

Emerging settlement monumentality in North Wales during the Late Bronze and Iron Age: the case of Meillionydd



The Llŷn peninsula, LBA-IA

- enclosed settlements
 - some sizeable hillforts (2x 6-12 ha, 2x 2-6 ha)
 - many small farmsteads (0.5-2 ha)
- and many open settlements
 - chronology unclear
 - structure unknown
 - relationships between sites unknown

Map showing the location of Late Bronze Age - Early Medieval settlements on the Llŷn Peninsula

Roundhouse settlements = black circles

Double ringwork enclosures

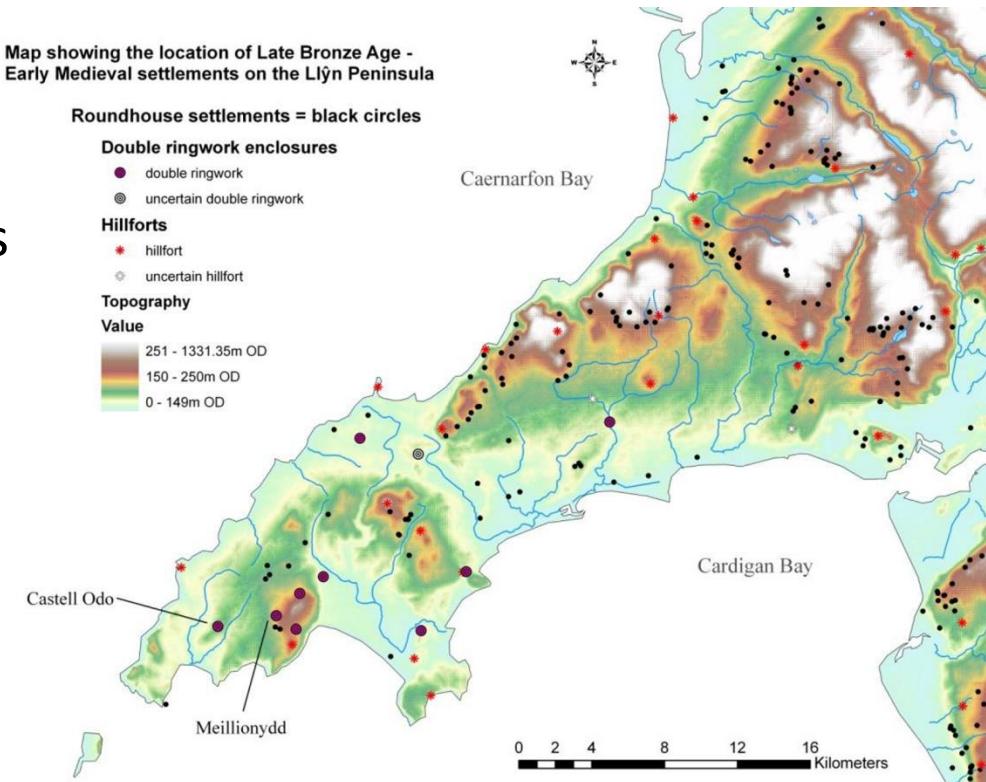
- double ringwork
- uncertain double ringwork

Hillforts

- ★ hillfort
- uncertain hillfort

Topography

Value



Late Bronze- and Iron Age settlements on the Llŷn

Penllŷn

Map showing the location of Late Bronze Age - Early Medieval settlements on the Llŷn Peninsula

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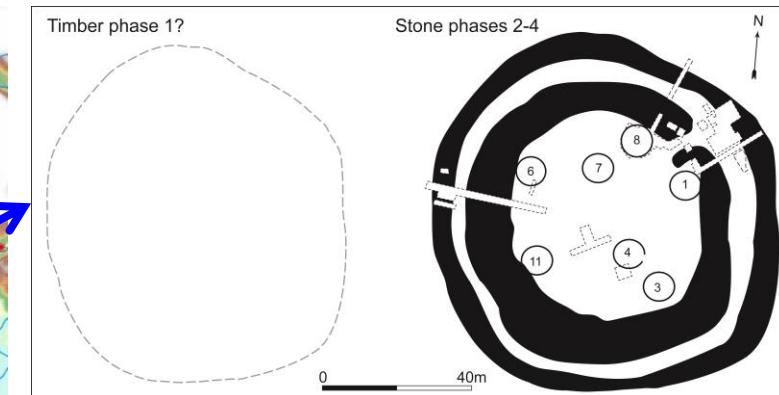
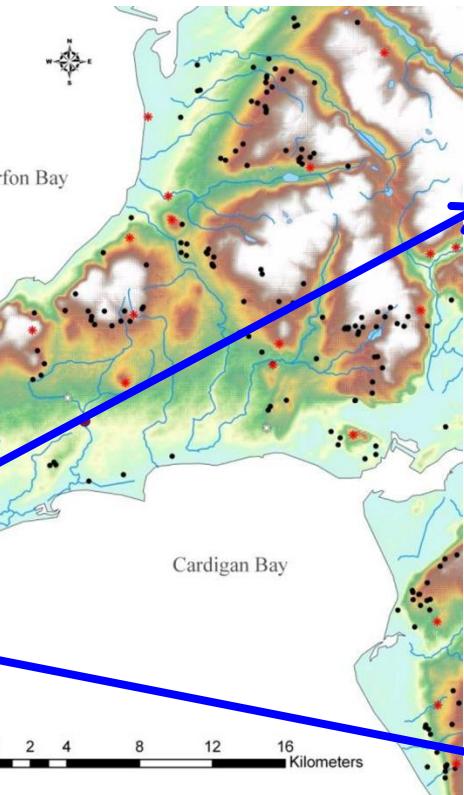
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Hillforts

- hillfort
- uncertain hillfort

Topography

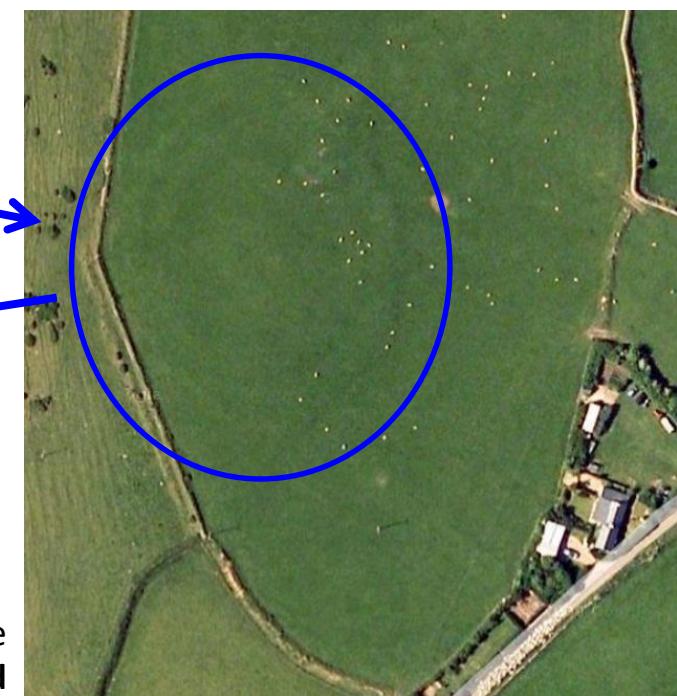
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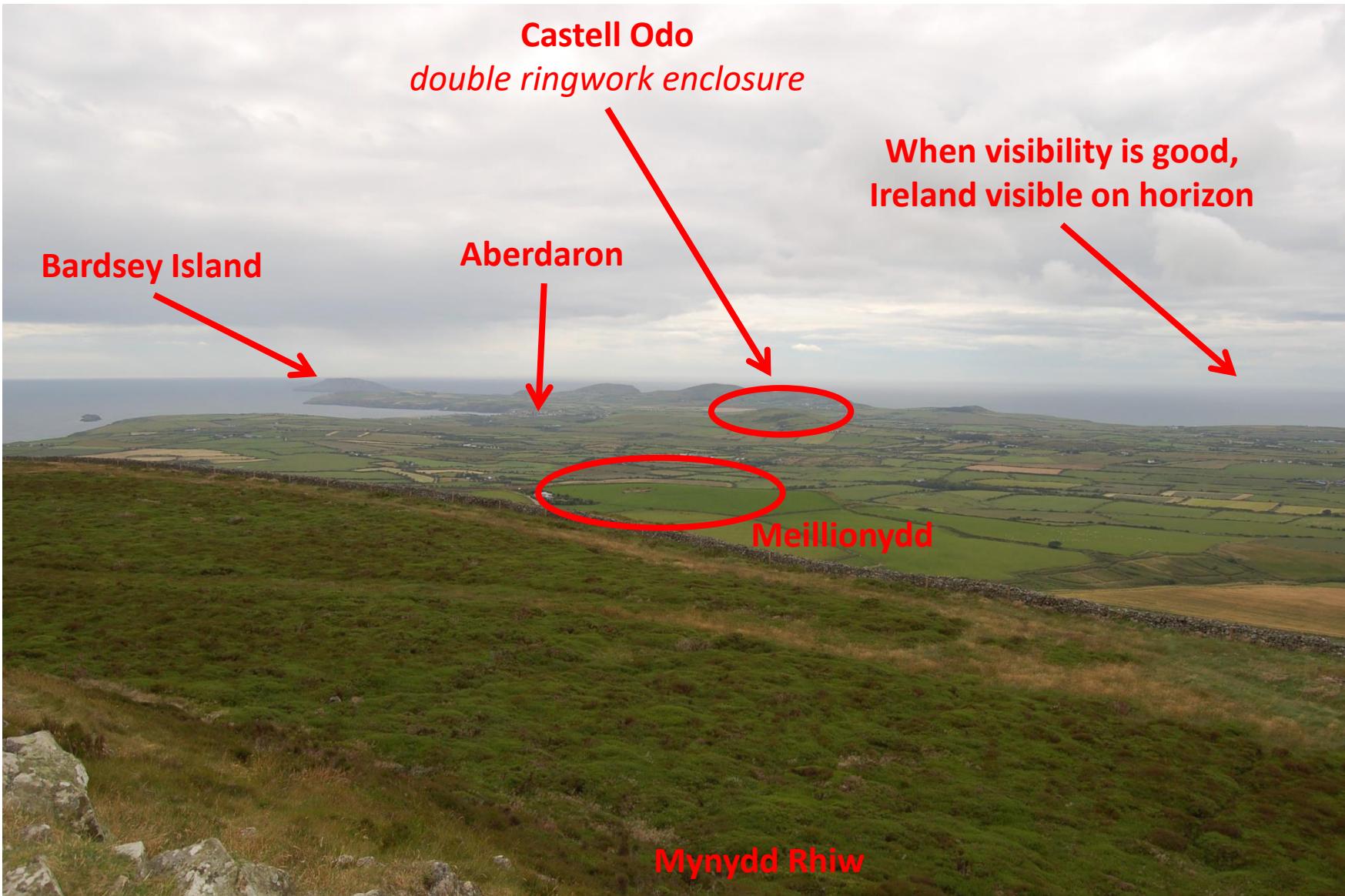
Double ringwork enclosure **Castell Odo**, partially excavated by Leslie Alcock in 1950ies (Alcock 1960)



Double ringwork enclosure **Meillionydd**



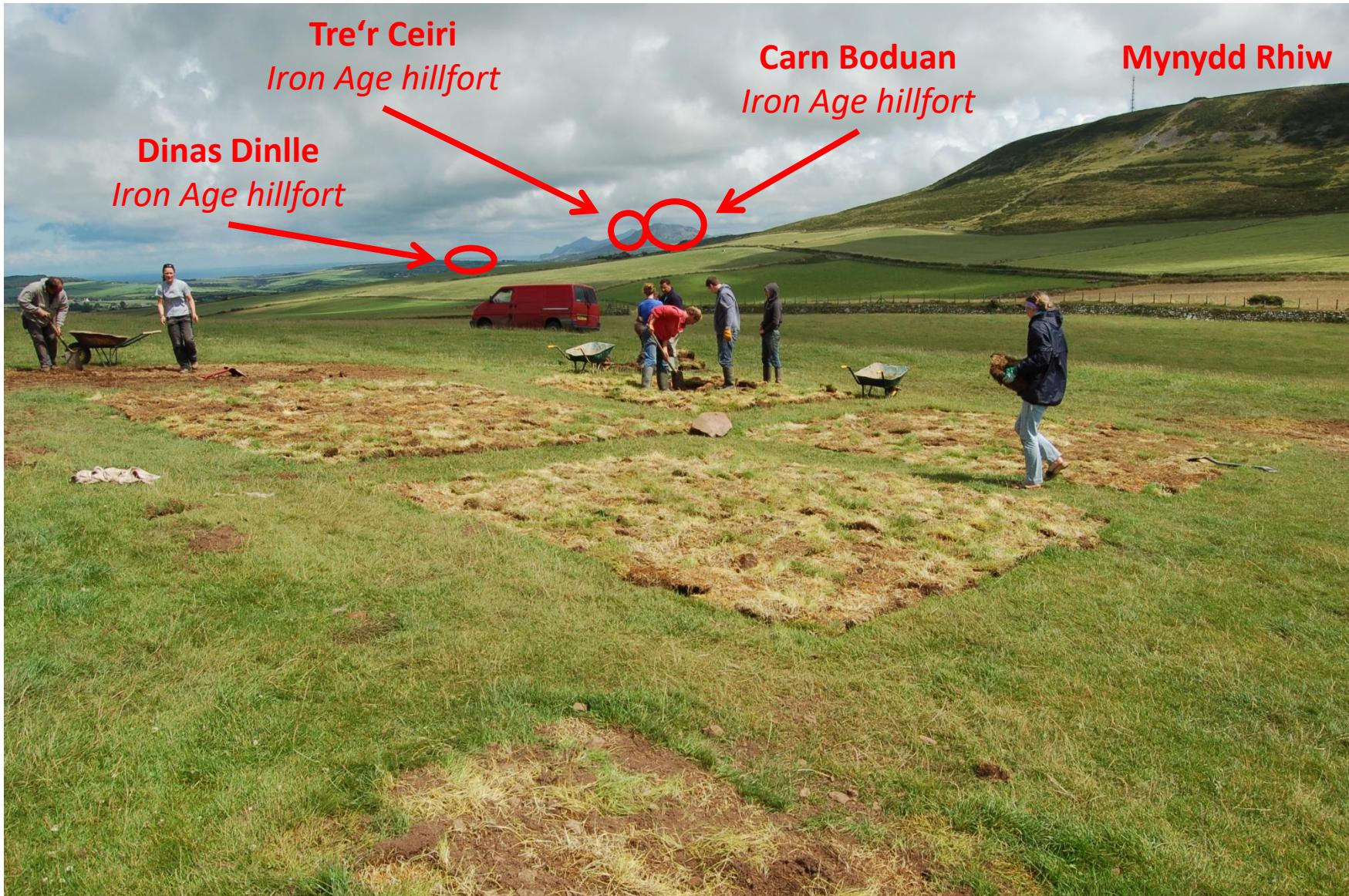
Location



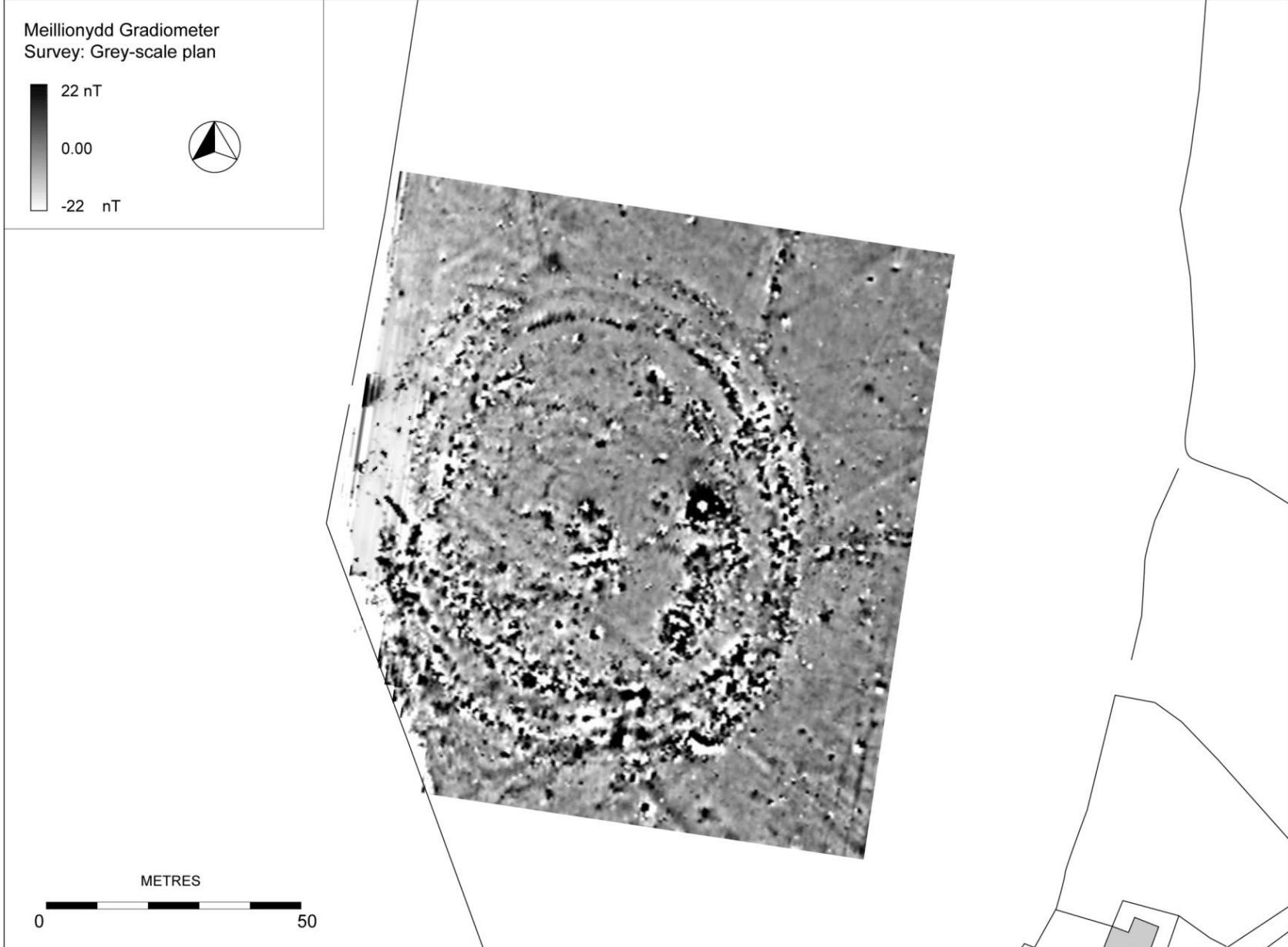
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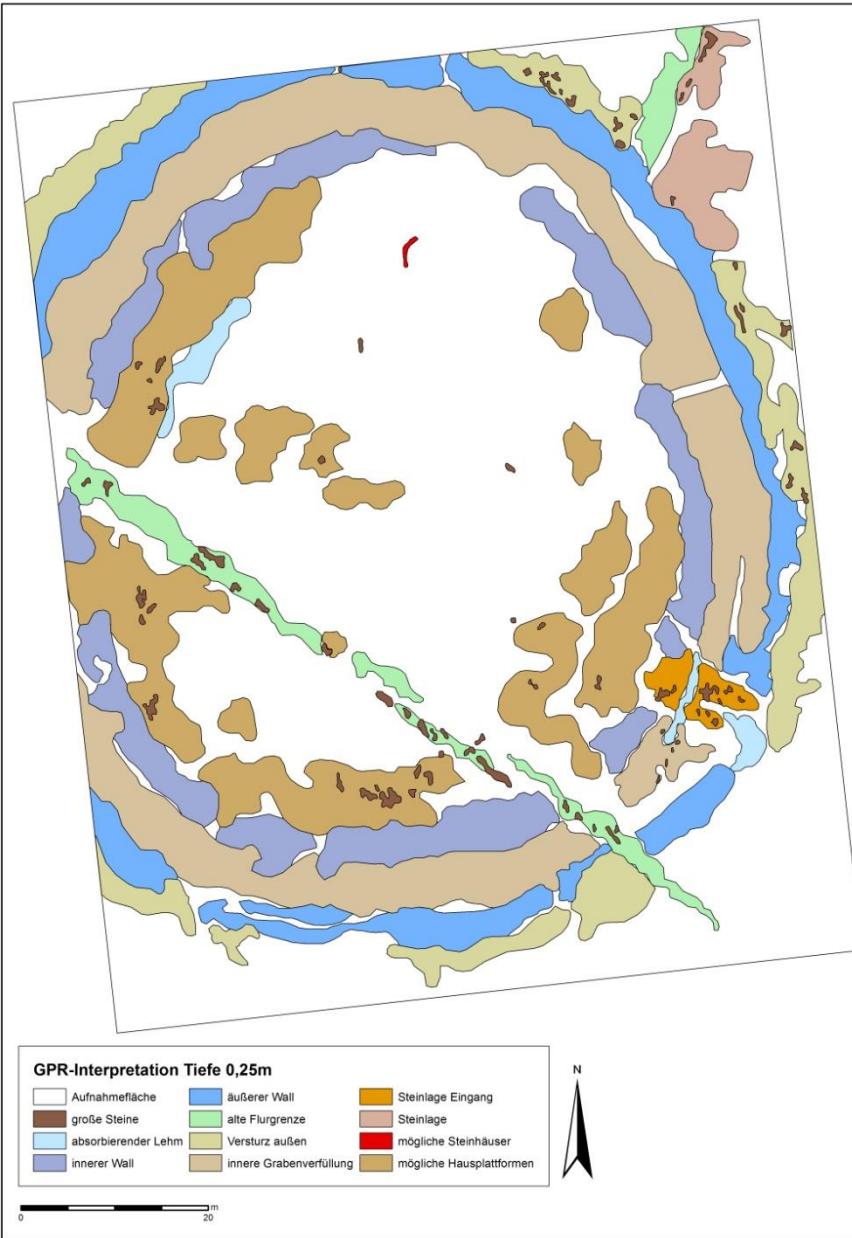
Meillionydd: Magnetometry by GAT



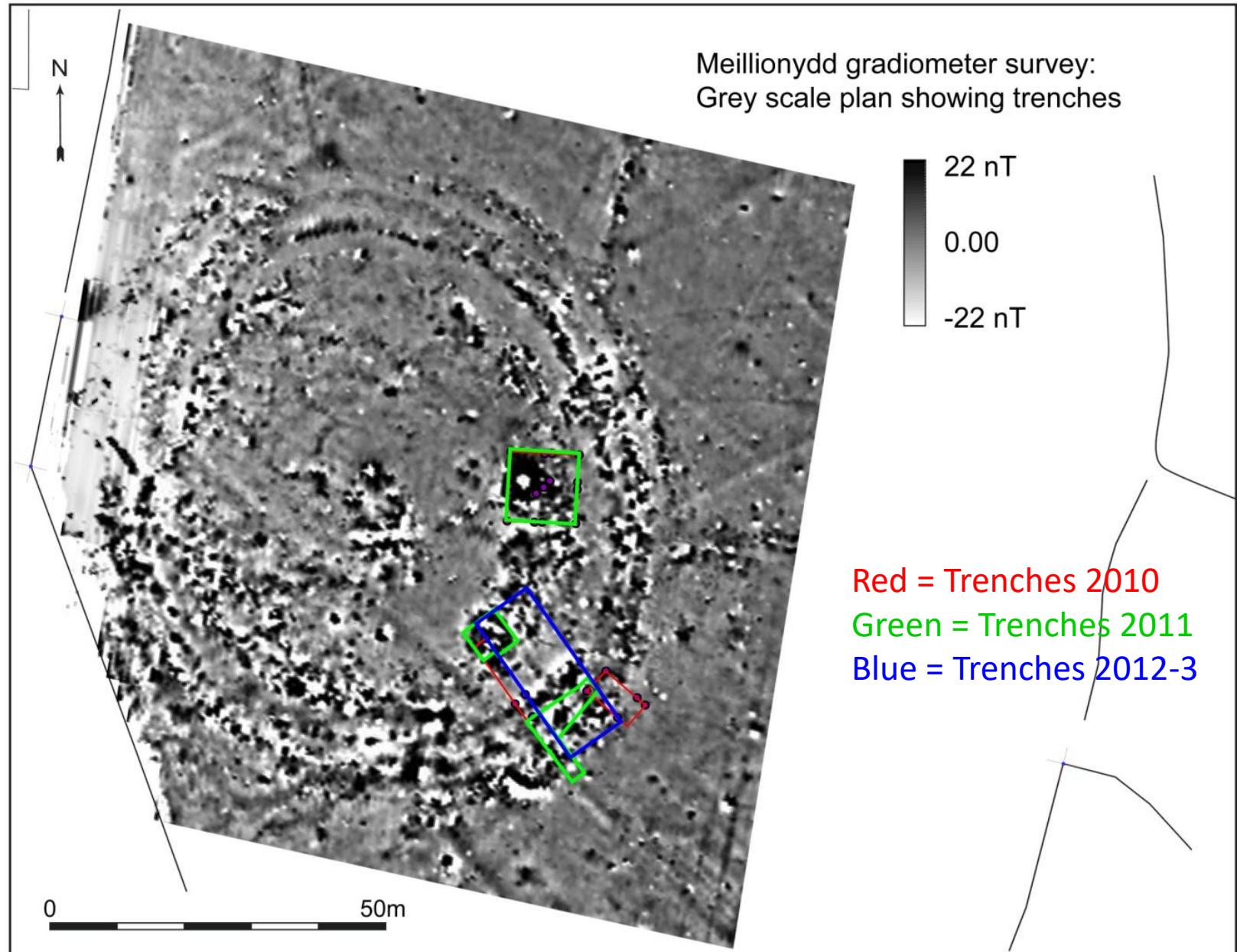
Meillionydd: GPR survey LBI ArchPro

Raimund Karl: Emerging settlement monumentality in North Wales: the case of Meillionydd

AMEA Conference, Cardiff 12/4/2014

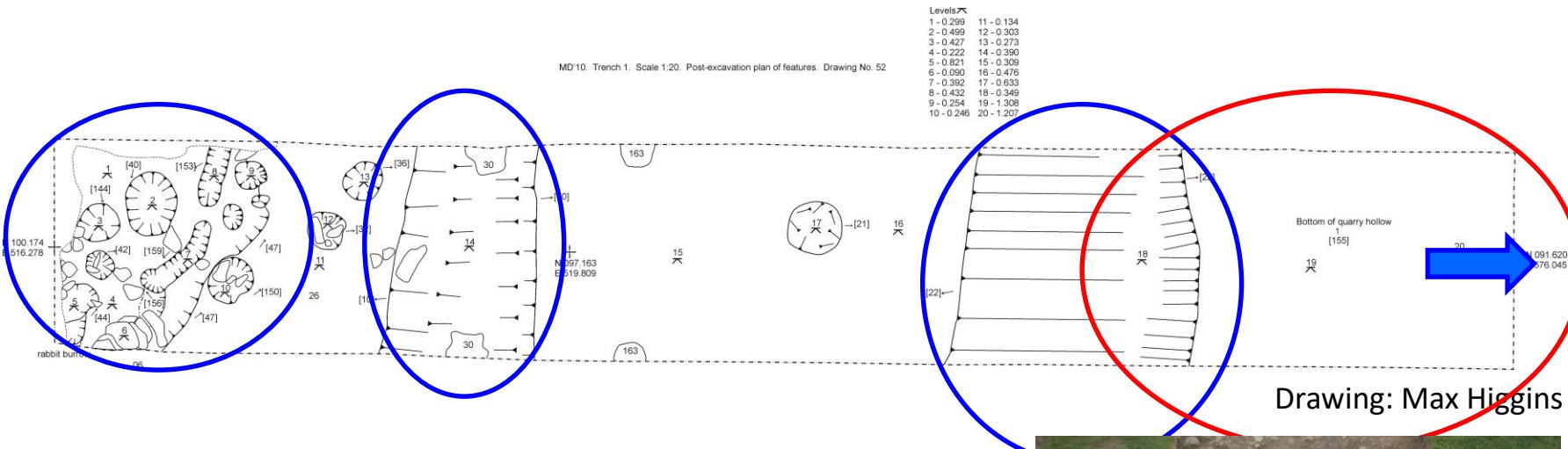


Trenches, 2010-2013



Trenches, 2010-2013

- Trench 1, 2010 (extended 2011-2013)



- multi-phased roundhouse
- bank foundation
- narrow ditch
 - later cut by wide quarry hollow for construction of outer bank
- outer bank with internal drystone facing



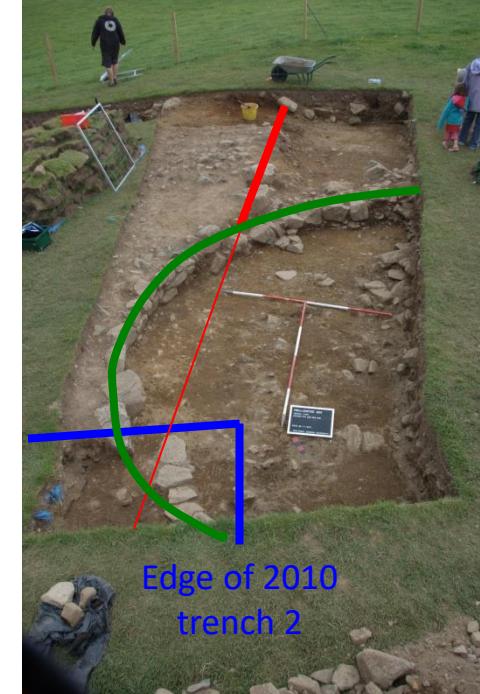
Trenches, 2010-2013

- Trench 1, extension 2012-2013
 - multi-phased roundhouse
 - internal bank
 - inturned entrance into inner enclosure
 - with metalled surface / road



Trenches, 2010-2013

- Trench 2, 2010 (extended 2011-2013)
 - external bank with partly preserved inner facing
 - multi-phased sequence
 - bank with internal quarry hollow
 - Later cut by roundhouse partially built into outer bank
 - Parallel sequence in Castell Odo
 - later roundhouse built into bank
 - almost on top of entrance into enclosure



Trenches, 2010-2013

- Trench 1 & 2, extensions combined 2013



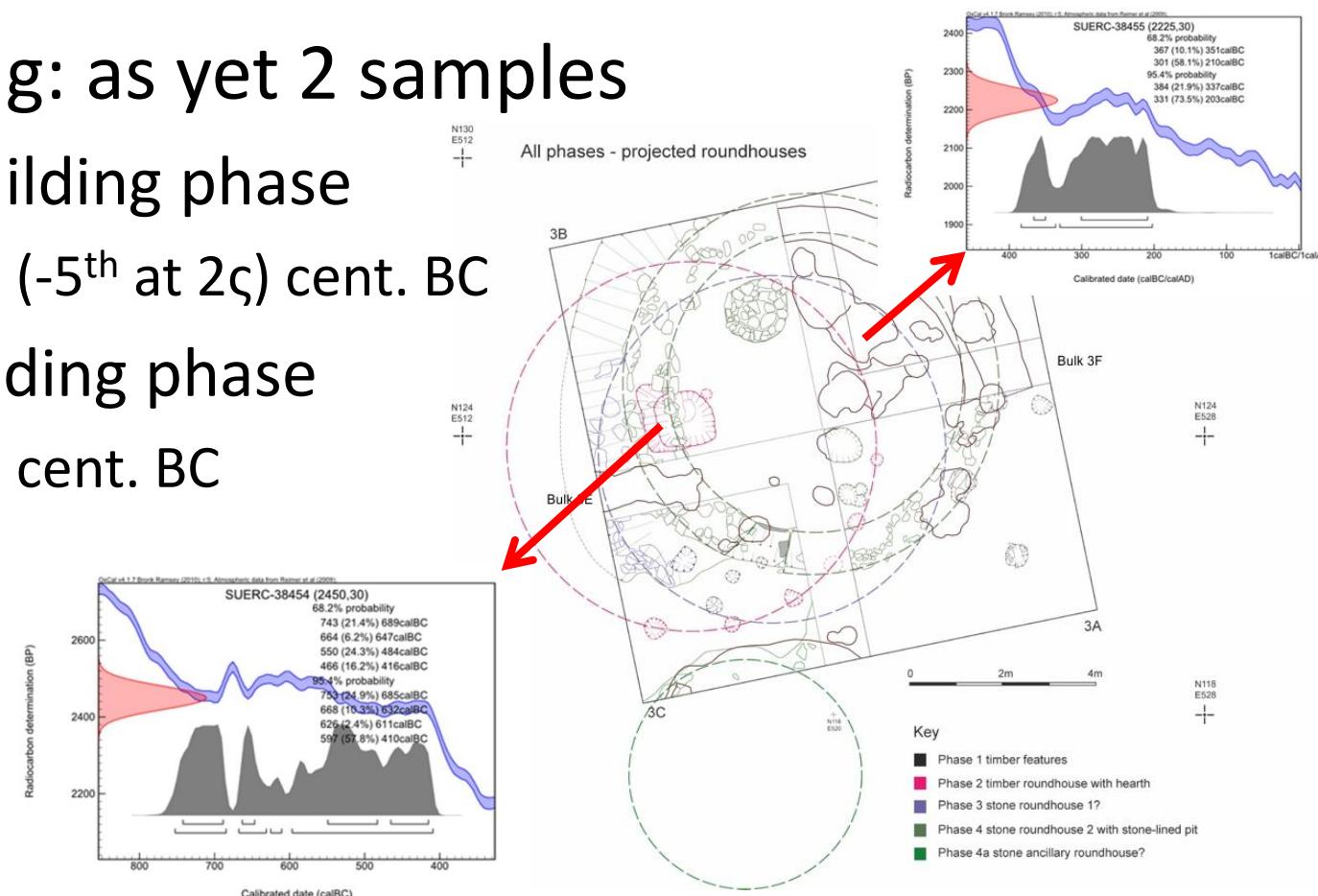
Trenches, 2010-2013

- Trench 1 & 2, extensions combined 2013



Dating

- no pottery - North Wales aceramic in LBA and IA
- hardly any other finds
- hints at dating c. 8th-3rd century BC
- 14C dating: as yet 2 samples
 - early building phase
 - 8th-7th (-5th at 2 σ) cent. BC
 - late building phase
 - 4th-3rd cent. BC



Interpretation

- Phase 1 (LBA)
- Phase 2 (EIA)
- Phase 3 (EIA/MIA)
- Phase 4 (MIA)
- Phase 5 (LIA)



Emerging settlement monumentality

- open site → enclosed → monumentally enclosed
 - pattern well known from British Isles
- implies significant changes
 - structuration of (a particular kind of) space
 - conceptualization of ‚court‘ as crucial element
 - of some ‚homes‘
 - but not all ‚homes‘
 - re-conceptualization of some ‚homes‘ (as ‚castles‘?)
 - expressions of changing social practices?
 - expression of (newly emerging) social hierarchies?
- not limited to British Isles
 - occurs – roughly contemporarily – in parts of Europe

Connectivity or random co-evolution?

- Bopfingen, Baden-Württemberg
 - starts out as open settlement in early La Tène
 - then lightly fenced
 - then ,court' firmly enclosed
 - then ,new court' monumentally enclosed



Archaeology and language

- emergence of (monumentally) enclosed settlement
 - between LBA and IA
 - in several areas of 'Celtic' World (and beyond?)
 - emerging significance of 'courts' of some (socially significant / privileged) households?
 - 'court' / enclosed settlement in Celtic language
 - Olr. *les*
 - Cymr. *llys*
 - Gaul. *lissos*
 - ← Celt. **lisso-*
 - mainly associated with settlements of people of social significance / privilege (?)
- LBA/IA social developments finding expression in Celtic language(s)?

Thank you for your attention!

Raimund Karl: *Emerging settlement monumentality in North Wales: the case of Meillionydd*

AMEA Conference, Cardiff 12/4/2014

