

Deborah Griffiths

Archaeology in the landscape.

When I first came upon it it was surrounded by these really tall mature conifer trees and it was really quite spooky, and the site is quite close to this open area and it was used by stock to shelter in when the weather was bad and there was a huge amount of erosion and poaching, the ground was being churned up, it's very soft and peaty, and really quite a mess was being made, so we put a fence round it to keep stock off and put styles to allow people in and it looks rather incongruous now that the area around has been clear felled, but that's why the fence is there.

The area around the monument was clear felled a few years ago, so suddenly instead of being able to see just trees when you're standing in this monument, you can see for miles and you suddenly realise the relationship between archaeological features and the wider landscape, we are now being able to look at the landscape that prehistoric people would have looked at when they were building this monument, and it's really amazing and if we look across about four miles away we can see a ridge which is Hamel Down ridge and on top of that ridge we can pick out small bumps which are prehistoric burial sites, prehistoric burial mounds or cairns, and so you suddenly think, well, you know, was this really important to prehistoric people that they should be able to relate their monuments one to another, and now, with this view we can perhaps, for the first time here for many years, get the feeling of what landscape may have meant to prehistoric people and the part it may have played in the siting of their ritual monuments and indeed their wider ceremonial activities. And with so much prehistoric archaeology around you can imagine that within the ground there are probably associated artefacts, flint tools and things like that, so when the ground was first disturbed in the original planting scheme I imagine there might have been a rich archaeological harvest as well.