

Report on site at SD 6683 7615 Ireby Beck  
18<sup>th</sup> June 2011

The site does not show up well on Google Earth but is very obvious on the ground as in the photograph below which is taken looking North.



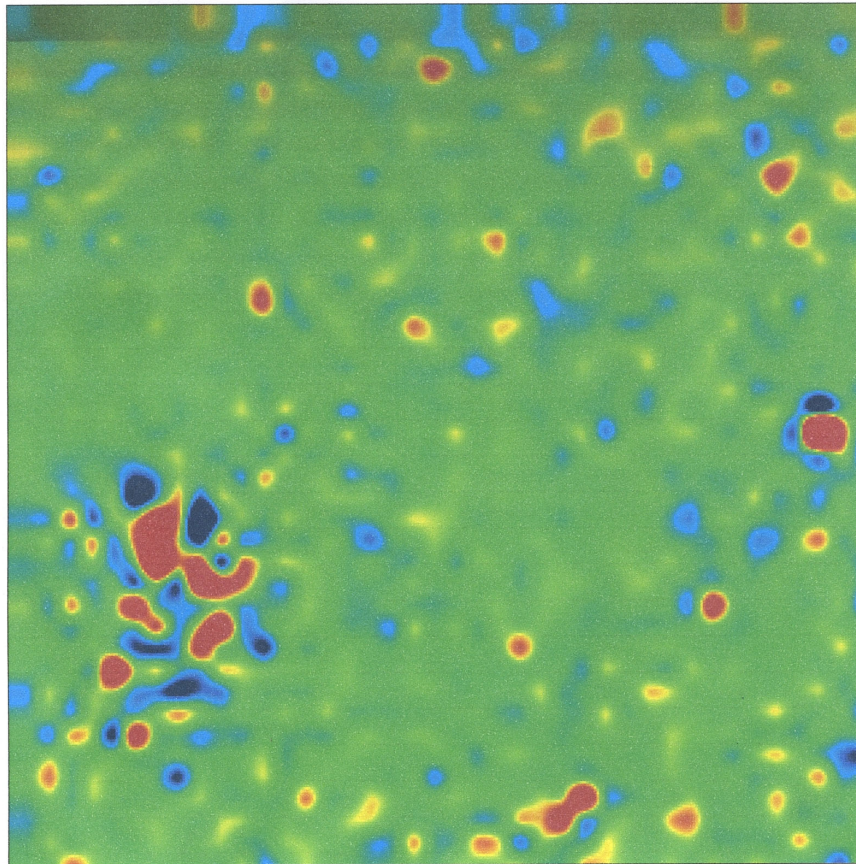
The site consists of two concentric circular features: a raised platform and a bank. The central platform is separated from the bank by a ditch. There appears to be a drainage channel from the ditch in the South-West . Diametrically opposite this in the North-East of the feature there is a possible entrance to the central platform.

The site was surveyed using a gradiometer to see whether it was possible to detect areas of burning. The survey is shown below.

Geoplot 3.0 - Gradiometer Data - c:\geoplot\comp\mgr\mgr.cmp +++

**Data Set:**  
Top Left Corner X,Y: 1, 1  
Bottom Right Corner X,Y: 320, 320

**Display Parameters**  
Shade Plot (Clip)  
Minimum: -3  
Maximum: 3  
Contrast: 1  
Units: Std Dev  
Palette: colour10.ptt  
Palette Option: Normal  
Plotting Scale: 1:150  
Printer Resolution (X): 600dpi  
Printer Resolution (Y): 600dpi



The highlights in red with dark blue immediately next to them were next checked with a metal detector to exclude metal as a possible cause . No metal readings were found. A 50 cm square of turf was lifted in the two areas likely to show burning but there proved to be burned stones very close to the surface and any attempt to find charcoal at these points was abandoned.

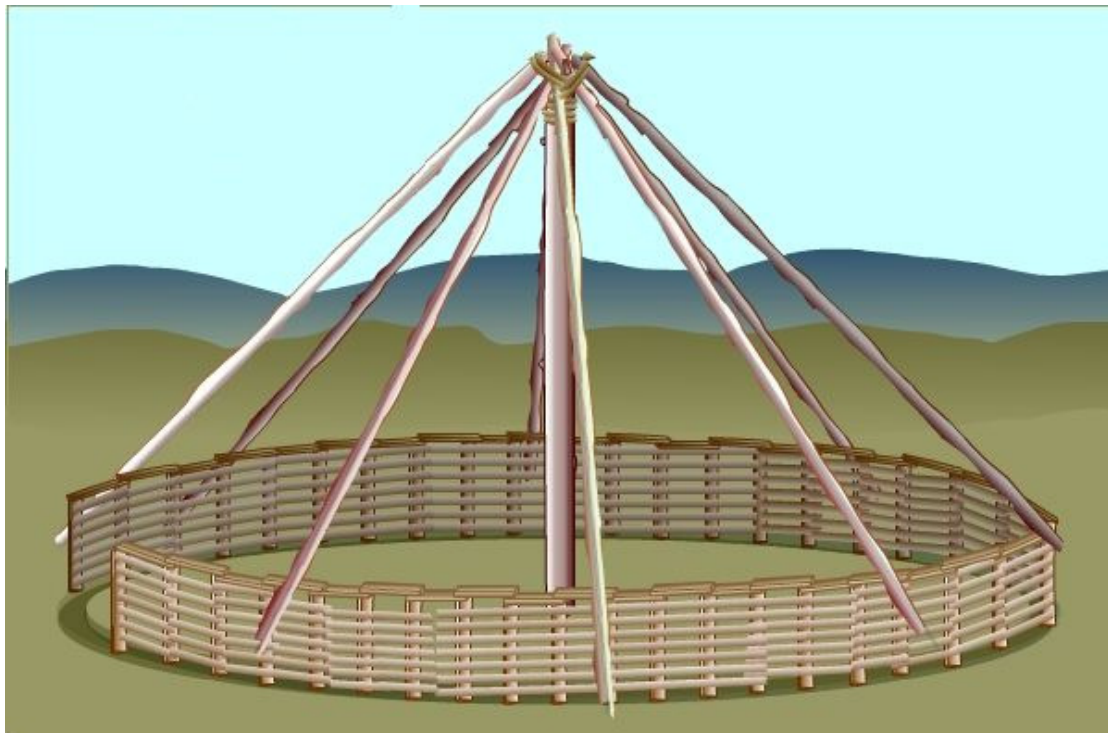
Next the ditch was investigated by probing and a layer of stones was encountered very close to the surface (see the photograph below)

A strip of turf 1 m x 25 cm was removed and a layer of carefully placed stones was revealed.



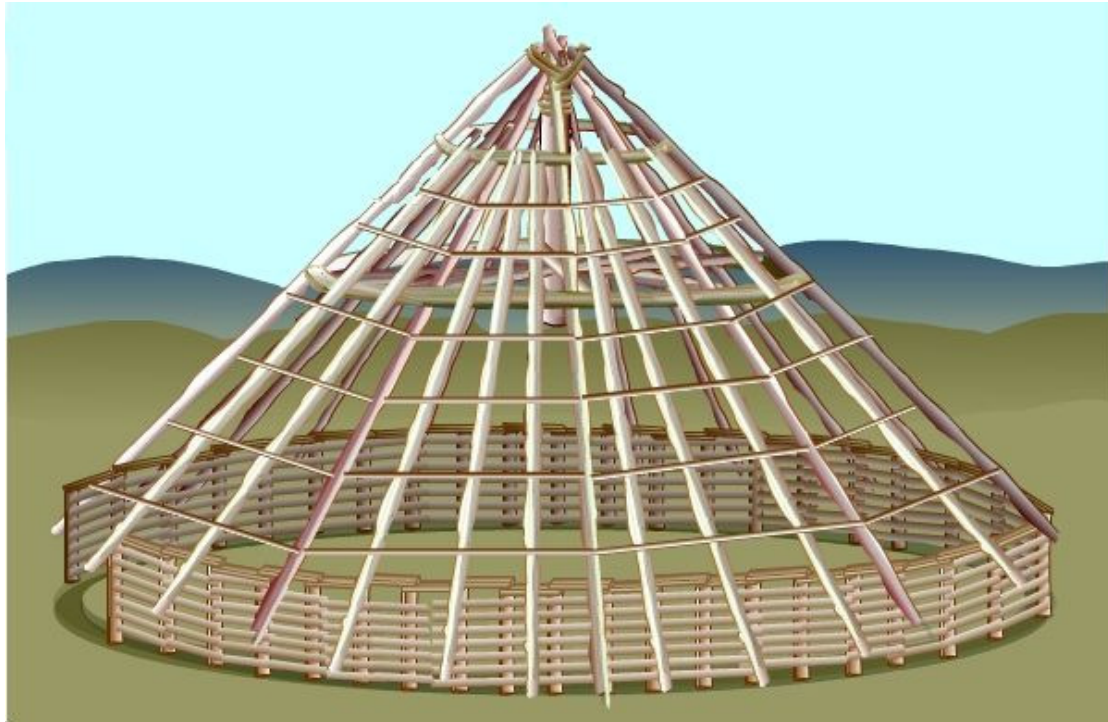
The stone immediately to the left of the scale was lifted and a piece of charcoal was found underneath. This was sent to the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre for Radiocarbon dating. The radiocarbon date was  $2135 \pm 35$  years BP (before 1950 AD) giving a calibrated date in the range 210 BC to 50 BC. (Ref: SUERC 34558)

The ditch feature is therefore later Iron Age but well before the Romano-British period. It is likely that the site is that of an Iron Age roundhouse as the ditch is the essential first step in its construction with posts placed within and linked together by hazel rods and laths as below.



Rafters would be laid to a temporary central pole resting on the ring of posts (and the outer bank in the case of this site.)

The roof would be constructed by creating two ring beams tied into the temporary central pole with rings of purlins made from hazel. The structure would then be strong enough for the central pole to be cut just below the lower ring beam as shown below.



After thatching the roof the walls would be given a protective covering of a daub of clay, cow dung and straw to give a plastered finish. The roundhouse might also have had a porch area built in to it.

The inner area of the site would give a useable living and working area equivalent to a modern mobile home on a caravan park.

I would like to thank Mr Lawson for his kind permission to undertake this project.

J J Price