Historic England

Religion and Ritual
Pre-AD 410

Scheduling Selection Guide

Summary

Historic England's scheduling selection guides help to define which archaeological sites are likely to meet the relevant tests for national designation and be included on the National Heritage List for England. For archaeological sites and monuments, they are divided into categories ranging from Agriculture to Utilities and complement the listing selection guides for buildings. Scheduling is applied only to sites of national importance, and even then only if it is the best means of protection. Only deliberately created structures, features and remains can be scheduled. The scheduling selection guides are supplemented by the Introductions to Heritage Assets which provide more detailed considerations of specific archaeological sites and monuments.

This selection guide offers an overview of the sorts of archaeological monument or site associated with religion and ritual before the formal end of the Roman period (AD 410) which are likely to be deemed to have national importance, and for which of those scheduling may be appropriate. It aims to do two things: to set these within their historical context, and to introduce the designation approaches employed and how these might be specifically applied in selecting candidates from individual monument types for designation.

This document has been prepared by Listing Group. It is one is of a series of 18 documents. This edition published by Historic England July 2018.

Please refer to this document as:

Historic England 2018 Religion and Ritual Pre-AD 410: Scheduling Selection Guide. Swindon. Historic England.

HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/scheduling-selection/

Front cover
North Stoke henge, Oxfordshire to centre of picture, showing as a cropmark. The settings for a stone or timber circle are clearly visible.

Contents

Introduction

This selection guide offers an overview of the sorts of archaeological monument or site associated with religion and ritual before the formal end of the Roman period (AD 410) which are likely to be deemed to have national importance, and for which of those scheduling may be appropriate. It aims to do two things: to set these within their historical context, and to introduce the designation approaches employed and how these might be specifically applied in selecting candidates from individual monument types for designation. There is inevitably some overlap with the Commemorative and Funerary selection guide as many sites of a ritual or religious nature also include human remains. This guide concentrates on those sites where the prime function is considered to be ritual or religious but it should be borne in mind that in the remote past many, what would now be considered as 'every day', activities had a ritual or religious dimension. Scheduling is concerned with the protection of sites, so important objects that have been removed to museums are not covered.

From the time that humans first returned to the British Isles at the end of the last Ice Age around 15,000 years ago communities have expressed their religious or magical beliefs and ritual practices in a variety of ways, some of which have left traces that may be described as 'buildings, structures or works' and, accordingly, have been considered for scheduling. Some of these traces are physically modest, such as the engravings of animals on the walls of Church Hole Cave at Creswell Crags (Derbyshire), carried out by Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers. In later periods, the farming communities of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age invested huge efforts in large-scale construction projects, of which Stonehenge is the best-known example, whereas during the later Bronze Age and Iron Age the emphasis shifted more to the enhancement through votive deposition of natural places such as rivers, springs, bogs and caves (something that occurs in earlier periods too). The Roman conquest brought much of Britain into the classical world with a commensurate formalisation of ritual and religious behaviour manifest in the temples found in Roman towns and across the countryside, though the ritual and religious practices of the native, Celtic, population were allowed to continue, albeit incorporated within the classical pantheon. Christian worship is evidenced from the third century AD.

1 Historical Summary

1.1 Palaeolithic and Mesolithic

Figurative or geometric carvings on the walls of caves and rock shelters are the only features from this period of a ritual or religious nature likely to be considered for designation (see the Caves, Fissures and Rock Shelters IHA). To date the only authenticated examples in England are engravings on the walls of Church Hole and other caves at Creswell Crags, dated to over 12,800 years ago (Fig 1). These were only identified as recently as 2003 and the possibility of further discoveries cannot be ruled out: recently there have been claims of a Mesolithic date for engravings at Aveline's Hole (Somerset). The engravings of four quadrupeds on the walls of the Goatscrag Rock Shelter (Northumberland) may also be prehistoric but their age is unknown.

There are a few sites in Britain where possible ritual structures of Mesolithic date have been identified, primarily through radiocarbon dates rather than datable objects. The best-known example is the row of three postholes found in 1967 under the

Figure 1
Head of an ibis carved into the surface of the rock at Church Hole Cave, Creswell Crags, Derbyshire. This striking image, only discovered in 2003, is a rare British example of Upper Palaeolithic rock art dating from the final stages of the last ice age 13,000 years ago.

twentieth-century visitors' centre at Stonehenge (Wiltshire), sometimes interpreted as totem poles, which predate the later monument by several millennia. The well-known Early Mesolithic site at Star Carr (North Yorkshire) lacks clear evidence of ritual structures but uniquely in Britain is associated with finds of antler head-dresses that may have been used in shamanic rituals.

1.2 Neolithic and Early Bronze Age

Some prehistoric sites are usually interpreted in pseudo-industrial terms, such as axe factories and flint mines. It is quite evident that the extraction of stone from inaccessible places, whether high up or subterranean, when easier sources of equally good material were available, had a ritual element, perhaps related to religious beliefs. So in effect did all aspects of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age life, including 'domestic' sites marked by pits that contain deliberately buried midden material or placed deposits. However, this selection guide focuses on the major monument types.

Causewayed enclosures

These have been identified as crop and soil marks, although a few also survive as earthworks, often beneath later hillforts. These are earthwork sites where circuits of interrupted banks and ditches enclose a hilltop or cut off a promontory. There may be up to three concentric circuits which when ploughed out survive as crop marks. Segments of ditches and banks are usually about 20 metres long, though smaller and longer examples are known; it is often suggested that small social groups (possibly families) constructed individual segments at these communal monuments. The areas enclosed range from less than 1 hectare to over 8 hectares.

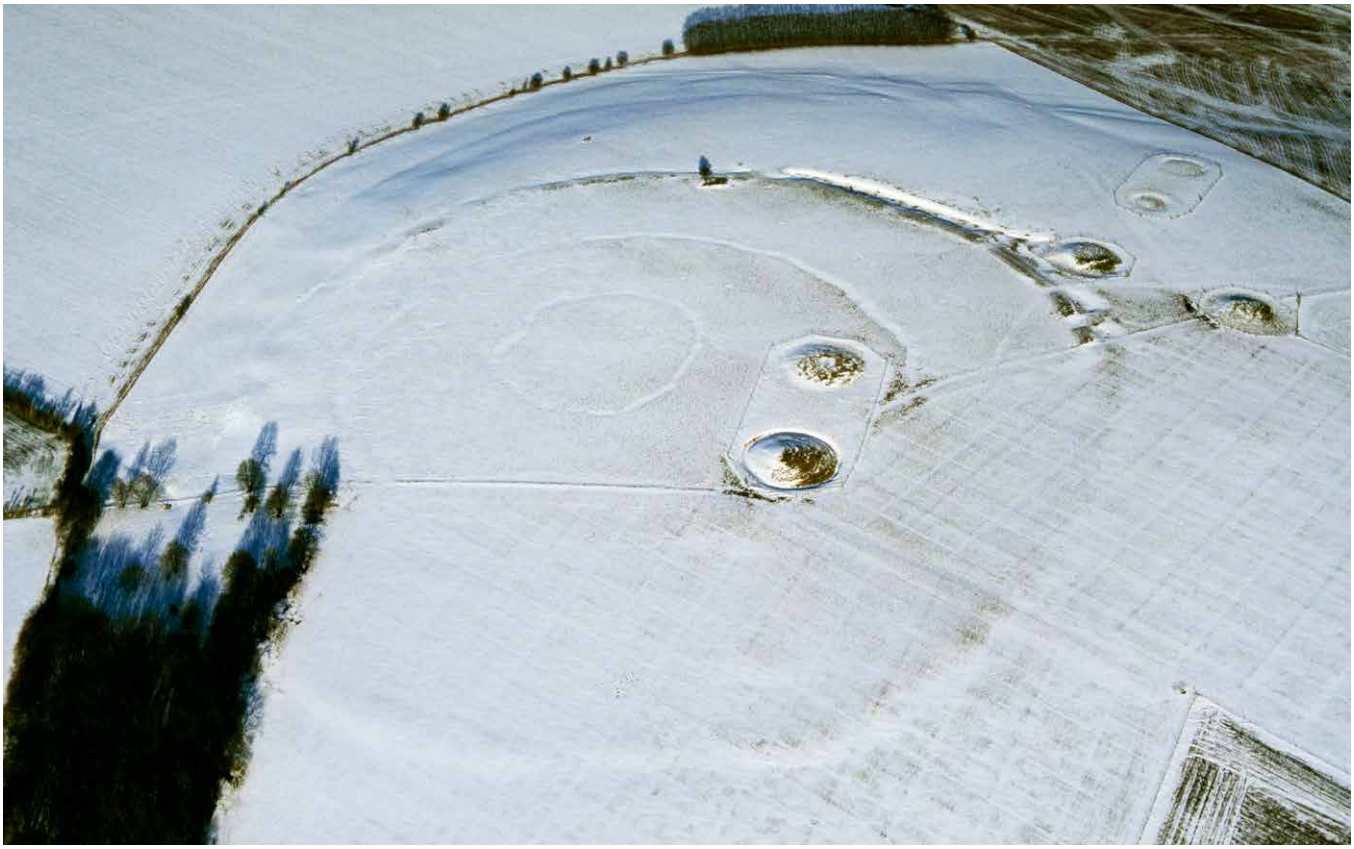

Figure 2
Windmill Hill Causewayed Enclosure, Wiltshire. A light covering of snow reveals faint traces of the three nearly concentric circles of ditches and causeways of this fourth-millennium BC complex.

Over 70 certain or probable examples are known in England, mostly south of the Trent-Severn line, though examples are known from Staffordshire and Cumbria. Extensively excavated enclosures include those at Windmill Hill (Wiltshire; Fig 2); Hambledon Hill (Dorset); and Crickley Hill (Gloucestershire). Related sites in the uplands of south-western Britain are known as tor enclosures; the best known is at Carn Brea (Cornwall). Excavations within the interiors and in the ditches at these and other sites have produced a wide range of finds indicative of domestic activity or large-scale feasting, including food debris and pottery (the only enclosure where waterlogged organic remains have been preserved is Etton, in Cambridgeshire).

However, the frequent presence of human remains and other apparently placed deposits, often in what appear to be significant depositional contexts such as ditch terminals, suggests that this activity also had a ritual element. The favoured interpretation of these sites is that they functioned as central places to which dispersed groups would come episodically to reaffirm their sense of community through a range of activities including feasting, trade and rituals associated with death. These monuments have recently been subject to a new programme of radiocarbon dating which has shown that most were constructed in the 3rd century BC (well after the start of the Neolithic) and although some were used for several centuries many of them were rather short-lived.

For a more detailed overview see the Causewayed Enclosures IHA.

Cursus monuments

These are long, narrow earthwork enclosures defined by parallel banks and ditches running for at least 100 metres and, occasionally, for several kilometres. They are widely scattered across central and eastern England, though the distribution extends to northern and western counties. The majority lie on the flat, well-drained gravel terraces of major river valleys, but some are known on the chalk downlands of Dorset and Wiltshire. Over 100 definite or likely examples are recorded in England, most surviving as cropmarks on aerial photographs, and although three or four survive as earthworks, these are badly denuded and incomplete. The division between cursuses (especially at the lower end of their size range), bank barrows and 'long mortuary enclosures' is often somewhat arbitrary.

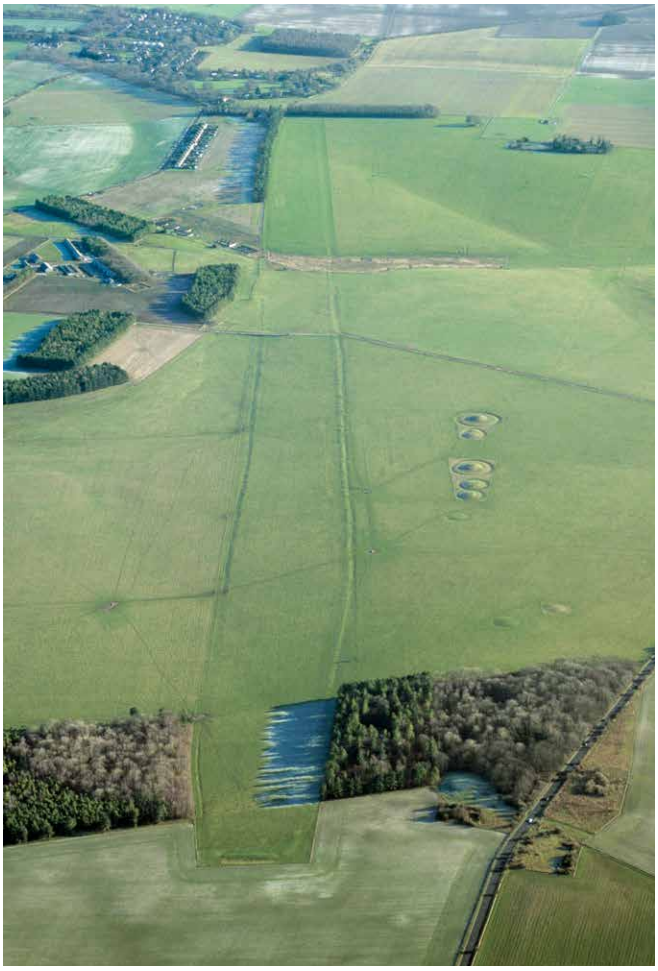

Figure 3
The Stonehenge Cursus. Dating from the Middle Neolithic (about 3500BC), the nearly parallel banks of the cursus stretch eastwards across the Wiltshire landscape. The Bronze Age Cursus Barrow can clearly be seen to the south.

Radiocarbon dating, though not as precise as that for causewayed enclosures, indicates that most cursus monuments were built during the mid- to late fourth millennium BC. They sometimes incorporate other types of monument, particularly long barrows, as in the case of the 10 kilometre-long Dorset Cursus and the Greater Stonehenge Cursus (Fig 3).

Most occur singly but at Rudston (East Riding of Yorkshire) as many as five are thought to converge near a large standing stone. Excavations have produced very few finds but they are sometimes thought of as processional ways, often associated with rivers, or as forming boundaries, while part of the Dorset Cursus may have been oriented on the midwinter sunset. The excavated example at Drayton (Oxfordshire), that was partially protected by alluvium deposits, retained evidence of its banks and waterlogged organic material (see Prehistoric Avenues and Alignments IHA).

Henges

Strictly speaking, these are circular monuments consisting of an earthwork bank and internal ditch and sometimes associated with stone or timber circles (for example, Arbor Low, Derbyshire: Fig 4; Stanton Drew, Somerset; and North Stoke, Oxfordshire: see cover). They occur throughout England with the exception of south-eastern counties and the Welsh Marches. They are generally situated on low ground, often close to springs and water-courses and are visible as crop and soil marks or upstanding earthworks. The reversal of the usual defensive arrangement of bank and ditch suggests they may have been designed to keep something (perhaps supernatural) in, to separate the sacred and the profane.

They belong to the third millennium BC with most dated examples falling between 2800 and 2200 BC. A few early henges dated to around 3000 BC, including the first phase at Stonehenge, have segmented ditches and internal banks, more akin to the much older causewayed enclosures.

Figure 4
The Henge at Arbor Low, Derbyshire. The mid-third millennium BC earthwork displays classic henge features; an external bank with internal ditch and opposed entrances. Here, the enclosed platform incorporated a stone circle, the stones of which now all lie flat, while the Gibb Hill barrow encroaches on the bank.

Henges usually have one or two, opposed, entrances and may be up to 110 metres in diameter, though a few much larger examples are known in Wessex, including Avebury and Durrington Walls (both Wiltshire). Very much smaller examples are also known, often less than 20 metres across, and these are called 'mini-henges'.

Henges are generally interpreted as arenas for various ritual practices and some appear to incorporate astronomical alignments such as the famous alignment of Stonehenge and its Avenue on midsummer sunrise. Like causewayed enclosures, henges sometimes incorporate human remains but these are more likely to be token deposits rather than complete burials. While Stonehenge is the best-known example of a henge it is far from typical; more representative examples include the three massive henges at Thornborough (North Yorkshire) and Church Henge at Knowlton (Dorset); the unusual ditchless henge at Mayburgh (Cumbria) is also very well preserved (see the Prehistoric Henges and Circles IHA).

Stone and timber circles

These have much in common with henges and are often found as components of henge monuments. However, they do also exist in their own right and can be found as freestanding structures, though in the case of timber circles these are represented by post holes and usually only discovered as crop marks (the circle of posts revealed below high tide at Holme-next-the-Sea (Norfolk; Fig 5) in 1998 being a unique marine survival, though atypical in nature).

Figure 5
Timber Circle at Holme-next-the-Sea, Norfolk. This Early Bronze Age circle of 55 posts and a central inverted oak tree was discovered below high tide in 1998 and subsequently excavated and removed for conservation. Nicknamed 'Sea Henge' it represents a unique survival of what may have been a common type of monument.

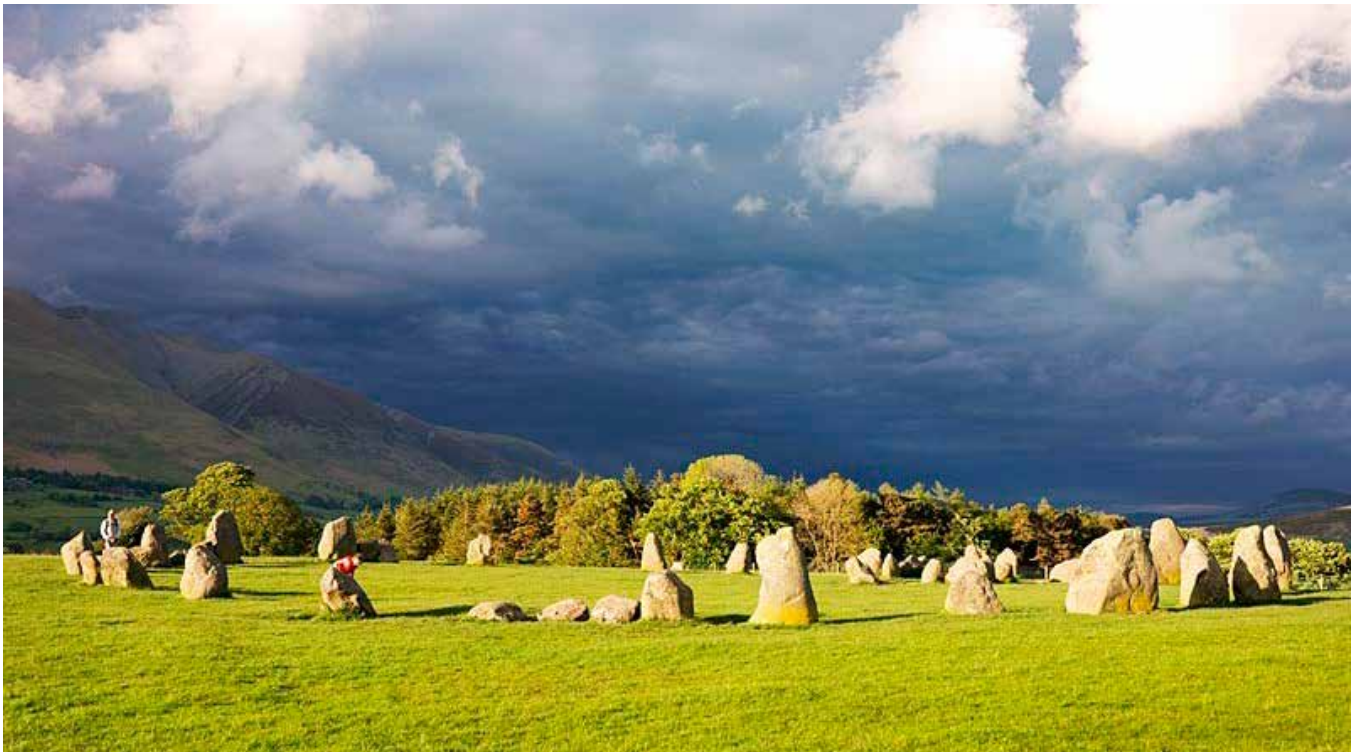

Figure 6
Castlerigg Stone Circle, Keswick, Cumbria. This Bronze Age circle of stone uprights occupies a focal position where several valleys converge amid the Lakeland fells.

The distributions of stone and timber circles complement each other: stone circles being found in the north and west, timber circles generally in the south and east. Whereas nearly 200 stone circles are known in England, timber circles are usually only discovered as crop marks and many no doubt have yet to be found. Good examples of stone circles not associated with henges include Castlerigg (Cumbria; Fig 6) and the Rollright Stones (Oxfordshire).

Stone and timber circles can be sub-divided according to their size, their regularity and whether they consist of single or concentric rings. Other variants include the type of stone circle known as Four Posters, such as Duddo (Northumberland). As with the other categories of monument considered so far, excavations of stone and timber circles occasionally reveal deposits of human remains, often from a secondary phase of the monument. An overview of stone and timber circles is included in the Prehistoric Henges and Circles IHA.

Stone and timber alignments and avenues

These generally focus on a pre-existing monument and are thought to define and formalise the manner and the direction from which the monument should be approached (Fig 7). The most famous examples are the Stonehenge Avenue, comprising parallel lines of earthwork bank that connect Stonehenge to the River Avon, and the West Kennet Avenue, consisting of parallel lines of standing stones running from The Sanctuary, a stone and timber circle, to the Avebury Henge.

In addition to avenues with distinct foci, this category includes other single and multiple alignments of stones, which do not have a clear focus but may be oriented on natural features. Timber alignments are only identified as crop marks or during the course of excavations. The date range for these sites is very broad and spans the entire third millennium BC and the first half of the second. For an overview see the Prehistoric Avenues and Alignments IHA.

Figure 7
Stone alignment, Drizzlecomb, Devon. This simple Bronze Age alignment of rather squat stones is one of three similar rows; it has no obvious focus other than the prominent standing stone at the far end.

Standing stones

These consist of one or more erect stones often unassociated with any other monument. They are widely distributed throughout England but with concentrations in Cornwall, the North Yorkshire Moors, Cumbria, Derbyshire and the Cotswolds.

A recent survey by Swarbrick has recorded 238 prehistoric standing stones at 160 sites in England. They can vary in size from less than a metre high to the gigantic eight metre monolith in Rudston churchyard (East Riding of Yorkshire). Their status as ritual or religious monuments is difficult to determine and they are often hard to date, though their date range is probably similar to that of stone circles.

Excavations at the base of some stones have occasionally found human remains and in exceptional cases, they are parts of complexes including other types of site, as at Long Meg and Her Daughters in Cumbria and the Heel Stone at Stonehenge. In the former case the monolith carries cup-and-ring marks (see below) while in the latter, the standing stone indicates an important astronomical alignment. However, mostly they stand as mute sentinels in the landscape, of unknown function. Some may mark routes of travel, others may record territorial boundaries and some may mark the location of important events.

Standing stones are briefly discussed and contextualised in the Prehistoric Henges and Circles IHA.

Pit alignments

These consist of linear arrangements of pits usually only identified as crop marks. They often extend in a sinuous fashion for up to a kilometre and many are of unknown function. Limited excavation has suggested that some may have held timber uprights but this was not always the case. They do not appear to have presented an impenetrable boundary and may instead have acted as territorial markers or served to demarcate areas reserved for particular activities; the excavated example at Meldon Bridge in the Scottish Borders was shown to have bounded an extensive promontory containing an area of Neolithic ritual and funerary activity. Pit alignments are found from the Mesolithic onwards (see above) but most are of Iron Age date; the recognition of Neolithic and Bronze Age examples is relatively recent and the criteria for identifying them remain unclear.

For a more detailed overview see the Prehistoric Linear Boundary Earthworks IHA.

Monumental mounds

These are Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age features that are larger than the slightly later round barrows and lack an obvious funerary element. The largest and best-known example is Silbury Hill near Avebury (Wiltshire; Fig 8), which is dated to the third quarter of the third millennium BC. The Marlborough Mound, not far away, has been dated to a similar period and raises the possibility that other sites usually considered to be medieval mottes may have prehistoric origins. On the basis of recent work at Silbury it has been suggested that these monuments were built up through episodic additions and reworking rather than being single undertakings.

Cup-and-ring motifs

These are found inscribed on rock surfaces mainly in upland areas of Northern England, especially in North Yorkshire and Northumberland (Fig 9), although isolated examples are found further south with a concentration of cup-marked stones in the south-west.

A rock surface bearing motifs (known as a panel) may contain anything from a single cup to dozens, surrounded by concentric rings. Motifs may be connected by artificial grooves or natural fissures. Grooves radiating from the centre of cup-and-ring motifs are called ‘gutters’. Other motifs include spirals and horseshoes and groups of motifs may be surrounded by a cartouche. Complex examples

Figure 8
Silbury Hill Monumental Mound, Wiltshire. This vast enigmatic mound dates from the third millennium BC. No function beyond simple monumentality has been established but it appears to have been erected in several stages rather than as a single event.

include the panels at Chatton Park Hill and Roughting Linn (Northumberland).

Functionally, like several other categories of early monument, cup-and-ring motifs are enigmatic and have been the subject of much speculation. Recent research has focused on their place in the landscape suggesting that they may have served as route markers or demarcated territorial boundaries. The dating of rock surfaces with motifs is very difficult but the occasional association of motifs with other, dated, monuments (for instance, Hunterheugh Crag, Northumberland) suggests a span extending from the early fourth to the middle of the second millennium. These objects are sometimes referred to as 'rock art'.

For an overview of such sites see the Prehistoric Rock Art IHA.

1.3 Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

The later prehistoric period saw a major shift in ritual and religious behaviour, or at least in the physical expressions of it. The large, public monuments of the Neolithic and Bronze Age were no more, surviving in the landscape simply as mute relics of a by-gone age, only occasionally respected or reused (as evidenced, for example, by the Iron Age scabbard from the primary ditch fill of Ferrybridge Henge, West Yorkshire). Ritual and religious practices appear to have become a

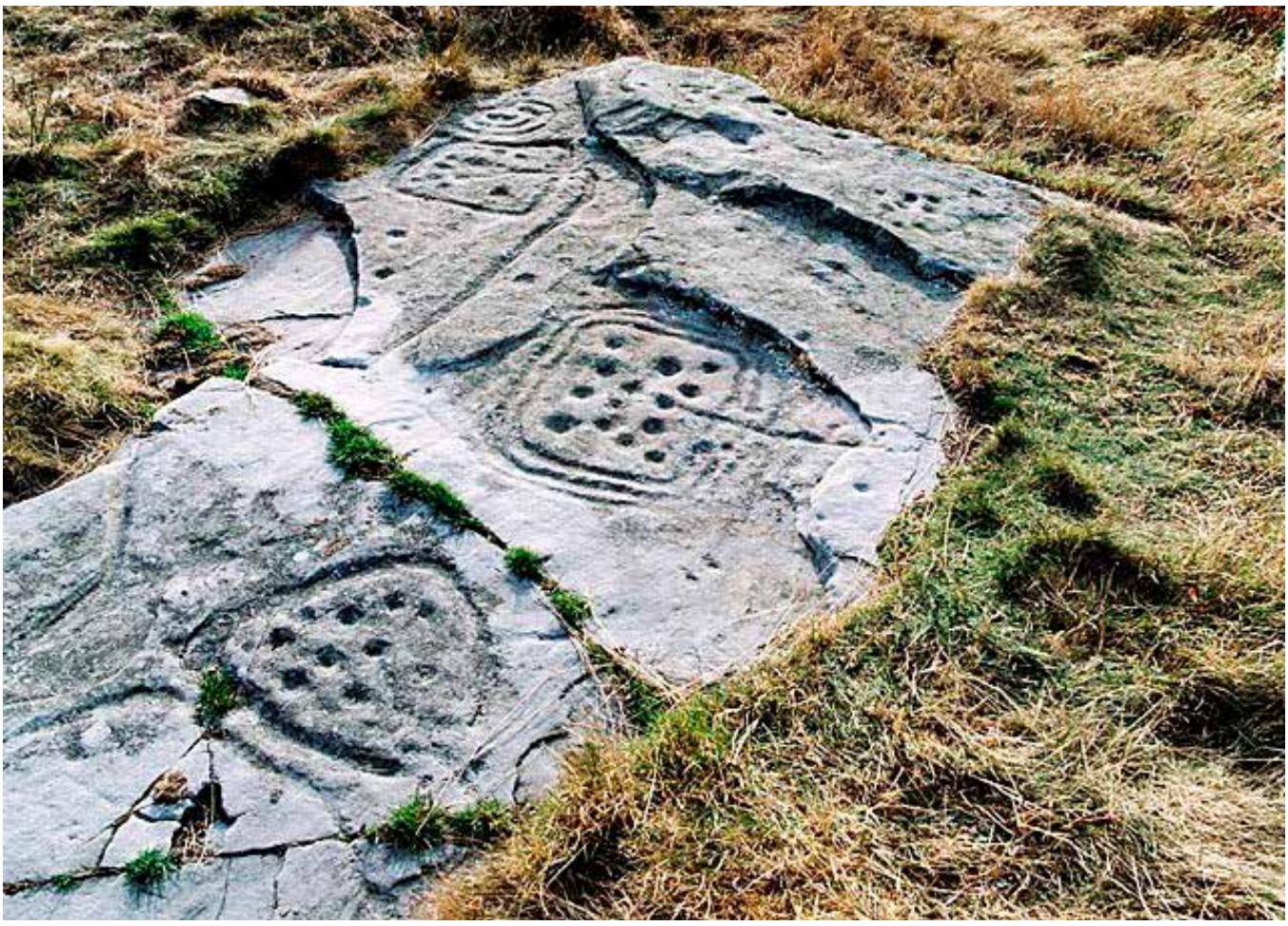

Figure 9
Cup-and-ring motifs on Doddington Moor, Northumberland. This unusual group of Early Bronze Age carvings includes, in addition to an example of the more common cup-and-ring motif, groups of individual cups surrounded by concentric grooves or cartouches.

Figure 10
Reconstructed Bronze Age timber causeway at Flag Fen, Cambridgeshire. Crossing the waterlogged fen, a causeway of stakes and planks led to a timber platform from which were made votive (ritual) deposits of swords, spears, daggers and pins.

far more personal and intimate matter, marked by the votive deposition of metalwork or other items, often in wet places but also in more domestic contexts such as enclosure ditches and roundhouses. Occasionally as at Flag Fen (Peterborough; Fig 10) in the Late Bronze Age or Fiskerton (Lincolnshire) in the Early to Middle Iron Age, deposition may have had a more communal or public character.

At the end of the Iron Age, classical sources allow us to speculate on the nature of belief systems and deities. Barry Cunliffe suggests a division between one group of gods relating to masculinity, the sky and individual tribes and a second, female group of goddesses relating to associations with fertility, earth, wells and springs, such as the goddess Sulis worshipped at Bath (Somerset). One priesthood, documented for instance by Julius Caesar, was the Druids, a religious elite with considerable holy and secular powers. Archaeological evidence for such people remains elusive, however, although the characteristics of the so-called doctor's burial at Stanway, Colchester (Essex) dating from about AD 40-60, are not inconsistent with such an interpretation. The idea that Druids were associated with the construction and use of Stonehenge is an early modern fiction with no historical or archaeological basis.

Shrines

Shrines of Iron Age date consisted of small, usually square timber buildings sometimes situated within a larger enclosure that can be termed an 'ambulatory'. Being of timber, they

rarely survive as surface features but have been identified as crop marks on aerial photographs. The best known example is that found at Caesar's Camp, Heathrow (London Borough of Hillingdon) during the 1940s, though examples are also known from inside hillforts such as Maiden Castle (Dorset) where a shrine measuring 6 by 3 metres was divided into two rooms.

For an overview see the Later Prehistoric Shrines and Ritual Structures IHA.

Natural features

Especially caves, rivers and springs, these were the locales for ritual and religious practices throughout prehistory but most evidently from the later Bronze Age through to the end of the prehistoric period (and beyond) when some marshy areas were enhanced by the construction of timber causeways and platforms used for the votive deposition of metalwork and human remains. The best known example of the latter is the causeway and 2-hectare platforms associated with depositions of swords, spears, daggers and pins at Flag Fen (Cambridgeshire).

Hill figures

These are large in scale, up to 60 metres across, and consist of visual representations of human or animal forms, which include giants at Long Wilmington (East Sussex) and Cerne Abbas (Dorset), and the white horse at Uffington (Oxfordshire; Fig 11). They were produced either as outlines, as in the case of the giants, where the turf has been removed to reveal the underlying subsoil, usually chalk; or alternatively, the whole figure might be exposed, the outline being created by the edge of the turf, as in the case of the white horse. The dating of these figures is very difficult, however, and only the Uffington horse has been convincingly dated to the prehistoric period (scientific – optically stimulated luminescence – dating suggest it was probably created between 1380 and 550 BC).

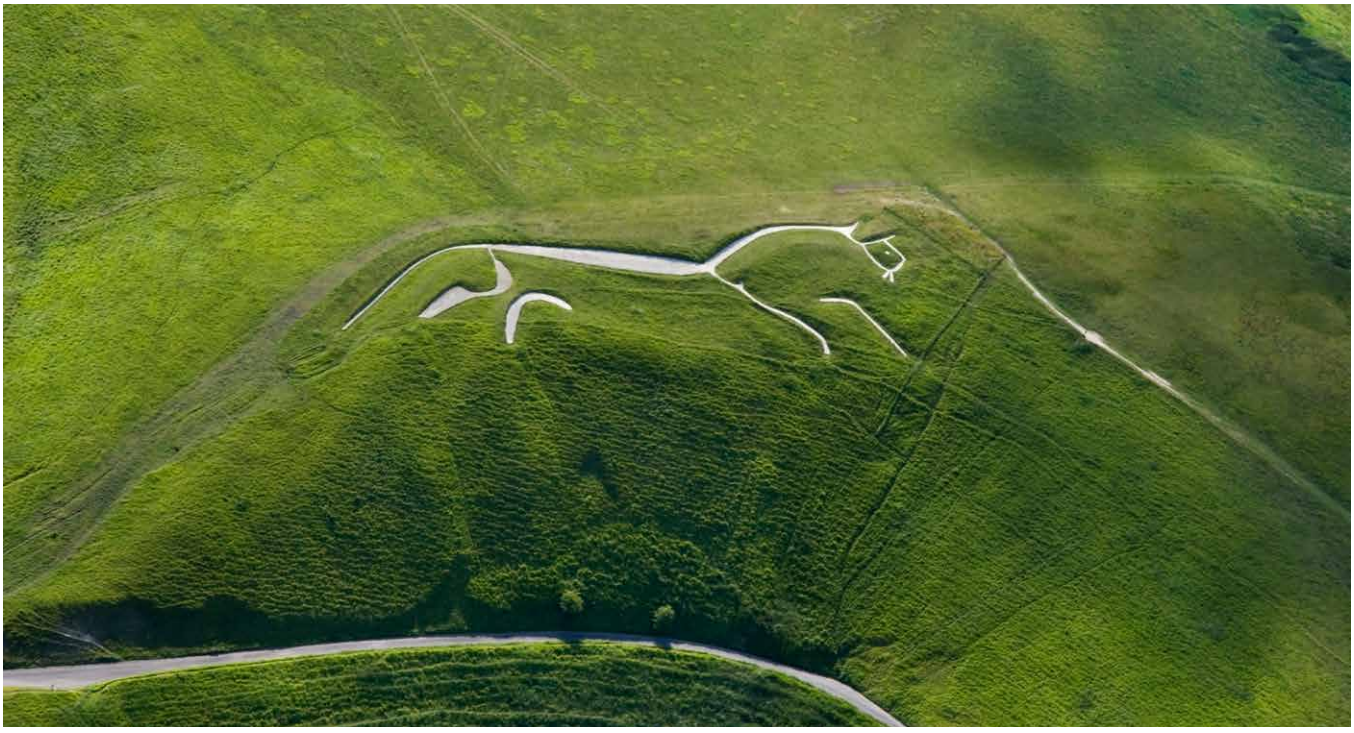

Figure 11
The Uffington White Horse, Oxfordshire. The figure appears as the side view of a stylised horse, and lies 160 metres north-east of Uffington Castle hillfort. It is generally accepted as having been first delineated in the later prehistoric period.

The dates of the Long Wilmington and Cerne Abbas human figures are much debated: they may be late prehistoric but are probably far more recent; their function and meaning remain debated.

1.4 The Roman period

Religious beliefs in Roman Britain can generally be characterised as polytheistic, and the worship of the gods of the Roman State (the Capitoline Triad – Jupiter, Juno and Minerva) helped to reinforce Roman sovereignty over Britannia. They, along with many other Roman deities were on occasion hybridised with indigenous British cults, such as the equation of Sulis and Minerva in Bath. Elements of the army brought local deities from their home regions and a further introduction were Eastern deities such as Mithras, who was popular with the army and gods such as Cybele from Asia Minor and Isis from Egypt. To this mix was added Christianity in the third and fourth centuries AD, initially persecuted because Christian monotheism precluded their involvement in state cults. This changed when Christianity was legalised in 313, becoming the state religion in 391.

Much of the evidence for Roman-period religion is in the form of portable material such as altars and religious artefacts such as statuettes of deities. Nevertheless, there is more evidence of religious structures than during the Prehistoric period due to the more substantial nature of the remains.

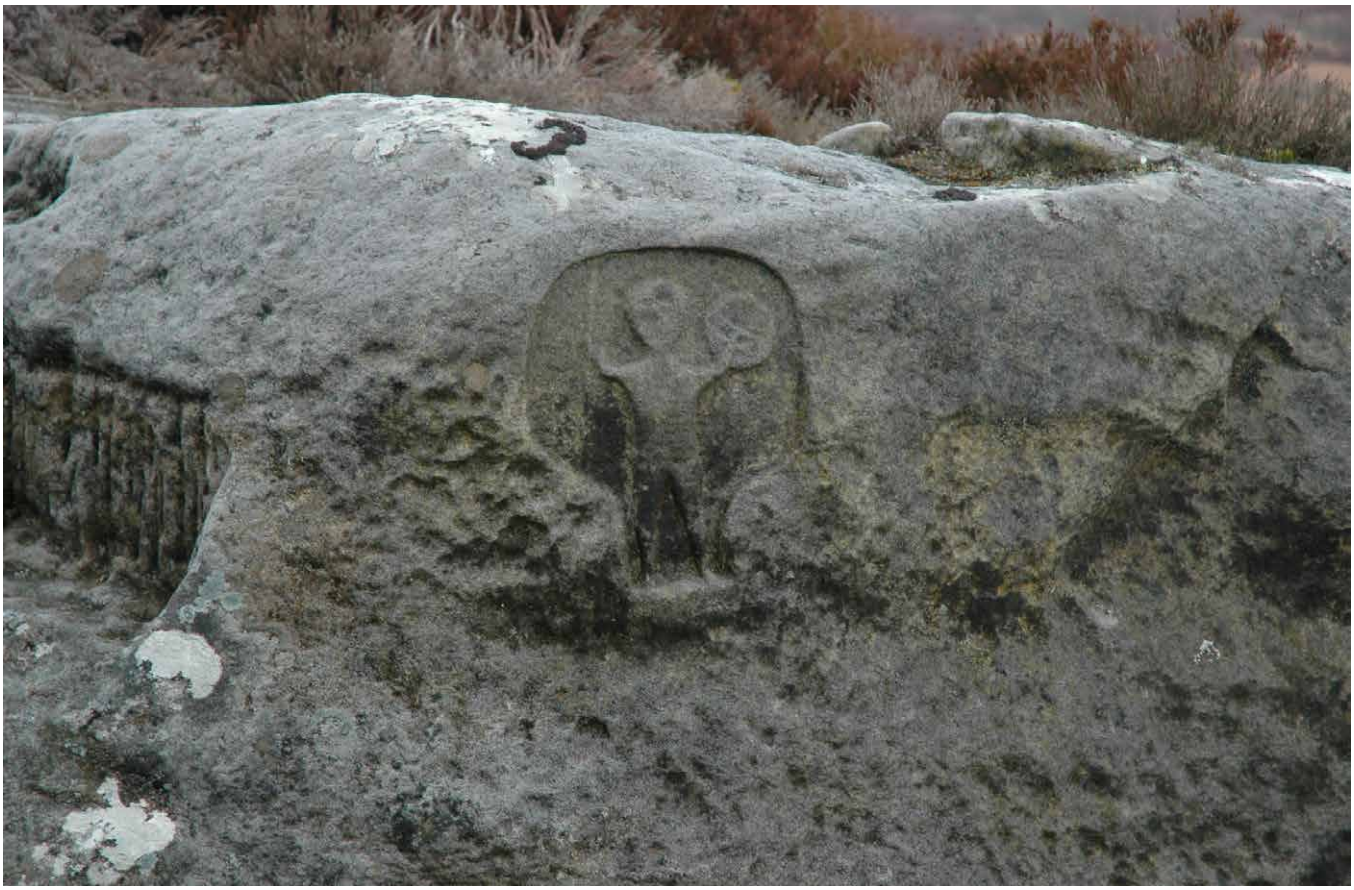

Figure 12
Rock carved figure of the Celtic deity Cocidious, Otterburn, Northumberland. With the attributes of spear and shield the figure depicted is considered to be male and may have been a component in a small, rock-cut shrine of the Roman period.

Sacred places

Places such as pools, rivers and so on clearly continued to be regarded as sacred by many. At Fiskerton (Lincolnshire), for instance, the late-prehistoric custom of depositing metalwork and organic material off a timber causeway crossing wetland near the River Witham continued in the Roman period, and beyond.

Shrines

These take a variety of forms, ranging from formally constructed buildings such as the semi-circular structure associated with the temple at Coleshill (Warwickshire), through minor structures such as nymphaea (sacred grottoes or springs) to other foci such as the Bronze Age barrow at Irthlingborough (Northamptonshire) that became a focus for coin offerings (see Fig 12).

Romano-Celtic temples

These are the most common form of religious building encountered during this period and they may be considered a continuation of the Iron Age shrine, but were usually built in stone, or at least having stone footings, and erected on a larger scale. They usually consist of two concentric elements: an inner *cella* and an outer, normally square, ambulatory (Figs 13-14). They sometimes stand within a sacred enclosure or, *temenos*. The ambulatories vary in size from less than 10 metres across to over 20 metres with *cellae* varying between 5 metres and 16 metres. Some form part of religious complexes where there appears to be continuity of religious focus from the Iron Age, as at Hayling Island (Hampshire), while at others there is no clear evidence of such as at the Springhead Temple complex (Kent).

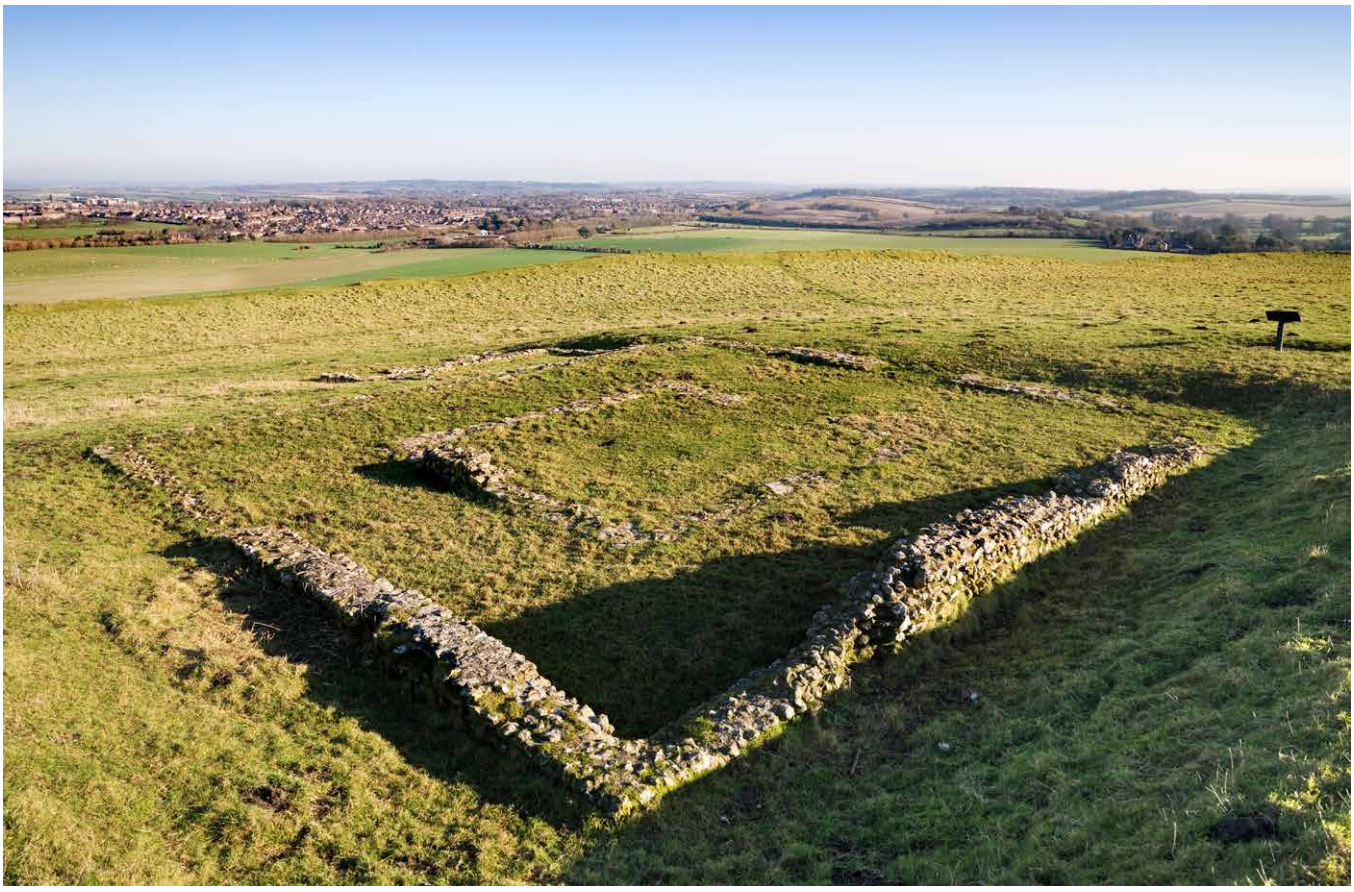

Figure 13
Romano-Celtic Temple within the Maiden Castle Hillfort, Dorset. This simple structure of the fourth century AD continues in stone and brick a form commonly built in timber in the Iron Age, an inner cella surrounded by and rising above an ambulatory.

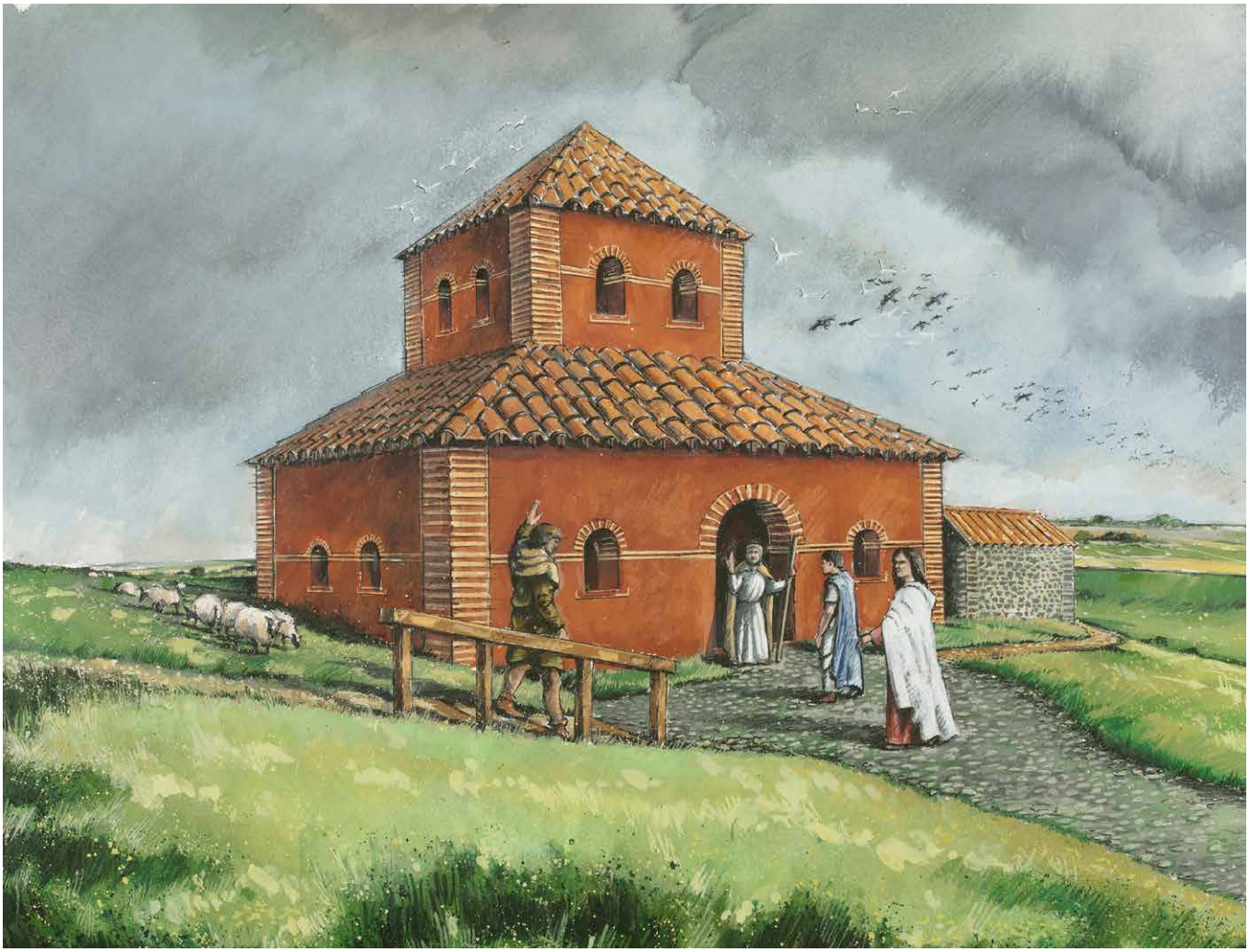

Figure 14
Imaginative reconstruction drawing of the Romano-Celtic temple within the Maiden Castle hillfort, Dorset.

Classical temples

These are less common but were an important element in the religious landscape of Roman Britain. These are rectangular stone built structures consisting of a podium supporting a *cella* usually located behind a columned portico. The best-known examples of classic temples in England are those of Sulis Minerva at Bath and Claudius at Colchester (Essex).

Basilican temples

These are oblong, apsidal structures built in stone in the conventional basilican plan consisting of a central nave with aisles on either side, but focused on a semi-circular apse where the altar/s were situated. Examples are the mithraea in the Hadrian's Wall (Fig 15) zone or that excavated in the City of London at the Walbrook.

Early Christian/Conversion period churches

These are, in essence, nothing more than a shrine or temple with a Christian dedication. Christianity had probably reached Britain by the third century AD and in the fourth century it became the state religion within the Roman Empire. All known examples are located within settlements, military sites or temple complexes. The best example is the west facing basilican building at Silchester (Hampshire). This has both a semi-circular apse and a nathex in which has been identified a baptistery.

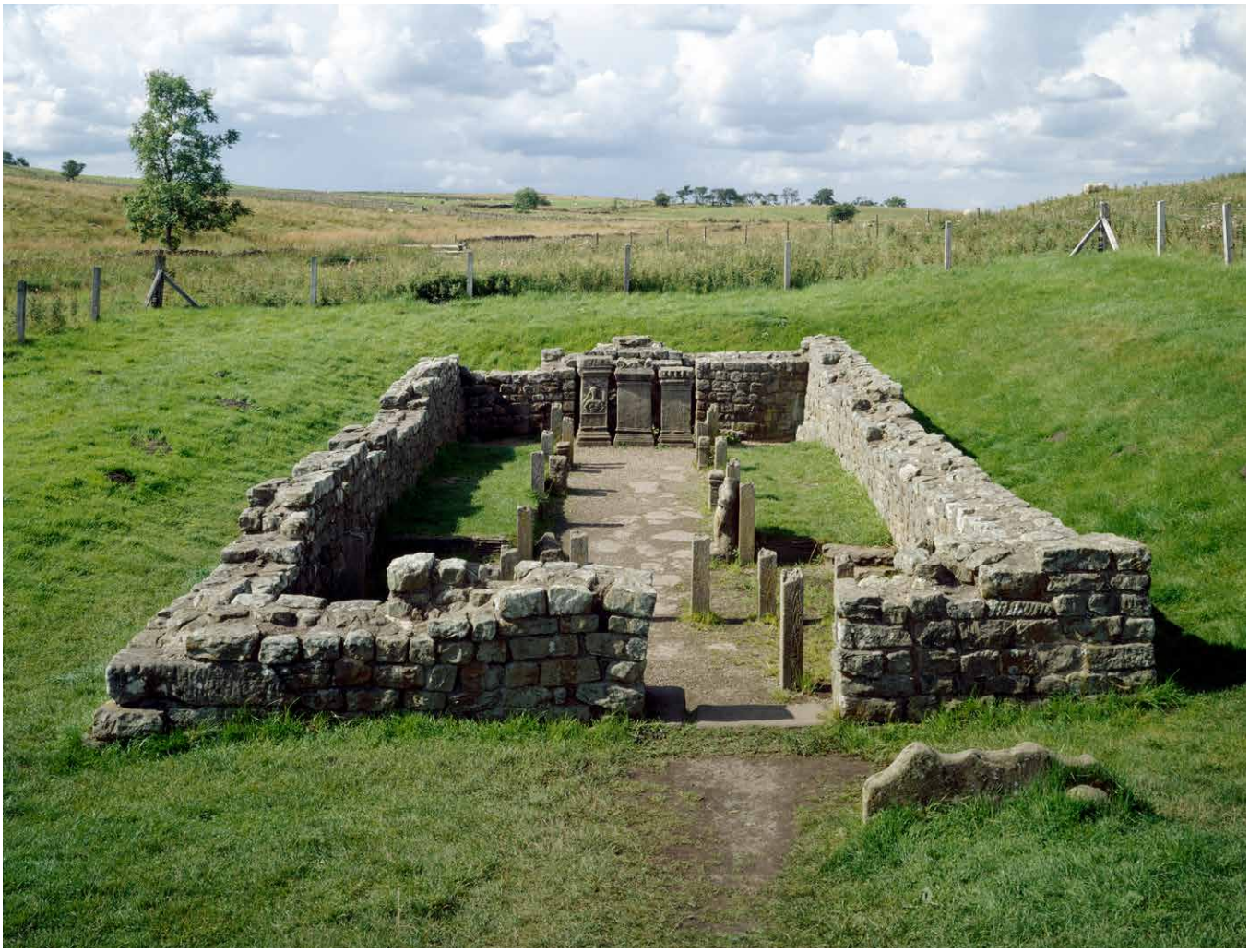

Figure 15
The temple of Mithras at Carrawbrugh on Hadrian's Wall, Northumberland. This simple basilican structure of a nave and two aisles stands in a low, rather damp, location outside the south-west corner of the Procolitia fort. One of several temples here, the earliest dating from around AD 200.

For an overview of structures associated with Roman religion see Shrines (Roman and Post-Roman) IHA.

Figurative rock carvings

Those belonging to the Roman period are very rare but several examples are known from rock faces in northern England, usually thought to depict the Celtic deity Cocidious whom the Romans may have equated with Mars. These figures are small, usually less than one metre across and depict a figure with its arms flung wide and its legs firmly braced on the ground. The sex is not depicted but the shape and accessories, including and sword and shield, or bow and arrows, suggest that it is male. Additionally, examples of phallic symbols embodying clear votive talismanic significance are often carved on the walls or floors of military sites in the north.

2 Overarching Considerations

2.1 Scheduling and protection

Archaeological sites and monuments vary greatly in character, and can be protected in many ways: through positive management by owners, through policy, and through designation. In terms of our designation system, this consists of several separate approaches which operate alongside each other, and our aim is to recommend the most appropriate sort of protection for each asset. Our approach towards designation will vary, depending on the asset in question: our selection guides aim to indicate our broad approaches, but are subordinate to Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) policy.

Scheduling, through triggering careful control and the involvement of Historic England, ensures that the long-term interests of a site are placed first. It is warranted for sites with real claims to national importance which are the most significant remains in terms of their key place in telling our national story, and the need for close management of their archaeological potential. Scheduled monuments possess a high order of significance: they derive this from their archaeological and historic interest. Our selection guides aim to indicate some of the grounds of importance which may be relevant. Unlike listed buildings, scheduled sites are not generally suited to adaptive re-use.

Scheduling is discretionary: the Secretary of State has a choice as to whether to add a site to the Schedule or not. Scheduling is deliberately selective: given the ever-increasing numbers of archaeological remains which continue to be identified and interpreted, this is unavoidable. The Schedule aims to capture a representative sample of nationally important sites, rather than be an inclusive compendium of all such assets.

Given that archaeological sensitivity is all around us, it is important that all means of protecting archaeological remains are recognised. Other designations such as listing can play an important part here. Other sites may be identified as being of national importance, but not scheduled. Government policy affords them protection through the planning system, and local authorities play a key part in managing them through their archaeological services and Historic Environment Records (HERs).

The Schedule has evolved since it began in 1882, and some entries fall far short of modern standards. We are striving to upgrade these older records as part of our programme of upgrading the National Heritage List for England. Historic England continues to revise and upgrade these entries, which can be consulted on the Historic England website.

2.2 Heritage assets and national importance

Paragraph 194 and footnote 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification and for assets of the highest significance should be wholly exceptional; 'non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets'. These assets are defined as having National Importance (NI). This is the latest articulation of a principle first raised in PPG16 (1990-2010) and later in PPS5 (2010-2012).

2.3 Selection criteria

The particular considerations used by the Secretary of State when determining whether sites of all types are suitable for statutory designation through scheduling are set out in their Scheduled Monuments Policy Statement.

3 Specific Considerations

The sites, structures and monuments built for religious and ritual purposes are understandably diverse, reflecting centuries of changing beliefs and attitudes. Each period has its own distinctive structures and practices but all have the potential to provide insight into past societies and social organisation. This section, using the non-statutory criteria, sets out particular considerations that are considered by the Secretary of State and Historic England when determining whether religious and ritual sites are suitable for statutory designation through scheduling.

3.1 Period

All types of monuments that characterise a category or period should be considered for preservation. Periods about which particularly little is known will be of particular importance and this is especially the case for early religion and ritual sites. If a site is particularly representative of a period, this will enhance consideration. Where a site has seen use in more than one period, for instance where a Bronze Age barrow was re-used for pagan Anglo-Saxon burials, this is likely to add to its interest.

3.2 Rarity

Some monument categories are so scarce that all surviving examples that still retain some archaeological potential should be preserved. In general, however, a selection must be made which portrays the typical and commonplace as well as the rare. This process should take account of all aspects of the distribution of a particular class of monuments, both in a national and a regional context: for instance, what is common in Devon may well be rare in Essex. All monument types dealt with in this guide from the prehistoric and Roman periods are regarded as scarce.

3.3 Documentation

The significance of a monument may be enhanced by the existence of records of previous investigation or, in the case of more recent monuments by supporting evidence of contemporary written or drawn records. Conversely, the absence of documentation can make the archaeological potential of a site more important, as that will be the only means of understanding it. Invariably, religious and ritual sites of prehistoric and Roman date are without contemporary documentation, enhancing the value of the archaeological remains. Well-recorded studies of a site including excavation reports, especially more recent ones, may provide a level of documentation which enhances our understanding of it and its potential.

3.4 Group value

The value of a single monument may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments or with monuments of different periods. Sites that have relevant associations with others of the same period or are part of a sequence of sites that has developed through time may be seen as more important and their significance enhanced. During the prehistoric period (and later) sites of a religious or ritual nature often occur together, for example timber circles beneath henges. In such cases the significance of the site is enhanced.

3.5 Survival/Condition

Sites that are physically intact will generally be selected over those which have been damaged or diminished. The potential of a site or monument, both above and below ground, to yield further information is an important factor in assessment.

3.6 Potential

This is concerned with what the site has to teach us about the past. In many cases, it is possible to predict if a site is likely to contain as-yet undiscovered archaeological evidence. If the site is, for example, waterlogged, we can expect greater preservation of organic material such as the timber posts of a timber circle or the survival of an Iron Age ritual deposit.

4 Considerations by Period

4.1 Palaeolithic and Mesolithic

Figurative or geometric carvings on the walls of caves and rock shelters are rarely found in England, the 2003 discovery of engravings on the walls of Church Hole and other caves at Creswell Crags being the only authenticated examples. Given their rarity and significance for insight into hunter-gatherer society, all positively identified examples will be of national importance and are good candidates for scheduling.

4.2 Neolithic and Early Bronze Age

Causewayed enclosures

Due to their rarity, the wide diversity of their plans, and their considerable age, all causewayed enclosures retaining sufficient archaeological potential will be good candidates for scheduling. Those examples associated with other monuments (contemporary or not) may be of particular importance, especially those which provide information on their dating and duration of use.

Cursus monuments

As a very rare Neolithic monument type, all cursus monuments are likely to be of national importance. Some selectivity, however, is required given their extensive nature and the incomplete nature of their survival. Those that incorporate other contemporary monuments and those which aerial photographs show run under alluvium deposits are likely to retain the greatest archaeological potential.

Henges

These are rare nationally with about 65 known examples. As one of the few types of identified Neolithic structures and in view of their comparative rarity and significance for the period, all henges will be good candidates for scheduling.

Stone and timber circles

As rare monument types which provide an important insight into prehistoric ritual activity all surviving examples are worthy of preservation.

Stone and timber alignments and avenues

Stone alignments are not numerous and timber alignments are only identified as crop marks or during the course of excavations. Stone and timber alignments and avenues provide rare evidence of ceremonial and ritual practices during the Neolithic and early Bronze Age. Due to their rarity and longevity of use, all examples that are not extensively damaged will be considered worthy of scheduling.

Standing stones

Standing stones are important as nationally rare monuments, demonstrating the diversity of ritual practices in the Neolithic and Bronze Age. Consequently, all undisturbed standing stones and those that represent the main range of types and locations would normally be considered to be of national importance and eligible for scheduling. Occasionally standing stones have been listed also but scheduling should be considered the preferred designation option for stones of a proven early date.

Pit alignments

These are usually only identified as cropmarks, although some will survive as earthwork features. While not all pit alignments are necessarily associated with religious beliefs, those that can be established as forming a role, for example in demarcating the wider area of ritual activity, may be considered of national importance and good candidates for scheduling along with their associated remains.

Prehistoric rock art

Around 800 examples of prehistoric rock art have been recorded in England. For its potential to inform about prehistoric society through understanding of the circumstances in which it was created, all positively identified prehistoric rock art sites exhibiting a significant group, number or complex of motifs will normally be identified as nationally important and are eligible for scheduling. Where panels have been entirely divorced from their original context, for example those stones moved into museums during the nineteenth century, their potential to inform is greatly reduced.

4.3 Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Shrines

Fewer than 20 are recorded and these are widely scattered over southern England from Kent in the east to Gloucestershire in the west. Given their rarity and representivity for their period, all those that retain sufficient archaeological potential will be of national importance.

The enhancement of natural features

This was a practice used as part of, or to facilitate religious or ritual activity during the Iron Age and has left few tangible traces. Due to their rarity and significance, all examples which can be positively identified will qualify for designation.

Iron Age hill figures

These can remain as obvious white figures in chalk or limestone while those that have not been maintained may be recognised either as slight earthworks or as soilmarks in dry periods. Very few have been recorded and given their rarity, all surviving examples are regarded as nationally important.

4.4 The Roman period

Romano-Celtic temples

These were widespread throughout southern and eastern England, although there are no examples in the far south-west and they are rare nationally with only about 150 sites recorded in England. In view of this rarity and their importance in contributing to the complete picture of Roman religious practice, including its continuity from Iron Age practice, all Romano-Celtic temples with surviving archaeological potential are considered to be of national importance.

Classical temples

These are rare with only 21 sites identified nationally. In view of their rarity and their importance for an understanding of Romano-British religion, all examples with surviving archaeological potential are considered to be of national importance.

Basilican temples

The tradition of building basilican temples was relatively short-lived, being confined almost entirely to the third and early fourth century AD. They are rare nationally and are found in the extreme north of England, concentrated on the line of the Roman northern frontier, and in the south-east. In view of their rarity and their importance for an understanding of Romano-British religion, all basilican temples with surviving archaeological potential are considered to be of national importance.

Early Christian churches

These are rare nationally and in view of their rarity and their importance for an understanding of Romano-British religion, all positively identified examples with surviving archaeological potential are considered to be of national importance.

Figurative rock carvings

Those belonging to the Roman period are very rare and are usually found in the military zone of Northern England; all positively identified examples will merit designation.

5 Select Bibliography

For information on particular monument types, see the relevant Introductions to Heritage Assets cited above.

5.1 Prehistoric

Multi-period

Bradley, R., *The Passage of Arms* (1990)

Bradley, R., *An Archaeology of Natural Places* (2000)

Palaeolithic and Mesolithic

Bahn, P. and Pettitt, P., *Britain's Oldest Art* (2009)

Conneller, C., 'Becoming deer: corporeal transformations at Star Carr'. *Archaeological Dialogues* 11, 37-56 (2004)

Neolithic and Early Bronze Age

Anderson-Whymark, H. and Thomas, J. (eds.), *Regional Perspectives on Neolithic Pit Deposition: Beyond the Mundane* (2012)

Bradley, R., *The Significance of Monuments* (1998)

Cochrane, A. and Jones, A., *Visualising the Neolithic* (2012)

Edmonds, M., *Ancestral Geographies of the Neolithic* (1999)

Garwood, P., Hey, G. and Barclay, A., 'Ritual, ceremony and cosmology', pages 331-82 in Dodd, A. and Hayden, C. (eds.), *The Thames Through Time: Early Prehistory to 1500 BC* (2011)

Gibson, A., *Stonehenge and Timber Circles* (2005) (especially Chapter 5)

Harding, J., *Cult, Religion and Pilgrimage: Archaeological Investigations at the Neolithic and Bronze Age Monument Complex of Thornborough, North Yorkshire* (2013)

Leary, J. and Field, D., *The Story of Silbury Hill* (2010)

Loveday, R., *Inscribed Across the Landscape: The Cursus Enigma* (2006) (especially page 124 onwards)

Oswald, A., Barber, M. and Dyer, C., *The Creation of Monuments: Neolithic Causewayed Enclosures of the British Isles* (1999) (especially Chapter 7)

Parker Pearson, M. and Ramilisonina, 'Stonehenge for the ancestors: the stones pass on the message', *Antiquity* 72 (1998), 308-26

Whittle, A., Healy, F. and Bayliss, A., *Gathering Time: Dating the Early Neolithic Enclosures of Southern Britain and Ireland* (2011) (especially sections 1.3 and 15.8)

Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

Chadwick, A., 'Routine magic, mundane ritual: towards a unified notion of depositional practice', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 31 (2012), 283–315

Cunliffe, B., *Iron Age Communities in Britain* (4th edition 2005) (especially Chapter 20)

Miles, D., Palmer, S., Lock, G., Gosden, C., and Cromarty, A., *Uffington White Horse Hill and its Landscape* (2003)

Pryor, F., *Flag Fen: Life and Death of a Prehistoric Landscape* (2005) (Later Bronze Age chapter)

Sharples, N., *Social Relations in Later Prehistory: Wessex in the First Millennium BC* (especially Chapter 4)

Wait, G., *Ritual and Religion in Iron Age Britain* (1985)

Woodward, A., *Shrines and Sacrifice* (1992)

5.2 Roman

Dark, K. and P., *The Landscape of Roman Britain* (1997)

Henig, M., *Religion in Roman Britain*, (1984)

Irby-Massie, G.L., *Military Religion in Roman Britain* (1999)

Lewis, M.J.T., *Temples in Roman Britain*, (1966)

Petts, D., *Christianity in Roman Britain*, (2003)

Rodwell, W, (ed), *Temples, Churches and Religion: Recent Research in Roman Britain*, (1980)

6 Where to Get Advice

If you would like to contact the Listing Team in one of our regional offices, please email: customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk noting the subject of your query, or call or write to the local team at:

North Region
37 Tanner Row
York
YO1 6WP
Tel: 01904 601948
Fax: 01904 601999

South Region
4th Floor
Cannon Bridge House
25 Dowgate Hill
London
EC4R 2YA
Tel: 020 7973 3700
Fax: 020 7973 3001

East Region
Brooklands
24 Brooklands Avenue
Cambridge
CB2 8BU
Tel: 01223 582749
Fax: 01223 582701

West Region
29 Queen Square
Bristol
BS1 4ND
Tel: 0117 975 1308
Fax: 0117 975 0701

This page is left blank intentionally

This page is left blank intentionally

Acknowledgments

Images

© Historic England

All images except those listed below

© Other

Figure 12: Phil Abramson

Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders and we apologise in advance for any unintentional omissions, which we would be pleased to correct in any subsequent editions.

Historic England

We are the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment.

Please contact
guidance@HistoricEngland.org.uk
with any questions about this document.

HistoricEngland.org.uk

If you would like this document in a different format, please contact our customer services department on:

Tel: 0370 333 0607
Email: customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk

All information and weblinks accurate at the time of publication.

Please consider the environment before printing this document

HEAG252
Publication date: May 2012 © English Heritage
Reissue date: July 2018 © Historic England
Design: Historic England