

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Excavation and Survey at Dyffryn Lane Henge, Berriew, Powys

PROJECT REPORT 2006-07



CPAT Report No 833

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N W Jones
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Report for Cadw

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

7a Church Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DL
tel (01938) 553670, fax (01938) 552179

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CONTENTS

		page
1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	BACKGROUND	4
3	EXCAVATION	7
4	TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY	13
5	GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY	14
6	ANALYSIS OF CROPMARKS AND CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES	19
7	CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGEMENT	22
8	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	22
9	REFERENCES	23

Illustrations

Fig. 1	Dyffryn Lane monument complex	3
Fig. 2	1857 Plan of Dyffryn Lane Henge by Phillips Lewis	4
Fig. 3	Topographical survey of the henge showing trench location	5
Fig. 4	Plan of 2006 excavations	6
Fig. 5	Topographical survey plan	12
Fig. 6	Resistivity survey: raw data grey-scale plot	16
Fig. 7	Resistivity survey: processed data grey-scale plot	17
Fig. 8	Resistivity survey: interpretative plan	18
Fig. 9	Dyffryn Lane area map regression	21

Plates

Plate 1	Cropmarks at Dyffryn Lane in 1990	2
Plate 2	Aerial view of the henge under excavation	7
Plate 3	Initial view of the stone circle	8
Plate 4	The henge ditch viewed from the interior	9
Plate 5	Stone circle from the west	10
Plate 6	Stone circle and pre-mound turfline	11

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A programme of excavation and survey was undertaken jointly by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) and Bradford University during July and August 2006 on the site of the Dyffryn Lane henge complex south of Welshpool, Powys (SJ 204104, Fig. 1). The sites in question are all scheduled (MG157) and Scheduled Monument Consent for the excavations on the henge monument was granted by Cadw on 25 October 2005, subject to various conditions.
- 1.2 Prior to the project the henge complex was known to include a probably multi-phase class I henge monument, numerous ring-ditches (some with still surviving mound material), an earthen long barrow and an enclosure site, as well as a number of other monument types (Fig. 1). The complex has been described by Gibson (1985) and trial excavations have already been undertaken on the Lower Luggy earthen long barrow (Gibson 2000) and the adjacent Neolithic enclosure (Gibson 2003, and forthcoming). The Dyffryn Lane complex lies about 3km to the south of the Sarn-y-bryn-caled cursus and timber circle complex where extensive excavations have also been undertaken (Gibson 1994).
- 1.3 The importance of the henge has long been recognised although its precise nature was not well understood. The present project was therefore proposed to investigate the henge, its landscape setting, and elements of the associated complex of monuments with a view to improving our understanding, re-assessing the chronology and significance, and assessing the impact of the current agricultural regime. The principal aims of the project were as follows:
- evaluate the preservation of the henge monument and the degree of agricultural erosion
 - test and date the perceived stratigraphical sequence at the site
 - place the site in its chronological and palaeoenvironmental setting
 - elucidate the form, condition and extent of other monuments within the complex
 - provide training in various field archaeology and excavation skills
 - undertake various education and outreach activities
 - make scheduling or other management recommendations
 - prepare a report for publication
- 1.4 At the time of writing only preliminary results are available from the excavations, with a full programme of post-excavation analysis, dating and specialist reporting planned for 2007.

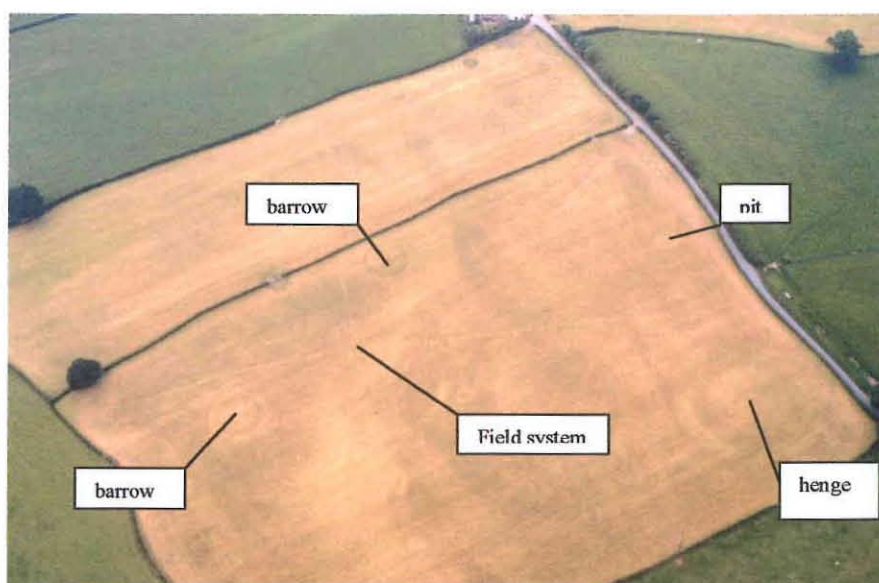


Plate 1 Cropmarks at Dyffryn Lane in 1990, including the henge, two barrows, a large pit and part of a field system. Photo CPAT 90-c-65

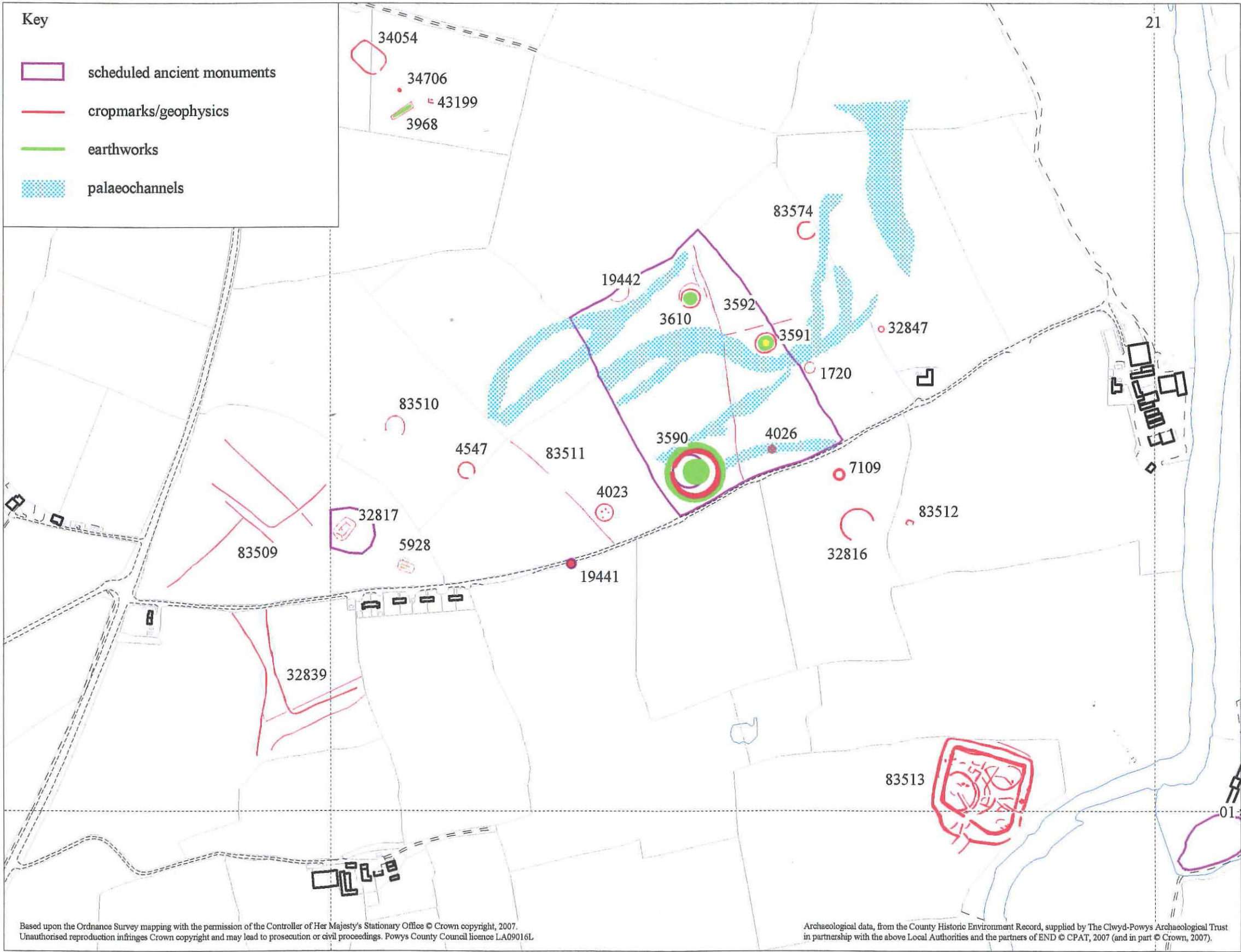


Fig. 1 Dyffryn Lane monument complex, scale 1:5,000

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The only recorded excavation of the monument at Dyffryn Lane was by Phillips Lewis of Buttington in 1857 who described a low mound 'which, by frequent ploughing, had become little more than a slight undulation in the land' (1857, 296). He also records, however, that the mound still survived to some 'eight or nine feet (c. 2.4 – 2.8m) above the general level of the field' (*ibid* 296): a substantial earthwork by present-day standards, although this may have been measured from the lowest point of the ditch, rather than the surrounding field. At that time the farmer was about to remove a stone which was interfering with the plough (B on Fig. 2), and a second toppled stone (A) was still visible in the hole dug to receive it the previous year. The encircling ditch of the henge does not seem to have been recognised and the antiquarian excavations therefore appear to have concentrated on the mound and to have comprised three trenches, commencing with a 'broad' trench 9yds (c. 8.3m) long between A and B, which recovered nothing but charcoal and 'cinders'. A second trench was dug from A to D 'ten or eleven yards' (c. 9.2 – 10.2m) in length, but the excavations found 'nothing to reward their toils' (*ibid* 297). The position of the third trench is less certain. It was driven through the centre of the mound to a point equidistant from B and D and a third stone was encountered on the circumference of a circle with M at its centre. All three stones had originally been upright.

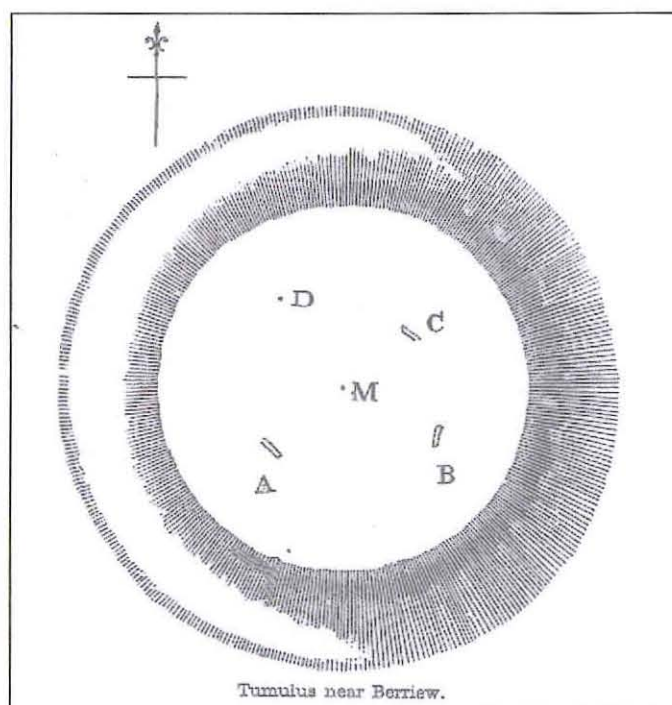


Fig. 2 1857 Plan of Dyffryn Lane Henge by Phillips Lewis

- 2.2 Phillips Lewis also records a 'considerable quantity of charred substances around stone A and in smaller quantities in other parts of the mound' (*ibid* 298). His subsequent brief reference to human cremation in India suggests that he considered these 'substances' to be at least in part calcined bone. His report also hints at the remains of *in situ* archaeological deposits.
- 2.3 The site was not located during the compilation of the Montgomeryshire Inventory (RCAHMS 1911) but the ditched nature of the mound and its associated monuments became better understood with the increased use of aerial photography from the mid-1970s and particularly the 1980s (Gibson 1995). The site lies in rich agricultural land and, though a scheduled monument, continues to be ploughed on a periodic basis under class consent. It would appear that at least one stone has been removed from the site to the farmyard of Dyffryn Farm. The other stones may yet be below the mound as suggested by parch marks on some aerial photographs (CPAT 86-C-118).

2.4 A topographical survey of the site by CPAT in 1987 revealed a mound 0.6 metres high by *c.* 40 metres in diameter and a low outer bank about 0.3 metres high, 15 metres wide and with an external diameter of 85 metres, both of which appeared to be unique survivals of earthwork evidence for this type of monument within the upper Severn valley. Subsequent geophysical survey commissioned by CPAT and undertaken by Geophysical Survey Bradford in 1992 identified the mound, the ditch with an entrance causeway to the north-west, the outer bank, and the suggestion of internal features, possibly stones. Linear anomalies across the survey area were interpreted as agricultural damage (Ovenden in Gibson 1995). The monument therefore appeared to be threatened by agricultural erosion and to comprise three stratigraphically linked elements (which might also be seen as the chronological sequence according to established chronologies):

- single entranced (Class 1) henge with an outer bank
- stone circle approximately 10-11m in diameter
- earthen (probably turf) barrow

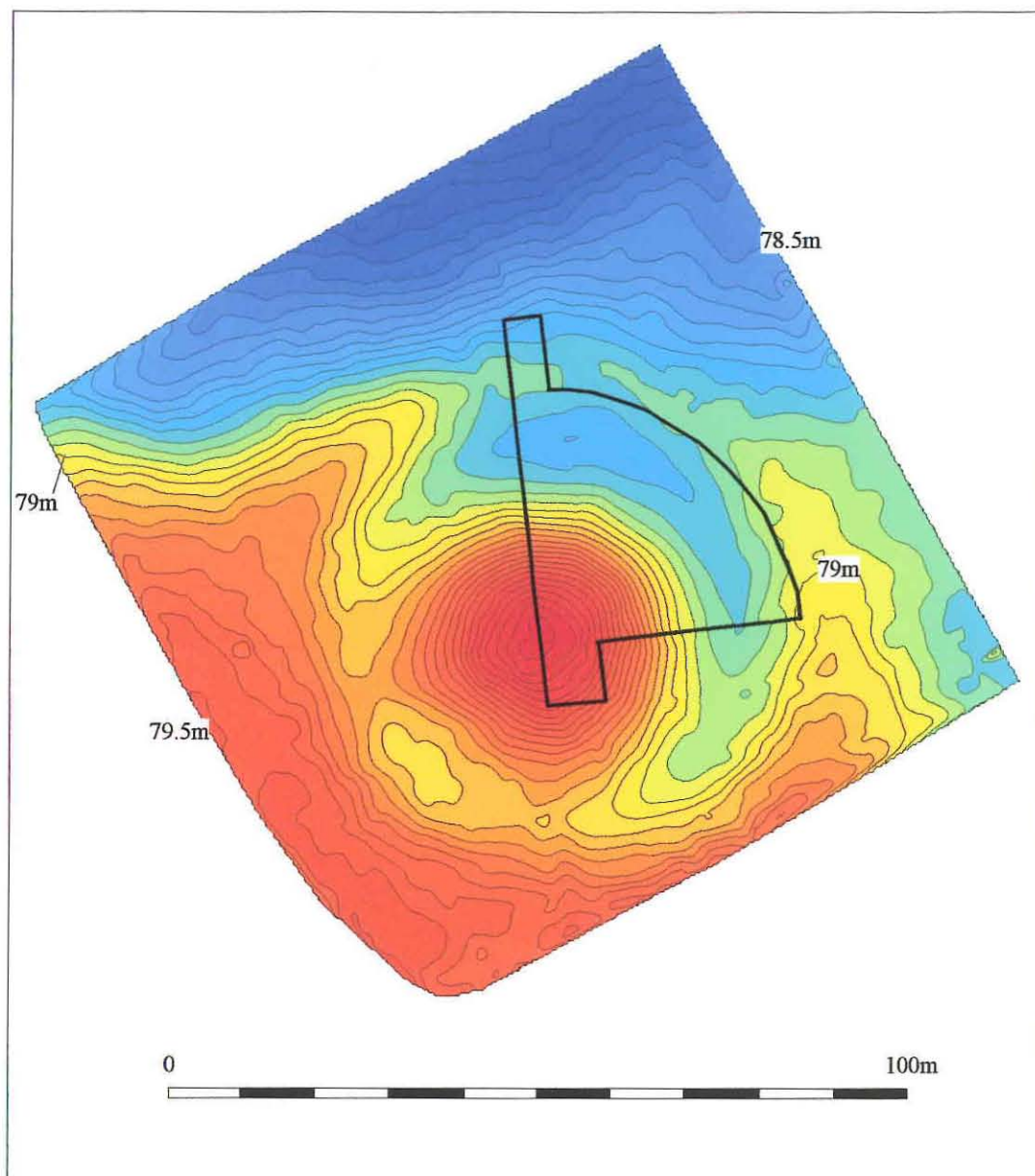


Fig. 3 Topographical survey of the henge showing trench location (contours at 0.05m intervals)

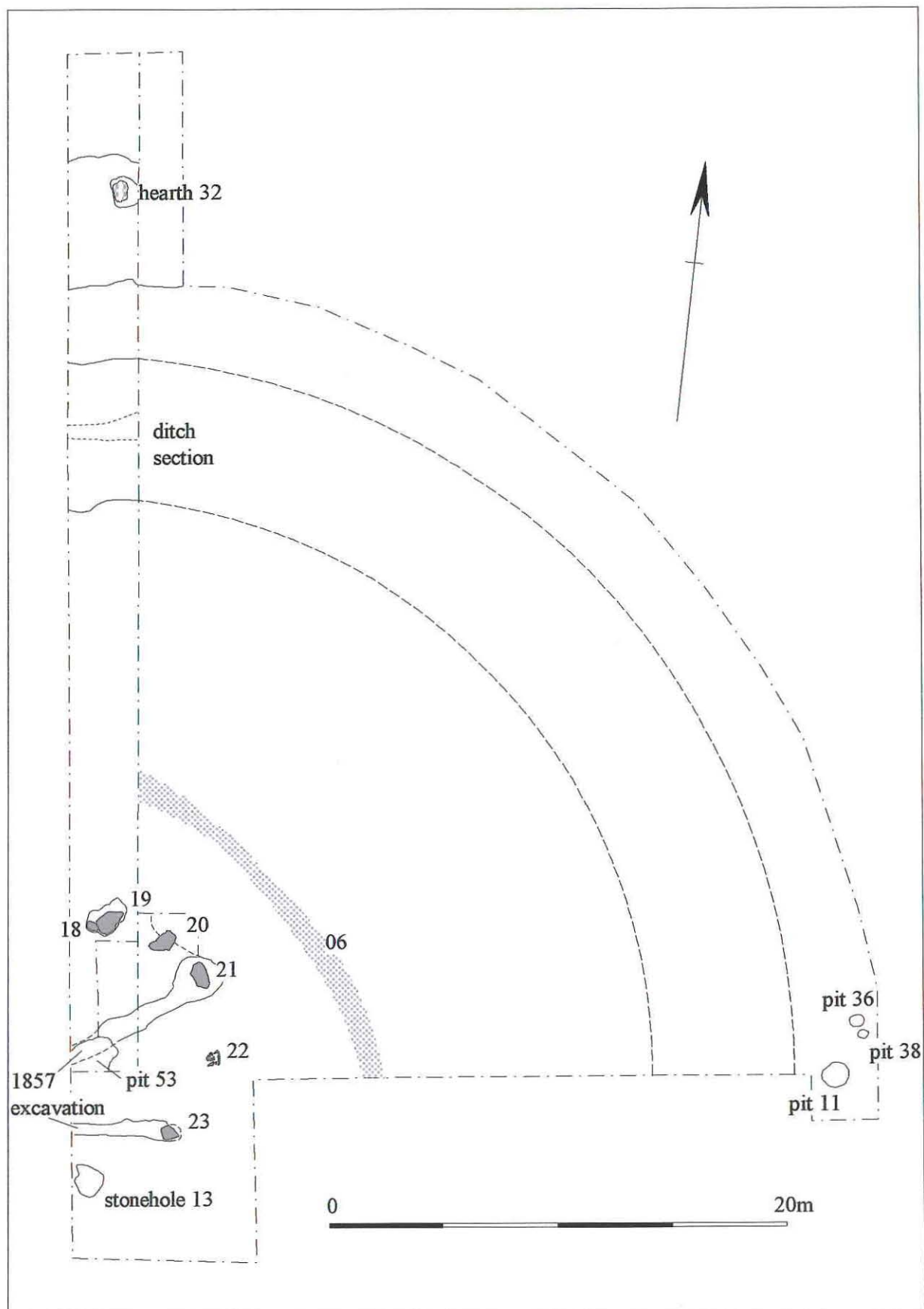


Fig. 4 Plan of excavated area

3 EXCAVATION

- 3.1 The excavation concentrated on the north-east quadrant of the henge, with the aim of identifying the antiquarian trench excavated radially into the centre of the mound between B and D shown on Figure 2.



Plate 2 Aerial view of the henge under excavation with the ditch showing as a prominent cropmark

- 3.2 The initial excavations were undertaken entirely by hand, comprising a number of sondages intended to determine the depth of modern ploughsoil and the level at which *in situ* archaeological deposits survived prior to the commencement of machine stripping. The north-east quadrant of the mound, extending to the outer edge of the ditch, was then stripped of topsoil using a mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision (Fig. 3).
- 3.3 Having stripped the topsoil five stones were immediately apparent, projecting slightly above the surviving mound material. The ditch was also very clear, although the edges were rather less distinct.
- 3.4 Unfortunately, the antiquarian trench proved difficult to identify and consequently the SMC was modified by Cadw to allow a strip up to 5m wide to be excavated along the western side of the excavation, with a further modification to permit the excavation of two pits which extended beyond the north-east edge of the excavation.



Plate 3 Initial view of the stone circle protruding through the surviving mound. Note grey fill of the stone hole in bottom left and ploughmarks in bottom right.

Antiquarian trenches

- 3.5 Although the description by Phillips Lewis implied 'broad' trenches, they proved to be no more than 0.5m wide and rather less extensive than had been thought. Two trenches were identified within the excavated area, both radiating from the centre of the mound. One trench ran eastwards from the western edge of the excavation towards one of the standing stones (23) and presumably equates to that cut between points A and B in Figure 2. The trench was up to c. 1.2m deep below the modern ground surface, and had undermined the stone, which had then been toppled into it, unfortunately removing any stratigraphical link between the stone and the mound.
- 3.6 The second trench ran north-east from near the centre of the mound to another stone (21), and equates to that between M and C in Figure 2. This too had undermined and displaced its stone, which is presumably the one which the farmer wished to bury in 1857 as it was obstructing the plough.
- 3.7 As well as the two trenches, Phillips Lewis evidently investigated a slightly wider area in the centre of the mound, although apparently without investigating the central pit (see below). Curiously, however, his report does record encountering ashes which he likens to an Indian cremation. The backfill from the trenches produced several flint artifacts and modern finds, but no indication of ashes or a potential cremation.

The Henge

- 3.8 The henge consisted of a large ditch with a low external bank and an entrance on the north-western side, outside the area of the excavation. A single section was cut across the ditch, along the western edge of the excavated area, extending through the external bank. The ditch was around 6.5m wide and up to 2.1m deep below the surface of the natural river gravels. The pattern of silting was suggestive of material that had been derived from both sides of the ditch, but with a slight bias to the outside, having eroded from the external bank.

- 3.9 There were no datable materials from the primary deposits of the ditch, although samples were taken by Dr J-L Schwenninger, of the University of Oxford, for dating by Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL).
- 3.10 The remnants of the outer bank comprised a layer of redeposited gravels 0.1m thick, sealing a leached old ground surface. The remains of a pre-bank soil were identified beneath part of the bank, within which a small hearth was revealed, comprising an area of heat-reddened soil with charcoal patches. Charred material from the hearth has provided a 14C date which calibrates to 2830 to 2820 BC and 2630 to 2460 BC at 2 sigma (Beta 223792).
- 3.11 Three pits were identified at the eastern edge of the excavation, within the area of the outer bank. Excavation suggested that all three might have been sealed by the bank and two of the pits produced sherds of middle Neolithic Peterborough-style pottery, one also containing heat-fractured stones.

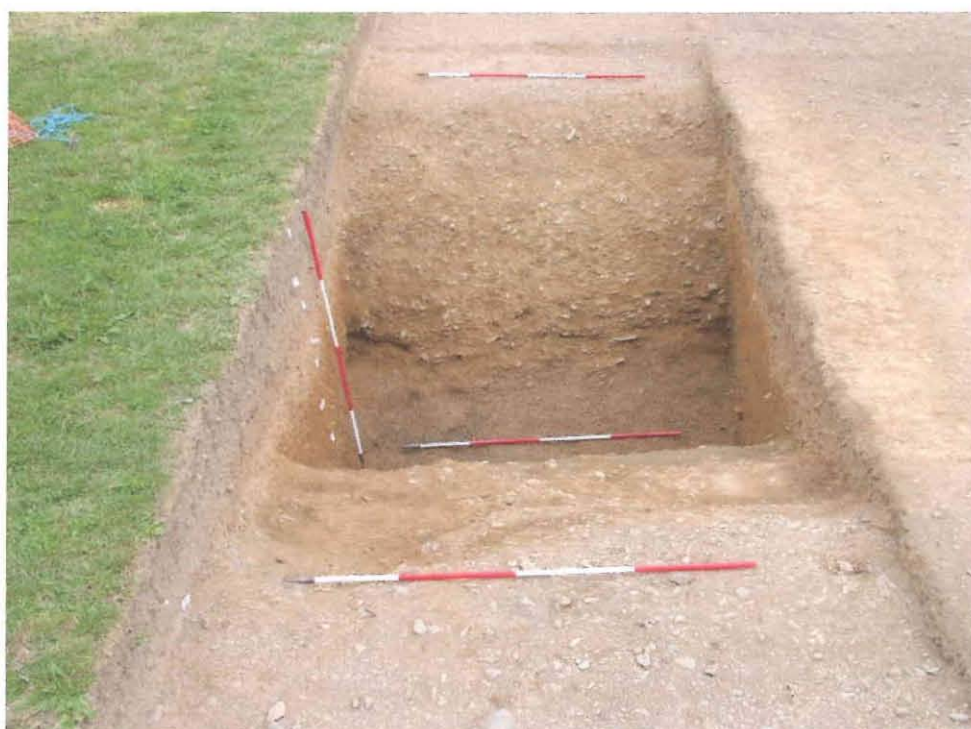


Plate 4 The henge ditch viewed from the interior (south)

Stone Circle

- 3.12 Although the results from Phillips Lewis's excavations suggested the presence of a stone circle, its nature was far from clear. The antiquarian excavations revealed three stones which could have been part of a free-standing stone circle, or possibly a kerb associated with the mound. The present excavations identified six stones, the tops of which protruded through the surviving mound material into the ploughsoil. It was immediately evident that the stones were suffering from plough damage and indeed a broken ploughshare was found adjacent to one of the stones.
- 3.13 In addition to the extant stones, a large hole was identified on the southern side, indicating the position of a seventh stone. Artefacts recovered from the fill suggest that the stone had been removed comparatively recently.
- 3.14 All of the stones appeared to be boulders, possibly glacial erratics, measuring between 0.5m and 1.2m across, and formed a circle around 11.2m in diameter. The spacing between stones 21, 22, 23 and stonehole 13 is approximately twice the spacing between 19, 20, and 21, suggesting that three smaller stones might also survive within the excavated area, but were completely

buried by the mound. Stones 18 and 19, on the northern side, were contiguous, although the significance is not clear.

- 3.15 Unfortunately, of the six stones identified within the excavated area two had been displaced by Phillips Lewis and a further three had been toppled in antiquity, leaving only one stone *in situ*. Careful excavation clearly demonstrated that the mound had been constructed over the stones, at least two of which were originally set within fairly shallow holes cut into the natural river gravels.
- 3.16 A compacted layer of subsoil was identified around the exterior of the circle and samples were taken for soil micromorphological analysis to determine whether this may have been the result of trampling.



Plate 5 Stone circle from the west showing the antiquarian trenches, central pit and pre-mound turfline

Turf mound

- 3.17 The central mound survived to a height of around 0.4m, with a diameter of 20m, and was composed of gleyed turves with iron-pan streaks. Apart from the antiquarian trenches, no other features were identified cutting into the mound. A small collection of flint artefacts was recovered from the surface of the mound, including a barbed and tanged arrowhead, but these cannot be regarded as stratified.
- 3.18 The outer edge of the mound was composed of more gravelly material, presumably incorporating redeposited river gravels. It may therefore be the case that spoil from the henge ditch was used to augment the mound, although no stratigraphical link existed between the two and it was not clear whether this might have been a primary deposit, or the result of recutting the ditch.
- 3.19 The excavations revealed part of a large oval pit beneath the centre of the mound filled with a soft, dark brown, mottled soil. One of the antiquarian trenches extended into the centre of the mound so that it was not possible to determine whether the pit had been cut through the mound,

or was buried beneath it. Although the pit was not excavated, augering suggested that it was at least 1.3m deep, below the surface of the natural river gravels.

- 3.20 The removal of part of the mound revealed a pre-mound turfline (context 41) comprising a thick, undulating layer of iron pan. Charred material from the turfline has provided a 14C date which calibrates to 2580 to 2300 BC at 2 sigma (Beta 223793). The turfline was seen to overly one of the fallen stones, indicating that the circle was ruinous at the time that the mound was constructed.
- 3.21 A sequence of buried soils was identified beneath the pre-mound turfline, comprising dark loams (context 44), iron panning and gravels. The area investigated was too small to understand the sequence fully, although a flint core, tentatively identified as Mesolithic, together with some large flint flakes were recovered from immediately below the turfline. Charred material from context 44 has provided two 14C dates which calibrate to 2870 to 2460 BC and 2460 to 2140 BC (from immediately below context 41) at 2 sigma (Beta 223795 and 223794 respectively).



Plate 6 Stone circle from the west showing pre-mound turfline and section through buried soils

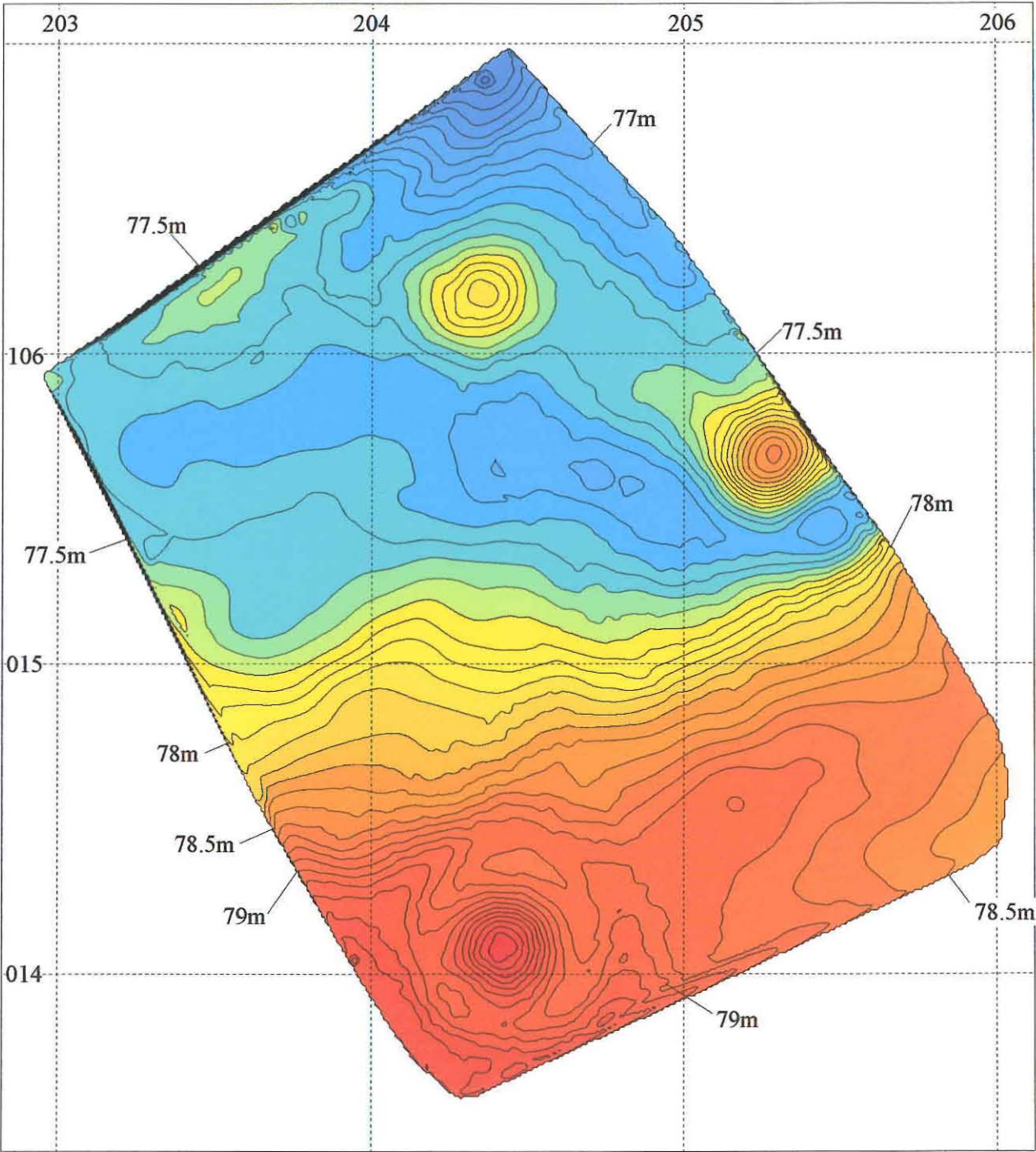


Fig. 5 Topographical survey, scale 1:2000

4 TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

- 4.1 A topographical survey was undertaken over the whole of the field containing the henge. An area of c.100m by 100m surrounding the henge was surveyed at intervals of around 3m, while the areas surrounding the two barrows in the north-east corner of the field was surveyed at intervals of around 5m. The remainder of the field was surveyed at intervals of 15m. The survey was undertaken by CPAT staff as part of the training programme for students, providing an introduction to the use of digital survey equipment and Penmap software.
- 4.2 The survey was related to Ordnance Datum and provides a baseline record of the state of the monuments in this area. In addition, the survey was used to locate both the excavation and the geophysical survey, providing useful data for the analysis and interpretation of the monuments.
- 4.3 The henge survives as a low, visible earthwork, although with no well-defined edges. The survey confirmed the presence of a slight external bank up to 0.1m high and 80-85m in external diameter, within which a broad ditch is clearly visible, the profile merging with that of the bank and internal mound. Owing to the natural slope of the ground the mound rises to a maximum of 0.5m above the general level of the surrounding field to the west and around 1.0m above the level to the east. Although an entrance has been identified on the north-west side from aerial photography and previous geophysical survey, this is not readily apparent as an element of the earthwork, although the outer bank is less distinct in this area.
- 4.4 The two upstanding barrows in the field were also clearly visible. The more southerly (PRN 3591) is rather more obvious, its profile enhanced by its position on the northern edge of a prominent palaeochannel. Comparison with the geophysical survey results suggests that both barrows are sited atop natural mounds, the more southerly standing 1.2m above the surrounding field, with the barrow itself occupying the top 0.5m. The other barrow (PRN 3610) is somewhat lower, rising to 0.3m on top of a natural mound 0.3m high which is elongated east to west. It is also interesting to note that there appears to be a slight bulge in the profile of the barrow on the western side that corresponds to the position of a putative gap in the ditch suggested by both cropmark evidence and the geophysical survey (see 5.8 below). It is therefore possible that past disturbance, possibly ploughing, has redeposited mound material over the ditch creating the impression of an entrance.

5 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

- 5.1 A programme of resistivity survey was undertaken by Stratascan of selected elements within the Dyffryn Lane Complex, for the purpose of elucidating a number of enigmatic cropmark sites which may form part of the henge complex.
- 5.2 Two surveys were carried out as part of the project, the first of which was undertaken concurrently with the excavations in an area covering the two upstanding barrows in the north-east corner of the field containing Dyffryn Lane Henge, with an additional area to investigate a potential ring ditch identified from cropmark evidence further to the west (Heard 2006). The second survey was undertaken at a later date on the site of a possible cursus identified from cropmark evidence by RCAHMW in 2005. Unfortunately, the resistivity survey (Cook 2006) produced very poor results on the latter site and the decision was therefore taken to carry out a magnetometer survey, which was undertaken by CPAT. The results from this survey were extremely positive, if rather surprising, as the site proved to be a complex multi-phase, double-ditched enclosure, the cropmarks having identified only a part of the western side. The survey has therefore been reported in full as part of the Defended Enclosures project (Hankinson & Silvester 2006, 9-11), rather than within this report which instead concentrates on the results from the first resistivity survey.

Methodology

- 5.3 The resistance meter used was an RM15 manufactured by Geoscan Research incorporating a mobile Twin Probe Array. The Twin Probes are separated by 0.5m and the associated remote probes were positioned approximately 15m outside the grid. Although the values being logged are actually resistances in ohms they are directly proportional to resistivity (ohm-metres) as the same probe configuration was used throughout.
- 5.4 Readings were taken at 1.0m centres along traverses 1.0m apart. This equates to 900 sampling points in a full 30m by 30m grid. All traverses were surveyed in a 'zigzag' mode. The 0.5m probe spacing of a twin probe array has a typical depth of penetration of 0.5m to 1.0m.
- 5.5 The processing was carried out using specialist software known as *Geoplot 3* and involved the 'de-spiking' of high contact resistance readings and the passing of the data through a high pass filter. This has the effect of removing the larger variations in the data often associated with geological features. The net effect is aimed at enhancing the archaeological or man-made anomalies contained in the data.
- 5.6 The survey results are presented as grey-scale plots of the raw data (Fig. 6) and processed data (Fig. 7), together with an interpretive plot identifying individual anomalies (Fig. 8).

Dyffryn Lane Barrow II (PRN 3591)

- 5.7 The upstanding mound was identified as an area of low resistance (23) around 20m in diameter, surrounded in part by a narrow high resistance anomaly (1) which may represent an area of compacted ground at the base of the mound. A circular high resistance anomaly (13) in the centre of the mound could represent a large central pit up to 7.5m in diameter. The mound is surrounded by a single, narrow ditch, appearing as a low resistance anomaly (5) with an external diameter of between 25m and 27m.

Dyffryn Lane Barrow III (PRN 3610)

- 5.8 The low mound was identified as a high resistance anomaly (22) around 17m in diameter surrounded by a single, narrow ditch (4) 25m in diameter. A possible entrance 5m wide is suggested by both the resistivity survey and cropmark evidence, although a low resistance anomaly (4a) can be seen within the gap which, combined with the topographical survey, suggests that the ditch may have been masked at this point by redeposited mound material (see

- 4.4). A high resistance linear anomaly can also be identified on the outer edge of the ditch of the northern barrow (2). This anomaly may also represent a strip of compacted ground or bank, possibly associated with the construction of the ditch.

Dyffryn Lane ring ditch VII (PRN 19442)

- 5.9 A possible ring ditch had been identified from cropmark evidence and the survey area was extended to include the eastern quadrant. This revealed a narrow curving ditch (10) which could be part of a ring ditch with a diameter of up to 26m. Areas of high resistance (14 and 15) were identified on either side of the ditch which may or may not be associated with it.

Miscellaneous features

- 5.10 The survey identified two palaeochannels, the larger of which (26) survives as a prominent topographical feature, while the other (24) is not visible on the ground, although it has been identified as a cropmark.
- 5.11 A high resistance linear anomaly was identified through the centre of the survey area in an east to west orientation (11). This represents a previous field boundary depicted on the 1870s Ordnance Survey mapping and appears to cut through linear anomaly 6.
- 5.12 The two linear features identified from aerial photography can also be seen within the survey as low resistance linear anomalies (6 and 7). These represent two ditches which are assumed to be associated with a former field system (PRN 3592). A break in the southern ditch (7) may represent an entrance. Moderate high-resistance area anomalies (18 and 19) were also identified in close proximity to the north-south ditch (6) which could represent areas of compacted ground or provide weak evidence of earthen banks situated either side of the feature. Two further low-resistance linear anomalies (8 and 9) were also identified running approximately parallel with the ditch (6).
- 5.13 A large area of high resistance (12) was identified close to the southern barrow, which may represent an area of structural debris or ground disturbance and could be associated with the possible entrance in the southern ditch of the field system (7).
- 5.14 Two disjointed linear anomalies (3) were identified to the north of the northern barrow, which may represent structural debris in a general area of ground disturbance, as no discernable structure could be identified.
- 5.15 Three discrete areas of mottled response (20-22) were identified which might represent areas of ground disturbance although could be of natural origin. A number of discrete low-resistance area anomalies (25) were also identified within one area of mottled response (20) which could represent a number of cut features of archaeological origin. A further area of possible ground disturbance was suggested by a group of high-resistance area anomalies (16) situated within an area of varying responses (21).

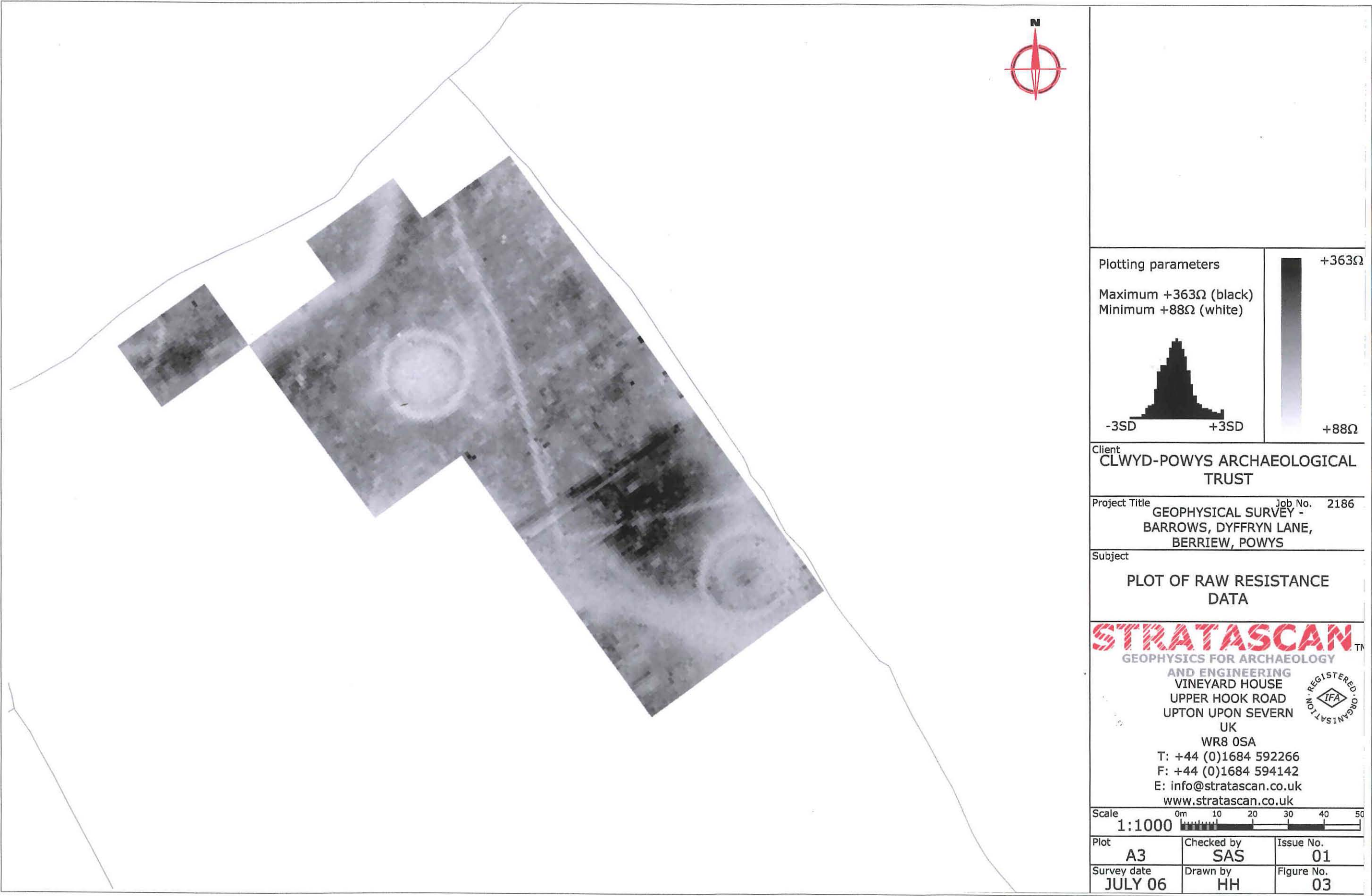


Fig. 6 Resistivity Survey: plot of raw data

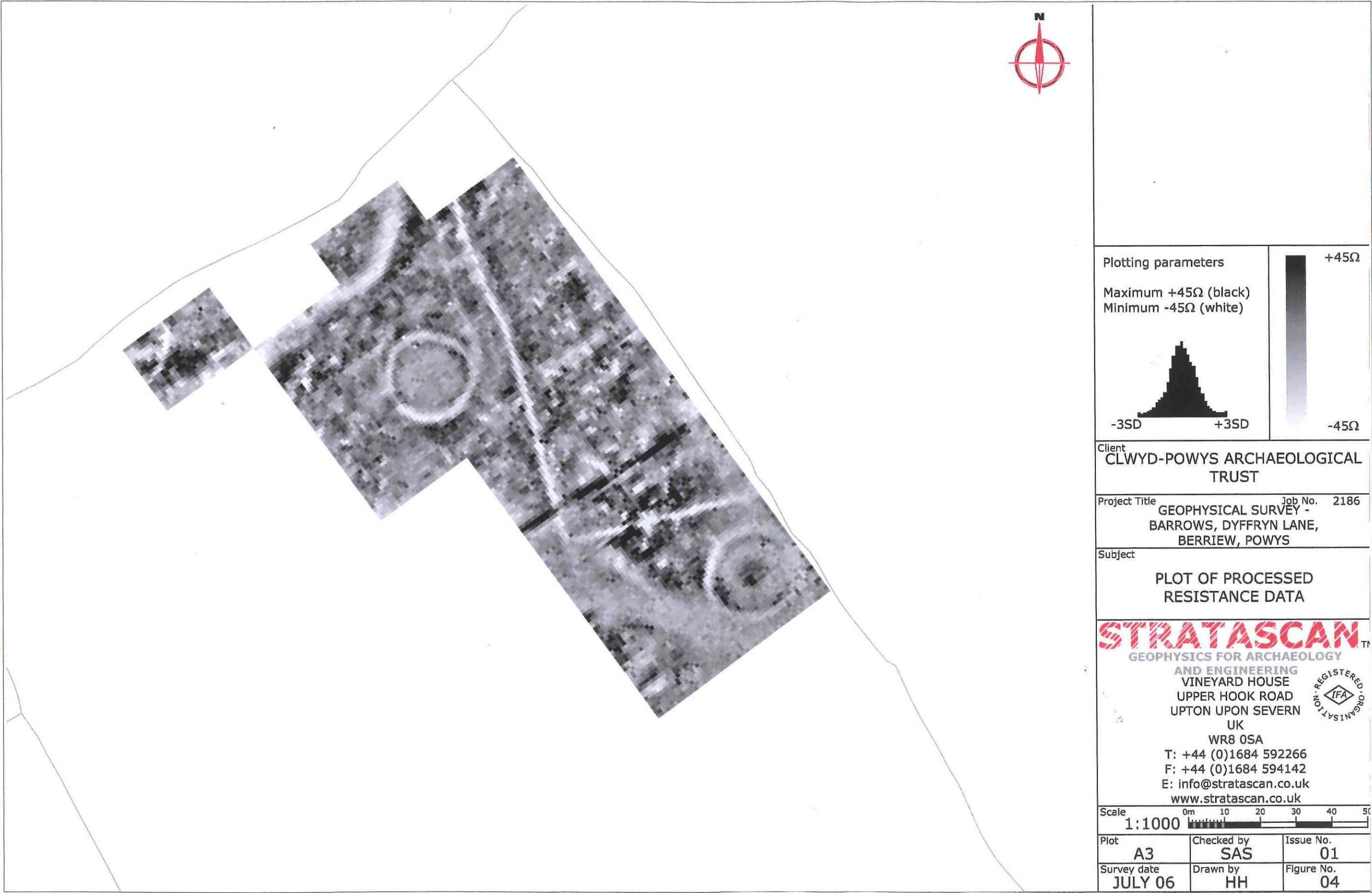


Fig. 7 Resistivity Survey: grey-scale plot of processed data

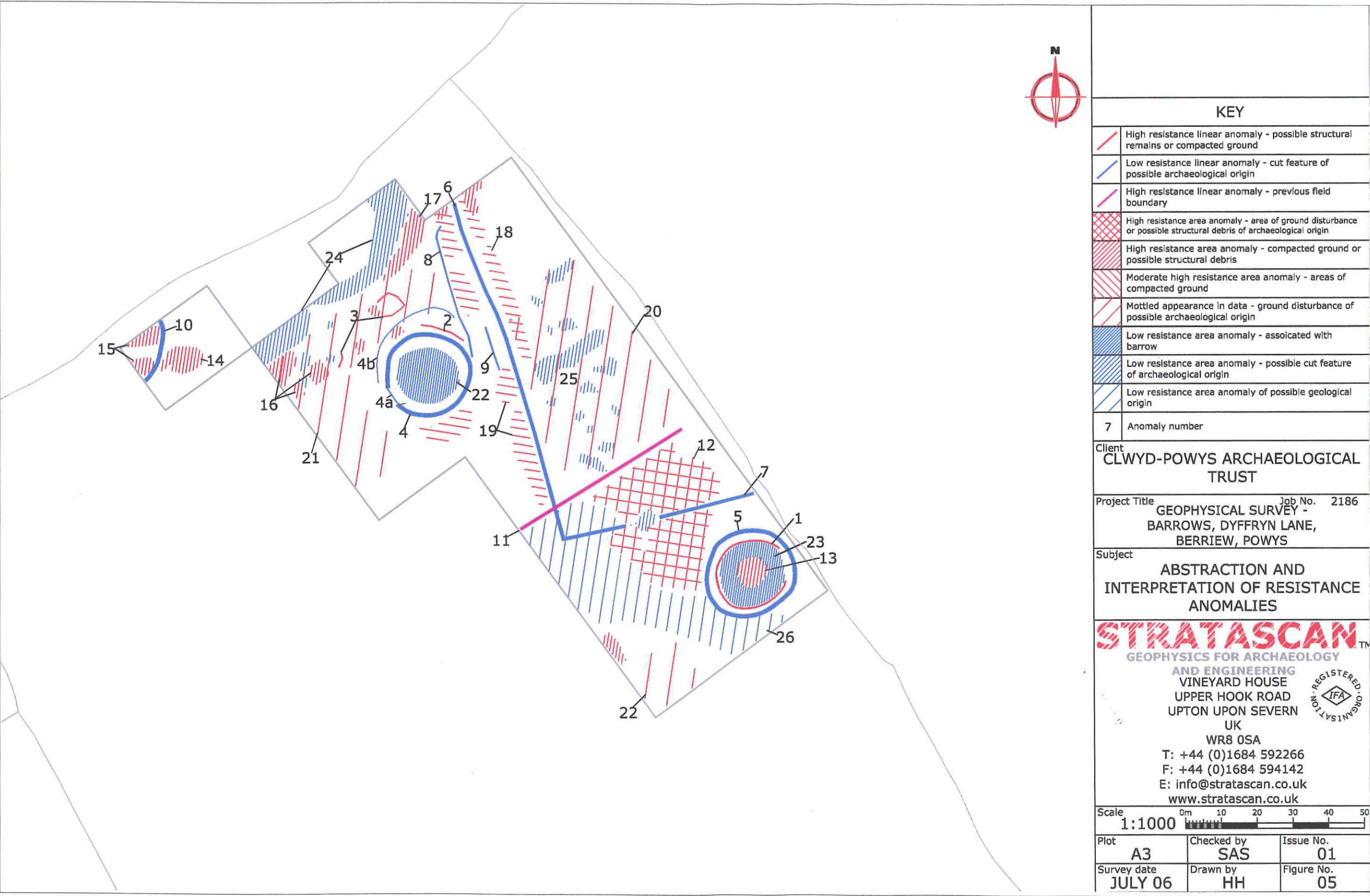


Fig. 8 Resistivity Survey: interpretive plan

6 ANALYSIS OF CROPMARKS AND CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

- 6.1 The project included a reappraisal and re-examination of the available vertical and oblique aerial photographic coverage for the Dyffryn Lane complex using material from the following sources: CPAT; National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth; Cambridge University; and the Central Register of Aerial Photography for Wales, Cardiff.
- 6.2 Those photographs with sufficient control points were rectified using AutoCAD against a digital map background. The plots were then imported and mapped into GIS in a format compatible with the regional Historic Environment Record.
- 6.3 As well as the archaeological features, the presence of cropmarks have also allowed the plotting of a number of palaeochannels within the same field as the henge. In general, the palaeochannels trend from west to east and are relatively slight compared with those associated with the main channel of the River Severn further to the east. Although it is possible that some represent braided elements of the main channel, it is possible that they are associated with former courses of the Afon Rhiw which now joins the Severn 1.5km further upstream.

Dyffryn Lane Monument Complex

- 6.4 The complex is spread over a fairly wide area along either side of Dyffryn Lane, although most of the known sites lie to the north (Fig. 1). Since most of the sites are known only from cropmark evidence it must inevitably be presumed that this represents a window on what may be a much larger buried landscape. There is an impressive range of monument types within the area including, to the north of Dyffryn Lane, the earthen long barrow at Lower Luggy (PRN 3968) and an adjacent Neolithic enclosure (PRN 43054), as well as a large pit (PRN 34706) and a possible square barrow (PRN 43199).
- 6.5 The fields alongside Dyffryn Lane contain as upstanding earthworks the henge (PRN 3590) and its two adjacent barrows (PRNs 3591 and 3610), the standing stone known as Maen Beuno (PRN 19441), as well as cropmarks identifying a large pit (PRN 4026) and nine ring ditches, one of which (PRN 4023) appears to have four pits set within it. At the eastern end of Dyffryn Lane cropmarks have identified two timber halls of possible Neolithic or early medieval date. The larger (PRN 32817) is most clearly defined with a sub-rectangular enclosure of post pits, measuring 28m by 18m, within which is a post-built structure around 16m long and up to 9m wide. The smaller site (PRN 5928) was the subject of trial excavations during the 1980s (Arnold *et al.* 1983), although no archaeological features were identified.
- 6.6 To the south-east of Dyffryn Lane there is a possible square barrow (PRN 83512), as well as the multi-phased, double-ditched enclosure (PRN 83513) which was the subject of recent geophysical survey (see 5.2 and Hankinson & Silvester 2006, 9-11).
- 6.7 Other cropmarks include elements of former field systems (PRNs 3592, 32839, 83509 and 83511) which, through comparison with historic cartography (see below), mostly appear to belong to a system of land division which may have its origins in the medieval period.

Historic Cartography

- 6.8 The examination of available historic cartography for the Dyffryn Lane area was undertaken in order to provide an understanding of the evolution and agrarian history of the landscape, as well as assisting in the interpretation of some cropmark evidence.
- 6.9 The earliest available cartographic source is a plan from the Vaynor Estate dated 1764, although unfortunately this does not depict the whole area and excludes the site of the henge. This map is of particular importance as it reveals the last remnants of what is presumably a medieval field pattern composed of numerous small strips. It is interesting to note, however, that many of the principal field boundaries persist to the present day, while it is the sub-

divisions which have been lost through a gradual process of consolidation. This process is demonstrated by comparing the 1763 map with the subsequent evidence provided by the Tithe Survey of 1840, the Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 mapping of 1886 and finally the present field pattern (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9 Dyffryn Lane area map regression, scale 1:10,000

7 CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The project has been successful in answering many of the main research objectives and has enabled a reassessment and reinterpretation of the henge. Although the antiquarian investigations had revealed three stones which were suggestive of a stone circle, it was uncertain whether this was a free-standing circle, or a kerb revetting the mound. The present excavations have clearly demonstrated that a stone circle pre-dated the mound, and that this had become ruinous by the time of the mound's construction. Post-excavation analysis is now underway at Bradford and further dates are expected from key contexts which should clarify the constructional sequence.
- 7.2 The excavations have also clearly demonstrated the degree of agricultural threat, with the components of the stone circle protruding above the surviving turf mound and into the ploughsoil. Several of the stones showed signs of having been struck by the plough and modern plough-scarring was also evident on the surface of the turf mound and the remnant bank of the henge. Although the two upstanding barrows which lie in the same field were not subject to similar trial excavation, it may be presumed that ploughing is having a similar impact and that all three earthwork monuments are gradually being subjected to a process of denudation. Although the sites are all scheduled, ploughing is permitted under class consent. There is, therefore, an urgent need to reconsider the management of this complex to ensure its future preservation.
- 7.3 The review of cropmark evidence and map regression has facilitated a reassessment of a number of sites within the Dyffryn Lane complex. In particular, the replotting of cropmarks has provided a more accurate record of the known archaeology, while comparison with cartographic sources suggests that some, but not all, of the field systems may be medieval rather than prehistoric. It is clear, however, that the known archaeology may represent only a small window on a much larger buried landscape and without further information it is difficult to assess the significance of these sites. Continuing aerial reconnaissance is, however, likely to further our understanding of the complex.
- 7.4 At present scheduled ancient monument status has only been afforded to a select few sites within the complex (see fig. 9), namely those within the field containing the henge, Maen Beuno standing stone, and the possible Neolithic house towards the western end of Dyffryn Lane. Further to the north, the only confirmed upstanding earthen long barrow in Wales (PRN 3968) remains unprotected.
- 7.5 The Severn Valley, and Dyffryn Lane in particular, has long been recognised as an area of great archaeological potential, with the well-drained, fertile soils presenting an attractive environment for settlement from the Mesolithic onwards. It is ironic, however, that it is these very conditions and their attractiveness for agriculture which now poses the greatest threat to the archaeological resource. For those sites which have already been levelled by the plough there is little realistic prospect of providing positive management. For the upstanding earthworks, however, it is to be hoped that some solution might be found, either through reduced ploughing, or a change in landuse, which will ensure their future preservation.

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