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**Land at OS Field 0006,  
Main Street  
Weaverthorpe  
North Yorkshire**

**SE 9694 7087**

**Archaeological Excavation**

**Authorised by .....**

**Date:.....**

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**June 2006**

**Land at OS Field 0006,  
Main Road,  
Weaverthorpe,  
North Yorkshire  
SE 9694 7087**

**Archaeological Excavation**

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**Land at OS Field 0006, Main Road,  
Weaverthorpe,  
North Yorkshire  
SE 9694 7087**

**Archaeological Excavation**

***Non Technical Summary***

*In August/September 2004 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd on land to the north of Main Street, Weaverthorpe. The results of this work determined the need for open area excavation in advance of the construction of a detached dwelling with detached garage, three terraced houses with garages and a visitor parking area.*

*Five phases of archaeological activity were recorded consisting of pits and linear boundary ditches, chalk-built walls and structures and a large pit/dew pond on the eastern side of the site.*

*A number of the features contained medieval pottery comprising mostly of locally produced fabrics such as Staxton / Potter Brompton ware, Beverley Type 1 and 2 wares, Splashed ware, Hambleton ware, Humber ware, and Scarborough ware; as well as a small residual assemblage of Late Iron Age/Romano-British pottery and flint artefacts. A surprisingly small amount of animal bone was also recovered.*

*The metal detecting survey uncovered several copper alloy objects including buckles, strap ends, and a lead weight, all dating to the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries*

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of an archaeological excavation undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. in advance of a residential development on land north of Main Street, Weaverthorpe, North Yorkshire

(Figs. 1 & 2 : SE 9694 7087). The excavation took place over six weeks in March and April 2006.

- 1.2 The excavation was carried out on behalf of, and funded by, the developers, Mr and Mrs Webster.
- 1.5 The MAP site code for the project was 02-03-06.
- 1.6 All maps within this report have been reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, licence No. AL 50453A.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The site lies within the north-eastern part of Weaverthorpe village, on the northern side of Main Road, which itself runs along the north bank of the Gypsy Race (Figs. 1 and 2). September Cottage, a recently constructed dwelling lies immediately to the east. The southern and western boundaries consist of hedges, with a post and rail fence along the eastern side. The northern boundary is not defined, but is at present represented by an area of ploughed land running northwards of a large ploughed-out bank. The topography consists of a slope that runs downwards to the south, from c. 80m to c. 71m A.O.D. The site measured 45m x 20m.
- 2.2 The geology at the site is recorded as chalky drift and chalk (Mackney *et al.* 1983), with overlying well-drained calcareous fine silty soils of the Coombe 1 Association (*ibid.*). Similar deposits extend along the floor of the Gypsy Race, and are surrounded by relatively steep-sided hills of solid chalk bedrock.

## **3. Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 3.1 The Great Wold Valley, through which the Gypsy Race flows, forms a huge landscape of Prehistoric features, known largely from cropmarks on aerial photographs, but also represented by earthworks (Stoertz 1997).

- 3.2 Some of the most notable cropmark features in Weaverthorpe parish are the massive multiple dykes that are believed to represent an Iron Age stock-management system (Riley 1990).
- 3.3 Other cropmark features plotted by the RCHME show a series of linked rectangular enclosures forming an Iron Age/Romano-British 'ladder settlement' that runs eastwards into Weaverthorpe from the direction of Helperthorpe, parallel to, and on both sides of the Gypsy Race (Stoertz 1997, Map 1). The cropmarks on the north side of the Gypsy Race are obscured by the built-up area of the village, plus the earthworks and pasture to the south of the church. However, it is entirely possible that the ladder settlement continues eastwards to the vicinity of the evaluation area and beyond.
- 3.4 An 'umbonate' bronze brooch with enamelled decoration of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date was recently found in the field (metal-detecting find by Mr Ken Umpleby).
- 3.5 The Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian periods are poorly documented at Weaverthorpe, but the fact that the village was mentioned in the Domesday Survey (1086), along with the origins of the place-name, point to the fact that there was an Anglo-Scandinavian settlement there. Weaverthorpe was recorded as *Wifretorp* in 1086, the name meaning *Vidfari's* village (*Vidfari* being an Old Scandinavian personal name meaning 'far-traveller' (Smith 1937).
- 3.6 Physical evidence of pre-conquest activity is provided by a stycca from the second reign of Aethelred II (AD 844-49 - another metal-detecting find from the site by Mr Umpleby, identification by Craig Barclay, formerly of the Yorkshire Museum).
- 3.7 The Domesday Survey shows Weaverthorpe to have been the pre-conquest centre of a broad estate of the Archbishops of York, worth £14 in the time of

King Edward (1066). However, the village was waste in 1086, perhaps as a result of William of Normandy's harrying of the north in 1069.

- 3.8 Herbert of Winchester obtained Weaverthorpe manor during the incumbency of Archbishop Thomas II (1108-1114). An inscription on the sundial over the south door of St Andrew's church records the construction of the church by Herbert. It is believed that the earthworks immediately south of the church relate to his manorial centre.
- 3.9 Weaverthorpe appears to have the form of a street village with fairly regular north-south rows of properties separated by a central street and the Gypsey Race (Fig. 2). The development area is situated at the eastern end of the northern block of rows, but it is not clear whether it formed part of the medieval village. The large bank (now ploughed out) at the northern boundary may have separated the properties of the village from the arable fields, if so this places the development area within the medieval settlement.
- 3.10 The main archaeological intervention to have taken place at Weaverthorpe was the excavation by Brewster in 1960 of an area enclosed by an earthwork bank and ditch, prior to the eastward extension of the churchyard (Brewster 1960). A Romano-British pit was located along with 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Two rectangular dwellings with chalk walls were interpreted as a hall and ancillary buildings, abandoned in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The enclosing earthworks were examined by Raymond Hayes and others in 1951, when Gritty Ware sherds were recovered from beneath the bank, indicating a post-conquest date for its construction.
- 3.11 No archaeological deposits were revealed during a watching brief on roadworks to the south-west of the church (MAP 2003).
- 3.12 Pre-determination archaeological evaluation had been undertaken in 2004. A Geophysical Survey in February 2004 (GeoQuest 2004) identified a large number of anomalies suggestive of silted up foundation trenches, ditches and

gullies. Evaluation in August/September 2004 (MAP site code 04-07-04) identified six phases of activity and several unphased features within the four trenches excavated. Phase 1 was dated to the Roman period. Phase 2, 3, 4 and 5 to the medieval period, and Phase 6 contained modern topsoil and subsoil deposits which were removed by machine.

#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

4.1 The objectives of the archaeological work within the proposed development area were:

1. to determine by means of targeted archaeological excavation the character, extent and nature of the archaeological remains within the development area,
2. to locate, recover, identify, assess and conserve (as appropriate) any archaeological artifacts exposed during the course of the excavation,
3. where appropriate, to undertake a post-excavation assessment after completion of fieldwork and site archive to assess the potential for further analysis and publication, and to undertake such analysis and publication as appropriate,
4. to prepare and submit a suitable archive to the appropriate museum.

#### **5. Methodology**

5.1 All the overburden (topsoil and subsoil) was removed using a back-acting mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless bucket. All machine excavations were undertaken under full archaeological supervision.

5.2 After removal of overburden, excavation proceeded by hand. Each archaeological feature or deposit was recorded on *pro-forma* Context Record Sheets (Appendix 1), according to guidelines laid down in the MAP Excavation Manual. A total of 147 contexts were recorded.

5.3 The finds assemblage consisted of animal bone (209 fragments), ceramic building material (17 fragments), clay tobacco pipe (1 fragment), 1 flint artefact, modern glass (12 fragments), metal objects (1 ferrous buckle, 1

ferrous hinge fragments, 1 ferrous object; 2 ferrous nails, 4 copper alloy buckles; 1 copper alloy perforated cover; 1 copper alloy strip; 2 copper alloy strap end; 1 lead fragment; 1 lead shot; 1 lead weight and 1 lead object/?pommel), pottery (1028 sherds), shell (2 snails), and 8 fragments of stone (Appendix 2).

5.4 Deposits that were removed as part of the overburden were recorded in section and by record only. All other archaeological deposits and features were recorded in plan at a scale of 1:20 on permatrace drafting film. Elevations and sections of features and individual layers were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and included an Ordnance Survey Datum height (Appendices 1 and 3). In total 96 drawings were archived; including 14 elevations, 50 plans and 32 sections.

5.5 A full photographic record comprising colour print, monochrome print and colour transparencies, was made. A total of 12 35mm films were used; including 4 colour slide films (Nos. 882, 883, 904, 906), four colour print films (Nos. 878, 901, 902, 903) and 4 monochrome print films (Nos. 887, 889, 898, 900). The Photographic Record of features and general trench shots, included a film register noting film number, shot number, location of shot, the direction of the shot, and a brief description of the subject (Appendix 4).

5.6 A total of 19 environmental samples were taken from the same number of deposits for general biological analysis (Appendix 5).

## 6. Results

6.1 An area measuring 45m by 20m was excavated revealing limestone walls (Pls. 1 to 5), and after a second phase of machining, which removed subsoil deposits (Pls. 7-10), Phase 1 to 3 pits, postholes and linear features were fully exposed.

6.2 *Period 0: Geology*

6.2.1 Undisturbed geological deposits of clean red silty clay, seen on the south-eastern corner of the site, and fine sand and gravels over the rest of the stripped area, were recorded as context 5020.

6.3 *Period 1: Undated Features (Figs. 3 and 6; Pls. 11 & 12)*

6.3.1 Period 1 features are characterised by a number of pits and a curvi-linear feature which have no associated finds and do not cut any of the features that contain sherds of medieval pottery. These features are obviously stratigraphically early and may equate to Romano-British activity on the site; a small assemblage of residual pottery of this date was collected from the excavations (Appendix 2), and a number of features from the evaluation were also dated to this period (MAP 2004 : Period 1).

6.3.2 The Period 1 features cut into the natural gravels : pits (5078 [5025]; 5114 [5110]; 5116 [5115]; 5128 [5127]; 5130 [5125]; 5132 [5131]; 5134 [5133]; 5136 [5135]), a shallow linear feature (5030 [5045]) and a curvilinear feature excavated in three segments (5070 [5069], 5141 [5142] and 5143 [5144]).

6.3.3 The Period 1 features represent marginal activity; the curvilinear feature may be indicative of an enclosure, however its full extent is unknown therefore firm interpretation is problematic. The inter-cut pit group to the west of this feature along with other examples to the east are most likely indicative of piecemeal gravel extraction.

6.4 *Period 2: Features of 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century date (Figs. 4 and 6; Pls. 13-18)*

6.4.1 Period 2 activity is characterised by a greater degree of gravel extraction with the excavations also being utilised as rubbish pits. Whereas Period 1 lacks associated pottery Period 2 pits have associated pottery of 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century date and a small faunal assemblage. In addition a substantial north-south aligned ditch (5120) is attributed to this phase as it appears to respect Period 1 Ditch 5070/5041/5043 and forms a western boundary to the high concentration of pits which typify Period 2.

6.4.2 Thirteen pits were attributed to Phase 2.

6.4.3 Only seven pits were single entities (i.e. were not disturbed by later pit digging activity - Pits 5074 [5065; 5073]; 5075 [5054]; 5088 [5068; 5087]; 5103 [5093]; 5121 [5104], 5101 [5066; 5111]; 5140 [5137, 5138, 5139]. These features varied greatly in size and shape with profiles also varying greatly from a shallow v-shape to a flat bottomed u-shape.

6.4.4 The remaining pits had been disturbed at least once by the cutting of an adjacent pit; this activity could be sub-divided into five distinct groups:

*Pits 5117 [5113] and 5118 [5124];*

*Pits 5099 [5107/5108]), 5100 [5109/5058] and 5102 [5112]*

*Pits 5084 [5059; 5083], 5086 [5067; 5085]) and 5091 [5089; 5090];*

*Pits 5097 [5096], 5095 [5092], 5062 [5056], 5064 [5063] and 5080 [5079].*

This last group appears to be a continuation of a dense concentration of pits excavated in Trench 4 of the evaluation of the site in 2004 (Fig. 4).

6.4.5 Size varied but in the main the inter-cutting pits ranged from 1m to 2.5m in diameter with u-shaped profiles.

6.4.6 Aligned north to south Ditch 5120 [5106; 5119] was a continuation of a feature seen in Evaluation Trench 2 and recorded as 2014 in the 2004 evaluation (MAP 2004 : Fig. 6) where it was seen to terminate. Ditch 5120 extends beyond the excavated area. Pottery from the two fills were of 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century date.

⑥.5 *Period 3: Amalgamation of the site (Fig. 5 : Pl. 19)*

6.5.1 Period 3 sees a change in the focus of activity at the site. Along the northern edge of the excavated area linear ditches are cut, with no respect for earlier land divisions (Ditches 5070 & 5120).

6.5.2 Two parallel east-west linears were recorded in the north-western corner of the site. Ditch segments 5061 [5060]; and 5072 [5071] had u-shaped and v-

shaped profiles respectively. The northernmost Ditch (5061) continued into the northern baulk and was recorded as Ditch 2028 in the 2004 Evaluation Trench 2 where it was seen to terminate..

- 6.5.3 Further ditches attributed to this phase were recorded in the north-eastern corner of the site. It would appear that Ditches 5035/5040/5041 [5034/5038/5037 respectively] were contemporary with Ditch 5039 [5023]. Ditch 5039 terminated c. 5m to the south of the intersection with Ditches 5035/5040/5041, whereas Ditches 5035/5040/5041 continued to the east and beyond the excavated area.
- 6.5.4 There still appears to be limited pit digging activity but only in the north-eastern corner of the site where Pits 5052 [5051] and 5047 [5037] were excavated into the southern edge of Ditch 5035 and 5041 respectively.
- 6.5.5 The Period 3 land divisions, if that is what they are, would appear to be the precursor to the even more formal division of the site by a series of limestone structures.

#### 6.6 *Period 4 Limestone Structures and Walls (Figs. 7-9; Pls. 20-23)*

- 6.6.1 Prior to Period 4 activity on the site had been characterised by cut rather than built features. In this period the site is sub-divided by walls and up to four 'buildings' (Structures 1-4) were constructed of unbonded chalk blocks.
- 6.6.2 Close to the northern boundary of the excavation area, Wall 1 (5012 and 5026), aligned east to west, was recorded for a distance of approximately 23m before butting up to a north-south section of wall (5077). Previous evaluation of the site had shown that further walls existed to the north of this example, therefore it can not be considered as the northern boundary of the site nor due to its height in relation to adjacent land should it be categorised as terracing. Midway along Wall 1 is a further section of wall (5010) which aligned north to south forms part of the eastern wall of Structure 2. This arrangement/utilisation of Wall 1 and 5010 reinforces the interpretation that

walls and structures are being created to divide the site as a means of controlling livestock rather than human occupation.

- 6.6.3 Structure 1: This was the only complete building to be excavated in 2006. Oblong in shape and composed of Walls 5013, 5015, 5016 and 5017, the building measured 10m long north-south by 4.5m wide, east-west. The southern end of Structure 1 was heavily damaged with only patchy stonework remaining. No internal floor surfaces or signs of domestic occupation were noted, this therefore suggests that Structure 1 was an agricultural building, being used either for storage or as an animal shelter.
- 6.6.4 Structure 2: Only Walls 5009 and 5007 were complete, the eastern side and southern walls of the structure [5010 & 5008] had been partially robbed out. Smaller in size to Structure 1, Structure 2 was only 7.5m by 4.4m; no internal features were recorded, again suggesting an agricultural function.
- 6.6.5 Structure 3 : Located on the eastern side of the excavation area, only two sides of this structure survived (Walls 5031 & 5032). The southern extent of Wall 5032 was removed by Period 5 activity, in the shape of a dew pond [5126].
- 6.6.6 Structure 4: Along the southern boundary of the excavation area two further walls were exposed [5006 & 5098], measuring 17.5m and 4m in length respectively. The full extent of this structure is unknown due to the location of the current site boundary but it is interesting to note that it has a completely different alignment to Structures 1, 2 and 3, which may reflect a different function.
- 6.6.7 Between Structures 2 and 4 excavation located the remnants of a limestone surface [5145] set into the natural gravel.
- 6.6.8 Period 4 is dated by pottery association to the 15<sup>th</sup> century or later. The structures suggest a series of field walls and agricultural buildings positioned on the edge of the village, ideally situated for stock access to pasture.

6.7 *Period 5: Post-medieval Activity (Figs 10-12 : Pl. 24)*

6.7.1 In Period 5 the stone buildings fall into disuse, and large quantities of rubble [5004, 5005, 5011, 5014, 5027; 5028; 5033, 5043] from this inactivity mask the remnants of the walls. In the south-eastern corner of the site a ?quarry or more likely a dew pond (5126) was excavated.

6.7.2 Deposits sealing the rubble spreads consisted of 5002, 5003, 5011, 5018, 5021, 5024, 5029; 5033; 5034; 5044; 5046; 5048; 5049; 5050; 5057; 5105; 5122/5082, and 5146.

6.8 *Period 6: Topsoil and Subsoil (Fig. 13)*

6.8.1 Period 6 represent all later activity at the site, represented by the formation of subsoil deposits [5001] and modern topsoil [5000], both the result of arable cultivation and which were mechanically removed under archaeological supervision.

**7. Discussion**

7.1 Six periods of activity were identified during the 2006 excavation which broadly correspond with the phasing undertaken on the evaluation results in 2004:

<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>Type of Activity</b>
<i>Period 1</i>		<i>Cutting of pits R-B in date</i>
	<i>Period 1</i>	<i>Cutting of pits no finds</i>
<i>Period 2</i>		<i>Cutting of e-w boundaries</i>
	<i>Period 2</i>	<i>Cutting of pits no finds 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Period 3</i>		<i>Limestone structures</i>
	<i>Period 3</i>	<i>Cutting of e-w boundaries</i>
<i>Period 4</i>		<i>Cutting of pits 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup></i>
	<i>Period 4</i>	<i>Limestone structures</i>

<i>Period 5</i>	<i>Period 5</i>	<i>Collapse of structures</i>
<i>Period 6</i>	<i>Period 6</i>	<i>Topsoil and subsoil deposits</i>

- 7.2 The reversal of the phasing between the 2004 and 2006 work in Periods 2, 3 and 4 was the result of being able to investigate a much larger open area, which consequently allowed a much greater degree of consideration and integration of the earlier results with the more comprehensive data gained in 2006.
- 7.3 The archaeological record complements the historical record of the lifespan of the site. Situated in a Wold valley location, the site first comes into use in the Romano-British period with the excavation of storage pits, most probably for grain and used by people associated with the Iron Age/Romano-British ladder settlement which is located by aerial photographic evidence to the west of the site.
- 7.4 After a period of perhaps 700-800 years the site, laying on the eastern margins of the village, comes back into use. Recorded in Domesday as worth £14 by 1086 the village was waste, perhaps as a result of William of Normandy's harrying of the north. It is not until the early 12<sup>th</sup> century with the new Lord of the Manor - Herbert of Winchester - that the village sees a period of revival with the construction of the church of St Andrew's and the formal laying out of the village. Situated at the eastern end of the village the site appears to have been an ideal source for small scale gravel extraction and refuse disposal in the 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is no evidence that the site was permanently occupied in this period.
- 7.5 During this period there was small scale land management illustrated by the cutting of east west boundary ditches, the precursor of the more formalised divisions constructed in limestone.
- 7.6 The structures, constructed of unbonded chalk blocks with no foundations, also possessed no internal floor surfaces, nor features such as hearths that

would suggest that they had been used for domestic occupation. Their size and layout is more indicative of structures used for the housing of animals. The arrangement of the boundary walls is indicative of animal management rather than the deliberate terracing of the site. Pottery found associated with deposits from the collapse of the structures and boundary walls was of 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century date suggesting that by the end of the medieval period the site had fallen into disuse.

- 7.7 Excavations at Sherburn Manor illustrated the use of limestone walls not just for structural activity but also for land division, yard areas and animal pens (Hayfield 1986). Limestone was an easily available resource and as such was readily used.
- 7.8 The economy of the inhabitants of Weaverthorpe village was based on sheep and it is interesting to note that the faunal assemblage is small in relationship to the quantity of pottery recovered. This would tend to suggest that stock were seen as marketable commodities and not for home consumption.
- 7.9 The creation of the dew pond on the site is a common occurrence on the Wolds. Excavations at Kirby Grindalythe in 2006 located an in-filled example and many more extent ponds still survive today as a common landscape feature of the Great Wold Valley.
- 7.10 Weaverthorpe is one of a number of Wold villages that have been excavated and show similar settlement trends. The chronology of events and structures is not dissimilar to the pattern recorded at Back Side, Duggleby (MAP 2005), and Wharram Percy (Hurst 1979). At Duggleby the village apparently expanded into a vacant area, perhaps a former green, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century; timber structures were replaced by chalk-walled buildings by the 14<sup>th</sup> century, to be abandoned in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. At Wharram the economic difficulties of the 14<sup>th</sup> century may account for the abandonment of tofts and then (as at Weaverthorpe and Back Side, Duggleby) all occupation had ceased by the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century the population of the Wolds had

declined and the economic climate had altered, and as a result many of the Wolds villages shrunk in size or were abandoned. Between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries large tracts of land became pasture, of which many remain so today (Fenton-Thomas 2005).

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Finds Mark Stephens *pottery dating/analysis*  
Anne Finney *processing and catalogue*