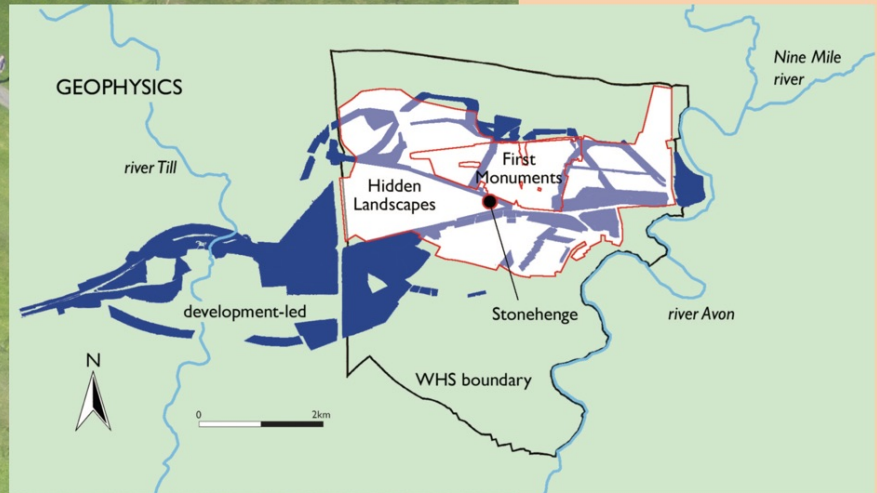


Right: Recent geophysics surveys around Stonehenge. Hidden Landscapes and First Monuments are two overlapping university projects; the blue summarises development-led surveys, including for earlier proposed visitor centre sites; other surveys have been conducted by Historic England (not mapped)



An unprecedented amount of fieldwork is happening around Stonehenge. Mike Pitts draws together some of the new discoveries

Nine or ten thousand years ago, hunter-gatherers raised huge pine posts on Stonehenge Down in pits we used to call the carpark postholes – they were found during works at the old visitor centre.

The mesolithic posts are the oldest known structures near Stonehenge. There are few comparable examples in the UK, the best known being a row at Crathes, Aberdeenshire (feature Jul/Aug 2009/107). The Stonehenge pits are a tantalising find so close to the future site of Europe’s greatest stone circle. Many have wondered if this proximity was more than coincidence, though some four millennia separate posts and stones.

The juxtaposition would have less weight if there were other, similar pits nearby but not so near Stonehenge. And there are others. What with hindsight looks like such a pit was

OUT BORDERS

Right: Recent excavations around the Stonehenge world heritage site; development-led work includes excavations and evaluated areas

