

FORUM

NEW SERIES

Volume 11

2023

The Journal of Council for British Archaeology
YORKSHIRE



CBA Yorkshire Annual
Review

Research, Fieldwork and
Excavation

Education, Community
and Commercial

Council for
British Archaeology

[www.cba -yorkshire.org.uk](http://www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk)

FORUM

NEW SERIES
Volume 11
2023

The Journal of Council for British Archaeology YORKSHIRE

Published by the Council for British Archaeology Yorkshire

Edited by Mike Turpin and Fedor Kiyanenko

© 2023–24 Council for British Archaeology Yorkshire (CBA Yorkshire) and Individual Authors. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, for commercial purposes or publication in other electronic, web-based or printed journals, without prior permission of the copyright holders.

Requests for such permissions must be addressed to:

secretary@cba-yorkshire.org.uk.

Forum: The Journal of Council for British Archaeology Yorkshire
ISSN 2051-8242 (Online)

Responsibility for opinions and statements contained in the papers, notes, correspondence, reviews and discussions is that of the authors and not the editor, the Committee or Trustees of CBA Yorkshire, or the Council for British Archaeology.

Council for British Archaeology Yorkshire is a registered charity number 519581.

A copy of the constitution may be obtained from the secretary or found on the CBA Yorkshire website.

Published on-line February 2024

<http://www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk>

CBA Yorkshire is a charitable organisation funded entirely by our members' and affiliates' subscriptions. This organisation aims to advance the education of the public in archaeology, to advance and assist in research, to provide information and to encourage widespread participation in archaeology throughout society. It brings together those interested in archaeology in Yorkshire and accordingly supports local societies, works with other partners in heritage and environmental conservation, encourages and publicises relevant research and advertises opportunities for education and participation. It sponsors, undertakes research and supports other individuals or organisations through modest grants. The organisation also provides advice and information, and campaigns on heritage issues within the historic Ridings of Yorkshire, from the Tees to the Humber, and from the Pennine moors to the east coast, in order to raise the profile of archaeology in the minds of decision makers. These aims are fulfilled through advocacy, working behind the scenes to protect and enhance the historic environment, together with our annual symposium, other meeting, newsletters, a website, electronic communications, and the FORUM journal.

Charitable Status: Council for British Archaeology Yorkshire is a registered Charity number 519581.

A copy of the 2022 constitution may be obtained from the secretary or found on the CBA Yorkshire website.

Officers 2022-23

The Organisation is run by a management committee and overseen by trustees. These are elected at the AGM and meet four times each year.

Management Committee :	2022/2023
Chairperson	John Buglass
Hon. Secretary	Dave Went
Hon. Treasurer	Russell Watson
Trustee	Ian Drake
Trustee	Jo Heron
Trustee	Shirley Thubron
Trustee	Mike Turpin
Trustee	Diarmaid Walshe (Resigned)
Trustee	Emma Samuel (Resigned)
Trustee	Phil Abramson(Co-opted)
Trustee	Fedor Kiyanenko(Co-opted)

Hon. Editor: Mike Turpin

Associate Editors: Fedor Kiyanenko; Phil Abramson

Membership Secretary: Jo Heron

Programme Secretary: Vacant

Heritage and Conservation Officer: Vacant

Education Officer: Perry Gardner

Museums Officer: Natasha Lawson

Digital Communications: Alistair Galt

Grants: Brian Elsey (Resigned) Vacant

Voluntary Roles: Trustees and Co-opted members

Appointed Representatives

Council for British Archaeology: Claire Corkill

North York Moors National Park Authority Archaeology Group: Nick Mason

York Archaeological Trust: Ian Drake

Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society: Vacant

Historic England: Simon Taylor

Front Cover image credits:

Green Hammerton: Fieldwalking day 2023

About FORUM Yorkshire

FORUM is an archaeological journal to which contributions are welcomed from students, voluntary and community-based groups, independent practitioners, providers of training and education, commercial organisations and academics. *FORUM* is dated and published retrospectively for the prior calendar year and is accessible on-line to subscribed members.

The geographic scope of this journal is Yorkshire including areas that were part of Yorkshire prior to the 1974 boundary reorganisation. Contributions on archaeology which is not located in Yorkshire (or its previous boundaries) may be accepted, but authors are requested to contact the editor prior to submitting such an article.

Contributions may be on any period of archaeology and the human past relevant to the geographic scope outlined above. It should be noted that the editor reserves the right to request changes to the paper, to make changes that maintain the house style and to request feedback from specialist (anonymous) reviewers as considered appropriate.

Authors are responsible for obtaining written permission to use any copyrighted material in their paper including Ordnance Survey mapping or derivatives thereof, and any material which is the intellectual property of any person(s) other than the author. Before publication, authors receive a PDF copy of their paper(s). The editor will contact the corresponding (primary) contributor to confirm inclusion and specify any required amendments.

All communications concerning the publication should be directed to the editor at:
associate.editor@cba-yorkshire.org.uk

Access and electronic distribution

Since 2020 *Forum* is an entirely on-line electronic publication. The online version is available to members only for the current year, after which it will be made available on open access in a browser-readable format (pdf). From *Forum* 2018 individual articles can be downloaded as well as the full journal.

Members of CBA Yorkshire and Affiliated Groups will be sent a copy of the password as part of their membership subscription. If you have not received the password then contact associate.editor@cba-yorkshire.org.uk in the first instance. In order to maintain the value of *Forum* for subscribed members, please do not share the password or any unprotected version with non-members until it is publicly available.

Forum is available as a menu option from the [CBA Yorkshire website](#) home page. Click on 'Forum' and you will see four options. 'Current Forum' will take you to the page with a link to the 2023 edition for CBA Yorkshire members. You will need to enter the password when prompted.

The *Forum Plus* editions are at: <https://www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk/forum-plus/>
Previous *New Series* editions are at <https://www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk/forum-archive/>
Foundation Series copies are at: www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk/cbay-newsletters-1980-1999/



What CBA Yorkshire Can Do For You



Do you need some help to:

- Form an Archaeology group ?
- Run a Field Survey ?
- Start an excavation ?
- Provide on-site facilities ?
- Get samples assessed ?
- Treat finds for preservation ?
- Mount a public exhibition ?
- Arrange publication ?

We have the expertise to assist in all these areas.

Our **Community Grants Scheme** is designed to offer support for archaeological projects run by groups.

Grants can be awarded both to assist in setting up new projects and to help with post-excavation costs as well.

We can also **provide advice** on how equipment might be loaned and **specialist guidance** provided while planning, on-site and during post-excavation.

CBA Yorkshire also provides opportunities to find out more archaeology via :

- CBA Yorkshire Forum
- Regular Fireside Chats on Zoom and the Video Archive
- Occasional Monographs - *a new feature.*

To find out more:

General Enquiries Contact: secretary@cba-yorkshire.org.uk

or

www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk

Community Grants Scheme:

<https://www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk/cba-yorkshire-grants-scheme/>

Editorial

*Mike Turpin,
Honorary Editor*

Forum Volume 10 was our second ‘bumper volume’ due to the efforts of the editorial team and thanks are due to Debbie Priess for her outstanding contributions towards assisting in getting that edition out. I would like to welcome Fedor Kiyanenko and Phil Abramson to the editorial team for 2024. During 2023, CBA Yorkshire hosted two very successful conferences; the first in April was at the historic Kings Manor, part of the University of York. For our second conference we hired a suite at the Golden Lion in North Allerton, in the heart of Yorkshire.

Because of the work involved with conferences we have decided to reduce the size of the Forum publication this year. The articles include reports on recent activities around the county (Historic Yorkshire, that is). We have featured articles from those who have benefited from the grants and awards scheme. The emphasis is on the activities of community groups who continue to engage in many worthwhile projects, supported by the generous time given up by various professional and academic archaeologists.

Forum and the conferences are just two of the ways we are seeking to reach out to a wider membership. The Fireside Chats programme has continued post covid and regularly has mixed audiences of members and friends. Attendances at the on-line Chats vary inevitably as interest varies in the different topics. However, do remember that the Fireside Chats are open to all in the hope we might attract new members, so please encourage your friends and contacts to join in. Any ideas for future speakers are always welcome and why not consider telling us about your interests in archaeology and local heritage?

All the articles and the work necessary to put the Forum together as an interactive on-line publication represents a significant number of voluntary hours provided by our generous authors and the editorial team. We would like to think that all this effort is worthwhile. As you know only CBA Yorkshire members have the option to access the current edition. Any feedback that members can provide would be most welcome and help to guide the content of future editions. It is not too soon to offer ideas for the next edition or please offer to help with the editorial team. Remember it is your journal and as such deserves to be the best we can offer.

Mike Turpin 2024

View from the Chair

From the range and diversity of contributions in this edition of Forum it would seem that despite the (continued) national and international turbulence of the past year the desire of archaeologists across the Yorkshire region to investigate the trials and tribulations of the past continues unabated. Local groups continue to investigate their pasts bringing to light fascinating information not only on where they lived (multi period occupation in Teesdale to shielings in the Dales) but also on what they did from jet mining in the Moors to medieval pottery production in South Yorkshire via coal mining in Birstall and burying their dead in Garforth.

The results of these investigations not only show us that the past is often much like the present (but with different artefacts), but also that there is so often much more lying buried in the ground than we often suspect. Which in turn begs the question how much more is out there, hidden from view, awaiting discovery and exploration, which is where, hopefully, CBA Yorkshire can help.

We can help the archaeological communities in our region not only by offering places where the results of your endeavours can be heard (Fireside Chats, Spring Symposium and Autumn Showcase) and seen (Forum, Forum Plus and Occasional Monographs) but also with support for what you want to achieve. This support is currently mainly in the form of financial grants for any aspect of a community archaeology project and some of those we have supported are reported on in this volume. However, in order to support you all we do need to have a functioning management committee and set of trustees. As I write we are on the cusp of electing/renewing various posts for a new committee for 2024 and currently we are short of two crucial honorary posts which allow us to function as CBA Yorkshire. These posts are the Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer. If we cannot fill these posts then there is a very strong possibility that we may have to suspend the activities of CBA Y until we resolve this issue. So, if any of you have the desire to help CBA Y function now and develop into the future, please contact us on the committee.

As I have now been in the Chair for a year (creating suitably large dent in the cushion) it is my great pleasure to give my thanks to the following committee members and trustees who actually make everything happen: Dave Went as Secretary; Jo Heron Membership Secretary; Mike Turpin, Fedor Kiyanenko and Phil Abramson for the (excellent as ever) Forum; Mike Turpin for the always enlightening Fireside Chats and finally all of the Trustees and committee/subcommittee members whose hard work behind the scenes makes it all possible.

A final heartfelt thanks also go to Ian Drake and Shirely Thubron who between them have racked up an astonishing 97 years helping run and support the activities of CBA Yorkshire. As an acknowledgement of their incredible level of support I am delighted to announce that they have both been given Honorary Life Membership of CBA Yorkshire.

*John Buglass
January 2024*

FORUM Contents Volume 11 2023

Welcome to Forum and an opportunity to find about recent archaeology within Yorkshire.

Forum is an opportunity for individuals and community groups to share their knowledge and archaeology projects. Why not offer to write an article for the next Forum edition? Contact: associate.editor@cba-yorkshire.org.uk

This table of contents is fully interactive click on any title to go straight to the pages you are interested in.

Each article has a 'Contents' link to return to this page and at the end of each article there is a 'Download' link which enables you to save a copy of the article which can then be printed if you need a hard copy.

Groups receiving grants during 2023

Firsby Hall Farm, South Yorkshire	1
Green Hammerton Field Walking 2023	9
The 2023 season at Gueswick	13

Articles

Hillhouse 19th Century Railway Sidings	19
Excavations at Garforth: high status Roman burial and The Kingdom of Elmet	24

Communities in Action

From Colliery Office to Inhabited House	28
Fieldwork by the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society 2022-23	38
Survey of a 'Druid's Temple' between Ingleborough and Ribblesdale: the Sleights Pasture prehistoric monument complex	49
Ingleborough's Shieling Sites: Investigation of three Isolated Structures	67
High Hunsley, Excavating a Medieval Village in the Yorkshire Wolds	76
Hornby Castle Wensleydale(OS 226 934) Archaeological Fieldwork 2023 Season	89
Non-invasive data comparisons at Hanging Grimston	94

Archaeological Register

Selected Recent Work by JB Archaeology Ltd	104
A Bull-Headed Mount from Roman Aldborough	110

Firsby Hall Farm, South Yorkshire

Jo Ferris

[Contents](#)

In 2023 Conisbrough Research and Archaeology Group (CRAG) were given the opportunity to excavate at Firsby Hall Farm, south of Conisbrough, South Yorkshire. The site is a known Medieval pottery production site which is widely thought to be of regional significance but is currently little understood.

Introduction and Background

The small hamlet of Firsby is now a series of post-medieval farm buildings some 3.5km southwest of the town of Conisbrough (famous for its 12th century castle) in the county of South Yorkshire. Documentary evidence in the form of the Conisbrough Court Rolls, written records of court sittings from 1265, tells us that clay rents were payable for the extraction of clay in the Firsby area. The earliest specific reference relating to William le Potter of Firsby in 1329 would suggest that the Firsby pottery production industry can be traced back at least to the early part of the 14th century.



Fig.1: Firsby Hall Farm and surrounding area.

About the author

Jo Ferris is a member of the Conisbrough Research and Archaeology Group (CRAG)

The geology of the area is part of the Pennine Coal Measures formation with thin coal and ironstone bands close to the surface. This gives rise to the possibility of iron smelting, in addition to pottery manufacture, also being part of the local industry fuelled by coal removed via bell pits from the surrounding fields. The land being poor quality for arable farming would have meant that the cottagers and smallholders took up industrial activities as they could not make a living from their modest acreage of land. Pottery manufacturing was a low status trade involving all members of the family, often with one or two hired workers, that took place alongside farming.

Modern Investigations

Up until the 1960's the land was predominantly pasture but once turned over by the plough large concentrations of wasters and kiln debris were revealed. In 1989 a field walking survey was carried out by Colin Hayfield and Paul Buckland and four distinct waster areas were identified. The pottery sherds were found to be from a plain, utilitarian, range of wares of a hard, coarse fabric often with a rough finish. Varying degrees of hardness either fired in reducing conditions produced a white or cream coloured fabric: Coal Measures White or oxidising conditions to produce purple and greys: Coal Measures Purple.



Fig.2: Plan of the waster areas plotted in 1989

The Firsby site had not previously been subject to any archaeological excavation, only desk-based assessments, so dating the pottery sherds collected whilst field walking had been done by reference to stratified assemblages of similar wares from elsewhere in the region.

The community group CRAG was founded as a legacy of the redevelopment project carried out at Conisbrough Castle by English Heritage between 2014 and 2016. Several of our members were part of the archaeological dig at the Castle and prior to that had been involve in a ceramics project when pottery sherds excavated from the castle in the 1970's were sorted and catalogued. Firsby pottery had been part of both assemblages and were now recognisable to the CRAG group. Further research has been undertaken including visits to local archives and the HER to gather more information regarding the pottery production area and its later development.

In 2022 the group was contacted by local landowners and on visiting them at Firsby it was discovered that they owned the field that contained waster area D. It was agreed that CRAG would work with the landowners to gather as much information as possible from this site that was recognised as of local significance but its pottery production history was poorly understood. The group sought advice from professional archaeologist John Buglass and ceramics specialist Dr Chris Cumberpatch both of whom had worked with us in the past and had been supportive and generous with their time and expertise. It was agreed that CRAG would commission a magnetometer survey and James Lyall came out to run a training day with the equipment and provide some indication as to what features the area may contain.

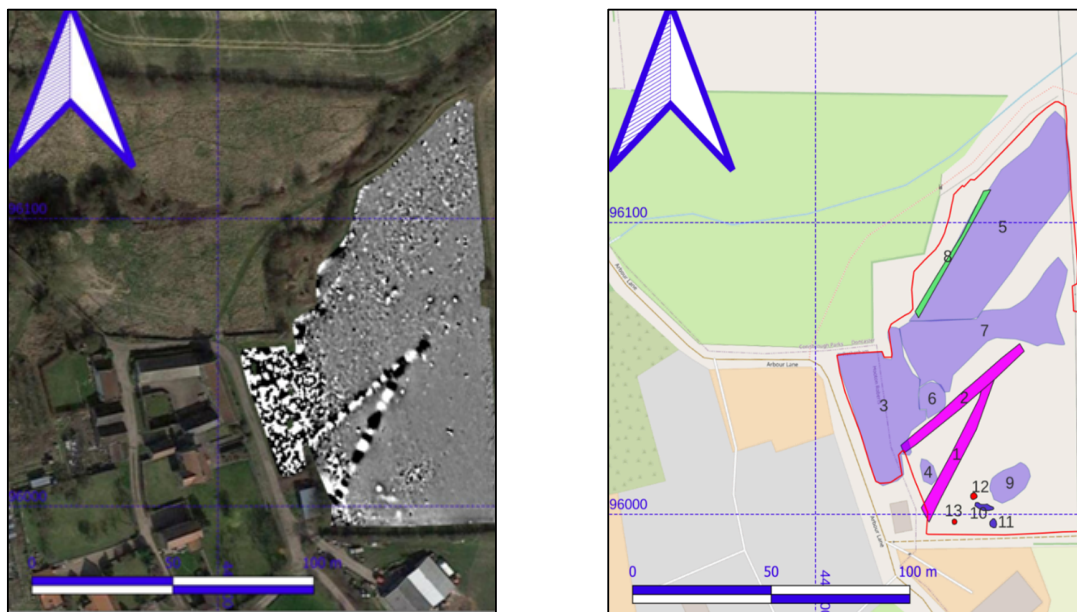


Fig.3 &4: Geophysical survey showing anomalies 9-13 to be excavated

After reviewing the subsequent results it was decided that the anomalies numbered 9-13 provided the greatest opportunity for identifying a kiln and an excavation should focus in these areas. A grant was provided by CBA Y and a weekend dig, supervised by John Buglass and Chris Cumberpatch, took place at the end of June 2023 when targeted test pitting explored four of the five anomalies numbered 10-13.

The Excavations

Although the kiln was not discovered much was learnt about waster area D, new skills were learnt and others refreshed. Four 2m² test pits were excavated and it was immediately clear that there were high concentrations of wasters below the level of the plough soil. All four trenches were dug by hand and at approximately 0.8m below ground level the natural clay level was identified. Approximately 6500 pottery sherds were excavated over the weekend and an initial interpretation is that the wasters had possibly initially been dumped in piles leading to the strong magnetic signal. CRAG is currently sorting and cataloguing the finds under the supervision of Dr Chris Cumberpatch following which they will be archived at Doncaster Museum. Although not a find from one of the test pits, the zoomorphic figure below brought along to the dig had been found on the surface approximately 10 years ago. Suggestions for its purpose range from some sort of spout to part of a medieval roof finial.



Fig.5: The excavation of test pits 10-13 in June



Fig.6: Many, many sherds of Firsby pottery



Fig.7: A zoomorphic piece of Firsby ware



Fig.8 & 9: Trench 9 showing pit of black ash-like material and similar substance removed from the boreholes up slope.

Like many archaeological excavations it was recognised that the June dig had posed more questions than it had answered and following a successful grant application to YAHS, CRAG were able to undertake a second dig at Firsby. Over a period of 5 days, in early October, a trench was opened up in the area of anomaly number 9. As this was positioned up a slight incline away from the previous trenches and the geophysical survey had identified this as a larger area of disturbance it was felt that this might be the position of the kiln.

An initial 2m² trench was extended and then extended again. It quickly became clear that we were working in a very different area with very few pottery sherds being collected. However, a charred black deposit was found in a shallow pit at a depth of approximately 0.5m. As no signs of burnt material had been found within the trench the decision was made that an auger survey higher up the slope would allow for a quicker exploration of a larger area. The boreholes were placed at 1m intervals, rising up the slope and the resulting cores gave a very surprising and puzzling result. The cores revealed a depth of plough soil followed by a gritty clay layer and then at a depth of between 1.5 – 2.0m a layer of a black, ash like substance was reached. This is 0.5m thick and sits on top what appears to be the natural clay. It is hoped that a sample of this black layer can now be analysed to determine its composition and by continuing to take auger samples its full extent and purpose will be identified.



Fig 10. Borehole test pit with trench 9 up slope



Fig.11 Stone surface in test pit

A further anomaly, area 4 identified by the geophysical survey, was recognised as of interest being a flattish terrace, part way up the slope of the field. A borehole survey was carried out along its length at 1m intervals. At the 2m position the auger hit stone at a depth of 0.5m and it was agreed that to investigate this area further a test pit 2m² would be dug. An ironstone surface was excavated at a depth of 0.5m with another layer of stone discovered underneath when the test pit was half sectioned. Small fragments of very early Firsby pottery were found between the two layers leading to the proposal that we have a working surface relating to the manufacturing process.

Conclusions

Clearly this is a site that has the potential to answer many questions regarding the Medieval pottery production industry at Firsby. The pottery sherds are already leading to the suggestion that the site was in production at an earlier date than previously thought and several new forms of Firsby ware have also been identified during the initial processing. The stone feature in the test pit is believed to be the remains of a working surface relating to the pottery manufacturing process and it is hoped that this can be collaborated by further exploration in this area. This would be an interesting discovery as ancillary areas relating to pottery production are rarely located being particularly ephemeral. It is hoped to have analysis of the black ash-like substance carried out this year to discover more about its composition. CRAG are planning on continuing with the auger survey in an effort to find the limit of this layer, with one suggestion being that it was a settling pit used for the weathering of the clay prior to its use. There are also plans continue to explore trench 9 which we still to believe to be the area of the kiln site.



Fig. 12. CRAG or the diggers

Acknowledgements

CRAG would like to thank Lynn and Roy for welcoming us onto their land, their enthusiasm and all the cups of coffee and pieces of cake they have provided over the past year. Also, John Buglass and Dr Chris Cumberpatch for their advice and expertise, James Lyall for the Geophysical survey, Colin Merrony for the drone photography and anyone else who has been part of this project.

We would also like to thank CBA Y for your grant support, without which this would not have been possible and we look forward to continuing to work with you all and sharing our findings on this interesting Medieval site.

References

Dawson D., Kent O, 2021 Late Medieval Pottery Kilns at Newport, Pembrokeshire and the recoring and interpretation of pottery production sites. Medieval and Later Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 9

Gregory RA., Cumberpatch CG.2004 Rediscovering the Denaby pottery: archaeological investigations at Denaby Main, Conisbrough, South Yorkshire. Post-Medieval Archaeology 38/1 133-179.

Hayfield C., Buckland P., 1989. Late Medieval pottery wasters from Firsby, South Yorkshire. Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society Vol 15, 8-24

[Download](#)

Green Hammerton Field Walking 2023

Chris Holloway

Contents

Green Hammerton Archaeology Society is a newly formed group based around the village of Green Hammerton which is known to be near to Roman Dere Street. Roman Dere Street starts in York and is the main Roman route towards the North passing into what we now regard as Scotland. You can find more details about Green Hammerton Archaeology Society at hammertonarchaeology.org.

Introduction

The Green Hammerton Archaeology Society, established in the summer of 2022 to foster community engagement with our village's archaeological heritage, recently undertook our inaugural fieldwork project in September—a fieldwalking surface survey. A fieldwalk was ideal for our first project, since it was easy to involve the local community in the work with a minimal amount of training, and does not require a significant amount of equipment: measuring tapes, plastic bags, and lots and lots of canes. We were able to fund the purchase of our fieldwalk gear thanks to the grant that we received from CBA Yorkshire.

The fieldwalking took place in a field close to Helensfield nature area, situated between New Lane and Red Lane which lies to the east of Green Hammerton village.

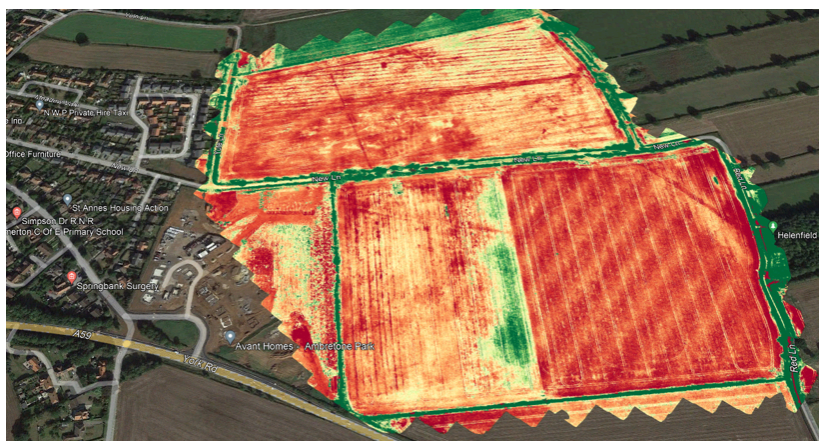


Fig. 1: YAA Mapping of the fields chosen for the survey.

About the author

Chris Holloway is a resident of Green Hammerton and a committee member of GHAS

This location was selected due to its identification as the probable route of the Roman Road (RR8a in the Margary numbering scheme) leading from Skipbridge through Green Hammerton, connecting York to the Roman settlement at Aldborough.¹ RR8 is better known by the name of Dere Street.

The likely route of the road to the east of Green Hammerton (Fig.1) has been identified from aerial observations by YAA Mapping²:

The primary objective of the fieldwalk was to see what could be found on the surface of the field, and the distribution of finds across the site. Additionally, and just as importantly, it served as an excellent opportunity to have the local community involved with archaeology.

Community archaeologist Jon Kenny provided invaluable support and training, guiding us through the fieldwork process and method on the Saturday morning. Jon generously lent us equipment and a tray of finds as examples of potential artifacts that had previously been discovered during fieldwalking at other sites. Part of the grant funding we received from CBA Yorkshire helped to pay for Jon's fantastic help. Once Jon had shown us how to start on the work, we got underway, measuring and gridding out the field into 10mx10m squares. The grid was established on the eastern edge of the field, closest to Red Lane and Helensfield.



Fig. 2: The team

The project had an excellent and enthusiastic attendance from local people who were keen to be involved with the work, including both adults and young people. GHAS committee member Rachel was leading the work and directing on how and what to pick up and record.

¹ roadsofromanbritain.org/gazetteer/yorkshire/8abc.html

² yaamapping.co.uk

Finds were collected and bagged according to the 10x10m square grid location they were found in, and after analysis the distribution of finds per square will be recorded using mapping software.

Over the two days, with lots of fieldwalking, bagging, labelling, measuring and cane moving, we managed to cover a 200m x 50m strip along the field edge closest to Helensfield, totalling 10,000 square meters. As part of the work, we took GPS coordinates for a number of points on the grid so that if the opportunity arises in the future we can pick up again from where we left off.



Fig 3: Examples of some of the finds as they were collected on the field



Fig. 4 Part of the collection of finds ready for further processing

10,000m² sounds like a lot of field, but really it's not even quarter of the total. Due to the field's agricultural use, the window of opportunity for fieldwork is limited, as we must align with the cycle of crops in the field.

Examining the collected bags, we had discovered a variety of items, including modern materials like tiles, bricks, ceramics, as well as more intriguing finds such as clay pipes and a china doll's hand and foot. Among the older artifacts were pieces of medieval pottery and a potential fragment of Roman pottery (to be confirmed). Notably older discoveries included a couple of items resembling flint cutting blades, possibly dating to the Neolithic. (Fig. 3)

Further analysis is required for these items to confirm the initial impressions.

Moving forward, our next steps involve cleaning, drying, cataloguing, and analysing the finds. (Fig. 4)

This process is expected to take some time, but we intend to involve the community in the process. We have sourced the items we need to undertake the processing from local donations, as well as purchases made using our grant from CBA Yorkshire. While initial steps have been taken in finds processing, there is still a considerable amount of washing and cleaning still to be completed.

[Download](#)

The 2023 season at Gueswick

Martin Green

[Contents](#)

In 2023, Altogether Archaeology returned for a further season's excavation at the Gueswick late prehistoric site. Upper contexts of the settlement are Romano-British, but the inner enclosing ditch is third century BC and the outer ditch around AD 0. An additional short excavation examined an adjacent possible windmill mound, finding a rectangular structure and a late medieval pilgrim badge. We plan to return in 2024 for further work on the enigmatic mound and the lower contexts of the settlement.

Introduction and update on the 2022 excavation

The Altogether Archaeology community archaeology group spent a further three weeks in summer 2023 excavating at Gueswick, a late prehistoric site in Teesdale. See publications on our earlier investigations at Gueswick in the previous two editions of *Forum*. In 2022, based on the findings of a magnetometry survey, we excavated a section of an outer palisade ditch enclosing about a hectare and a section of an inner ditch enclosing a rectangular area about 60m x 50m. Within this enclosure, excavation revealed two areas paved with flagstones, which included four re-used querns, and a hearth, but no clear building outline.

Since the last edition of *Forum* was published, we have acquired six radiocarbon dates from the 2022 season's charcoal samples (mostly hazel). The fill of the palisade ditch is late Iron Age (around AD 0, consistent with the dates from another section excavated in 2021). The fill of a small ditch to its north has a similar date.



Fig. 1: The spearhead after conservation, with an X-ray image

About the author

Martin Green (altogetherarchaeology@gmail.com) is the fieldwork coordinator of Altogether Archaeology

However, charcoal among the packing stones in the base of the palisade ditch is Middle Bronze Age, suggesting that these stones were re-used from a much earlier occupation phase. This is not surprising as there is a probable Bronze Age cairn and rock art only 100m to the east.

Two pieces of charcoal from the inner ditch both have dates from the third century BC. This fits in with our suspicion that the Gueswick settlement was initially a typical enclosed Iron Age farmstead, many dozens of which are known in the North Pennines. Later in the Iron Age, it was expanded, with a palisade ditch enclosing a larger area. The sixth radiocarbon date was from hazel charcoal found next to an iron spearhead (Fig. 1) in rubble beside a paved area in the settlement. It is firmly Romano-British (AD 127-223 at 95% probability). The split-socket, leaf-shaped spearhead has now been X-rayed and conserved; it is very similar to one found at South Shields Roman fort.



Fig. 2: The Roman coin after conservation

A coin (Fig. 2) found in the settlement area has also been conserved and is probably a nummus of Galerius from circa AD 300. The spearhead and coin, along with pottery (e.g. mortaria) and glass bangle finds (described in last year's *Forum*) show that these upper settlement contexts are Romano-British, despite the enclosing ditches being earlier, from the Middle and Late Iron Age.

The 2023 summer excavation

With the help of the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeological Group, we extended the magnetometry survey in Spring 2023 to cover the majority of the plateau. Among other details, this located the previously uncertain northern section of the palisade ditch.

We opened three trenches, with Rob Young again providing professional supervision. One was placed across a ditch shown on the magnetometry survey, running north from the palisade ditch and hence probably part of a field system.



Fig. 3: Excavating the ditch to the north of the settlement

This ditch was cut 70cm into the natural moraine material from which the Gueswick Hills are formed. The fill from the ditch included charcoal (heather, birch, hazel, blackthorn and oak) along with a hazel nutshell and a spelt wheat glume. There were also fragments of coal: a frequent finding on the site in both the Iron Age and Romano-British contexts. These results are consistent with the ditch being late prehistoric: a tighter date range will come from the charcoal which has been sent for radiocarbon dating. A “bright spot” in the magnetometry survey in this trench disappointingly proved to be a group of iron-rich natural stones. A small second trench further away from the settlement, excavated to investigate other “busy” areas on the survey, found no man-made features.

The largest trench investigated the settlement area inside the inner ditch. The 2022 trench was partially re-opened to expose the paved areas and then extended westward: however, little additional paving was found and most of the newly exposed area was a spread of rubble overlying some pits, post-holes and gullies (though no clear building outlines). Some of the paved area was



Fig. 4: The two beehive querns (both bottom stones) that had been re-used as paving slabs

lifted, including two of the four querns which had been re-used as paving slabs. Both are bottom stones of beehive querns (Fig. 4). One is roughly hemispherical, of fine-grained gritstone. It shows damage to its edges including two deep impacts on opposite sides, possibly an attempt to split it to decommission it before re-use. The other stone is a much taller, Craven-type quern, made of coarser gritstone. There is a

vertical-sided 8cm high flange around the grinding surface, with the rest of its 28cm height being a crude hemisphere.

As the name implies, Craven-type querns are more normally found on the western side of the Yorkshire Dales (and also Anglesey): this is the first example from north of the Swale.



Fig. 5: Excavating the contexts below part of the paved areas. A quern can be seen near the front edge of the remaining paving.



Fig. 6: Drone view of the settlement trench at the end of the 2023 season. Pits, post-holes and gullies are outlined

Under the paving, there was a dark charcoal-rich stony layer, with cobbles below. All the potsherds from these lower contexts were of Iron Age “native” types, with Romano-British finds entirely lacking.

Analysis of samples from under the paving showed a wide range of charcoal species (heather, alder, birch, maloideae, salicaceae, hazel and birch) as well as coal.

Some of the hazel showed a growth pattern consistent with a 5 to 6-year cycle; alder charcoal under one slab had a growth ring pattern consistent with coppicing.

A pit in the centre of the trench, covered by a capstone, contained birch and heather charcoal, plus at least ten grains of spelt wheat and some spelt chaff. Another pit

and a long gully both contained a few spelt grains and chaff as well as several species of charcoal. Six charcoal samples have been sent for radiocarbon dating from this trench, which should give a clearer idea of the chronology of the settlement.

In the summer of 2024, we plan to resume work on this trench, lifting the remaining paving in search of underlying structures and more extensive exploration of the lower contexts. Despite the rich assemblage of finds and much information from the ditch fills, we still don’t know the ground plan of any buildings in the settlement, possibly due to plough damage and robbing to build the adjacent field wall.



Fig. 7: The mound, with the upper hill-side terraces visible to its right



Fig. 8: The quern fragment, found beside the mound

A brief return to Gueswick in autumn 2023

A mound on one end of the plateau had intrigued us since we first started working at the site. It wasn't clear if it was natural, and geophysics found no evidence of a structure on it.

However, lying near the base of the mound was a fragment of a quern. With an estimated diameter of 58cm, this is rather large for a Roman quern and at the upper limit for hand power, so more likely to be from a small post-Roman powered mill. Was this the site of a windmill?



Fig. 9: An oblique drone photograph of the trench on the mound.

We returned to Gueswick in late October to excavate the top of the mound. After only three days, adverse weather meant we had to close the trench, to re-open in summer 2024. We did have time to expose a rectangular structure, about 6m x 3m, shown by bands of small stones; larger stones are likely to have been robbed.

There were also several groups of larger stones. One of these was underlain by a 60cm square stone slab while another group covered a post-hole.

The only other one we had time to excavate produced the biggest surprise: lying under the stones was a damaged copper-alloy pilgrim badge. It is currently being conserved but appears to show the martyrdom of St Edmund, whose shrine is at Bury St Edmunds. He is tied to a tree, with archers on either side aiming at him.

Ten similar badges are recorded on the PAS database, including one from Sherburn (North Yorks); they date to around AD 1500.

The context suggests this was a deliberate deposition: was this a religious site, or had a workman, returning from a pilgrimage to East Anglia, placed it under the structure that he was building?



Fig. 10: The Late Medieval pilgrim badge, before conservation, showing the martyrdom of St Edmund

The groups of stones and the rectangular structure aren't typical of the layout of a medieval windmill, which usually had a central timber post standing on two horizontal beams arranged in a cross.

However, the large stone slab could certainly have been a padstone for a large post. Hopefully, further work in 2024 will clarify the situation.

Acknowledgements

John Cruse advised on the querns and registered them on the Yorkshire Quern Survey. Ben Westwood (Finds Liaison Officer) helped us identify the pilgrim badge. As always, the Lamb family have helped and supported our work on their land. Rob Young was again the professional archaeologist guiding the excavation. Surveying and drone photography was done by Stephen Eastmead and finds photography by Tony Metcalfe.

We received a grant from Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected (a joint programme of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the North Pennines National Landscape). Our post-excavation work was generously supported by CBA Yorkshire and the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland.

[Download](#)

Hillhouse 19th Century Railway Sidings

Richard Edgar

[Contents](#)

This article describes the ‘re-discovery’ of the mid-19th century railway sidings and associated structures at Hillhouse, Huddersfield. The excavations were undertaken ahead of the planned Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade (TPU) to the railway lines between Manchester and York via Leeds and Huddersfield. The exact state of preservation of the sidings prior to excavation was unknown as the above-ground structures had been removed in the late 20th century and the site had been levelled and was in use as various industrial units.

Introduction

In 2022, Archaeological Service WYAS (ASWYAS) undertook a strip, map and record excavation at the site of the former Hillhouse Sidings, located to the north of Huddersfield town centre. This was ahead of works to improve and electrify the railway line as part of the TPU. (Fig. 1)

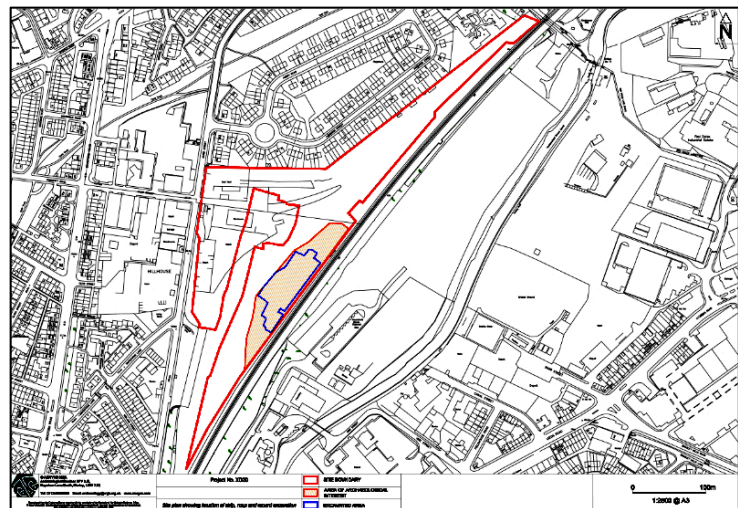


Fig. 1: The site boundary overlaid on modern mapping



Fig. 2: A general view across the site prior to excavation

The site had been levelled in the late 20th century and covered in concrete. Therefore, geophysics was not an option. (Fig. 2) The excavation was planned from map regression.

About the author

Richard Edgar is a Supervisor with Archaeological Services WYAS



Fig. 3: An extract from the 1854 6 inch Ordnance Survey map showing the original White Stone Sheds.

Map regression indicated that from the middle of the 19th century the site had seen the development of an extensive siding system. The original Manchester to Huddersfield line opened between 1846 and 1849 and was part of the 'railway mania' that saw the development of railway lines across the country from the 1840s. The 1854 Ordnance Survey Map (surveyed between 1848-1850) shows a railway line with two railway spurs leading to the White Stone Engine Sheds (Fig. 3)

Within the space of 40 years the Ordnance Survey mapping shows the sidings had expanded rapidly with multiple lines, an expanded engine shed, a wagon shed, a new separate engine shed, a turntable and multiple sidings that led to cranes and cattle pens (Fig. 4). These new additions possibly truncated or led to the removal of the original structures.

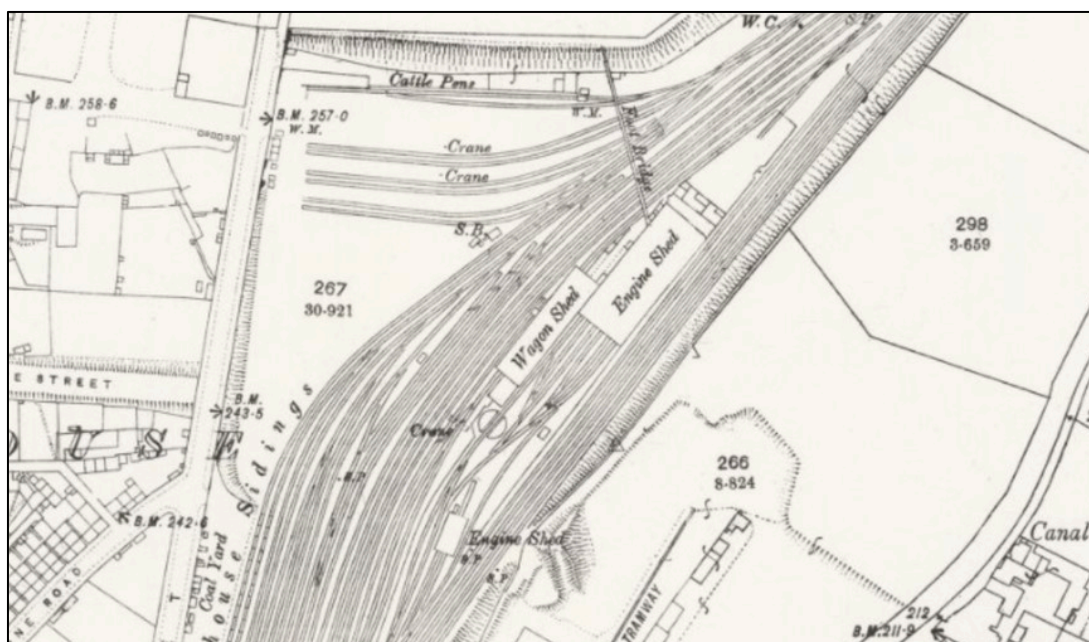


Fig. 4: An extract from the 1893 25 inch Ordnance Survey map

Excavations

The extant concrete, tarmac and rubble surface was removed using a 360 excavator. The rubble from around any structures was also removed by the excavator, followed by hand cleaning by a team of archaeologists. An area of 0.45 ha was excavated to allow stratigraphic relationships to be determined. Surprisingly, a good number of structures were still visible, although they had been heavily truncated during demolition.



Fig. 5: Drone image showing the turntable in the centre, truncated by engine/wagon shed structures and by the insertion of a ceramic drain and manhole

The most impressive remaining structure was a turntable (Fig. 5) which can be seen on the 1893 Ordnance Survey mapping, to the southwest of the wagon shed. The turntable was constructed of frogged, factory-made redbrick with a sandstone interior shelf on the inside. Fragments of timber planks were still in situ on the sandstone shelf. The centre pivot was a large concrete block with iron fixing rods through it. The drone shot was taken whilst the area was being

stripped, but it still shows that the turntable had been truncated by later engine or wagon shed structures and by the insertion of a ceramic drain and concrete manholes (Fig. 5).

A second circular structure (G9 on Fig. 6) of the same diameter was located just to the northeast of the turntable. On this figure, the original turntable is given group number G4.

This second turntable was only partially excavated due to its proximity to the current railway line (Fig. 7);

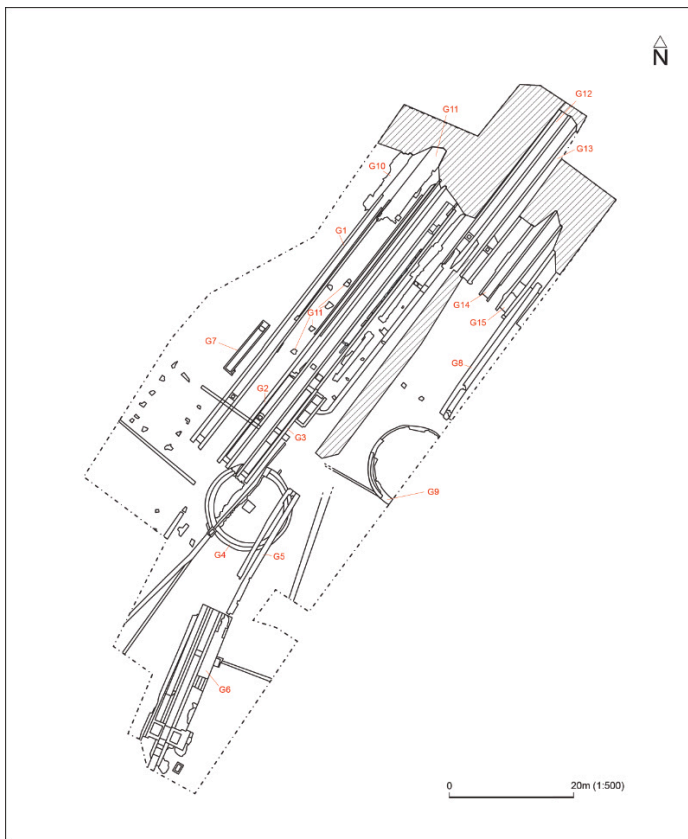


Fig. 6: Survey plan of the excavated area scaled at 1:500



Fig. 7: Turntable G9, looking southeast

In fact, the eastern edge of the turntable likely extends below the modern tracks. This structure, although not as well constructed as the first turntable, was interpreted as an earlier temporary turntable. The central pivot stone, unlike turntable G4, was absent.

Turntable G9 appeared to have a direct relationship with engine bay G8.

Stratigraphically these were the earliest structures on site. The bricks used in G8 and G9 were unfrogged and similar in appearance. The turntable does not appear on historical mapping suggesting it was only in use for a short period of time between 1850 and 1889.

In contrast, the engine sheds and wagon sheds were constructed from frogged red bricks. It was possible to see where these sheds had been extended and where earlier structures had been truncated to accommodate the later structures. All the wagon and engine-shed structures appear to have had rails on top of the walls, fixed in place with iron rods which ran through the walls. Most of the rails had been removed, probably during demolition, but in two locations (G2 and G6), rails were still in situ.

The continued use of the sidings up to their final demolition was demonstrated by the discovery of a concrete-block motor-vehicle inspection bay (G7). This was located within the wagon sheds, to the northwest of G1.

The inspection pit had a polythene membrane as a damp course.

The finds from the site, though sparse, highlighted its purely industrial use. These included coal shovels, a large spanner and glass tubing used to measure the steam pressure in the engines. There was a distinct absence of domestic waste such as broken pottery, food waste (e.g. animal bones) and personal items.

Conclusion

The strip, map and record excavation achieved the main aims of the project: to identify the mid to late 19th-century remains below the modern ground surface of asphalt and concrete.

Although no direct dating evidence was discovered, there is ample cartographic documentation to support the visible stratigraphic sequencing encountered during excavation. There was no direct evidence for the original White Stone shed and it appears to have been significantly rebuilt or truncated by the later 19th-century engine sheds visible on site and on the 1893 map.

[Download](#)

Excavations at Garforth: high status Roman burial and The Kingdom of Elmet

Jane Richardson

[Contents](#)

Archaeological Services WYAS excavated a site near Garforth in 2021 and 2022. We were on site for around 6 or 7 months investigating the entire area of archaeological potential.

The Excavation

The work was required due to a planning condition, due in part to a Historic Environment Record from 1918 about human burials in the area. Previous archaeological work around Garforth had also uncovered evidence for Roman ditches, corn driers and enclosures and also post-Roman activity in the form of burials, and sunken-floored buildings.

A team of up to 10 archaeologists carried out the excavations, supervised by Kylie Buxton. They exposed, excavated and recorded Roman ditches and gullies, Early Saxon sunken-floored buildings and a 9th to 11th-century kiln. They encountered charred cereals, animal bone, shell, slag, pottery (Roman and post-Roman material), metal and glass objects, human burials and a lead coffin.

Given the importance of the site, spanning the Late Roman and Early Saxon periods, and the number of human burials recovered, a comprehensive radiocarbon dating programme has been undertaken. This has recently confirmed the presence of a minority of Roman burials (including the lead coffin, and the single cremation) and a majority of 7th-century inhumations. The Roman burials were located in the outlying graves, while those of Saxon date were more ordered (in rows or groups). Still to be completed is the isotope analysis, although early results indicate there was very little to no consumption of marine resources.

About the author

Jane is the manager of West Yorkshire Archaeological Services

The Lead Coffin Burial

Roman-period funerary activity included a burial in a lead coffin that required specialist lifting (Fig. 1).



Fig.1 Lifting of the lead coffin following initial conservation
©Archaeological Services WYAS

Initial results suggested that the coffin contained a female (SK40; 26-35 years), buried with a silver wire ring, penannular copper alloy bangle, thirty glass beads and hob nails (Fig. 2).

She suffered from severe stress during the first to seventh year of childhood (dental enamel hypoplasia), indicating malnutrition or disease. She also had degenerative joint changes on her thoracic and lumbar vertebra which may have caused some discomfort or even disability.

Following further analysis by York Osteoarchaeology, it became clear that a second individual was present, indicated by a second set of legs (SK66).



Fig.2 Excavation of SK40 and her jewellery from the lead coffin
©Archaeological Services WYAS

Perhaps the legs, which are poorly preserved, represent the first occupant, and for whatever reason, their remains were partially removed at a later date to make way for a second occupant. The legs come from a child aged 8-10 years. The radiocarbon dates for these two individuals are both later Roman (247-415 AD for SK40 and 247-437 AD for SK66 – both 2nd sigma).

For now, we are assuming that the grave goods recovered from the coffin, relate to the final complete occupant.

Early Saxon Burials

Early Saxon burial includes the grave for an older female (SK12, over 46 years). She suffered from dental caries, periodontal disease, tooth loss and dental enamel hypoplasia. She had a bad back, perhaps not surprising given her age, with degenerative disease of her cervical and lumbar vertebrae. She has signs of possible infection on her lower legs and also parturition scars suggesting she was a mother (Fig.3).



Importantly this older woman was buried with a cylindrical sheet copper alloy work box. It is 7th-century in date, corroborating the radiocarbon date from the skeleton, in the range 653-774 AD. The container has an intact base and incomplete lid with repoussé decoration. The lid is attached by three S-shaped copper alloy links. An iron loop is attached to the copper alloy links suggesting the presence of a chatelaine.

These items were traditionally interpreted as work boxes due to the presence of threads or organic material (a sewing kit), but objects of this form have more recently been re-interpreted as potential Christian reliquaries.

Fig.3 Excavation of SK12 and her 'workbox'
©Archaeological Services WYAS



Fig.3 Excavation of a possible family group (SK41-43), a mother and her two children?

©Archaeological Services WYAS

Discussion

This site still has much to reveal and scientific analysis, conservation work and research is ongoing. We hope that the DNA and isotope analysis may identify migration, while DNA analysis will also allow us to consider issues such as weaning, diet, infectious diseases such as leprosy, and genetic relationships between individuals.

The site is unique in the county and unusual in that it clearly represents at least two periods of occupation and burial. The narrow time frame for burial (late Roman to Early Saxon), along with settlement evidence, strongly suggests different groups occupying and perhaps reoccupying the landscape over this time frame.

Acknowledgements

Jane Richardson would like to thank York Osteoarchaeology for preliminary information about the human bones, Gail Drinkall for details about the finds, and SUERC for the radiocarbon dates.

[Download](#)

From Colliery Office to Inhabited House

Jim Jackson

[Contents](#)

This article describes the final phases of a four year project to excavate the remains of a building adjacent to the entrance of a 19th century colliery abandoned by 1870. The aim of the project was to determine the structure of the building as far as possible and to suggest the possible function of the building in relation to the colliery.

Introduction

South Leeds Archaeology(SLA) have been doing surveying and a series of excavations on the site of an 19th century colliery near Birstall, in West Yorkshire. Some of the work has been already reported by Dave Russ[1] [2]. In August and September 2023, we returned to the Colliery Office building that had been surveyed in early 2019, and partially excavated in 2019, 2021 and 2022 (Fig. 1). This time we excavated the whole building (inside the green circle in Fig. 2), discovering a cellar and some building alterations that indicate its changed use from a Colliery Office to an Inhabited House.

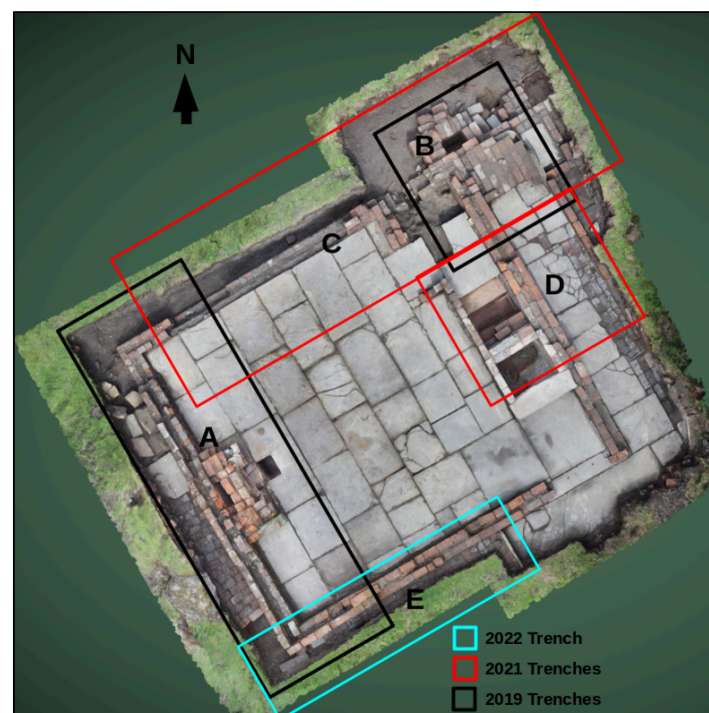


Fig 1: A Plan of the Colliery building, with excavation trenches and their years marked. Taken from the 2023 3D Photogrammetry Model

About the author

Jim Jackson is Vice-Chair of South Leeds Archaeology

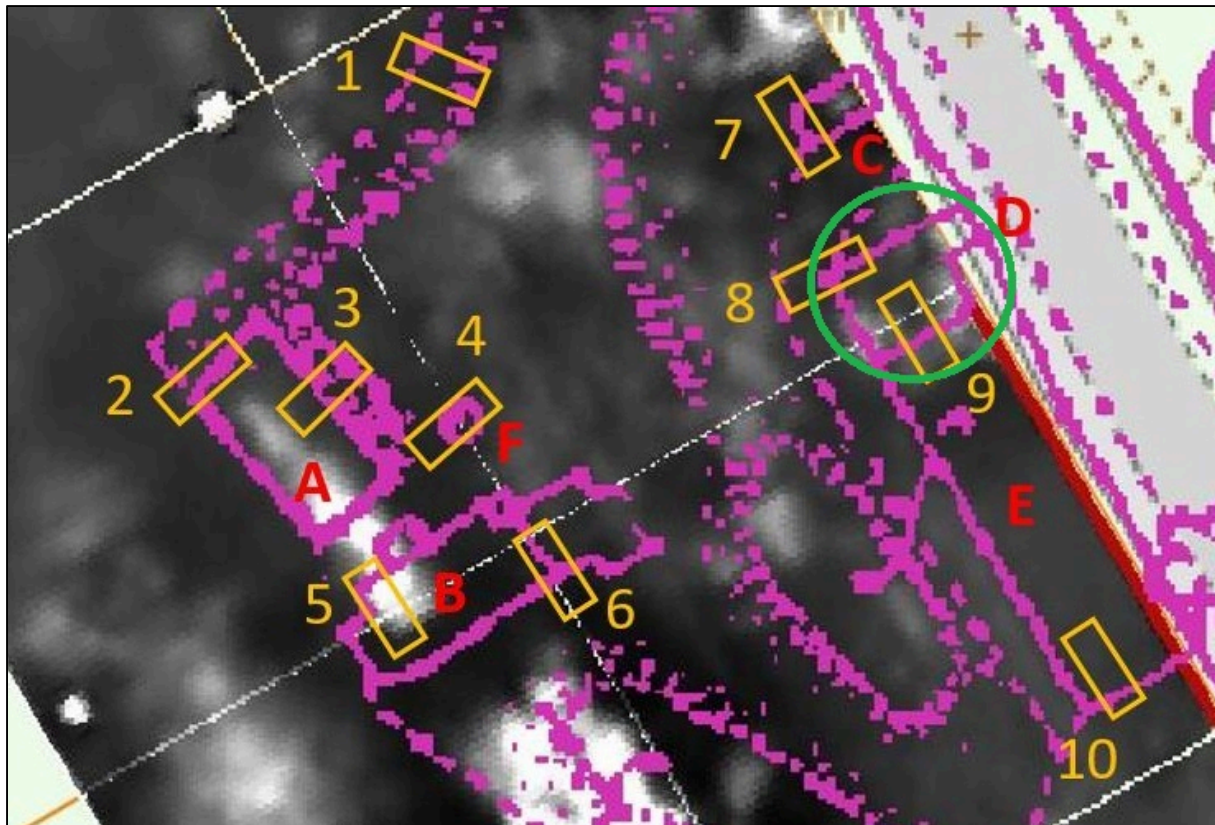


Fig 2: The purple outlines represent the features copied into QGIS from the 25inch O.S mapping, superimposed on the geophysics plot with black to white showing low to high resistivity.

Previous Work

In 2019 SLA did a Resistivity survey of the colliery area which is shown overlaid with details from a late 1800's 25in OS map in Fig. 2.

Later in 2019, a trench (Figure 1 A) along the building wall containing the fireplace and chimney (Fig 3) was excavated.



Fig.3: The fireplace (2023)

Also a small square (Fig. 1 B) around the north corner, on the outside of the building where there was a bricked and paved area. The excavations revealed the building had a stoned flagged interior, and a fireplace. Most of the excavation spoil was demolition waste – brick, glass, stone etc. But, as Russ (2021) reports, concealed shoes and some other objects were found at the back of the fireplace.

In 2021 this northern corner (Fig. 1 B) was re-excavated and extended along the northern wall (Fig. 1 C) as far as possible to area 'D' in Fig 2 next to the road. This area appears to be a loading platform at approximately cart height. Presumably for coal sacks to be loaded onto carts brought along the road. There is a stone structure to brick wall transition (Fig. 4) along the road side field boundary possibly showing where the loading bay abutted the road.

The excavations were also extended along the office building wall (Figure 1 D) and revealed an internal wall in the building (Fig. 5 on the left). Note the 3 brick width of the external wall on the right, elsewhere it is a double brick width.



Fig.5: 2021 photo showing internal brickwork and wider external wall.



Fig.4: View from the road, showing transition from stone wall to brick work of possible loading platform.

Also in 2021 a trench was dug roughly where trench 7 is marked on Fig 2, to try and find evidence of the building indicated on the 19th century map. No footings for walls or other evidence of a building were found, but a midden hole in the ground was found with lots of broken glass and pottery and other domestic

waste (Fig 6). It could be that a wooden based structure covered the midden and our trench missed any post holes.



Fig.6: Some finds from the excavated midden

A small excavation was undertaken in 2022 by members of the Leeds Young Archaeologists Club and their leaders. This excavation (Fig. 1 E) showed that to the outside of the building was a brick paved area (Fig. 7).

The 2023 Excavation

The 2021 northern building trench was excavated again over the internal brickwork, and extended along the wall to the southeastern corner of the building, revealing a large stone “step” at the end of the internal wall, a door entrance in the southern wall, and more of the strange walled square structure within the house. (Fig. 8)



Fig.7: 2022 YAC excavation along southeastern wall showing brick paved outside area.



Fig.8: photo showing more of internal wall structures and the building doorway



Fig.9: Inside the internal brick structure

This was filled with a mixture of colliery waste material (Fig. 9), which on excavation eventually revealing the existence of a cellar that had mostly been filled in (Figs 10a and 10b).



Fig.10a: Arch of entrance to cellar



*Fig.10b: Inside of Vaulted Cellar
with white washed walls*

The 2021 trench was re-excavated back to the northern corner, to reveal the whole of the structure at this side of the house (Fig. 8). Then the stone flags between the internal wall and the exterior wall were lifted and waste/fill material removed revealing steps down to the cellar (Fig. 11), with a blocking wall across the stairwell made of bricks of a more modern type than the original building walls.



Fig.11: Steps down to the cellar

Further excavation work was carried out on the outside of the east wall to expose a brick and stone paved surface leading round to the building door way.

Just outside the northern corner is a drain and sump for waste water, and some pipe work (Fig. 12). One of the pipes arises in the brick work of the building's wall.



Fig.12: Building services pipes

At this point it was decided to excavate and expose the whole building, in order to do a photogrammetry 3D model [3] of the whole. Fig. 13 shows one view of the model.



Fig.13: View of all of the building taken from the [2023 3D Photogrammetry Model](#)

During this activity we had a wonderful piece of serendipity in the finding of two pieces of a thermometer that directly matched and joined two disparate pieces we had found four years previously in the 2019 dig (Fig. 13). The importance of the '180' at the top of the scale depicted in red, is still to be determined.

Towards the end of the excavation Leeds YAC members and leaders again joined us for a session. They took part in some digging and cleaning, looking for finds in the spoil with a metal detector and measuring and recording the dimensions of the building.



Fig.14: Glass pieces of a thermometer

Interpretation

The building was obviously originally built with a cellar and a set of steps down. At some later point the cellar was infilled with colliery spoil material, the steps down were bricked off and infilled, levelled and stone flagged. The area would have made a small room, probably for toilet/washroom. The service pipes (Fig. 12) are in this area, and in the 2021 dig a few broken porcelain pieces were found.

The building could have had two storeys, with steps going up parallel with the cellar steps. The steps leading up from the large stone step near the building door. It is interesting that the external wall in this area is 3 bricks wide, forming a frame work for the stair well with the wholly internal brick wall. The arrangement of stairs leading up from the area of the building entrance is very common in other Victorian housing in the area.

Possible corroborating evidence for the second storey are 2 pieces of metal pipe work (Fig. 15) found on the outside of the chimney wall. The 2 pieces together are approximately 4 metres in length which would make a good down spout from roof guttering on a 2 story building.

The nature of the brick work in the fireplace is curious (Fig. 2). Bricks have been laid on top of the metal fire grate. Could it be that the original open fire has been converted as a base for a cooking range? If so the flue/ chimney arrangement would have been altered to accommodate the output from the now higher range. Leaving the back of the original fireplace away from the heat. It was here that the concealed shoes were found. Given that such objects seem to be usually associated with houses[4], we may suppose that they were hidden at the time the building was converted into a dwelling place.



Fig.15: Possible rainwater down spout from roof guttering

Acknowledgments

Ed Sugden The Land Owner for allowing, nay, encouraging, us to dig up his fields.

Mike Turpin For telling us where to go - Surveying and QGIS expertise!

Phil Jones For doing the Photogrammetry 3D Model

Dave Russ For looking after and researching the finds

Leeds Young Archaeology Club for coming and helping.

The SLA members who participated in the work, and colleagues from PontARC. Especially those who volunteered for backfilling!

References

[\[1\] Dave Russ 'Community Archaeology at Birstall' CBA Yorkshire Forum Plus Vol 3 2020](#)

[2] [Dave Russ 'Removing the Birstall Curse' CBA Yorkshire Forum 2021.](#)

[3] Phil Jones <https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/birstall-mlc-2023-9e40bc04621345be88a72d36aba4bf8d>

[4] Dr Debora Moretti, of West Yorkshire Archaeological Services, who holds a PhD in early modern witchcraft studies, has commented:

“This is indeed an interesting and potentially significant find. The concealed shoe tradition appears in a range of building types - basically wherever builders were renovating or rebuilding, especially chimneys. The latest research is showing this is in fact a builders’ tradition and principally for good luck. Whereas usually they are found in houses, this tradition is less attested in mills/factories or, as in this case, collieries especially in West Yorkshire. It would be therefore important to have this new cache and its archaeological contexts and historical background studied appropriately and the shoes conserved appropriately.”

[Download](#)

Fieldwork by the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society 2022-23

Various Authors

[Contents](#)

This article outlines fieldwork undertaken by the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society during 2022 and 2023. While the focus of the Society's work continues to be the Scarborough area, the opportunity has also arisen to undertake work further afield in the county.

Completed reports on the sites mentioned in this article are made available for download from the website of the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society <https://www.sahs.org.uk/Recent-Fieldwork.html> and through the Archaeology Data Service <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/organisationDetails.xhtml?organisationId=60>. Many of the Society's past publications are available for free download from the Internet Archive <https://archive.org/details/sahs?sort=-date>

Excavations at Thorn Park Farm, Hackness

In April and October 2022, the Society undertook two small evaluation excavations of cropmark features at Thorn Park Farm near Hackness at SE 9843 8812, several miles inland from Scarborough (Pearson 2022). The work aimed to expand understanding of the landscape history of an area previously studied by the Society through survey work in the adjacent Raincliffe Woods (Pearson 2018). The earlier work included the excavation of a mound on the edge of the woods next to the farm at Sawmill Bank Foot where a boulder wall dating to the middle Bronze Age was discovered (Bland and Pearson, 2021).

The excavation in April 2022 investigated a double-ditch feature recorded by Historic England as a 560m long cropmark, aligned north-east to south-west and interpreted as a possible trackway (North York Moors National Park HER No. 18671). The excavation established that both ditches were between 3.4m to 3.8m wide. Due to time constraints, only the south ditch was fully excavated, it was found to have a v-shaped profile with a maximum depth of 1.2m. The ditch fill did not yield any dateable artefacts. We are awaiting the results of a C14 date from a sample of charcoal taken from the bottom of the ditch, which was kindly funded by a grant from the National Park.

The interpretation of the feature as a double-ditched track is plausible, but there is also the possibility that it is an early land division, pre-dating the present field pattern and woodland boundary.



Fig. 1: View looking east across Thorn Park Farm showing the excavation of the square enclosure in progress. The double-ditch cropmark crosses the field nearest to the wooded slope on the right (south) of the image.

The excavation in October 2022 investigated a square enclosure measuring around 26m across which is visible on the ground as a slight earthwork and has been mapped from the air by Historic England (North York Moors National Park HER No. 18670) (Fig. 1).

The excavation determined that the enclosure is defined by a 1.1m wide U-shaped ditch with a maximum depth of 0.9m. Several small circular depressions at the bottom of the ditch may indicate where a series of upright posts had been placed forming a palisade (Fig. 2). Several flint flakes and a possible 'pounding' stone were recovered from the ditch fill. A



Fig. 2: View of the ditch defining the perimeter of the square enclosure at Thorn Park Farm.

C14 date is awaited from a sample of the basal fill kindly funded by the National Park. On present evidence, the earthwork may be the remnant of a small, square-shaped palisaded enclosure.

Excavations at Brompton-by-Sawdon

The village is situated 8km inland from Scarborough. Prior to 2023, the Society had focused its research on an area called Castle Hill where survey and excavation work over multiple years located several buildings and the perimeter wall of a medieval manor house (Pearson, Jamieson and Hall 2022). In 2023 the Society undertook a series of garden digs to investigate the development of the village. This was followed in October by the investigation of part of a cropmark site to the east of Brompton previously reported on by English Heritage (Knight 2011).

The garden digs in July were an initial attempt to find evidence for the development of the village by investigating changes in levels of occupation over time. Eight gardens and two areas of public open ground were investigated by excavating a series of 1m x 1 m trenches. This is admittedly insufficient to draw any firm conclusions about the development of the village however, more work is planned; encouraged by the discovery of Roman as well as medieval pottery in several of the gardens.

The October excavation took place in a field several hundred metres to the east of the village in an area recorded on historic Ordnance Survey maps as Eastanby. Three trenches were opened across two ditches at the north-west extremity of a probable Roman settlement at NGR SE 9507 8239. The purpose of the excavation was to determine the nature and preservation of the archaeological remains indicated by the cropmarks. The site has previously been described in the aforementioned English Heritage report (Knight 2011). In 2022 the Society undertook a geophysical survey across several areas of the site. The two ditches investigated in 2023 were aligned co-axially, with one trench exposing the right-angle corner of an inner ditch, while 16m to the north the other two trenches examined different sections of an outer ditch. The outer ditch was 2.4m wide at the top with a maximum depth of 1.2m (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Section across the outer ditch of the settlement complex at Eastanby, Brompton

Both ditches had been backfilled rapidly resulting in a very uniform fill devoid of artefacts apart from one fragment of Roman roof tile and one sherd of pottery. Animal bone was also recovered, but the paucity of finds suggests that the area was peripheral to the rest settlement.

The excavation determined that in this area the settlement remains have been degraded by ploughing with only features cut into the natural likely to have survived. (Pearson and Siddle 2024)

Building recording at 100 Castle Road, Scarborough

In February 2022 the Society undertook a measured survey and photographic recording of the remains of a late-18th-century limekiln surviving as a 1.7m wide arch incorporated in the rear north wall of a shop on Castle Road, Scarborough at NGR TA 04295 89000 (Hall 2022). The rise of the arch from the springing line to the apex is just under a metre. The sides are in stone possibly reusing blocks from Scarborough's late-medieval



Fig. 4: View of the arched opening of the former lime kiln.

town wall which bordered the opposite side of Castle Road (Fig. 4). The voussoirs of the arch are executed in large bricks. The investigation determined that the opening was the draw-arch for a limekiln which was preserved following the construction of the Amicable Society School on the site in 1807 and the National School in 1836. An alleyway next to the shop is labelled 'Limekiln Hill' on the 1:1056 scale, 60 inches to the mile Ordnance Survey map of the town surveyed in 1850 and published in 1852.

Survey and recording of coastal mining remains at Speeton

Following a cliff collapse at Middle Cliff, Speeton, towards the south end of Filey Bay in March 2023 (NGR TA 14842 75816), some timber posts were exposed which aroused public interest on social media. The structure was identified as probably being the remains of a mid-19th-century coprolite mine. A narrow bed of coprolite (about 0.12m thick) outcrops at Speeton and for a short period in the mid-19th century, this was worked by driving adits into the cliff. Coprolite is highly phosphatic and was an important resource in the production of early chemical fertilisers.

Given the continued likelihood of further cliff collapse due to sustained periods of wet weather, the Society decided to do a rapid recording of the remains which consisted of four, possibly five pit props and one horizontal member (Fig. 5). These were geo-located using a Trimble GNSS satellite receiver and then drawn, conventionally photographed and 3D photographed which allowed us to better understand the structure.



Fig. 5: View along the structure revealed at Middle Cliff, Speeton in March 2023.

The horizontal member which had a turn in it, appeared to be a re-used timber, possibly from a ship and John Buglass suggested that it may have been a second or third futtock making up one of the ribs of a ship's hull (Fig. 6). Any hopes of recovering this timber for further analysis were dashed when a further cliff collapse obliterated these remains. Further monitoring was carried out and in

November 2023 after another cliff collapse revealed a further four pit props which were also geo-located and photographed. These have also largely disappeared due to further cliff collapse.

Given the extensive retreat of the cliff face since the mid-19th century we think that what is being revealed in the recent cliff collapses is the extreme end of the adits driven into the cliff.



Fig. 6: Detail of the horizontal member showing evidence of re-use and the turn to the left of the post.

Excavation at Gillingwood Hall, near Richmond

The farmhouse at Gillingwood Hall sits among the earthwork and built remains of a formal garden now dated to the 17th century at NGR NZ 171 048, 1.2km to the west of the village of West Gilling. The farm occupies the site of a Jacobean mansion belonging to the Wharton family which was destroyed by fire in December 1750 as described in a previous edition of *Forum* (Gates and Pearson 2022, 110-14). That article concluded with the aspiration that 'geophysics may assist in detecting the foundations of the earlier house'. A GPR survey took place in November 2022 as part of a training exercise for a PhD student, but this did not detect the presence of any buried foundations.

Consequently, in October 2023, a small evaluation trench was excavated in collaboration with the Society.



Fig. 7: View of the trench showing part of a buried windowsill of the house destroyed in 1750.

The trench was located on the projected line of the front wall of the house determined from the position of a free-standing, Palladian-style doorway believed to be the last visible component of that building, probably its main entrance. The excavation located part of the front wall of the house 4m to the south-west and in line with the doorway (Fig. 7). The wall was buried below nearly a metre of angular stone demolition

rubble. This contained large quantities of animal bone mixed with fragments of pottery and glass, all presumably dating from the time that the house was demolished. The wall incorporates the base of a window opening, from which it can be calculated that the internal floor level is probably at least another metre lower, so around two metres below the ground level and the base of the doorway. This discovery implies that the house possessed a basement.

Survey of Aldby Park, Buttercrambe

Aldby Park is situated on the west bank of the Derwent (NGR SE 7304 5845), several miles upstream from the crossing of the river at Stamford Bridge. In 2021 the Society completed an earthwork survey of a prominent mounded garden feature close to the main house which probably originated as a Norman motte and bailey castle (Jamieson and Pearson 2021). Following that survey, the Society extended the investigation to record extensive areas of medieval and later earthworks (Fig. 8) within a 32ha area of the adjacent park (Jamieson and Pearson 2023).



Fig. 8: Survey in progress at Aldby Park in front of the main house.

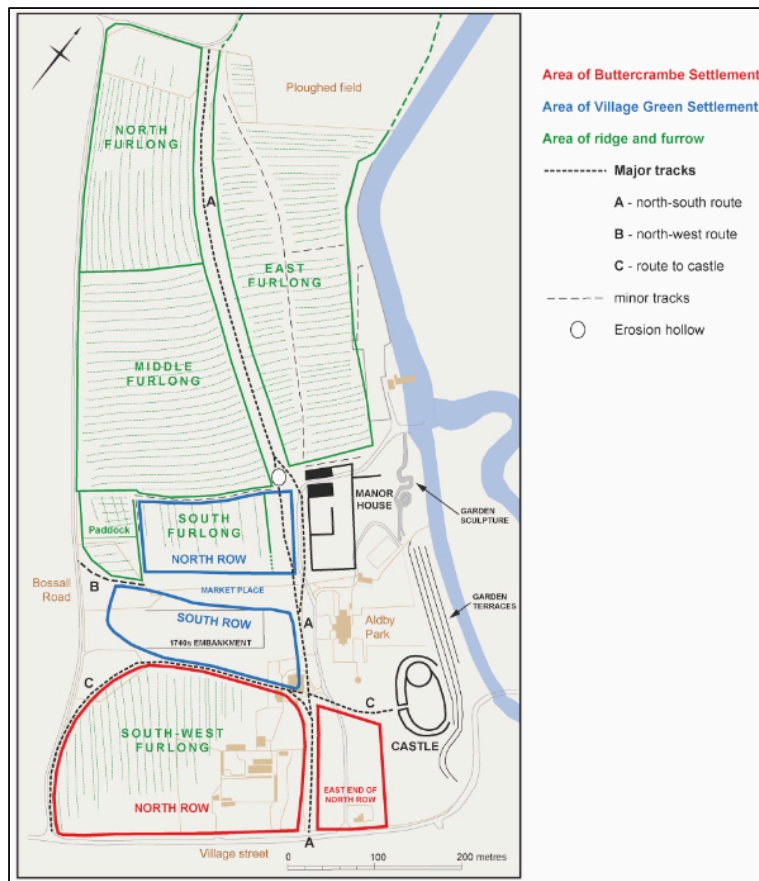


Fig. 9: Plan of Aldby Park showing the main archaeological features recorded by the survey and discussed in detail in the report.

To the north of the castle site and the present house are the earthworks of a potential manorial enclosure including the sites of several buildings and a lower area that might have been used as a farmyard or a garden (Fig. 9). The manor site probably post-dates the motte and bailey castle and might be the 'capital message' of several well-built houses and a garden recorded in 1282 at Buttercrambe. Elsewhere within the park are well-preserved furlongs of ridge and furrow ploughing including two areas where medieval settlement has impinged onto the ploughed area.

One settlement formed the north side of a two-row village near the manor house arranged on either side of a central marketplace or village green. However, the south row no longer survives as this was obliterated in the mid-18th century during the landscaping of the grounds following the construction of the present house in 1726. The other area of medieval tofts and crofts represents the former north row of the village of Buttercrambe. Buttercrambe was evidently much larger in the medieval period with the north row overlying an area of ridge and furrow ploughing. The expansion of the village may have been contemporary with the construction of the present village church which incorporates fabric dating stylistically to the 1240s.

Following on from the 2021 survey of the motte and bailey castle at Aldby Park, in 2023 the Society examined the sites of three other possible earthwork castles further downstream along the Derwent in Sutton Wood, at Aughton and Thorganby.

Field visit to Giant's Hill, Sutton Wood

The site is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a 4m high circular motte enclosed by a sub-rectangular moat (List Entry no. 1008041) in Sutton Wood on the east side of the Derwent 10km south of Aldby Park (NGR SE 71038 48630). A field visit in February 2023 established that the height of the motte has been incorrectly recorded and is nothing more than a slightly raised platform at the centre of a typical medieval moated enclosure.

Survey of a moated site at Aughton

In February 2023 the Society undertook a 1:500 scale earthwork survey of a moated site at Aughton on the east bank of the Derwent, 19km downstream from Aldby Park at NGR SE 70268 38659. The site is recorded as a motte and bailey castle in Le Patourel's survey of moated sites in Yorkshire and in the National Heritage List for England (Le Patourel 1973, 17-18, 109; List Entry no. 1007973). The motte element is in open ground on the edge of the Derwent floodplain with the medieval parish church of All Saints immediately to the south.



Fig. 10: View looking south-east across the outer ditch of Aughton moat showing the motte with All Saints parish church in the background.

The survey was restricted to the area of the motte which comprises a square-shaped and flat-topped mound standing around 3m above ground level, surrounded by a wide ditch (Fig. 10). On the north side the ditch is 10m beyond the mound leaving a broad shelf between the two. The shelf is occupied by a long, straight-sided hollow that probably represents the site of a large building orientated east-west.

A sub-rectangular depression on the summit of the motte indicates the location of a second, much smaller structure (Fig. 11). The probable sequence indicated by the earthworks is that the motte is the primary feature with a possible small inner bailey on the north side represented by the shelf. A broad north-south bank 30m to the west of the motte continues south into the churchyard suggesting that the church and the motte originally had a common west boundary. The broad ditch around the motte is secondary and cuts into both the base of the mound and the suggested inner bailey.

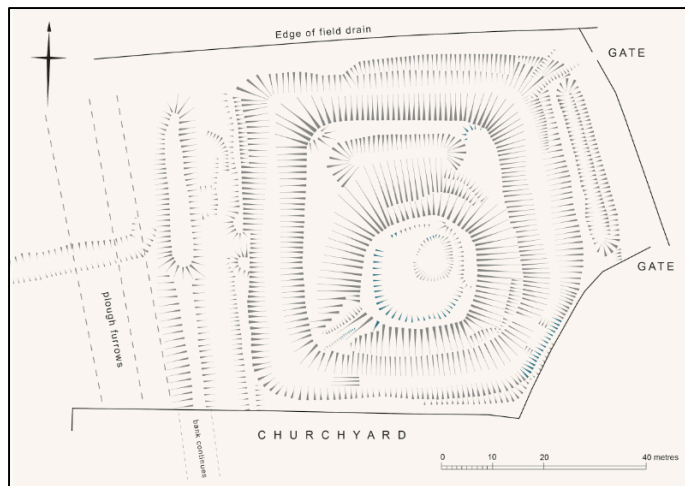


Fig. 11: Earthwork survey plan of the moated site at Aughton.

Its purpose may have been to make the motte appear more like a moated site in response to changing fashions. Patourel identified a bailey to the east of the motte however the single broad ditch visible here may well be a fishpond rather than part of the defensive perimeter of an earthwork castle. As an alternative interpretation, the list entry considers that the bailey perimeter is

represented by ditches partially bounding the grounds of Aughton Hall, to the south-east of the motte.

Survey of Giant Hill, Thorganby

In March 2023, the Society undertook a 1:500 scale survey of a crescentic length of bank and ditch recorded on historic Ordnance Survey mapping as 'Giant Hill'. The site is recorded as a 'medieval promontory ringwork' in the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record (Entry no. MN17571). It is on the west side of the Derwent floodplain, 18km downstream from Aldby Park and 1.5km to the south of the village of Thorganby at NGR SE 69289 39625. The bank and ditch are aligned roughly east-west across the neck of a triangular-shaped promontory defined on the other sides by the slightly lower ground of the Derwent flood plain (Fig. 12). At its maximum, the bank is around 20m wide at the base and 2m high, it extends for 60m from the west side of the promontory disappearing as an earthwork 30m from the east side. The ditch on the north side of the bank is 10m wide and up to 1.5m deep (Fig. 13). The line of a former field boundary is represented by a slight scarp 3m beyond the outer edge of the ditch. The ditch starts on the west side of the promontory where it is open to the edge of the flood plain while it has a distinctive curved terminal 45m from the east side of the promontory.

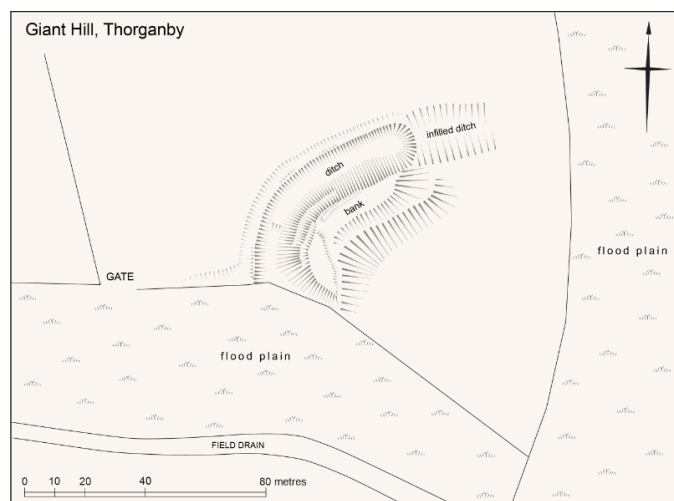


Fig. 12: Earthwork survey of the supposed ringwork castle at Giant Hill, Thorganby.

Beyond this point, the survey recorded a 20m long shallow depression continuing the line of the ditch. This implies that the present ditch with the rounded terminal is a recut of a longer ditch that had been backfilled.



Fig. 13: View looking south of the bank and ditch at Giant Hill, Thorganby.

The infilled section of the ditch appeared on a geophysical survey undertaken by English Heritage in 1997 and, as demonstrated by the earthworks, both the ditch and bank end before the east side of the promontory (Bray 1998). The geophysical and earthwork surveys therefore establish that there was a 20-25m

wide gap between the end of the supposed ringwork defences and the east side of the promontory. This may have accommodated an entrance into the castle, but the width is excessive and would have created a weak point in the defences. Consequently, there must be some doubt over the interpretation of the site as a medieval ringwork. The site appears to have been occupied in multiple phases, as demonstrated by evidence that the ditch was backfilled and then recut, as revealed by the earthwork and geophysical surveys. The recut ditch, which is almost as deep as the flood plain, could have been used as a channel to berth small boats at periods when the low ground bordering the promontory had flooded.

Acknowledgements

The work was undertaken by members and friends of the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society of whom Martin Bland, Ann and Nigel Clark, Gareth Davies, Tim Gates, Chris Hall, Elaine Jamieson, Trevor Pearson, Simon Temlett and Andrew Volans shouldered various supervisory and organisational responsibilities.

Bibliography

Bland, M. and Pearson, T. 2021. The 2019 and 2021 Excavations at Sawmill Bank Foot, Raincliffe Woods, Scarborough, North Yorkshire. [Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 55](#).

Bray, E. 1998. Giant Hill, Thorganby Grange, North Yorkshire. Report on Geophysical Survey, December 1997. [Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report 14/98](#).

Gates, T and Pearson, T. 2021. A newly recorded early 18th century garden at Gillingwood Hall, near Richmond, North Yorkshire. Council for British Archaeology Yorkshire Forum: New Series vol. 9, 110-114.

Hall, C. 2022. The Investigation of a Stone Structure at 100 Castle Road, Scarborough. [Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 57](#).

Jamieson, E. and Pearson, T. 2021 An Archaeological Survey of an Earthwork at Aldby Park, Buttercrambe, North Yorkshire. [Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 54](#).

Jamieson, E. and Pearson, T. 2023. An Archaeological Survey at Aldby Park, Buttercrambe, North Yorkshire. [Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 60](#).

Knight, D. 2011. Cropmarks at Brompton-by-Sawdon, North Yorkshire. Air Photograph Assessment Special Project. [English Heritage Research Department Report Series 087-2011](#).

Le Patourel, J. 1973. The Moated site of Yorkshire. The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series No. 5

Pearson, T. 2018. An Archaeological Survey of Forge Valley, Raincliffe and Row Brow Woods, Scarborough, North Yorkshire. [Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 49](#).

Pearson, T., Jamieson, E. and Hall, C. 2022. The 2021 Excavation at Castle Hill, Brompton. [Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 56](#).

Pearson, T. 2022. Excavations at Thorn Park Farm, Hackness, Scarborough 2022. [Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 59](#).

Pearson, T. and Siddle, R. 2024. Archaeological Investigation of a Cropmark Site at Brompton-by-Sawdon, Scarborough 2023. [Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Site Report 61](#)

[Download](#)

Survey of a 'Druid's Temple' between Ingleborough and Ribbleshead: the Sleights Pasture prehistoric monument complex

Yvonne Luke

[Contents](#)

The Ingleborough Archaeology Group have been researching and surveying a prehistoric monument complex to the south west of Ribbleshead. Antiquarian investigations robbed out much of the site but little archaeology has been done on the monument in the past making this an important project.

Introduction

The Ingleborough Archaeology Group, under the direction of the author, have been involved in surveying the remains of a large prehistoric monument complex in Sleights Pasture towards the head of Weyssedale (SD 7568 7837 c.325m OD) (Figure 1).



Fig. 1: Sleights Pasture - General View

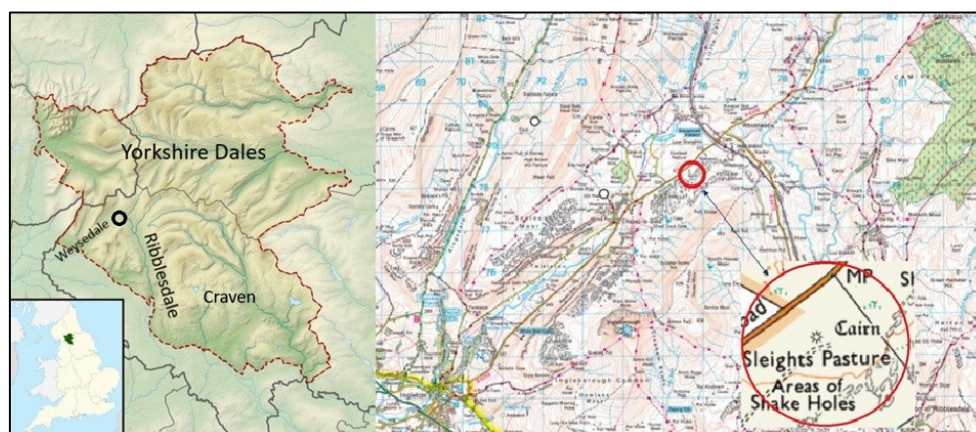


Fig. 2 Maps showing the location of the monument complex.
Contains © OS data Crown Copyright 2023

About the author

Yvonne Luke is vice-chair of the Ingleborough Archaeology Group

The site lies in the Civil Parish of Ingleton, in the District of Craven, County of North Yorkshire (Figure 2).

It is just to the south of the B6255 and approximately a kilometre south-east of the Batty Moss Viaduct at Ribbleshead. Sleights Pasture lies towards the head of Weysedale, which stretches in a linear fashion south-west to the edge of the Pennines, from Ribbleshead to Ingleton. Whernside rises 3.6km to the north-north-west and Ingleborough, the dominant topographic feature, 4km to the south-south-west.

The site includes the remains of the largest cairn in the area, and indeed the whole site forms one of the largest prehistoric ritual-cum-burial complexes known in the Yorkshire Dales, measuring approximately 50m x 85m (Figure 3). Considering its size and the implied importance of the site, remarkably little is understood about the monuments it contains. It remains unknown in the wider archaeological literature.

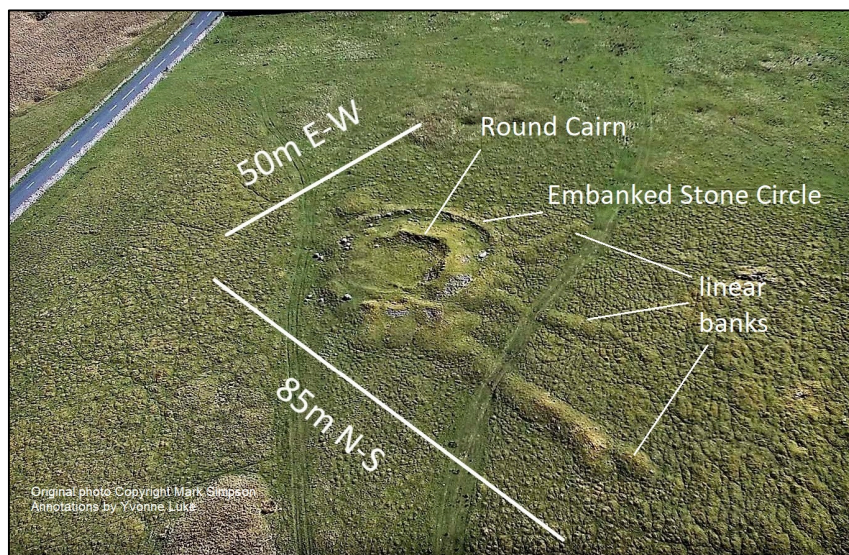


Fig. 3: Aerial photograph of Sleights Pasture monument complex with the different structures highlighted. Original photo © Mark Simpson

This complex of archaeological structures is in a semi-ruined condition, the result of stone robbing and antiquarian excavation. The adjacent field walls are built of stones taken from the site, and Batty (2016) has identified an excavation which took place in 1828. The archaeology is further confused by a plethora of moved and dumped material - abandoned boulders, stone scatters and possible excavation spoil heaps, which may - or may not - include the three curious linear banks which radiate out of the south and east side. It is a chaotic sight.

Since the 1851 first edition OS map, the site has been labelled as a Cairn.

In 1963 the central circular part of the site was scheduled by English Heritage (now Historic England) as a Round Barrow, and this description was confirmed subsequently (List Entry Number 1010443; <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010443> accessed 17 June 2022). However, there are a number of issues with this description and analysis. The first, most obvious and simple, is that it was described as a Barrow when it is obviously, from the surviving field evidence, a Cairn incorporating much stone material. That there once was a large central round mound is beyond dispute: although over three quarters of it has vanished, a crescent-shaped bank survives in the eastern half of the site, rising to a long curving section 2m high.

What is more puzzling is the existence of a circular earthwork which appears to be physically separate from the mound. In the List Entry this outer circular bank is identified as a 'kerb' to the Barrow (i.e. the Round Cairn), thus interpreting it structurally a subsidiary, previously attached, part of the central Cairn mound. However, the surviving stones do not run where one would expect to find a kerb – around the outside perimeter edge of the circular site. Careful observation indicates they consistently line the *inner* revetment of the encircling embankment.

Also, in the better-preserved eastern half of the site, a persistent gap is visible between this outer circular bank and the body of the Cairn mound. Although about a quarter of it is missing, another - reasonably intact - quarter section can be followed round partially buried under later excavation debris. It has all the hallmarks of a different type of structure, potentially built in a different period to the Round Cairn and serving a different function. The presence of a number of vertical stones providing an internal face to the bank, as well as what appears to be a fallen standing stone, suggest it may even be the remains of a curiously structured Embanked Stone Circle (Luke 2022, 3-4). Interestingly the 1828 excavators referred to the site as a 'Druid's Temple' (*Westmorland Advertiser and Kendal Chronicle* 29 March 1828, quoted by Fell 1953, 3), an early antiquarian term which invariably referred to stone circles. The site would have been notably more intact in 1828.

Following these field observations, it was decided to organise a number of surveys with the Ingleborough Archaeology Group (Luke 2022, 6-13).



Fig. 4: 1to50 Survey of the central part of the monument complex
 © Ingleborough Archaeology Group

Among these were a measured survey of the central circular site at 1:50, undertaken between September 2021 and May 2022 (Figure 4).

Three different UAV surveys were conducted by Tony Hunt. Hunt developed a Digital Elevation Model (DEM) for us (Figure 5), which provides a detailed image of the entire site and environs.

The TST (Total Station Theodolite) survey covered the entire site, including the linear banks and a Catalogue of Stones was created, itemising the dimensions, lithology, and the archaeological structure (if any) with which individual stones were associated. These were accompanied by a photographic archive. The measured survey covered all the structures within the main sub-circular complex and a few additional features which lie adjacent. The three linear banks were excluded from this survey (except in the areas where they met the core site) as they display few structural archaeological features within their earthworks.

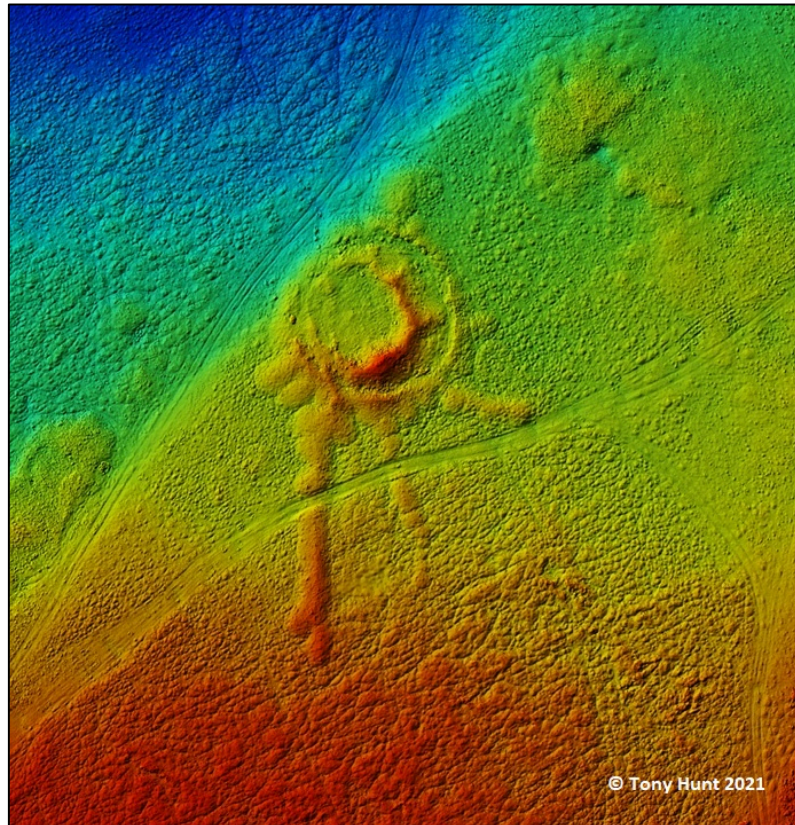


Fig. 5: Digital Elevation Model of Sleights Pasture monument complex © Tony Hunt.

The character of these linears is best grasped through aerial photographs, the Digital Elevation Model created by Hunt's drone survey and the TST survey.

To enhance the accuracy of the measured survey, a 5m grid orientated on Magnetic North and measured from the approximate centre of the site was established using the TST. The most frequently used method of measurement was through taped right-angled offsets, as described in [Graphical and Plane Table Survey of Archaeological Earthworks](#) (Historic England, 2018; available online). Whenever possible a baseline tape starting at Control Point zero was used, to reinforce accuracy. Otherwise, baseline tapes were always laid using the established 5m grid.

Much of the character of the site comes from the stones and boulders present, not just the grass-covered earthworks. Even a cursory inspection of the monument complex shows the existence of a large number of boulders and stones of different lithologies with potentially different structural functions within the monuments, some of which are key to understanding what is going on.

To this end the Catalogue of Stones (Figure 6) captures information about all the major boulders, stones and stone spreads on site.

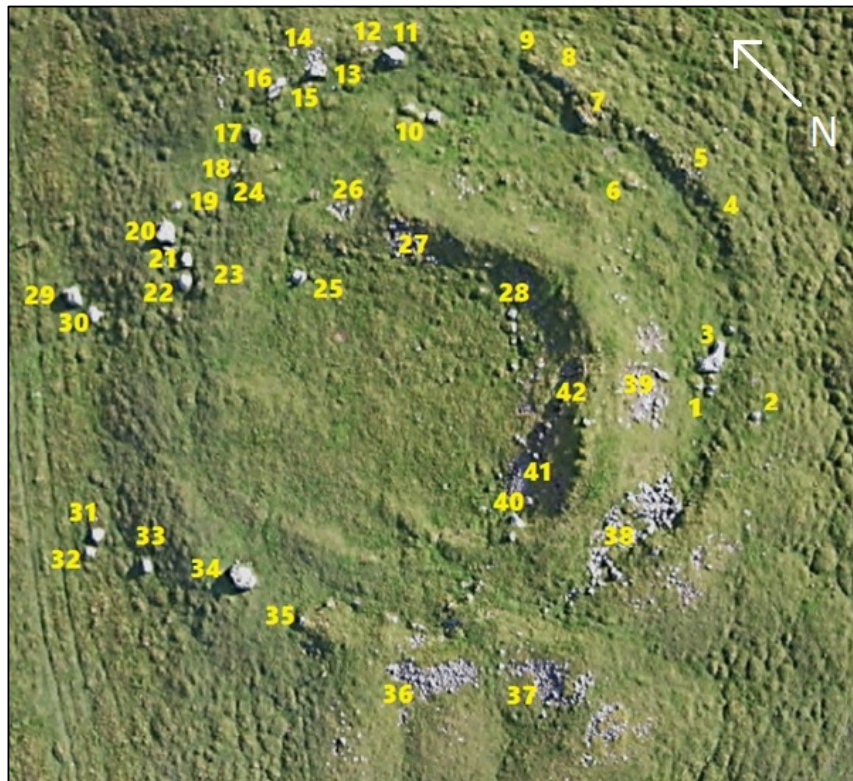


Fig. 6: Map of the Catalogue of Stones. Original photo © Mark Simpson

As a means of making sense of the disorder and confusion of the site, caused by excavation and stone robbing, it proved indispensable. This record contains information on the geology/lithology of the stone, its basic character (e.g. slab of limestone pavement, natural boulder), dimensions and simple description, an informed judgement of whether or not it was still *in situ*, the archaeological structure (e.g. Cairn) or event (excavation or quarrying/robbing episode) with which it could be associated and a photograph. By collating all this information it became possible to make an informed decision on which stones were still *in situ* and which had been moved. This was one of the key judgements necessary, in order to make better sense out of what survived relatively intact from the original monument complex.

The surveys have revealed a much more complicated suite of archaeological features than previously thought, and proved beyond doubt that there are not one but *three* major different types of structure on site: a circular bank with the characteristics of an unusual Embanked Stone Circle, a large Round Cairn and three linear banks radiating off the southern and eastern sides of the circle.

Other slighter features were also recorded. The detailed results of the surveys are now available on the [Ingleborough Archaeology Group website](#) as a report *A 'Druid's Temple' between Ingleborough and Ribbleshead: Sleights Pasture Monument Complex* (Luke 2022). This article is a summary of its findings. The monument complex is discussed below in what is thought to be the likely chronological sequence of its construction.

The Embanked Stone Circle

The survey demonstrates that approximately half this structure is clearly visible and reasonably intact, principally in the eastern half of the monument. A further quarter survives more or less intact but partially buried by later debris in the SW quadrant. The NW quadrant is mostly robbed out. The Embanked Stone Circle is characterised by a bank with a steep internal revetment, faced with occasional near vertical stones placed on their long axis. It is these stones which help characterise the structure as an unusual Embanked Stone Circle: their height is rarely more than 0.5m. A gentle slope c.2.5m wide characterises the outer part of the bank (Figure 7).

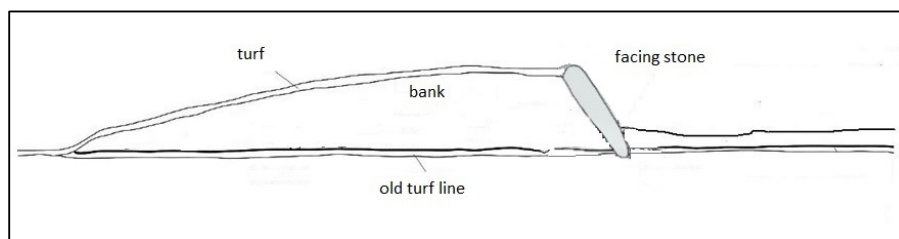


Fig. 7: Imagined cross section of the bank showing the near vertical revetment stone and sloping embankment (after Ó Ríordáin 1951)

Most of this is covered by turf, but occasionally sandstone pieces are visible below the surface. Even in the NW quadrant, where the bank and its stones have been robbed out, traces of deposits from the circle survive on the ground. When surveyed in, it became apparent that the structure formed a near perfect circle with an internal space c.28m wide and a slightly flattened eastern side. Including the bank, the external diameter approximates to c.33m.



Fig. 8 The Embanked Stone Circle, with the central Cairn and other structures digitally removed. Original photo © Mark Simpson

A good idea of the structure can be gained from looking at a modified aerial photograph from which all other – almost certainly later – structures have been removed (Figure 8).

Several features stand out. The first is that parts of the surviving eastern bank have been extended outwards at a later date, either as lobes or in more extended lengths, hinting at chronological development of the structure (Figure 9). (Luke 2023, 19).

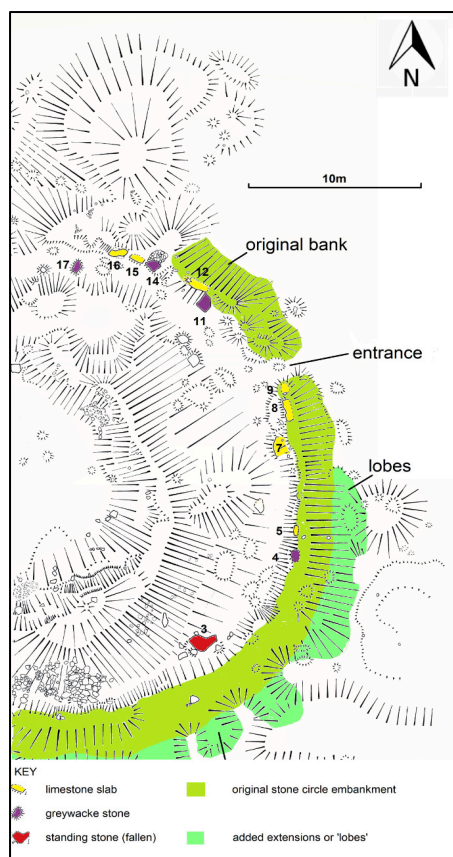


Fig. 9 The eastern more intact side of the Stone Circle highlighting the structures mentioned in the text.

The second is that the circle was built to straddle the sloping edge of the limestone terrace upon which the monument sits (Luke 2023, 23-26) (Figure 10). This appears to be a deliberate choice, as the terrace is capacious, flat and wide at this point. It calls to mind the 12m linear cairn at Keld Bank, only 1.4km to the south-west, which accompanies the 24m Neolithic long cairn: both these structures straddle the edge of their limestone terrace, and the linear cairn actually runs *along* the slope (Luke 2013, 26-30), not unlike the Sleights Pasture monument.



Fig. 10: The natural terrace edge where the now denuded Embanked Stone Circle used to run; Ingleborough in the background.

What appears to be a fallen standing stone lies close to the bank on the eastern side (Luke 2022, 17-18) (Figure 11).



Fig. 11: Fallen standing stone with the remains of the large Round Cairn behind.

It is a heavily weathered piece of limestone pavement 1.5m long. A slight hollow in the turf at its base probably indicates its original position.

Also visible in the eastern half are several distinctive internal revetment stones still *in situ*, large limestone slabs up to 1.6m long (Luke 2022, 20-23) (Figure 12).

There is also a break in the bank in the north-east, which may be indicating an original entrance (Luke 2022, 21-22).



Fig.12: North-east section of the Stone Circle showing limestone revetment slabs with Stone 8 in situ and 7 fallen forward (left); Stone 12 (right)

In the north-west quarter, the bank has been all but eradicated. One of the aims of the survey was to try and identify its likely path. Happily traces survived, visible on the terrace edge as slightly raised areas several centimetres high and supporting a different vegetation rich in mosses (Luke 2022, 23). These slight raised areas are also visible in Hunt's DEM (Figure 5), confirming the results of the painstaking survey. Also in the western half of the circular monument, two large greywacke boulders sit within the footprint of where the bank would have run, had it survived (Figure 13). It is possible they too formed part of the architecture of the stone circle, either its original configuration or a later modified version.



Fig. 13: Greywacke boulders (Stones 20 and 34) sitting on the line of the robbed out Stone Circle

Other greywacke boulders lie scattered around the western half of the complex, pulled out of place and abandoned during one of several phases of destruction (*Figure 10*) (Luke 2022, 26). It is now difficult to be certain which part of the monument complex these came from.

Examination of the survey data supports the conclusion that the Embanked Stone Circle is the earliest visible monument on site though other structures, now invisible, may have preceded it. If the surviving remains are an accurate guide to its original morphology, it appears to have been designed as a circular low stony bank faced internally with stone blocks placed vertical but on their longer axis, acting as a formal revetment to the bank. These facing stones are not high, few of them rising above the height of the bank. They may never have been contiguous, but it is impossible to tell from surface inspection.

The Round Cairn

So much of the great Round Cairn is now missing that inevitably there are aspects of its construction and chronology which will remain unknown. In particular the removal of the entire centre of the mound, where the most important burial(s), structures and deposits are likely to have been placed, is a permanent limitation. Happily, some antiquarian descriptions of the site survive and give us a fuller picture of the monument before it was robbed out. Through combining the results of the survey with surviving documentary information it is possible to build up a clearer, though far from complete, picture of the Round Cairn: what it was built of and how it was constructed (Luke 2022, 32-42).

That this particular area has been long associated with large tumuli is evident from a very local place-name *Howrake Rocks*. *Howrake* was probably the old name for the area later known as Sleights Pasture.

The place-name is of mixed Old English-Norse origin, a combination of two words: 'haugr' meaning a hill or tumuli in Old Scandinavian (Smith 1962, 201-2) and 'hraca' indicating an area of rough unenclosed grazing land for sheep or cattle (Smith 1962, 208). It is probably referencing more than one cairn, as a late 18th century witness described two of similar large size within Sleights Pasture field. John Hutton's *A Tour to the Caves, in the Environs of Ingleborough and Settle in the West Riding of Yorkshire* (1780) portrays a pair of near identical monuments. He and a companion returned to Sleights Pasture to pick up their horses after a day excursion on Ingleborough. 'We could not but observe in this field, two remarkable large heaps of small round stones, at about a quarter of a mile [400 metres] distance from each other, called by country people the *Hurders*.... most probably these mounts were tumuli' (Hutton 1780, 29).



Both the measured survey and the DEM demonstrate it is possible to follow much of the original limit of the Round Cairn, especially in the eastern half of the monument. As can be seen from the photograph (Figure 14), while the interior has been extensively quarried, the outer eastern flanks appear to be intact.

Fig. 14: The remains of Round Cairn looking south towards Ingleborough



The gap between the mound and the Embanked Stone Circle can be easily followed in this half (Figure 15). The gap is not a ditch and does not penetrate the ground. Speight, who visited the site in the late 19th century, described it as a 'narrow aisle' (1892, 256).

Fig. 15: The gap between the bank of the Stone Circle and the Round Cairn

Even in the robbed-out NW quadrant, enough residual material survives to provide a visible edge, and so document the path of the gap between the two monuments. Both the measured survey and the DEM image support the hypothesis that a deliberate defined space was left between the two monuments. Using the recent surveys, it can be estimated that the original body of the Round Cairn was c.25m N-S and 22-23m on its E-W axis, making it very slightly oval in shape (Figure 16).

The original height of the Round Cairn is more difficult to estimate. The best surviving section measures c.2m in height but the original elevation was probably greater than this, 3m or more. Assuming a height of 3m and a summit diameter of 10m, the Round Cairn would contain c.765 cubic metres of material; a height of 4m would require over 1000 cubic metres of material. A substantial amount of stone, earth and human effort was required to erect such a monument.

One of the few advantages to losing well over three-quarters of the Cairn mound to stone robbing and excavation is that we are presented with a random section of the innards of the structure. Much of it is grassed over, but sufficient building material remains visible to give some account of how and with what it was built.

When Hutton saw the cairns in the C18th he was surprised by their makeup: *'there was not one stone scarce to be seen of the kind near them; all the stones in the neighbourhood were limestones, but these were round, sandy, gritty stones'* (Hutton 1780, 29). The description of both cairns being made of rounded sandstone pieces is intriguing, for there are several places on the cairn complex where groups of sandstone pieces can be seen, including one particularly large spread on the best-preserved section of cairn just south of the fallen standing stone (Figure 17). The survey has recorded these and other smaller scatters of sandstone still visible: they provide the best surviving evidence to support Hutton's description of a *pair* of large cairns covered in sandstone. The southernmost one does not survive. Much of the stone from the surviving cairn appears to have been incorporated into the local field walls.

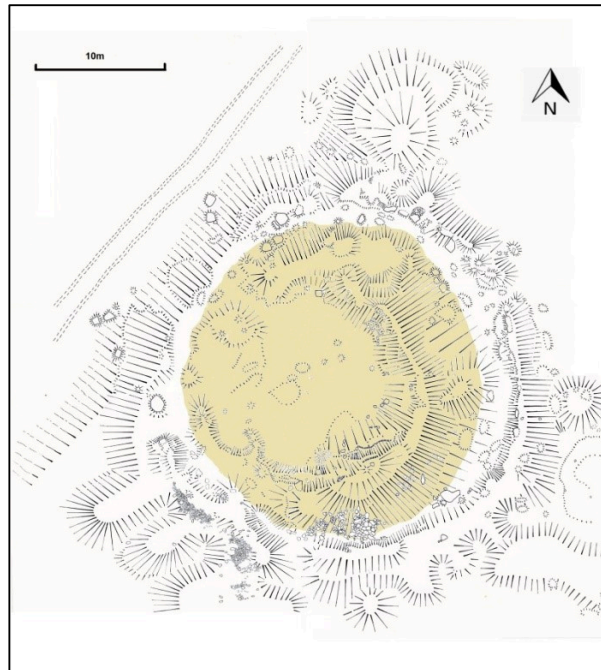


Fig. 16 The approximate footprint of the Round Cairn before it was robbed and excavated



Fig. 17: Scatter of dumped sandstone on the side of the Cairn (left); stones from the cairn in the fieldwall only 140m north of the Cairn (right)

Hutton assumed that sandstone formed the entirety of the two large Cairns. In fact this is not the case and limestone, in various forms, is also present within the cairn body. It looks from the evidence as if sandstones pieces formed but an outer shell of the mounds, a final distinctive covering and potentially the last structural additions to the large Round Cairn. Larger stones survive within the footprint of the Cairn including two rounded boulders c.0.5m visible on a potential kerb line close to each other in the NW quarter. They appear to be *in situ*. The other distinctive material from the Cairn body are areas of clutter, stone pieces of varying sizes but mostly quite small, made up of mixed limestone fragments and sandstone. Some are derived from excavation spoil and survive today in redeposited spreads. Among these scatters, burnt pieces of stone have been identified (Luke 2022, 38-41).

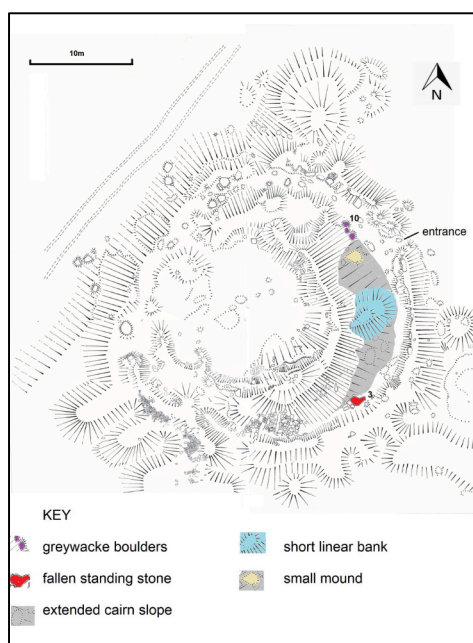


Fig. 18: Survey plan showing the development of the site after the building of the Round Cairn

There is evidence of chronological development on the surviving east flank of the mound in the form of placed stones, a short bank and very small mounds as well as what appears to be an extended lower slope of the Cairn (Figure 18). This area is immediately opposite the NE entrance of the Embanked Stone Circle, and gives the impression of having been used and added to after the erection of the large Round Cairn (Luke 2022, 35). Just outside the bank at this point is a small 5m cairn and the shadowy ring structure, adding to the sense of elaboration in this quarter.

The Linears

Although linear banks radiating from cairns are found elsewhere in the north of England, there are actually few examples and, importantly, nothing resembling the site on Sleights Pasture. This makes for difficulties in their interpretation and probably lies behind their exclusion from the area covered by Historic England in its scheduling (List Entry Number 1010443; <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010443> accessed 17 June 2022). The site was excavated by a mine owner, Mr Tatham, in 1828 and this has led to the reasonable suggestion that these linears are all excavation dumps (Batty 2016). Labourers and, in the Dales, miners were commonly used to do the hard physical work of excavation in the 19th century. There are, however, reasons for doubting this interpretation and these are discussed below.

A general objection to this idea is that evidence on the ground suggests the monument complex has been robbed out and excavated from the west, as it is the western side which is most denuded. Greywacke boulders lie abandoned downslope of the monument, and the field walls containing stones from the site lie to the west and north, as does the gate to the turnpike road. All the linears are to the east and south, on the most intact side of the site. Looking at the ergonomics of stone removal, the difficulty of traversing the steep-sided built gap or 'aisle' with wheelbarrows would be a very real physical problem on this side: the bank revetment would provide a serious obstacle. A further objection is that the debris most likely to derive from excavation again lies on the western side, specifically the SW quadrant, where it obscures the line of the extant but hidden Stone Circle embankment.

All three linear structures seem to postdate the building of the Embanked Stone Circle. The E and SE linears overlap the bank of the Circle and, although the northern end of the S linear is obscured by later dumps of material, it is likely to have the same relationship to the bank. However, all three linears are different in morphology, possibly a further example of an extended chronological development of the site. The E and SE linears are c.15m and 30m respectively, and up to 5m wide. The former appears to have been carefully placed to avoid the shadowy ring/half ring structure, as indeed does the 5m cairn. Or perhaps the shallow ring bank was inserted into the available space between these two structures.

Either way, it suggests none of the structures is modern in origin (Figure 19). The SE linear changes nature and direction after 20m from a single, albeit irregular, earthwork to a series of separate mounds running N-S for the last 10m.

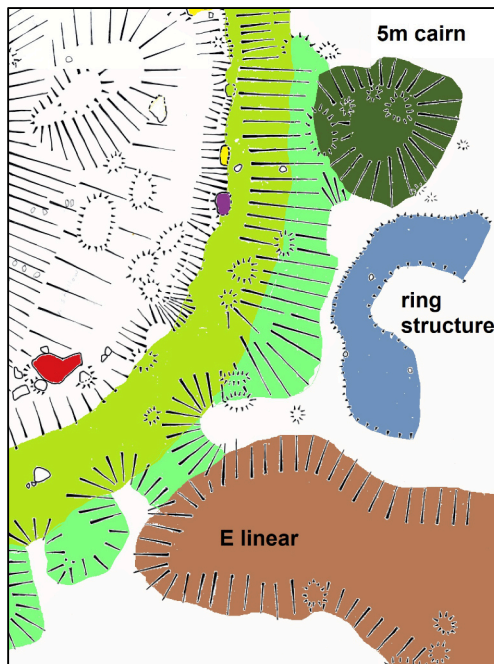


Fig. 19: Detail of the S-E quadrant highlighting the relationship between structures.

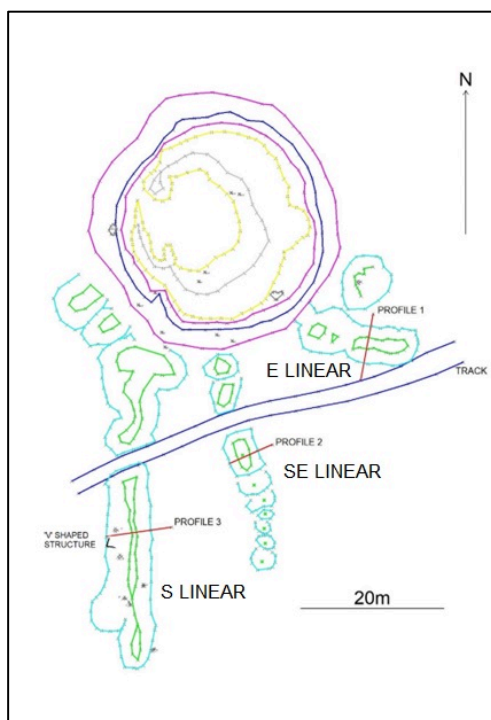


Fig. 20: TST survey showing the position of the 'V' shaped structure on the west side of

Both the E and the SE linears can be seen to overlap the secondary lobes of the bank of the Stone Circle, again suggesting they were built after the embankment was extended.

The S linear is the largest and grandest of the linears: dead straight, c.46m long and built on a N-S axis, it contains over 100 cubic metres of material. The question here is why, if it is an excavation dump, did they bother making such a long one, further and further away from the excavation site, rather than several shorter ones? (Luke 2022, 43-49). Happily there is physical proof of its antiquity in a small but distinctive structure overlying the western side of the bank over halfway down its length (Figure 20). This small 'V' shaped 5 stone setting is all but identical to another example just recently identified at a site 500m due west of Sleights Pasture (**Fig 21**). The latter is found in association with a prehistoric cairnfield, containing a huge variety of cairns and other structures, probably mainly Bronze Age though with potential earlier origins and indeed later reuse. This idiosyncratic almost insignificant feature, of unknown function, provides irrefutable proof of the genuine antiquity of the S Linear.



Fig. 21: 'V' shaped stone setting on S Linear, Sleights Pasture (left) and Haws House Pasture cairn field (right) with 1 metre rule.

Overview of the Monument Complex

An excavation of the monument took place in 1828. No major cists or burials were mentioned, which implies the site may have already been partly destroyed, but the excavator, a mine owner called John Tatham, discovered several artefacts recorded in the perfunctory newspaper article (Fell 1953, 3) rediscovered by Batty (2016). Their descriptions are suggestive of a Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead, a Beaker-period pottery vessel and a Middle Bronze Age spearhead, though until the finds are located this remains speculative. The artefacts potentially indicate a long period of use and adaptation – possibly from the (late?) Neolithic period (c.3000 BCE-2500 BCE), through the Beaker period (c.2400 BCE-2100 BCE) into the Middle Bronze Age (mid-2nd millennium BCE).

Now that the separate natures and identities of the Embanked Stone Circle, the Round Cairn and the linears have been established, it is possible to suggest that these monuments show great chronological depth. Using the surveys, it is feasible to construct a relative chronology for the Sleights Pasture monuments based on their visible surface stratigraphy and physical relationships.

The Embanked Stone Circle is the earliest visible monument on site. It belongs to a complex and heterogeneous group of monuments which, although traditionally clumped together within this morphological definition, do not belong to the same period nor fulfil the same functions. Due to lack of extensive up-to-date data on this type of stone circle, one is reduced to sweeping generalisations, but the earliest ones may date to the first few centuries of the 3rd millennium BCE and belong to the late Neolithic. Therefore, they would be contemporary with one of the main periods of 'traditional' stone circle building in the British Isles. The later ones, smaller in size, appear to have more in common with Early and Middle Bronze Age monument traditions – Casterton Embanked Stone Circle, erroneously identified as the site of the 1828 excavation by Clare Fell (1953, 3), is just such a monument. The use of the term 'Embanked Stone Circle' therefore has severe limitations as a clear, datable and self-explanatory category of prehistoric monuments.

It is not known if the Round Cairn was built incrementally over time or in one go, but ultimately it formed a substantial mound which occupied most of the interior of the Embanked Stone Circle, leaving a gap between the Cairn and the Circle bank. The large Round Cairn is therefore a critical and major alteration to the site, changing its character and purpose forever and rendering the original function of the Embanked Stone Circle obsolete.

It is tempting to associate the creation of this structure with the Beaker period and the arrival of a new post-Neolithic culture arriving in the Pennines, but at the moment this is merely a hypothesis. The apparent addition of extra cairn features on its north-east flank close to the entrance to the Embanked Stone Circle is also suggestive of later subsequent use and development of the mound.

The linear banks are patently additions which postdate the creation of the Embanked Stone Circle. However, given that the interior of the Stone Circle was rendered inaccessible by the building of the Round Cairn at a critical turning point in the use of the site, can the linears be interpreted in terms of a serious desire to maintain the importance of the complex and develop further roles for it into the late 3rd millennium or later? This overview attempts to provide an initial working hypothesis for the development of the site. The reality is likely to be much more complex.

Further details are available in the published report *A 'Druid's Temple' between Ingleborough and Ribbleshead: Sleights Pasture Monument Complex* (Luke 2022), available for download on the Ingleborough Archaeology Group website. Further research is being undertaken, both in searching for specific parallels and identifying a wider archaeological context for the monumental structures seen at Sleights Pasture. While the complex as a whole may be unique, some of its elements have parallels elsewhere. This research survey, undertaken by the Ingleborough Archaeology Group through the most demanding (wetter and colder!) months of the year, demonstrates both how little we currently know about this long period of monument building in the Yorkshire Dales and how detailed fieldwork and survey can enrich our understanding. Geophysical survey of the site is planned for March 2024, under the direction of Rick Peterson of the University of Central Lancashire and as part of a wider archaeology project designed by Doug Mitcham of the YDNPA. The results of this fieldwork are eagerly anticipated.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks are due to: Rodney Beresford, the farmer at Sleights Pasture, for his permission and warm support; Andrew Hinde, of Natural England ditto; Tony Hunt for his exquisite UAV surveys; Arthur Batty and Mark Simpson for use of their research and photographs.

The IAG survey team worked very hard in often inclement weather: the survey and subsequent report would not have happened without their efforts: John Cuthbert, David Gibson, Clare Leigh, Vicki Lewis, Bob Moore, Sarah Moorhouse, Mike Short and Di Millen, Dianne Wall.

Finally, my dear friend Abigail Nixon, who seems to have driven me over to Sleights Pasture an inordinate number of times.

Bibliography

Batty, A. 2016. *Could this be the answer to who excavated the large cairn in Sleights Pasture Chapel-le-Dale?*

Available online; accessed August 2022:

<http://www.ingleborougharchaeology.org.uk/Sleights%20Cairn.pdf>

Fell, C. 1953. A Beaker burial on Sizergh Fell near Kendal. *Transactions of the Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society*. 53, 1-5. Kendal, Titus Wilson & Sons Ltd.

Historic England. 2018. *Graphical and Plane Table Survey of Archaeological Earthworks*. Available online: accessed May 2020. See Historic England website

[Graphical and Plane Table Survey of Archaeological Earthworks](#)

Hutton J. 1780. *A Tour to the Caves, in the Environs of Ingleborough and Settle in the West Riding of Yorkshire*. Kendal, Richardson and Urquhart, J. Robson, and W. Pennington

Luke Y. 2013. *Neolithic Long Mounds of the Yorkshire Dales and allied structures. First interim report: towards a resource assessment*. Black Shiver Press (privately published)

Luke Y. 2022. *A 'Druid's Temple' between Ingleborough and Ribbleshead: Sleights Pasture Monument Complex*. Ingleborough Archaeology Group, Ingleton

Ó Ríordáin S.P. 1951. Lough Gur excavations: the great stone circle (B) in Grange townland. *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 54C, 37–74

Smith A. H. 1962. *The Place-names of the West Riding of Yorkshire Part Seven: Introduction, Bibliography, River-names, Analyses*. *English Place-name Society*. Vol xxxvi. Cambridge, University Press

Speight H. 1892 *The Craven and North-West Yorkshire Highlands*. re-print 1989 by Smith Settle, Otley

[Download](#)

Ingleborough's Shieling Sites: Investigation of three Isolated Structures

David S Johnson

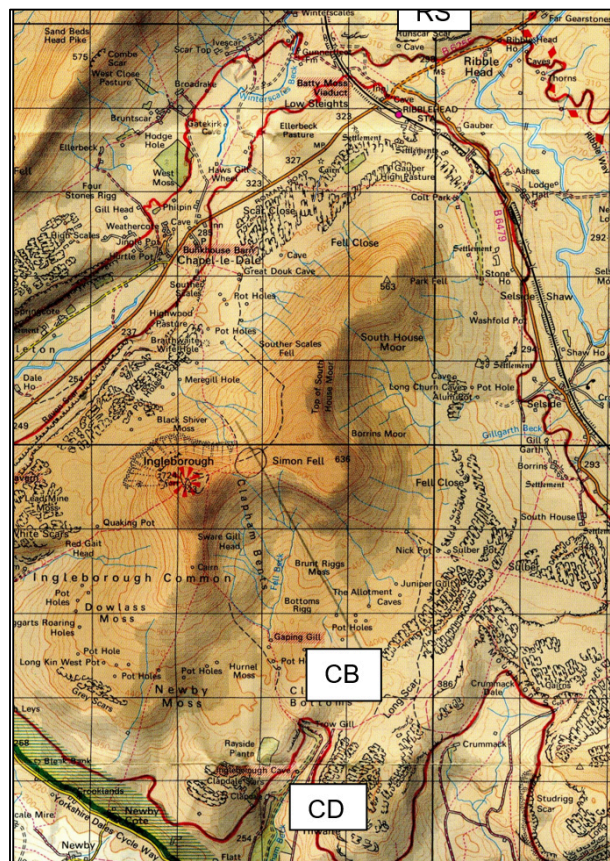
[Contents](#)

From 2021-23 members of Ingleborough Archaeology Group undertook archaeological investigations of three isolated structures around Ingleborough: at Runscar Scar on Blea Moor, and in Clapdale and Clapham Bottoms in Clapham parish. The investigations were to test the hypotheses that the sites would prove to be shieling sites from either the early medieval (ie Anglo-Saxon) period or the high medieval (ie post-Conquest) era.

Introduction

The Runscar Scar site lies in the south-east corner of Blea Moor, at SD76561 79716. The Clapdale site lies above and to the east of the valley of Clapdale at the northern end of Clapdale Wood, at SD75341 7066 (Fig. 1). The Clapham Bottoms site lies in the north-east corner of that stinted pasture between a derelict field wall and the stockproof parish boundary wall, at SD75986 72338.

At Runscar Scar the ground surface is broadly level to the east and west but falls gently to the south with a limestone outcrop forming a marked break of slope on the north side.



*Fig.1 Location of the three sites. CB – Clapham Bottoms, CD – Clapdale, RS – Runscar Scar
(© Crown copyright and database rights 2014)*

About the author

David Johnson is an independent landscape archaeologist who has been leading a long-term programme of research into Anglo-Saxon-period settlement sites around Ingleborough. He was Chair of the Ing Arch Group for over 12 years and is now Hon. President.

The Clapdale site lies on level ground with the surface dropping sharply immediately west of the site to Clapdale Beck but rising gently to the east towards the foot of Thwaite Scars.

The Clapham Bottoms site lies on a level terrace with the ground surface dropping markedly to the west.

In each case, rectangular wall footings with partial turf cover are visible on the ground. No wall exceeds 500mm above the surrounding ground level.

Pre-excavation, the Runscar Scar structure was measured externally as 4m by 2.5m, aligned NE-SW on its long axis (Fig. 2); the Clapdale structure 9.5m on its long NE-SW axis by 4.5m on the short NW-SE axis (Fig. 3); and the Clapham Bottoms structure 5.5m internally on the long east-west axis by 2.3m on the short north-south axis (Fig. 4)

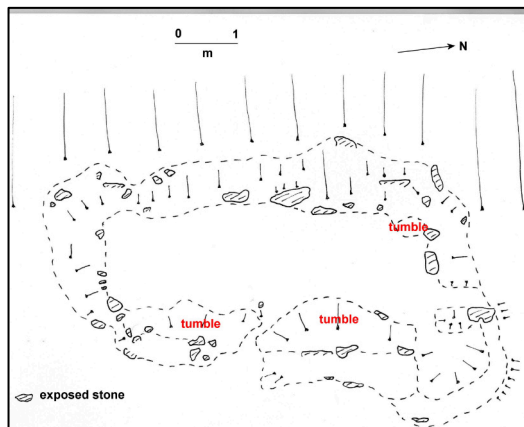


Fig. 2 Runscar Scar: detailed plan of structures D1 and D2

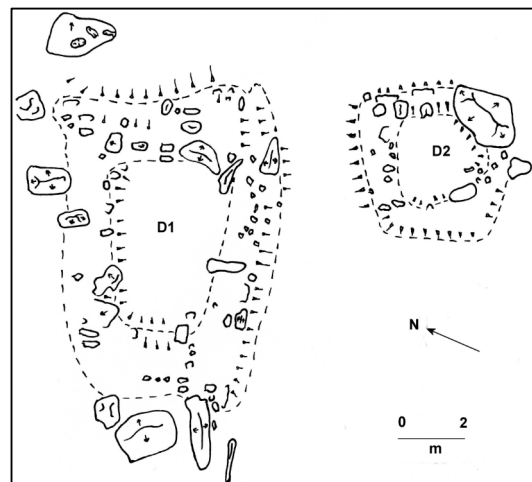


Fig. 3 Clapdale: measured plan of the excavated structure

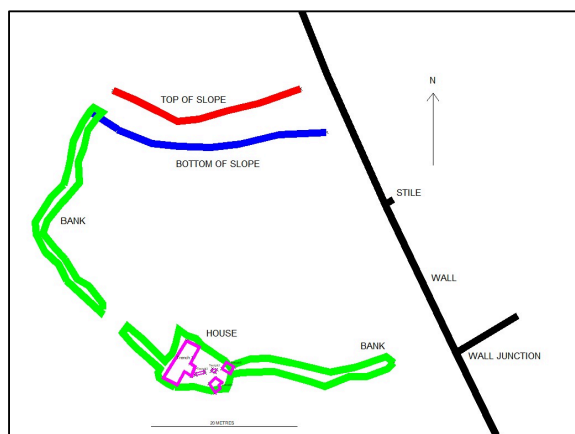


Fig. 4 Clapham Bottoms: total station plot of site components. Excavated areas are outlined in purple. (By John Cuthbert)

Project Aims

The aims of the project can be summarised as:

1. To investigate the various structures' full ground plans and detailed internal morphology, including any internal walls, to determine constructional methods and materials. For example, were the floors earthen, paved or set on bedrock; were there entry points into the buildings, and could external thresholds be identified?
2. To interpret what the three sites' original functions might have been, whether permanent dwellings or seasonal shieling huts.
3. To secure dating evidence from recorded finds (rf) – charcoal, bone, ceramics and metalwork – logged from the sites to compare them with early-medieval dates obtained for other excavated sites around Ingleborough.

Methodology

Desk-based assessment

As there is a limited amount of published or grey literature available that is directly relevant to the sites, an extensive search was undertaken to gather archival and grey material. This was carried out as part of an ongoing early-medieval research project led by me, with the participation of volunteers from the Ingleborough Archaeology Group, the Upper Wharfedale Heritage Group, and members of the public.

Measured plan and total station surveys

A tape-and-offset measured survey plan and a total station plan were drawn of the structures on each site and their immediate surroundings, following English Heritage guidelines.

Geophysics

Geophysical surveying was undertaken at all three sites prior to excavation. At Clapdale a gridded gradiometry survey was led by Dr Roger Martlew of the Yorkshire Dales Landscape Research Trust (YDLRT). The Clapham Bottoms site is very heavily masked by dislodged limestone blocks so it was not feasible to lay out a grid, therefore geophysical surveying was carried out using the gradiometer in scan mode, as was also done at Runscar Scar.

Excavation

Targeted excavation and ground surveying were directed and supervised by the author.

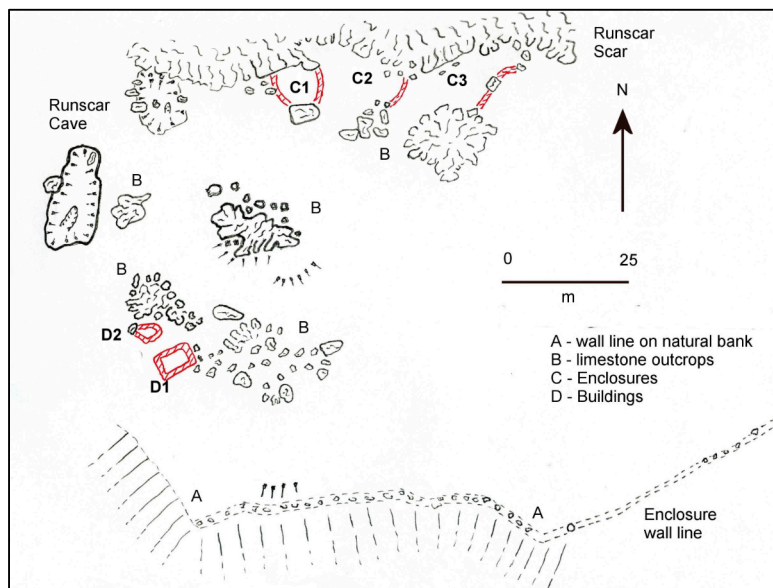


Fig. 5 Runscar Scar: overall site plan. Numbers discussed in text

Site morphology

Runscar

The Runscar Scar site was accorded the site code RS. There are two small features adjacent to each other: the larger one (D1, Fig. 5 and see Fig. 2) has a surface area of c. 13.5m²; the smaller (D2) c. 3m². Two-thirds of the smaller feature was excavated, with one trench, and about one-third of the larger feature with

another trench. The excavation lasted five days, including backfilling, with eight volunteers on site each day. The structure is bounded by substantial double-skin, dry-stone dwarf walls, centred on SD76562 79718. Internally the main pre-excavation earthwork had side walls seemingly 1.2m in width and gable walls c. 1.5m. The structure is aligned north-east to south-west and was constructed entirely of substantial limestone or sandstone blocks.

No more than 2m from the main structure is a second, less substantial, stone-built structure backed onto a large outcrop of limestone; in plan form, this structure appeared to be either sub-rounded or squared, 1.5m in width and length. Excavation by test pits proved it to be squared on the north side but rounded on the opposite side. Its walls were estimated, prior to excavation, to be 700mm in width. Nestling beneath the south-facing edge of Runscar Scar, c. 75m north-east of the two structures, is a linear complex of three small enclosures interpreted as coeval stock folds (C on Fig. 5). The northern edge of all three is the 2m+ scar, while the southern edge is largely composed of three large outcropping blocks of limestone. Joining these two long edges and separating the three folds are lengths of stone-cored banking. The complex of structures and stock folds is bounded on the south by a 120m-long stone-cored bank (A on Fig. 5) running for approximately 50m as a free-standing stone bank laid on glacial till deposits from its eastern end at SD76676 79708. The rest of the feature – code B – is seen as a stone-cored bank laid along the edge of a low limestone scar, running from a sharp change of alignment at SD76630 79689 to terminate c. 30m due south of D1 at SD76569 79691.

Approximately 200m east of the main complex is a second, 40 m-long, stone-cored bank aligned roughly north-south from a very small limestone scar at SD76810 79729. The two upper sections are double-skinned with some massive limestone boulders visible while the curving stretch is single-skinned with only glacially-rounded sandstone boulders visible. This feature is interpreted as a coeval stock control measure and the existence of a shallow gully, with an intermittent rivulet, just to the east and also aligned roughly north-south, may have had some significance in the layout of the stone banks here.

Clapdale

The Clapdale site (code CD) primarily consists of a small rectangular structure bounded by double-skin, dry-stone dwarf walls, centred on SD75340 70696. Internally the pre-excavation side walls were seemingly 1.2m in width with gable walls c. 1.5m. Much of the stonework from the west wall has slipped downslope over time. Other features recognised within the immediate locality are a 130m-long stone-cored bank running in a curvilinear manner south-eastwards from the main structure (Fig. 6).

The excavation was concentrated within the structure and on three magnetic anomalies highlighted by the gradiometer survey outside the structure. Six trenches or test pits were delimited. Of the total area of the structure, c. 43m², less than about one-quarter, was excavated. The objectives here were to expose one or more gable walls, two internal and external corners, including a bulbous projection in the north-east corner, and part of the internal space. Excavation took five days including backfilling, and a maximum of twelve volunteers were involved on site.



Fig. 6 Clapdale: main structure with the stone-cored bank plotted on a Google Earth image as a white line with major boulders shown in black and excavated areas outlined in red. (John Cuthbert)

Clapham Bottoms

The Clapham Bottoms site (code CB) sits on the edge of a limestone terrace overlooking the bowl that is the Bottoms; the terrace is covered with exposed or vegetated limestone pavement, at an altitude of 380m AOD. The site consists of a small rectangular structure, aligned east-west, at NGR SD75986 72388.

A slightly curving, stone-cored bank runs off each end of the structure eastwards and westwards then northwards but with no obvious joining bank along the northern side. The rectangular structure is seen as grass-covered dwarf walls of variable width; internally the structure measures c. 5.5m long by c. 2.3m wide and externally c. 9m by 5.5m. The dwarf walls are composed entirely of limestone ripped from adjacent limestone pavement surfaces; they take the form of double-skin walls faced with large blocks and infilled with limestone rubble.

The total area in this feature is c. 12m². Small test pits, rather than trenches, were deemed more appropriate for such a small structure. Excavation here took four days, including restitution, with eight to ten volunteers on site each day.

Results

Runscar

All charcoal samples from Runscar were analysed and identified, with four offering good potential for radiocarbon dating. Thirteen animal bone fragments were analysed and identified. Two samples of charcoal were submitted for radiocarbon dating: rf 112 (alder/hazel) and rf 114 (hazel) both from the layer immediately above a flagged occupation level in the main structure. Rf 112 returned a radiocarbon age of 1172±22 years and rf 114 returned the almost identical 1190±25 years. At the 95.4% confidence level rf 112 was calibrated to 772-955 cal AD and rf 114 to 772-944 cal AD. One sample of animal bone – an *Equus* metatarsal – returned a radiocarbon age of 547±24 years. At the 95.4% confidence level, a date range of 1323-1429 cal AD was obtained; at the 68.3% level, its date range is 1329-1423 cal AD.

The Shielings Project set out hypothesising that the three selected sites would prove to be summer shieling sites either from the Anglo-Saxon or the post-Conquest/high medieval period. Given the isolated location of the Runscar Scar site and the very small nature of the two built structures, along with the two enclosure banks, the evidence strongly points to the site only having been occupied during the summer months rather than year-round. The discovery of an obvious hearth in the larger of the two structures suggests that it had been a domestic structure as opposed to being used for just keeping animals.

The flagged floor also points to the larger structure having been for people rather than livestock. It can be perceived as a shieling site.

The two contrasting date ranges from the charcoal and bone samples, supported by the later provenance of a horseshoe, support the contention that the site was in use in one way or another over an extended length of time – potentially 600 years (770s to 1420s).

From the dating evidence obtained, however, it cannot be surmised that the site was in continuous use as a summer shieling through such a long period.

Clapdale

Thirty samples of charcoal were logged and examined, half of which showed promise for dating. Three were submitted for dating but returned conflicting determinations. From Trench 3 rf 106 was a sample of *Prunus* charcoal: it returned a radiocarbon age of 1214 ± 24 years BP. At the 95.4% confidence level, the calibrated date range was 707-886 cal AD, whereas at 89.5 % it was 772-886 cal AD placing it within the middle of the Anglo-Saxon era.

At the 68.3 % probability level, the date range was 785-876 cal AD. Broadly speaking, these date ranges are what was hypothesised for the structure.

However, two samples from Trench 4 returned contrasting date ranges, both from the basal level of the trench: rf 119 returned a radiocarbon age of 3493 ± 24 years BP. At the 95.4% confidence level, a date range of 1888-1744 cal BC was obtained whereas at the 68.3 % level, the range was 1880-1768 cal BC, almost the same as at two sigma. Within the one-sigma range, at 46.1%, the date range tightened to 1829-1768 cal BC. These date ranges place these samples within the Early to Middle Bronze Age. Sample 128 was also logged from the same context returning a radiocarbon age of 2726 ± 24 years BP. At the 95.4 % confidence level, it returned a date range of 915-815 cal BC while at the 68.3 % level, it returned 897-831 cal BC. Therefore, this sample dates to the very end of the Bronze Age or the Bronze Age/Iron Age transition.

Because of the conflicting date ranges – Early/Middle and Late Bronze Age within Trench 4 and an early medieval date range from Trench 3 – a fourth sample (rf 116 from Trench 4) was sent for radiocarbon determination. This did nothing to resolve the matter. The radiocarbon age returned was 3625 ± 24 BP. The determination was 2117-2098 cal BC at 95.4 % probability and 2038-1900 cal BC at 91.6 %. At the 68.3 % level, it was 2026-1949 cal BC. Thereby, as with rf 119, placing the sample within the Early to Middle Bronze Age with only a 132-year difference in radiocarbon age from rf 116.

It was clear, most convincingly in Trench 6, that the structure's walls had been designed and built to last; with width varying from 1m to 1.3m and with large limestone blocks laid to create a double-skin wall with rubble infill, it was a substantial structure. This would suggest that it was not something thrown up for one season or a short lifespan but was meant to endure. Similarly, the long stone-cored bank associated with the site was sturdily built and equally impressive in scale.

The only dated material from this site that was closely associated with the structure was the charcoal from Trench 3, so, the structure should probably be seen as dating from the early medieval era between 772 and 886 cal AD (at 89.5 % probability) with evidence of late-prehistoric activity at deeper levels. Excavation showed that it was a building with dwarf stone walls: what came out of Trench 3 strongly points to the presence of a hearth within the structure, strongly indicating human habitation. Its small size probably precludes permanent occupation; the long enclosure bank suggests livestock management. There is a high level of probability that this site was indeed a summer shieling hut.

Clapham Bottoms

Owing to the small size of the site, excavation was limited to one trench and four small test pits. Perhaps understandably for such a small and geographically isolated structure, no evidence of material culture was revealed through excavation: no artefacts, bone, charcoal or hearth structure, thus no absolute dating evidence was secured. However, samples of burnt flaggy sandstone were seen within the structure's interior and on the west gable wall which were interpreted as having originated in a hearth which was most probably situated at the western end of the structure. Given that most of the burnt stone was found on the inner side of the west gable wall, at its southern end, this may suggest that the hearth was located within a wall recess here. It is stressed, though, that this remains hypothetical as no in-situ physical proof was found, though some evidence of a paved floor was seen within the wall recess at the south-west corner and in the trench extension, taking the form of small limestone slabs laid flat and contiguously.

Two key questions need to be addressed. First, was this site a shieling hut or a structure occupied by livestock, though clearly not cattle owing to the structure's small size? The presence of fragments of burnt stone strongly suggests a hearth and therefore that the structure was used for habitation: a small stock building would not have required a hearth. Its small size, the lack of adjacent buildings and the simplicity of the site as a whole preclude its having been a permanently-occupied farmstead.

The two stone-cored banks provided a haven for corralling livestock overnight, but no more. Second, can this site be ascribed to the early medieval or the high medieval period? The only, admittedly circumstantial, evidence that can be brought to bear is the morphology of the structure's corners: the squared/rounded template seen here is known from many pre-Conquest sites around Ingleborough but not from later ones.

Conclusion

The project set out with the two hypotheses discussed above. First, all three sites are indeed interpreted as summer shielings.

Second, Runscar provided two radiocarbon date ranges associated with hearth material firmly within the Anglo-Saxon era (late 8th to mid 10th century) as well as one from the monastic era (early 14th to early 15th century); in addition, the horseshoe could have been coeval with this later date range or up to a century later. Clapdale provided one date range from the Anglo-Saxon era associated with hearth material (beginning of the 8th to the late 9th century) as well as three late prehistoric date ranges (Early Bronze/Mid Bronze/Late Bronze/early Iron Age) from a greater depth within the building.

Clapham Bottoms did not produce any absolute dating evidence, though the morphology of some of the corners does give circumstantial evidence that fits the local Anglo-Saxon template.

Therefore, it can be suggested that two of the sites – Runscar and Clapdale – were occupied as shielings in the Anglo-Saxon period either continuing or being continued by occupation on site from earlier or later eras: however, this does not equate to an unbroken continuum of occupation on either site. The Clapham Bottoms site's attribution must remain conjectural – it may have been in use in the Anglo-Saxon period.

[Download](#)

High Hunsley, Excavating a Medieval Village in the Yorkshire Wolds

Leon Corneille-Cowell

[Contents](#)

Deserted medieval villages are common in the British landscape. This paper aims to examine and disseminate the community-led excavations at High Hunsley run by Ethos Heritage since the summer of 2022. This article will discuss the current findings of the excavation and what can be inferred from them so far, as well as High Hunsley's significance in the study of rural medieval settlements.

Introduction

Deserted Medieval villages (DMV) are a common sight in the British countryside, with 2000-3000 currently known (Robinson 2021, 120). These sites are often nothing more than building outlines plotted into fields, remaining as ephemeral reminders of communities that once lived, worked, worshipped, and died on these sites, with complex layouts hinting at social microcosms within them that belay layers of occupation and repair (Steane 1984, 185). These sites have been an area of interest for archaeologists and historians alike since the excavation of Wharram Percy in the mid-20th century (Hurst 2016, 251; Stamper 2009, 332). As well, further sites include Cowlam, Wawne, Eske, and Riseholme (Brewster and Hayfield 1988; English and Miller 1991; Hayfield 1984; Thompson 1960). Beginning in 2022, Ethos Heritage has undertaken a community-led project to excavate the previously uninvestigated DMV at High Hunsley located in the East Riding of Yorkshire (BBC Humberside 2022; Corneille-Cowell 2023).

History of the village

The village was first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 with 10.8 households under the Bishop of Durham and Hugh, son of Baldric (Powell Smith and Palmer 2011). Slater notes in 1907 that enclosure was enacted in the area in 1795 (Slater 1907).

About the author

Leon is a BSc student at the University of York and finds processing officer at Ethos Heritage. He is starting an Msc in Funerary Archaeology at the University of York in September 2024



Fig. 1: High Hunsley, from the air, taken from the north-west (Barr 2023)

It then disappeared for several centuries from the record before being noted in 1823 in Baines' *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of York* stating that Hunsley was "a place of some consequence," where "the foundations of ancient buildings are sometimes dug up" (Baines 1823, 358). It was noted on several ordnance survey maps (Figures 2 & 3) of the area showed a 'Hunsley House' which has been demolished and replaced with a working farm, it's likely this Hall was built after the abandonment of the village.

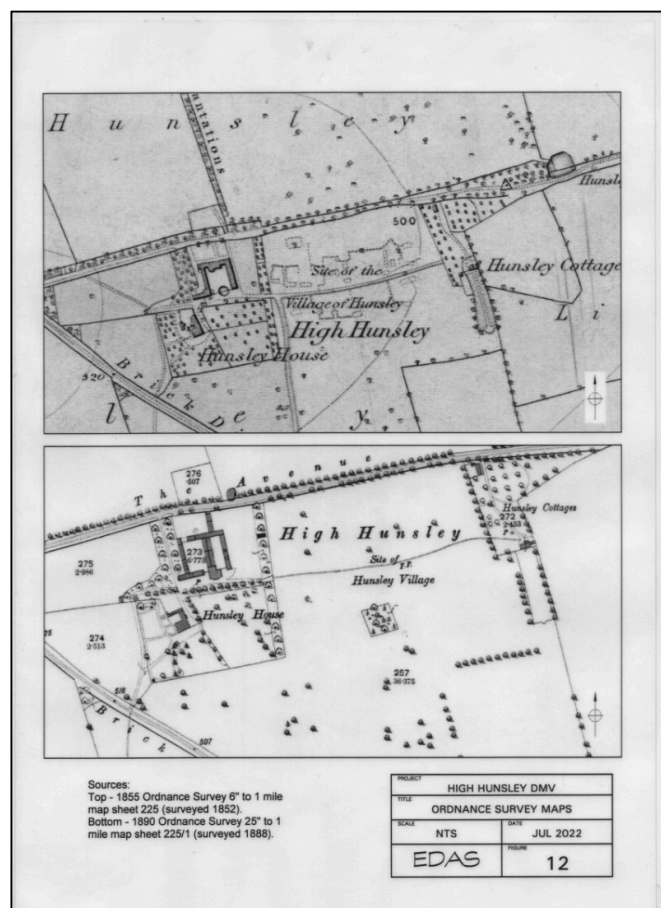


Fig. 2 The village appearing on the OS map (Ordnance survey 1855)

Fig. 3: The village appearing on the OS map along with Hunsley House (Ordnance Survey 1890)

The area is located on the Yorkshire Wolds which are geologically composed of a raised layer of Chalk. It is surrounded by Brough, Beverley, Newbald and North/South Cave. Archaeologically the area has bronze age barrows, a Roman settlement in Brough (Petuaria) and Newbald and several other Medieval sites including an Anglo-Saxon execution cemetery (Buckberry and Hadley 2007; Faull 1974, 7; Wachter 1966; Williams 1998, 73).

Pre-Excavation works

Surveys on the site had previously been undertaken from the years 2019 to 2022; several non-invasive surveys were carried out on the site including topographical, magnetometry, and resistivity, as well as drone surveys by local groups including East Riding Archaeology Society (ERAS), the Roman Road Research Association (RRRA) and Historic England (Ethos Heritage 2022a, 3; Ethos Heritage 2022b, 3). The results of this are shown in Figure 4 which shows clear outlines of several buildings including houses, a trackway and a possible church or Roman signal tower predating the rest of the village.



*Fig. 4: The Geophysics of the site, on a north-south orientation
(RRRA James Lyall)*

2022 Excavations

Excavations began in the summer months of 2022 and lasted for three weeks. They were run by three experienced archaeologists, several student trainees and 126 community participants including retirees, families, and local groups of children in care and special needs children (Ethos Heritage 2022a, 4). This was done under the academic advice of Dr Helen Fenwick of Hull University and the Medieval Settlement Research Group (MRSG 2017; University of Hull 2023). The excavation itself consisted of two trenches (Figure 5), Trench 1 (T1) and Trench 5 (T5). T1 was an open area 10 x 10 metre trench and T2 was L shaped 10 metres east to west and 6 metres north to south. The turf was removed by hand due to practical issues with machinery. This seeming misfortune was beneficial in the end as many of the finds were close (less than 30cm) to the topsoil and would have been lost if a machine had been used. The remains of a possible wall were discovered in T5 towards the end of the excavation. T2 had a section that was less stony but richer in finds, specifically animal bones, which could indicate there was a yard or midden where waste was disposed of.

A detailed account of the 2022 excavations can also be found in [CBA Yorkshire Forum Volume 9; pages 180-195](#)



Fig. 5: A plan of the site from 2022 with trenches, from left T1 and then T2 (Coates and Hunt 2023)

The Finds of 2022

Most of the finds occurred in T1 due to its size and depth, particularly a large deposit on the west side of the trench in a layer of loose soil without inclusions. Overall, a large (15.8kg) amount of animal bones showing cut and butchery marks was found, as well as many teeth; animals identified as belonging to Cow, Horse, Dog and Pig (Ethos Heritage 2022a, 9). The most unusual find was a piece of worked bone with unclear purpose.

A large assemblage (11.7kg) of pottery was found (Corneille-Cowell 2023). This included medieval glazed and Green glazed (including Beverley and Humber ware), local Humber ware, Shell tempered ware, Coarse ware, and Grey slip ware (Ethos Heritage 2022a, 10). This included several jug handles. Most of the pottery was of local craft but there was some from further afield such as Shell tempered which dates from the 11th century and originates in Lincolnshire (Watkins 1991,76). The Coarse Grey and other unglazed wares found are hard to date and were thought to date from earlier, but Beresford and Hurst (1971) suggest it was for crude vessels with utilitarian purposes such as cooking. The large amount of beer jugs found led to speculation that the building may have been the village tavern (Brown 2022).

Finally, there was a varied collection of metal objects and glass, metal objects included six iron knives (Figure 6), three copper alloy pins and strap end and similar personal items as well as many iron nails (which are common in DMV's) and stone working tools (Beresford and Hurst 1971, 140; Ethos Heritage 2022a, 8). Pieces of window lead were also found in T1, further supporting the argument of a non-typical medieval building that was built by someone with status.

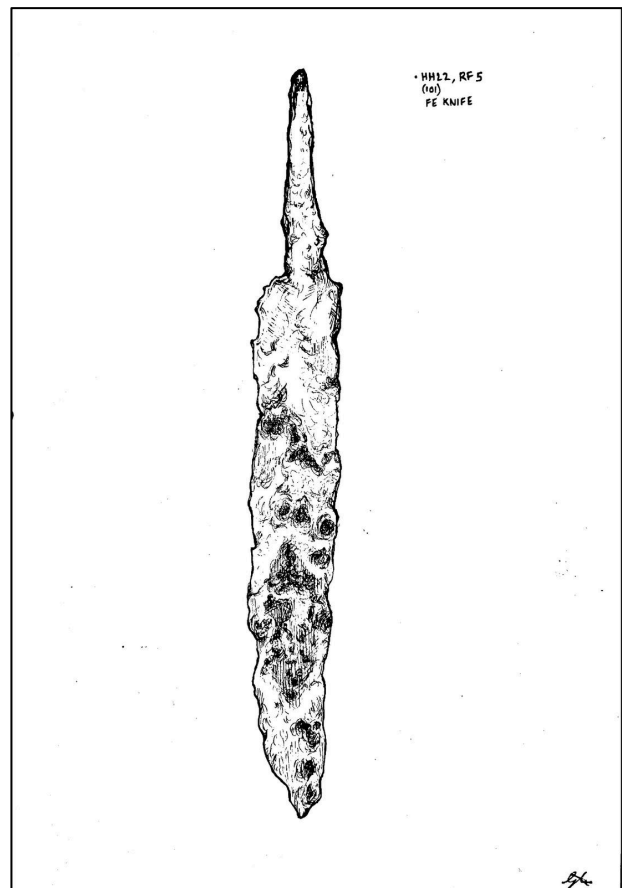


Fig.6: A sketch of the knife (Lee 2023)

2023 Excavations

Excavations ran for 4 weeks beginning on 16th July and ended 14th August. It included a multinational team consisting of Americans, Canadians, Swedish, Japanese and many locals and there were up to 40 participants on-site each day.



Fig.7: A site plan of the 2023 excavations, from left to right T4, T3, T1 and T2 (Coates and Hunt 2023)



Fig. 8: From left to right trench 3, 1, 2, on a north-south orientation (Barr 2023)



Fig. 9: Trench 4, where the suspected church was located on a north-south

This expansion allowed for several trenches to be in progress at once (Figure 7); including a large square with a dogleg offshoot that expanded on the wall found in T2 in 2022 (15m EW x 25m NS)(Figure 8), a square in a similar spot to 2022 (T3) (10m x10m), a strip over the area of T1 and a square in the corner where the suspected church is located (T4) (10m x 10m+2m NS x 19m EW)(Figure 9).

Trench 4 found areas of modern waste such as iron nails and asbestos but eventually discovered a wall (Figure 10) and an area with no inclusions or finds, possibly a man-made ditch.



Fig.10: The high-status building wall in the northeast corner of T4 (Authors own 2023)



Fig. 11: The window arch found by the landowner's husband on the suspected church site (Authors own 2023)

The stone along with the prior discovery of an early gothic window (Figure 11) (now kept in the landowner's garden) has led to speculation that the building may have been a small ecclesiastical building as was theorised after the geophysics.

Conversations with Helen Fenwick confirmed the building's high status, while conversations with archaeologists from Beverley Minster have confirmed the stone was the same material as that used in the minster and Newbald Church. The building showed signs of deliberate demolition.

Trench 2 extended to where the wall was discovered in 2022 and the outline of a small building was found. Despite its size, its walls are solid, suggesting a non-domestic building of utility, a workshop or a stable have both been hypothesised.

The Finds of 2023

The finds from 2023 followed a similar trend to those of 2022 with dateable pottery (23kg) including Beverley ware (2.6kg), Humber ware (4.78kg), Cistercian (0.082kg), Purple ware (0.251kg), Grey ware (5.76kg) and Oxidised ware (9kg). This dates the site to the 12th-15th century as Beverley was in used 12th-14th, Humber ware in 14th-15th centuries and Purple ware/Cistercian 15th-16th centuries.

The pottery was distributed unevenly across the trenches with 17.7kg being in Trench 2, 4kg in Trench 3 and 1.2kg in Trench 4. The forms of the pottery found range from fine ware and coarser ware with evidence of burning possibly used for cooking, handles, rims, and bases as well as several bunghole/cistern pieces (Medieval Pottery Research Group 1998, 4.5).

A variety of animal bones ranging from rabbits and rodents to horses including signs of butchery and burning, a common feature in DMV's (Beresford and Hurst 1971, 138).

Ferrous objects including many nails and unidentified objects were found as well as knives and horseshoes. Copper alloy finds including more jewellery and a possible mount fragment (Figure 12) were found.

Several pieces of iron slag attached to flint have been found, further supporting the idea of a workshop, as with the nails, though the

horseshoe may suggest a stable it could also lean towards the workshop theory (Beresford and Hurst 1971, 140).



*Fig. 12: A copper alloy mount fragment
(Coates 2023)*

Discussion

During the 2022 excavation, it was found that the artificial platform was possibly the remains of a high-status building; possibly the remains of the local alehouse, something which has never been investigated archaeologically before (Brown 2022). It is more likely the remains of a house of some status, a person who was middle class rather than the average person's dwelling.

Finds were found on site that dated it between the 11th and 16th century, with the date of abandonment being possibly post-medieval. The pottery found on site was of a similar variety to that found in excavations in Beverley, demonstrating some exchange between urban and rural sites (Armstrong 1980; Disbury 2011; Didsbury 2005; Didsbury and Watkins 1992; Watkins 1991).

Pottery changed throughout the centuries due to fashion and technological changes such as darker wares and vessel forms (Cumberbatch 2003).

Kilns producing the type of oxidised orange ware found on site have been excavated at places like Holme-Upon-Spalding-Moor (Mayes and Hayfield 1980, 103). Cistercian ware kilns have been excavated in other locations in Yorkshire, along with the amount of decorated ware suggesting localised trade and an open village economy (Beresford and Hurst 1971, 142; Mayes, Pirie and Le Patourel 1966; Woodrow 1971). It would be interesting to apply Jervis's (2022) theoretical framework to High Hunsley once it has been excavated more, however, currently the site is still too little uncovered for that.

As mentioned previously, there are around 2,000 DMVs in the UK, with some historians noting this abandonment as being a Europe-wide phenomenon (Dyer 1982, 19), with 123 sites being in the East Riding of Yorkshire (Fenwick and Turner 2023). Reasons for abandonment have long been discussed on site including the known reasons such as Plague (Green 2022, 125; Hurst 2016, 251), Enclosure (Robinson 2021, 134) and more regionally, the Pilgrimage of Grace (Davies 1968). The village was mentioned in several letters by a Friar of St Roberts in Knaresborough as a gathering point for the rebellion, which may possibly explain the church and its demolition (Altazin 2011, 182).

Conclusion

In his research, Beresford suggests that out of the villages in the East Riding 45-50 were abandoned due to sheep farming/enclosure and 20-30 were abandoned as a result of the Black Death (Fenwick and Turner 2023). Based purely on the dating evidence it is likely that plague can be ruled out as a reason for abandonment. The Pilgrimage of Grace, while an exciting idea, it is unlikely that the settlement was affected to such an extent as to be wiped off the map. Enclosure is the most likely answer we can draw out at this early stage of the project as it fits the dates and later use of the land for grazing sheep.

We can tell from the abundance of pottery from Humber and Beverley that High Hunsley was a bustling agricultural settlement with connections to both these areas of production and an open economy. Signs of domestic work have been found over the course of both years as well as the unidentified high-status building. However, the project is still in its early stages, the future may involve opening a big trench to reveal the truth behind the mystery of the high-status building. The analysis of the finds is still in a preliminary stage and reports have been commissioned from various specialists. It will take several years to complete and build a solid timeline of the village chronology and apply theoretical frameworks for interpreting medieval rural settlements in the area.

During the excavation, there were nearly 300 participants from all backgrounds with a mean age of 35. This included veterans, active-duty service personnel, university students, the local YAC and Brownie groups along with families and professionals.

Bibliography

Altazin, K. (2011). *The Northern Clergy and the Pilgrimage of Grace*. Thesis.

Armstrong, P. (1980). Excavations in Scale Lane / Lowgate 1974. *East Riding Archaeologist*, 6, pp.1–92.

Baines, E. (1823). *History, Directory, and Gazetteer, of the County Palatine of Lancaster*.

BBC Humberside (2022). High Hunsley dig: Archaeologists hunt for deserted medieval village. *BBC News*. [online] 22 Jun. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-61889193> [Accessed 5 Mar. 2023].

Beresford, M., and Hurst, J.G. (1971). *Deserted Medieval Villages*. Guildford and London: Lutterworth Press.

Brewster, T.C.M. and Hayfield, C. (1988). Cowlam deserted village: a case study of post-medieval village desertion. *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 22(1), pp.21–109. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1179/pma.1988.002>.

Brown, M. (2022). Suspected Medieval Alehouse Unearthed in East Yorkshire. *The Guardian*. [online] 28 Aug. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2022/aug/28/suspected-medieval-alehouse-unearthed-east-yorkshire> [Accessed 5 Mar. 2023].

Buckberry, J.L. and Hadley, D.M. (2007). An Anglo-Saxon Execution Cemetery At Walkington Wold, Yorkshire. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 26(3), pp.309–329. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0092.2007.00287.x>.

Corneille-Cowell, L. (2023). *Archaeology project is documenting Yorkshire's lost medieval village*. [online] Heritage Daily - Archaeology News. Available at: <https://www.heritagedaily.com/2023/05/archaeology-project-is-documenting-yorkshires-lost-medieval-village/147200> [Accessed 8 May 2023].

Cumberpatch, C.G. (2003). The Transformation of Tradition: the Origins of the Post-medieval Ceramic Tradition in Yorkshire. *Assemblage*, 7.

Davies, C.S.L. (1968). THE PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE RECONSIDERED. *Past and Present*, 41(1), pp.54–76. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/past/41.1.54>.

Didsbury, P. (2005). The Pottery. In: *Archaeological investigations at Morton Lane, Beverley*. Leeds: Archaeological Services WYAS, pp.15–21.

Dyer, C. (1982). Deserted Medieval Villages in the West Midlands. *The Economic History Review*, 35(1), p.19. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2595101>.

English, B. and Miller, K. (1991). The deserted village of Eske, East Yorkshire. *Landscape History*, 13(1), pp.5–32. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01433768.1991.10594436>.

Ethos Heritage (2022a). *Interim report on the Deserted Medieval Village of High Hunsley, East Yorkshire*.

Ethos Heritage (2022b). *Project Design for non-invasive surveying and invasive archaeological excavations*.

Faull, M.L. (1974). Roman and Anglian Settlement Patterns in Yorkshire. *Northern History*, 9(1), pp.1–25. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1179/nhi.1974.9.1.1>.

Fenwick, H. and Turner, M. (2023). *Yorkshire (East Riding)*. [online] Beresford's Lost Villages. Available at: <https://beresfordslostvillages.wordpress.com/yorkshire-east-riding/> [Accessed 9 Mar. 2023].

Green, M. (2022). *Shadowlands: A Journey Through Britain's Lost Cities and Vanished Villages*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Hayfield, C. (1984). Wawne, East Riding of Yorkshire: a case study in settlement morphology. *Landscape History*, 6(1), pp.41–67. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01433768.1984.10594381>.

Hurst, J.G. (2016). Deserted medieval villages and the excavations at Wharram Percy, Yorkshire. In: R.L.S. Bruce-Mitford, ed., *Recent Archaeological Excavations in Britain: Selected Excavations, 1939-1955*. Routledge.

Mayes, P., Pirie, E.J.E. and Le Patourel, J. (1966). A Cistercian Ware Kiln of the Early Sixteenth Century at Potterton, Yorkshire. *The Antiquaries Journal*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003581500053282>.

Medieval Pottery Research Group (1998). *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms*. Historic England.

Powell Smith, A. and Palmer, J.J.N. (2011). *[High and Low] Hunsley | Domesday Book*. [online] opendomesday.org. Available at: <https://opendomesday.org/place/XX0000/high-and-low-hunsley/> [Accessed 12 Aug. 2023].

Robinson, B. (2021). *England's Villages*. Kings Road Publishing.

Slater, G. (1907). *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields*

Stamper, P. (2009). Landscape of the Middle Ages. In: I. Ralston, ed., *The Archaeology of Britain: An Introduction from the Earliest Times to the Twenty-First Century*. Routledge.

Steane, J. (1984). *The Archaeology of Medieval England and Wales*. Great Britain: Book Club Associates.

Thompson, F.H. (1960). The Deserted Medieval Village of Riseholme, near Lincoln. *Medieval Archaeology*, 4(1), pp.95–108. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00766097.1960.11735641>.

University of Hull (2023). *Helen Fenwick*. [online] www.hull.ac.uk. Available at: <https://www.hull.ac.uk/staff-directory/helen-fenwick> [Accessed 5 Mar. 2023].

Wacher, J. (1966). Petuaria. New evidence for the Roman town and its earlier fort. *The Antiquaries Journal*, 40(1-2), pp.58–64. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003581500061473>.

Watkins, G. (1991). The Pottery. In: *Excavations at Lurk Lane Beverley 1979-82*. Beverley: Humber Archaeological Unit, pp.61–103.

Williams, H.M.R. (1998). The Ancient Monument in Romano-British Ritual Practices. *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal*, 0(1997), p.71. doi: https://doi.org/10.16995/trac1997_71_86.

Woodrow, K. j (1971). Cistercian Ware from Silcoates School, near Wakefield. *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 5(1), pp.185–188. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1179/pma.1971.008>.

Wright, S.M. and Hurst, D. (2011). Midland's purple and Cistercian-type wares in the west Midlands in the 15th-16th centuries [data-set]. *Archaeology Data Service [distributor]*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5284/1010824>.

Acknowledgments

I'd like to thank the landowner for allowing us to excavate on her land, Richard Coates Emma Samuel and Diarmaid Walsh from Ethos Heritage for their excellent work directing the excavation, Andrew Barr for allowing the use of his aerial photographs in this publication, Georgia Lee for her excellent illustrations and finally all the participants who have taken part in the work on site so far.

[Download](#)

Hornby Castle Wensleydale(OS 226 934)

Archaeological Fieldwork 2023 Season

Erik Matthews

[Contents](#)

This article continues the account of the excavations carried out at Hornby Castle in 2023, following from previous editions of Forum and Forum Plus.

Introduction

Work during the summer 2023 season continued examining the site of the Medieval and early post-Medieval vicarage. It was intended to complete recording of the foundations of the 12th century stone tower which had been located in previous seasons but this proved impossible due to persistently high ground water levels associated with the generally wet weather. A new trench was therefore opened across the possible site of a chapel, based on tantalising evidence found in the 2015 season.

The Vicarage

Work continued across what was identified as the east cross wing, illustrated on a 1650 Estate plan. Initially a deposit of rubble was encountered with a mix of early 17th century pottery, which sparked speculation on a re-building phase following the Civil War. Amongst the early 17th century material were two coins of particular interest: a Scottish Terner of Prince Charles as King Charles II of Scotland from 1650 and a silver liard of King Louis XIII of France (1618-1643). The Scottish coin was the second such found, the other coming from the Park area together with a deposit of Civil War period ammunition and clay pipe fragments. It was speculated that this represented a possible stopping place for Scots forces en route to the Battle of Worcester in 1650, taking account of the loyalties of the land owner. The coin of King Louis XIII of France was totally unexpected and prompted heated discussion about its presence on our site. (Fig 1) Two possibilities may be considered.

About the author

Erik is the Field Officer of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland

Firstly, France was a close ally of Sweden in the Thirty Years War and whilst England was officially neutral large numbers of mercenaries from this country fought on the Swedish side with some returning radicalised and forming a lesser known cause of our own Civil War in the 1640s. The second possibility is that Conyers-Darcy (the Younger) the main landowner at the time, either had a French tutor for his children or a member of his family did.



<Fig. 1: Silver liard of Louis XIII of France

The records of the Parliamentary Committee, when they were attempting to indict Conyers-Darcy in 1649 noted that the vicarage was at that time being leased by Conyers-Darcy from the York Diocese for the substantial sum of £30 per annum. The quality of the construction suggests that the arrangement may well have been a long term one.

Vicarage Kitchens

Within the cross wing it soon became apparent that we were working in the late Medieval and early post-Medieval kitchen. Several stone lined hearths, a large post hole, which may be related to a piece of fixed furniture, and a mortar floor with a noticeable heat scorch mark (Fig 2) were recorded.



Fig.2: Heat scorch mark from the vicarage kitchen (bottom right)

The pottery dates from the 14th through to the early 17th century and, together with the significant quantity of butchered animal bone and charcoal, it was clear that the area had not been kept particularly clean.

In a previous season a slate-covered, stone walled structure was identified below the level of the cross-wing foundations. It was first thought to have been a late Saxon grave associated with the churchyard a short distance to the north.



Fig.3: Vicarage Drain

However when it was carefully recorded and the cover was removed the explanation was found to be rather more prosaic: the structure was a sophisticated foul drain designed to take away the kitchen waste to the nearby beck. A similar, and very much larger, structure was identified and excavated in association with the kitchen of the 15th century castle during our 2015 season. A very similar feature was identified by David Austin during the Barnard Castle excavations in the early 1980s (Fig 3). It soon became clear that the former kitchen floor was tilting west to east by as much

as 30 degrees and that at its western edge two narrow irregular “fissures” had opened up suggesting a major problem of subsidence of the east cross wing (Fig 4).



Fig.4 : Evidence for subsidence of the east cross wing



Fig.5 : Attempt to underpin the cross wing.

The mortar floor yielded a significant quantity of early 12th century pottery including most of a developed Stamford ware cooking pot. At the same time it became clear that at least two attempts had been made to underpin the cross wing (Fig 5) with fragments of reused Roman material in the first instance and later robbed ashlar stone from the Medieval tower within the moat in the early post-Medieval period.

Examination of the northern section of the vicarage trench identified the reason behind the evidence of subsidence. The cross wing was constructed within an infilled ditch and on-going structural problems may explain the repeated reconstruction of the building in the period post 1660 and the eventual abandonment of the site and re-location of the vicarage in 1820.

Following examination of a recent lidar plot of the site and two aerial photographs in the collections of the Imperial War Museum at Duxford it has been suggested that a vallum, comprising a bank and ditch, surrounds the site and focuses on the surviving late Saxon church tower. This has been suggested as connected to the evidence of a late Saxon thegnly hall, previously identified in the area of the tower. Further investigations are on-going.

The Chapel

Work on the kitchen trench in the 2014 season previously identified a carved Nidderdale marble capital dating to the early 13th century and suggesting a chapel of some sophistication very close by. When ground-water conditions temporarily prevented further work this season in the Tower trench it was decided to explore this area further.

At approximately 35cm below the modern ground surface a heavily-robbed foundation of an octagonal stone building, aligned east to west, was located. The level of the building had been deliberately raised relative to its neighbours in order to emphasise its significance and the presence of a deposit of cinnamon-coloured sand around its fringes suggested the bedding of an external tiled surface - again emphasising its importance. Two areas of shallow-founded post holes and a sill trench were discovered, suggesting internal furnishing (a screen?) Evidence was also recorded for access to a source of water, possibly previously discovered timber water pipes dating to the 14th century. An early 19th century ceramic land drain which had previously been encountered in the adjacent kitchen trench was also found to cut through the site and some effort had been made to reinstate the work.

Pottery finds have been relatively insubstantial compared with other locations on the site and mainly comprised a series of pots and jars in Northern Gritty ware circa 1100 AD. More significant was a rim sherd of an Andenne ware jar which had clearly previously had a lid, indicating early 12th century elite occupation.



Fig.6: Early 17th century domed thimble



Fig.7: Part of worked bone stylus

Other small finds included a late Medieval iron door key, an early 17th century domed sewing thimble from the period of use of the site as a formal garden (Fig 6) and part of a worked bone stylus with ring and dot decoration from the early 12th century and possibly associated with a chapel (Fig 7). The most



Fig.8: Array of five post holes

significant feature located in the centre of the chapel trench was an array of five post holes, each measuring 1m deep and 0.5m diameter. They were sharply splayed and it is thought they supported a significant timber structure such as a bell frame (Fig 8). Indeed a 12th century timber bell frame survives at the church of St Benedict's Haltham En Bain near Horncastle in Lincolnshire.

Towards the south west corner of the chapel trench evidence was identified of a more ephemeral timber structure tracking beneath the later foundations and which may prove stratigraphically to be a Pre-Conquest structure, indeed a residual sherd of a Torksey ware bowl was recovered from the site dating to the Pre-Conquest period

Work will continue in this area in the new season.

[Download](#)

Non-invasive data comparisons at Hanging Grimston

Alison Spencer

[Contents](#)

During the spring and summer of 2022 Fridaythorpe Fimber Wetwang Archaeological Project (FFWAP) carried out a geophysical survey and comparison of other available information relevant to the site. This is a summary of our findings, with particular thanks to David Snowden and Kevin Cowie for leading the new elements of survey investigations.

Introduction

The Scheduled Monument of Hanging Grimston 32665 (now National Heritage List for England asset number 1019093) is located on Mount Pleasant Farm and is part of the Halifax Estate (Figure 1).

The sitework undertaken by FFWAP was carried out under a Section 42 Licence as issued by Historic England.

The area of this study was to the west of the modern tarmac road which dissects the site and is shown in Figure 2.

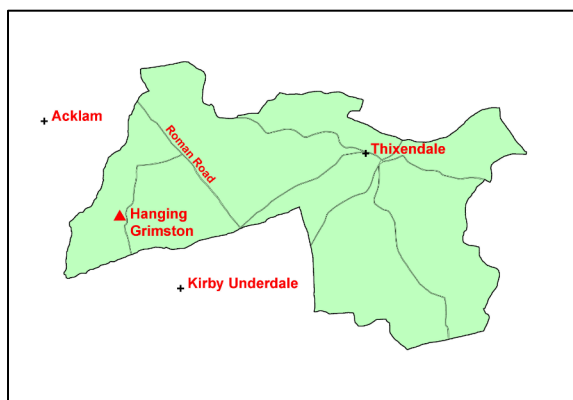


Fig.1: Site location within the Parish of Thixendale

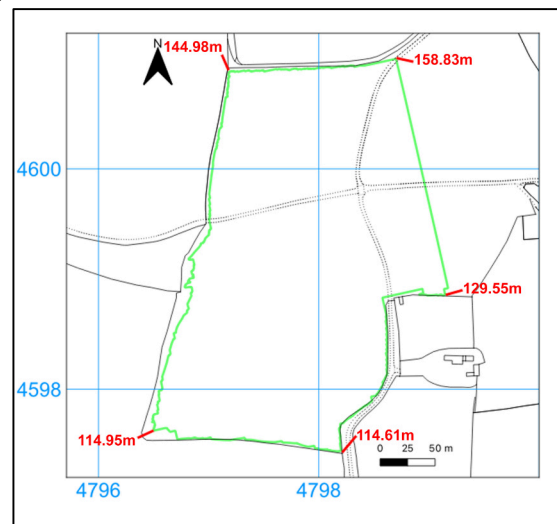


Fig.2: Location of the surveyed area (green outline added spot heights in red) on Ordnance Survey background

© Crown copyright and database rights [2022]. OS 100017946"

About the Author

Alison Spencer is the Chair of FFWAP

In 2012 Archaeological Services WYAS were commissioned, by LEADER Coast, Wolds, Wetlands and Waterways, to undertake a one metre transect magnetometry and resistivity survey of the site. The results of that survey may be seen in Archaeological Services WYAS Report No. 2416 (OASIS ID: archaeol11- 138970).

Over the period 2015 to 2019, under the Direction of Marcus Jecock, the Hanging Grimston Community Archaeology Project (comprising Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society (SAHS), together with members of the High Wolds Heritage Group (HWHG)) carried out a campaign of excavations under a series of Scheduled Monument Consents. This included, in 2018, excavation of part of one of the enclosures. That work indicated that Fields 2 and 3 in the WYAS survey, may have had further, enigmatic, anomalies within the boundaries of the enclosures.

The aim of this FFWAP undertaking was to add further clarity by using a higher resolution, half metre transects, in a fluxgate gradiometer survey and to test for the presence of any previously undetected archaeological anomalies in the field. The opportunity was also taken to compare and interpret, other forms of available data.

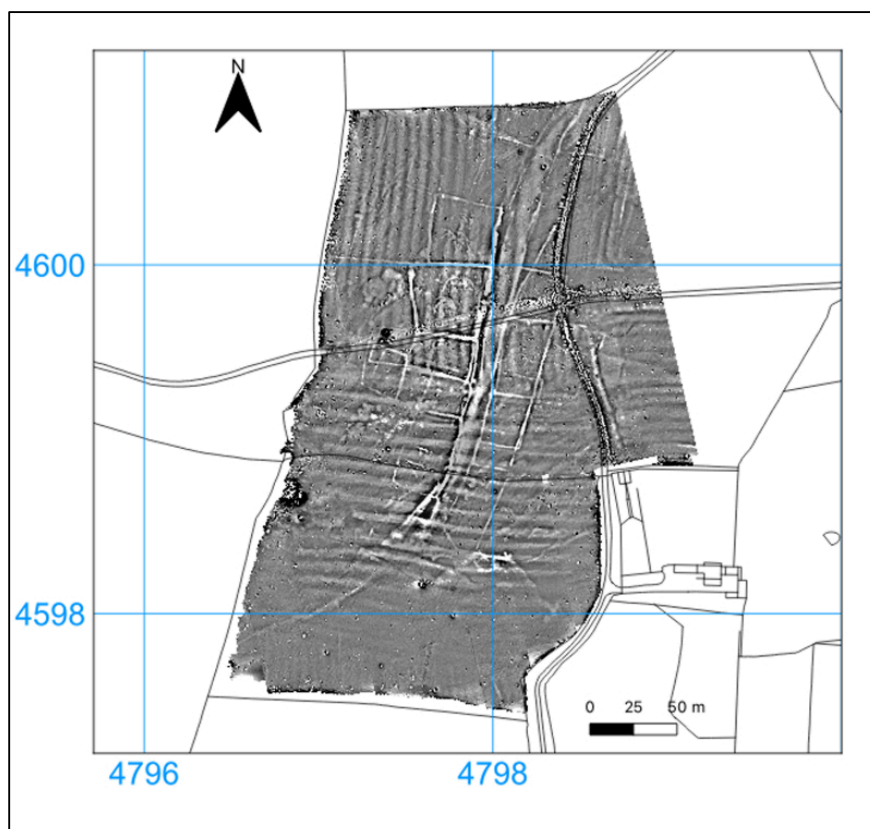


Fig.3: FFWAP survey magnetic data

The magnetic survey was conducted using Geoscan Research FM36 single probe fluxgate gradiometers, taking 4 readings per metre along transects at half metre intervals, giving 8 readings per square metre. The sensitivity of the machine was set to 0.1nT (where nT stands for nanoTesla; the Tesla being the unit of magnetic flux density).

The field was divided into 158 grids of 15m x 30m (including partial grids), walked in an east to west zig-zag pattern. The grids were georeferenced using a Trimble Catalyst DA1 system tethered to a Sony Xperia Z4 Compact mobile phone. Data was collected using Qfield, a free to use mobile application that interfaces with FFWAP's QGIS (Quantum Geographical Information System).

Comparison between magnetic data results of 1m and 0.5m transect surveys

FFWAP wish to thank Archaeological Services WYAS for their support and cooperation in this section of our report.

Ideally, in order to carry out a complimentary comparison between two fluxgate gradiometer surveys the following criteria should be enabled :

- a) The processing of the raw survey data should be similar.
The raw data from the Archaeological Services WYAS survey was not obtained – the plots shown in Figures 4, 6 and 8 were derived from a scanned image with the greyscale images reversed in order to produce a similar shaded plot to the FFWAP survey.
- b) The surveys should be walked in the same orientation.
The Archaeological Services WYAS survey was walked in a north/south direction whereas the FFWAP survey was walked east/west.
- c) Where possible, the surveys should be undertaken using the same equipment.
The Archaeological Services WYAS survey was carried out using a Bartington Grad 6012 fluxgate gradiometer whereas the FFWAP survey was carried out using a GeoScan Research single sensor FM36 fluxgate gradiometer.

The variations in survey processing and equipment used (identified above) do not appear to have significantly distorted the resulting information between the two surveys for comparison purposes.

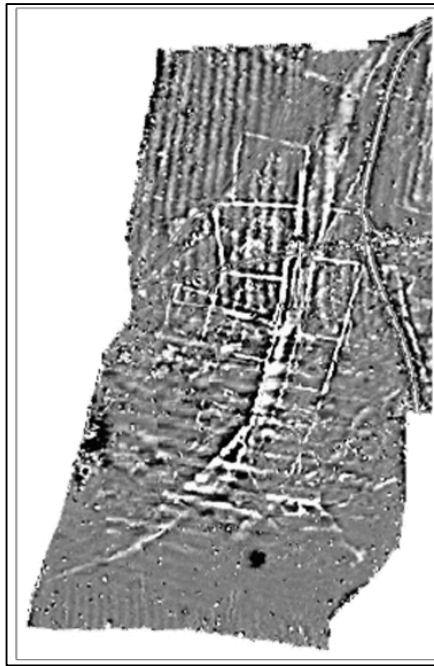


Fig. 4: Archaeological Services WYAS survey at 1m transects

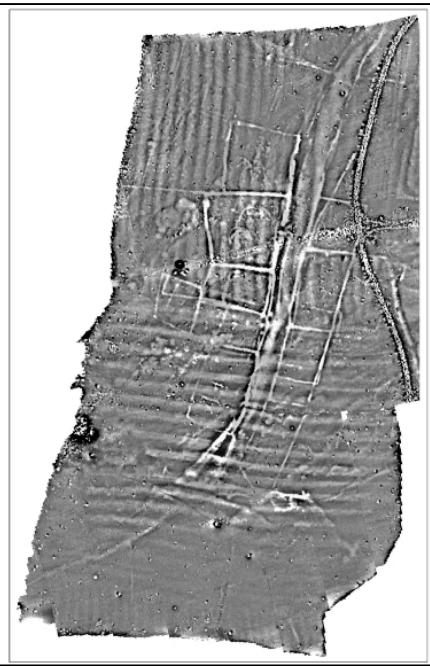


Fig. 5: FFWAP survey at 0.5 transects

When comparing Figures 4 and 5 there is fair to good correlation between the two surveys. However, closer inspection of these surveys (as shown in Figures 6 and 7) do provide a greater clarity of anomalies achieved by using the higher definition 0.5m transects.



Fig. 6: Archaeological Services WYAS survey at 1m transects



Fig. 7: FFWAP survey at 0.5 transects

Comparison between LiDAR, Drone and Magnetometry

LiDAR and specially processed drone images record variations on ground surface levels whereas magnetometry is a plot of the contrasts in the magnetic susceptibility below the surface of the ground.

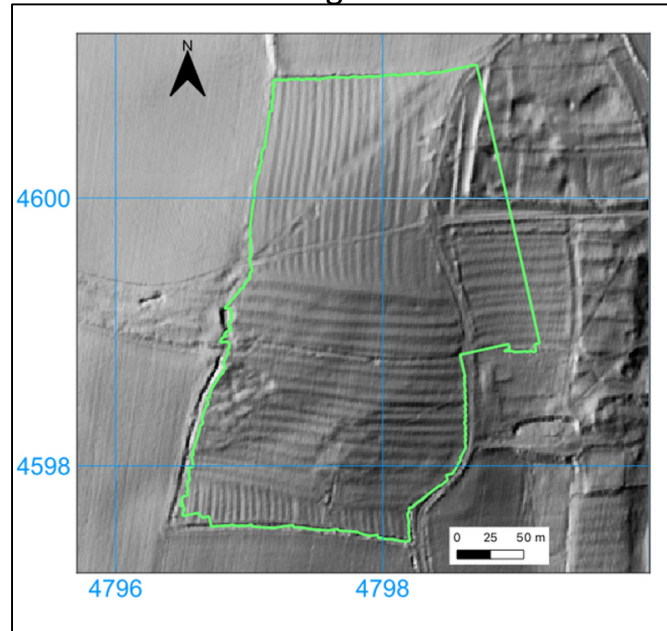


Fig. 8: LiDAR DTM plot (survey area outlined in green)



Fig.9: Drone survey (Courtesy Tony Hunt - Yorkshire Archaeological Aerial Mapping)

Figures 8 and 9 (LiDAR and drone respectively) provide definition of the undulations of the ground surface. However, neither will show below ground surface anomalies such as the ditches and features of a ladder settlement that are clearly identified in a magnetometer survey (Figures 4 and 5). This emphasises that magnetometry is still an essential tool in acquiring a full analysis of non-invasive landscape archaeology.

Medieval ploughing

The area of the survey is permanent grass pasture and has not been ploughed in living memory. The area is overlain with medieval agricultural features.

Figure 10 illustrates the four areas of medieval ploughing; three, within areas A, B and C are of rig and furrow (also known as rigg and furrow or ridge and furrow), whereas location D has been interpreted as a group of lynchets; a series of agricultural terraces formed across the slope of a hillside as profiled in Figure 15. This is further clarified in Figure 16. Areas A and B in Figure 10, show a slight curvature, 'S', at the ends of the plough run. This may well be due



Fig 10: Medieval Ploughing

to the ploughing having taken place in the early Middle Ages with a team of oxen and a single sided plough. The 'S' occurs as the animals offset to right or left as each pair reached the edge of the field thus causing a displacement curve to the otherwise straight plough line.

Area C (Figure 10), on the south of the surveyed area does not show the 'S' curvature and the rig and furrow appear to be closer together. Indications are that this may have been ploughed in the later Middle Ages with a horse pulled plough and more efficient plough share profiles. It is interesting to note that the profile of the rig and furrow is less

clearly defined on the magnetometry survey (Figure 3). This may be because the furrows do not penetrate the ground surface as deeply as areas A and B or may be due to the effect of a changing geology.

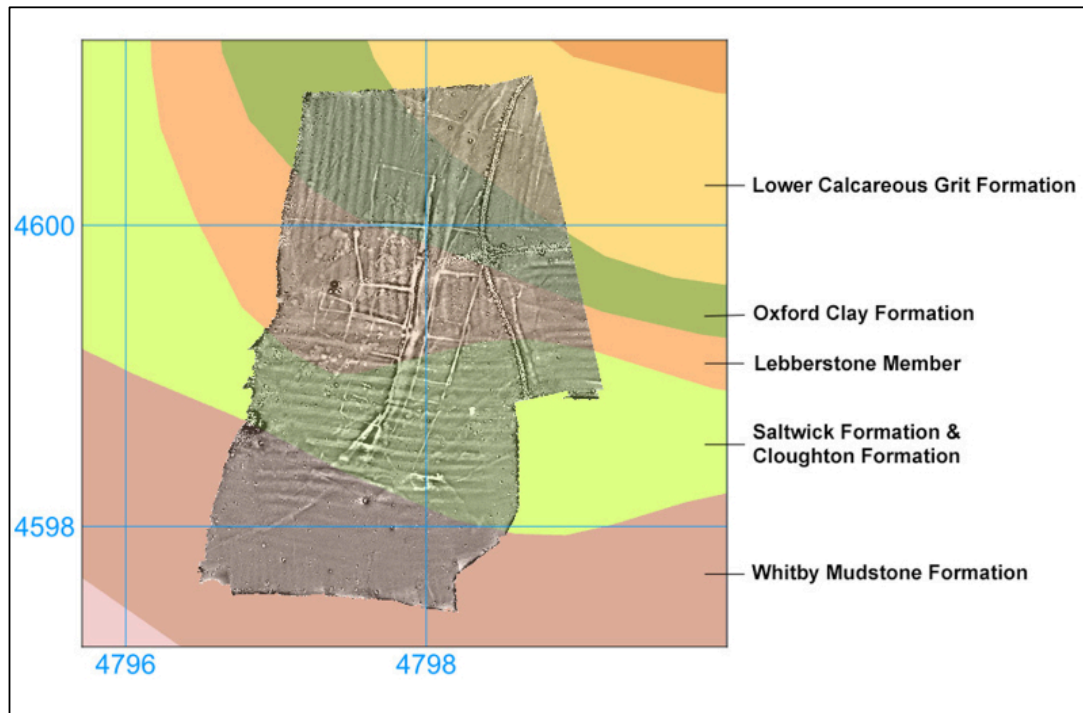


Fig.11 Magnetometer survey results overlaid on map of the geology
(map current at the time of survey)

The southern most geological formation is a Whitby mudstone which is a geological layer providing relatively poor magnetic responses compared to the predominately chalky materials further north.

Extracting profiles from LiDAR

As part of our research we carried out a comparison between rig and furrow profiles as extracted from the LiDAR data, and as measured on the ground.

At the location as shown in Figure 12, a length of 30m, recorded at 0.25cm centres, was abstracted from the LiDAR tile.

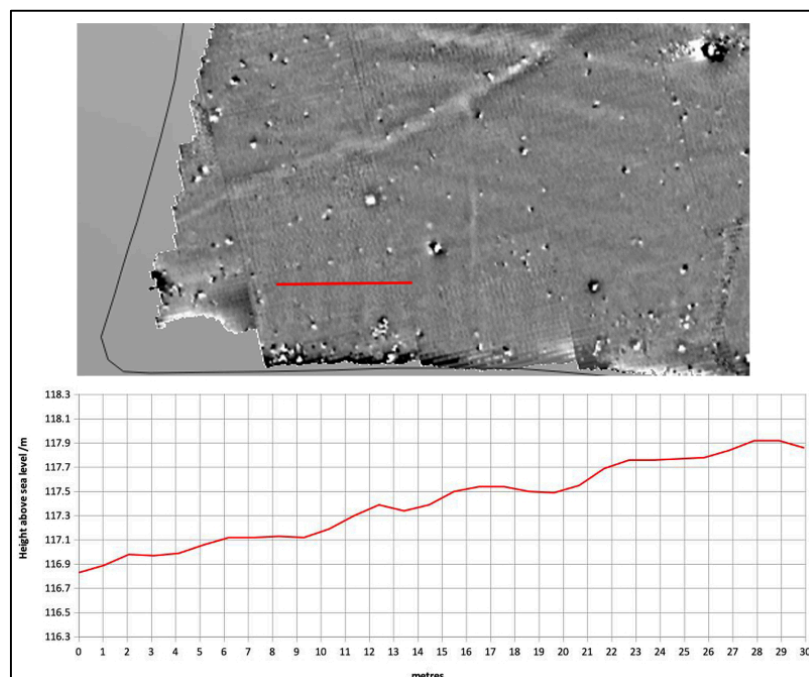


Fig.12 : Southern LiDAR profile abstract – Area C

Using a Trimble Catalyst DA1 system the same location was established, and readings taken on the ground also at 0.25cm to mirror the LiDAR plot.

Figure 13 shows the comparable data results. The correlation between LiDAR and field results, in this instance, are sufficiently similar for future profile data to be extracted by either source in future activities.

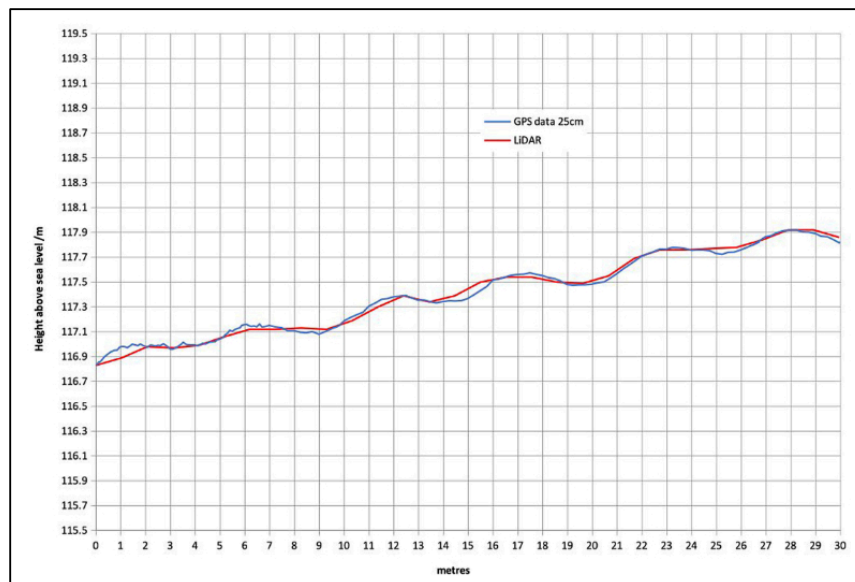


Fig.13: Section of rig and furrow with comparison between LiDAR and site georeferenced data

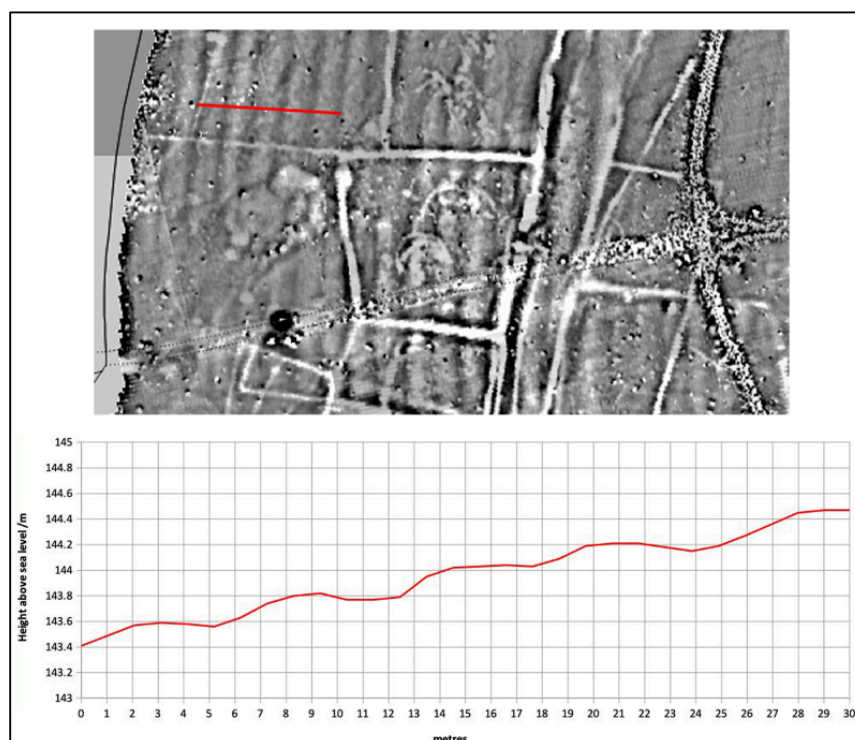


Fig.14: Northern LiDAR profile abstract – Area A

LiDAR profiles were also abstracted from areas A and D (identified in Figure 10).

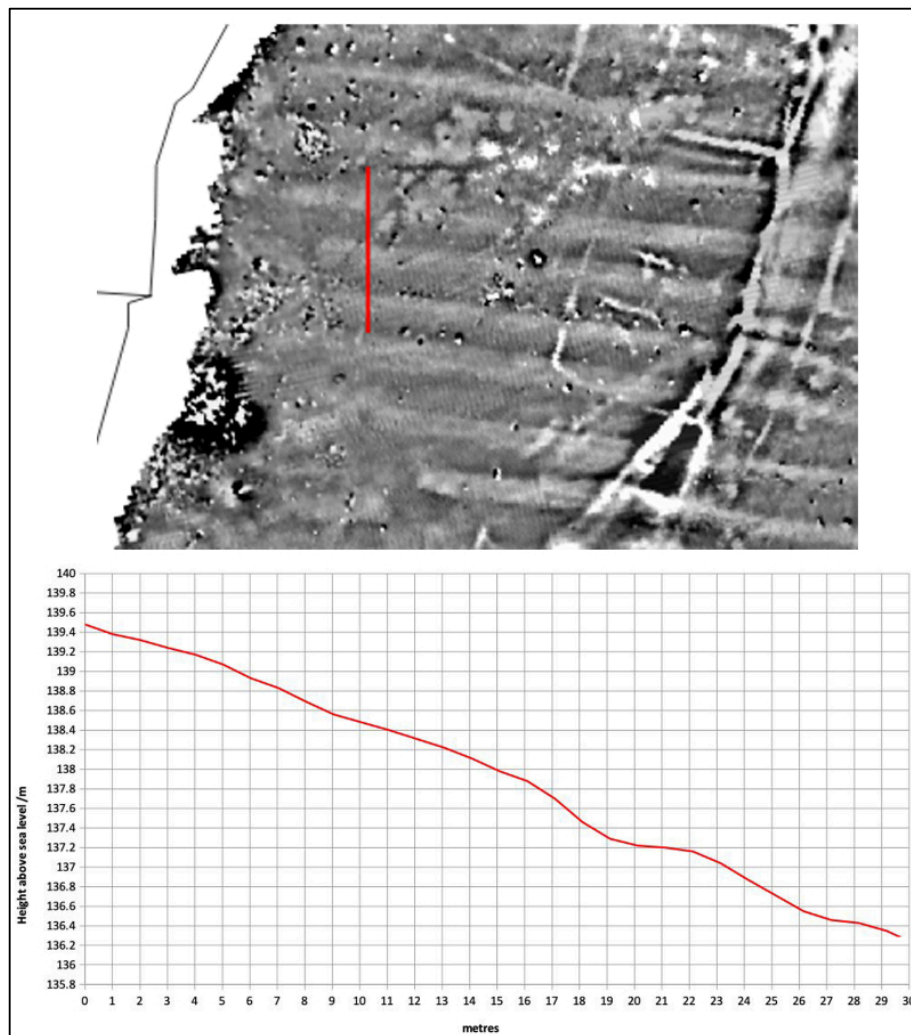


Fig.15: Central LiDAR profile abstract – Area D

We also compared the profiles of the ploughing profiles in areas A, C and D (areas identified in Figure 10). This clearly showed that area D was of a different form to A and C – hence confirming that lynchets were used on the steepest ground.

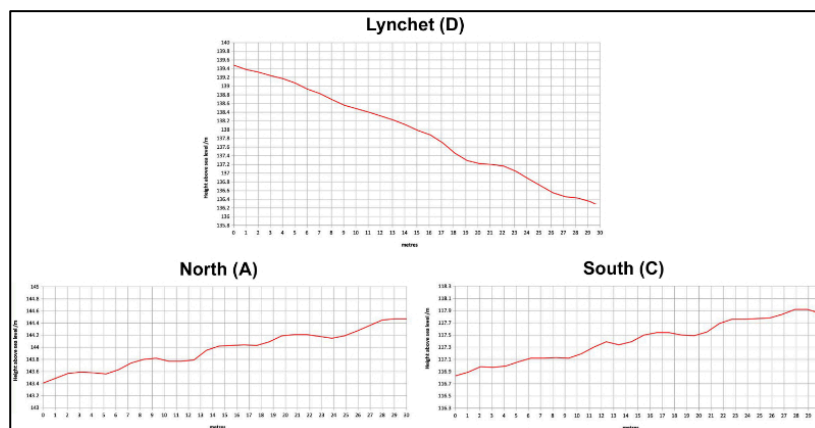


Fig.16: Ploughing profile comparisons

Acknowledgements

FFWAP are extremely grateful to the landowner, Lord Halifax, and tenant farmer, Mr Ian Grice, the latter for allowing us free access to the land, as well as the in-depth knowledge about the area which he freely discussed.

FFWAP also wish to acknowledge the immense assistance provided by James Lyall (Director of Geophiz.biz) in mentoring the group and overseeing our surveys and reports.

Maps and overlays reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Crown Copyright 2018. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. © Crown copyright and database rights [2022]. OS 100017946" North Yorkshire County Council.

LiDAR data used for Figure 8 is from the DEFRA 2020 survey at 1 metre resolution. This contains public sector information licenced under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

Tony Hunt of Yorkshire Archaeological Aerial Mapping for permission to use his drone image of the site (Figure 9)

CBA Yorkshire for awarding FFWAP a grant in 2022 to purchase the Trimble DA1 system.

[Download](#)

Selected Recent Work by JB Archaeology Ltd

John Buglass

[Contents](#)

This article describes two projects undertaken by JBArchaeology during 2023 as a contribution to the Archaeological Register.

Introduction

With the increase in the number of projects post-Covid still being sustained, the last year has been as busy as ever. Out of a total of 47 projects undertaken archaeological watching briefs were carried out on 27 sites (12 of which were on monastic sites or churches) along with three excavations/evaluations and six desk-based assessments, but only eight historic building surveys.

As with most small-scale developer projects the discoveries tended to be very modest and the results of all of these projects can be found in the relevant counties Historic Environment Record. However, two small projects that were different from usual were work on a landscape artwork project and on the garden features of a former grand country house.

Thorn House, Rosedale Abbey

The first of these was a short watching brief and historic building recording undertaken on behalf of the Ross Foundation on the remains of a mostly collapsed barn, now known as Thorn House, at Rosedale Abbey in the North York Moors National Park. Although the recording and monitoring was of a very modest early 20th century barn (Figs. 1&2) which had been used for overwintering livestock, the significance and interest of the project is the innovative combination and reuse of derelict historic buildings in conjunction a major landscape art project by Andy Goldsworthy <https://hangingstones.org/>

About the author

[John Buglass is the Director of JBArchaeology Ltd](#)

The reuse of abandoned historic buildings is a complex and often fraught topic, particularly when the commonest reuse of historic barns is conversion into residential use.

It was felt that this project offered a different, and unusual, alternative to either residential use or loss through abandonment, decay and eventual collapse.



Fig. 1. Thorn House prior to recording and excavation
© J Buglass



Fig. 2. Detail of the eastern end of the floor, looking south-east, scales 1m
© J Buglass

Brodsworth Hall

The second project of note was an archaeological watching brief and recording that was undertaken, on behalf of English Heritage, on the clearance of vegetation and soil on parts of the Summer House and Eyecatcher mounds at Brodsworth Hall, Brodsworth, South Yorkshire.

As part of the long-term restoration of the Victorian gardens at Brodsworth Hall historic Ordnance Survey mapping has been used to identify now lost garden features with the aim of trying to locate and restore them.



Fig 3. South-eastern side of Summer House mound showing earlier retaining walls and foundations for path/steps, looking north-east, scales 0.5&1m

© J Buglass

These features were a series of steps leading up to both the Summer House and Eyecatcher mounds. The first area investigated was the line of a path and steps up the eastern side of the mound on which the Summer House sits. Although the ground clearance showed that the earlier steps had been removed it was still possible to determine enough of the remains of the retaining wall and foundations for the steps to inform their eventual restoration (Fig. 3). In addition a small amount of evidence was observed that suggests that the Summer House was once surrounded by a set of railings.

The clearance of smothering vegetation on the western side of the Summer House mound also recorded the very collapsed remains of a pair of stone-built features on either side of the



*Fig 4. West side of Summer House mound with entrance to ice house, note collapsed stonework on right hand side
© J Buglass*



Fig 5. Remains of stonework for tree planting, looking north, scales 0.5&1m © J Buglass

entrance to the former icehouse. These appear to have been retaining walls for



Fig. 6. Vegetation partially cleared on Eyecatcher Mound, looking north-west
© J Buglass



Fig. 7. Vegetation cleared on Eyecatcher Mound, looking north-west © J

more formalised planting of yew trees (Figs. 4&5).

The results of the investigations on the Eyecatcher mound proved to be much more dramatic as they very quickly revealed a set of very simply built steps curving up the side of the mound from the adjacent path to the top of the mound (Figs. 6&7). Additional ground reduction along the line of the former path to the east of the mound revealed both the level of the earlier path and a series of edging stones. From the very simple nature of these steps it would seem that these were probably a later addition to the feature in order to facilitate access to the plinth on the top rather than as access to a view point.

Acknowledgements

I would particularly like to thank Albany Bell of the Ross Foundation and Sally Wilson of English Heritage for inviting me to undertake these two projects.

[Download](#)

A Bull-Headed Mount from Roman Aldborough

John Buglass

[Contents](#)

Roman Aldborough known as Isurium Brigantum was the civitas capital for the region of Roman Britain populated by a confederation of tribes named by the Romans as the Brigantes. The entire village is designated as a scheduled ancient monument and significant finds continue to be found today. This article describes one such find.

Introduction

During a programme of archaeological test pitting in Roman Aldborough, North Yorkshire a bull-headed mount was recovered from c.1.2m below modern ground level. The mount was discovered in the early post-Roman demolition layers and sealed below the medieval and later plough soils.



Romano-British bull-headed mount from a suspended bowl
©John Buglass

About the author

[John Buglass is the Director of JBArchaeology Ltd](#)

The copper alloy bull-headed mount is an unusual find with no others known from Aldborough. However, there is an increasing corpus of similar finds (mostly metal detected) that have been reported through the Portal Antiquities Scheme (PAS) and elsewhere.

The bull-headed mount would have been one of three, possibly four, that would have been used to suspend a bowl on fine chains. Both the bowl and chains would probably have been copper alloy.

The previously discovered mounts of this type have been variously ascribed to the later Iron Age/early Romano-British period and as such the discovery of this one in the demolition layers of the later Roman town suggests that it may have been an heirloom item. However, it equally could have been brought in with soil/refuse that was used ground raising and levelling over the Roman remains.

The mount has a small lug to the back which would have held it onto the rim of the bowl and the ring above the head would have accommodated the suspension chain. The ring is well worn suggesting long term use.

Although the mount has been damaged in the past it is still possible to make out its complete form with curving horns facing forward on either side of its head along with a pair of ears just below. The decoration of the mount is very simple but still shows a high degree of detail. This detail includes small circles for the eyes and lines around the end of the snout to represent the nose.

It is possible that it might have once been horn capped, judging by the damaged end of the surviving horn. If it was horn capped, then it is an item of higher economic status, and as there are not that many which are capped it makes it a little rarer and more important. If it was horn capped then date wise (based on current data) it also limits it to c.75BC to no later than AD75/AD100.

The piece is currently thought to be of British manufacture and potentially a decorative, or honorific piece. It has also been observed that the symbol of Legio VI Victrix was a bull and the unit has potential associations with York and Bainesse near Catterick. But this potential link is far from proven.

Additional Examples

A number of recent finds of similar items have been documented by the PAS and include:

From Llancarfan in South Wales: <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/1051818> and <https://the-past.com/news/two-hoards-from-monmouthshire-declared-treasure/>

For an example with its chains see: <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/782203> This one was found in the vicinity of Topcliffe and although it is of a ram/caprid, but the idea is the same.

Other examples are:

<https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/904921>
<https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/1078379>
<https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/428563>

DUR-2BB9E6 and YORYM-CAD7AB are other examples from North Yorkshire, LVPL-A75032 from East Yorkshire.

From Briefing. The magazine of the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society:

Iron Age/Roman buckets often had 'bovine mounts' (also known as oxhead) — heads of bulls/cows to decorate the handle fixings. From Hellifield in Craven comes LANCUM-D72FF3, a particularly fine specimen, in good condition, with forward-curving horns with little horn caps, narrowed eyes and one remaining fixing arm to the left, possibly intended as an extended ear. The horn caps are regarded as dating the object to 75-100BC.

In addition this type of mount will probably be covered more fully in a forthcoming book-of-the-thesis project by Rebecca Ellis-Haken. <https://independent.academia.edu/RebeccaEllis32>

References

- E.M. Jope, 2000, Early Celtic Art in the British Isles vol. 1 109–10, vol. 2 pls 182–3
- S. Worrell, 'Roman Britain in 2005 II. Finds reported under the Portable Antiquities Scheme', *Britannia* 37 (2006), 456–7 no. 25, Compton Abbas (SOMDOR-B23561);
- Pearce and Worrell, 'Roman Britain in 2018. II. Finds reported under the Portable Antiquities Scheme', *Britannia* 50 (2019), 468–9, no. 3, Bestwick (YORYM-700D19);

Pearce and Worrell, 'Roman Britain in 2019', *Britannia* 51 (2020), 444, no. 2, Hambleton (SWYOR-D206A8);

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Mr L Raper for inviting JB Archaeology to undertake the evaluation work and particular thanks to the following for much detailed information on bull-headed mounts in general Dr John Pearce, Prof. Melanie Giles and Dr R Ellis-Haken

[Download](#)