

**CIRCLE OF STONES WITHIN
REY CROSS ROMAN CAMP**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT

NY 91 SW 13



RCHME Newcastle

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NMR no: NY 91 SW 13



Mark Bowden

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NY 91 SW Co Durham Bowes Parish Teesdale District

NY 9008 1247

Circle of stones, Rey Cross

Within the Roman camp at Rey Cross, Bowes Moor, a rough circle of boulders lies approximately 40 m S of the E entrance on the N side of the camp. The ground falls gently to the E and commands extensive views on all sides except the W. There is no peat growth at the location of the circle but peat hags lie to the W, N and E at a distance of only 50-70 m. The ground within and surrounding the circle is uneven and contains hummocks, partly as a result of extensive rabbit burrowing. The vegetation cover is coarse grass. A slightly raised area of ground in the W half extends for several metres outside the circle. There is no sign of an internal cairn structure.

The group of stones, about 40 in number, does not form a perfect circle, being flattened on its NW and NE sides. There are substantial gaps in the circle to the W, S and NE.

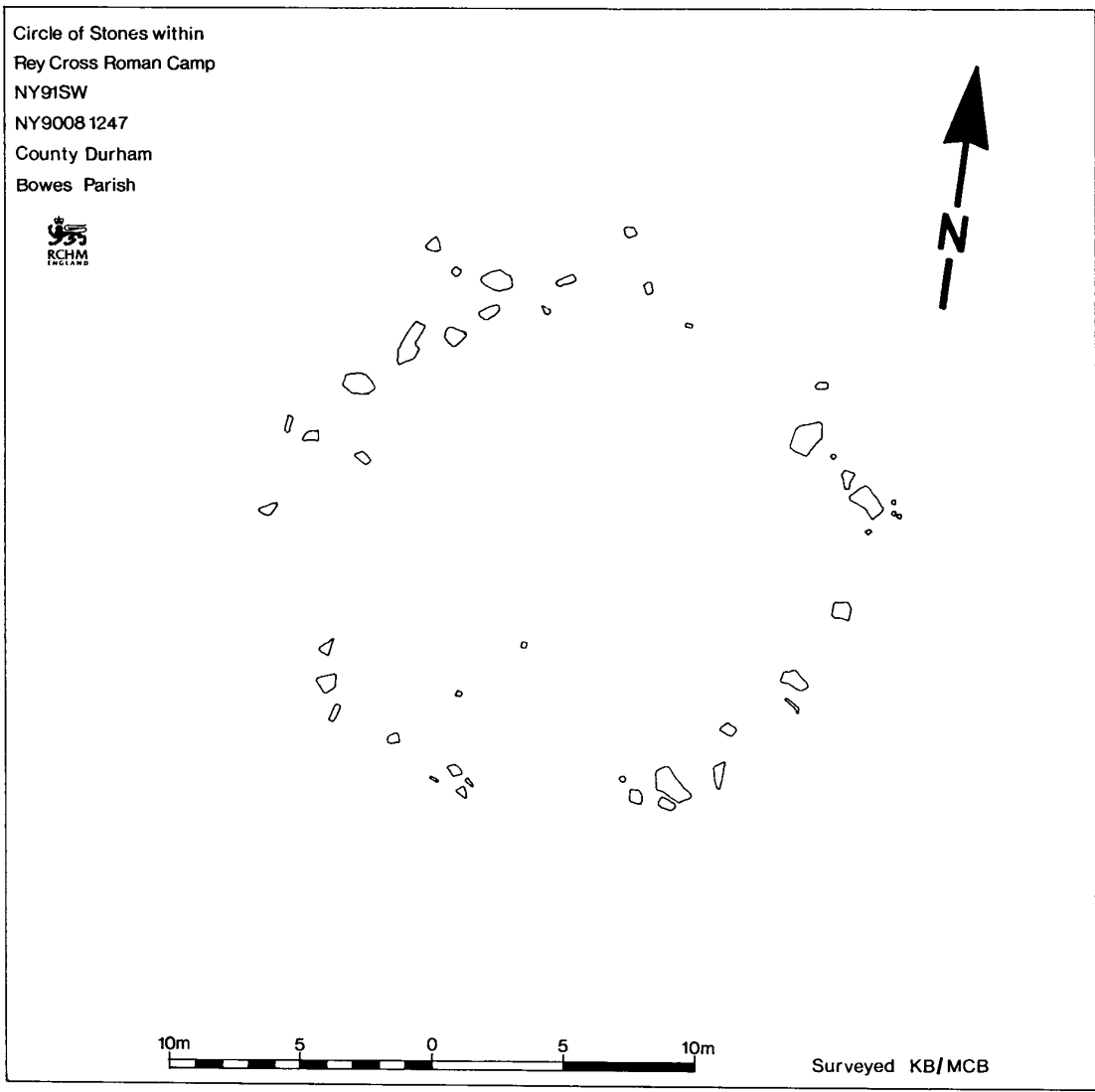
The boulders vary in size from about 0.5 by 1.0 to 1.0 by 1.8 m. The highest stands 0.75m above ground level but most are no more than 0.3 m high and several are flush with the ground and partly turf-covered. None of the stones can be said to *in situ* as they are all lying in apparently natural positions. Most of the stones in the "circle" are of amorphous shape and only 8 or 10 appear to be capable of being stood upright. The interior of the circle is stone-free with the exception of two stones in the SW part which are well buried in the turf.

Several other groups of boulders are apparent within the area of the camp and over the surrounding moorland but only this group could conceivably be interpreted as having been deliberately arranged.

Whether this group of stones represents a prehistoric ritual site, or whether its near-circular form is the result of human agency at all, remains in doubt. It should be noted that the circle partly overlies the presumed courses of two of the camp's internal roads, though not perhaps in such a way as to constrict them seriously.

MCB Bowden, November 1987

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Plan (reduced from original at 1:200). ©RCHME Crown copyright