

Mysterious Rock Markings Baffle Archaeologists

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THE DISCOVERY of a series of mysterious rock carvings by Newcastle University archaeologists has sparked a quest among experts to find out exactly what they are. The Newcastle University team, who were alerted to the carvings by a local farm-hand, are baffled as to what they mean or who created them. Fellow experts they have consulted, from bodies like English Heritage and The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, are equally confused. As far as they know, nobody has ever reported anything like them before.

The markings, found hewn into one, isolated sandstone boulder, include a group of concave spherical shapes of around 20 centimetres in diameter, another which resembles an adult footprint, several deep scores and another, heart-shaped marking.

People are now being encouraged to come forward with explanations and to help solve the mystery.

Newcastle University researchers were alerted to the markings by a local farm-hand while the team was carrying out fieldwork for a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board looking at prehistoric 'cup and ring' rock art in Northumberland in North East England. A typical cup and ring work of art would feature cups or cups and rings of various sizes carved into a slab of rock.

Dr Aron Mazel, research associate with the School of Historical Studies, has been investigating the markings with Northumberland and international rock art authority Stan



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