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**Low Farm
Kirby Grindalythe
North Yorkshire
SE 9052 6759**

Archaeological Excavation

Authorised by

Date:.....

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Non Technical Summary

An Archaeological Excavation was carried out on a proposed development site at Low Farm, Kirby Grindalythe North Yorkshire (SE 9052 6759) during September and October 2005. The excavation followed on from an evaluation that took place in July 2000, illustrating the archaeological potential of the site, including graves, pits and boundaries of probable Late Iron Age/Roman date.

The open-area Excavations revealed a major double-ditched boundary of Iron Age/Roman date that crossed the central part of the area on a north to south alignment, and which cut through earlier pits and linear features. The graves of three infants, two juveniles and an adult were excavated and two sent for radiocarbon dating.

Later features consisted of medieval pits and ditches. The south/central part of the excavated area was badly affected by post-medieval disturbance.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of an archaeological excavation carried out by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on land at Low Farm, Kirby Grindalythe, North Yorkshire (SE 9052 6759 - Fig 1) during September and October 2005. The excavation adhered to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd (Appendix 8).
- 1.2 An evaluation had been carried out in July 2003 that established the presence of significant archaeological deposits at the site, providing information to enable an

appropriate mitigation strategy to be formulated (i.e. the follow-on excavations). This follows the archaeology policy issued by the Secretary of State for the Environment contained in *Planning Policy Guidance 16 'Archaeology and Planning'* (PPG 16).

- 1.3 The site code for the project was MAP 01-09-05.
- 1.4 All work was funded by Hogg The Builders (York) Ltd.
- 1.5 All maps within this report have been produced 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 development area was bounded to the north, west and south by minor roads and to the east by residential properties. The northern part of the site consisted of a grassed paddock, with a former sheep dip along the north-west boundary. Existing outbuildings along the western boundary are to be demolished, and a barn in the central part of the site will be refurbished as dwellings. The area to the south of the barn was occupied by a block-paved courtyard. The farmhouse at the south-west of the development area awaiting refurbishment at the time of writing.
- 2.2 The elevation of the land drops from c. 104m AOD at the north to c. 98.50m at the south. However, the slope is not even, the construction of the farm buildings, farmhouse and farmyard having created a terrace. There is also a slight north to south natural ridge within the former paddock, the land dropping away to either side.
- 2.3 The site stands on soils of the Coombe 1 Association, which are defined as well-drained calcareous fine silty soils in valley bottoms, shallow on valley sides, overlying chalky drift (Mackney, 1984, 194).

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.1 Situated in an area with little reliable surface water, the Gypsy Race and the relatively fertile land on the valley slopes, have formed an attractive area for

settlement from early times through to the present day. Discontinuous cropmarks illustrate settlement enclosures of assumed Iron Age/Romano-British date along the valley floor (Stoertz 1997). The cropmark of a double-ditched trackway or boundary runs parallel to the Gypsy Race immediately west of Kirby Grindalythe, whilst another example runs to the east of the village, and its associated rectangular enclosures, runs north-eastwards up the valley side.

- 3.2 The immediate origins of the present village of Kirby Grindalythe are suggested by the five fragments of 9th or 10th century carved stone crosses incorporated into the church tower. A pre-conquest origin for the village is confirmed by the Domesday Survey, which recorded the passing of the manors of Ketilbjorn and Thorfinnr to Count Robert Mortain. A smaller manor previously held by Uglubathr passed to the king. The village was recorded as *Chirchebi* in the Domesday Survey, the suffix *in Crandala* being mentioned in a charter of 1123-8, augmented as *Crendalith* by 1367. The place-name means 'church village', Grindalythe referring to an old name for the valley of the Gypsy Race meaning 'valley where cranes were seen' (Smith ed. 1937).
- 3.3 At the 1297 Lay Subsidy only four people at Kirby Grindalythe had the necessary 9s. worth of assets to make them liable for taxation. By the time of the 1334 Lay Subsidy, the settlement was taxed at 38s. slightly above average for the area. The church, its income and land at Kirby Grindalythe were given to Kirkham Priory in 1311, and reverted to the crown at the 1539 dissolution.
- 3.4 The site lies within the core of the medieval village, with the church and manor house lying c. 100m to the west. Present day Kirby Grindalythe is in fact a shrunken medieval village, with an area of settlement earthworks immediately west of the church being scheduled as an ancient monument. The 1890 25" Ordnance Survey map shows further earthworks related to the medieval settlement immediately to the east of the site. These earthworks point to a decline in the importance of the medieval settlement, a process reflected by the near-total desertion of other settlements in the valley, such as Wharram Percy, Mowthorpe and Thirkleby.

- 3.5 The medieval farming system was finally ended in 1755, when the village's open fields were enclosed by agreement.
- 3.6 The First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows a similar arrangement of buildings to that which exists within the development area today (Fig. 2).
- 3.7 There have been two archaeological interventions at Kirby Grindalythe prior to the commencement of the present project. A Watching Brief was carried out by Landscape Research Ltd, at the Cranedale Centre in November 1992, recording the foundations of a post-medieval chalk-walled barn and a boundary ditch (Lyall, 1992). Three graves were also present, presumably associated with the church, whose graveyard lay immediately to the west.
- 3.8 Four small trenches were excavated by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd prior to the erection of new electricity poles within the area of scheduled earthworks situated to the west of the church (MAP 1997). Walls (probably not relating to buildings), pits and ditches of 11th to 15th century date were revealed. A further trench, outside the area of earthworks, and close to the northern bank of the Gypsy Race showed approximately 1.75m of colluvial build-up with associated finds of calcite-gritted sherds and flint flakes.

4. 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 at the site,
 2. To locate, recover, identify, assess and conserve (as appropriate) any archaeological artefacts 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 The initial topsoil-stripping of the development area was carried out by a 360° mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision. The stripped area was hand-cleaned (Pls 1-3), and the features revealed assessed in terms of date, origin and function. The features and deposits that were suitable for further examination were hand-excavated, sampled and recorded, concentrating on the areas that had not been subject to later disturbance. Because of logistical problems with the storage of topsoil from the stripping process, the excavated area was divided into three (Areas 1, 2 and 3 – Figs. 3 and 4).
- 5.2 Linear features such as ditches and gullies were sectioned to ascertain their shape, character and date. A sample of 20% was excavated for those linear features under 5m in length, and 10% for those over 5m in length. The intersections between linear features were examined to show their stratigraphic relationships. Discrete features such as pits and postholes were half-sectioned, and any intersections with other features examined.
- 5.3 All work was carried out in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct (IFA 1998).
- 5.4 All archaeological deposits were recorded according to correct principles of stratigraphic excavation on MAP's *pro forma* context sheets, which are compatible with the MoLAS recording system.
- 5.5 The full extent of archaeological deposits was recorded in plan at a scale of 1:20 on drawing film. Sections of features and individual layers were drawn at 1:10, also on drawing film, and included an OD height.

- 5.6 The photographic record comprised monochrome and colour prints, and colour transparencies, in 35mm format, recording all the archaeological features encountered.
- 5.7 All artefacts were retained for specialist analysis. All finds were cleaned, identified, assessed, dated (where possible), marked (where appropriate), and properly packed and stored according to national guidelines (EH 1995).
- 5.8 Samples were taken from a full range of deposits for General Biological Analysis.

6. Results

6.1 Phase 1 (Figs. 5, 6 and 7)

- 6.1.1 On stratigraphic grounds, the earliest features consisted of a curvilinear ditch (Ditch A), five inhumation burials (Graves 115, 139, 219, 272 and 3008), a large pit (101), and three gullies: 85, 64=66 and 2007=2010=2012. It is possible that another large pit (127) belongs to this phase, because of its similarity to Pit 101.
- 6.1.2 Ditch A followed a meandering north-east to south-west, alignment in the eastern part of the excavated area. Five segments (91, 119, 136, 159 and 3021) were excavated in Ditch A, showing it to be V-shaped in profile and between 2.15m and 3.00m in width, with depths varying between 0.71m and 0.96m. The five segments: 91, 119 136, 159 and 3021, had a variety of fills (122, 123, and 124; 117 and 118; 135, 180, 181 and 182; 146, 147, 171 and 158; 3022, 3023 and 202 respectively). The general pattern was of chalky primary deposits (124, 118, 182, 158 and 202), with various ensuing slumped layers, capped off with dark greyish brown silty clay with chalk fragments (122, 117, 135 146 and 3022). Calcite-gritted sherds were recovered from Fills 117, 122, 123, 124, 147, 158, 171 and 3022. The only diagnostic find was a ring handle from 171, which suggests that the ditch had largely silted up by the Roman period.
- 6.1.3 The earliest of the burials was Skeleton 138 (Pl. 4), which was contained within Grave 139 (Fill 137). This adult individual had been placed on its left side, with the knees flexed, the left hand between the legs and the right hand brought up under the head, which lay to the south. The upper right leg, along with the whole of the right

arm, was truncated by a later grave (115). There were no associated grave goods, although the grave fill (137) contained animal bone fragments and calcite-gritted sherds.

6.1.4 Grave 115 truncated the top of the earlier grave (139) and contained the burial of a child (Skeleton 114), with the head to the north-west, lying on its right side, with the arms folded up under the chin, and knees flexed. Once again there were no grave goods, although the grave fill (113) contained a few calcite-gritted sherds and animal bone fragments. The grave was cut by Ditch 112 (a possible recut of Ditch A) on its northern side, and Pit 129 to the south-east (described in the next phase).

6.1.5 There were three infant burials (218, 271 and 3007) that, like Burial 114, were cut by ditches of the next phase. At the south of the excavated area, Burial 218 (Pl. 5 - Grave Cut 219, Fill 217) was cut by east-west ditch 215, and was laid on the right hand side with the head to the north. Some 17.5m northwards the other two infant burials were cut by east-west ditch 275/3005. Burial 271 (Grave Cut 272, Fill 270) was apparently prone, with the legs to the north-east; the fill contained calcite-gritted sherds. Burial 3007 was contained within grave cut 3008 (Fill 3006), which cut an earlier pit (Cut 3014, Fill 3013). Also cut by Ditch 215 was a small pit (Cut 284, Fill 283) that contained a single infant human bone, along with calcite-gritted sherds.

6.1.6 Pit 101 (Pl. 6) was situated c. 5m to the south of Ditch A, and was cut through by a later gully (85, which in turn was cut by Ditch B, of which more later). The pit was 2.2m long, 1.50m wide and 0.85m deep. The fills (99 and 100) were brownish clay silts, the basal fill (100) being darker and with more chalk inclusions; neither fill contained any finds. Pit 127 was an oval feature, though at 1.75m long and 1.00m, was slightly smaller than Pit 101; the two fills (125 and 126), were composed of compacted chalk fragments, the basal deposit (126) being heavily voided. Once again there were no finds.

6.1.7 Gully 85 is included here, because like Ditch A it was cut by the later Ditch C. This gully ran on a parallel west to east alignment with gully 64/66 on its southern side. Both gullies were c. 0.3m wide and 0.12m deep, and were filled with similar chalky

brownish clay silts (84, 63 and 65 respectively). Gully Fill 65 alone contained any finds, consisting of calcite-gritted sherds. At the northern extreme of the excavated area another east-west gully was recorded during the evaluation, being also cut by Ditch C. Excavated in two segments (2007, Fill 2006; 2010, Fill 2011), this gully was relatively shallow, and yielded calcite-gritted fragments.

6.2 Phase 2 (Figs. 8, 9 and 10)

- 6.2.1 In this phase a double-ditched boundary (Ditch B and Ditch C) cut through Ditch A and Pit 101 and Gully 85 of the preceding phase. To the east of the boundary lay a number of westward-running linear features that terminated before reaching Ditch C, along with clusters of pits, postholes and gullies, and a further burial. A scattering of features also lay to the west of the boundary. Ditch C appears to have been contemporary with another ditch at the south of the excavated area.
- 6.2.2 The two ditches forming the double-ditched boundary ran on a north to south alignment across the central part of the excavated area, Ditch B being separated from Ditch C to the west by an interval of c. 4m. The two ditches were not identical, Ditch B being both wider and deeper than Ditch C.
- 6.2.3 Ditch B was observed in three segments: 183, 192 and 189. At its fullest extent (Segment 198), the ditch was 3.5m in width, and it had a depth of c.1.30m. The full profile obtained in Segment 183 (Pl. 7) showed the sequence of fills: a silty primary fill (175) succeeded by a mass of chalk fragments (174) in the centre, which was in turn overlain by various smaller silting episodes (168, 151, 153, 154 132, 151 and 141). The upper fill (152) was a greyish brown clay silt with chalk gravel. To the south, Segment 192 was deeper at 1.5m; here, the primary silt (191) was succeeded by a much more even silting process (190). Seven deposits within Ditch B contained pottery sherds (132, 148, 152, 187, 188, 197 and 201), the calcite-gritted sherds and Grey Ware from primary silt 188 suggesting that the ditch was largely open, but beginning to silt up, in Roman times. Segment 189 (Pl. 8) was contemporary with a deep, east to west running ditch (192), the primary silting of which (191) contained calcite-gritted and Grey Ware sherds. Unfortunately, it was only possible to examine Ditch 192 in a relatively narrow segment due to its depth and the proximity of standing buildings.

- 6.2.4 Ditch C (Pls. 9 and 10) was examined in six segments (37, filled by 33 and 38; 44, filled by 34, 43 and 53; 52, filled by 45, 46 and 48; 74, filled by 73 and 102; 83, filled by 68 and 82; 90, filled by 93, 94, 95 and 96). In addition, the 2003 evaluation recorded two segments of Ditch C: 2005, in Trench 2 to the north, and 4006 in Trench 4 to the south.
- 6.2.5 A characteristic of Ditch C was that it increased in depth as it progressed southwards; this is probably due to better preservation down-slope. As an example of this process, Segment 37 to the north was 1.15m wide and 0.45m deep, whereas Segment 52 further to the south was 2.10m wide and 0.85m deep; all segments displayed a flat-based V profile. The fills within the segments suggested that the manner in which the ditch silted up was similar along its length, with 'marly' primary silts (38, 53, 48, 82, 96 and 102), rich in chalk fragments, succeeded by layers of silty clays with varying proportions of chalk gravel. The only primary fill to contain finds was 48, which had a single calcite-gritted sherd; Fills 45, 46 and 68 all had both calcite-gritted and Grey Ware sherds, with calcite-gritted sherds alone in Fill 43. As with Ditch B, the suggestion is that Ditch C was in use, and silting up during the Roman period.
- 6.2.6 A group of three parallel east to west-aligned ditches respected the double-ditched boundary, by terminating between 5m and 8m to the east of Ditch C. The northernmost of these Ditches (279) was 1.36m wide and 0.36m deep, the silty clay fill (278) contained animal bone fragments. Immediately to the south, Ditch 275 (=3005) was, at 2.05m, slightly wider, but similar in depth to 279; the silty clay fill (274=3004) contained calcite-gritted sherds and animal bone fragments. An interval of c.2.5m separated 275 from the next ditch, which was excavated in three segments (76, filled by 72 and 78; 109, filled by 107 and 108; and 116 [=3015], filled by 95 and 105 [=3016]) and had similar dimensions to the other two. Two of the silty clay upper fills (72 and 107) contained calcite-gritted sherds. These ditches all had rounded V-shaped profiles.
- 6.2.7 Some 10m to the south lay another east to west running ditch, roughly parallel to (and presumably associated with) the other three, and cut into the southern edge of Ditch

- A. The ditch was examined in three segments (3019, filled by 3020; 3025, filled by 3026; 112, filled by 106), and was probably also visible as deposit 171 on the western side of Segment 159 (Ditch A). Fill 3026 contained calcite-gritted sherds.
- 6.2.8 Remaining in the location of the silted up Ditch A, two parallel slightly curvilinear gullies (42, filled by 41; 55, filled by 54) cut into the top of the former ditch. Gully 42 was 4m long, 0.72m wide and 0.32m deep; the chalky, silty clay fill (41) contained calcite-gritted sherds. Gully 55 was smaller in size, being 2.50m long. 0.40m wide and 0.12m deep; it was filled with a similar material to 42, Fill 54, which contained more of the ubiquitous calcite-gritted sherds. It is likely that these two gullies were drainage features. A shallow pit (cut 134, fill 133) cut into the top of Ditch A at the eastern limit of excavation, and was overlain by a shallow deposit of brown silty clay (89) that included calcite-gritted sherds and animal bone.
- 6.2.9 A shallow oval 'scoop' (88, filled by 77) cut into the top of Gully 42, the clay silt fill (77) being rich in animal bone and calcite-gritted sherds. Another amorphous scoop (75, filled by 71) was presumably associated with 88; it too contained animal bone fragments and calcite-gritted sherds. A rather more regular circular pit (81, filled by 79 and 80) lay immediately to the west, its upper fill containing calcite-gritted sherds.
- 6.2.10 Slightly further to the east, another amorphous pit (Cut 170, Fill 169) cut into the top of Ditch A, with another small pit (cut 226, fill 225) laying immediately to the north. This latter pit cut into another pit (cut 194, fill 193), which in turn cut into a narrow north-south gully (cut 196, fill 195), which is described in the following paragraph as Gully 267. Pit fills 169 and 193, and Gully fill 195 contained calcite-gritted sherds. Pit 3030 from the evaluation was part of this cluster of features, and contained an almost complete calcite-gritted vessel (3028).
- 6.2.11 At the eastern limit of the excavated area, a complicated sequence of inter-cutting gullies, pits and postholes was apparently later than the east-west Ditch Segment 109. Although obviously representing more than one 'phase' of events, such dating evidence as there is suggests that this group of features should be included in Phase 2.

The earliest feature was a small oval pit, or posthole (Cut 269, fill 268), that was cut by a shallow north-south gully (cut 267, fill 266); the latter contained a small amount of animal bone and pottery. There were three oval pits (cut 111 [segments of which were excavated as 3012 and 3018 in the evaluation stage], fill 110; cut 259, fill 258; cut 261, fill 260), between 1.20m and 1.60m in length, 0.80m and 1.00m in width, and 0.35m and 0.53m in depth. Pit 259 cut into Pit 261. The fills were brownish silty clays with chalk fragments, 110 and 258 containing calcite-gritted sherds. Four postholes completed this cluster of features (cut 228, fill 227; cut 252, fill 253; cut 263, fill 262; cut 265, fill 264); as 265 cut into the end of Gully 267 and 263 into Pit 261, the possibly structural activity that these postholes represent the latest event here. The postholes were between 0.50m and 0.60m in diameter, and 0.21m and 0.34m in depth; the fills were brownish sandy silts or sandy clays, with at least two (251 and 262) having a suggestion of packing in the form of chalk cobbles. Postholes 228, 262 and 264 contained calcite-gritted sherds.

- 6.2.12 Pit 35 lay between the northern extent of Ditches B and C, forming a roughly circular feature 1.65m in diameter and 0.40m in depth. Both the chalky primary fill (47) and the less stoney upper fill (36) contained calcite-gritted sherds.
- 6.2.13 Burial 50 (Fig. 9, Pl. 11 - Grave Cut 51, Fill 49) cut into the top of east-west ditch 3025. This burial was represented by the almost complete skeleton of a child in a flexed posture, lying on the right hand side, with the head to the north. There were no specific grave goods, but the grave fill (49) contained a few calcite-gritted sherds and animal bone fragments.
- 6.2.14 Three undated features – two pits (cut 104, fill 103; cut 277, fill 276) and a posthole (Cut 121, Fill 120) could possibly belong to this phase; although they contained no dateable finds, the relatively pale brown (as opposed to very dark greyish brown) hues of the fills suggest that they were of some antiquity. Pit 104 lay on the eastern side of Ditch C and was 0.9m in diameter and 0.19m deep; Posthole 121 lay c. 4m to the north and had a diameter of 0.45m and a depth of 0.30m. Pit 277 lay at the north-eastern corner of the excavated area, being an oval feature, 1.8m long, 1.4m wide and 0.38m deep.

6.3. Phase 3 (Figs. 11 and 12)

- 6.3.1 Phase 3 encompassed all the medieval activity, which was represented by a spread of pits that were scattered across the excavated area. There were nine pits (Cuts 20, 24, 29, 70, 129, 145, 150, 161 and 224), a curving linear feature (Cut 27, Fill 17) and a ditch (Segments 58, 157 and 215).
- 6.3.2 Three of the pits (20, fill 4; 24, fill 15; 29, fill 22) and linear feature 27 (fill 17) formed an apparent cluster at the west of the excavated area. Pits 20 and 29 were rectangular, the former being 1.55m x 0.6m in size, the latter 0.8m x 3.5m; depths were between 0.24m and 0.30m. The fills (4 and 22 respectively) were greyish brown silty clays, Fill 4 containing Staxton and Scarborough Ware sherds, and Fill 22 residual calcite-gritted and Grey Ware sherds, along with a Staxton bowl rim. Pit 24 was a sub-square feature, 1.65m x 1.44m in size, and 0.45m deep; the dark brownish grey silty clay fill (15) contained residual calcite-gritted and Grey Ware sherds, along with a relatively large group of Staxton and York Glaze Ware sherds. Another rectangular pit (Cut 26, Fill 14) that contained no finds could also belong with this group of features. At the extreme north-west corner of the excavated area, Linear Feature 27 ran westwards from a terminal, before returning northwards; this feature was around 1.40m wide and 0.30m deep. The fill consisted of chalky, greyish brown sandy silt (17) that contained a residual Grey Ware sherd, along with York Glazed, Beverley-1 and Staxton sherds; the dating evidence points to a medieval origin (although it is possible that it in fact relates to the post-medieval sheep-wash situated to the east).
- 6.3.3 In the centre of the site, Pit 224 existed as a rectangular feature 1.68m long, 0.92m wide and 0.34m deep. The greyish brown silty clay fill (223) contained residual calcite-gritted and Grey Ware sherds, alongside Splashed and Staxton ware examples.
- 6.3.4 Two vertically-sided pits (150 and 161) were situated in close proximity to each other c. 5m south-east of Pit 224, cutting into the top of Ditch C. Both of these pits were between 1.10m and 1.24m long, around 0.60m wide and 0.40m deep. The fills were similar in each pit, with a layer of charcoal and small flint fragments (147 and 160)

covered by a deposit of burnt flint fragments, that was in turn overlain by brown clay silt with frequent chalk fragments. The pits were 'capped off' by layers of chalk-rich silty clay. The only finds were a sherd of Grey Ware from 160, and a sherd of Gritty Ware from 149.

- 6.3.5 Three further pits (70, 129 and 145) lay to the north of the east-west ditch described below. Pit 70 cut into the top of Ditch C, and was truncated by the east-west ditch, as well as two post-medieval features (40 and 60/62); it was at least 3m in diameter and 0.30m deep. The dark greyish brown clay silt fill (69) contained animal bone fragments, and a small indeterminate, abraded medieval sherd. Pit 129 was an oval cut at least 1.00m long, and 0.90m wide and 0.23m deep. The dark brown silty clay fill (128) contained calcite-gritted sherds, and a single York Glazed Ware example. Pit 145 formed a rounded-square cut, approximately 1.70m wide; it was 0.20m deep. The chalky, greyish brown clay silt fill (144) contained Staxton and Beverley-1 Ware sherds.
- 6.3.6 The east-west ditch (Pl. 12) ran westwards for approximately 12m before its course became obscured by later features. The three excavated segments (58, 157 and 215) were around 1.50m wide, and between 0.4 and 0.5m deep, 58 and 215 with rounded V-shaped profiles, and 157 with broader, more rounded profile. Segments 58 and 215 showed a broadly similar filling regime, with chalky basal fills (57 and 214 respectively) overlain by more soily deposits (56 and 213). Fill 56 contained residual calcite-gritted sherds, and Stamford, Beverley-1, York Glazed and Staxton wares. Fill 214 also had residual calcite-gritted sherds, along with a single Beverley-1 sherd. Segment 157 had filled-up in a different way, perhaps reflecting its anomalous profile: a deposit of chalk fragments (214 - perhaps eroded bank material) lay along the base at the southern edge, with the bulk of the segment filled by largely stone-free clay silt; the upper part of the segment was covered by a layer of chalky, loamy material. Fill 163 contained Staxton and Beverley 2 sherds, and Fill 156 contained residual Romano-British sherds along with Staxton and Beverley-1 examples.
- 6.3.7 The evaluation recorded a shallow east west gully that cut into the top of Ditch C (2009, filled by 2008), probably agricultural in origin.

6.4 Phase 4 (Figs. 13 and 14)

- 6.4.1 Phase 4 comprised post-medieval and modern activity at the site.
- 6.4.2 In the north-west corner of the excavated area, the evaluation excavation identified an east-west aligned linear feature (1004) that consisted of a shallow gully with a row of postholes along the southern side, with an associated metal tank. This feature was identified as a sheep-dip of relatively recent date.
- 6.4.3 A cluster of five postholes (Cut 19, Fill 3; Cut 21, Fill 6; Cut 23, Fill 9; Cut 25, Fill 5; Cut 32, Fill 13) were recorded in the western part of the site, presumably representing a former fence-line. The postholes were 0.5m to 0.9m in diameter and 0.2m to 0.4m in depth. Only one fill (3) contained any dateable finds (Black Ware and Slipped Red Ware), but the similarity in the dark loamy fills leave no doubt that the postholes were associated with each other.
- 6.4.4 The central/southern part of the excavated area was taken up by a massive area of disturbance (cut 229) over 10m in diameter, filled with deposits of recent building rubble and sand (200, 220, 221 and 222), possibly representing a filled-in pond. Deposit 221 contained 18/19th century sherds. Also in this area were spreads of chalk rubble forming rough surfaces (230, 253, 254, 255, 256 and 273) that had been deposited in recent times to consolidate the area for the movement of livestock.
- 6.4.5 Also post-medieval in date were a large shallow pit (Cut 40, Fill 39) and a crescentic gully that cut across the top of it (Cut 60/62; Fill 59/61). These two features contained pottery ranging from Romano-British to 19/20th century in date.
- 6.4.6 Evaluation Trench 3 contained three modern, shallow pits (Cut 2016, Fill 2014; Cut 2018, Fill 2017; Cut 2012, Fill 2013), fill 2017 apparently representing a recent dog burial.
- 6.4.7 Completing the picture of modern activity at the site, two service trenches ran across the excavated area. A plastic water pipe (Segment Cuts 131, 173, 178 and 186) ran on

a north-south alignment, roughly following the eastern side of the Ditch B. A ceramic drain (Cut 146) ran from a drain-cover in the public road, on a north north-west to south south-east alignment across the eastern half of the excavated area.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The open-area excavation and recording at Low Farm showed a sequence of activity stretching from the Iron Age, through Roman and medieval times to the modern period. There was a break in activity in post-Roman times until the 11th or 12th century.
- 7.2 During Phase 1 a deep, east-west aligned boundary ditch (Ditch A) was dug across the site. Ditch A had an unusual sinuous alignment, with a marked change of direction half-way along its course; its westward continuation was unfortunately truncated by post-medieval activity. Two oval pits were dug south of the ditch, as were graves containing the burials of an adult, a child and an infant; three more infants were buried to the north-east. At a late stage in Phase 1, the northward 'embayment' in Ditch A was straightened out by two parallel gullies, which may represent the traces of a hedge.
- 7.3 The six skeletons were sent for osteological analysis and two were radiocarbon dated to the late Iron Age to 70BC (Appendix 5 & 6). Three of the non adult skeletons showed skeletal changes that possibly indicate they had suffered from scurvy. Only one case of scurvy is described for the whole of prehistoric Britain (including the Iron Age) so for three individuals to show possible signs of scurvy is somewhat unusual. The high prevalence of scurvy suggests that the population to which these children belonged was struggling to consume a diet adequate in vitamin C. (Holzt, 2006 Appendix 5).
- 7.4 A major realignment of boundaries took place in Phase 2, with the east-west aligned Ditch A being replaced by a major north-south double-ditched boundary composed of Ditches B and C, which lay 4m apart. Such double ditches or "double-dykes" are often interpreted as drove-ways, the ditches flanking a route-way for stock passing through arable or settlement areas, in a well-organised agricultural landscape. The

discrepancy in width and depth between Ditch B and Ditch C however suggests that this was an evolving boundary, with perhaps one ditch pre-dating the other. A double-ditched boundary excavated at West Lodge, Malton also showed a discrepancy in form between its two ditches, in this particular case a boundary ditch was associated with a parallel hollow-way of Roman date (MAP 1992).

- 7.5 That Ditches B and C represented an important boundary is shown by the concentration of contemporary activity to the east, compared with an absence to the west. Ditches, shallower gullies, pits and postholes all point to settlement-related activity in the form of drainage features and temporary structures; the absence of a recognisable structural plan suggests that this activity lay on the fringes, rather than at the centre, of a settlement. A further infant burial to join those of the previous phase reinforces the (continuing) marginal nature of this area in terms of prehistoric/Roman settlement.
- 7.6 This marginal theme is continued in the medieval period (Phase 3), with a scattering of pits (probably for rubbish disposal and piece-meal quarrying) rather than structural remains represented. The east-west medieval ditch traced in the south-west corner of the site obviously formed a boundary, though whether as a simple field ditch or a toft/croft boundary (i.e. a feature separating settlement and agricultural areas) remains unsure.
- 7.7 The post-medieval period (Phase 4) saw evidence of activity related to the workings of Low Farm itself such as the sheep-run in the north-west corner of the site. Feature 229 took up a large part of the centre/south of the excavated area and apparently represented an in-filled pond or perhaps a quarry contemporary with the barn immediately to the south.
- 7.8 Even a rudimentary examination of the linear cropmarks plotted by Stoertz in her study of the Yorkshire Wolds gives an idea of the scale and complexity of such archaeological features, the problems involved in their study was summed up by Terry Manby as follows:

“To distinguish the earthwork boundaries of the Bronze Age from the vast complex web of boundaries, trackways and field systems in Eastern Yorkshire is extremely difficult” (Manby 1980, 327).

- 7.9 The excavation at Low Farm illustrated the complexity of an evolving system of boundary features ranging from Iron Age, through Roman to medieval in date, and went some in disentangling their history. The area was apparently at the fringe of an Iron Age/Roman settlement sited on the south-facing slope of the Gypsy Race, and was used as a dispersed cemetery during this period. Medieval remains point to back-yard activity away from the more intensively occupied areas of the village.

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