A Geophysical Survey of
Hall Rings Enclosure
Pelynt
Cornwall

View of Hall Rings looking north (Heritage Gateway)

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Report No.5
SMC No. 10191
English Heritage License Nos.
SL00115058 & SL00116543
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1.0 Introduction

A magnetometer survey (License No. SL00115058) and resistivity survey (License No. SL00116543) of Hall Rings enclosure (NGR. SX 2143 5553; SMC 10191), Hall Barton Farm, Pelynt, Cornwall was undertaken by Dr Catherine Frieman of the Australian National University (ANU), Canberra, and James Lewis, Glasgow University, in collaboration with Kyle Beavorstock of Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS), Reading and Peter Nicholas of the Tamarside Archaeology Group. A further topographical survey was also carried out on the extant remains of the enclosure and an external linear earthwork referred to from here as the outer embankment The surveys took place between the 2nd and 5th of November, 2015, with the consent of the landowner Mr Geoffrey Maddever, of Hall Barton Farm, Pelynt. The survey was carried out as part of a wider project of the Southeast Kernow Archaeology Survey (SEKAS).

1.1. Rationale

Despite many generations of archaeological fieldwork in Britain’s southwestern peninsula and Cornwall’s central role in later prehistoric exchange networks, the prehistory of the south-eastern part of the county has not been exposed to the same amount of modern archaeological investigation. The SEKAS project aims to develop a better understanding of the prehistoric landscape of this region which links the metal-rich uplands to the English Channel. The study region for the SEKAS project comprises of the area between the Tamar and the Fowey rivers and south of the A38, and the period from the Neolithic through to the later Iron Age.

The enclosure at Hall Rings is one of a number of prehistoric monuments within the parish of Pelynt. Indeed within the area of southeast Cornwall, no other parish contains more prehistoric enclosures and barrows than Pelynt. Therefore, this area must have been important to past communities and any research into southeast Cornwall, must investigate these monuments and their setting. Despite the presence of a number of prehistoric monuments in this area there has been no modern investigation of them. A geophysical survey of Hall Rings will present a non-intrusive investigation to establish the extent and character of the sub-surface features.

The site at Hall Rings is a scheduled monument and as such any archaeological investigation requires a Section 42 License. The license was obtained from Mr Nicholas Russell Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments of the South West Office English Heritage on the 6th of October 2015 (English Heritage Ref: AA/075714/5).

1.2. Objectives

The objective of the survey of Hall Rings was to:

1. Undertake a full magnetic survey of the monument.
2. Undertake a full resistivity survey of the monument.
3. Establish the character and extent of subsurface remains within the scheduled area.
1.3. Site Location

Hall Rings is located approximately 1km east of the village of Pelynt, in the parish of Pelynt and is situated in the district of Caradon in southeast Cornwall (Fig. 1). In Figure 1 the enclosure is identified by a red circle and the outer embankment by a blue line.

![Figure 1: The site location (© Ordnance Survey).](image)

The site is situated at the tip of a northeast aligned spur. The spur is defined by deep stream valleys on three sides (see Figure 1) and these form part of the West Looe River system. The surrounding landscape is characterised by irregularly shaped fields which are used for a mixture of arable and pasture farming.

The settlement pattern in the local vicinity is dominated by small farms and villages and are linked by narrow lanes and roads which are usually enclosed by high hedges. The village of Pelynt is located approximately 1km to the west. The village is mentioned in Doomsday Book and is the birth and burial place of Bishop Trelawney, famous for opposing the attempts by James II to legalise freedom of worship for Catholics. The landscape is bisected by a number of river valleys, and the enclosure is located within an area that has been defined by the Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLC) as Ancient Enclosed Land, (Herring 1998). The scheduled area encompasses the monument itself (circled red, Figure 1) and large area immediately to the southwest which is thought to contain a prehistoric field system. This is defined by a linear embankment (blue line, Figure 1).

1.4. The Monument

The monument comprises two enclosures: the main circular enclosure is connected to a smaller D-shaped enclosure to the southeast. The southwest side of the monument is bounded by woodland and here is found the extant remains of two ditches and banks which define this side of the site. The rest of the monument is no longer visible as it was removed in order to free up the field for cultivation during World War Two, though local residents remember elements of its previous extent (Geoffrey Maddever, pers. comm.). The scheduled area encompasses a further embankment to the southwest and this as noted above, was recorded on the topographical survey.
Figure 2. Hall Rings Enclosure as depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map 1880s (Digimap).

The extant remains of the enclosures is recorded on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map 1880s (see Figure 2). Figure 3 (below) is the same map but with the interpretive annotations added on, the banks are marked green (Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7 & 9) and ditches are annotated, red (Nos. 2, 4, 6 & 8). The two entrances into the enclosures are numbered 10 and 11 and number 12 refers to a further possible entrance.
Figure 3. The 1st edition OS map with authors annotations.

According to the map the circular enclosure appears to be defined by a bank (1), a ditch (2) followed by an outer bank (3). The outer bank (3) does not completely extend around the circular enclosure but terminates at points 13 and 14. This enclosure is not a proper circle but more egg-shaped and measures c.104m NE by SW and c.99m NW by SE. The inner enclosure appears to have a single narrow entrance (11) located on the southeast side of the monument. Locals suggest that, at least in the historic period, a second entrance (38) was visible on the surface on the northwest side, more or less opposite the south-eastern entrance (Geoffrey Maddever, pers comm).

The D-shaped annex measures approximately c.93m NE-SW by c.65m NW-SE. The map depicts two gaps within its circuit, the first is located to the northeast (12) and the second the south (10). Based on the illustration from the map the second southern entrance (10) appears to be the entrance proper, however, it is possible that the north-eastern gap may be an entrance but the complete outline of this was not visible at the time the map was drawn.

The two surviving substantial ditches 4 and 6 define the southern side of the monument which are also incorporated and define the southern side of the D-shaped enclosure.

The site has limited views in all directions: to the north is Muchlarnick ridge and the total extent of the view is 1km. To the east is visible the tops of a small number of ridges for a distance of 4.3km. The south is defined by a ridge upon which might have been visible if both site were cotemporary the enclosure at Trelaske. Finally the west is defined by the north-south ridge and this is visible for a distance of 400m.

The site lies c.136m OD and the underlying geology is Meadfoot Beds, comprising of slate, grit and limestone (BGS 2002).
2.0 Archaeological Background

Cornwall’s Historic Environment Record defines Hall Rings as a multi-vallate hillfort. The monument is thought to have been constructed and used at some point between 400BC to 600AD.

There may originally have been between 750-1,000 Rounds within the southwest (Henderson 2007: 220). These are small settlements enclosed by a ‘single bank and ditch and usually sited on hill slopes and spurs’ (Johnson and Rose 1982: 155). Although this definition is generally correct, work at Caervallack (Edwards and Kirkham 2008) and Fraddon (Johnston, Moore and Fasham 1998-99) has demonstrated that rounds can be multi-vallate. This type of settlement is thought to have been constructed and used between the 4th century BC and 6th century AD but was particularly important during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (Quinell 2004 in Young 2012).

Within the project area, investigations of several enclosures have been carried out. To the north, at the multi-vallate hillfort Bury Down, geophysical survey and excavation was carried out by Keith Ray in the 1990s (Ray 1994; 2001). Ray’s geophysical survey revealed evidence of interior features and the segmentation of the outer ditch, interpreted as the remains of a Neolithic causewayed enclosure which, in turn, surrounds the extant later Iron Age enclosure (Ray 2001:55). Stabilisation work was undertaken along the inner bank; however, no excavation was carried out but localised plans and sections were drawn (Preston-Jones 1996). In 2013, a complete magnetometer survey of the monument was undertaken by the Saltash Heritage Group under the direction of the SEKAS. It found evidence of a possible a rectangular structure within the inner enclosure; however, the outer ditch appears to be continuous with no evidence of any gaps (Lewis and Frieman forthcoming).

A Middle to Late Bronze Age enclosure was found during construction work at Liskeard Junior and Infant School. The enclosure ditch was heavily truncated, and it was not possible to identify an associated bank. The monument was dated based upon pottery and charcoal which produced a date range of 1396-840 BC (Jones 1998-99:67). During excavations on St. George’s Island (Looe Island) in 2009, Channel Four’s programme ‘Time Team’ found evidence for a Romano-British enclosure (Wessex Archaeology 2009: 22).
3.0. Methodology

Three surveys were undertaken, a magnetic survey, a resistivity survey and topographical survey of the extent remains. The methodology for each will now be discussed below.

3.1. The Magnetic Survey

A magnetic survey was undertaken at Hall Rings, the survey employed 20 × 20m grids which were sited using an EDM and extended in a north-south direction. A total of 84 grids were surveyed for the magnetic assessment, with the survey covering a total area of 3.36ha. The area surveyed comprises roughly 25% of the scheduled area and the entirety of the main enclosure earthworks known from historical surveys and aerial photographs. The southwestern banks were included in the topographic survey, but the scheduled area between these banks and the enclosure banks was not included in the magnetic survey area.

The survey used a Bartington Grad 601-2 dual sensor fluxgate gradiometer. The zig-zag method was used and readings were taken at 0.25m intervals along traverses 1m apart. This provides 1600 sampling points across a full 20m × 20m grid and the total number of points taken for the whole survey was 134,400. The units used were nano-Tesla (nT); and the processed data ranged from a maximum of 10 and a minimum of -10 and produced a standard deviation of 4.16nT.

The magnetometer data was processed using TerrasSurveyor 3.0.25.0. Once the downloading was completed, the magnetic results were processed; and the data was clipped, de-staggered, de-stripped and the grids were moved (to re-locate the interior) and range matched.

Anomalies detected using the magnetometer are depicted as either negative or positive. The interpretation of the results is based on previous experience of the surveyors and comparison with other sites. The final results are presented in this report in greyscale format.

3.2. The Resistivity Survey

The resistivity survey employed 20 × 20m grids and these were sited using an EDM and extended in a north-south direction. A total of 4 grids were surveyed, with the survey covering a total area of 0.16 ha. The survey used a Geoscan RM15 Resistance meter and the survey was conducted using parallel traverses and sample intervals of 1 metre. Post processing of the data was carried out using Geoscan's Geoplot Software.

The raw resistance data was collected in units of Ohms. On downloading the data was subject to initial review and processing to identify spikes and geological noise. The data was then clipped to 3SD, noise spikes were removed and the grids edge matched. The data was then converted to resistivity data (units of Ohm/metres) using the standard multiplier of 1.5707. Further processing was then carried out using a High Pass filter to remove gradient and Interpolation to smooth and enhance the data presentation.

Anomalies detected using the resistivity are depicted as either negative or positive. The interpretation of the results is based on previous experience of the surveyors and comparison with other sites. The final results are presented in this report in greyscale format.

3.3. The Topographical Survey

In addition to the geophysical survey, a topographical survey was carried out and this covered the earthworks in the wood and the outer embankment. The topographical survey was undertaken using a Trimble Geo7x with real-time sub-decimetre accuracy and TerraSync 5.61 software. Readings were taken along traverses which crossed the site in N-S and E-W directions every 20m and the data was processed using Trimble GPS Pathfinder Office 5.30. This consisted of Differential Correction using the Ordnance Survey base station RINEX data. The results provide detailed physical record of the extant remains which hopefully will allow for a more detailed understanding of the monument.
4.0 Results

Figure 4 displays the results of the magnetic survey. Two enclosures can be clearly observed, the circular enclosure to the northwest, and the annex to the southeast.

Figure 4: The result of the magnetic survey presented in greyscale format.
Figure 5. Interpretation of anomalies.

Legend

Archaeological Anomalies are highlighted in:

- Red dash for ditches associated with the enclosure
- Red line for other anomalies
- Green for enclosure ditches
- Blue possible archaeological anomalies
- Brown for ferrous anomalies
- Yellow dots represent plough trends

In Figure 5 the positive archaeological anomalies (red and green) are numbered 1-9, 13-15 and 36. Numbers 10-12 refer to the possible entrances and gaps within the enclosure circuit. All numbers except 15 are associated with the banks and ditches defining the prehistoric monument, whereas 15 is probably a post-medieval land drain.

Numbers 21-35 refer to the possible archaeological anomalies identified within the survey area. These anomalies have been highlighted (blue) with various degrees of confidence and will be described in detail below.
4.1. Archaeological Anomalies

Number 1 has been interpreted as representing the inner circular bank of the main enclosure, and it measures c.10m wide. The partial remains of the bank are still present on the west of the monument. Number 2, has been interpreted as a circular ditch surrounding the inner bank (1). On the results, it is defined by a thick positive anomaly, which continues to the west side of the monument where it remains a visible earthwork.

Number 3 is interpreted as an outer circular bank and this can be followed from 12, (the gap between the main enclosure and the D shaped enclosure) around the monument where it appears to terminate at the point where it would have entered the D shaped enclosure. Similar to 1 and 2 it still visible above ground on the west side of the monument. Numbers 4, 5 and 6 were interpreted as successive banks and ditches on the 1880s map (see figure 2); however, when looking at the modern OS map and the survey results, 4, 5 and 6 appear to represent just one large ditch. It is not clear why this discrepancy exists, but it appears that the original mistake occurred with the first drawing of the 1880s OS map.

Figure 6. Photo facing southeast showing banks 3 (left) & 7 (right).

Number 7 is interpreted as an external bank located on the western edge of the monument and measures c.75m long. Number 8 is the bank of the D shaped enclosure, and measures c. 110m long. Number 9, is defined by a thick positive anomaly following the circuit of 8, the same signature as 2 (above), and is an external ditch. Number 36 displays a similar signature and follows partway along the interior of 8, measuring c.50 long. This anomaly appears to represent an internal ditch.

Numbers 10, 11 and 12 refer to the entrances and gaps within the circuits of both enclosures. Number 10 is probably an entrance to the D shaped enclosure and appears to be no more than c.5m wide. Number 11 is the entrance into the main enclosure and is possibly 10m wide. The exact dimensions and form of the entrance are difficult to ascertain as there is a large ferrous anomaly located within the entrance which is disrupting the results. Number 12 is the ‘gap’ between the main and D shaped enclosure located on the northeast side of the monument. It is possible the bank (8) continued up to
the ditch (2) which is suggested by the results, but it appears that 9 terminates before 14 (see below) and does not abut the main enclosure.

Number 13 follows the circuit of 1 and appears to be an internal ditch. It is similar to 36 which is also an internal ditch following a bank (8), (see above). Number 14 refers to what appears to be a small external ditch on the northeast side of the main enclosure. It does not follow the entire circuit but is restricted to only one side. Number 15 is a linear northwest-southeast aligned feature which cuts across the interior of the main enclosure and appears to truncate the bank (1) on its south-eastern side. The anomaly measures c.90m long and does not appear to be part of the enclosure, suggesting it represents a post-medieval field drain.

4.2. Possible Archaeological Anomalies

Number 16 is a semi-circular anomaly located at the northern terminus of 7 and measures c.30m long. This anomaly does not appear to be part of monument but a later feature which respects it. These probably represent a removed hedge which follows the circumference of the field. Number 17 is a semi-circular feature located immediately to the north of 16. The anomaly is c.40m long and the open south facing side measuring c.25m wide.

Number 18 is an irregular semi-circular shaped anomaly located at the northern end of the survey area. The feature measures c.40m long and the open west facing gap 20m wide. Number 19 is a right angled anomaly located immediately northeast of the main enclosure. The anomaly measures c.55m long.

Number 20 is aligned northwest-southeast and measures at least 15m long. The feature continues beyond the northern edge of the survey area. Number 21, is aligned northeast-southwest and measures at least 15m long and extends beyond the northeast edge of the survey area. Number 22 is also aligned northeast-southwest and extends beyond the northeast edge of the survey area. Number 23 is a small right angled linear feature which extends from and continues beyond the edge of the survey area. The feature measures at least 17m long. It is not clear what these features represent; they could be the remains of field drains, old field boundaries or deep plough marks.

Numbers 24 and 25 represent two triangular shaped features. Number 24 is located immediately southeast outside the D shaped enclosure. It measures about 10m long and 8m wide at its widest part. Number 25 located within the D shaped enclosure displays similar dimensions. They might be anthropogenic in origin or geological the size and shape suggest they could be human made. Their function and purpose at this point is not understood.

Number 26, is a northwest-southeast aligned linear anomaly, located at the west side of the D shaped enclosure. This could be the remains of a quarry trench which was dug during the construction of the enclosure. Number 27 is a small curvilinear feature located in front of the entrance of the main enclosure (11) and it measures c.10m long. Number 28 are two linear features which appear to form an irregular ‘circular’ feature that measures c.10m in diameter.

Number 29 is a northeast-southwest aligned linear anomaly located directly to the northeast of the main inner entrance, and it measures c.10m long. The southwestern end of the linear feature abuts a strong ferrous anomaly and immediately to the southwest of this is a northwest-southeast aligned linear feature (35) which measures c.10m. The relationship and function of these group of features is not clear. The strong ferrous response probably originates from agricultural activity. However, it is notable that there are two strong ferrous responses within the immediate vicinity of the entrance to the inner enclosure.
Number **30**, has been interpreted as the possible remains of a structure. This was aligned northwest-southeast and measured approximately c.30m long by 15m wide. At least 4 internal features have been identified which might represent pits.

Number **31** is a northeast-southwest aligned linear anomaly and measures c.20m long. It appears be connected to **15** however the response from **31** was much weaker and so it is recorded as possible archaeology. Number **32** is a semi-circular feature located immediately to the northeast of **30**. The anomaly is c.40m long and the open north facing side measuring c.25m wide. Directly northwest of **32** is small semi-circular alignment of three possible pit anomalies (**33**).

On the northwest side of the monument and appearing to truncate **13** are two strong magnetic responses which are interpreted as pits (**34**). These both exhibit similar shapes and measure approximately 8m in diameter. Anomaly **37** is a semi-circular feature which measures at least 15m long and extends beyond the edge of the survey. It might be the same feature as **23**.

Number **38** is a linear anomaly, aligned northwest-southeast and measures c.10m long. This anomaly which is parallel with **27** it might be associated with it. Anomaly **40** is a small semi-circular and an irregular anomaly located at the southern edge of the D shaped enclosure. The semi-circular anomaly might represent prehistoric activity but it is unclear what the irregular anomaly might be. Anomaly **39** comprises of two anomalies; a small linear anomaly aligned east-west, probably related to the entrance (**10**) or the earthworks (**8 & 9**). The rectangular anomaly is possibly a pit again might be related to the entrance or earthworks or maybe be later in date.

![Figure 7. Depicting all the anomalies found during the survey.](image-url)
4.3. Topographical Survey

Figure 8. Topographical Survey
The topographical survey recorded the western banks and ditches of the enclosures and the outer embankment (37) included in the scheduled area. The enclosure earthworks have been discussed above and this section will focus upon the outer embankment. 

The north-eastern terminus of the outer embankment begins approximately 50m southwest of the enclosure. At this point from the outer embankment’s northeast terminus the earthwork follows a southwest alignment for c.200m until it turns southeast for 250m before continuing east-north-east for c.175m.

The part of the embankment labelled hedge (Figure. 6) is much narrower and more overgrown and not on the same scale as the wider larger bank to the east. It also follows a somewhat different alignment than the nearby 37 and would not connect directly to it. This section appeared to be more ‘hedge’ than embankment, unfortunately the top was too overgrown to allow points to be taken on it, however, survey points were recorded from the north and south sides of the earthwork at this point.

The larger eastern part of the embankment is more robust and flattish on top and presents a roughly trapezoid profile, consistent with the extant banks immediately surrounding the enclosure. The hollow way which runs along the outer edge of the embankment continues towards a navigable part of the West Looe River, and this is suggested represents an ideal path along which to move livestock down to the river (Geoffrey Maddever pers comm).
5.0 Discussion of Results

5.1. Introduction

The monument appears to be in good condition and strong positive responses were recorded especially from the enclosure ditches during the magnetic survey. Within the enclosures, a number of features were identified which might represent archaeological anomalies. It is not the intention here to discuss each anomaly but to compare the results here with other sites in the area and discuss several notable features. The underlying geology of Meadfoot Beads (BGS 2002) proved a good background to undertake the survey.

5.2. Resistivity Survey

Unfortunately, the weather conditions within which the survey was carried out proved less than ideal. For three of the four days of fieldwork, heavy rain was experienced by the surveyors, slowing the rate of work on the site. Whilst this did not greatly inhibit the magnetic survey, it did have a very detrimental effect on the resistivity survey. In the event, on the first day only four grids were surveyed, but the data from these was disrupted due to a technical error. For the following three days, the ground was so waterlogged that the data was unusable; so it was decided to abandon the resistivity survey and concentrate exclusively on the magnetic survey. This decision was reluctantly taken as it is not known when we will have a similar opportunity again.

5.3. Archaeological Anomalies

The survival of potential archaeological features within the enclosure is not surprising as recent work at Bake Rings, Pelynt, (Lewis and Frieman 2014), and Padderbury Top, Menheniot, (Lewis and Frieman 2013) have demonstrated similar results. These sites stand in contrast to the enclosure at Bury Down, Lanreath, where, in contrast, very few internal features were recorded. The surveyors suggest that the lack of internal features at Bury Down is not due to intense agricultural activity, this site has received much less agricultural attention than the other sites above, but that the site may have acted as a meeting place as opposed to a place of occupation (Lewis and Frieman forthcoming).

Two semi-circular anomalies (17 and 32) which might represent roundhouses have been identified. One (17) is located outside the enclosure and the other (32) within it, but both display similar dimensions to one another and to comparable structures found during other investigations. At Bake Rings, for example, two possible roundhouses were identified (Lewis and Frieman 2014) and at Padderbury Top a similar structure was recorded (Lewis and Frieman 2013). The existence of a possible rectangular structure (30) with several internal anomalies is notable as structures of these dimensions are not typically expected to be found within these type of enclosures. At present, no firm conclusions can be drawn about this feature, and it represents a focus for further work on the site.

Hall Rings presents other parallels with other enclosure sites especially Padderbury Top. Both Hall Rings and Padderbury Top appear to have internal ditches. At Hall Rings these are found following the inner bank of the main and D shaped enclosures (13 and 36) and at Padderbury Top the same anomaly was found. These inner banks have been interpreted as quarry ditches which were excavated during the construction of the banks (Lewis and Frieman 2013). In front of the main entrance of the circular enclosure at Hall Rings there is a curvilinear anomaly (27). The location of this feature is similar to a comma-shaped anomaly found in front of the entrance to inner enclosure of Padderbury Top. Both of these features might represent some sort of division taking place. If this interpretation is correct this may relate to the separating of livestock for various purposes and may have acted as a possible ‘drafting gate’ through which livestock was sorted (Pryor 2006: 105).

The anomalies 24 and 25 are identical in alignment, shape and size. The anomalies might be geological, however, so far no similar anomalies have been identified during other surveys. The
remaining option is that they are human made, but their locations are odd. Anomaly 25 does appear to be aligned with 26, but 24 is located outside the D shaped enclosure and appears to bear no relation to the monument. At present it is not clear what these anomalies represent.

The nature of the high ferrous response at the location of the main entrance is interesting. The response probably originates from later activity, its location however is notable as it lies within entrance to the inner enclosure.

Local reports of a north-western entrance to the inner enclosure probably relate to the area between the two possible pit features (34). While no break in the bank or ditch is present, they appear somewhat less well preserved here than elsewhere in their circuit and may represent a later footpath into the central enclosure. A similar feature was identified at Bury Down where our surveys have made clear that the western entrance depicted on many maps is simply a later footpath across the bank and ditch rather than an original feature.

5.4. The Survey Results Compared with the 1880s O.S. Map

Whilst the magnetic survey generally confirms the illustration on the 1880s O.S. Map there is one area where a key difference can be observed. This is the location of the features 4, 5 and 6. On the map these features are depicted as a ditch (4), bank (5) and ditch (6), however, the topographical survey and field investigation found only on ditch present where these three features were illustrated. This confusion is down to an interpretive or cartographic error during the depiction of the monument on the 1880s map. These ‘features’ are located within the wood on the sites western side, and it may be the presence of the wood which led to the cartographic error.

The magnetic survey confirms the shape and size of the monument and the location of entrances as depicted on the 1880s O.S. Map. All the potential and possible archaeological features identified during the survey would not have been visible during the initial and subsequent mapping of the monument.

5.5. The Outer Embankment

The outer embankment fulfilled a number of functions the most obvious being to divide the spur and enclose the enclosures within the ditch and the stream valleys which formed the spur. The majority of Iron Age and Romano-British enclosures in the region are located on hill or valley slopes, yet there exists a small subset of enclosures that are located on hill or ridge spurs. Within the immediate vicinity of Hall Rings, the enclosures at St. Nons, (Muchlarnick) and at Trelawne are located on similar natural features.

In a discussion of the role of hillfort ramparts, Lock (2007: 347) notes that they bring into focus what is outside as well as what is within. He cites the work of Pellow who emphasises the ‘complexity…of boundaries and boundedness as physical and metaphysical lines of demarcation at more intimate and everyday levels of social categorisation’ (Lock 2007: 346-7). As noted, both Hall Rings and St. Nons have an external ditch and this emphasised the separateness of these sites a sense which was enhanced by the stream valleys enclosing the rest of the monument. The valleys might have represented physical and metaphysical lines of demarcation and reinforced social roles. Thus, by placing the enclosure on a spur this was reinforcing not just the physical appearance and separateness of the enclosure but also social categories within society.

Within the immediate vicinity only site comparable with Hall Rings, St. Nons and Trelawne is Largin Castle, which shares a number of design features with Hall Rings. As noted, both are multivallate ring forts located on northwest facing spurs, and have external ditches which divide and enclose the spur. Hall Rings, St. Nons, and Trelawne are located on the west side of the West Looe River basin within 2 km² of each other. Yet despite there being numerous opportunities to exploit other spurs within the
study area this was not done. The Fowey River, for example, a larger more navigable river, exists as a comparable location, yet no similar concentration of sites occurs.

Furthermore the survey demonstrated the large bank and ditch system (4-6 & 7) located to the west of the enclosure did not encircle it and might be interpreted as another attempt to divide the spur and further separateness and status of the occupant of the enclosure.

5.6. Entrances

There was no evidence from the survey indicating that the northwest gap (38) in the main enclosure was an additional entrance to that of 11. The bank and ditch are continuous with no gaps or ditch terminus’ indicating an entrance. It is possible that the 38 might have been an additional entrance or remodelling of the outer circuit constructed soon after the original ditch and bank were constructed. If this is the case then this construction might not register on the magnetic results. A similar arrangement was noted at the hilltop enclosure at Bury Down, Lanreath, here a smaller entrance can be seen directly opposite the main entrance. It is not clear if these entrances the result of historical activity which perhaps exploited low points within the circuit or were constructed during the initial use of the monument.

The same problem exists with identifying the main entrance in the D shaped enclosure. The tithe and O.S. Maps depict feature 10 as a recognisable entrance albeit a small one. The ditches terminate and there is no evidence of the banks continuing behind this gap. Also the location of the 10 is where one would expect in relation to the field systems and the outer embankment. Its small size, however, is at odds with the monumental banks and ditches which define the enclosures. One would expect an equally impressive entrance although there may be other factors such as livestock management which required the construction of a smaller entrance. Although 12 appears to be a larger gap the survey indicates the bank continues and abuts the main enclosure, indicating that although the ditch (9) might not continue up to the main enclosure the bank did thus creating a complete circuit. Similar to 38, however, it is possible that 12 might represent a later gap through the bank but it is impossible at this stage to determine if this is the case and when this occurred.
6.0 Conclusion

The objectives of the survey was to undertake a) a complete magnetic and b) a complete resistivity survey of the monument and to establish the character and extent of the subsurface remains. The first objective was successful, as the site was completely surveyed by the magnetic, however, the objective was not obtained for the reasons described above.

The survey has contributed to the discussion of the role of these sites in the wider landscape, especially in relation to earlier monuments. Many questions still remain, such as the exact chronological relationship between the two enclosures and the definitive character of the anomalies, especially within the circular enclosure. Answering these questions lies beyond the ability of this survey, but this report has highlighted several areas of interest which will hopefully focus future research.
7.0 Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the following people for their help and comments:

Mr Geoffrey Maddever (landowner)

Mr Peter Nicholas, Cornwall Archaeological Society (CAS)

Mr Tim Dawson, Geophysics Manager, Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS)

Mr Kyle Beavorstock, Mr William Attard and Mr Tom Stewart of Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS)

Dr Linda Fibiger, Lecturer, Edinburgh University

Australian National University, Canberra for funding the survey
8.0 References


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