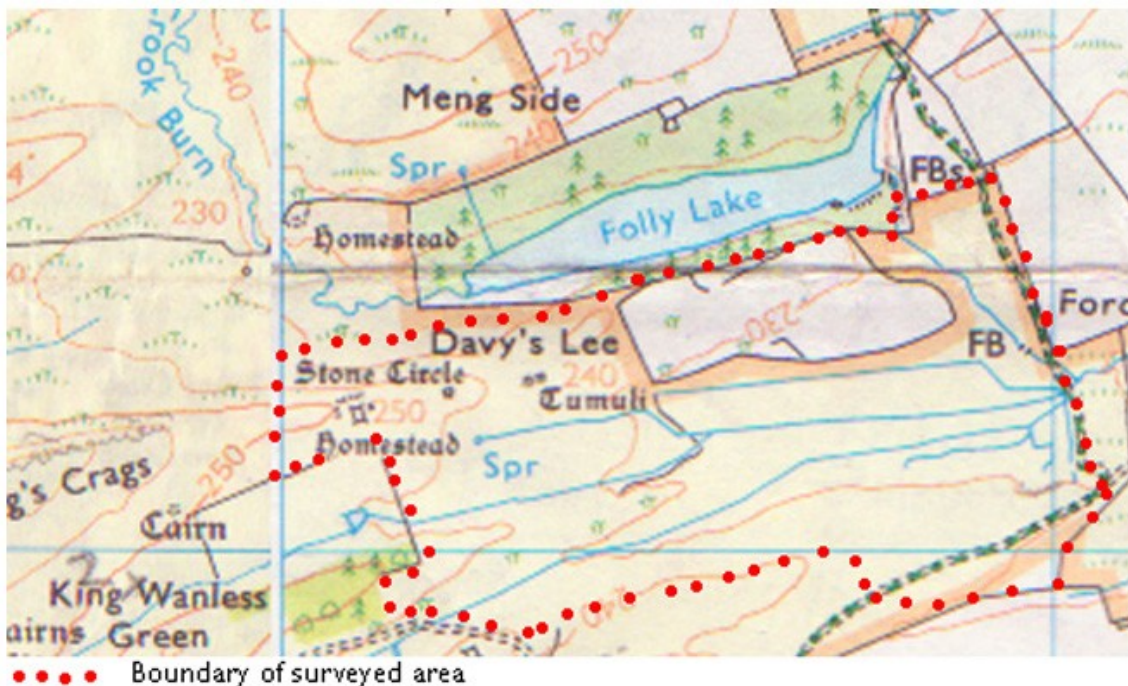


Summary Report : Level 1 Survey 17th – 20th March 2015

Over the course of 4 days 12 members conducted a Level 1 walkover landscape survey in the vicinity of Davy's Lee Enclosure on Sewingshields Farm, by kind permission of landowner Mr P. Straker and farmers Messrs Murray. The area surveyed, indicated on the map below, continues immediately north from the area we surveyed during 2014, the reports of which are available on our website www.tynedalearchaeologygroup.btck.co.uk .



Level 1 Landscape Survey March 17th - 20th 2015

This report summarises what we consider to be the more significant findings. A full gazetteer of all sites recorded will be published later.

Prior to fieldwork members of the group studied existing Historic Environment Record (HER) data, National Mapping Programme data, Tim Gates's aerial photographs and his 2004 report for Northumberland National Park Authority, plus Lidar images of the area. This enabled us to identify locations of potential archaeological interest.

However, we applied a strict methodology of walking the entire study area, excluding the very worst of the boggy areas, in 20m bands to ensure that all ground features were examined.

Davy's Lee Enclosure.

A. Perimeter Bank.

The enclosure is bounded by a sod-cast bank up to 1m high and 2.65m wide. As there are indications that the perimeter bank exhibits more than a single phase of construction we carefully recorded any noticeable variations in dimension, variations in structure and any gaps in the bank. In all 34 separate locations on the perimeter were measured and recorded, comprising, as far as we are aware, the most comprehensive examination ever conducted of the enclosure.

Three aspects of the currently visible perimeter bank were of particular note:

A 1. On its northern side running ENE close to the plantation strip south of Folly Lake, at NY 80519 71536 the bank turns abruptly SSE, skirting the edge of the 20m diameter circular enclosure (HER 7857, suggested in the data to be the remains of a robbed-out burial cairn). Beyond this feature the bank resumes an ENE alignment. Immediately to the north of the diverted perimeter bank, and east of HER 7857 Tim Gates has identified a small area of cord rig which we were not able to identify on the ground. There are no visible obstructions in the landscape that would have prevented the builders of the perimeter bank from taking the quicker and easier option of continuing in a straight line at this point.

The bank on the north-east side of the enclosure is not followed by the modern fence which now encloses the plantation on the south side of Folly Lake. Instead, the boundary bank crosses the fence at a shallow angle, and appears to contour the steep slope above the boat-house close to what appears to be a former track way ascending the slope. The bank re-crosses the fence again to the east. We were unable to examine this section in any detail due to access restrictions. Folly Lake was artificially created some time prior to 1920 by damming of the Crook Burn just east of the boathouse and this and its surrounding forest plantation have likely impacted on the original extent of the enclosure in this area.

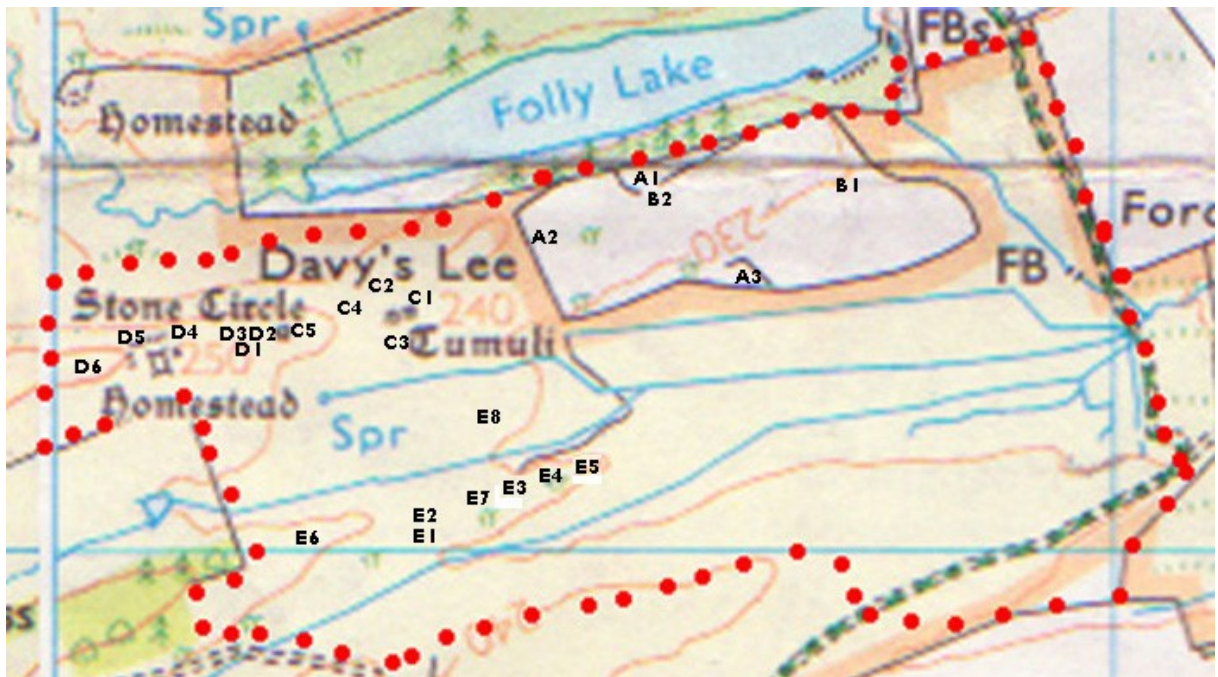


Fig 1. Survey area with locations of features discussed in report.

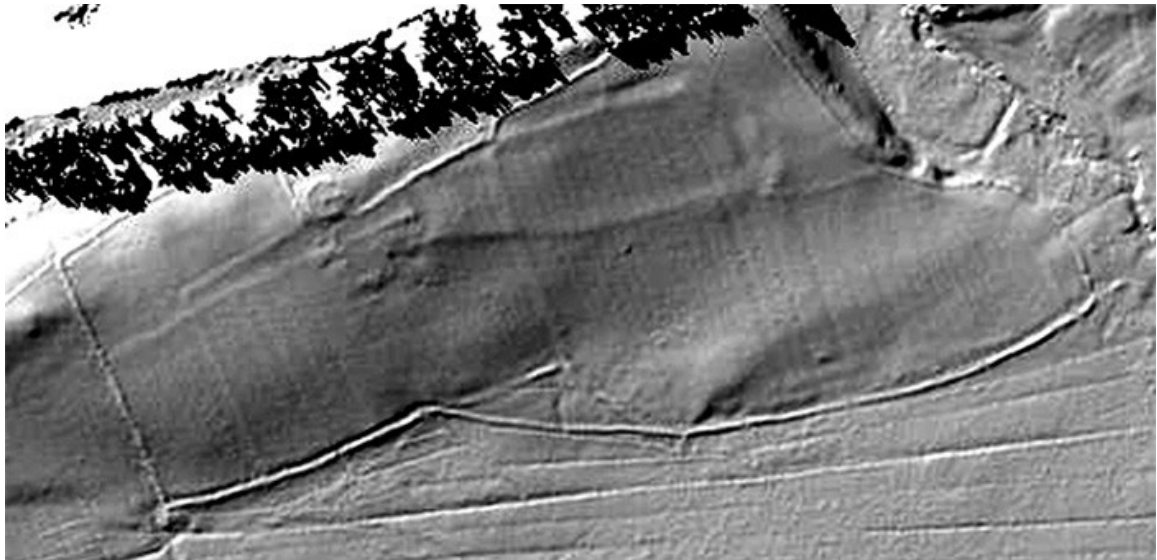


Fig. 2 Lidar image of Davy's Lee Enclosure

A 2. The westernmost section of perimeter bank is noticeably lower (0.4m) and narrower (1.7m) than other sections, suggesting the possibility of a different phase of construction. An area of cord rig identified by Tim Gates is visible to both the north and south of the northern section of the westernmost perimeter bank. If this westernmost section of the current perimeter were a later feature than the larger roughly N-S bank to its east then the possible barrow remains at NY 80419 71291 would have been just outside the earlier perimeter. Members who recorded this area were unsure whether the cord rig mentioned immediately above continued over the possible barrow remains.

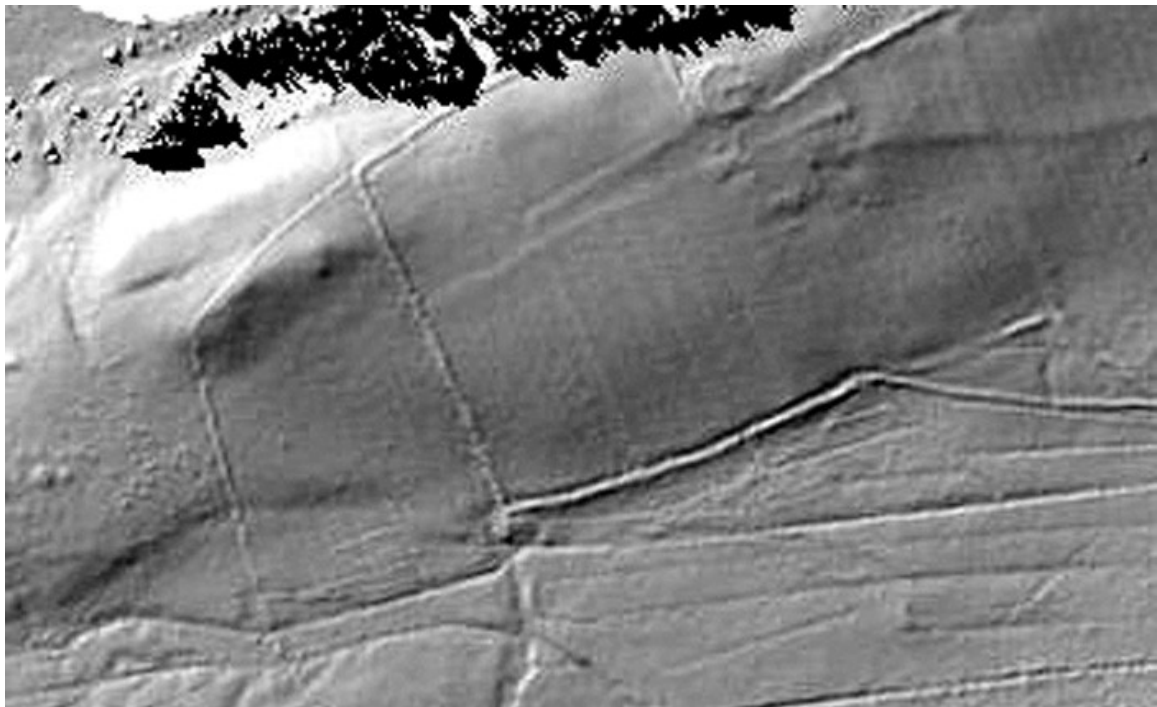


Fig. 3 Lidar image western end of Davy's Lee Enclosure

As is visible on the Lidar images, figs 2&3, there are indications of other possible boundary banks within the present-day enclosure perimeter. We intend to investigate such possibilities further during the Level 3 survey.

A 3. On the southern side of the perimeter bank there are two lengths of bank angling into the enclosure from NY 80671 71248 and NY 80594 71252. The interior bounded by these two banks is marshy and has indications of modern drainage. The prominent bend in the southern (outermost) boundary bank on the west side of this feature (NY 80589 71253), and the apparent obliteration of the inner boundary from this point east to NY 80628 71266, although still clear on the LIDAR image, may suggest that the inner boundary predates the outer and its inclusion of the triangular boggy area.

Immediately to the north of the junction of these two subsidiary banks the Lidar images suggest a possible bank running NNW to the northern edge of the perimeter bank, with indications of a right-angled junction with a further linear feature. However, we were unable to distinguish this possible feature from the broad (10m wide) ridge and furrow visible throughout the enclosure. When we undertake our planned Level 3 detailed survey in the summer we intend to examine this, and other questions of a possible sequence of boundaries, more closely.

B. Interior Features:

B 1. Possible cairn (ploughed out) and banked platform.

At NY 80731 71351 we discovered a previously unrecorded low turf-covered mound 14m N/S by 11m E/W. The low mound, with some sub-surface stoniness, has been overlain by broad 10m ridge and furrow. There are two exposed larger stones in the apparent perimeter, one of which is cup-marked. This stone probably corresponds to that recorded as HER 22632, described as being different to the Davy's Lee cup-marked boulder (HER 7856). Extending 5m south of the perimeter of the mound we found a banked platform (15m long, 0.4m high), arcing at its western end.

Interestingly this coincided with the roughly E-W linear feature shown running across the whole enclosure on Lidar images (Fig 2). Despite our efforts we were unable to locate the rest of this feature on the ground, except possibly as a further length of banked platform at NY 80579 71322 just to the south of the circular enclosure HER 7857.

Given what has been found elsewhere concerning relationships between cairns and prehistoric boundary features, and between burial cairns and cup-marked stones, we feel that this conjunction of features warrants closer examination during our Level 3 survey.



Fig 4. Possible cairn with cup-marked stone



Fig 5. Banked platform south of possible cairn

B 2. Earthworks south of HER 7857.

Inside the perimeter, just south of the large circular enclosure around which the perimeter bank bends, is a cluster of earthworks. These consist of two parallel lengths (the longest 18m by 0.2m high) of banked platform with a possible arced connecting bank and a short (2m) low (0.2m) bank located perpendicularly between the two linear features, but not joined to either. Just to the west of these earthworks are two further roughly semi-circular low (0.1m to 0.2m) arcing banks each of about 10m diameter.

It would be premature to attempt interpretation of this cluster of features. We have noted above the possible coincidence of the linear platforms with the features visible

on the Lidar images. Given the proximity of the large circular enclosure HER 7857 to these earthworks it may be appropriate to investigate further any potential relationship between these features during the Level 3 survey.

C. West of Davy's Lee Enclosure:

The ridge immediately north of Davy's Lee Enclosure dips a little before rising again further west to become King's Crags. On the slighter south slope of the ridge in this area there is a concentration of features of probable prehistoric date.

Cairns and banks.

C 1. From NY 80342 71221 to 80322 71216 is a group of three cairns (HER 7843). The easternmost having a diameter of 4m and height of 0.5m, the middle 7.5m diameter, 0.6m high and the westernmost 10m diameter, 0.5m high.

C 2. We identified a low (0.2m) linear earthen bank with a few visible stones running 33m roughly N-S from NY 80306 71242 to 80311 71214 and terminating due west of the westernmost of the three cairns.

C 3. A further discontinuous 3m wide 0.3m high linear earth bank, with slight ditches on either side, was identified running roughly N-S for 37m from south-west of the cairn group (NY 80325 71199 to 80336 71174) down the slight slope towards the boggy area (Fig 7)



Fig 7 Low earthen bank looking south

C 4. There is a small cairn 2m diameter, 0.5m high, (HER 22627) at NY 80253 71213. It was initially thought to be either a clearance feature or possibly a route-marker along the ridge, but is not dissimilar in form to the E-W orientated cairn described below which may cover a stone cist burial and may merit further investigation.

Stone Circle.

C 5. At NY 80216 71203 there is a scheduled monument 'stone circle' (HER 7835, SM 20976). There are aspects of this monument that posed questions for us. Although three of the 11 recorded stones stand to a reasonable height, two at 0.6m and one at 1.0m, the remaining stones are barely above surface level (0.1m). On a previous visit during 2012 a total of 13, possibly 14, stones were counted and distances between them measured, raising additional questions. The low-lying stones, which do not look like mere packing stones, are quite evenly spaced and on the northern side of the circle seem set into the rising slope (figs 8 & 9). The fairly even spacing suggests that it is unlikely that larger stones have been robbed out. We considered whether the subsequent peat growth had led to a significant rise in

surface level, but the two largest stones are in the wettest part of the site and the proximity of the ridge to the low-lying stones suggested that this is an unlikely explanation. The circle is located on sloping ground (fig 7).



Fig. 7 HER 7835 Stone Circle from north-west.

Reedy grasses in the interior of the circle made it difficult to assess accurately, but there do appear to be slight indications of a low (0.1m) mound close to the southern perimeter.

Given the various questions raised by members examining the stone circle we suggest detailed measurement and plan drawing during the Level 3 survey.



Fig.8 Low-lying stones in slope looking north.



Fig 9. Stone circle looking north-east up the slope.

West of stone circle:

West of the stone circle and east of the Romano-British Enclosed Settlement (HER 7839) we identified previously unrecorded linear features that by their location could be remains of field boundaries associated with the settlement.

D 1. A linear earthen bank (2.5m wide, 0.25m high) with a few large stones runs down the slope for 65m from near the ridge at NY 80190 71209 to the boggy area at 80205 71143 (Fig 10).

There is a slight ditch on its western side, but this does not appear to be a modern drainage feature.



Fig 10 Low earthen bank east of Romano-British settlement.

D 2. Just west of the northern end of this bank is a small roughly rectangular cairn (Fig 11), 2.3m by 1.3m, 0.5m high. The team recording this feature commented that it appears to be kerbed. Its long axis is aligned E-W, as are the exposed cists (HER 22623 and 22624) to the west of the Romano-British settlement. The team were struck also by the similarity of dimensions between the cists and this cairn.



Fig 11 Rectangular cairn

D 3. Close to the northern end of the N-S linear bank at NY 80183 71207 there is a short (3.5m) linear grouping of stones (fig 12) suggestive of wall remains. Intermittent stones are visible aligned along the ridge towards the northern edge of the Romano-British settlement to the west.



Fig 12 Possible remains of boundary wall

D 4. Immediately east of the north-east corner of the enclosed settlement at NY 80110 71194 there is a stony mound (HER 22624 'Cairn'). Given the other indications of a wall along the ridge it is arguable that this stony mound could be further remains of the northern boundary wall (Fig 13).



Fig 13 Stony mound HER 22624 and Romano- British settlement.

D 5. The Romano-British settlement is partly overlain by a modern walled plantation and there is a strong likelihood that it has been partially robbed-out when the subsequent walling was built. However there are interesting features still visible on the surface, particularly the double bank still extant on its western side (Fig 14).



Fig 14 Romano-British settlement, looking N-W from western section of southern enclosure bank towards double bank.

Cists (HER 22623 & 22624).

D 6. HER data records uncertainty concerning grid references for the two cists. The eastern most cist (HER 22623) at NY 80041 71135 is the more disturbed but does have some indications of a surrounding cairn, measuring 3m E-W, 2m N-S and 0.25m high. (Fig 15)



Fig 15 Cist HER 22623 from south.

Cist HER 22624 measures 2.5m E-W, 1.5m N-S and its tallest stone stands at 0.5m (Fig 16)

The attribution of cup-marking to the top of the eastern stone is dubious in our opinion, appearing more characteristic of erosion features (Fig 17).



Fig 16 Cist HER 22624 from west



Fig 17 Dubious 'cup-marks'

on E stone

The area in which these cists are found is shown as enclosed and of mixed woodland on the OS map published in 1898. Tree stumps in the vicinity and a few scattered trees are all that remains of the woodland which may have caused some disturbance of archaeological features although there is now a smaller area of fenced coniferous plantation on boggy land to the south.

E. South of Davy's Lee Enclosure:

The roughly W-E low ridge south of the boggy area south of Davy's Lee Enclosure has a concentration of features that have been identified from aerial photographs as stack stands (post-medieval feeding stations for stock). HER 12456 to 12460 are listed as stack stands or groups of stack stands. Our examination of these features leads us to question a number of these designations. Stack stands characteristically have a raised interior surrounded by a ditch with a possible external bank. Their function was to provide drier locations for stacks of winter feed for stock.

E 1. HER 12456

This low (0.2m) rectangular bank at NY 80409 71015 has some stones, suggestion of a possible entrance and is adjacent to an arcing bank extending 11.5m north-west to join the conjunction of a banked platform (which itself continues as a long sod-cast bank extending towards Davy's Lee Enclosure) and another sod-cast bank that extends all the way from the foot of Sewingshields Crag, continuing north passing west of HER 12457. These banks together form a possible enclosure immediately to the west of the rectangular feature currently designated as a stack stand (Fig 18)



Fig 18 Banks adjacent to possible rectangular building

E 2. HER 12457

Described as a group of 4 stack stands (NY 80372 71034, 80388 71041, 80400 71044, 80409 71045), these rectangular structures (Fig 19) immediately north of HER 12456 all contain large visible worked stones, and two of the structures have strong indications of entrances. Previously we decided to conduct our own Level 3 survey here in May this year, and will reserve further observations until completion of this survey. Arising from our examination of HER 12456 we have decided to extend the scope of the May Level 3 survey to include this.

E 3. HER 12458

At NY 80521 71077 this sub-circular earthen bank, up 0.4m high and 1m wide measures 3.8m by 3.3m and has a ditch around the outside of the bank. The interior lacks the clearly raised aspect observable on other stack stands in the area, and the

surrounding bank is quite high compared with other local examples. However we would not be confident about challenging its existing designation as a stack stand.

E 4. HER 12459

This 0.25m high rectangular earthen bank at NY 80605 71093 measures 14m by 9m and exhibits the characteristic features of a stack stand.

E 5. HER 12460

This trapezoidal earthen bank at NY 80652 71120 stands right at the end of the ridge and follows its shape. It measures 14m by 7m and its external bank is 0.4m high. There is some indication of a possibly raised interior that would support its designation as a stack stand although the surface is uneven. We would not, however, necessarily rule out other possible interpretations of this feature (Fig 20).



Fig 20 HER 12460 Stack Stand

Three previously unrecorded stack stands.

We identified two further stack stands on the ridge and one in the wetter area north of the ridge with features more characteristic of other local stack stands that we surveyed just to the south in 2014.

E 6. At NY 80262 71009 we discovered a stack stand measuring 7m by 4.5m with a clearly raised interior and surrounding ditch (Fig 21).



Fig 21 New stack stand E 6

As can be seen from fig. 21 the external bank is very much lower than those on designated stack stands further east on the ridge, and the raised interior and surrounding ditch are evident.

E 7. At NY 80527 71074 we discovered a smaller stack stand of similar appearance, elliptical in shape measuring 3.8m by 3.3m with a raised interior and surrounding ditch. There was only the slightest of indications of an external bank.

E 8. At NY 80454 71145, on lower, wetter ground a sub-circular stack stand 6m x 6.5m with a clear surrounding ditch and raised interior. Once again the external bank was very low as can be seen in fig 22.



Fig 22 New stack stand E 8

As we discovered from our 2014 surveys it is evident that the identification of stack stands from aerial photographs does need to be checked on the ground.

F. Boundary Features.

In addition to the boundary features specifically mentioned in this report we recorded further substantial boundaries, some of which are continuations of boundaries that we identified during surveys in 2014. The indications thus far suggest that we are looking at a sequence of boundaries, some possibly as early as the Bronze Age, some potentially Iron Age/Romano-British, some probably medieval and others post-medieval.

At this stage it would be premature to present an analysis but we regard investigation of these various boundaries as central to clarifying our understanding of human activity in the area over the course of millennia and intend to report on this in detail after further study.

G. The ford in ‘the middle of nowhere’.

Farmer Jamie Murray told us of an old ford east from the area we were surveying and suggested it was worth checking out. This indeed proved to be the case. After a trek across boggy land we reached the ford at NY 81149 71308. The 2m wide ford is well constructed from dressed stone with ramps of smaller dressed stone either side of the stream (Fig 22). There is a dressed timber beam on its east (downstream) side. Old maps show a weir at this approximate location. There is no current sign of a track in either direction from the ford although Google Earth shows what appears to be an old track running NW towards the west end of Halleypike Lough. However the current OS map shows a length of track a few hundred metres south on higher ground, directly in line with Roman milecastle 34. By walking a straight line from the ford towards this track we encountered a substantial banked track running diagonally

up the steep scarp of the next ridge (Fig 23). This banked track meets the relatively modern access track to Town Shields and the marked track heading south from the top of the ridge in the approximate direction of the milecastle. The track and ford should be examined for possible Roman construction or it may represent a previous, unmapped route for estate access north to Stell Green, now provided by the current ford and track to the west.



Fig 22 Ford



Fig 23 Banked track up ridge

Priorities for detailed Level 3 surveys.

1. We had previously identified the group of 4 so-called stack stands HER 12457 as the subject of our first 'on our own' level 3 survey. Given the proximity of, and potential relationships between, these and the converging banks and rectangular structure HER 12456 we have decided to extend the scope of the May 12th to 15th survey to incorporate these features. Should time permit there

would also be value in a detailed survey of the other HER stack stands further east on the ridge.

2. Regarding priorities for design of the forthcoming Altogether Archaeology/ NNPA survey module we have the following recommendations:
 - i) The circular enclosure HER 7857 at Davy's Lee Enclosure to be surveyed in conjunction with the earthworks immediately to the south within the perimeter. The interpretation of HER 7857 as a robbed-out cairn has been questioned. A detailed plan of this site may help to elucidate the nature of these remains.
 - ii) The possible ploughed out cairn at NY 80731 71351 and the adjacent platform and bank be surveyed in detail and further attention given to whether it is possible to identify any very subtle indications on the ground of the linear feature visible on the lidar images traversing the entire enclosure E-W.
 - iii) The stone circle HER 7835, SM 20976, be surveyed in detail.
 - iv) If time and resources permit, the potential boundary features east of the Romano-British enclosed settlement HER 7839 be surveyed. There would also be value in a detailed survey of the settlement's enclosure banks, particularly with a view to investigating further the extent of the double banks.

The team.

In alphabetical order, participants in this survey were Phil Bowyer, Lorraine Clay, Andy Curtis, Kathy Davidson, Martin Green, Michael Hall, Sally Hutt, Fransje Samsom, Andrew Tate, Anne Tate, Luke Wooton, and Ralph Wrighton.

In all, 78 features of archaeological interest were identified, measured, photographed, discussed and recorded systematically. Every participant has contributed valuable observations to our assessment of features, and in this report I have tried to present a summary of the views emerging from our discussions.

The weather overall was a bit kinder to us than last year, although we did have more areas of boggy land to traverse this time! We had excellent views of the solar eclipse and a good time was had by all. A warm welcome is extended to anyone else able to join us, both on our detailed survey May 12th to 15th and for the professionally led survey scheduled for June in conjunction with Northumberland National Park and Altogether Archaeology. It does not matter if you have no previous experience as everyone is always ready to share what they have learnt.

First time volunteers Anne and Andrew Tate commented thus:

"Apart from helping out with some excavations on a Roman site in Doncaster when still at senior school (many, many years ago!), I've only ever been an 'armchair archaeologist'. My husband and I have recently become interested in stone circles and rock art and have been to the Davy's Lee, Ravensheugh Crags and Standingstone Rigg areas a couple of times, but not really appreciated what we were seeing in the landscape. On hearing that the Group was investigating Davy's Lee, I was interested enough to want to join and learn more. I really wanted to take part in the Level 1 survey, but I confess to being more than a little nervous for a number of reasons - would I pick things up quickly; would I fit in with the rest of the group who probably knew far more about archaeology than I did; with my bad knees would I be able to get up and down the ditches and hills? I needn't have worried. I was made very welcome by the rest of the team who really looked after me, guided me through what to do, and when I got stuck in a boggy area, helped me out with good humour! Best of all, the more experienced members explained what we were looking at, and answered my questions about what I was seeing with patience and enthusiasm. I much enjoyed my two days out on the hills, and came back with a new way of looking at, and understanding of, lumps and bumps in the landscape. Since taking part, we've been out to a

number of other sites and looked at these with a new understanding and enjoyment. I'm really looking forward to the Level 3 survey and to taking my understanding to the next level."

Anne Tate

"It was particularly interesting because it taught me to look at landscapes in a new way. Typically when I've been out walking, I've only seen variations in the landscape without really understanding what I was seeing. This survey taught me to look at things in a wider context, being able to pick out features I would have otherwise overlooked. For example, I now know what the different types of ridge and furrow ploughing look like; we've been able to identify stack stands, boundary banks and ditches, and a cairn, and I now look at variations in vegetation to see what this might throw up. This area is also complex in what it offers archaeologically and being able to understand and interpret different phases of development was mind-opening. Never having taken part in a survey like this before, I'll certainly volunteer again, and I'd encourage others to come and help - you'll be made very welcome by the rest of the volunteers and members." Andrew Tate

Also worthy of mention are two 'hawk-eye' moments:

1. On his first day of landscape survey Luke spotted the most subtle of low mounds which on inspected appears likely to be the ploughed-out traces of an ancient burial cairn.
2. Lorraine, aware of the value of checking mole-hills for possible upcast finds, spotted a tiny piece of ceramic about the size of a finger-nail resting on a mole-hill in Davy's Lee Enclosure. Will we be able to get a possible period for this?

We are very grateful to the Murrays of Sewingshields Farm for their help making it possible for us to conduct our surveys and for sharing their local knowledge with us, and to Mr P. Straker for his permission for this work to take place on his estate. Report compiled on behalf of the group by Phil Bowyer, with additional observations by Andy Curtis and Martin Green. 8/4/2015