.

These earthwork features are one of the key components of the Quantocks' broader landscape character. **Round cairns are prehistoric funerary monuments dating to the Bronze Age** (c.2000-700 BC). They were constructed as earthen or rubble mounds, the latter predominating in areas of upland Britain where such raw materials were locally available in abundance. Round cairns may cover single or multiple burials and are sometimes surrounded by an outer ditch. Often occupying prominent locations, they are a major visual element in the modern landscape. Their considerable variation in form and longevity as a monument type provide important information on the diversity of beliefs and social organisation amongst early prehistoric communities. Twelve round cairns have been recorded on the Quantocks, although the original figure is likely to have been higher. They are particularly representative of their period and a substantial proportion of surviving examples are considered worthy of protection.  
  
**The four cairns on Hurley Beacon survive well as a group**, despite some disturbance of the Hurley Beacon cairn itself, possibly the result of antiquarian excavation, and will contain archaeological deposits and environmental evidence relating to the monument and the landscape in which it was constructed.

Details

**The monument, which lies in two separate areas of protection, includes four Bronze Age cairns located on Hurley Beacon**, a promontory in the western region of the Quantock Hills. Three of the cairns are close to each other on the summit of the hill and the fourth lies 130m downslope to the south west. **The most impressive of the cairns is known as Hurley Beacon and, due to its prominent location, it is likely to have been the focus for other cairns in the area. The mound is approximately 2m high and 24m in diameter. The centre of the mound has been dug into leaving an irregular depression approximately 6m across and 1m deep. As its name suggests, the cairn has traditionally been used as a fire beacon**. The mounds of the three other cairns range from between 5.5m to 8m in diameter and are an average of 0.5m in height. The cairn located to the south west of the main core has a shallow depression about 3m long and 2m wide adjacent to its north east side.