

Summary

This report describes three seasons of excavation conducted in advance of gravel extraction in 1972, 1973 and 1988 on the Devil's Quoits circle-henge monument near Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire. Evidence has been recovered for the total plan, including the extent of the ditches and the positions of the standing stones, while the probable area and character of the external bank are known from the excavations of W F Grimes in 1940. Sections were cut through the ditch to establish its stratigraphy in 1972 and 1973. In 1988 a further study was made of the interior, including stoneholes which had been inaccessible in the earlier excavations. Finds contemporary with the use of the monument include struck flint and animal bone but very little pottery. Iron Age, Roman and medieval material was recovered from later deposits. The sediments and soils in the henge ditch are analysed. The character and the interpretation of the monument, including its possible manner of construction are discussed, as is the available environmental evidence. The destruction of the stone circle, the erosion of the bank and the silting of the henge ditch are described.

The monument is placed in its immediate setting by the inclusion of a gazetteer and review of local pre-Iron Age sites. The importance of this monument as a ceremonial complex within the Upper Thames Region as well as nationally, and proposals for its preservation and partial reconstruction as a cultural amenity are also discussed.

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