
NNPA/ALTOGETHER ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY NORTH OF SEWINGSHIELDS CRAGS

Initial Survey Results Summary



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INTRODUCTION

The Level 3 survey was carried out by volunteers from the Tynedale Archaeology Group led by Peter Schofield of Oxford Archaeology North, and Krissy Moore, the NNPA Community Archaeologist, as part of the Altogether Archaeology “North of the Wall” survey module. The Project Design focused upon 3 areas identified as being of particular interest following the Level 1 survey conducted by Tynedale North of the Wall Archaeology Group during March 2014.

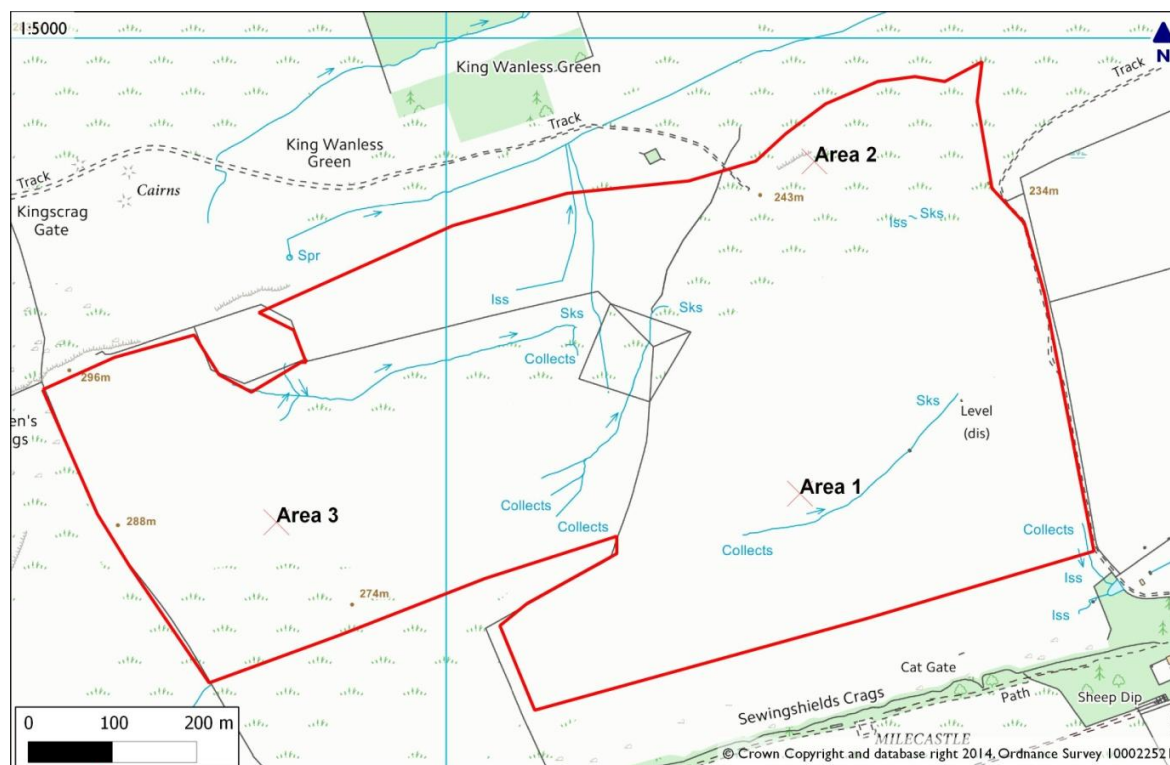


FIGURE 1: STUDY AREA MAP

During the survey two further sites a little south of the designated survey area, both previously identified as stack stands on the basis of aerial photography, were surveyed and were recorded as sites 59 and 60 after inspection had queried their HER designations as stack stands.

A full survey report is being prepared by Peter Schofield of Oxford Archaeology North. The current summary is therefore provisional and its contents may be subject to revision after further analysis of data has been carried out for the full report. Our summary is presented to provide initial feedback to volunteers who participated in the survey and to other interested individuals.

This report summarises the findings of surveys of the following five sites (Table 1):

TABLE 1: SITES SURVEYED DURING THE WORK

Survey Area	Details
Area 1 ...	HER 24827 at NY 80448/70526. Previously identified as ‘Stack Stands and Enclosure’. As a result of the survey the site is now thought to be a Medieval period building and enclosures.
Area 2 ...	A series of boundary features, some possibly pre-historic.
Area 3	HER12409, designated as an Enclosed Settlement of probable Romano-British date. The area also includes remains of linear boundary features.
Area 4	HER 12443, designated as a stack stand on the basis of aerial photography, now thought to be a hut circle with associated low linear bank.

Area 5	HER 12442, designated as a stack stand, now thought to be a raised circular building platform and banked enclosure, its western edge overlain by a later north-south sod cast bank of possibly medieval date.
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FIGURE 2: PLOT OF SURVEY AREAS

AREA 1 RESULTS

This feature, consisting of a number of low-lying banks, has been over-ploughed by post-medieval ridge and furrow. Volunteers were presented with the challenge of differentiating between subtle changes of slope representing remains from the original feature and those arising from later ploughing. With the guidance of survey leader Peter Schofield, volunteers flagged out top and bottom changes of slope prior to detailed manual recording using theodolite and disto. Volunteers also used GPS equipment to digitally record the same changes of slope.

Once plots had been created showing all top and bottom changes of slope volunteers completed the site plan by drawing in appropriate hachures to indicate variations in the angles of slope and other visible features.

Having completed the site plan volunteers discussed with the survey leader interpretations of the site. The following is a summary of the interpretation arising from those discussions (although this remains provisional pending the final report from Oxford Archaeology North)



FIGURE 3: THEODOLITE SURVEY OF FLAGGED-OUT ELEMENTS IN AREA 1



FIGURE 4: DRAWING WORK, CAPTURING THEODOLITE AND DISTO SURVEY IN AREA 1

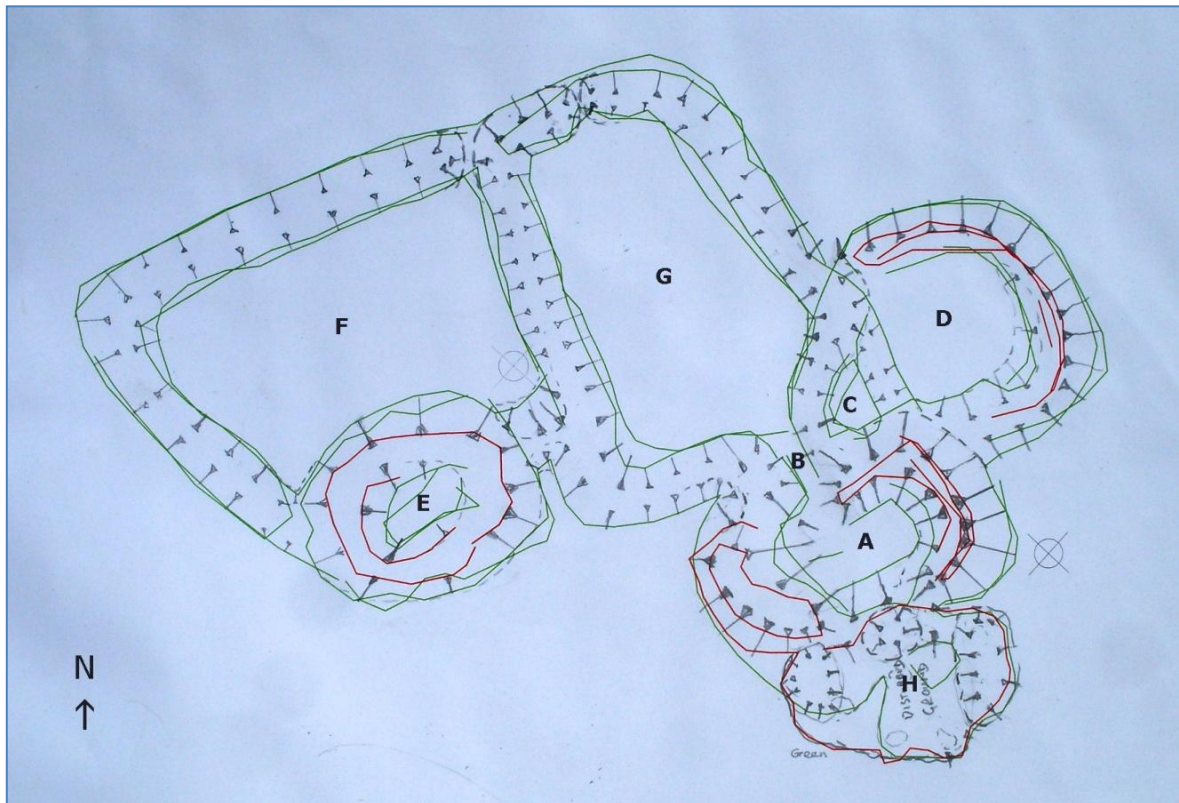


FIGURE 5: SITE PLAN AREA 1 (ANNOTATED)

To assist description of the site we have annotated the plan identifying specific elements.

Element A at the south-east of the site contained the steepest surviving banks. Whilst inserting wire flags to mark the top change of slope the eastern edge of the features was found to be very stony. In contrast the shallower western bank of the feature was not stony. These aspects, together with the shape and dimensions of the feature suggest that the feature may have been a platformed longhouse building with dwarf walls of stone, supporting a perishable superstructure and thatched roof. The drainage 'hood' wall is a distinctive feature of longhouse construction in the period as it protects the gable end from damp. Excavated examples are published in Roberts (2006). Its internal dimensions are 12m x 5m, and its full external extent is 17m x 9m.

Immediately south of building A is an area of disturbance, **Element H**.

Immediately north of Building A are indications of an entrance, **Element B**, opening onto a larger enclosure, **Element G**. The full extent of the subdivided paddock (Elements F & G) is 37m x 22m.

East of entrance B, at the south-east corner of enclosure G, are slight banks delineating a smaller triangular enclosure, **Element C**. Immediately to the east of this is a more clearly defined 'D'-shaped enclosure, **Element D**, which measures 14m x 13m.

Immediately west of enclosure G is a further enclosure, **Element F**. On the southern end of enclosure F, is **Element E**, an arguably sub-circular shallow banked feature, which measures 12m x 11m. The interpretation of this feature remains more problematic. Probing with wire flags did not indicate much stoniness beneath the surface. It is unclear whether feature E is a further enclosure or the remains of a structure of other function.

AREA 2 RESULTS

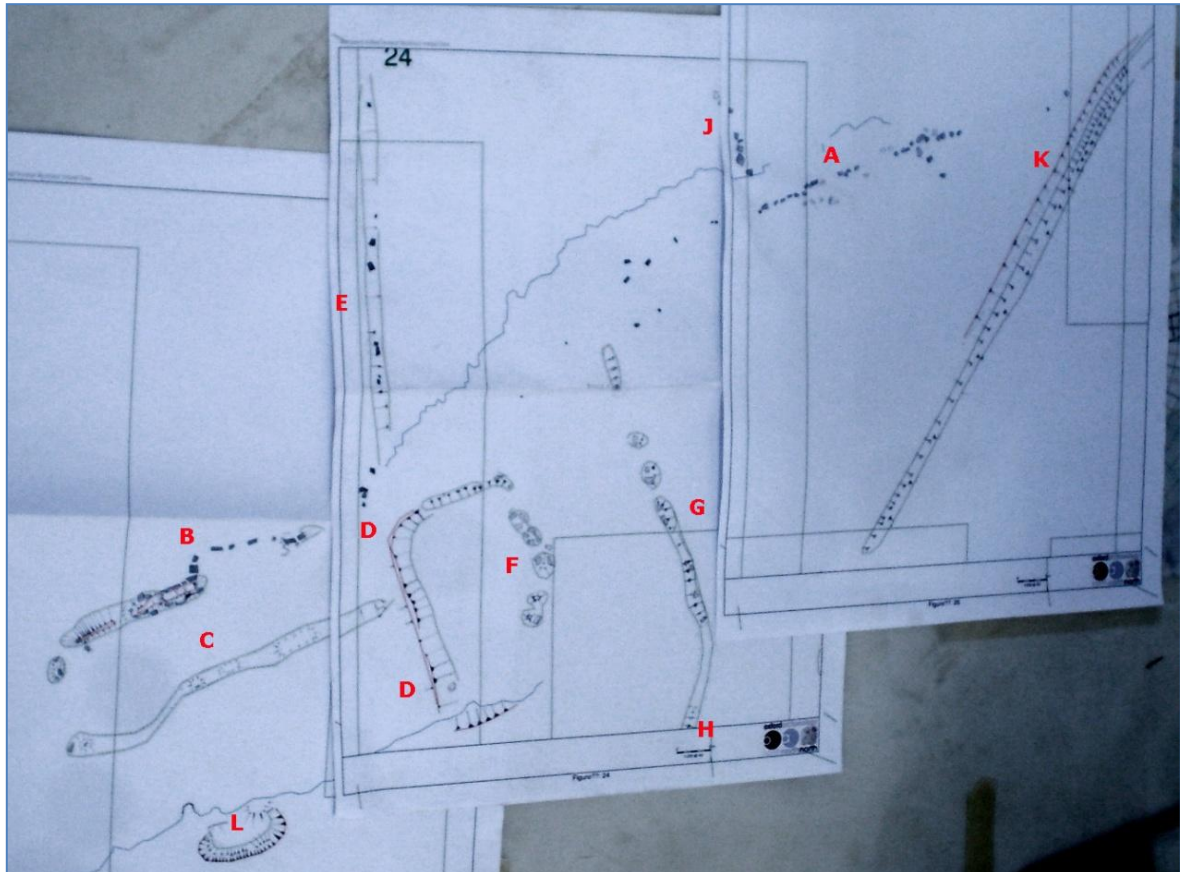


FIGURE 6: SITE PLAN AREA 2 (ANNOTATED)

At this location we surveyed a number of linear features with varying characteristics with a view to identifying any possible relationships between them, either functional or chronological.



FIGURE 7: SURVEYING AREA 2 FROM ELEMENT F



FIGURE 8: GPS SURVEY OF ELEMENT A, AREA 2

Element A Is a 34m long row of some 28 visible stones running parallel to, and some 5m south of, the low natural ridge. Although the possibility of this comprising a stone row similar to that about 3km to the north-east at Standingstone Rigg had been raised following the Level 1 survey in March it is now thought more likely to be a boundary feature, particularly in view of its apparent relationship to the other boundary features in Area 2.

As the ridge descends at its western end, comprising **Element B** there is a line of orthostats, then a length of bank double faced with large orthostats and then an earthen bank, traces of which continue close to part of an extensive north-south sod-cast bank which runs from the foot of Sewingshields Crag.

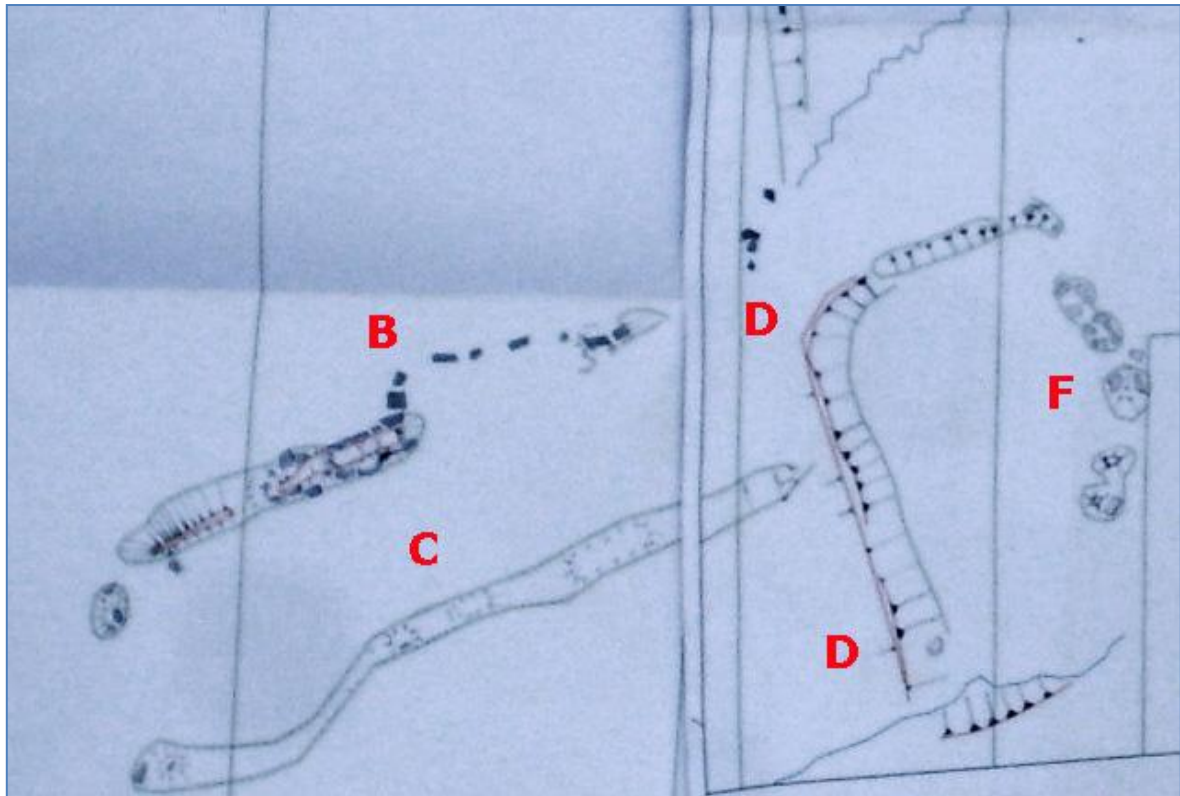


FIGURE 9: ANNOTATED PRELIMINARY PLAN OF AREA 2 (DETAIL)



FIGURE 10: BOUNDARY ELEMENT B, AREA 2



Figure 11: boundary element B, area 2

Element C is a low bank that runs roughly parallel to the south of the components of boundary element B. This terminates at its eastern end close to **Element D**, a distinct change of slope that appears to turn just south of

the natural ridge. Interestingly there is also a low linear bank with intermittent visible stones, **Element E**, that continues on the same north-south alignment as bank D prior to its apparent turn immediately south of the ridge. (See Site Plan Area 2)

To the east of bank D, a roughly north-south line of orthostats, **Element F**, creates the impression of a rectilinear enclosure in conjunction with bank D.

To the east of the linear orthostats **F** a further roughly north-south row of orthostats, **Element G**, runs towards the ridge. At its southern end it appears to connect with an earthen bank at H.

Just north of the ridge, close to the row of stones A, a further line of orthostats, **Element J**, extends for about 10m.

At the eastern end of our survey area 2 the ridge is crossed by an extensive sod-cast bank and ditch, **Element K**, running roughly SW-NE in the direction of Davys' Lee Enclosure.

Dating this series of boundary features has to remain somewhat conjectural. However, there appear to be examples of both medieval and post-medieval sod-cast banks crossing this area. The stony boundary features could well be earlier, and possibly pre-historic. We await the final report for further elucidation of this question.



FIGURE 12: LINEAR ORTHOSTATES, ELEMENT F



FIGURE 13: A FURTHER LINE OF ORTHOSTATS, ELEMENT J

AREA 3 RESULTS

This area was included in the project design as an 'optional extra' should time permit. Situated just south of the summit of Queen's Crag, its distance from our access point meant that it was surveyed only by GPS and digital plots generated. Completion of hachured site plans and recording was undertaken by members of Tynedale North of the Wall Archaeology Group over the weekend following the end of the NNPA/Altogether Archaeology Survey. HER12409, designated as an Enclosed Settlement of probable Romano-British date, is the

focal point of Area 3. In addition to carrying out a level 3 survey of the settlement we surveyed remnants of ancient field boundaries in the vicinity.

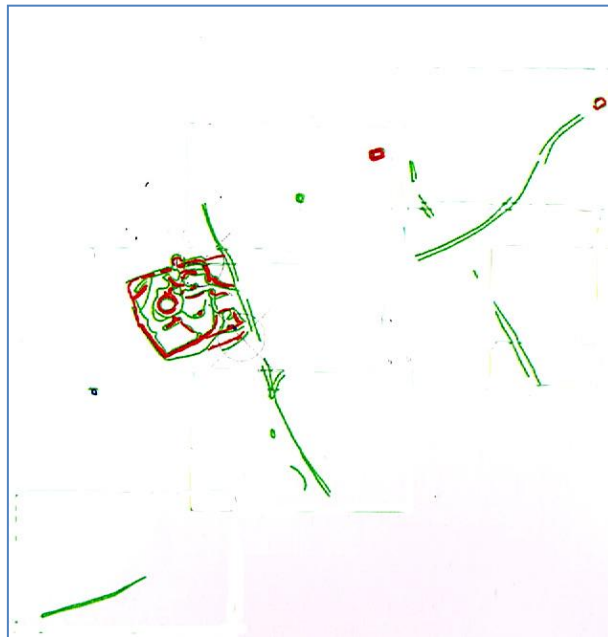


FIGURE 14: PLOT OF HER 12409 PLUS SURROUNDING FIELD BOUNDARIES.

Survey of the enclosed settlement revealed a number of interesting features, and posed some challenges for detailed interpretation.

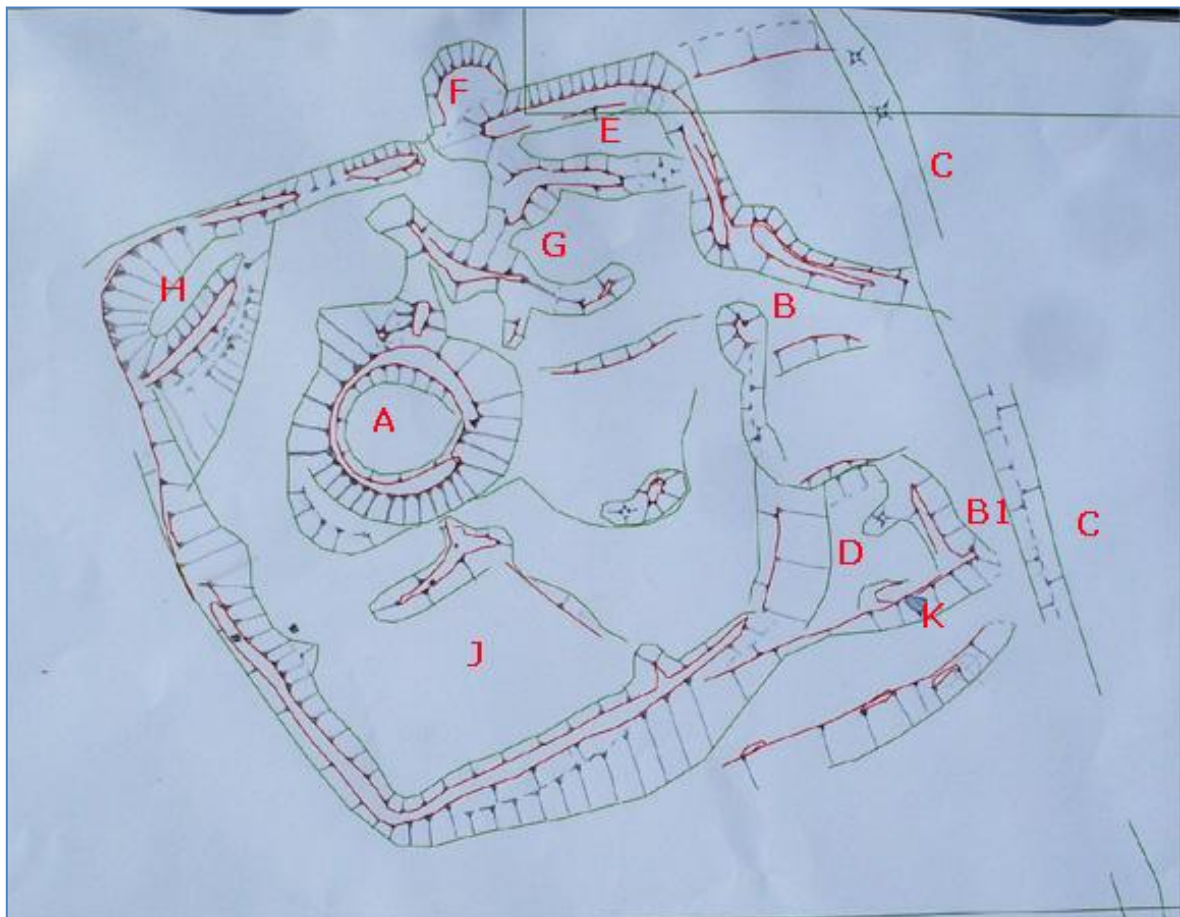


FIGURE 15: SITE PLAN OF HER 12409 (ANNOTATED)

Most of the outer enclosure is clearly defined and round house **A** is well delineated. The current HER data makes reference to signs of an external round house outside the south-east corner of the enclosure. Detailed survey of area **D** gave no evidence to support this interpretation, and there were no other visible features in the vicinity that might have offered an alternative location of the putative external round house. The south-east corner did however contain other features of interest. During the level 1 survey in March we identified a previously unrecorded cup-marked earth-fast stone, **K** on the plan, with a crescent of 5 cup marks visible on its upper surface.



FIGURE 16: CUP-MARKED STONE



FIGURE 17: INTERNAL FEATURES VIEWED FROM NW CORNER OF ENCLOSURE.

Another noteworthy feature here arises from the relationship between the enclosure and an approximately north-south field boundary, **C**, which runs close to the eastern edge of the enclosure and continues north beyond the ridge. There is a bank extending from the entrance **B** to boundary **C** may well have functioned to channel livestock into the enclosure. Whatever the purpose was of structure **D**, the effect of its location extending from the enclosure bank is to create a pinch-point at **B1**, which could have served to restrict the flow of livestock approaching from the south.

The layout of the interior of the enclosure appears quite complex. In the north-east corner a low bank creates a possibly enclosed area **E**. At the western end of this feature there is a possible northern entrance on the ridge with an adjacent raised platformed feature **F**.

The bank enclosing **E** appears to connect to a curved bank **G**, which may be the remains of a further round house structure. As the land rises along the ridge proceeding west there is a triangular enclosure, **H**, in the north-west corner. The south-west corner contains indications of a further enclosure, **J**.

About 30 metres south-west of the enclosed settlement lies a large cup-marked boulder which we first discovered in June 2012.

The boulder (at NY 79713 70421) bears the slot marks of a later unsuccessful attempt to quarry it by splitting. Previous to the two discoveries there was no known rock art in the immediate vicinity of Queen's Crags. The fact that one of the earth-fast cup-marked stones forms part of the enclosed settlement is of particular interest.



FIGURE 18: BOULDER

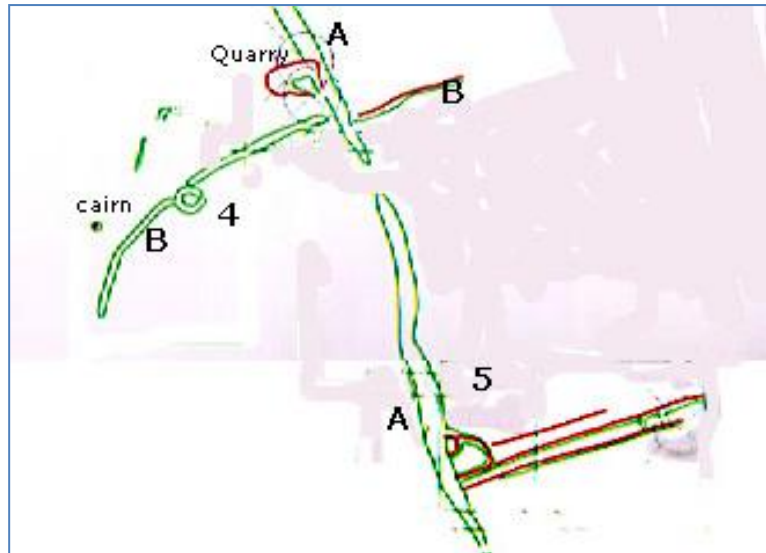


FIGURE 19: PLOT OF AREAS 4 AND 5

AREAS 4 AND 5.

Although not included in the project design volunteers took time to visit two further sites which were recorded in the HER as stack stands on the basis of aerial photography. Subsequent survey has prompted a fresh interpretation of both sites (Figure 19).

Area 4 (HER12443) consists of an earthen bank B with a circular banked feature.



FIGURE 20: AREA 4 SHOWING LINEAR BANK B AND CIRCULAR BANK.

It is noteworthy that to the east of the circular feature bank B is overlain by the north-south sod-cast bank A, which is thought to be of medieval date (Haigh and Savage 1984). Closer examination of the relationship between bank B and the circular bank gives grounds for interpreting the feature as a prehistoric hut circle.

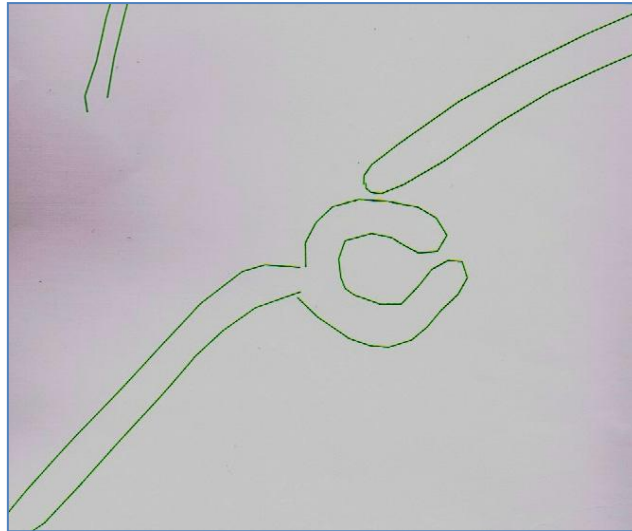


FIGURE 21: PLOT OF AREA 4

From the west bank **B** curves to meet the circular bank, and to the east there is a gap before bank **B** continues. A similar relationship between bank and hut circle occurs at the Scheduled Monument Bronze Age Hut Circle site near Ravensheugh Crag. A further indicator is that the circular bank has a clear entrance, something not found on stack stands!

Area 5 (HER 12442) also exhibits an interesting relationship with the north-south sod-cast bank **A**.

Area 5 consists of a raised sub-circular platform **C** within a trapezoidal banked enclosure **D**. To the east of the enclosure there are some strip lynchets. The feature is crossed by the north-south sod-cast bank **A**. Close examination revealed that the sod-cast bank overlays the raised platform and enclosure bank. As the sod-cast bank **A** approaches the enclosure bank it broadens at 1 on the plan. Where the sod-cast bank meets the southern edge of the raised platform **C** at 2 there are subtle changes of slope that are suggestive of platform **C** having been truncated and overlain by bank **A**. At 3 the bottom change of slope curves inwards, and south of platform **C**, at 4, we can see that the eastern edge of sod-cast bank **A** has shifted east compared with its edge north of enclosure **D**.

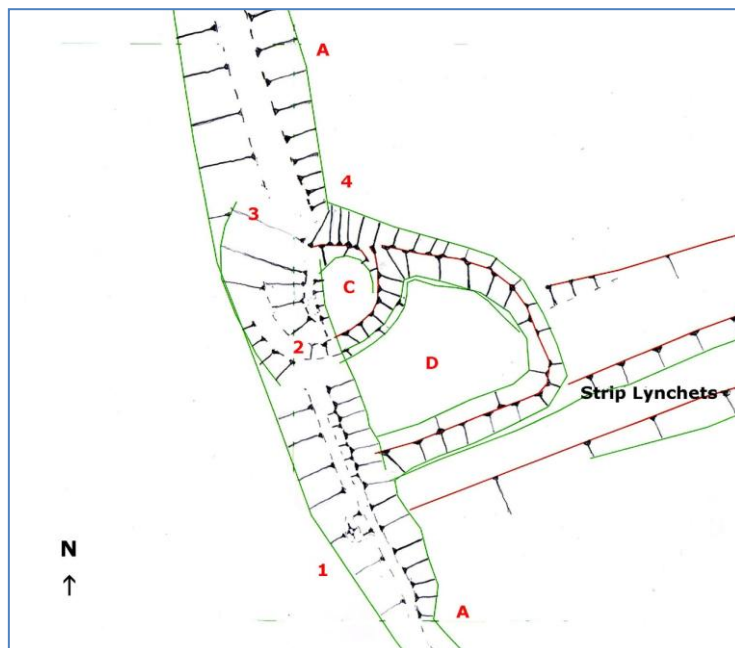


FIGURE 22: SITE PLAN AREA 5



FIGURE 23: AREA 5 SHOWING PLATFORM C AND EASTERN EDGE OF BANK A AT 4



FIGURE 24: JAMIE WITH HELICOPTER AT AREA 1.

Haigh and Savage (1984) argue that sod-cast bank A is a boundary feature related to the Sewingshields estate during the 12th and 13th centuries. The raised platform and enclosure feature clearly pre-date the sod-cast bank.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY.

As part of the survey module Jamie Quartermaine of Oxford Archaeology North brought the remote control helicopter to complete an aerial photographic survey of areas 1,2 and 3. His images will be turned into digital 3D models of the sites and will form part of the final report. Tynedale North of the Wall had hoped to trial their kite aerial photography kit during the module, but there was insufficient wind to undertake this.

CONCLUSIONS

The Level 1 survey carried out by Tynedale North of the Wall Archaeology Group had identified three locations of particular interest and the project design for the NNPA/ Altogether Archaeology module provided for a professionally-led Level 3 survey of these locations. This Level 3 survey has seen volunteers create detailed site plans for all three locations, and enabled them to participate in refining their initial interpretations of the features they had identified. For the volunteers this has been a very useful learning process, and a confirmation of the archaeological value of the work they are carrying out. Further the interaction between NNPA, Altogether Archaeology, Oxford Archaeology North and Tynedale North of the Wall Archaeology Group has facilitated volunteers being able to take this particular survey beyond the original remit of the project design to complete survey plans of additional sites. It is hoped that it will be possible to now build upon the work done last year at Ravensheugh Crag and Standingstone Rigg and this year at Sewingshields to extend the survey to incorporate the various other archaeologically significant locations between Sewingshields Crag and Ravensheugh Crag (Including sites at King's Crag, Crow Crag, and Townshields Bank).

All involved with this survey are grateful for the support and interest shown by the Murrays at Sewingshields, and to Mr Straker for his kind permission to conduct archaeological surveys on his estate. Thanks must also go to all those volunteers who have given of their time, enthusiasm and developing expertise, in variable weather conditions, both in March and June to complete some outstanding work.

Phil Bowyer, Tynedale North of the Wall Archaeology Group &

REFERENCES

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- Roberts, K (ed) 2006. *Lost Farmsteads: Deserted rural settlements in Wales*. CBA Res Rep 148: York