

Superhenge turns out to be giant circle of chalk-filled post holes

17 August 2016, by Bob Yirka



Stonehenge. Image: Wikipedia.

A team of researchers working at a site near Stonehenge made headlines last year when they conducted radar tests on a 4,500-year-old monument called Durrington Walls. They reported that they had found evidence of a circle of buried stones that was much larger than Stonehenge, leading to the nickname Superhenge. Now, after excavating two of the locations thought to contain stones, the team is reporting that they are not stones at all, but are instead holes in the ground that once held wooden posts but which are now filled with small blocks of chalk.

The excavation is part of the Stonehenge Hidden Landscapes Project, which is seeking to better explain the nature of Stonehenge by digging up and studying other parts of the landscape that may contain other structures or artifacts from the same time period. Last year, a study was made of Durrington Walls, a monument approximately two miles from Stonehenge. Today, it exists as a semi-circular mound (approximately 1,640 feet across) of [chalk](#) and dirt with a ditch situated just next to it. Radar guns suggested 200 to 300 anomalies beneath the ground at regular intervals which archeologists believed were likely long, tall stones

buried below. But now that the team has dug out two of the anomalies, they have discovered that the radar was picking up columns of chalk blocks sitting in five-foot-deep holes that they now believe were once used to keep wood posts upright in the ground. Both holes also had a shallow connecting hole that is believed to have been used to help steady the pole in the ground. At the bottom of one of the holes, the researchers found the remains of a cow shoulder blade that had been fashioned into a primitive shovel.

The researchers now theorize that the site was intended to be used for conducting unknown types of rituals, but was never finished—instead, the posts that had been laid were pulled from the ground and were filled in with blocks of chalk and then the whole site was covered over with dirt and chalk bits, as if attempting to remove its existence from the landscape. They suggest it appears likely a change occurred, either in religious or political leanings, or a new group of people came in, took over, and then sought to remove evidence of the structure.

© 2016 Phys.org

APA citation: Superhenge turns out to be giant circle of chalk-filled post holes (2016, August 17)
retrieved 6 December 2022 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-08-superhenge-giant-circle-chalk-filled-holes.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.