

# Avebury World Heritage Site National Mapping Programme project



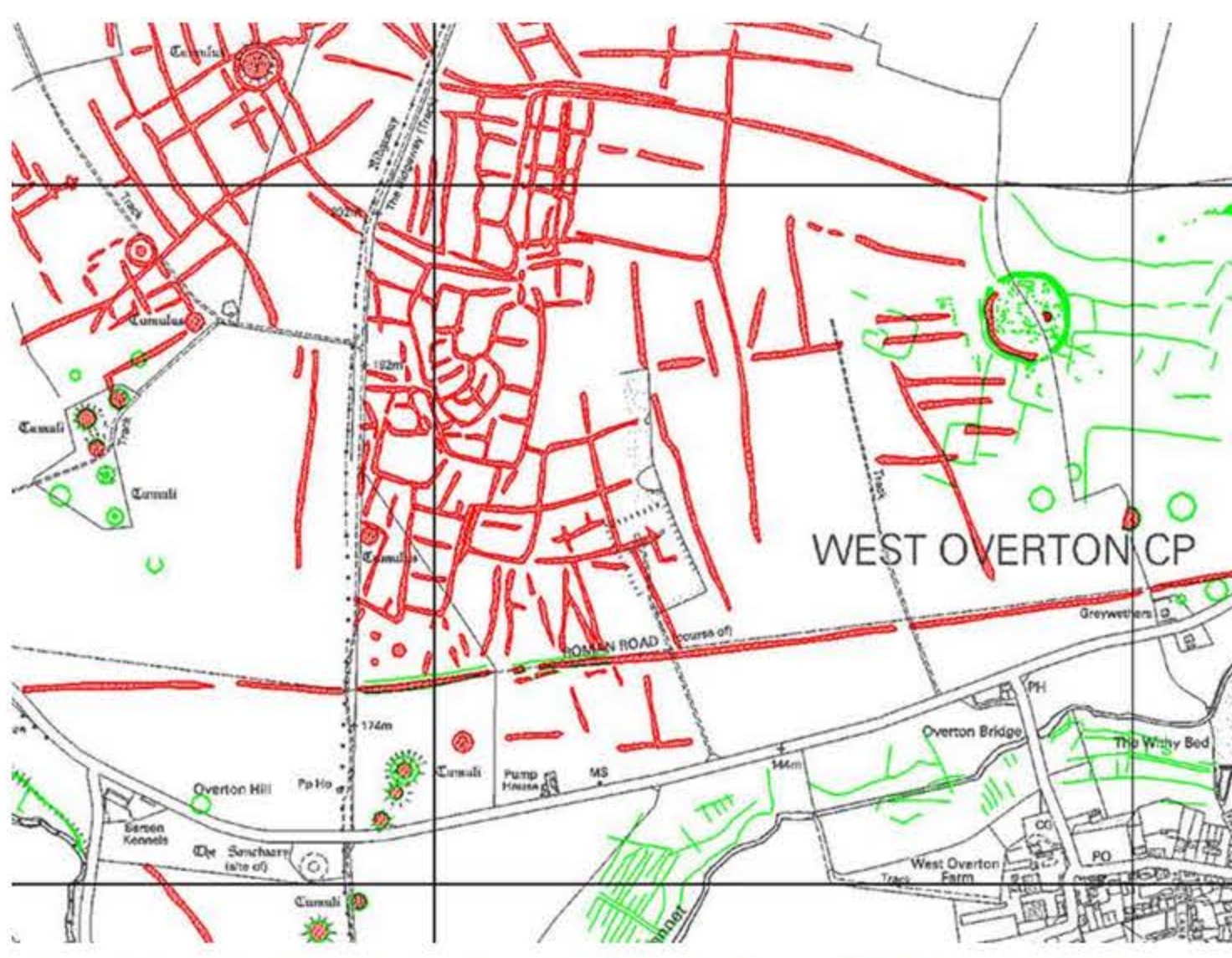
Avebury and the surrounding area is known for its remarkable prehistoric remains. The best known of these are Avebury Henge, the West Kennet and Beckhampton Avenues, the West Kennet long barrow, the causewayed enclosure at Windmill Hill, and Silbury Hill. The extensive, and often hidden, heritage of the area was mapped through analysis of aerial photographs and lidar during the Avebury World Heritage Site National Mapping Programme (NMP) project.



Looking east across Avebury Henge on 03-MAY-2002 (NMR 21519/15). © Historic England

## Layers of information

Photographs taken from the 1940s onwards recorded earthworks that are now ploughed level or almost flat. For example, extensive prehistoric or Roman fields once stretched from Horton Down eastwards to West Overton and the ridgeway.



Archaeological map showing buried features revealed as cropmarks, well preserved earthworks, and earthworks ploughed level but recorded on old aerial photographs. Base map OS Licence 100024900. 2015. NMP data © Historic England

Particularly well-preserved examples can still be seen on Fyfield and Overton Down.



The view looking south east across Overton Down on 12-NOV-1997 with earthworks of prehistoric and later fields in the foreground. The earthworks once extended into the modern ploughed fields beyond (NMR 15862/25) © Crown copyright. HE

Reconnaissance over nearly a hundred years revealed buried aspects of past land use in the Avebury landscape. An excellent example of this process is the Late Neolithic palisade enclosure site at West Kennet. Though first photographed in the 1950s by J K St Joseph, the significance of the cropmarks was not recognised until 1987. Excavations by Alasdair Whittle of Cardiff University between 1987 and 1992 uncovered an extensive and previously unsuspected complex of Late Neolithic date.

Whittle's site plan, published in 1997, was largely based on mapping from aerial photographs by RCHME in 1992. The NMP survey added further detail from historic and new photographs, while further cropmarks were recorded following reconnaissance in 2001. Since the most recent published plan (2003), even more detail has been photographed.

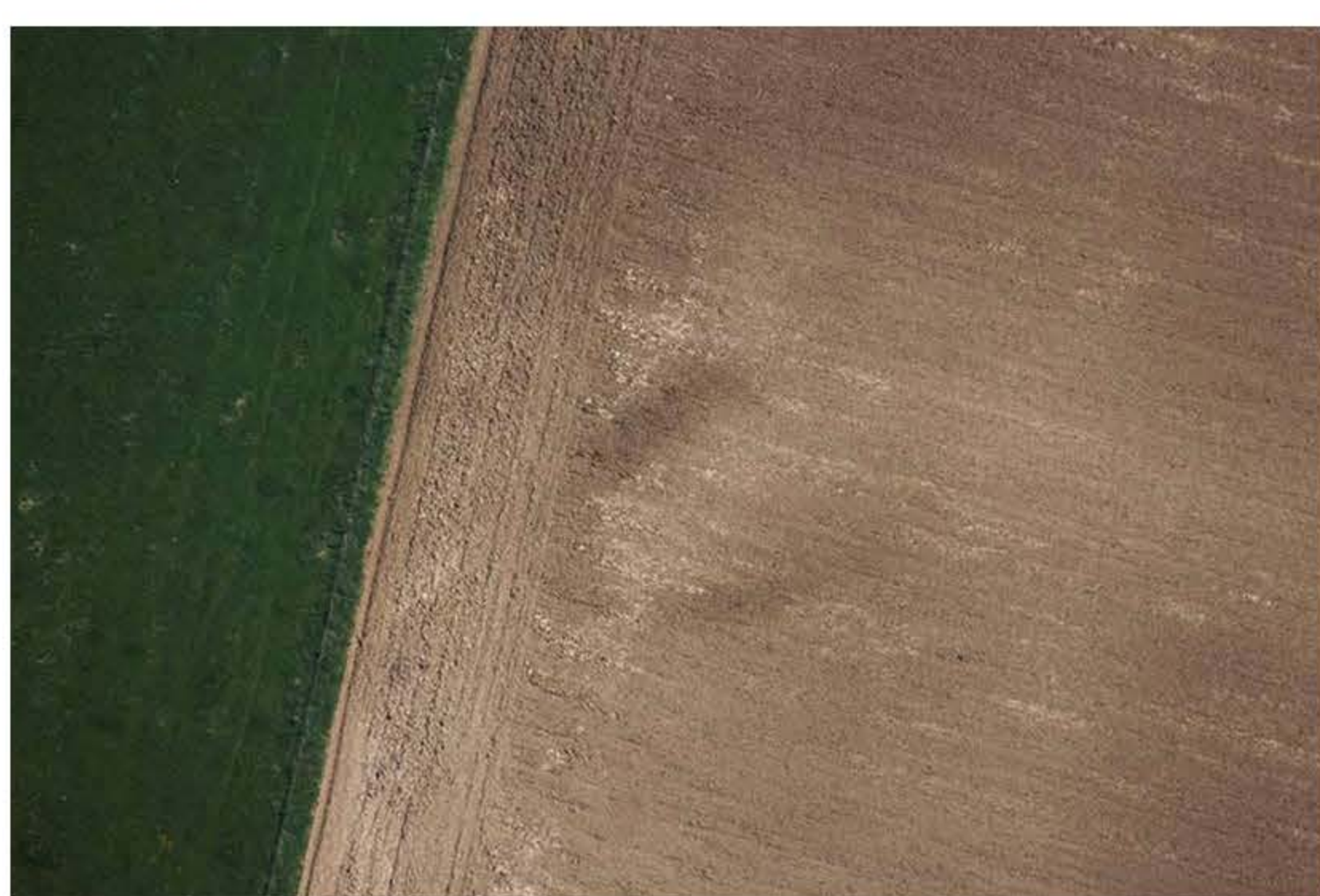


Part of the buried remains of the Late Neolithic palisade enclosure complex at West Kennet showing as by cropmarks and photographed on 15-JUL-2000. The pit or post circle is one of a number of features first recorded in summer 2000 (NMR 18725/14) © Historic England

## New discoveries in well-explored areas

Aerial reconnaissance continues in the Avebury area, and can add not just additional detail to known sites, but can reveal completely unexpected monuments in even the best explored area.

A relatively recent example of this is a probable Neolithic long barrow, photographed by Damian Grady of English Heritage in the early summer of 2009. Lying just a few hundred yards south of the Avebury henge, it was photographed as a soilmark. There appears to be no earthwork survival – no trace of the monument can be seen on available lidar, for example.



Buried remains of a newly discovered Neolithic long barrow revealed as a soilmark just south of Avebury and photographed on 21-APR-2009. The darker U-shaped patch of soil represents the location of the ditches that originally surrounded an upstanding mound (NMR 26218/005). © Historic England