

VALLEY OF STONES SARSEN SURVEY



NATURAL ENGLAND



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Dorset
National
Landscape

Farming in Protected
Landscapes programme

Made possible with



Heritage
Fund





Living Amongst the Sarsens

A 5 year project to produce new heritage interpretation of the Valley of Stones



Photo: © Historic England



Natural England manage the National Nature Reserve



Historic England have been doing some landscape survey (aerial research)

Project Outputs

- New knowledge about the landscape
- Digital map
- New signboards
- Better understanding for landscape management

Why the Valley of Stones?



We found a polissoir but there are many unanswered questions about how the Valley of Stone was used in the past

Photos: © Historic England

What, why, how ... the Valley of Stones

- Crow hill

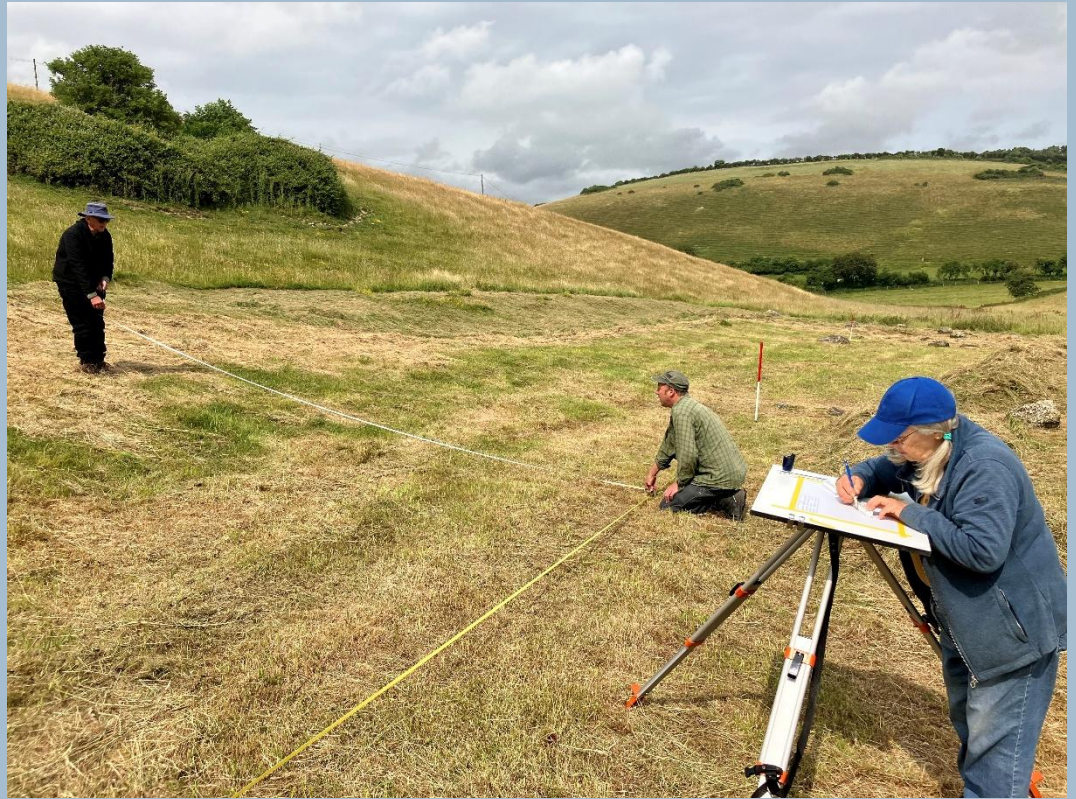


Photo: © Becca Pullen/ Historic England

What, why, how ... the Valley of Stones

- Crow hill
- Field systems



Photo: © Ian B

What, why, how ... the Valley of Stones

- Crow hill
- Field systems
- Brick works



Photo: © Mike B

What, why, how ... the Valley of Stones?

- Crow hill
- Field systems
- Brick works
- Not a stone circle



Photo: © Hayley/ Past Participate

Why Conduct a Sarsen Survey?



Geological Survey of England & Wales 1855.
Sheet 17, 1.63,360 Old Series

- To ascertain the occurrence and distribution of sarsen in the Valley of Stones
- To establish how sarsen stones have been dealt with by past populations e.g., polissoir, quarrying; field boundaries.
- To provide insights into how this relates to the wider landscape e.g., Tenants Hill; Hampton stone circle; The Hell Stone.

Uses of Sarsen



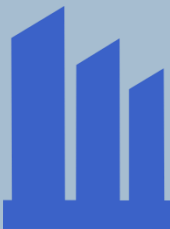
Kingston Russell Stone Circle



Grey Mare and Her Colts



Hell stone



Prehistoric
monuments

PAST PARTICIPATE

Uses of Sarsen

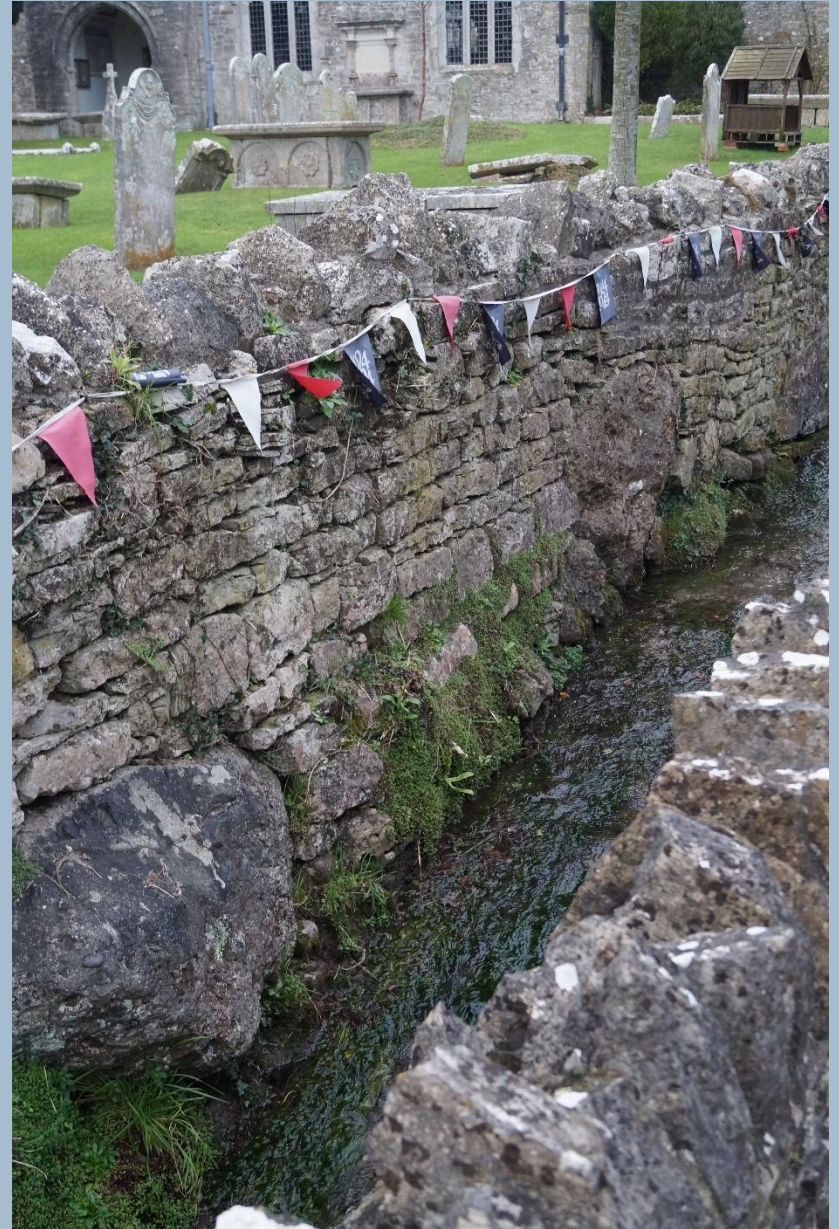


Lynchet



The Moot Stone

Uses of Sarsen



What did you find?

Challenging conditions



AS13.6

Photo © Amanda N

What did you find?

Spiky bushes

Cows



Mosses

What did you find?



Photo: Jo H



Photo:
Rachael H

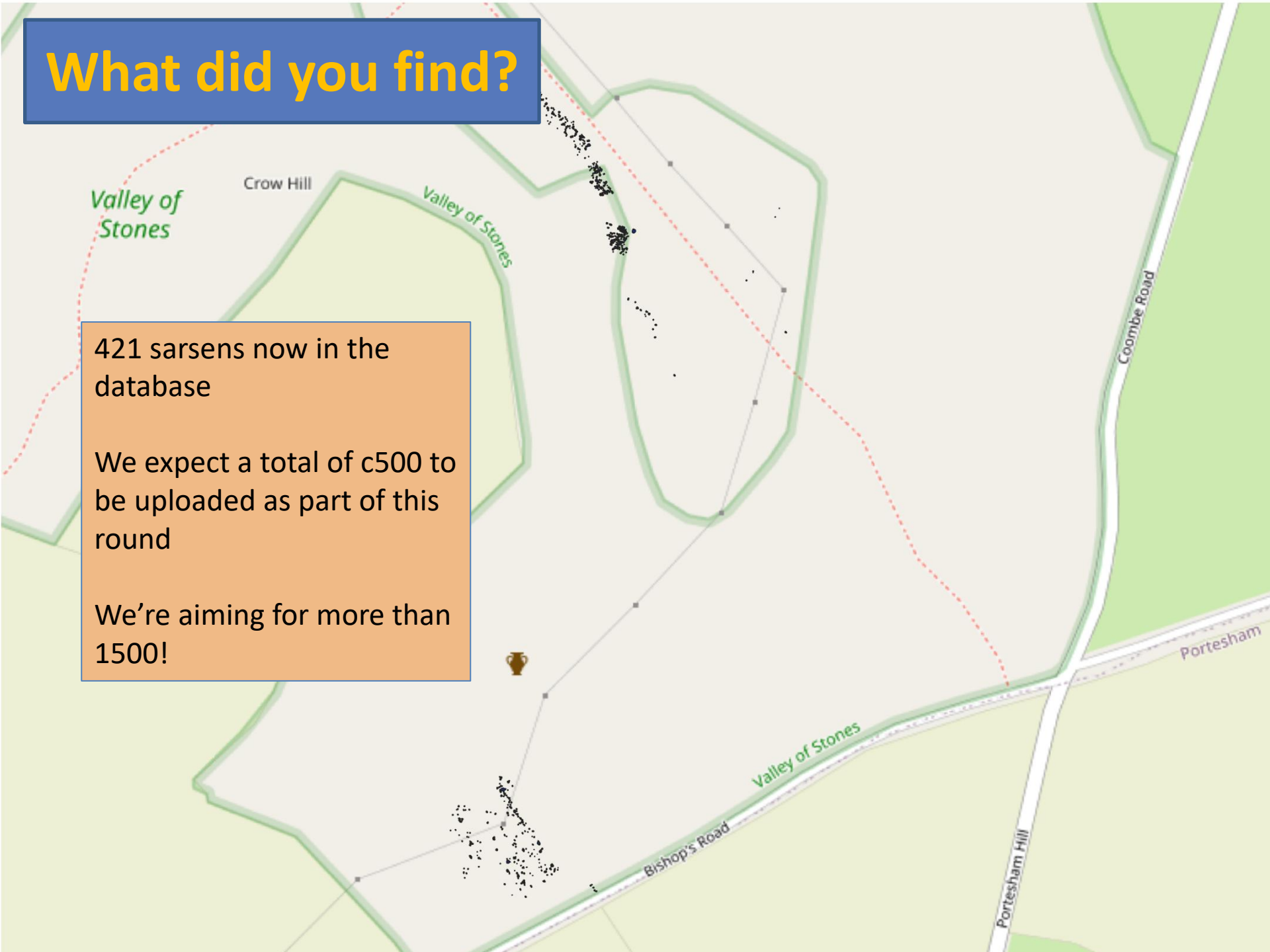


What did you find?

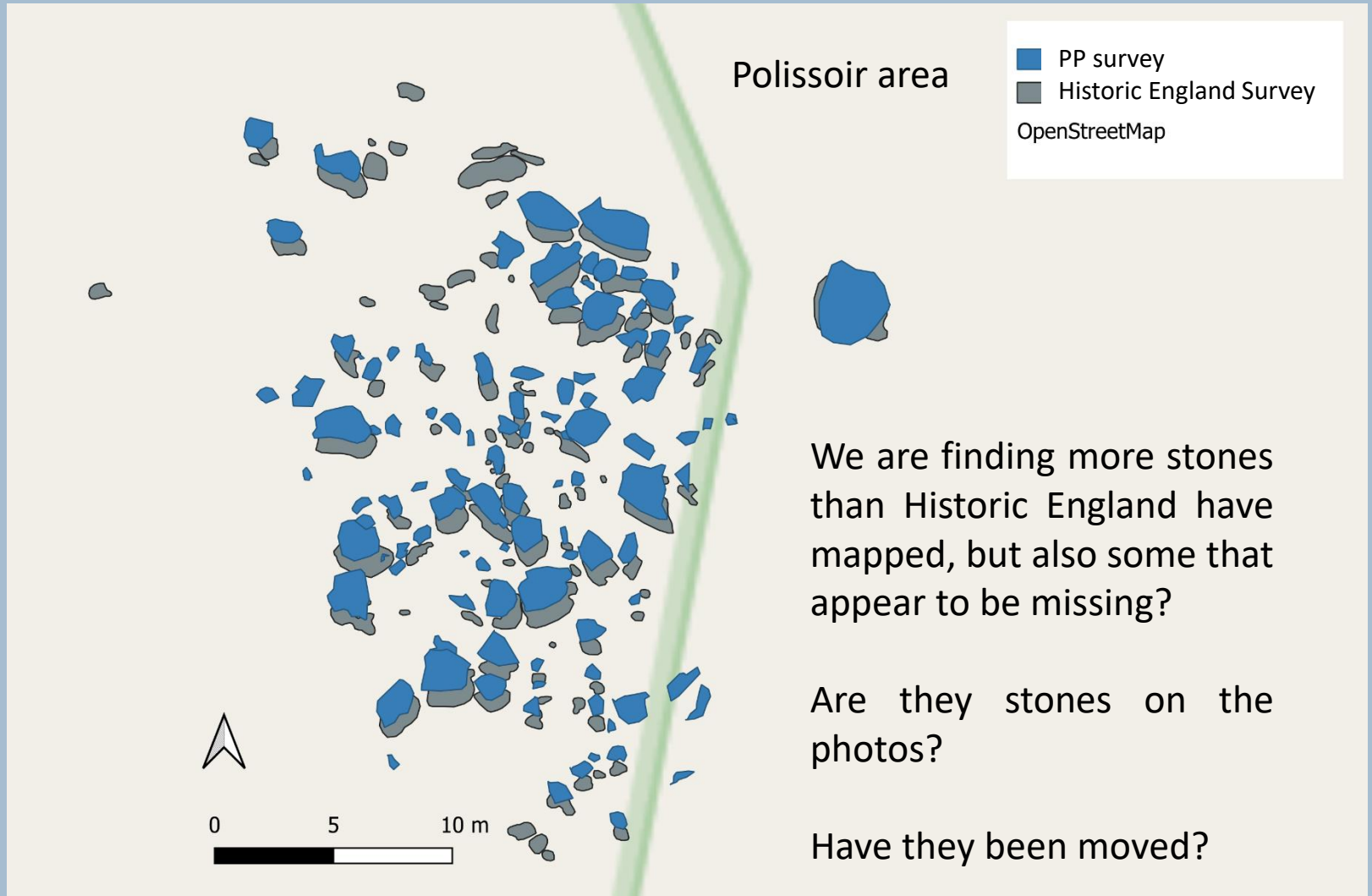
421 sarsens now in the database

We expect a total of c500 to be uploaded as part of this round

We're aiming for more than 1500!



What did you find?



Big Stones



AS15

Length 3.1m

Width 3.2m

Depth 1.3m



AS1.13

Length 4.8m

Width 2.06m

Depth 0.9m



What did you find?



Smaller Stones



AS17.3



AS31.13



AS6.3



AS35.9

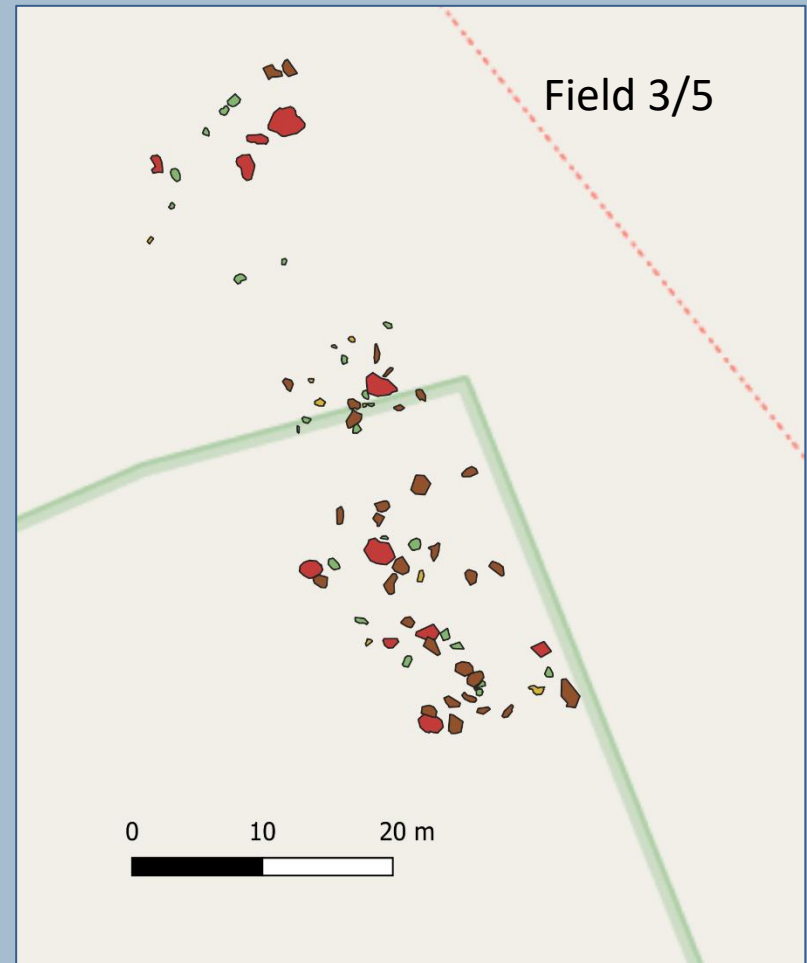
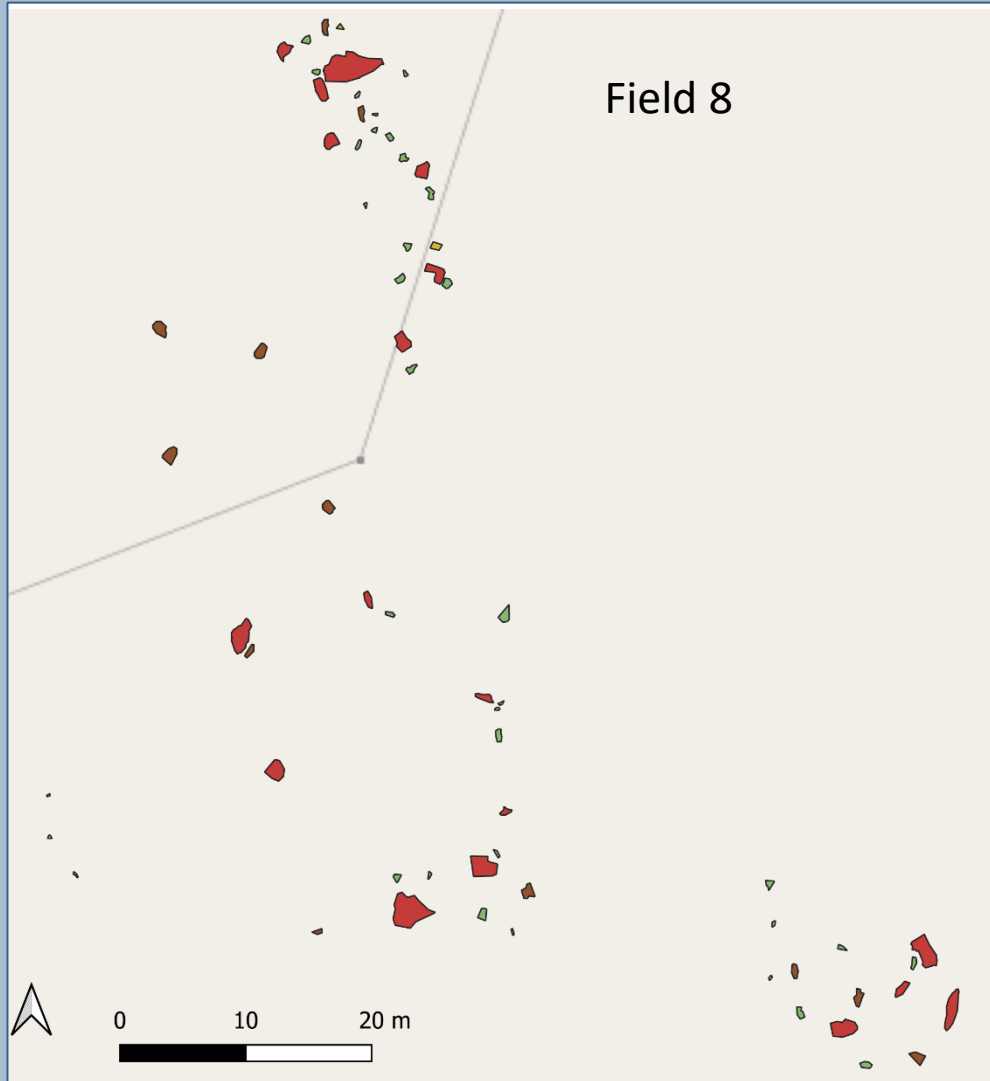


AS25.4






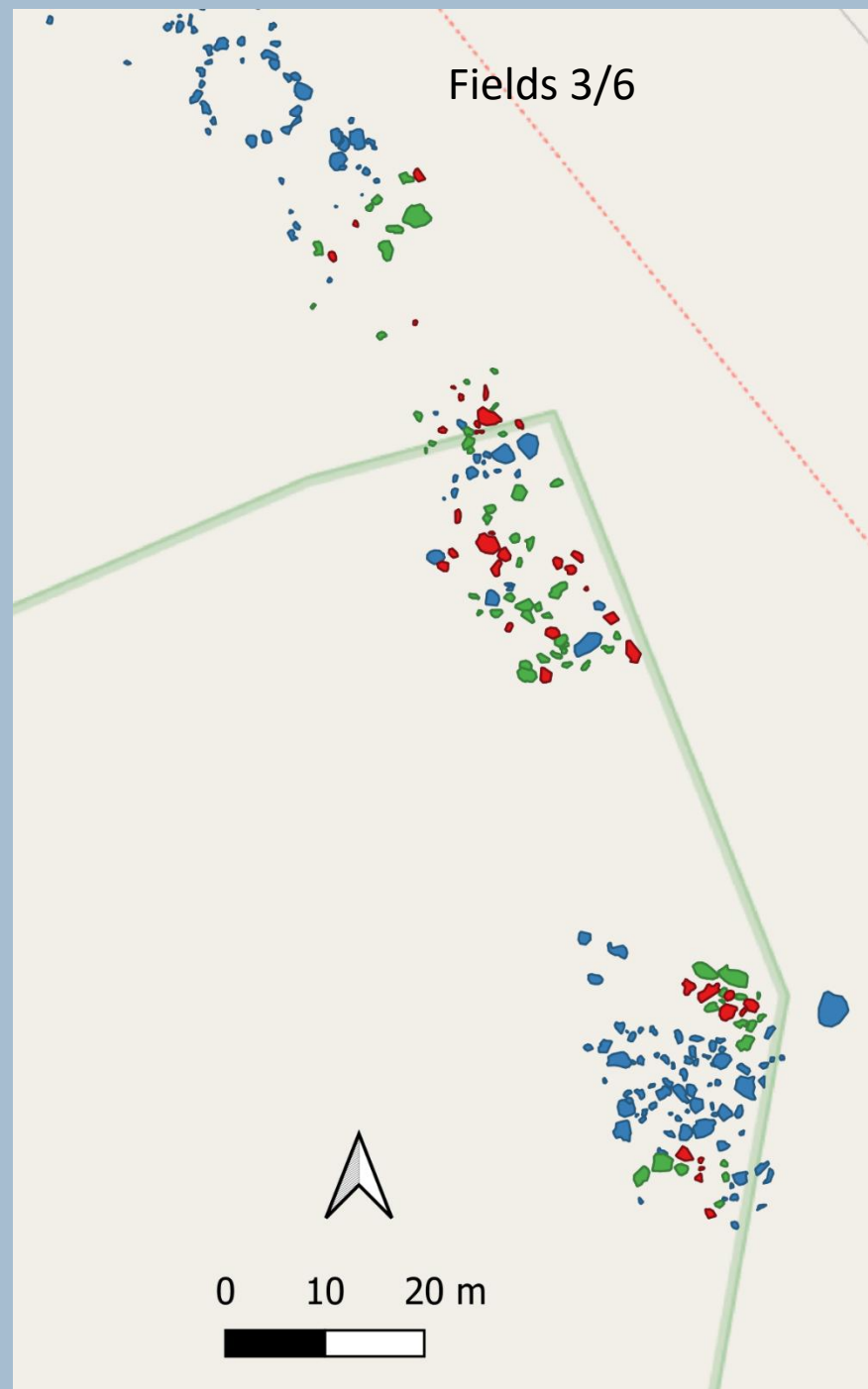
AS16.5a

Boulder Size



Types of Sarsen

Conglomerate	
No conglomerate	
Data not returned yet	



Any other patterns

No patterns in colour distribution apparent

No patterns in quartz presence apparent



AS11.11



AS31.11

Signs of use?

Another polished stone?



Photos: Mike B



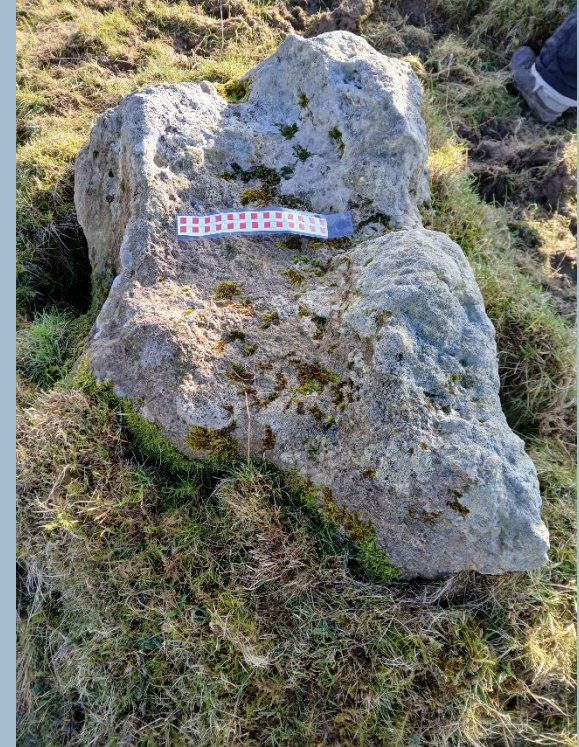
Fields



Limit of stones

What have you achieved?

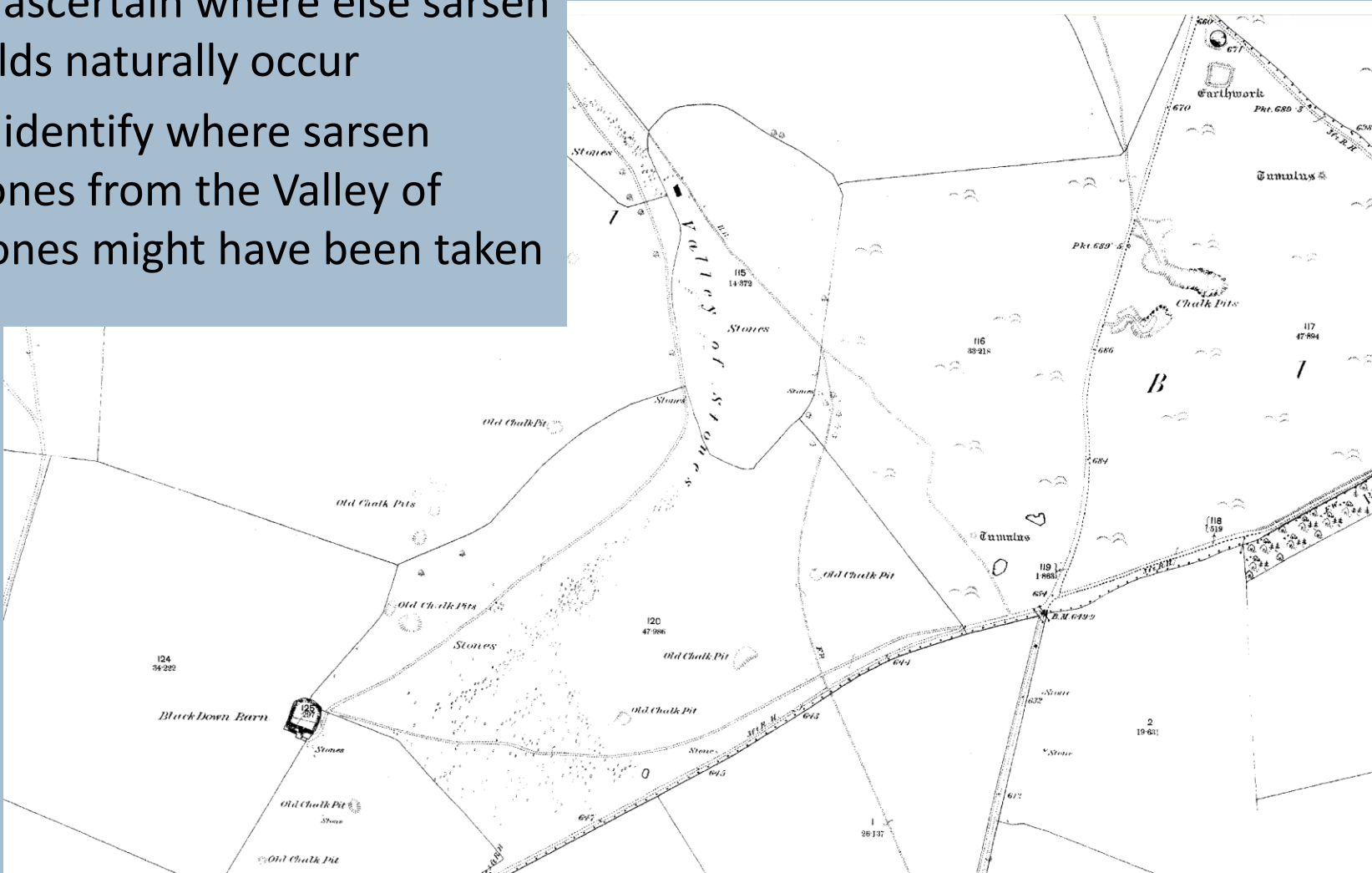
- Under a 1/3 complete
- Ironed out methodological problems
- Starting to get a picture of distribution i.e. we know where archaeological sarsens aren't!



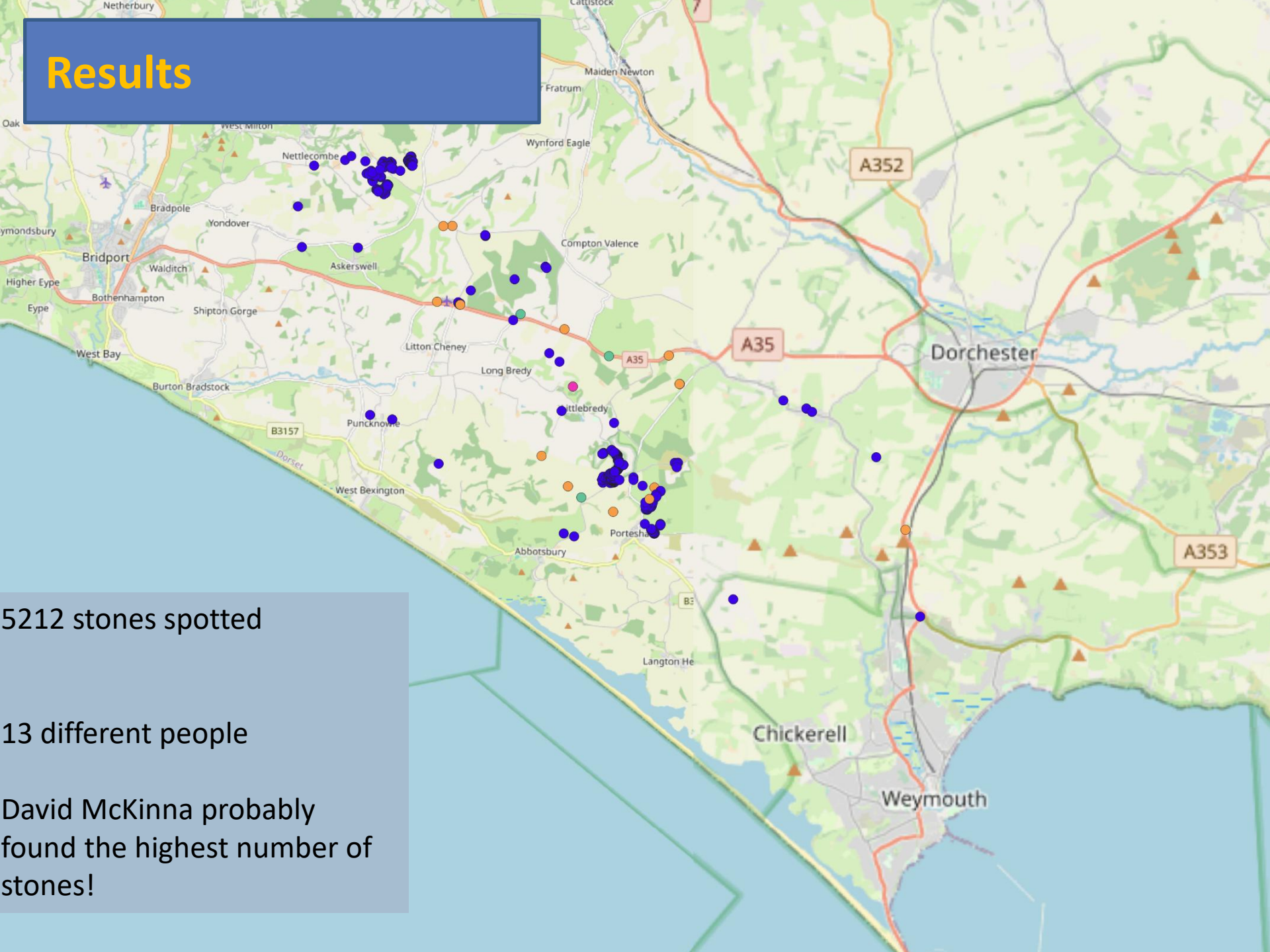
AS3.2

Digital Survey

- To ascertain where else sarsen fields naturally occur
- To identify where sarsen stones from the Valley of Stones might have been taken



Results

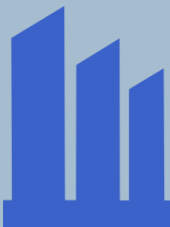


5212 stones spotted

13 different people

David McKinna probably found the highest number of stones!

Eggardon



Eggardon



Results

Cluster at Eggardon

Eggardon grit is a type of Greensand. Not sarsen but still interesting

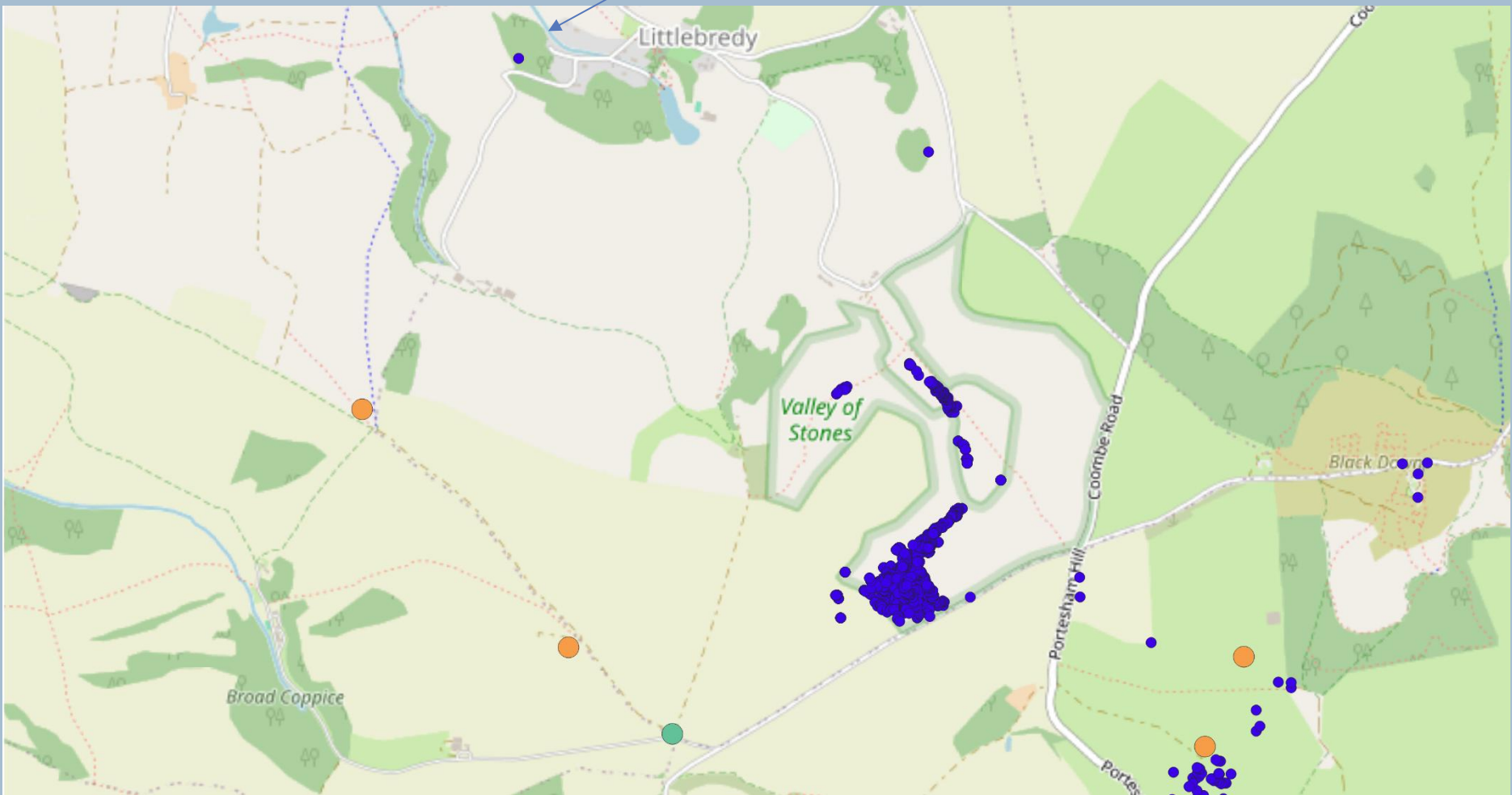
Bench marks- some on stones!



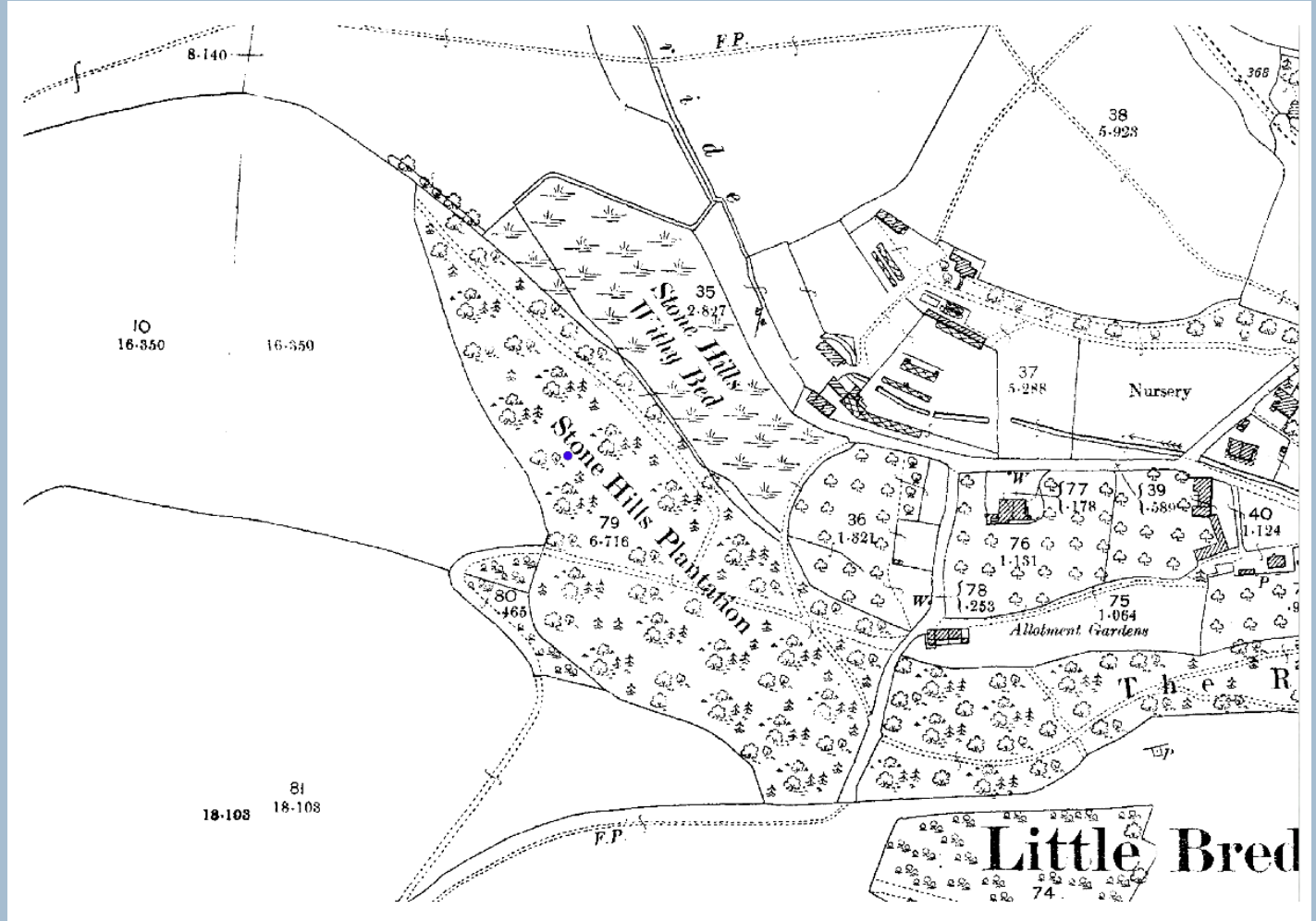
[Photo: DIGS](#) – Dorset's Important Geological Sites

Valley of Stones

Stoney Hills



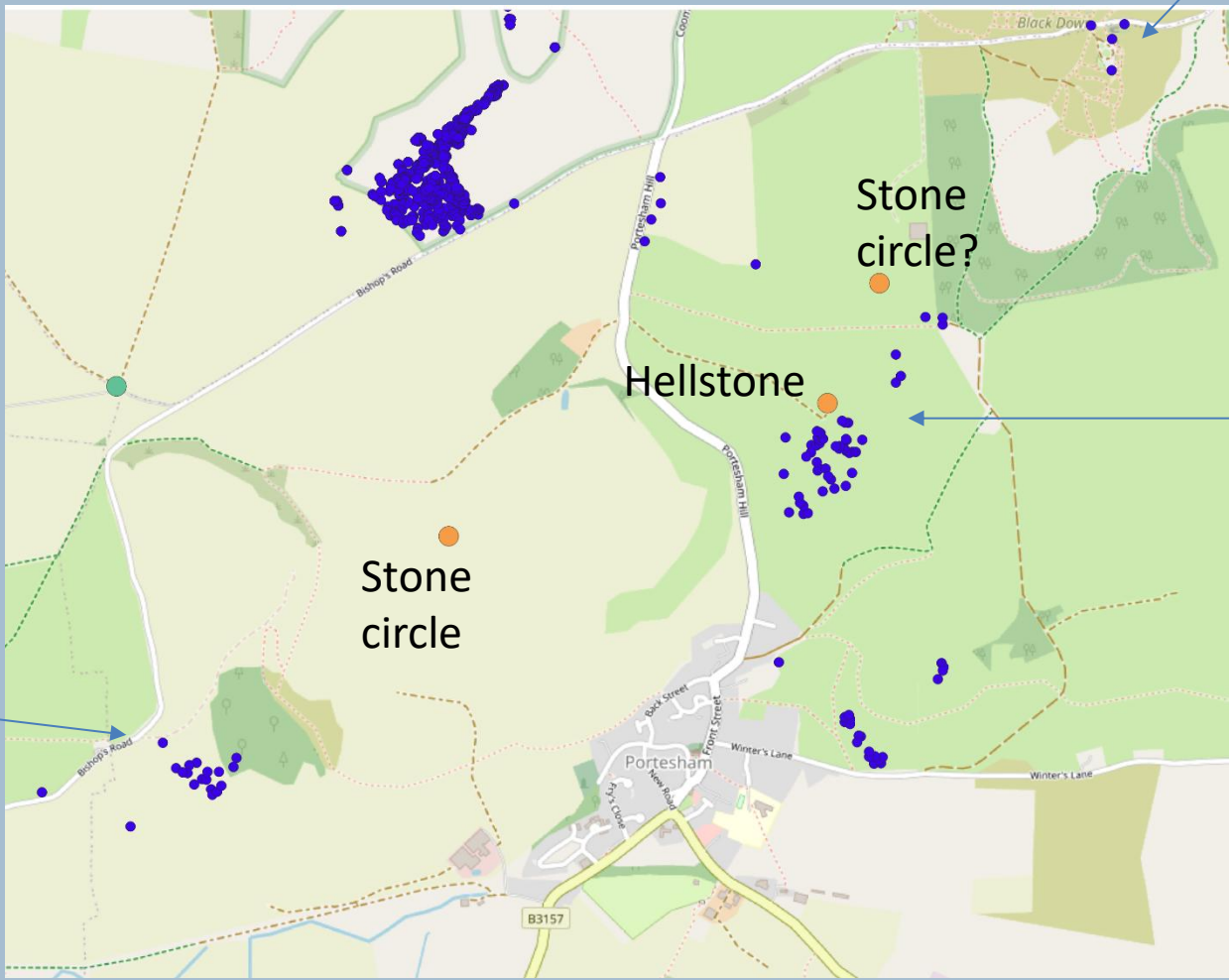
Stoney Hill



2nd Edition OS Map 1902

Portesham Cluster

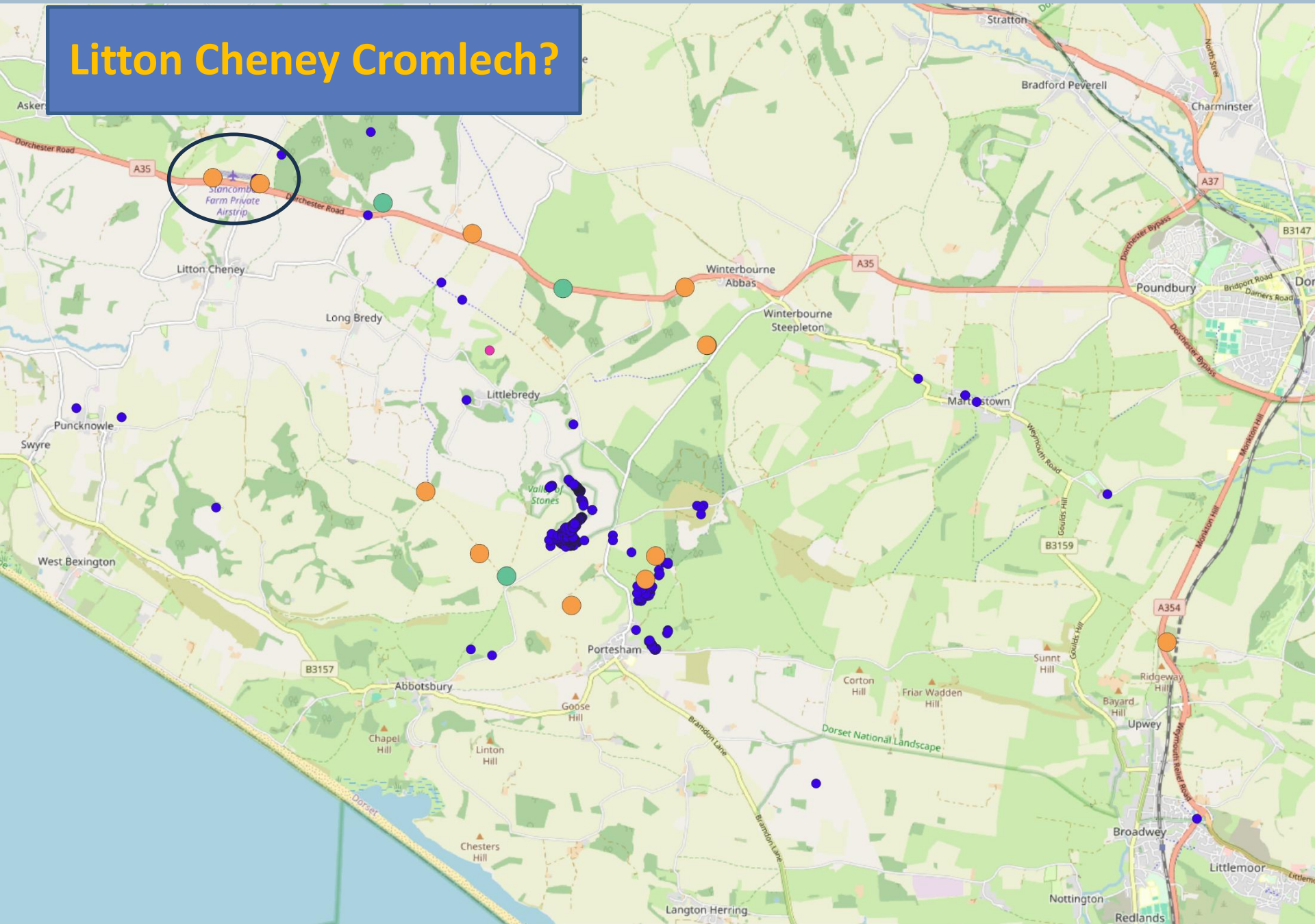
These only appeared after the 1st edition OS map



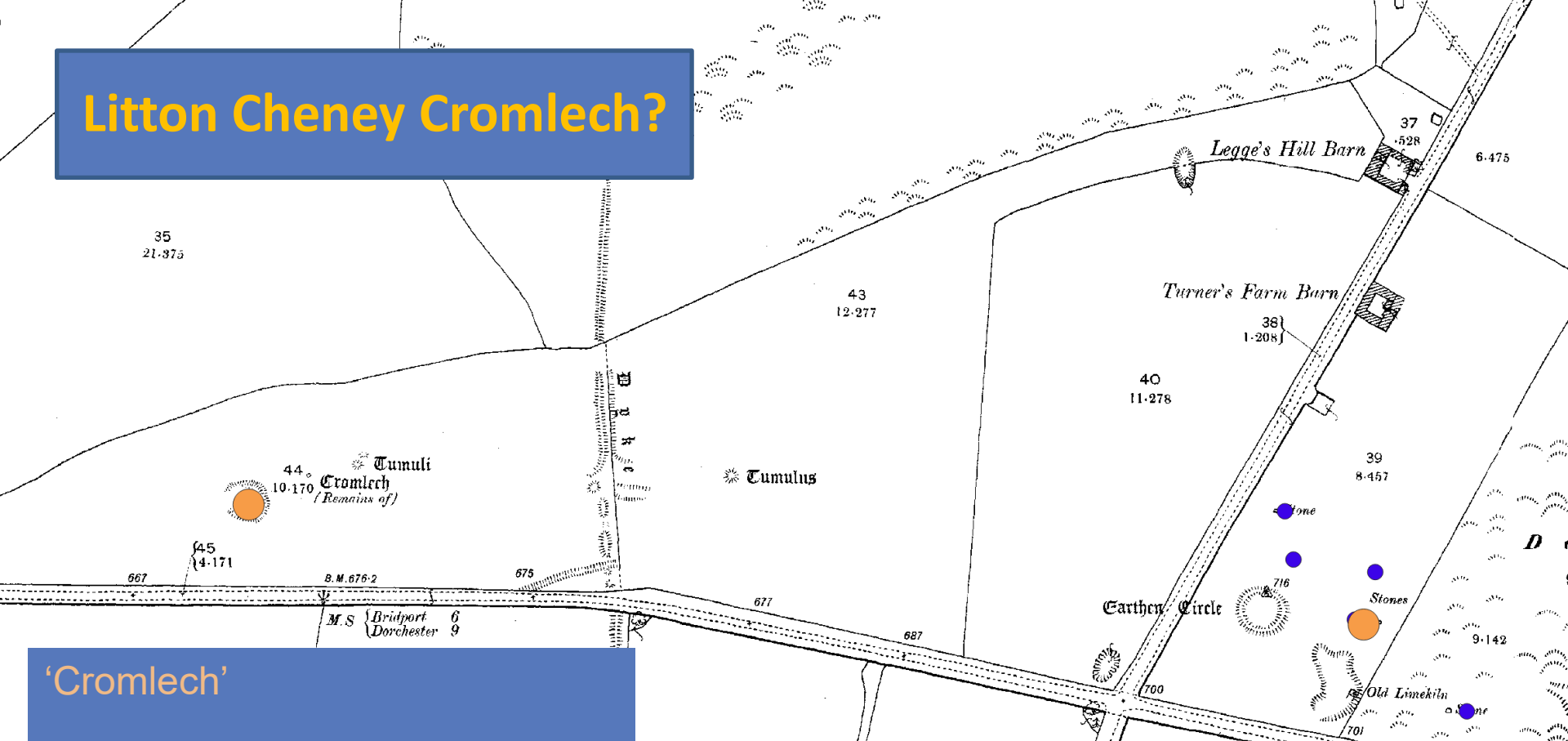
Cluster may well be sarsen

Cluster probably not sarsen

Litton Cheney Cromlech?



Litton Cheney Cromlech?



'Cromlech'

Formerly described as a 'megalith' but excavation in 1975 suggested that the stone was natural

'Earthen Circle'

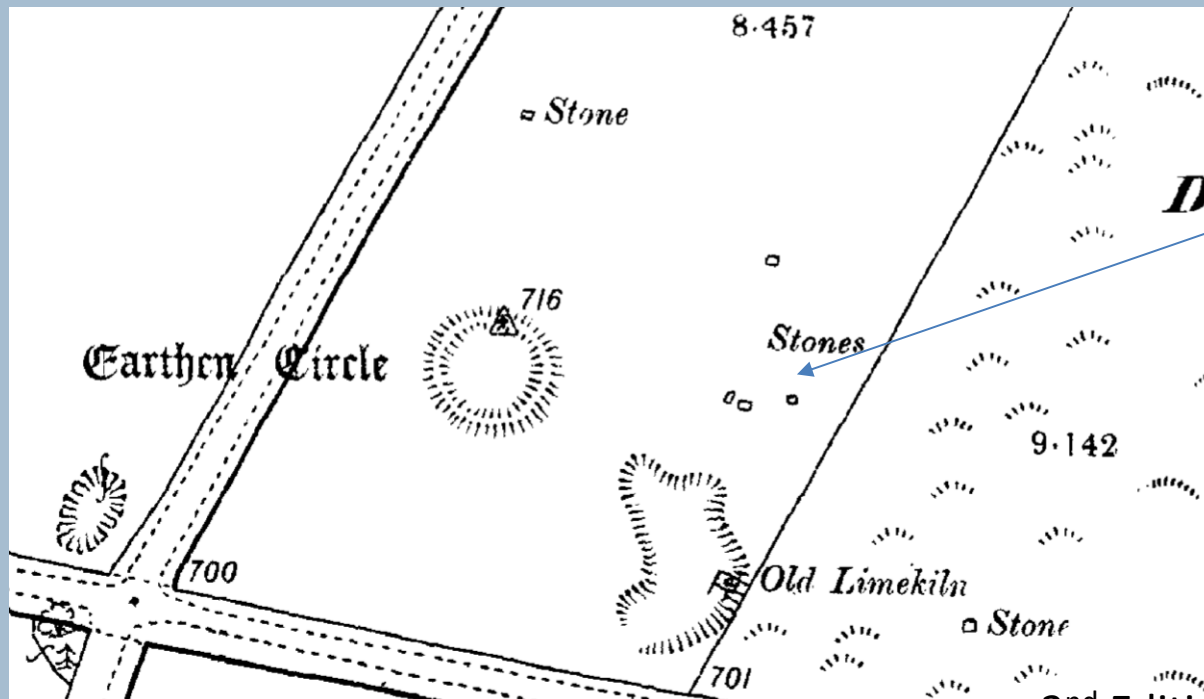
The possible site of a hengiform monument or timber circle

Litton Cheney 2

Litton Cheney 2 was a 14 m diameter ring ditch, with a single recumbent sarsen adjacent to the inner edge of the ditch, and three potential stone outliers situated 30 m to the south

Rylatt, Teather et al 2021

Piggott and Piggott 1939, 146

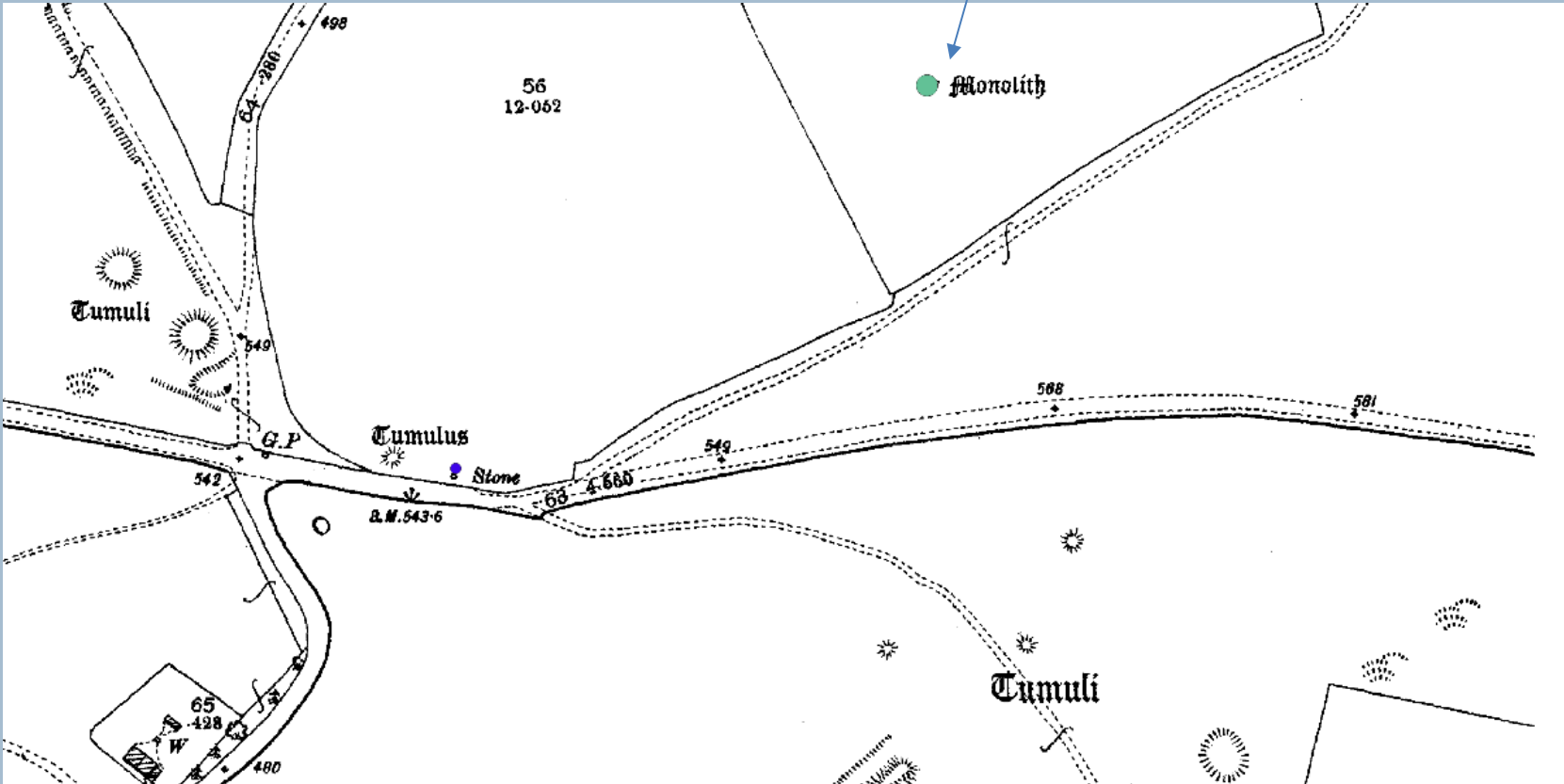


Litton
Cheney 2

2nd Edition OS Map 1902

Long Bredy Standing Stone

Monolith



2nd Edition OS Map 1902

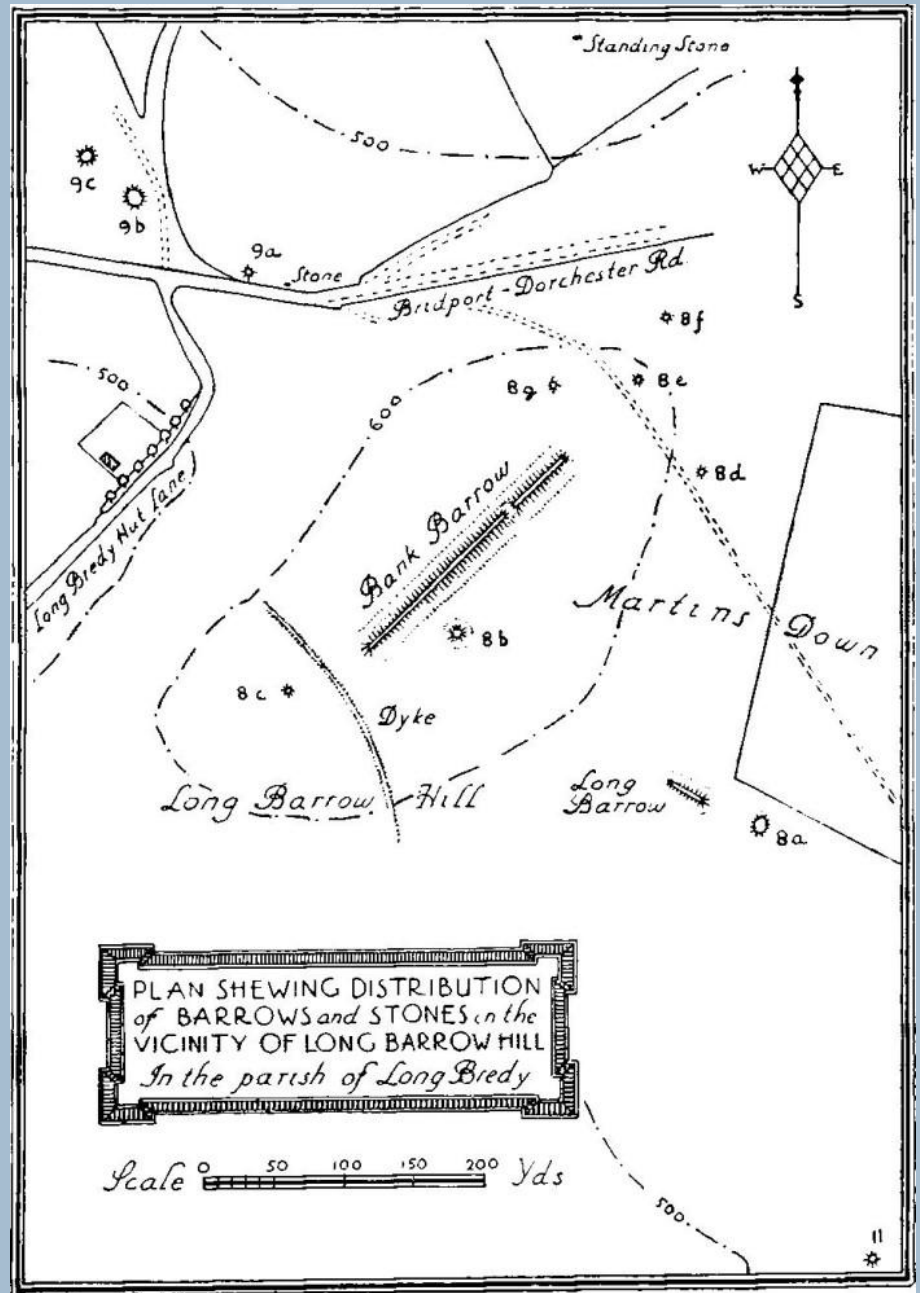
Long Bredy Standing Stone

(17) **Standing Stone**, 270 yards N. of the N. end of the bank barrow (8), is a rough block 6½ ft. high, 9 ft. long and 2½ ft. thick (RCHME 1952. An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset, Volume I (West). 42.



Long Bredy Standing stone

RCHME 1952. An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset, Volume I (West). 42.

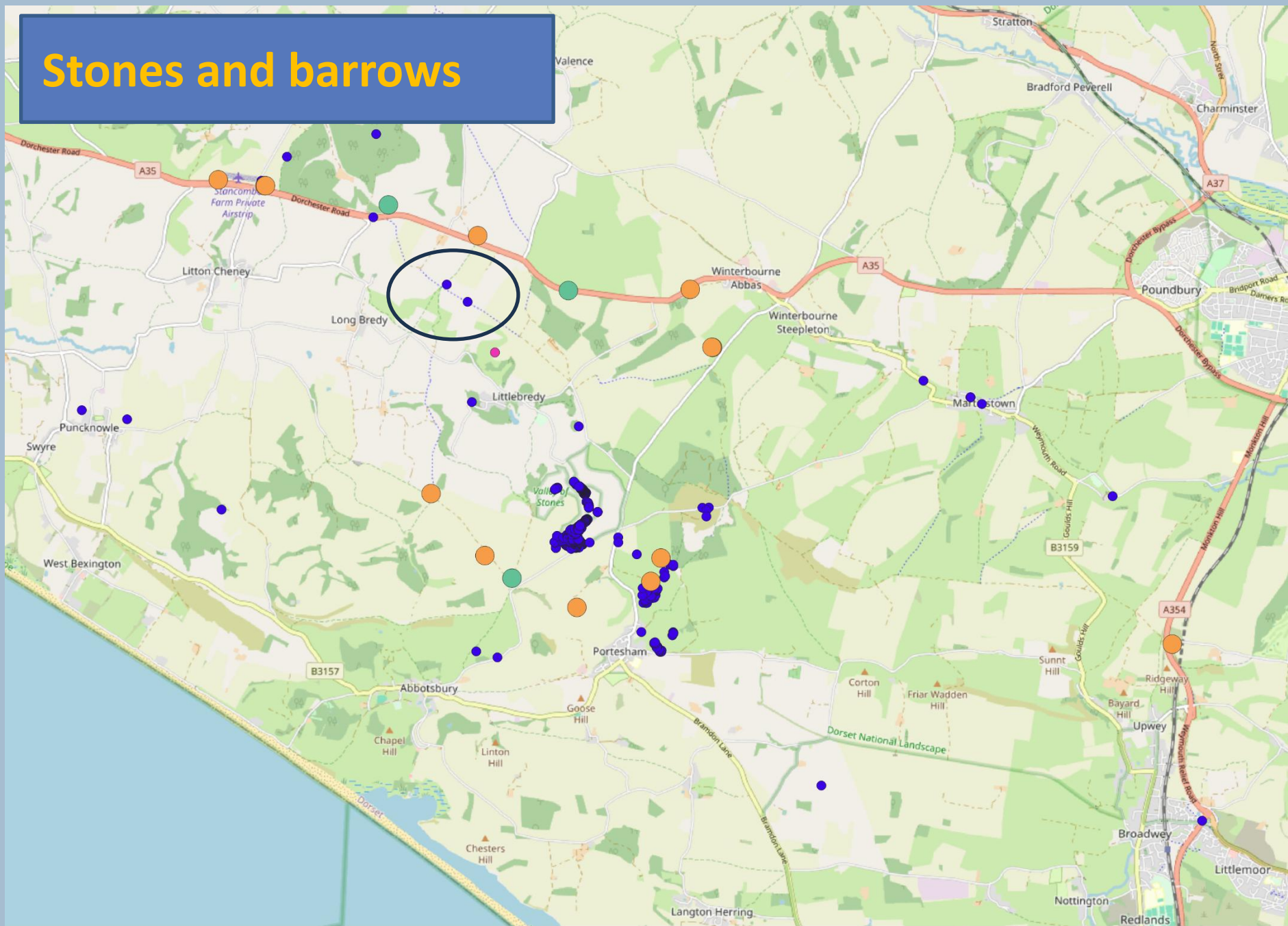


Hangman's Rocks

“The Sarsen Stone Survey (a) of 1974-5 prompted a search for the site of Hangman's Rocks, noted by both Aubrey and Hutchins, and shown on the 1765 Bedford Estate Map as 3 stones. A thorough search revealed one sarsen 3m long by 1m wide lying in a hedge bank, doubtless the remains of the Hangman's Rock group.”

Heritage Gateway Monument Number 884825

Stones and barrows

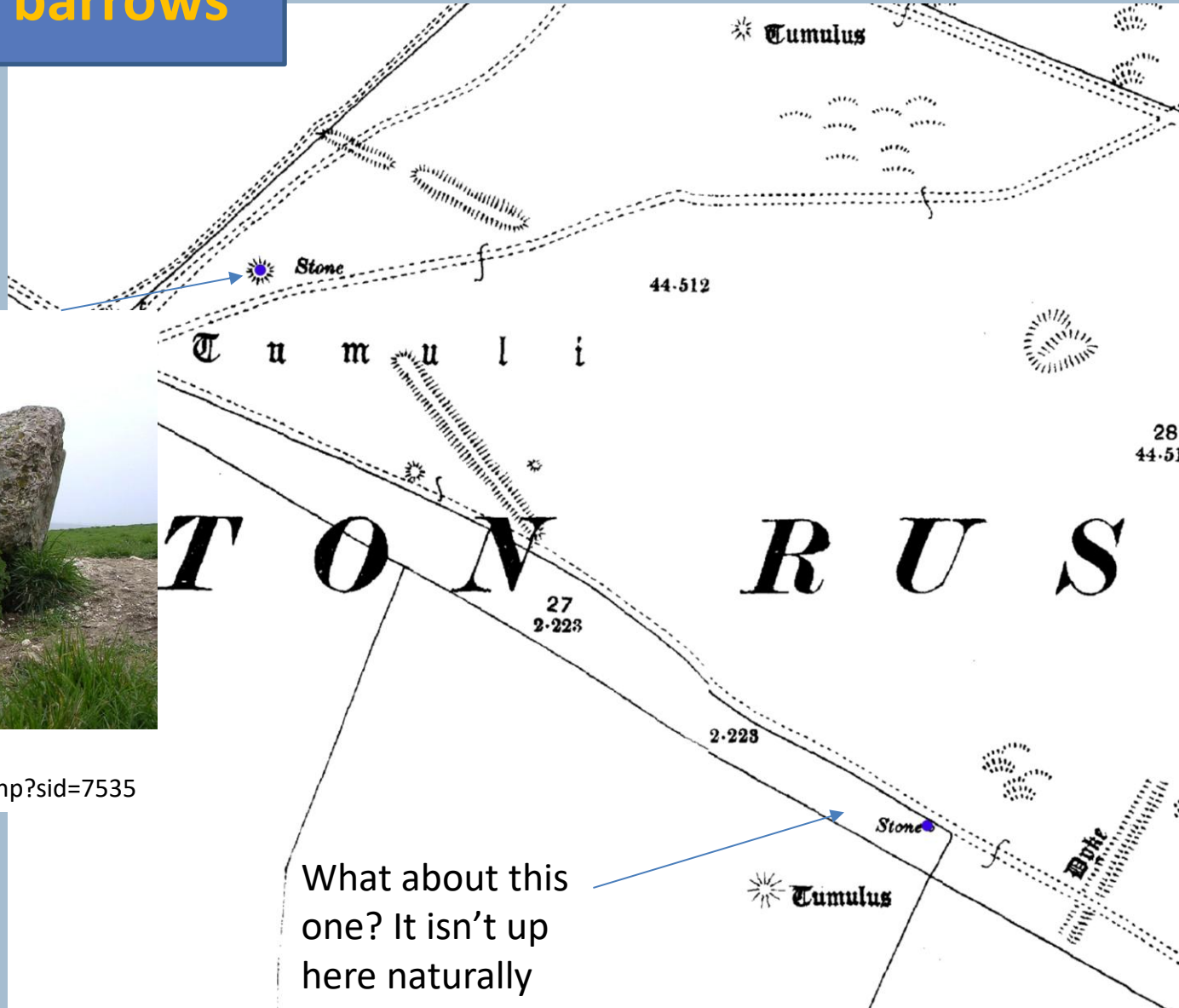


Stones and barrows



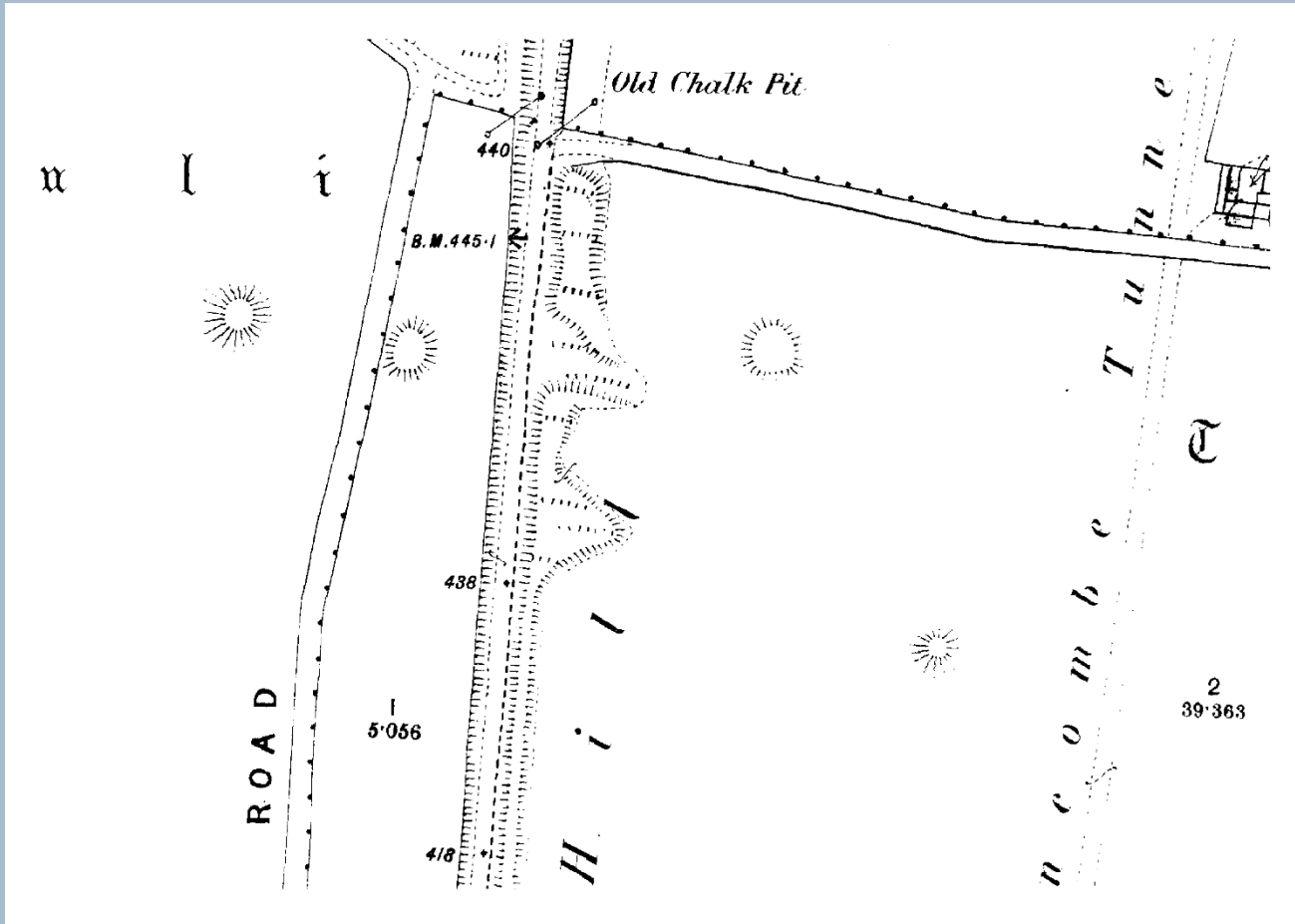
Jim Champion

www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=7535



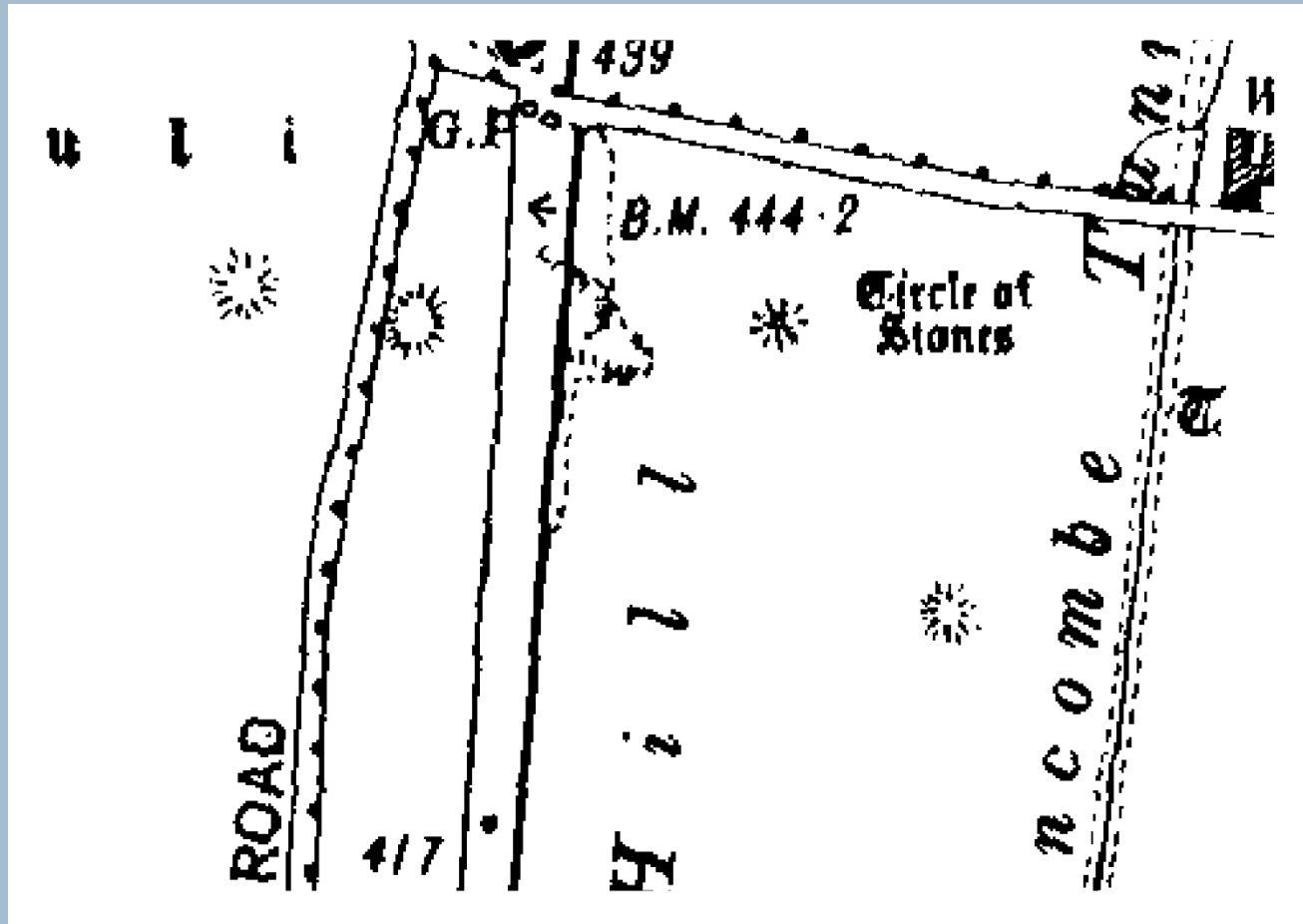
What about this one? It isn't up here naturally

Ridgeway Hill



2nd Edition OS Map 1902

Ridgeway Hill



3rd Edition OS Map 1929

Conclusion

Thank you

- We're gaining a better understanding of the distribution of the sarsens in the Valley of Stones.
- We've got a starting place to look across the wider landscape at where the sarsens might have moved to, especially in prehistory.



AS31.8



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