

Neolithic Long Cairn ?
on
Blea Moor.
(Burbladthwait)



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Front cover. Showing cairn.

Photograph A Batty.

Neolithic Long Cairn? on Burbladthwait.

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We have carried out research on what we consider may be a Neolithic Long Cairn (Plate 1 and 2). This is situated below a limestone outcrop on an area called Blea Moor historically known as Burbladthwait. The cairn measures approximately 48m long by 21m at widest point and 3.5m high at the eastern end, it is perfectly aligned east to west, on the same axis at the eastern end there is a large limestone boulder sat on bedrock. Whether this has been positioned by human hand or is natural we do not know, there is also a spring flowing out from beneath a limestone outcrop at the western end (Plate 3). The location also means the cairn is visible from a wide area around Ribblehead, North Ribblesdale and across the Sleights towards Chapel le dale. These and the availability of stone for construction are probably all good reasons why a cairn may be built in this location.

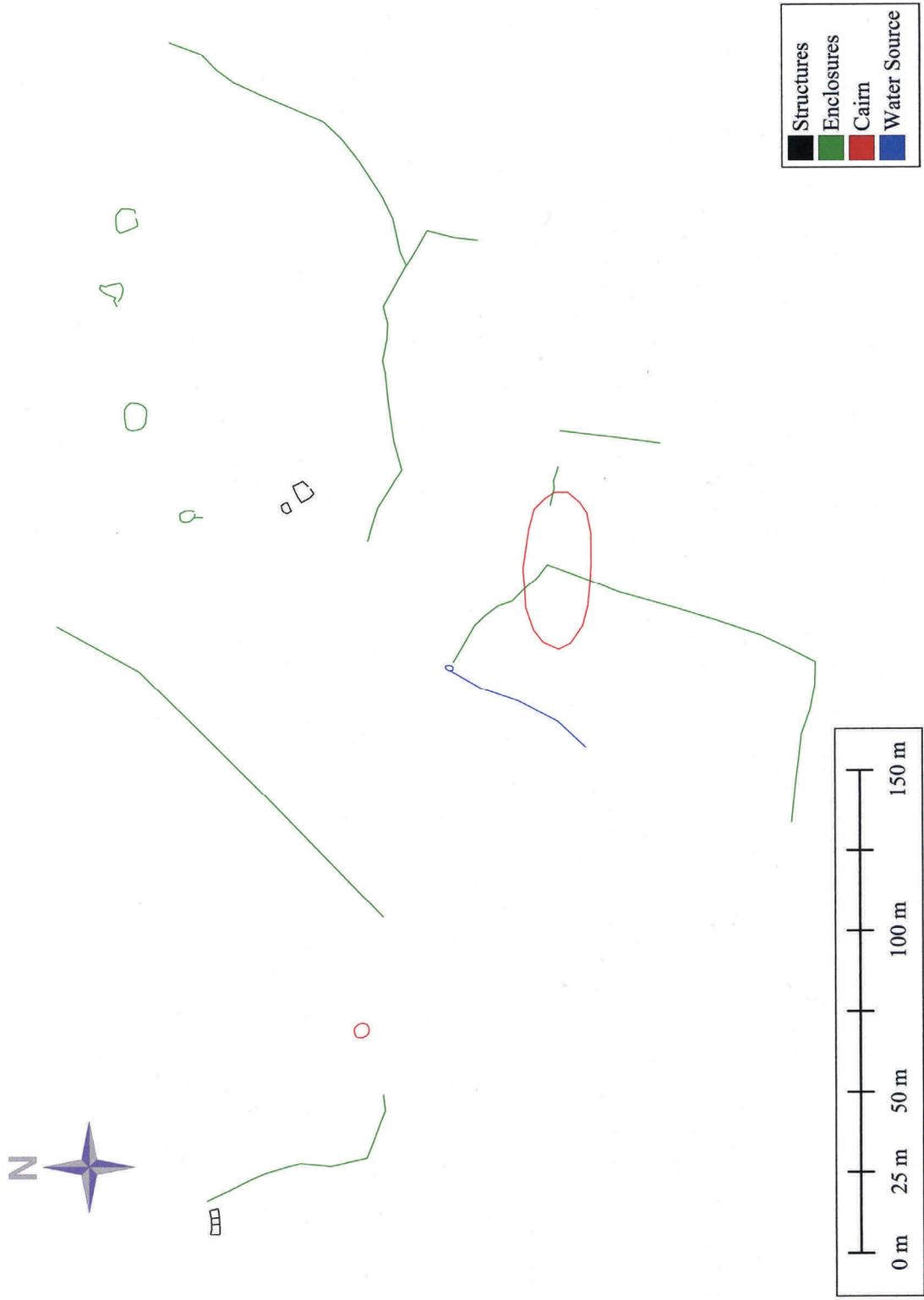
The structure of the cairn appears to be of broken limestone with a thin turf covering, creating a small hummocky appearance over the whole surface (Plate 2). Inspection of the stones protruding above the turf shows all these to be loose, with no bedrock visible any where on the surface. We initially thought it was possibly a glacial deposit called a drumlin as there are a considerable number of these to the south but they bear no resemblance to the one described here, these are formed of rounded sandstone, gravels and clay, and are of massive size and mostly aligned north east to south west. For a cairn like feature of the form identified here to be created by glacial action would be very unlikely, and we know of no other example in the local area.

Differentiating between a natural feature and a man made one can sometimes be difficult in archaeology, in this case we don't have answers but we have plenty of evidence to support asking the question "Is it a Neolithic Long Cairn?" In our opinion it is very likely to be one but we leave others to decide for themselves.

There are several papers on the website describing the research we have done regarding other archaeological features on Burbladthwait.

www.ingleborougharchaeology.org.uk

Survey showing possible Neolithic Cairn.



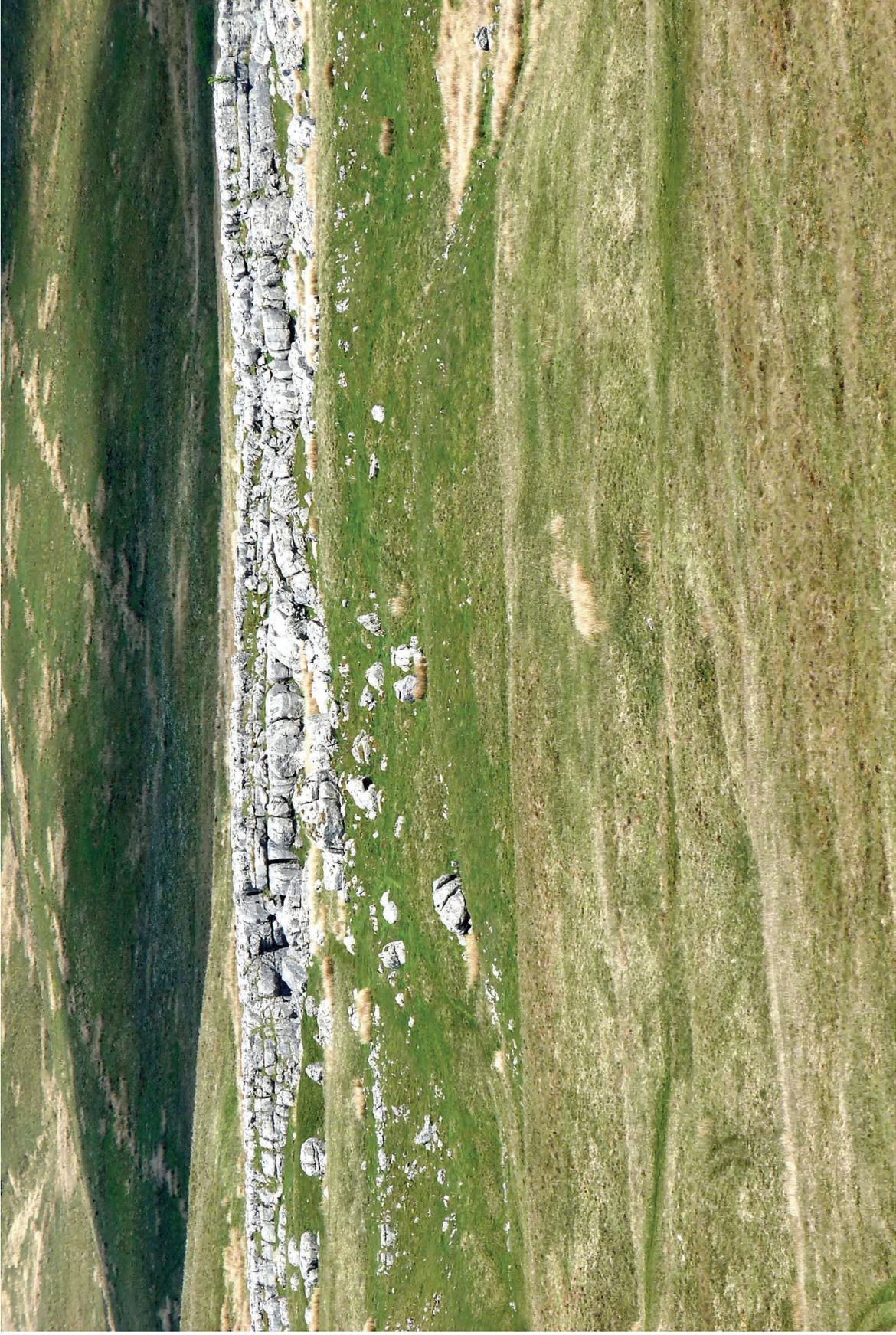


Plate 1. Looking North from Ribblehead proposed cairn is across centre of photograph.

Photograph A Batty



Plate 2. Looking south towards Ribblehead.

Photograph A Batty.



Plate 3. Spring approximately 30m from western end of cairn.

Photograph A Batty.