

An Entrance and a Longer Long Barrow

Geophysical survey at Stanton Drew, 2010

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The joint BACAS and BaNES project at Stanton Drew in 2009 provided evidence that the Cove may be part of a long barrow (Richards and Oswin 2010), together with encouraging results at the other parts of the site that showed we could replicate the English Heritage work which revealed the post circles within the main and south south-west circles (David et al 2004; Oswin et al 2009). However, we only had five days and so had only scratched the surface of what could be done. We returned in 2010 to complete the surveys we had had to leave unfinished and to carry out new work suggested by our earlier results. In total, we were there for 16 days and a full report is being produced. This article describes a couple of the highlights.

The Main Circle

One of the discoveries made by the English Heritage team (David et al 2004) was that, in addition to the nine post circles in the interior of the Main Circle, there appeared to be a large encircling ditch outside the stones. This ditch had a large apparent entrance of 50 metres in its north-east sector, with a possible second, smaller, entrance to the south-west at a bearing of about 241°. This survey was done with a fluxgate gradiometer. English Heritage repeated part of the magnetometry survey with a caesium magnetometer with a much higher resolution in order to investigate the post circles, but this survey did not include the area of the ditch.

We completed our survey of Stone Close using the Bartington magnetometer, and the section of the results covering the Main Circle is shown in Figure 1. The post circles and ditch with its large entrance to the north-east can be clearly seen. Additionally, there are some linear anomalies crossing the circle south-north and west-east that are probably post-medieval field boundaries. Some of these boundaries can be seen as hedges in William Stukeley's 1723 illustration (see Figure 2).

We believe that the English Heritage team, using the lower resolution fluxgate gradiometer results, mistook the place where an old field boundary, or a trackway, crossed the line of the ditch as being a possible entrance. Using our results from the Bartington, we feel confident in asserting that there is a gap there, but further to the south-west. The entrance (see Figure 3) is at a bearing of about 217° and about 10 metres wide; the nearest stone is M10. Figure 4 shows an enlargement of the entrance.

All our plans of Stone Close have been based on the one produced by Charles Dymond (1896). Richard Sermon (*pers. comm.*) has calculated that Dymond's plan is oriented 1.8° west of true north, so the entrance's bearing is actually about 215°.

Figure 1 right
Magnetometry plot
of Main Circle

Figure 3 far right
Interpretation of Main
Circle magnetometry

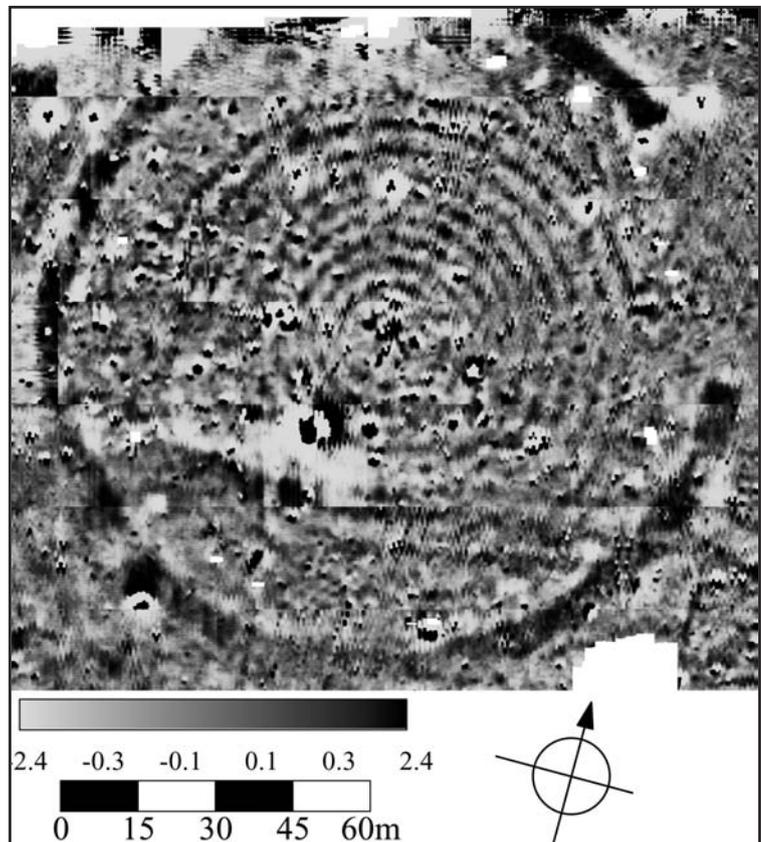
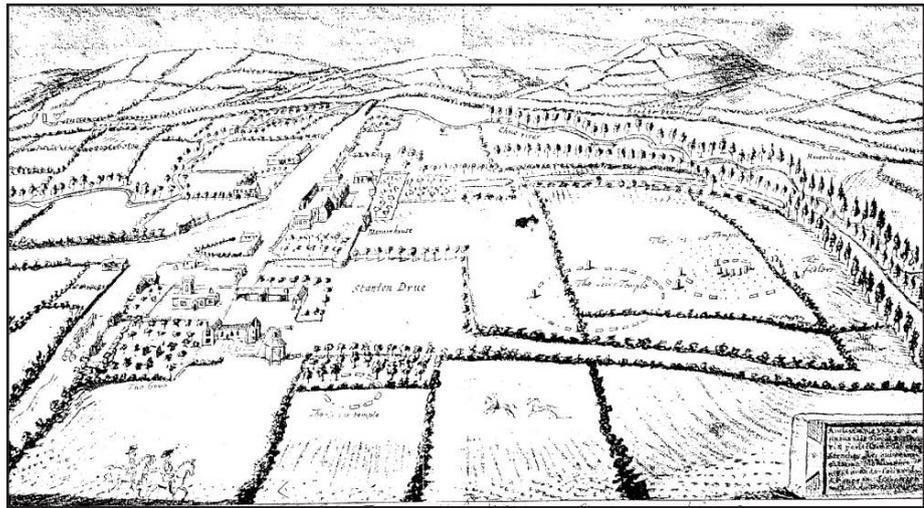


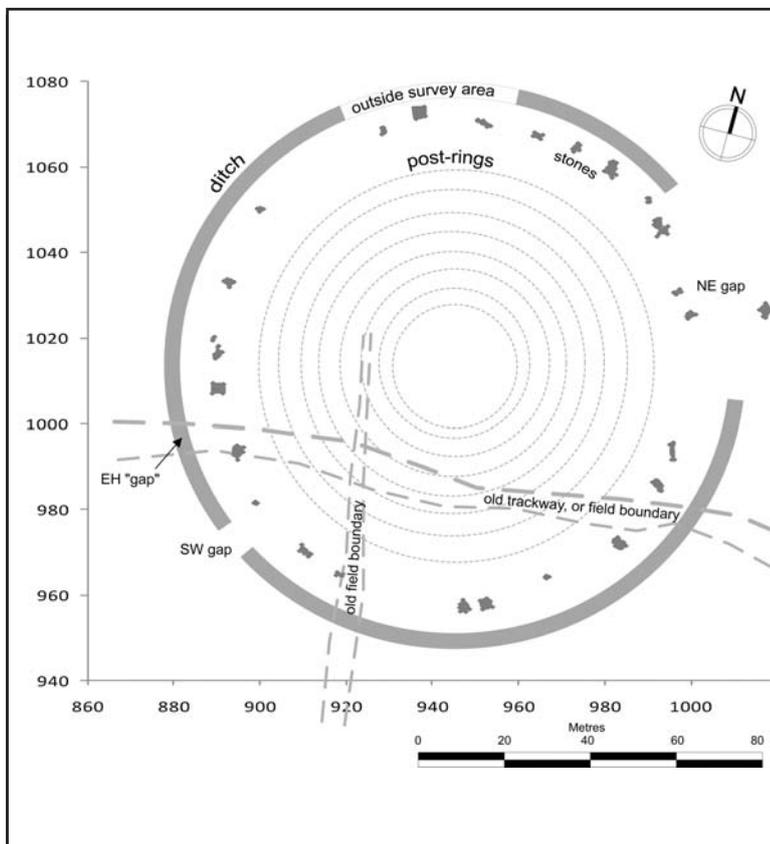
Figure 2
'A View of the Celtic
Temple called The
Weddings at Stanton
Drew July 1723', by
William Stukeley



The Cove

In 2009, we claimed that our resistance survey results at the Cove were consistent with that of a long barrow with stone used in its construction, oriented to face approximately south-south-east. The Cove stones lie at the southern end of this, and could have been part of the structure or free-standing in a courtyard. The northern extent of the 'barrow' was not known as it extended beyond our survey area into the private garden of the pub.

In 2010, we extended our survey into the private garden, and also into the north-west corner of the churchyard. The twin-probe resistance results are shown in Figure 5 and appear to strengthen the evidence for the long barrow conjecture. The high resistance shape extends northwards, past the fence all the way to the northern boundary, with a possible flanking ditch represented by the low resistance on the west. There are one or two modern features showing in the results: at the line labelled '1013' and also 3 metres further to the south, there are two dark parallel anomalies that are probably the footings of a chicken run that was present in 2009.



The results from the churchyard show a higher resistance area to the north which lines up with the results from the private garden. There is a lower resistance area to the south which appears to continue into the east side of the pub garden.

We carried out some resistance profiles west-east across the private garden with the probes at half-metre spacing. The profiles were spaced at 3 metre intervals and the locations of four of the profiles are shown in Figure 5, labelled by their northings on the site grid: 1022, 1019, 1016, and 1013. The results of the profiles are shown in Figure 7. These confirm the twin-probe resistance results, with the high resistance towards the east side. The low resistance areas to the west could be consistent with the remains of a flanking ditch. A common feature of long barrows is the presence of ditches or quarries extending along the sides (Kinnes 1992).

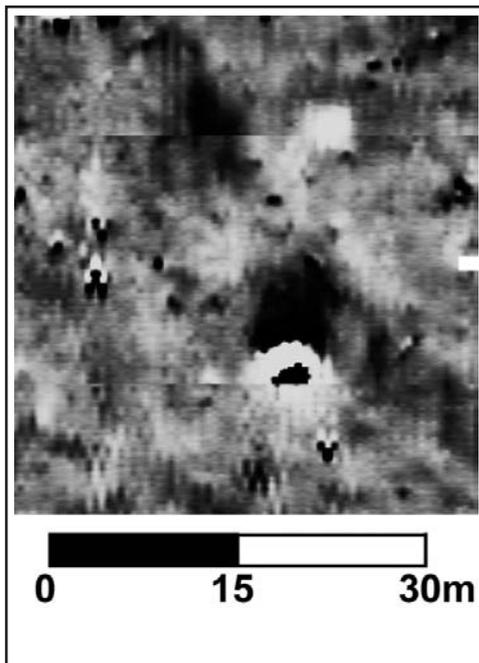


Figure 4 above
The south-west entrance in the Main Circle

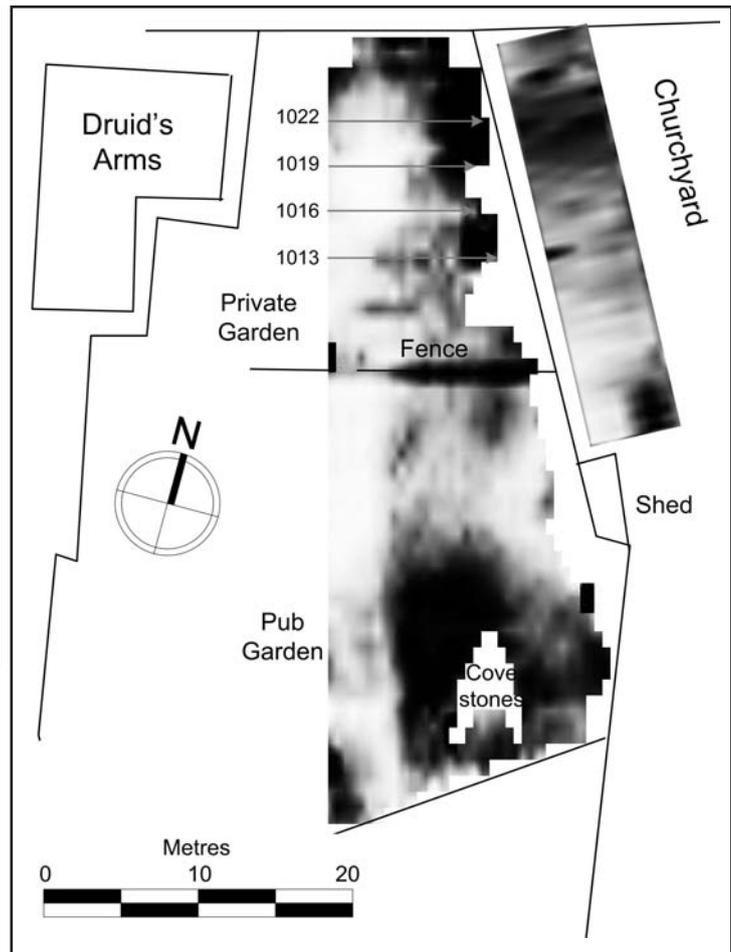


Figure 5 right
Twin-probe resistance survey results at the Cove, and locations of resistance profiles

Conclusions

The work in 2010 has produced some intriguing results. The magnetometer survey in Stone Close has confirmed that there is a second entrance in the encircling ditch, but not in the place originally proposed by the English Heritage team. The entrance does not align with lines between the Main Circle centre and the Cove, or the Main Circle centre and the SSW Circle, lying approximately midway between the two.

The evidence for the Cove long barrow conjecture has been strengthened by obtaining results from the garden to the north and from the churchyard. There is also the possibility that we have discovered a flanking ditch or quarry, something that is frequently associated with long barrows.

It has been possible here to cover just some of the work from 2010. The full report will include further interpretation of the Stone Close and Cove results, plus the results obtained at the south south-west circle.

Acknowledgements

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Figure 6 above
The technical process of resistance profiling at Stanton Drew
Figure 7 below
The resistance profiles from the Cove (private garden)

