

FORUM

NEW SERIES
Volume 1
2012

The Journal of
Council for British Archaeology
YORKSHIRE

Published by the Council for British Archaeology: Yorkshire Group

Edited by Spencer Carter

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The Archaeological Forum Journal: CBA Yorkshire

ISSN 2051-8234 (Print)
2051-8242 (Online)

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The Council for British Archaeology Yorkshire Group is a registered Charity number 519581. A copy of the constitution may be obtained from the secretary or found on the CBA Yorkshire website.

Printed by H&H Reeds Printers, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 8JH, UK

Council for
British Archaeology

www.cba-yorkshire.org.uk

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The group 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 meetings, newsletters, a website, electronic communications, and the Archaeological Forum Journal.

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About FORUM Yorkshire

FORUM is an annual journal where community, independent, professional/commercial and academic archaeologists (and practitioners in complementary fields) can report their research or extend discussions about archaeological and allied issues. A range of contributions is invited including long (3000–6000 word) or short (2000–3000 word) articles, shorter notes (up to 2000 words), site summaries, and preliminary or full research fieldwork and project reports. Longer papers may be considered and requests should be submitted to the editor. We also accept reviews of books or articles related to the archaeology and heritage landscape of Yorkshire. Contributions are welcomed from students, voluntary and community-based groups, independent practitioners, providers of training and education, commercial organisations and academics. FORUM is *semi-peer reviewed* meaning that contributors (and the editor) may request independent, specialist review of articles that are submitted for consideration. FORUM is dated and published retrospectively for the prior calendar year and distributed around February to subscribed members.

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Contributions may be on any period of archaeology and the human past relevant to the geographic scope outlined above. A copy of the full editorial policy may be obtained from the editor. However, 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 independent (anonymous) reviewers as considered appropriate.

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Citation example

Waddington, C. 2012. Discovery and Excavation of a Roman Estate Centre at Whirlow, South-west Sheffield.
Archaeological Forum Journal: CBA Yorkshire 1, 43–52.

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The Bordley Township Project: Aspects of Human Impact on a Landscape in Craven

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Keywords Landscape, Earthworks, Lithics, Lead, Community archaeology, Bordley, Craven

Abstract

Bordley Township presents a diverse landscape with evidence for human activity over perhaps five millennia. The current project is working towards an interpretation of the evidence derived from walk over and more detailed survey, along with the limited documentary evidence, to develop an understanding of the rich history of the township.

Introduction

Over the last three years the Bordley Township Project has been investigating the landscape in and around the township of Bordley in Craven, now in North Yorkshire but historically part of the West Riding (Fig. 1), with a view to interpreting its history and the archaeology of human activity in the area for the wider public. The project has developed a programme of fieldwork to facilitate the investigation and has engaged with young people in the area through working with local primary schools, running an after-school archaeology club and providing other out of school activities to enable them to appreciate their local heritage. The aim of this paper is to provide an outline of the project fieldwork and also to briefly describe some of the initial results.

The township is an area of scattered settlement with no through vehicular routes, in the eastern Aire catchment between Malham and Kilnsey/Threshfield in upper Wharfedale, centred on the shrunken hamlet of Bordley which now comprises only two dwellings. It straddles the Craven faults with a bedrock geology characterised by the limestone of the Wensleydale Group around High Mark in the north and the Pendle Grit Formations in the south where they are cut by the valley of the Bordley Beck, south of Bordley Hall. This provides a diverse landscape with ample evidence for human activity from late prehistory through the Iron Age, Romano-British and the medieval periods to the present day.

Methodology

Our focus in the fieldwork to date has been to carry out walk over surveys of all the fields within the township (Fig. 1) identifying and recording surviving surface features. This is now around 95% completed. Where appropriate, some of those features have or will be surveyed in further detail. A limited geophysical survey has been

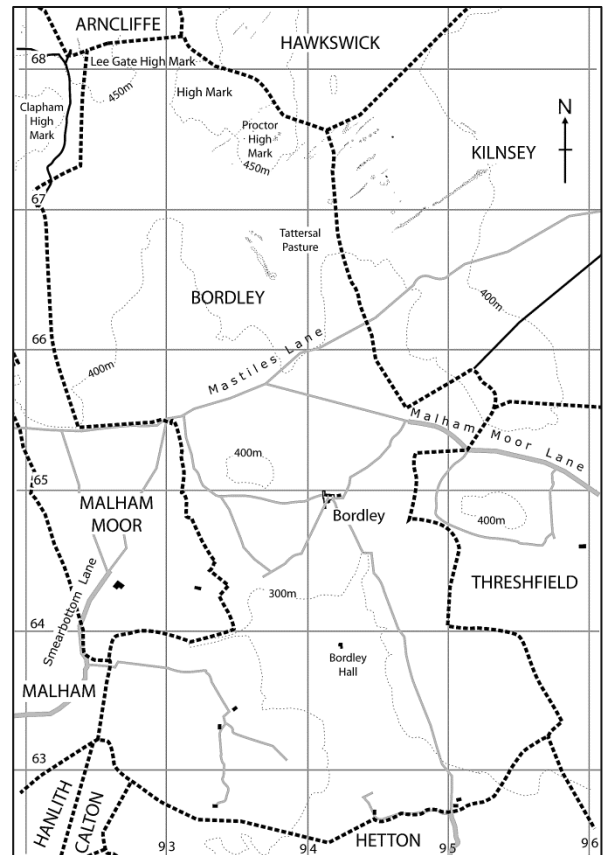
carried out around Bordley Hall Farm with a view to identifying sub-surface evidence. In addition to this a programme of vernacular building recording has already covered the southern parts of the township with results published in the 2011 Interim Report (Cloughton 2011).

Figure 1 Bordley Township, modern boundaries. (After Heward 2010, 17). Scale: 1km grid squares. Based on Ordnance Survey open data © Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved.

Results

Evidence for early land-use

The features recorded are so far undated but lithic finds provide some evidence for early land-use, with worked chert fragments of a type which might be linked to the Late Mesolithic period (*e.g.* Fig. 2) being found in the north of the township. Those, along with a ripple-flaked (pressure-flaked) flint arrowhead (Fig. 3) from the Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age (Dodsworth 2012), were chance finds during field surveys and there has, as yet, been no systematic lithic survey carried out. The finds catalogued by the project do, however, suggest continued if seasonal use of the area throughout the early pre-historic periods and the presence of a fine ‘Four Poster’ stone circle commonly referred to as the ‘Bordley Circle’ (NGR SD 94944 65271) on the eastern boundary of the township at the Malham Moor Lane gate indicates the cultural significance of the area in the Bronze Age (Martlew 2010).



None of the earthwork features, the remains of enclosures and dwellings, recorded by the project (see Fig. 4 for an example) have yet been dated and assumptions as to date for those that have already been entered in the Yorkshire Dales Historic Environment Record (HER) prior to this project are largely made on typological grounds. Previous surveys, by the former Ordnance Survey archaeological teams or carried out remotely as part of the national mapping program for England, had already located some of the earthworks but there is much that is not visible using aerial photography and can only be identified by field walking. This is particularly true on the gritstone in the south, where vegetation and peat accumulation has partially if not totally obscured the features (Fig. 5). Even on the limestone, many robbed out wall lines are difficult features to identify.

There are a range of enclosure earthworks in prominent and sheltered locations in the north of the township, and examples of both can be found in Tattersal Pasture (centred at NGR SD 94106 66840). Some, no doubt, will prove to be of late prehistoric date through to Romano-British but much of what is visible today is probably of medieval/post-medieval origin.

Roman and post-Roman occupation

Mastiles Lane (Fig. 1) bisects the township and the marching fort astride the lane just beyond the western boundary of the township clearly indicates some Roman presence and their influence is reinforced by the fragments of

quern stones of that period found near Lainger. Post-Roman impact on the area is unclear, with the name of the township suggesting an Anglo-Saxon origin. Evidence from the Domesday survey suggests that it was under Anglo-Scandinavian lordship by the 11th century. It was probably at this early medieval period that the township as we understand it today came into existence and the evidence elsewhere (Sylvester 1967) suggests that such townships were the building blocks for the later ecclesiastical parishes, and in our case the parish of Burnsall.

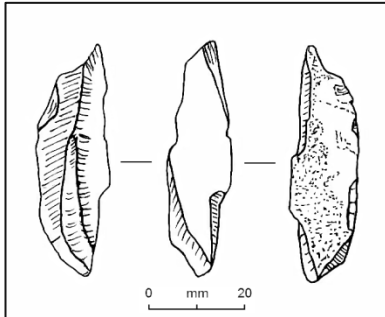


Figure 2 Double burin made from a chert platform rejuvenation flake. BTP Ref. 057.

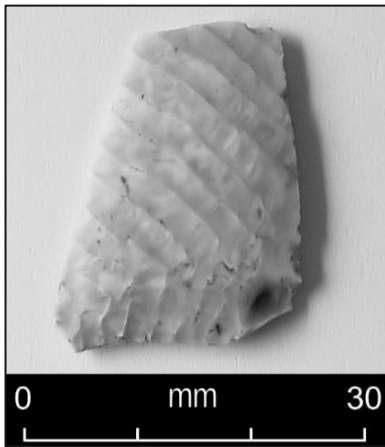


Figure 3 Ripple-flaked flint arrowhead. BTP Ref. 068. J. Heward.

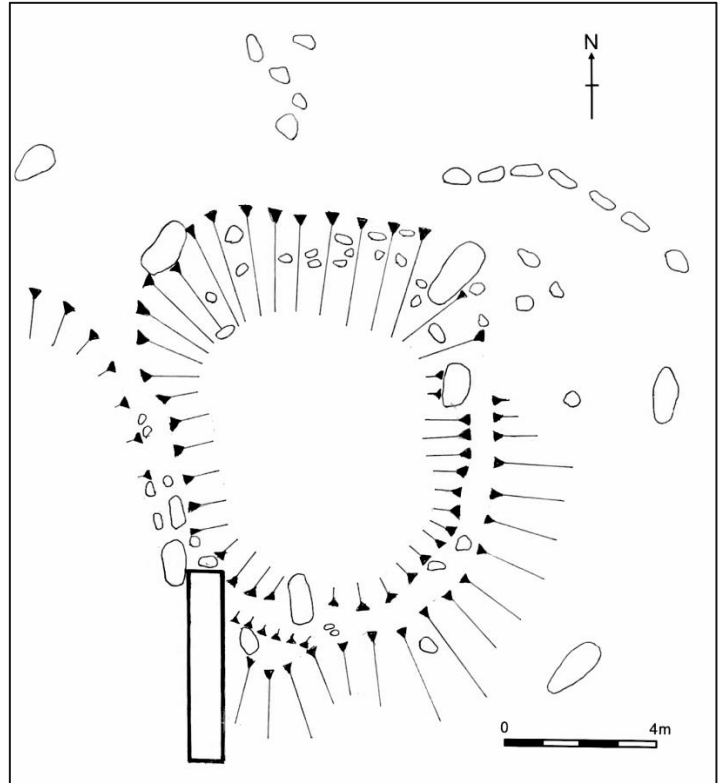


Figure 4 Part of an earthwork feature group in the south of the township (NGR SD 94880 63000 centred) which are clearly visible in aerial photography and might be linked to medieval or earlier stock control. K. Shaw.

It was the establishment of two granges of Fountains Abbey at Bordley in the 12th century which had perhaps the greatest impact on the township. Pastoral farming had probably been practiced in the area for many centuries but the lay brothers of Fountains and its subsequent tenants developed the raising and pasturing of sheep for their wool on a large scale². Field name evidence around Bordley Hall also suggests that horse breeding was important in the local economy. Even the best land in the township is far from ideal for raising cereal crops, although there is limited field evidence in the southern part for arable farming and the documented presence of a corn mill suggests that a certain amount was regularly cropped in at least the post-medieval period. The documentary evidence, currently being researched by Mike Spence (*pers. comm.*), indicates that the wool crop in the 15th century was substantial, and survey work suggests that the earthworks connected with stock control and housing at that period are significant features across the township.

² *Medieval Bordley*. an illustrated presentation by M. Spence to the Bordley Township Project, Hetton, May 2012.

After the dissolution of Fountains Abbey and sale of their Bordley lands to absentee lords from the mid-16th century onwards, judged by the practice in adjoining townships, the emphasis on sheep continued (Wilkinson 2011, 102–103). Stinted pastures were established across the north of the township, controlled by local by-laws and the resident freeholders (Raistrick 1976, 45–46). By the 19th century the absentee lord was gone, stinted pastures had been enclosed and divided by agreement amongst long established freeholders, with the intake to the north-east of Lainger being the last to be enclosed, this time under the annual Inclosure Act for 1847 (The National Archives, Kew: PRO MAF1/853). The field walls that exist today are largely a result of that process but amongst them are much earlier walls which in some cases, judged on their structure, perhaps date back to the late medieval period or earlier, and their features are being recorded in the course of our survey work (Fig. 6).



Figure 5 An ancient wall line in Park House Close, adjoining the boundary with Calton in the far south-west of the township, and invisible in the aerial photography. *J. Heward.*



Figure 6 An ancient wall set on a well-defined ledge cut into the hillside at the bottom of High Bank (NGR SD 94540 64530). *D. Leonard.*

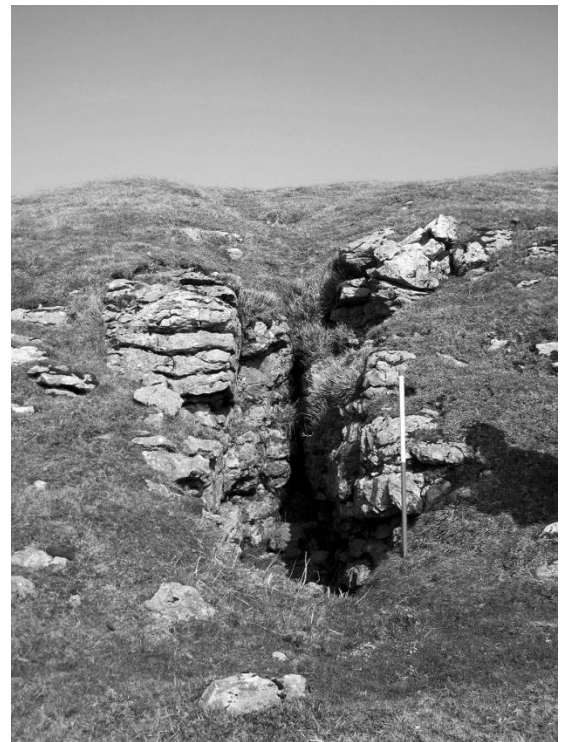


Figure 7 Workings on one of the narrow lead veins in the northern part of Tattersal Pasture. *P. Cloughton.*

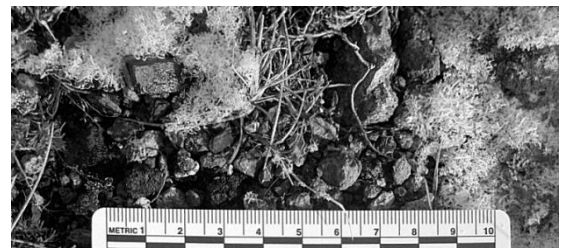


Figure 8 Coal and coke mixed with fragments of rock from fire-setting amongst spoil from workings on Lee Gate High Mark. *P. Cloughton.*

The work of the project is, however, not confined to the modern township boundaries as those are very likely to have moved over time, particularly under lay control from the mid-16th century onwards. Its western boundary was disputed in the area of Smearbottom Head (The National Archives, Kew: PRO C1/1522/64) and what is now part of Malham Moor township, including Newhouses, was originally part of Bordley.

Although pastoral farming has dominated the landscape at Bordley there are industrial features to be recorded. The quarrying and burning of limestone for agricultural improvements from the post-medieval period onwards is found in at least three locations: Lee Gate High Mark; Kealcup Hill; and the valley to the east of Long Ridge. Coal, as a fuel for lime-burning, domestic and other uses, was mined from seams in the Grassington Grits in the south-eastern part of the township from at least the 1640s, when the Cliffords of Skipton Castle worked pits adjacent to Boss Moor (Spence 1959; 1992). Shallow workings for lead at a well-defined horizon in the limestone of the Lower Wensleydale Group are prominent features in the north of the township, with numerous narrow veins having been worked from Kilnsey and Hawswick in the east, across Bordley to Malham Moor in the west (Heward 2010).

It is unclear when the lead deposits were first worked but the recent discovery of a late medieval wind-blown, bole or bale smelting site at High Wind Bank in Kilnsey, close to the Hawswick boundary at NGR SD 96900 69400 (Northern Archaeological Associates 2012, 10–11, 14–15), highlights the possibility that there was lead working across the whole area at that period and brings into question the assertion by Raistrick (1953, 69) that a lack of references in the monastic record meant that they had not been worked.

Although, as yet, no smelting sites of a similar period have been found within Bordley and no hard dates are available for any of the workings there, it is possible to develop a relative chronology for lead working. A series of shallow shafts and open-works, with grass-covered spoil heaps, are found along all the veins across the north of the township (Fig. 7). The waste from many small ore preparation or dressing areas alongside the workings has been reworked to recover the small fragments of ore unsuitable for the earlier wind-blown smelting process, and that will have been carried out after the introduction of a new ore-hearth smelting process at the Malham (Janet's Foss) smelt-mill in the 17th century and later, in the early 18th century, at Kilnsey (Gill 1993, 136, 141). The sites where the reworking, using gravity separation of crushed ore in water, was carried out can be found alongside springs in the north of the township and in adjoining parts of Hawswick and Kilnsey.

The presence of coal and coke amongst fragments of heat affected rock and vein material on the spoil heaps (Fig. 8), the waste from fire-setting (the shattering of rock using intense heat) is also indicative of changes in technique in the post-medieval period. Based on good dating evidence found underground in the Derbyshire Peak District (Barnatt and Worthington 2009, 98–99) coal was in use by the 17th century to shatter both rock and ore found in narrow strings, as at Bordley, a procedure which would have rendered the ore unsuitable for smelting using the earlier wind-blown process. It is also evident that spoil from later attempts to work the veins using deeper shafts (in the late 18th and 19th century), employing explosives to shatter the rock, in some cases overlies the earlier dressing sites. Hard dating must, however, wait until investigations are made underground or dateable material is discovered at the surface.

Conclusion

Without excavation it is unlikely that hard dating will be possible for the majority of the earthwork features identified in the course of the survey work described above but, as illustrated for the lead workings, it is sometimes possible to develop relative chronologies. In the near future the project will carry out a detailed survey of the coal workings in the south-east part of the township with a view to developing a similar chronology. Over the next one to two years the project will move to interpretation of the fieldwork results with a view to developing an understanding of human impact on the township area over time. It is already possible to construct various

scenarios for the evolution of land use and the settlement pattern. However, these need to be tested and, where possible, compared with examples elsewhere in the region. Based on the information available to date, at least one aspect of the pattern of land use in the township is evident. The concentrations of early (late prehistoric to medieval) field boundaries identified in adjoining townships such as Threshfield, Kilnsey and Hawkswick, to the west of the Wharfe and the Skirfare, and at Malham, as far east as Gordale, do not appear to extend into Bordley, suggesting that the area was perhaps on the periphery of intensive settlement.

There are many questions yet to be answered in interpreting the field evidence within the landscape of Bordley Township. As the project advances, all avenues towards the fullest understanding of the historic landscape will be considered and the results made available for discussion. If nothing else, it should make the wider public aware of the very existence of Bordley and the value of detailed survey and its interpretation in understanding the landscape, its archaeology and its history.

Archives

On completion of the project it is planned that the finds will be curated at the Craven Museum, High Street, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 1AH, UK. Feature data will be passed to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority for incorporation in their Historic Environment Record (HER).

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for generous and ongoing funding for the Bordley Township Project. He would also like to thank all those who are contributing their time and expertise to the project, particularly our project director, Janis Heward, who provided invaluable advice in drafting this paper. In addition the author thanks all the owners and occupiers in the township for generously allowing us access to their land. He is also indebted to the Forum Editor and anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments on the early draft for this paper.

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