Cadbury Hill

How old is it?

The hill top of Cadbury-Congresbury has produced signs of activity in Neolithic and Bronze Age times (7000-1000 BC), but the first evidence of occupation comes from the pre-Roman Iron Age (500 BC to 43 AD), when substantial defences turned the hill into a hill fort.
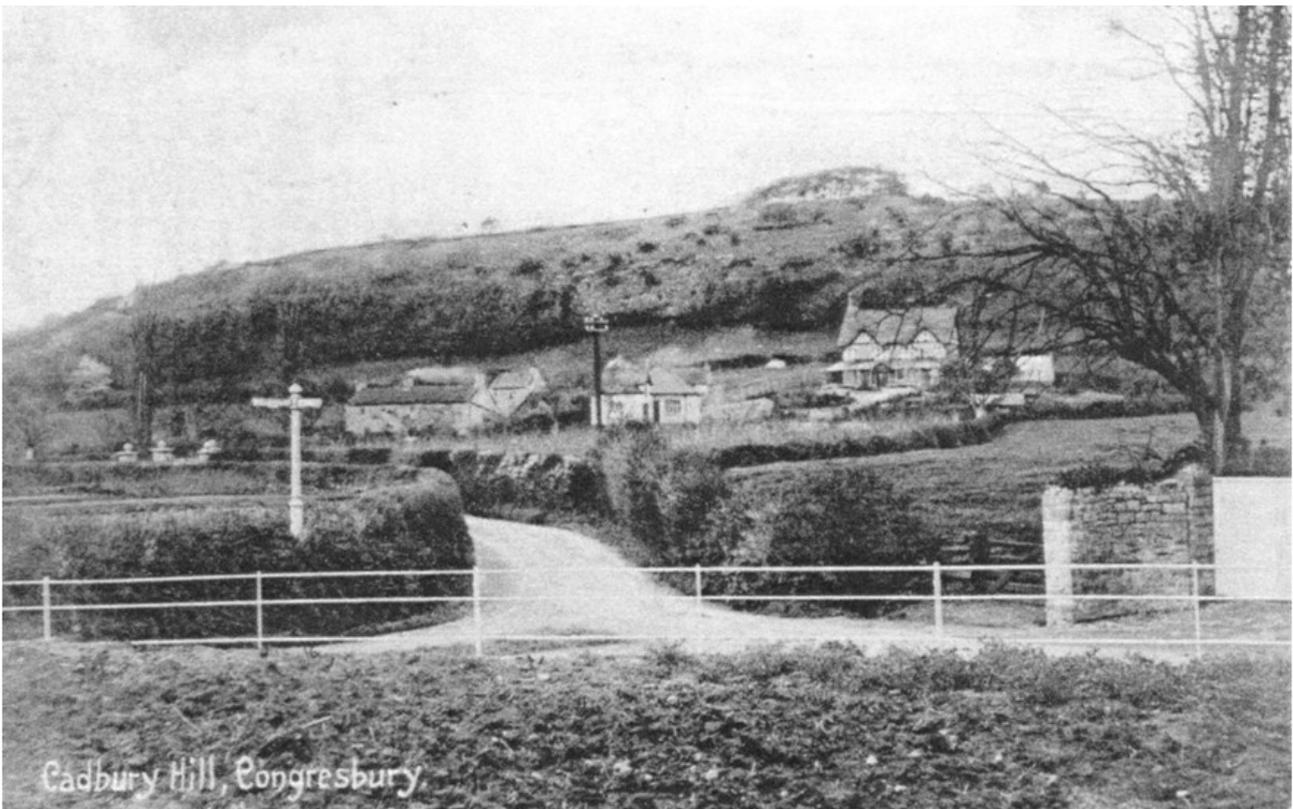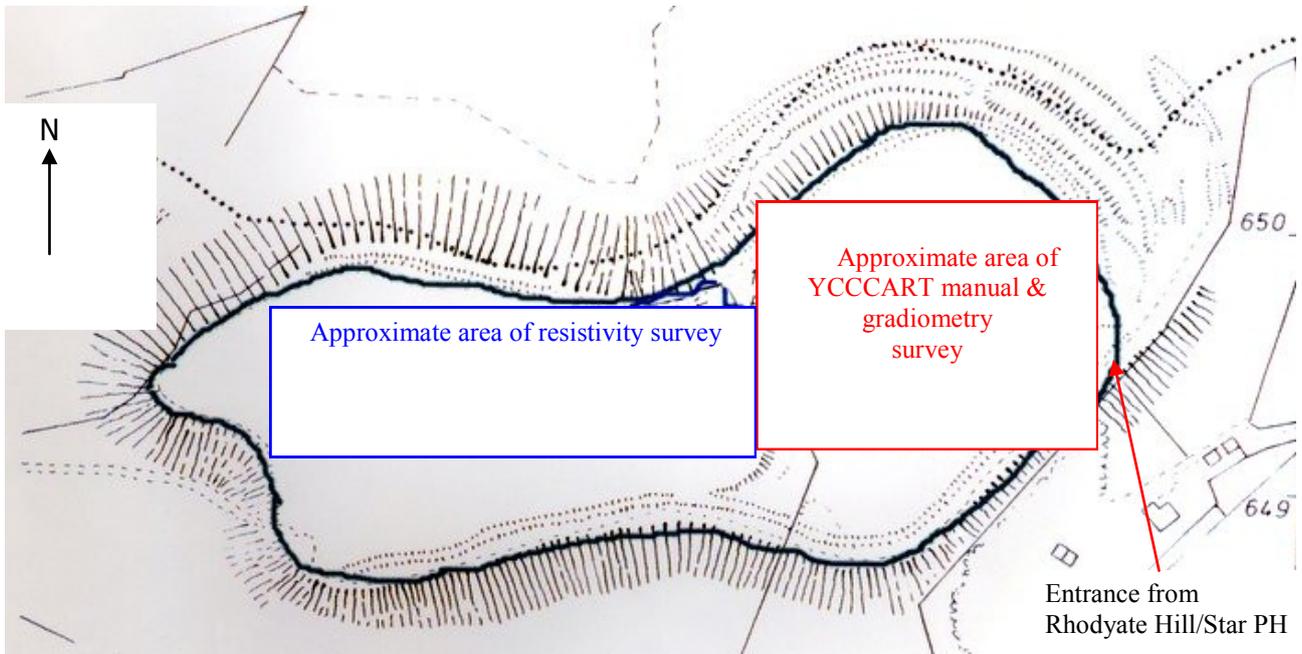

This post card of c1909, with a photo taken from outside the gate of Rhodyate House, shows only a few scattered bushes on the south side of Cadbury.
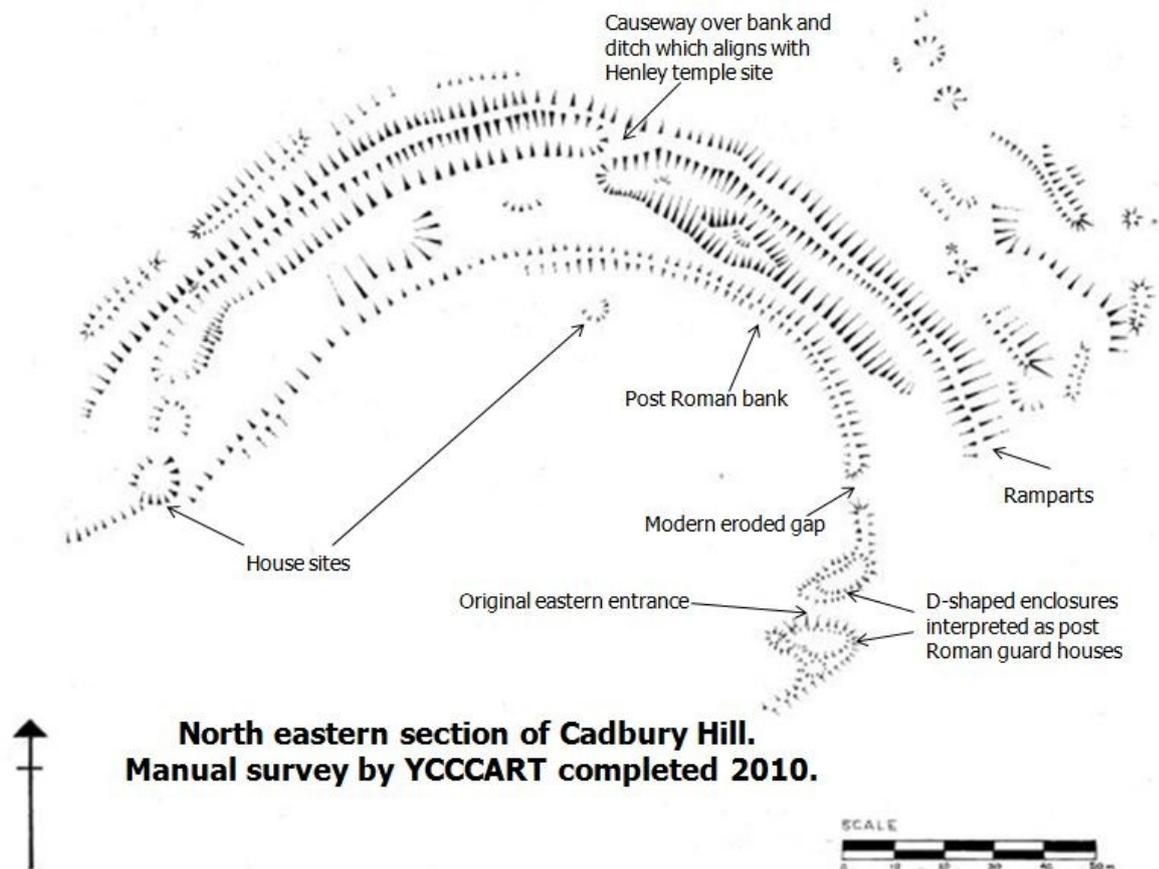
Why is it so important?

In the post Roman period the hill was refortified and reoccupied. During the period 1968 to 1972 archaeologists discovered that the people then living on the hill top imported pottery from Syria, North Africa and Francia (France etc). They found evidence of Germanic glass, smelting and glass-bead making, round house foundations of post-Roman date (very unexpected at the time) and remains of one end of a great timber hall.
The site clearly had links with Byzantium (Eastern Mediterranean) in the 5th and 6th centuries AD: this was no hovel on a hill-top!

N

Approximate area of resistivity survey

Approximate area of YCCCART manual & gradiometry survey

650

649

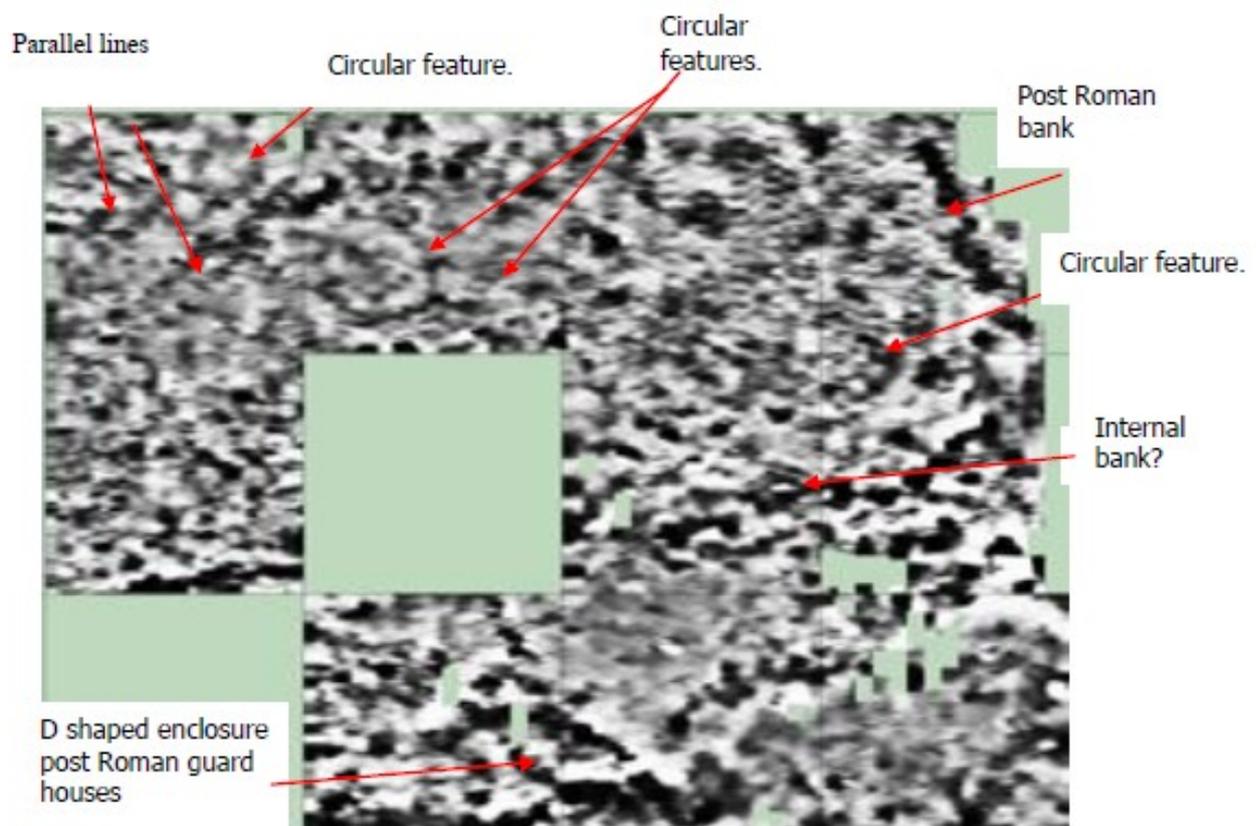Entrance from Rhodyate Hill/Star PH

What can I see today ?

If you walk up from Rhodyate Hill, along the lane, go through the gate with the sign board and past a large oak tree and you will see the massive Iron Age ramparts illustrated on the map below. Continue on keeping to the left path and you will come to the remains of the D shaped enclosures, believed to be post Roman guard houses which stood at the original entrance, as well as the other features shown below.
The Henley temple site, to north east of the hill fort, is where a Roman temple stood at Henley Wood (Now destroyed but was close to ST 44304 65192)

Causeway over bank and ditch which aligns with Henley temple site

Post Roman bank

Modern eroded gap

Ramparts

House sites

Original eastern entrance

D-shaped enclosures interpreted as post Roman guard houses

North eastern section of Cadbury Hill.
Manual survey by YCCCART completed 2010.

SCALE

Parallel lines
Circular feature.
Circular features.
Post Roman bank
Circular feature.
Internal bank?
D shaped enclosure post Roman guard houses

Geophiz

In 2011 YCCCART, with permission from English Heritage, started geophysical surveys on the hill. The results above were obtained using a gradiometer and covered part of the area of the manual survey. Below the results are overlaid on the manual survey.

Approximate site
of shrine
(See next page)

Victorian stone circle

6

24

50

31

25

32

69

33

27

6

34

62

9

56

36

2

35

3

10

40

63

51

39

37

38

41

42

64

64

4

9

Area within blue rectangle and beyond to left was
surveyed with a resistivity meter
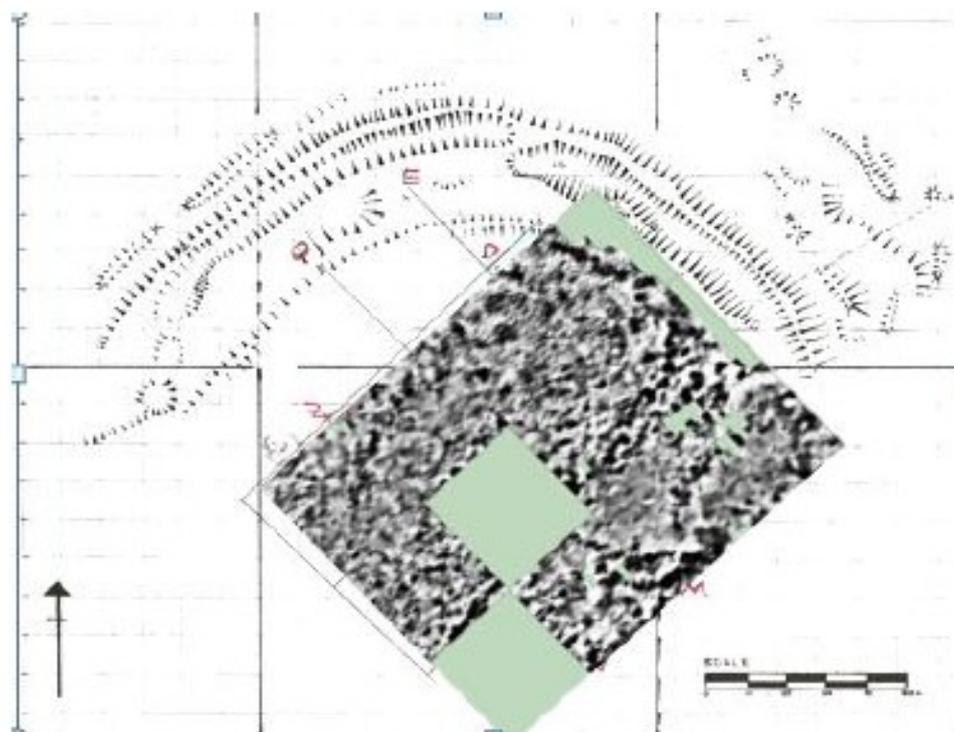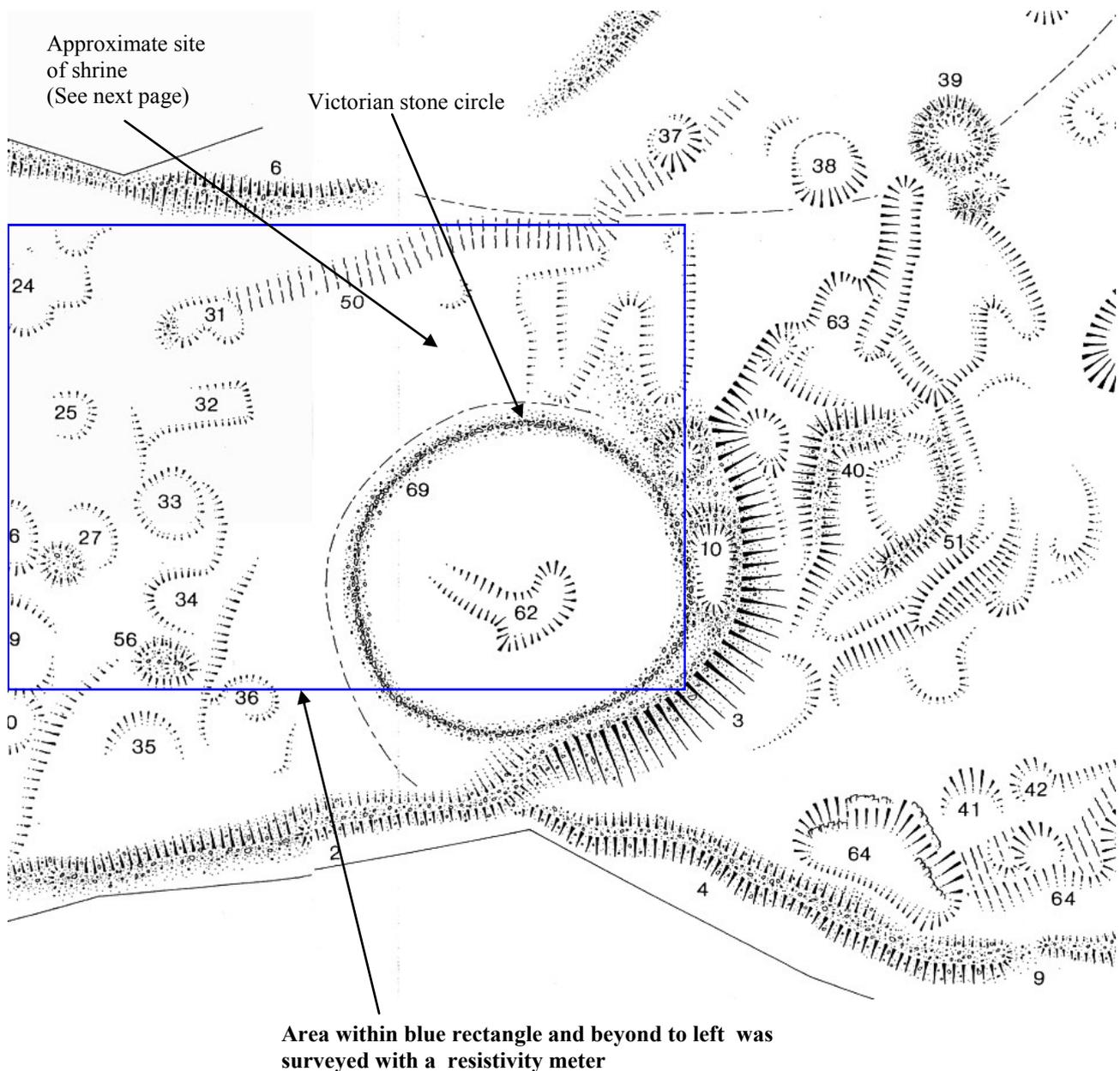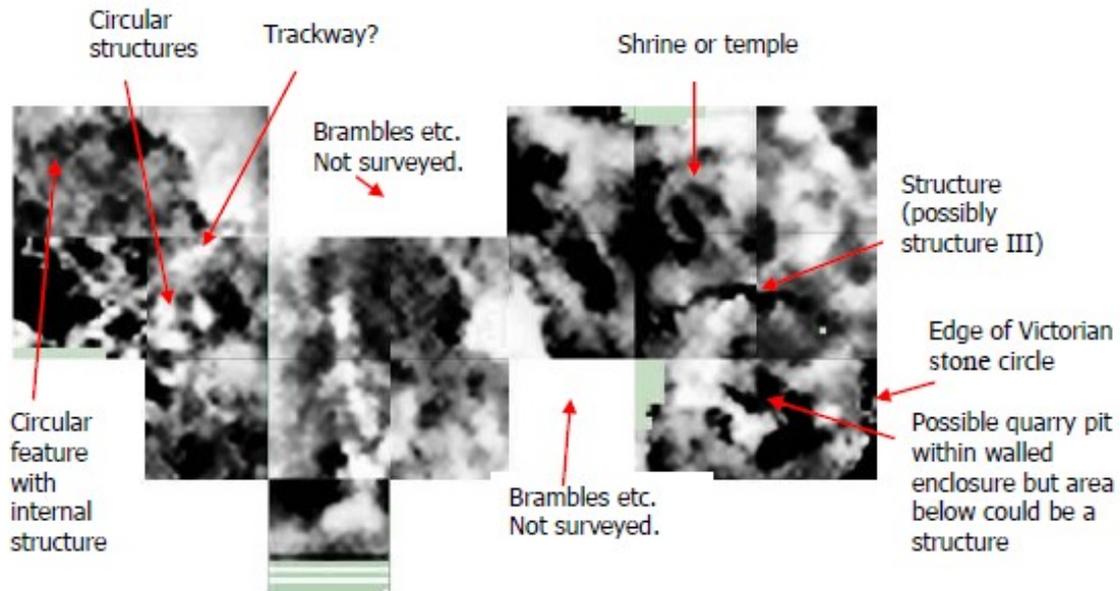
Mark Corney Survey 2004

**The manual survey above is part of a survey completed by Mark Corney in 2004
and shows the central and part of the western section of the hill fort.
Mark's full survey report is on YCCCART's web site www.ycccart.co.uk.
A YCCCART resistivity survey in 2011 covered the area within the blue rectangle
above. The numbers above relate to Mark's description of the features such as:**
**69.   Roughly circular walled enclosure, 37m in
diameter**
**62.   Shallow, irregular quarry pit within walled
enclosure 69.**
**33.   Circular depression, 7.5m in diameter
set within a sub-rectangular platform 11m by 8m.**
**39.   Embanked circular structure 10m in diameter,
defined by a well-preserved limestone rubble bank
 up to 3m wide and up to 0.5m high. This round
house is shown on the right.**

Circular structures

Trackway?

Shrine or temple

Brambles etc. Not surveyed.

Structure (possibly structure III)

Circular feature with internal structure

Edge of Victorian stone circle

Brambles etc. Not surveyed.

Possible quarry pit within walled enclosure but area below could be a structure

2011 Resistivity survey

The resistivity survey results above show the shrine or temple site (top right). This was recorded in the 1968 excavation report, as was structure 3 to the south of the shrine, but neither are on the manual survey as nothing is visible above ground.

Entrance
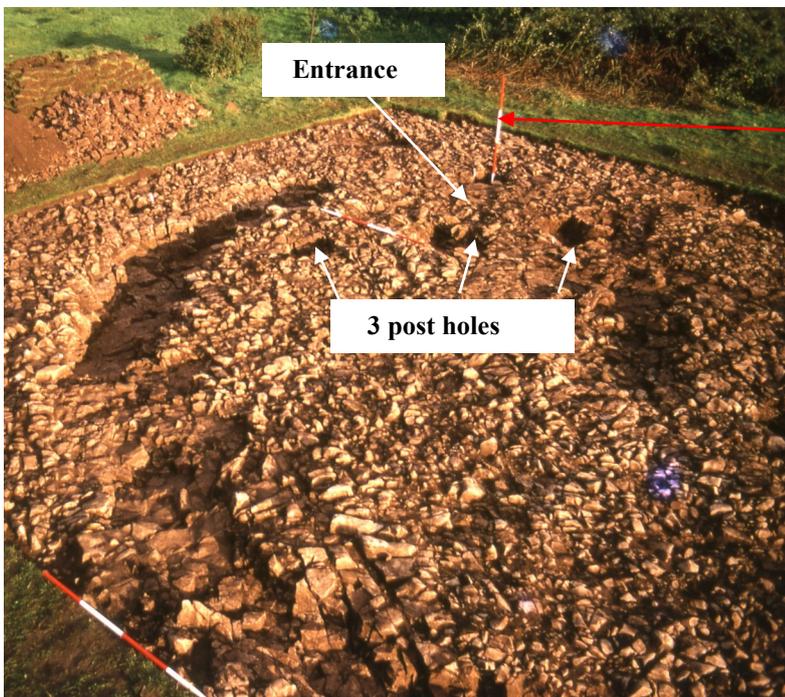
3 post holes

Left is the shrine excavated in 1968. (Photo courtesy of the late Keith Gardner). Below the red & white pole is the massive 6m wide entrance just beneath which are three post holes. The post holes are believed to have contained wooden posts to which was attached a wooden screen used no doubt to screen onlookers from the ceremonies taking place inside.

YCCCART intend to continue geophysical surveys at the end of 2011 / beginning of 2012, following which a full report will be included on the YCCCART web site

Cadbury.   More than just archaeology.

The hill is also a local nature reserve and a place to visit at any time of year

We are on the web.
www. YCCCART.co.uk
Read our reports & catch up with our progress
For further information please contact Brian Bradbury on 01934 838018

heritage
lottery fund

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