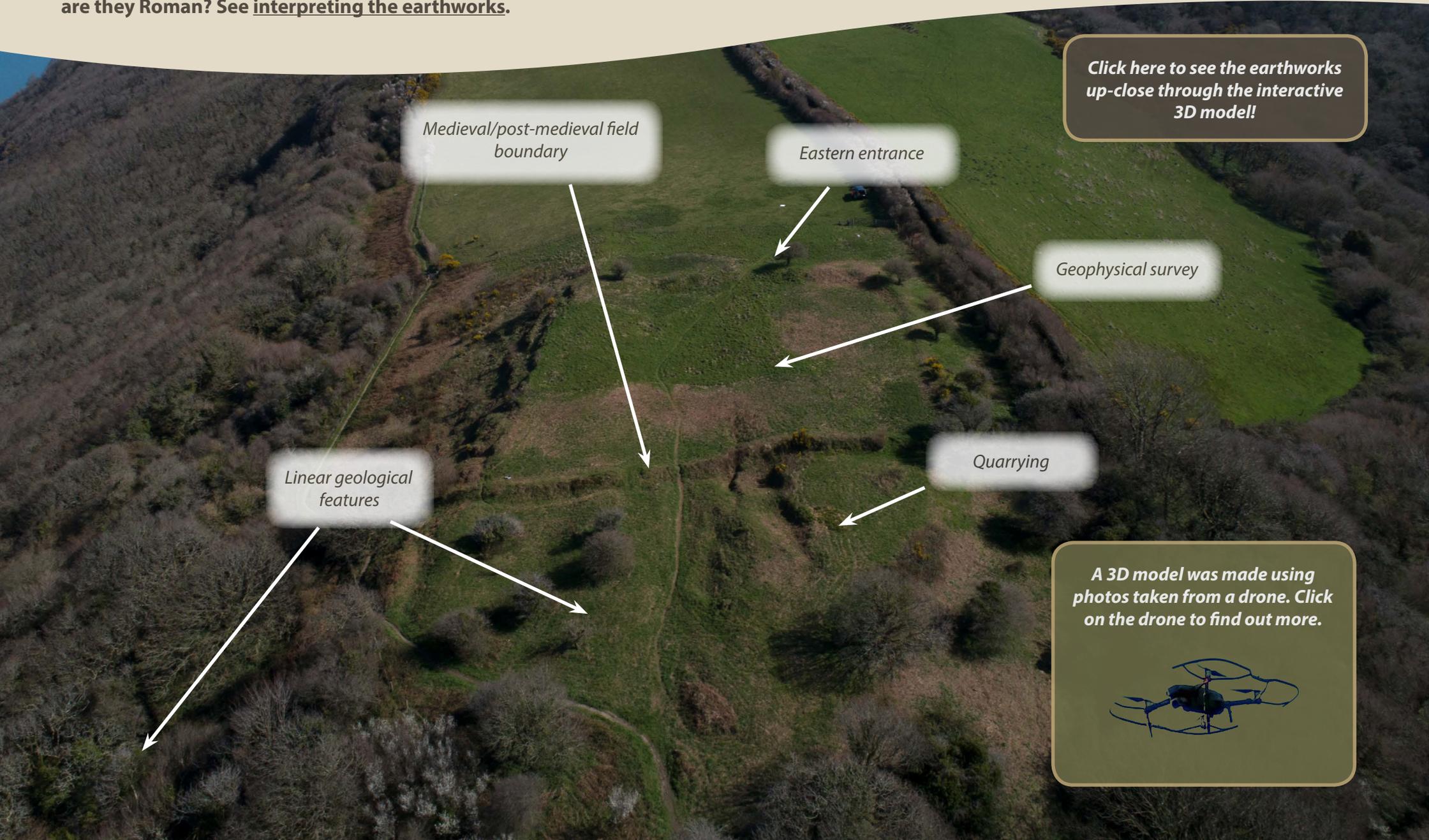


Earthworks East of Buck's Mills

Earthworks of an ancient monument on the hilltop overlooking the village and the North Devon Coast. Are they prehistoric, or are they Roman? See [interpreting the earthworks](#).



Medieval/post-medieval field boundary

Eastern entrance

Geophysical survey

Linear geological features

Quarrying

[Click here to see the earthworks up-close through the interactive 3D model!](#)

A 3D model was made using photos taken from a drone. [Click on the drone to find out more.](#)



Eastern entrance

This is a probable prehistoric or later entrance to the enclosure, providing easy access via the hilltop ridge to the east. Another smaller gap in the ramparts to the north is later, caused by pedestrians or erosion.

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Linear geological features



The enclosure is amongst linear features which are caused by the local geology being weathered and slumping slowly downslope to the north. This process has left a number of large linear features, which could easily be mistaken for archaeological features. However, it is possible that the site of this enclosure was chosen to take advantage of these already present natural banks.

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Medieval/post-medieval field boundary



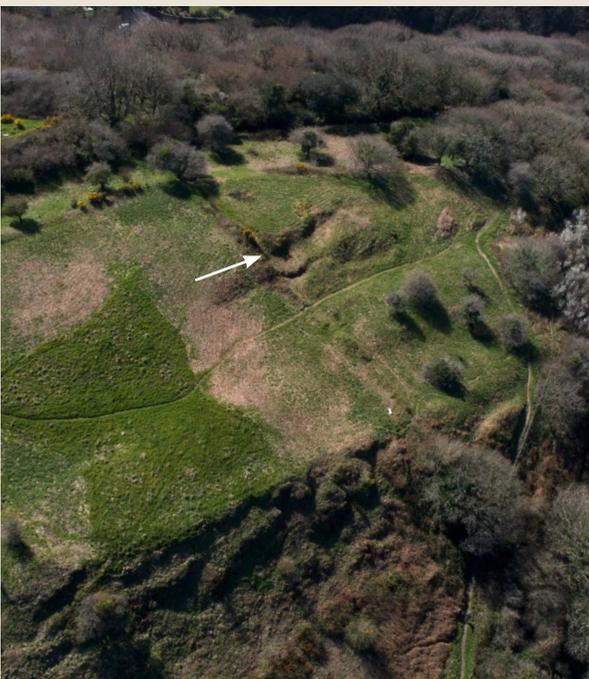
This field boundary is a characteristic 'Devon Bank' field boundary of medieval or post-medieval date, formed of earth and stone, running north-south through the middle of the enclosure. The land to the east of the boundary is more level than to its west, which could mean that it was historically ploughed.

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Quarrying

In later periods, the western end of the hillfort has been subject to quarrying for stone, possibly for the construction of field boundaries in the area, and/or for buildings in the village of Bucks Mills. There are many quarry pits in the woodland, and some linear quarry cuts to the west of the field boundary within the site.

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Geophysical survey

A geophysical survey was undertaken at the site in 2019. As per the interpretation of the earthworks, the geology in the area has complicated the interpretation of the geophysical survey results. However, the results appear to show an internal and external ditch on the eastern bank, while a possible section of ditch has been recorded along the southern rampart externally only. Possible pits, post holes, and areas of burning were recorded in the north, either side of the eastern rampart, which may be suggestive of settlement. There was also a hint of a partial bank remaining at the very northern edge of the site, where the land starts to slope away. Interestingly, the response recorded in this area varies from that of the southern and eastern banks, suggesting a variation in the way these banks were constructed.

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Interpreting the earthworks

There has been doubt over whether this site is of prehistoric or Roman date for some time. Recent work by Cotswold Archaeology¹ has interpreted the earthworks as potentially having enclosed a rectangular shaped area, later distorted by vegetation growth in the west of the site, quarrying, the form of the local geology, and the loss of the northern boundary down-slope. Angular enclosures are more often dated to the Roman period than the prehistoric, and given its position, these earthworks may have functioned as a marching camp or fort overlooking the valley and taking advantage of the wide-open views across the coast. It is possible that the site was used over multiple periods, with any prehistoric earthworks being overlain by Roman banks.

¹: Cotswold Archaeology., Forthcoming. Hillforts of the North Devon Coast AONB: Survey and Interpretation Report. Unpublished document. CA Report number 6837_1.



Creating the 3D model of Buck's Mills

[Click here to see the earthworks up-close through the interactive 3D model](#)

The 3D model was produced from a series of high quality aerial photographs taken by drone above the site. The drone was flown in a grid patten, taking a large number of high quality photographs, each overlapping the one before it. This method can survey over large areas in relatively short time-frames when compared with surveys which can be undertaken on foot. The images are processed to produce 3D models.

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[Click here to find out more about Earthworks East of Buck's Mills on the North Devon Coast AONB website](#)

