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**Smaws Quarry
Tadcaster
North Yorkshire
Phase III
Sample Excavations**

March 1997
MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.

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North Yorkshire
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Introduction

In January 1997, MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. excavated a series of trenches on land to the west of Smaws Quarry, Tadcaster Parish, North Yorkshire (SE 4625 4325 centre: Fig. 1). This area measuring approximately 7 hectares (henceforward known as the site) forms the north-western corner of Area A of the Desktop Study (MAP 1996) and has been designated within the Local Plan for mineral extraction.

The site lies in an arable field immediately to the east of the present quarry and stands on a solid geology of Upper Permian Magnesian Limestone, with overlying shallow brown earth of the Aberford Soil Association (Mackney et al 1983). The topography of the area in which the evaluation trenches were located consists of a fairly gentle southward facing slope, centred on the 50m contour.

The 1997 excavations concentrated on evaluating a selected number of linear anomalies (Trenches 1 and 5-9 : Figs 2 and 3) located by a Geophysical Survey (GSB 1996) and 'blank' areas (Trenches 2-4).

All work was funded by Redland Aggregates Ltd.

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Previous Archaeological Work

Prior to the evaluation in the western portion of Area A in 1997, excavation work had been confined to the north-western boundary of the present quarry working (MAP 1994). This work had located a number of boundary ditches probably both of prehistoric and Roman date. Fieldwalking and Watching Briefs on the annual extension of the quarry has produced predominantly a prehistoric assemblage of worked flint and a small number of pottery sherds. Roman material had been limited to the occasional sherd of Grey, Calcite Gritted and Samian ware.

The Desktop Study of the proposed extension (Areas A, B and C) had considered the site within its

wider archaeological and historical landscape context. Spot finds from the quarry's environs are of Neolithic/Bronze Age and Roman date, and linear cropmarks, both on the site itself and in the surrounding fields highlighted the possible sensitivity of the extension area (MAP 1996).

Intensive fieldwalking by MAP in September 1996 located flint tools and waste, and pottery of Roman, medieval and post medieval date.

Geophysical Surveys of Bradford scanned the site in September 1996, followed by a 50% intensive magnetometer survey (GSB 1996). The intensive survey showed a concentration of linear and curvilinear anomalies, which together suggested a complex of land boundaries, trackways and possible field or enclosure divisions (Fig. 2). Additionally, a very strong magnetic response was believed to equate to a hearth or kiln.

A.L. Pacitto carried out a partial magnetometer survey concurrently with the 1997 excavation of the sample trenches, which confirmed the previous results and provide additional useful information (Fig. 2 & 3).

Excavation Methods

Topsoil, and some subsoil, was removed by a rear-acting JCB excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. Machine operation ceased at the surface of the archaeology or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever was primarily encountered.

A written record was maintained on standard forms under the continuous context recording system (*Appendix 1*) and plans and sections were drawn at suitable scales (1:20 and 1:10 respectively : *Appendix 3*). Colour slide and print photography was also used to record archaeological features (*Appendix 4*). A total station was used to record the location of the trenches in relation to the existing field boundaries.

A number of samples were taken for general biological analysis by the EAU, University of York (*forthcoming*).

Excavation Results

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated to examine two parallel linear anomalies shown on the geophysical survey (Fig.

2). The trench measured 12m by 4.50m, and revealed two ditches (context 1003 and 1005 : Fig. 4) aligned east to west and separated by 3.50m of limestone bedrock.

Both features were cut into the limestone bedrock and measured between 1.10m and 1m in width and 0.25m to 0.20m in depth with shallow 'U' shaped profiles (context 1003 and 1005 respectively : Fig. 4 : Pls. 1 and 2).

The fills of ditches 1003 and 1005 (contexts 1002 and 1004 respectively) were clay silts with limestone inclusions. Finds were confined to ditch 1003 and consisted of Roman pottery of 1st-3rd century date, and animal bone fragments (*Appendix 2*).

Trench 5

Trench 5 was positioned over a linear geophysical anomaly (Fig. 2). Below 0.30m of topsoil, excavation located a single feature aligned north to south (context 5004 : Fig. 5 : Pl. 3). This feature measured 1.20m in width and was cut into limestone bedrock to a depth of 0.52m, with a 'U' shaped profile. The primary fill of clayey silt (context 5003) suggested rapid silting. Sealing context 5003 was a relatively thick deposit of silty clay (context 5002), which contained numerous burnt quartzite pebbles and cobbles (possible 'pot-boilers'). Finds were restricted to a single flint flake from the primary silting of the ditch (context 5003).

Trench 6

Trench 6 was positioned to assess two linear geophysical anomalies (Fig. 2). Excavation located two parallel ditches separated by 1.80m of limestone bedrock (Fig. 6).

Both ditches (contexts 6012 and 6019 : Pls 4 and 5) were aligned south-east to north-west, with 'V' shaped profiles. Ditch 6012 measured 2m in width and was cut to a depth of 1m. It possessed a series of fills (contexts 6011 to 6004), which varied from silty sand to sandy silts with varying inclusions of limestone gravel. Fills 6007-6009 entered the ditch from the eastern side, suggesting the possibility of a bank. No finds were recovered from this ditch.

When the ditch had completely silted up a possible redefinition of the feature may have occurred as suggested by contexts 6002 and 6003 (Fig. 6). This recut was 1m in width and 0.20m in depth with a shallow 'U' shaped profile. Finds included a single sherd of Calcite Gritted ware from context 6003.

Ditch 6019 measured 1.5m in width and was cut to a depth of 1.2m. Excavation located five distinct

fills (contexts 6018 to 6014). All the fills were sandy silts and relatively inclusion free, with the exception of 6016 which contained large amount of limestone blocks, burnt sandstone cobbles and animal bone. The nature of this deposit suggested deliberate backfilling, with material, possibly derived from a domestic context.

The uppermost fill of ditch 6019 (context 6014) contained four sherds of Roman pottery.

Context 6013 filled the top of the ditch, but as it also extended to the east, this suggested that 6013 was a colluvial deposit rather than a ditch fill. Context 6013 also contained a number of Roman pottery sherds.

Trench 8

Trench 8 was positioned over a linear geophysical anomaly (Fig. 2). Excavation located two features, contexts 8005 and 8003 (Fig. 7 : Pls 6 and 7).

Feature 8005, the earliest of the two features, was cut away by Ditch 8003 on its southern side. As only a small portion of the feature was exposed, excavation suggested that the feature was a minimum of 0.75m in width and 0.5m in depth. Feature 8005 was filled with a single deposit (context 8004), a clay silt which contained no finds.

Ditch 8003 measured 1.5m in width and was cut to a depth of 0.5m with a flat bottomed 'U' shaped profile (Fig. 7). This ditch was aligned south-west to north-east and was filled with a single deposit of clay silt with frequent limestone inclusions, in addition concentrations of burnt sandstone and quartzite cobbles were also recorded (context 8002). This again suggested deliberated backfilling. As with feature 8003, there were no associated finds to provide a relative date.

Trench 9

Geophysical survey suggested the presence of a single south-west to north-east aligned linear anomaly (Fig. 2). Actual excavation located two ditches in Trench 9 (Fig. 8 : Pl. 8).

The earliest feature (context 9012) would have originally measured c. 1m in width (the south-eastern edge of this feature has been cut away by Ditch 9008) and was 0.5m deep with a 'U' shaped profile. Ditch 9012 was filled by three deposits of silty sand (contexts 9009, 9010 and 9011). The profile of which suggested activity from the north-west (Fig. 8). No finds were recovered from any of the ditch fills.

When ditch 9012 had completely silted up, Ditch 9008 was cut. This ditch was broader and shallower, measuring 1.5m in width and 0.35m deep with a shallow 'U' shaped profile. The fills of Ditch 9008 consisted of sandy silts and sands (contexts 9002 to 9007). Silting of the feature was uniform suggesting gradual accumulations. No finds were recovered from the excavated ditch segment.

Trenches 2, 3 and 4

Trenches 2, 3 and 4 were positioned to evaluate the interior of the possible enclosures and were located to the west of the main concentration of geophysical activity (Fig. 2). Excavation failed to locate any features other than in Trench 3 where a colluvial deposit was exposed (context 3002). Trenches 2 and 3 produced a small finds assemblage which consisted of a flint flake from Trench 2 (context 2001) and three Roman pottery sherds in Trench 3 (context 3002).

Trench 7

Trench 7 measured 2m² and was positioned directly over a burnt area as suggested by the geophysical survey (Fig. 2). Removal of the topsoil revealed a plough scored clayey silt, natural glaciofluvial deposit (context 7002). A large modern ferrous object was recovered from the ploughsoil, which was probably the source for the geophysical anomaly.

Summary

The sample excavations demonstrated that the majority of anomalies interpreted by the Geophysical Survey were of an archaeological nature and occurred within 0.3m of the present ground surface.

Excavation showed a variety of ditch profiles, which varied from the shallow 'U' profile to the more distinctive flat bottomed 'V'. It is also interesting to note that comparison of these profiles show a similarity in width and depth over the site (for example Trench 1 and Trench 8). The re-cutting of features and intercutting of features (Trenches 6, 8 and 9) suggests prolonged periods of use as also indicated by the finds assemblage.

Finds recovered from the excavations provided a small assemblage of dating material. Even so, it is clear that both prehistoric and Roman activity is occurring on this site (as suggested by the previous fieldwalking). The presence of pot boilers and other burnt material suggests that some form of occupational activity is also represented. Although the spatial distribution (Trenches 5 and 8) makes any centralization of activity currently problematic.

The site covers approximately 7 hectares and from the Geophysical Survey it is clear that activity is

concentrated to the east of the area. Even so, it is clear that this activity does extend outside the surveyed area and that a proportion of these anomalies represent multiphased features.

Discussion

Although most of the features sampled were linear, there were sufficient variations in form to suggest a mixture of function and date. The double ditched feature sampled in Trench 1 could relate to a trackway, the Geophysical Survey showed this feature to extend for at least 100m over the site, forming the north and east boundaries to the complex of geophysical anomalies. The south-west to north-eastern aligned feature in Trench 5 is on a different orientation to the rectilinear enclosures or fields whose boundaries were examined in Trenches 6, 8 and 9. The Geophysical Survey shows that this ditch extends beyond the south-west and north-east margins of the main complex of anomalies, and this would imply that it was a land boundary rather than a field division.

The great depth and V-shaped form of the ditches in Trench 6 stands out from the others examined. The geophysical survey implies that Ditch 6019 in Trench 6 forms the western boundary of a distinct enclosure, and certainly the scale and V-shaped profile of this ditch suggests more than a field boundary.

Excavation along the north-western boundary of the present quarry workings in 1994 (approximately 700m to the west of the 1997 excavations), located a series of ditches (MAP 1994). Two of which were clearly of Roman date, the third was potentially of Iron Age date. All the ditches were cut into the bedrock and possessed shallow 'U' shaped profiles. Some displayed evidence for re-cutting and the majority were not dissimilar in size to those excavated in Trench 1 and Trench 8, and possibly Trench 6. Finds from the 1994 excavations were limited to flint artefacts, Roman pottery and pot boilers. An assemblage almost identical to the 1997 excavations. In the 1994 excavations it was not possible to ascertain if banks had ever been associated with the ditches as the evidence had been removed by agricultural erosion. Excavation in Trenches 6 and 9 tentatively suggest banks were originally used on this site.

It would appear that the boundary and enclosure system on the proposed extension area is part of an evolving or adapting system of land management, with also the possibility of settlement. The background of Bronze Age activity attested by the presence of flint artefacts and the presence of Romano-British pottery illustrates the longevity of activity in this area of North Yorkshire.

Bibliography

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APPENDIX 1

Context Listing

Trench 1

- 1001 Topsoil - 10YR4/2 clay silt
- 1002 Deposit - 5YR4/4 clay silt. Fill of 1003.
- 1003 Cut of linear ditch
- 1004 Deposit - 5YR4/4 clay silt. Fill of 1005.
- 1005 Cut of linear ditch
- 1006 Natural - limestone bedrock & clay silt (5YR5/4)

Trench 2

- 2001 Topsoil - 10YR4/2 clay silt
- 2002 Natural - limestone bedrock & clay silt (5YR5/4)

Trench 3

- 3001 Topsoil - 10YR4/2 slightly clay, sandy silt
- 3002 Colluvium- 7.5YR3/4 silty sand
- 3003 Natural - limestone bedrock, silty clay (7.5YR3/3) & silty sand (10YR5/4)

Trench 4

- 4001 Topsoil - 10YR4/2 clay silt
- 4002 Natural - limestone bedrock & silty clay (7.5YR3/3)

Trench 5

- 5001 Topsoil - 10YR4/2 clay silt
- 5002 Deposit - 7.5YR4/4 silty clay. Fill of 5004.
- 5003 Deposit - 7.5YR4/6 clay silt. Fill of 5004.
- 5004 Cut of linear ditch

Trench 6

- 6001 Topsoil - 10YR4/2 clay silt
- 6002 Deposit - 7.5YR3/3 sandy silt. Fill of 6012
- 6003 Deposit - 7.5YR3/4 sandy silt. Fill of 6012
- 6004 Deposit - 7.5YR3/4 silty sand. Fill of 6012
- 6005 Deposit - 10YR5/6 silty sand. Fill of 6012
- 6006 Deposit - 10YR3/4 silty sand. Fill of 6012
- 6007 Deposit - 7.5YR3/4 sandy silt. Fill of 6012
- 6008 Deposit - 10YR3/4 sandy silt. Fill of 6012
- 6009 Deposit - 10YR4/4 clay silt. Fill of 6012
- 6010 Deposit - 10YR4/4 silty sand. Fill of 6012
- 6011 Deposit - 10YR4/6 silty sand. Fill of 6012
- 6012 Cut of linear ditch
- 6013 Deposit - 7.5YR3/4 silty sand. Fill of 6019
- 6014 Deposit - 10YR3/4 sandy silt. Fill of 6019
- 6015 Deposit - 10YR3/4 sandy silt. Fill of 6019
- 6016 Deposit - 10YR4/4 sandy silt. Fill of 6019
- 6017 Deposit - 7.5YR4/6 silty sand. Fill of 6019
- 6018 Deposit - 7.5YR4/6 silty sand. Fill of 6019
- 6019 Cut of linear ditch
- 6020 Natural - limestone bedrock & silty sand (10YR5/4)

Trench 7

- 7001 Topsoil - 10YR4/2 clay silt
- 7002 Natural - limestone bedrock & clay silt (5YR3/4)

Trench 8

- 8001 Topsoil - 10YR4/2 clay silt
- 8002 Deposit - 5YR4/6 clay silt. Fill of 8003
- 8003 Cut for linear ditch
- 8004 Deposit - 5YR4/4 clay silt. Fill of 8005
- 8005 Cut of possible pit
- 8006 Natural - limestone bedrock & clay silt (5YR3/4)

Trench 9

- 9001 Topsoil - 10YR4/2 clay silt
- 9002 Deposit - 7.5YR3/4 sandy silt. Fill of 9008
- 9003 Deposit - 7.5YR3/3 sandy silt. Fill of 9008
- 9004 Deposit - 10YR4/6 silty sand. Fill of 9008
- 9005 Deposit - 10YR3/3 sandy silt. Fill of 9008
- 9006 Deposit - 7.5YR4/4 silty sand. Fill of 9008
- 9007 Deposit - 10YR4/4 sandy silt. Fill of 9008
- 9008 Re-cut of linear ditch 9012
- 9009 Deposit - 7.5YR3/4 silty sand. Fill of 9012
- 9010 Deposit - 7.5YR4/6 silty sand. Fill of 9012
- 9011 Deposit - 7.5YR3/4 silty sand. Fill of 9012
- 9012 Cut of linear ditch
- 9013 Natural - limestone bedrock, silt (7.5YR4/6), sand (10YR5/6) & silty clay (5YR5/6)

APPENDIX 2

Finds Catalogue

Context	Description
1002	Total Pottery - 2 sherds, 0.02kg (Samian and Greyware) Animal Bone - 4 fragments, 0.075kg
2001	1 flint flake, waste. Length: 25mm; width: 19mm; depth: 8mm.
3002	Total Pottery - 3 sherds, 0.02kg (2 joining base sherds Greyware and 1 unidentified)
5003	1 flint flake, waste. Length: 16mm; width: 13mm; depth: 6mm.
6003	Total Pottery - 1 sherds, 0.005kg (1 body sherd calcite gritted ware)
6013	Total Pottery - 6 sherds, 0.09kg (1 rim sherd Greyware, 1 body sherd Greyware, 4 sherds calcite gritted ware including 1 rim)
6014	Total Pottery - 4 sherds, 0.05kg (3 calcite gritted ware, including 1 base; 1 mortaria rim)
6016	Animal Bone - 23 fragments, 0.30kg
6018	4 fragments of daub
7001	Total Pottery - 3 sherds, 0.05kg (Greyware and calcite gritted ware)

APPENDIX 3

Archive Summary

Plans

1. Plan of Trench 1. scale 1:20.
2. Plan of Trench 5. Scale 1:20.
3. Plan of Trench 6. Prior to excavation. Scale 1:20.
4. Plan of Trench 6. After excavation. Scale 1:20.
5. Plan of Trench 8. Scale 1:20.
6. Plan of Trench 9. Scale 1:20.

Sections

1. Trench 1. Context 1003. Scale 1:10.
2. Trench 1. Context 1005. Scale 1:10.
3. Trench 5. Context 5004. Scale 1:10.
4. Trench 6. Context 6012. Scale 1:10.
5. Trench 6. Context 6019. Scale 1:10.
6. Trench 8. Context 8003 and 8005. Scale 1:10.
7. Trench 8. Context 8005. Scale 1:10.
8. Trench 8. Context 8003. Scale 1:10.
9. Trench 9. Context 9012. Scale 1:10.

APPENDIX 4

Photographic Catalogue

Colour Print

1. View of Trench 3. Facing North-east.
2. View of Trench 3. Facing North-east.
3. View of Trench 3. Facing North-east.
4. View of Trench 3. Facing North-east.
5. View of Trench 3. Facing North-east.
6. View of Trench 3. Facing North-east.
7. View of Trench 1. Facing North-west.
8. View of Trench 1. Facing North-west.
9. View of Trench 4. Facing South.
10. View of Trench 4. Facing South.
11. View of Trench 4. Facing North-east.
12. View of Trench 5 Ditch, context 5004. Facing South-west.
13. View of Trench 5 Ditch, context 5004. Facing South-west.
14. View of Trench 6. Pre excavation. Facing West.
15. View of Trench 6. Pre excavation. Facing West.
16. View of Trench 7. Facing North.
17. View of Trench 7. Facing North.
18. View of Trench 7. Facing North.
19. View of Trench 8 Pre excavation. Facing West.
20. View of Trench 8 Pre excavation. Facing West.
21. View of Trench 8 Pre excavation. Facing West.
22. View of Trench 6 Ditch, context 6012. Facing North.
23. View of Trench 6 Ditch, context 6012. Facing North.
24. View of Trench 6 Ditch, context 6019. Facing North.
25. View of Trench 6 Ditch, context 6019. Facing North.

26. View of Trench 8. Facing East.
27. View of Trench 8. Facing East.
28. View of Trench 8. Facing East.
29. View of Trench 8 Ditch and possible Pit/Ditch, contexts 8003 & 8005. Facing East.
30. View of Trench 8 Ditch and possible Pit/Ditch, contexts 8003 & 8005. Facing East.
31. View of Trench 8 Ditch and possible Pit/Ditch, contexts 8003 & 8005. Facing East.
32. View of Trench 8 possible Pit/Ditch, context 8005. Facing North.
33. View of Trench 8 possible Pit/Ditch, context 8005. Facing North.
34. View of Trench 8 possible Pit/Ditch, context 8005. Facing North.
35. View of Trench 8 Ditch, context 8003. Facing West.
36. View of Trench 8 Ditch, context 8003. Facing West.
37. View of Trench 9 pre excavation. Facing North.
38. View of Trench 9 pre excavation. Facing North.
39. View of Trench 9 Ditches, contexts 9008 & 9012. Facing West.
40. View of Trench 9 Ditches, contexts 9008 & 9012. Facing West.
41. View of Trench 9 Ditches, contexts 9008 & 9012. Facing West.
42. View of Trench 1 Ditch. context 1003. Facing North-west.
43. View of Trench 1 Ditch, context 1003. Facing North-west.
44. View of Trench 1 Ditch, context 1003. Facing North-west.
45. View of Trench 1 Ditch section, context 1003. Facing East.
46. View of Trench 1 Ditch section, context 1003. Facing East.
47. View of Trench 1 Ditch section, context 1003. Facing East.
48. View of Trench 1 Ditch 1005. Facing North.
49. View of Trench 1 Ditch 1005. Facing North.
50. View of Trench 1 Ditch 1005. Facing North.
51. View of Trench 1 Ditch Section, context 1005. Facing East.
52. View of Trench 1 Ditch Section, context 1005. Facing East.
53. View of Trench 1 Ditch Section, context 1005. Facing East.

Colour Slide

1. View of Trench 3. Facing North-east.
2. View of Trench 3. Facing North-east.
3. View of Trench 3. Facing East.
4. View of Trench 3. Facing East.
5. View of Trench 1. Facing North-west.
6. View of Trench 1. Facing North-west.
7. View of Trench 4. Facing South.
8. View of Trench 4. Facing South.
9. View of Trench 4. Facing North-east.
10. View of Trench 4. Facing North-east.
11. View of Trench 5 Ditch. Facing South-west
12. View of Trench 5 Ditch, context 5004. Facing South-west.
13. View of Trench 5 Ditch, context 5004. Facing South-west.
14. View of Trench 6. Pre excavation. Facing West.
15. View of Trench 6. Pre excavation. Facing West.
16. View of Trench 7. Facing North.
17. View of Trench 7. Facing North.
18. View of Trench 7. Facing North.
19. View of Trench 8 Pre excavation. Facing West.
20. View of Trench 8 Pre excavation. Facing West.
21. View of Trench 8 Pre excavation. Facing West.
22. View of Trench 6 Ditch, context 6012. Facing North.
23. View of Trench 6 Ditch, context 6012. Facing North.
24. View of Trench 6 Ditch, context 6019. Facing North.
25. View of Trench 6 Ditch, context 6019. Facing North.
26. View of Trench 8. Facing East.
27. View of Trench 8. Facing East.

28. View of Trench 8. Facing East.
29. View of Trench 8 Ditch and possible Pit/Ditch, contexts 8003 & 8005. Facing East.
30. View of Trench 8 Ditch and possible Pit/Ditch, contexts 8003 & 8005. Facing East.
31. View of Trench 8 Ditch and possible Pit/Ditch, contexts 8003 & 8005. Facing East.
32. View of Trench 8 possible Pit/Ditch, context 8005. Facing North.
33. View of Trench 8 possible Pit/Ditch, context 8005. Facing North.
34. View of Trench 8 possible Pit/Ditch, context 8005. Facing North.
35. View of Trench 8 Ditch, context 8003. Facing West.
36. View of Trench 8 Ditch, context 8003. Facing West.
37. View of Trench 9 pre excavation. Facing North.
38. View of Trench 9 pre excavation. Facing North.
39. View of Trench 9 Ditches, contexts 9008 & 9012. Facing West.
40. View of Trench 9 Ditches, contexts 9008 & 9012. Facing West.
41. View of Trench 9 Ditches, contexts 9008 & 9012. Facing West.
42. View of Trench 1 Ditch. context 1003. Facing North-west.
43. View of Trench 1 Ditch, context 1003. Facing North-west.
44. View of Trench 1 Ditch, context 1003. Facing North-west.
45. View of Trench 1 Ditch section, context 1003. Facing East.
46. View of Trench 1 Ditch section, context 1003. Facing East.
47. View of Trench 1 Ditch section, context 1003. Facing East.
48. View of Trench 1 Ditch 1005. Facing North.
49. View of Trench 1 Ditch 1005. Facing North.
50. View of Trench 1 Ditch 1005. Facing North.
51. View of Trench 1 Ditch Section, context 1005. Facing East.
52. View of Trench 1 Ditch Section, context 1005. Facing East.
53. View of Trench 1 Ditch Section, context 1005. Facing East.