

Chapel House Wood Landscape Project

Interim Report 2012



The aims of the project this year were to investigate a dense charcoal scatter on the hillside above the settlement, and to commence the investigation of a new area within the settlement (area DG).

Charcoal scatter

A gradiometer survey was carried out prior to sampling the area. The results (Fig. 1)

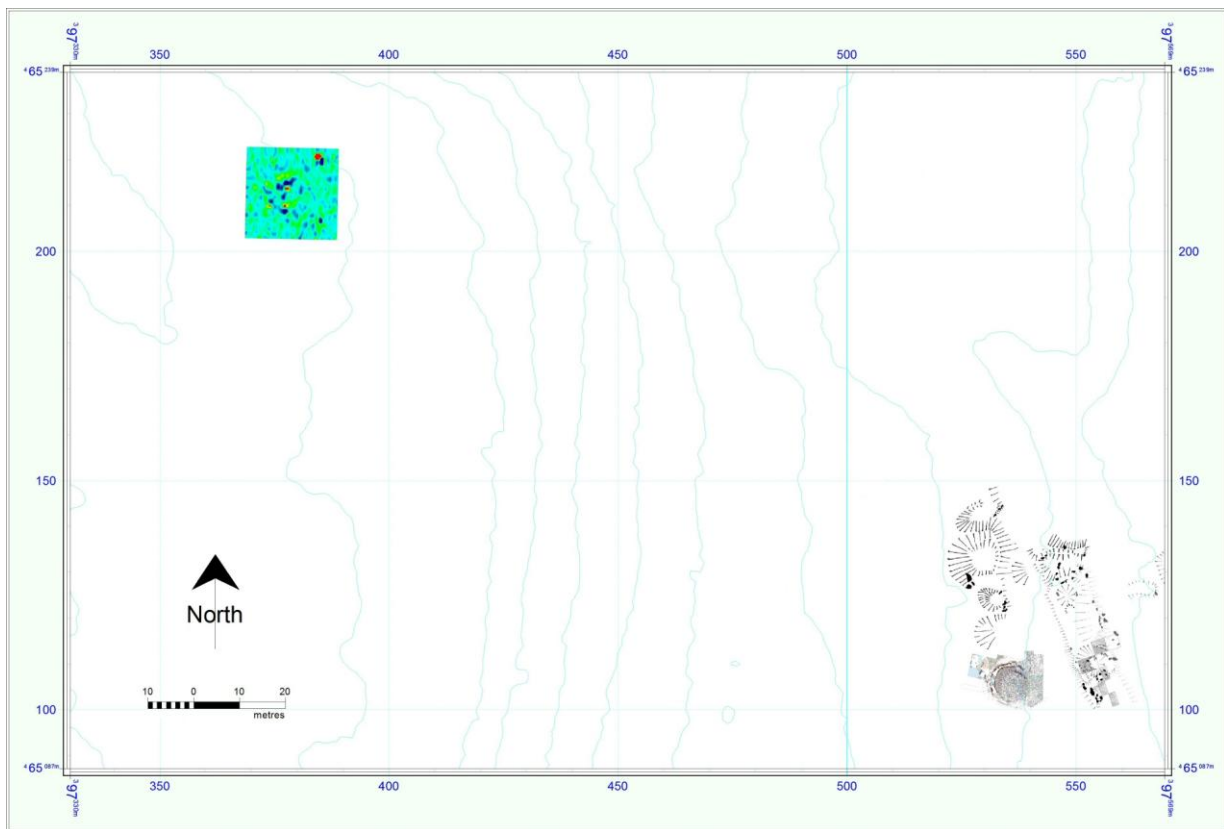


Fig. 1 Location of the charcoal sampling area and gradiometer survey in relation to the settlement

The gradiometer survey identified one bipolar anomaly which may be due to a metal object, and a possible semicircle of anomalies that relate more closely to the spread of charcoal. The pattern is not sufficiently well defined to represent a structure, but it could represent charcoal burning on the site. 10 soil samples were collected for analysis in collaboration with Dr Jill Thompson at Bradford University, and it is hoped to obtain radiocarbon dates following species identification.

Excavation of area DG

Preparations began with a gradiometer survey of the eastern part of the settlement (Fig. 2) followed by setting out a series of excavation areas to cover a well-defined circular hollow and adjacent banks and boulders (Fig. 3). These areas were designed to give a good overall view of activities in this area, within the

limits of shelter provided by our polytunnel and large tent (this year having seen the wettest early summer on record).

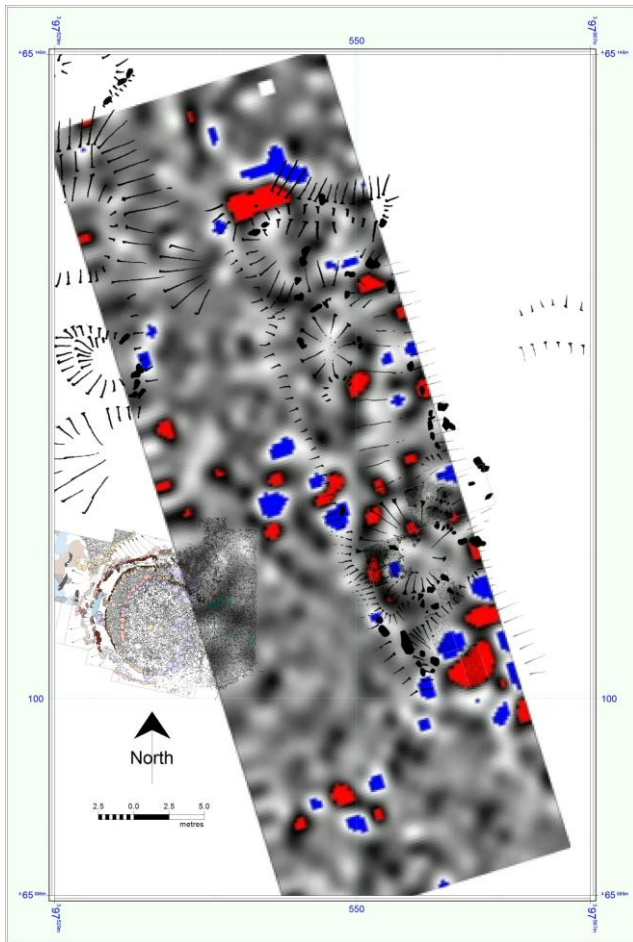


Fig. 2 Gradiometer survey

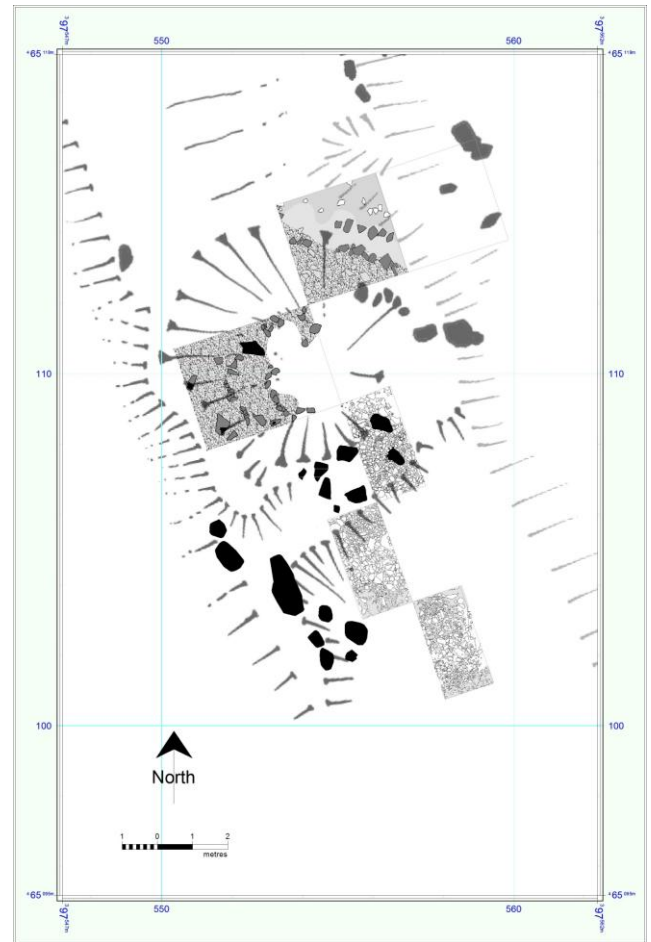


Fig. 3. Excavation areas

Amidst the general scatter of anomalies two significant responses stand out towards each end of the area surveyed. The southern anomaly lies next to a group of large earthfast boulders outside the circular hollow, but on the surface there is no clearly definable structure in this area. A detailed magnetic susceptibility survey (Fig. 4) also picks up this anomaly, and suggests that a weaker level of response may correlate with the distribution of shattered sandstone cobbles. It was noticeable in the excavated areas that the main concentrations of these cobbles lies outside the circular hollow, beyond a double line of larger boulders as indicated by the shading in Fig. 3.

Within the hollow a large flat sandstone slab was found *in situ* (Fig. 5). Although not associated with any of the more obvious magnetic anomalies, this slab may be a bakestone.

Few artefacts were recovered this year, but notable among the finds are two small pieces of extremely thin sheet metal.

Conclusions

Despite generally wet conditions the work this year has established a firm foundation for the continuing examination of area DG, and in particular the investigation of the strong magnetic anomaly and boulder setting, and the definition of the structural elements associated with the circular hollow. It appears that these elements may be similar to features encountered in previous years on the platform to the west of the hollow way, and that the better preservation in area DG may actually help to throw some light retrospectively on the interpretation of the earlier results.

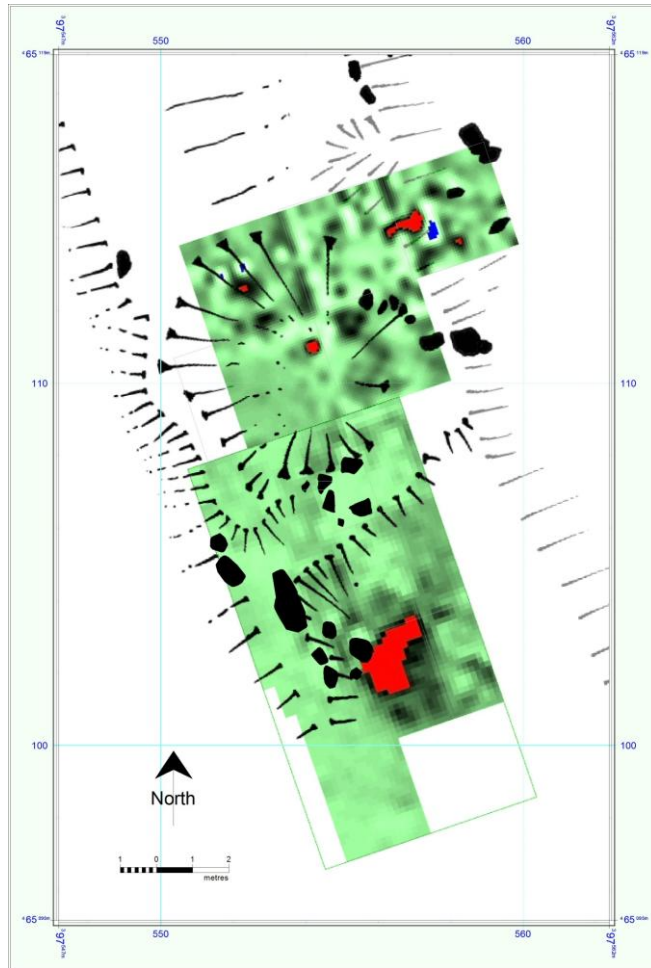


Fig. 4 Magnetic susceptibility survey



Fig. 5 Possible paving in the corner of Area C

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