

Humber Field Archaeology

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors



Archaeological Observation
Investigation and Recording
at

Briscoe Ridge Lane
Beckwithshaw

Site Code: WB2012.039

National Grid Reference: SE 2573 5096 – SE 2615 5095

Northern Powergrid Reference: YC08291

for

Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) Ltd

Watching Brief Report Number: 1328
November 2012

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D. P. Rawson, November 2012

Summary

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology on behalf of Northern Powergrid during groundwork associated with the 11kv overhead line diversion at Briscoe Ridge Lane, Beckwithshaw, North Yorkshire.

Though no archaeological features were observed or finds collected, there was a notable change in the quality of the subsoil from clay to sand a little to the east of the Iron Age entrenched site, and this sandy subsoil, which would have been far more suitable for habitation and working, continued for at least 170m to the west.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology, on behalf of Northern Powergrid during groundwork associated with the 11kv overhead line diversion at Briscoe Ridge Lane, Beckwithshaw, North Yorkshire (*Figure 1*).

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2. Archaeological Background

Immediately to the north of Briscoe Ridge Lane at grid reference SE 2591 5103 there is a small Iron Age entrenched site (Monument No. 51763) consisting of a ditch and outer bank (*Figures 1 and 2*). Both bank and ditch have been largely erased by ploughing (*Plate 10*). Excavation by B.W.J. Kent showed the area to have been occupied by hut circles prior to the digging of a trench some 16 feet (4.8m) wide and 6 feet (1.8m) deep. Soon after, the ditch was half-filled with boulders and earth amongst which there was a probable Roman sherd. The ditch was then used for cooking sites and a number of paved hearths have been found in the vicinity. Many querns have been removed from nearby field walls, and there is a tradition that tools, which by description appear to have been socketed axes (celts), were found on the site in the nineteenth century (Cowling 1946).

Many flint scrapers, some of them reworked Mesolithic material, a Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead, and a transverse cutting arrow point of the early four-sided type have been found at Briscoe Rigg (*ibid*).

3. Methodology

The work associated with this project was carried out by staff from Humber Field Archaeology, in accordance with an e-mail (dated 13th August 2012) sent by Linda Smith, Rural Archaeologist at North Yorkshire CC to Stephen Grey, Wayleave Officer of Northern Powergrid, recommending that an archaeological watching brief be carried out. The watching brief was subsequently undertaken according to the NYCC guidance document ‘Standard Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for Limited Archaeological Recording (“Watching Brief”) for Service Works’, dated January 2006.

The scheme of works comprised monitoring the excavation of a cable trench and associated spurs. Four visits were made to the site between the 8th and the 11th October 2012.

Any exposed areas of subsoil and lower stratigraphic units were examined for archaeological deposits. The excavated dimensions of the foundation trenches were

recorded, as were the depth sequences of any exposed stratigraphy. Where archaeological deposits/features were identified, context numbers were assigned and detailed descriptions were made, plans and sections were drawn and a photographic record was maintained

4. Results

Main cable trench

A trench around 410m long was excavated along the south side of Briscoe Ridge Lane (*Figure 2, Plates 1 and 2*). The trench was generally 0.90m deep and 0.30m – 0.40m wide (*Plates 3, 5 and 8*).

No archaeological features were observed throughout the base and sides of the trench.

Throughout the easternmost 240m of trench there was a layer at least 0.55m thick of dark yellow-brown clay (1002) within its base (*Plate 4*). This clay was very largely free of inclusions save for a 15m stretch of the trench immediately to the north-west of Rigg Farm, where several very large blocks of limestone were found within the 1002 (*Figure 2, Plates 6 and 7*). These blocks appeared to have been very roughly worked and varied in size from around 0.75m (max) x 0.50m (max) x 0.30m (max), up to 1.10m (max) x 0.50m (max) x 0.30m (max). Throughout the easternmost stretch of trench the 1002 was topped by a 0.35m thick layer of very dark grey brown topsoil (1001).

Throughout the westernmost 170m of trench there was a layer at least 0.60m thick of yellow-orange clayey sand that contained frequent inclusions of limestone rubble (1003) (*Plates 8 and 9*). The rubble stone was generally no larger than 0.30m x 0.20m x 0.20m. Above the 1003 there was a layer of 1001 around 0.30m thick.

Trench spur 1

This spur ran south south-west from the main trench for 11.50m (*Figure 2, Plate 11*). It was up to 1m wide and 0.90m deep. No archaeological features were observed within it and the stratigraphy recorded was the same as that for the western portion of the main trench.

Trench spur 2

This spur ran south-west from the main trench for 17.80m (*Figure 2, Plate 12*). It was no more than 0.40m wide and was 1.10m deep. Again, no archaeological features were observed within it. Throughout the base of the trench there a layer at least 0.90m thick of the 1003 described earlier, though here there was rather more limestone rubble within the matrix and in places within the base of the trench it may have constituted the broken limestone natural (*Plate 13*).

With the completion of spur 2 the programme of observation, investigation and recording was concluded.

5. Discussion

The following is solely the opinion of Humber Field Archaeology, and may not reflect that of the North Yorkshire County Archaeology Service, archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

The large pieces of roughly worked limestone were all around 0.30m thick and this probably indicates that they were once part of a local farm building – most likely Rigg Farm. Though no archaeological features were observed it was notable that the subsoil was far sandier in the western portion of the excavation. This sandy subsoil 1003 began a little to the east of the Iron Age entrenched site and would of course have been far more suitable for habitation and working than the very much more clay soil to the east.

6. Acknowledgements

Thanks are accorded to Northern Powergrid and in particular to Murphy Ltd, for help and co-operation during the course of this project.

The work was carried out in accordance with the WSI produced by North Yorkshire County Archaeology Service. The report was edited by David Atkinson, whilst administrative support was provided by Georgina Richardson and June Rooney.

7. References

Cowling, E.T. 1946. *Rombalds Way*

English Heritage. 1991. *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 2008 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (October 1994, revised September 2001 and October 2008)*

North Yorkshire County Archaeology Service. 2006. *Standard Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for Limited Archaeological Recording (“Watching Brief”) for Service Works*

9. Appendices

Appendix 1

Context list

- (1001) Very dark grey brown topsoil, up to 0.35m thick
- (1002) Dark yellow-brown clay, at least 0.55m thick
- (1003) Yellow orange clayey sand that contained frequent inclusions of limestone rubble, at least 0.60m thick

Appendix 2

Archive

Project Details:

Archaeological observation, investigation and recording at Briscoe Ridge Lane, Beckwithshaw, North Yorkshire

Site Code: WB2012.039

National Grid Reference: SE 2573 5096 – SE 2615 5095

Northern Powergrid Reference: YC08291

Author David Rawson **Date of fieldwork** 08.10.12 – 11.10.12

Report Number. Humber Field Archaeology Report Number: 1328
November 2012

Quantity

There were no finds

4x A4 plastic sleeves contain the paper archive

Summary of work

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Though no archaeological features were observed or finds collected, there was a notable change in the quality of the subsoil from clay to sand a little to the east of the Iron Age entrenched site, and this sandy subsoil, which would have been far more suitable for habitation and working, continued for at least 170m to the west.

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- 2.2 Staff site visit log

3 The Photographic Record:

- 3.1 Photographic Catalogue
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- 3.3 Reference Prints

4. Final Report:

Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording at Briscoe Ridge Lane, Beckwithshaw, Humber Field Archaeology Watching Brief Report Number 1328, November 2012

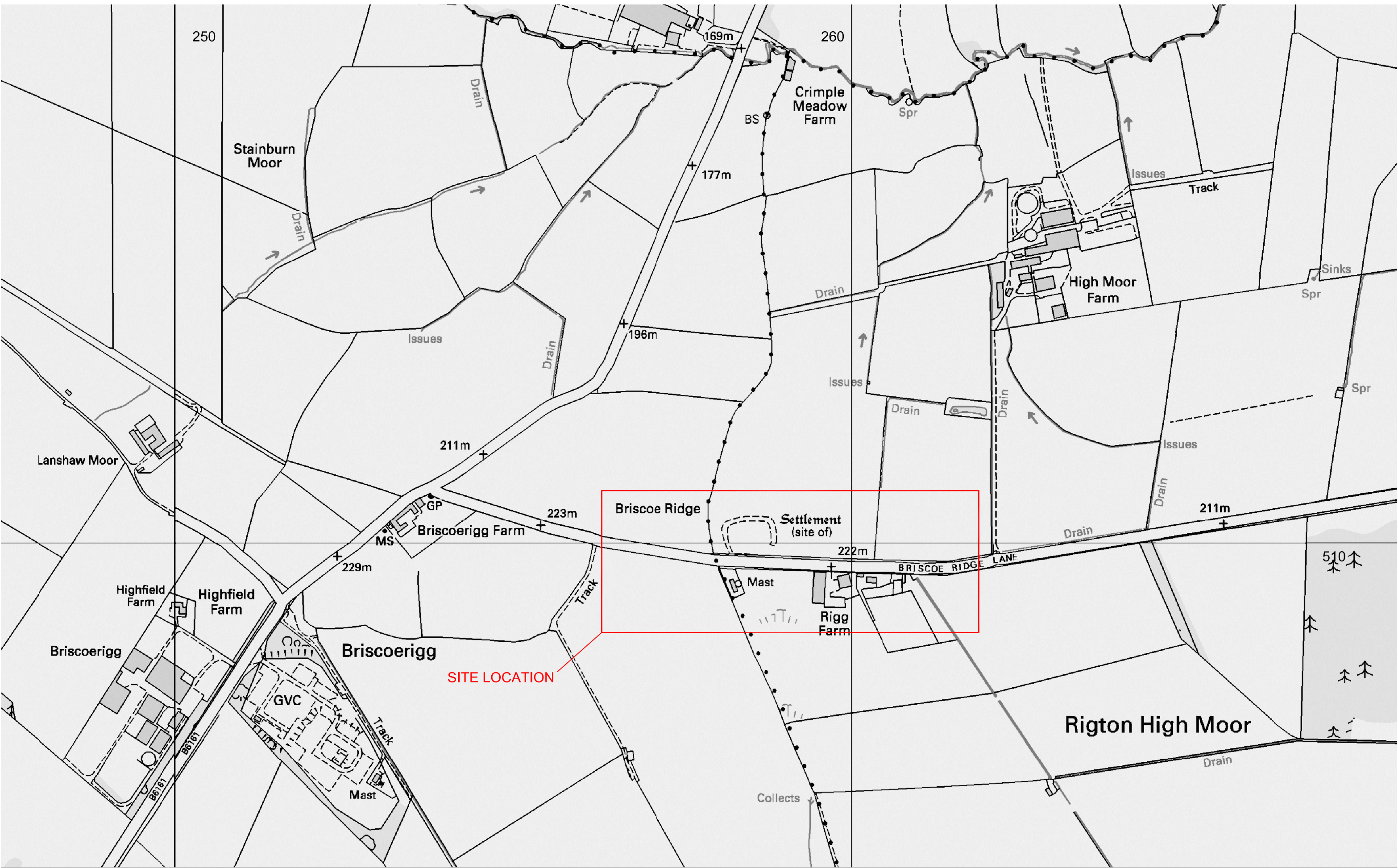
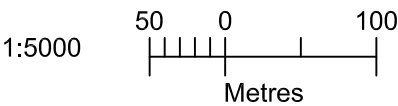


Figure 1 Site location plan



Briscoe Ridge

Settlement
(site of)

222m

SPUR 2

SPUR 1

BRISCOE RIDGE

Mast

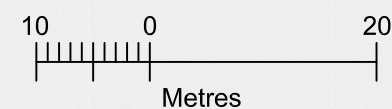
LARGE PIECES
OF LIMESTONE
RUBBLE FOUND

Rigg
Farm

PORTION OF TRENCH WITH (1003) IN BASE



1:1500



NB. TRENCH SHOWN WITH EXAGGERATED WIDTH
FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLARITY

Figure 2 Plan showing the electricity
cable trench



Plate 1 View towards Briscoe Ridge Lane from the south-east



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Project Management • Desk-based Assessment • Field Survey • Fieldwork • Finds Research
• Post-excavation Analysis • Inter-tidal Work

Humber Field Archaeology is an independently-funded part of the Humber Archaeology Partnership, a partnership serving The East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Kingston upon Hull City Council