

Hill View Farm
South Cerney, Gloucestershire
SU 045974

Archaeological Evaluation
February 2020



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Summary

An evaluation trench was dug by volunteers from the South Cerney Trust on 20 January 2020. The trench was located over geophysical anomalies which had been identified in the results of a geophysical survey which had taken place in October and November 2018. None of the anomalies were uncovered during the evaluation. An area of compacted stones was revealed in the lower western side of the trench. The function and date of this feature is not known. No artefactual material was recovered from the trench.

Site Owner

The field is owned by Will Seymour who gave permission for the excavation to be undertaken.

Authorship

This report was written and compiled by John Samways.

Copyright

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Disclaimer

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Acknowledgements

The South Cerney Trust would like to express our thanks, gratitude and appreciation to the land owner, Will Seymour, for his permission and enthusiasm to carry out the excavation. Thanks also to T Sibbich for the supply and operation of the mechanical digger and to J Hill, M McQueen, and C Snowden for their help and support.

The Location of the Excavation

The survey was carried out in a field belonging to Hill View Farm at the north-western edge of the village of South Cerney, Gloucestershire. South Cerney is located to the south-west of Cirencester, Gloucestershire and north of Cricklade, Wiltshire; Figure 1.

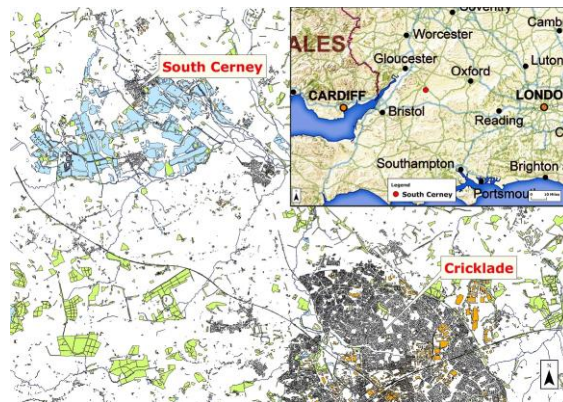


Figure 1: Location of site (Base Mapping: Ordnance Survey, Crown Copyright)

The underlying geology is Kellaways Sand Member - Sandstone and Siltstone, Interbedded (British Geological Survey). Figure 2.

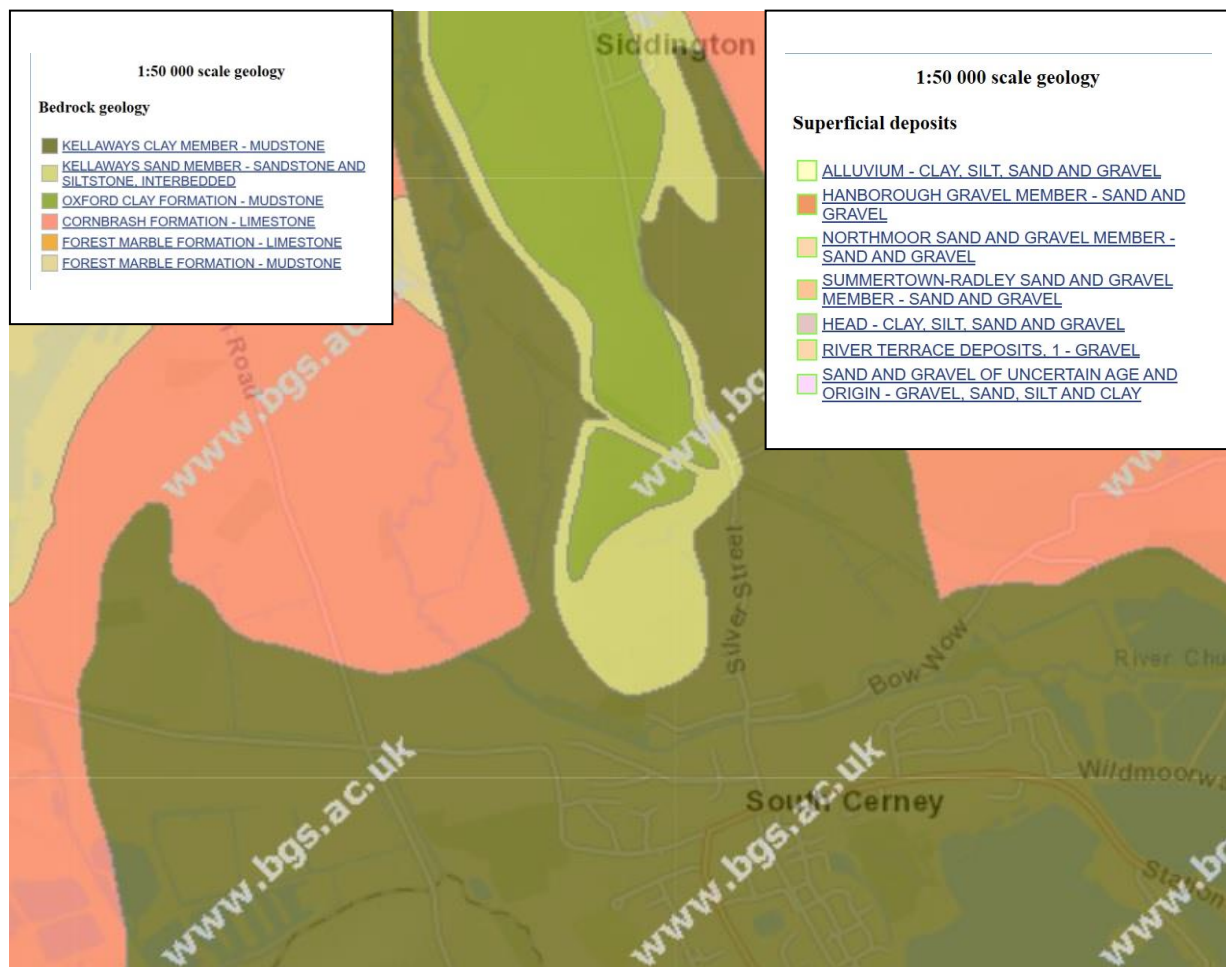


Figure 2: Underlying Geology (British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright)

The trench was located at the southern end of the field, as shown in Figure 3, incorporating trench 2 from the May 2019 excavations where an iron working furnace was revealed.

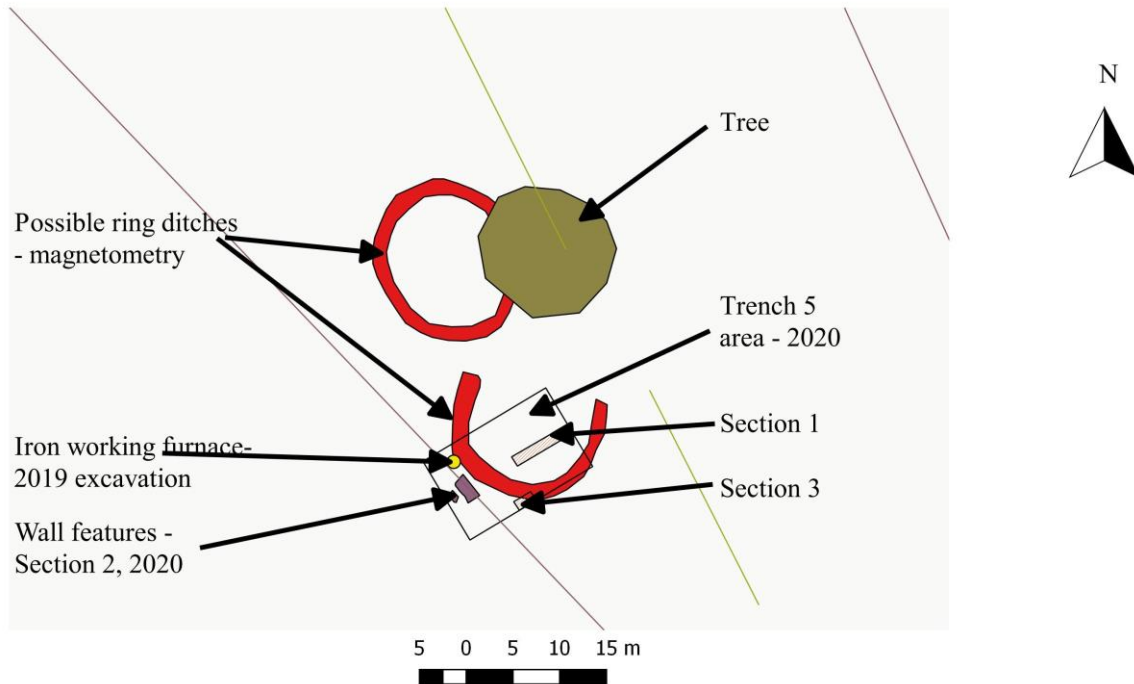


Figure 3: Location of trench 5 (Base Mapping: Ordnance Survey, Crown Copyright)

The Aim of the Evaluation

This work was to look for any evidence for human occupation associated with the furnace uncovered during the 2019 excavations and to obtain dateable evidence, if possible, for activity at the site.

Carrying out the Evaluation

The work was undertaken on 20 January 2020. The weather was dry and partly sunny.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was set out as 10m x 15m, as shown in the cover photograph and figure 3 above, and a number of sections within this area were machine cut by a digger with a toothless bucket 1m wide. Section 1 ran across the centre of the mound, an area shown as high resistance in the 2018 resistivity survey. Section 3 was cut across a possible ditch revealed in the 2018 magnetometry survey.

No artefactual material or features were found in sections 1 and 3.

Section 2 was cut in an area outside of the area previously surveyed, but in alignment with a possible series of post holes. A stone feature was revealed in this section, and comprised of two areas of compacted stones, made up of local sandstone; Figure 4. Unfortunately, the area quickly filled with water and cleaning of the stones became impossible. As a result, it has not been possible to determine the function, if any, of this feature or if it is merely a geological deposit. No dateable material was recovered from the section.



Figure 4: Stone feature (photo courtesy of C Snowden)

Assessment

As with the evaluation in 2019, none of the features visible in the geophysical survey were found within the trench. The stone feature lies close to the iron furnace found on the natural surface in trench 2 during the 2019 excavations. It is not possible to say if the two features are from the same date, though a few fragments of iron pan were recovered in the vicinity of the stone feature.

Next Step

It is proposed to re-open the section of trench containing the stone feature once the ground has become sufficiently dry. This will enable more of the feature to be revealed and, if possible, ascertain its function and date. No other work is proposed on any of the other features shown in the 2018 geophysical survey.

Bibliography

South Cerney Trust. 2018. Hill View Farm, South Cerney, Gloucestershire. SU 045974. Magnetometry & Resistivity Geophysical Surveys, October - November 2018

South Cerney Trust. 2019. Hill View Farm, South Cerney, Gloucestershire. SU 045974. Archaeological Evaluation, May 2019.