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Short Report no. 2022-04R



Name of site: Rollright - King stone field

County: Warwickshire District: Stratford-on-Avon Parish: Long Compton

NGR grid reference Centred on SP295309

Nearest postcode. OX7 5QB

Start date: 7 August 2022 End date: 26 September Report date: 15 November 2022

This is in our short report format. For details of survey techniques please see our book "Archaeology - In the Service of Property Development?" available free on our website at <https://archgeophys.weebly.com>

Previous work

Our small test surveys on 7 August were reported in our note to the clients of 12 August 2022. This had 4 grids of magnetometry and 2 small areas of earth resistance which had been carried out at 0.25, 0.5 and 0.75 mobile probe spacings. It concluded that the magnetometry results were similar to the earlier Ancient Monuments Lab results and that the 0.5 and 0.75m earth resistance results appeared best.

The 1987 Ancient Monuments Lab report on their 1982-1986 surveys can be found at:-
<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/145-1987?searchType=research+report&search=Rollright+stones>

This large survey was carried out before digital data logging and the readings were recorded on a line plotter in the field. It therefore has trace plots rather than a greyscale images.

It considered that, apart from anomalies associated with an Iron-Age settlement which is predominantly in the next field to the east, the isolated pits and segments of ditches did not appear to be related to the Iron Age settlement or the excavated barrows near the King stone.

Excavation and other work on this site is in George Lambrick's 1988 book *The Rollright Stones- Megaliths, Monuments and Settlement in the Prehistoric Landscape*.

George Lambrick's 2017 *An Illustrated Guide to the Rollright Stones* gives a short overview of the stones and their background.

Survey Details

Geology at site

According to the BGS Geology viewer. Bedrock - Chipping Norton Limestone Formation. No information on upper levels.

Known archaeological sites / monuments covered by the survey: Round cairn and possibly site of Saxon grave

Scheduled Ancient Monument no.1018400 covers part of this area. See <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1018400>

Archaeological sites / monument types detected by the survey: 5m wide ditch-like feature, (now named as Sally's ditch), and possibly the site of the previous excavation trench.

Surveyor :Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics, Roger Ainslie, Sally Ainslie
Client George Lambrick, the Rollright Trust.

Sestion 42 licence SL00232930 Monument no. 018400 HER no MWA2394

Purpose of survey:

Research to ascertain if magnetometry would show more than was previously known and if earth resistance would reveal anything else.

Location of:

- a) Primary archive, i.e. raw data, electronic archive etc: Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics. Also with client.
- b) Full report: ditto

Technical Details

Type of survey

A Magnetometer

Area surveyed: 0.29ha. Traverse separation, if regular: 1 metre. Reading / sample interval: 8 per metre

Type, make and model of instrumentation: Bartington Grad 601/2

B Earth Resistance

Area surveyed: 0.26ha. Traverse separation, if regular: 0.5 metre. Reading / sample interval: 2 per metre

Type, make and model of instrumentation: TR Systems/CIA resistance meter. MK2 Twin probe array, 0.5 metre mobile probe separation.

Land use at the time of survey: Grass approx 15cms.

Additional remarks

30 metre grids. First line start NW corner going east zig zag.

Results (refer to plans below)

- 1 Probable ditch. Some 5m wide, so comparable to the North Oxfordshire Grims ditch.. Part seen on magnetometry but more of it and clearer on the earth resistance. Now called "Sallys Ditch" as the AML report didn't think much of the anomalies in this location and it appears not to have been previously identified.
- 2 Probably a secondary ditch, although as it is only visible on earth resistance, it could be where soil moisture has been retained by a bank between it and Sally's ditch.
- 3 Possible curved ditch. It shows in the magnetometry and is our best, albeit not very good. candidate for a barrow ditch.
- 4 High resistance area. Probably geological, where limestone is at a shallow depth. This outcrop may have extended further east-west and have been affected by later quarrying and similar activities (see 1961 Fairey photo). https://pictureoxon.com/frontend.php?action=printdetails&zoomify=1&keywords=Ref_No_increment;EQUALS;POX0451801&prevUrl=
- 5 Possible ditch. Paths can also cause similar anomalies by reducing the amount of vegetation on an area, which limits water loss by transpiration.
- 6 Mottled area in magnetometry results. Could be pits associated with the Iron Age settlement to the east.
- 7 Possible ditch, but far from certain as visible in magnetometry results but not earth resistance.
- 8 The edge of the barrow as revealed by excavation. This is not visible in our magnetometry and the earth resistance indicates a smaller rubble mound than that which was excavated.
- 9 Probably the southern end of 1980's excavation trench, where the stony backfill contrasts with the undisturbed soil.
- 10 Magnetometry results dominated by the steel reinforcement to the Observer Corps concrete bunker.

Conclusions

The magnetometry results were very similar to those of the previous survey. We didn't identify the circular mound located by excavation or the Saxon burial location, although this was not unexpected. Sally's ditch was good to find, although as with almost all geophysics, its interpretation will depend on excavation. Mark Bletchly's lidar processing indicates some small circular features in the field to the north of the survey, but whether they are archaeological or something else, such as the positions of recent containers for animal feed, is as yet unknown. It also indicates large scale

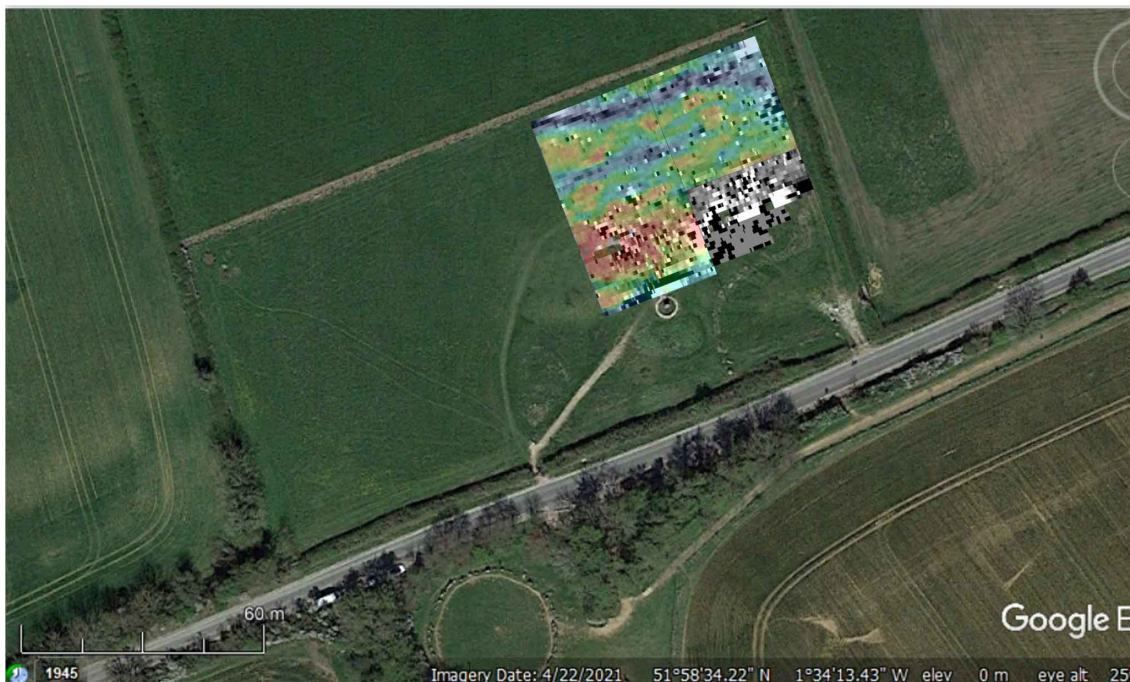
levelling of the land to the west of the survey area.

Acknowledgements

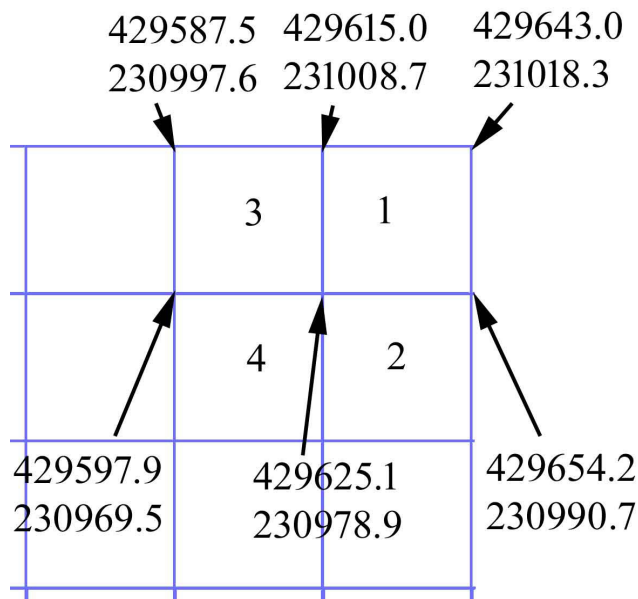
George Lambrick asked us to do the work; Sally Ainslie assisted with the fieldwork; Mark Bletchly processed lidar data to see if the big ditch showed above ground, (it didn't - although other features showed), and advised of the Fairey photo showing the area. Robin Smitten arranged access and grass cutting.

REMINDER

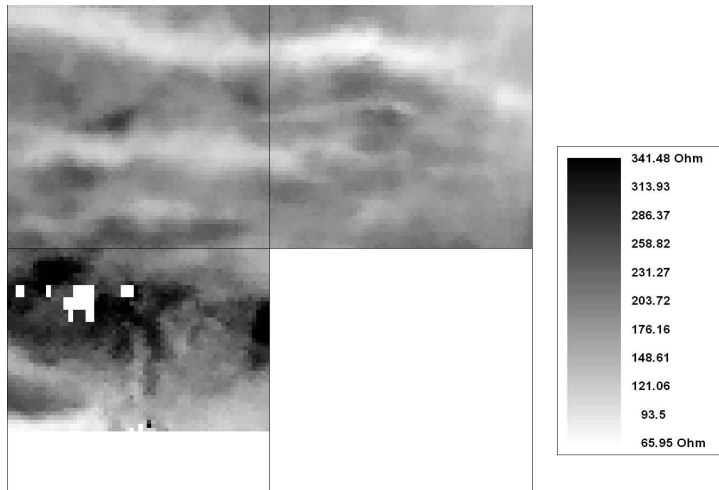
Many features cannot be located by using magnetometry or resistivity. Features including flint scatters and burials may well exist which are not detectable by these survey methods. The failure to locate remains does not mean that they are not there.



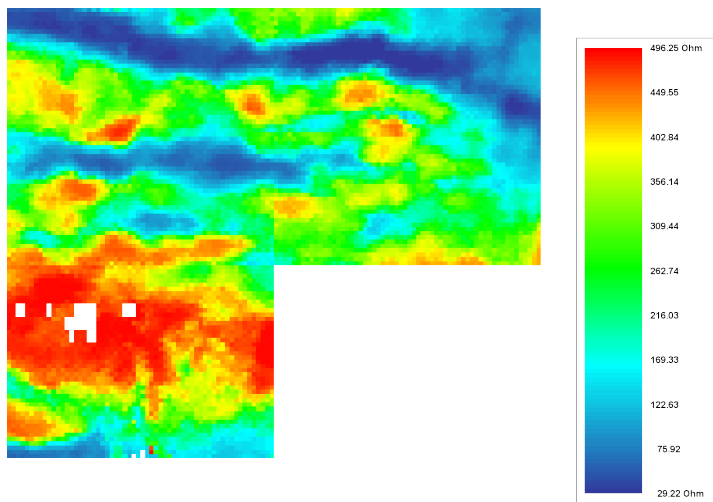
LOCATION on Google Earth base.



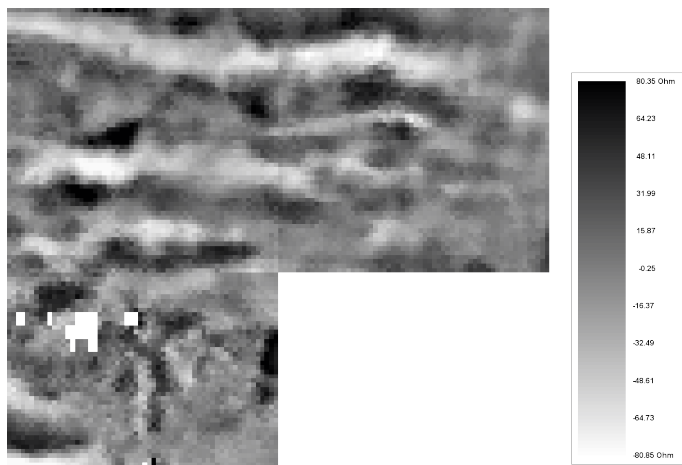
LOCATION gps co-ordinates and magnetometry grid order



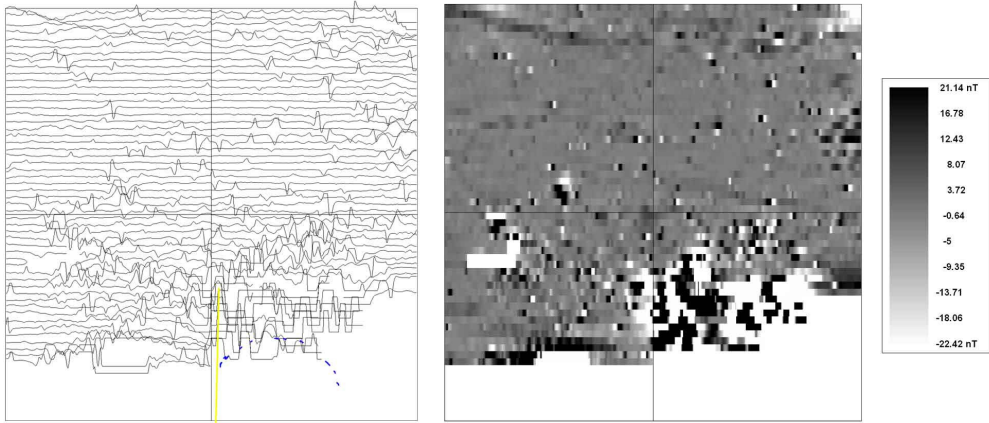
Earth resistance Greyscale clipped $\pm 3sd$



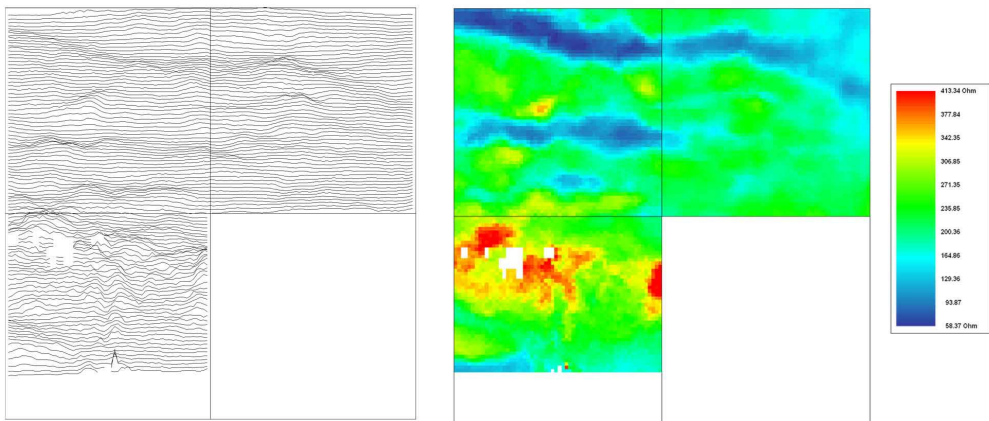
Earth Resistance survey Colour plot



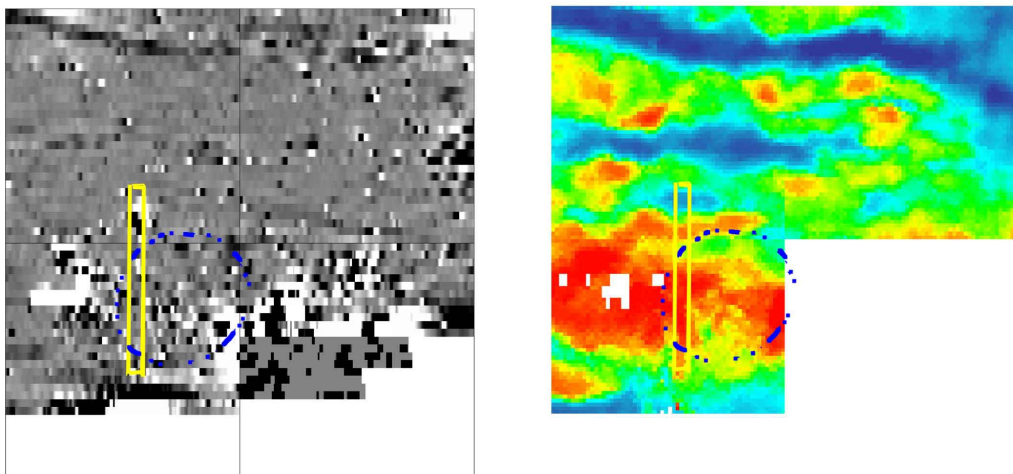
Earth Resistance – high pass filtered



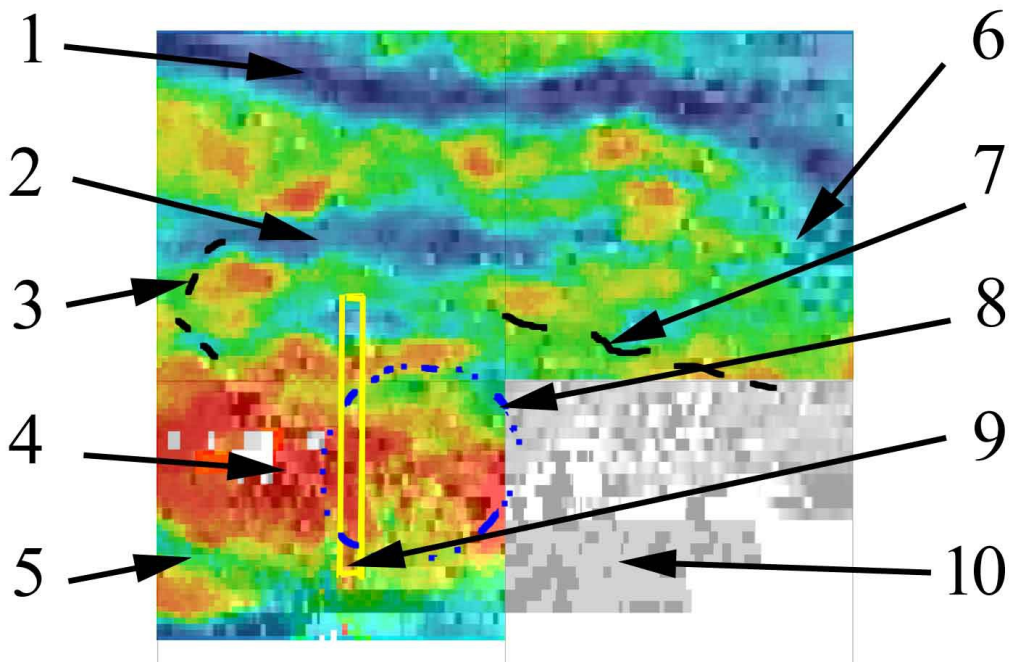
Magnetometry Trace and greyscale



Earth Resistance trace and colour



Magnetometry and earth resistance with previous excavation



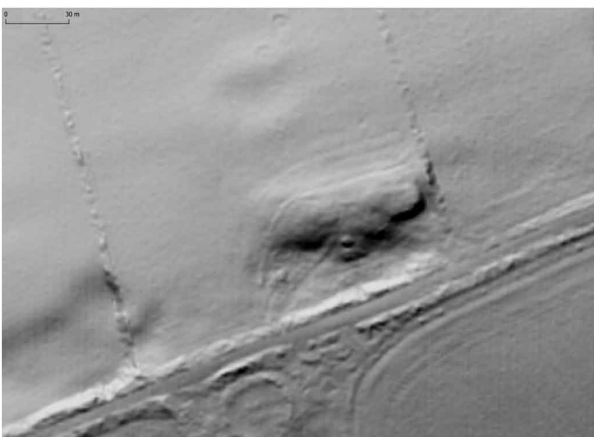
Interpretation



Google Earth



Lidar standard sensitivity on Google Earth



Lidar Sstandard sensitivity



Lidar High sensiivity (vertical increased)