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NYS 7996  
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**Howardian Hills  
North Yorkshire**  
**AONB Woodland Survey  
Black Moor**  
**Assessment Report**

NYCCHER	
SNY	7996
ENY	872
CNY	
Panch	2019
Rec'd	11/06/03

MAP  
08-04-02

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<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure List	2
Overlay List	2
Plate List	2
Summary	3
Acknowledgements	3
1 Introduction	4
2 Site Description	4
3 Historical and Archaeological Background	5
4 Aims, Objectives and Methodology	6
5 Results	7
6 Site Assessment	10
7 Discussion	11
8 Recommendations	13
9 Bibliography	14
Tables	
1 Review of Site Information	15
2 Site Listing	16
3 Site Assessment	17
Appendices	
1 Field Record Forms	31
2 Survey Sheets	32
3 Specification	44
4 Scheduling Criteria	45

<b>Figure List</b>		<b>Page</b>
1	Site Location Scale 1 25000	18
2	First Edition Ordnance Survey Map	19
3	Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map	20
4	County Series Ordnance Survey Map	21
5	Ordnance Survey Map 1930 Scale 1 10,560	22
6	Ordnance Survey Map 1985 Scale 1 10,000	23
7	Features 1 - 11	24
8	Scheduled Ancient Monuments	25
9	Sites from Sites and Monument Record	26
10	New features found during the survey	27
11	Overlay Base Map	28

#### Overlays

- 1 Modern Features
- 2 Post-medieval Features
- 3 Prehistoric Features

#### Plate List

1	Site 11 Facing North-east	29
2	Site 11 Section Facing North-east	30

## **Summary**

This report assesses all monuments surviving or recorded within Black Moor, an area of woodland within the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Black Moor was surveyed in March 2002.

All sites and monuments previously recorded by English Heritage, the North Yorkshire Sites and Monument Record and on the Ordnance Survey were noted and visited. Sites ranged from upstanding earthworks dating from the Prehistoric to modern day.

The woodland varied from recently planted dense conifer plantation, mature conifer plantation, and open deciduous woodland.

## **Acknowledgements**

MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd would like to acknowledge Mr M Marshall and Mr G Goodwin, and thank them for their permission to survey the monuments in Black Moor.

We would also like to thank the North Yorkshire County Council for their help during the survey work.

# Howardian Hills North Yorkshire

## AONB Woodland Survey Black Moor

### Assessment Report

#### 1. Introduction

- 1 1 Black Moor is situated in the parish of Brandsby cum Stearsby (SE 6050 7300 centre Fig 1), and is located 1 km to the north-east of the village of Brandsby and 16 km west of Malton. This woodland area is part of the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1 2 Survey of the woodland, covering approximately 26 hectares was undertaken in March 2002. All work was funded by the Howardian Hills AONB Project.
- 1 3 The survey area was covered by a variety of woodland conditions from recent plantation, open plantation and dense mature conifer plantation and mixed woodland. Black Moor is owned by Mr Mike Marshall and Mr G Goodwin.
- 1 4 All maps within this report have been reproduced from Ordnance Survey with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Licence No AL 50453A.

#### 2. Site Description

- 2 1 Black Moor comprises of a sub-circular tract of land with strip plantation forming its eastern boundary. In the north the site is bounded by the Brandsby to Hovingham Road and to the east by the Gilling to Terrington Road. Its southern boundary is formed by an area of arable land (Fig 1 NGR SE 6050 7300).
- 2 2 Black Moor stands on soils of the Rivington 1 Soil Association (541f), which are well drained coarse loamy soils over a solid geology of Jurassic sandstone. The soils have only minor limitations in supporting tree growth and support species including Sitka spruce, Norway spruce, Douglas fir, Japanese and

hybrid larch, sycamore, beech and elm Oak could also be grown on some plots" (Jarvis et al 1984, p 262 & Mackney et al 1983, p 17)

### 3. Historical and Archaeological Background (Figs. 2- 6)

3 1 A map regression exercise was conducted for Black Moor

3 1 1 On a 'Map of the Lordship of Brandsby, property of Francis Chomeley esq' surveyed by John Haynes in 1746 (not illustrated) Black Moor is shown as a featureless piece of land titled 'Black Moor' (NYRCO 1988)

3 1 2 The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1856 (Fig 2) shows the land block is only planted in the west where it is called Strip Plantation and sparsely planted along the northern boundary, a small copse is shown to the north of a field boundary This boundary is bisected by a sinuous footpath, which cuts through the area on a north-west, south-east alignment Two Tumuli are shown, one in the northern half of the area and one in the south These two barrows flank a sub-circular feature titled Old Racecourse This feature is in the main shown as a single track Both the boundary and footpath bisect this feature at two points on its parameter A linear feature aligned south-west, north-east is shown in the south of the area measuring approximately 100 metres in length

3 1 3 The 1912 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 3) shows the land characterised by a number of copses in the west with strip planting along the northern, western and eastern sides Strip Plantation is shown in the west of the site bordering a trackway from the Brandsby to Hovingham Road through to Brandsby Lodge in the south A single boundary is shown roughly bisecting the area Three Tumuli are now shown, two in the north and one in the south Contours shown on the map show the varied nature of the topography which rises in both the south and the east from approximately 460 feet to 500 feet The linear feature shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig 2) is no longer shown The Racecourse is now shown as predominantly single tracked except for a section in the north where it has two tracks

- 3 1 4 The County Series Ordnance Survey Map of 1911-12 provides more detailed information. This map (Fig 4) illustrates the mixed nature of the woodland. The linear feature shown on the 1856 is not illustrated and in addition to the Tumuli and Racecourse a sheepfold is illustrated.
- 3 1 5 The 1930 1:10560 Ordnance Survey Map (Fig 5), continues to show the open nature of most of the area and there appears to have been no regimented planting. The only change is that the full circuit of the Old Racecourse is no longer depicted, the eastern half is missing.
- 3 1 6 The 1:10000 Ordnance Survey Map (Fig 6) no longer shows the Old Racecourse, the three Tumuli are still depicted and further building work appears to have been undertaken in the vicinity of the sheepfold. The open areas shown on previous maps are now marked with woodland symbols. Four new tracks are shown providing access from the northern boundary, which meet a south-west, north-east aligned trackway from the south.
- 3 1 7 The 1993 Howardian Hills Survey (NYCC 1993) did not visit Black Moor.
- 3 1 8 The North Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record list four sites on Black Moor (Tables 1 to 3), three round barrows and a hollowway.

#### **4. Aims, Objectives and Methodology**

- 4 1 A survey of the archaeological features on the Howardian Hills AONB was undertaken in 1993 (NYCC 1993). It was an action point under Objective CHI of the Howardian Hills AONB Management Plan (NYCC 1997) to undertake a further archaeological survey within woodlands to record the extent and condition of archaeological or historical landscape features, and to identify those requiring conservation or management.
- 4 2 The aim of this survey was to provide an assessment, for future land management purposes, of the upstanding historical and archaeological landscape features within the woodland areas.

4.3 The survey included -

- a review of existing recorded information
- production of record sheets and working maps
- field inspection and recording
- summary and overlay maps showing recorded features
- digital plotting of recorded features (for the SMR)
- production of the assessment report

4.4 Field survey was undertaken by a team of two archaeologists. A copy of the scheme of works is included in this report as Appendix 3

## 5. Results

5.1 A total of eleven features were noted during the survey of the woodland areas (Tables 1-3, Features 1-11, Fig 7)

### 5.2 *Barrows*

5.2.1 Three round barrows (tumuli) were located in Black Moor. All the round barrows listed are Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM Nos 28216, 28217 & 28218, Fig 8, Sites 1-3). The barrows surveyed range in size from 12m to 17m in diameter and were generally just over 1m in height. The height of the barrows may be deceptive due to the amounts of wind blown and felling debris which covers the mounds. None of the barrows show any sign of excavation although there is a 'spongy' feel to the mound bodies due to the incidence of rabbit burrowing. Vestiges of a ditch was observed associated with all of the barrows. A possible kerbstone was recorded at Barrow 3. All of the barrows were situated close to the edge of the natural scarp.

### 5.3 *Structures*

5.3.1 A sheepfold (Site 4) is recorded on the County Series Ordnance Survey map of 1911/12. This feature is obscured by an earthen bank extending for a distance of 22m and well covered by vegetation. The visible part of the feature appears to be the entrance on the north-eastern corner where a 2m x 4m area is brick built and



visible for fourteen courses with the remains of a wooden plank roof. The interior is full of stagnant water and wind blown debris

#### 5.4 *Tracks*

5.4.1 Site 5 is listed on the Sites and Monuments Record as a hollowway. Site 6 is only recorded on the 1856 Ordnance Survey map. In addition the early Ordnance Survey maps record that a racecourse once existed on Black Moor (Site 7)

5.4.2 Both Sites 5 and 6 were clearly visible with steep "U" shaped profiles, although Site 6 was more pronounced. Site 5 runs parallel with the Brandsby Hovingham road for a short distance before turning to the south-west. Site 6 follows the course of the trackway shown on the 1856 Ordnance Survey map. These features do not appear to be affected by forestry ploughing

5.4.3 Site 7 is unfortunately situated in areas which have been heavily forested. Vestiges of the northern circuit were observed for a distance of 50m, similar short sections were observed in the west and south. The track was noted as a shallow depression measuring approximately 0.5m in width and was filled with water at the time of the survey. There is currently little published material on this particular racecourse, which dates from the Eighteenth and possibly as early as the Seventeenth century. Fairfax-Blakeborough's book *Two Hundred Extinct North Country Race meetings* does not include the Black Moor racecourse. Brandsby Lodge, situated to the south-east, was once owned by the Payne-Golwy family, a prominent sporting family from the 1800's. Of course it is possible that Site 7 was not an actual racecourse but a training gallop

#### 5.5 *Earthworks*

5.5.1 The most impressive landscape feature of Black Moor were a series of linear embankments (Pl 1). These earthworks consisted of four embankments with intervening ditches on a north-east south-west alignment (Sites 8 - 11). The features were observed for a distance of 40m. The three most westerly banks ended but the eastern bank continued to the south into a dense plantation of conifers. A section had been cut through the bank recently. This was

photographed (Pl 2) All of the banks were in excess of 5m in width and the ditches possessed a "U" shaped profile

5 5 2 This section of triple banked earthworks have not been previously recorded Consideration of aerial photographic information for Black Moors environs shows a section of triple banks (surviving as a crop mark) to the south-west Continuing the line of these features through to those in Black Moor tends to suggest that these are the same

5 5 3 The potential of these earthworks in relationship to the prehistoric landscape is very intriguing Several theories can be suggested - are they related to the the barrow cemetery, or is there a link between the more well known entrenchments (i.e Cleve Dyke System on the Hambleton Hills and the more northerly entrenchments of Scamridge Dykes on the North York Moors)? Possibly the most tantalising supposition is the possible connection with the earthworks located on Grimston Moor in the survey undertaken in 1999 The Grimston Moor earthworks are only 1500m away and are of a similar nature to the ones located on Black Moor Unfortunately, these theories can only be postulated at this stage

5 6 3 Another bank and ditch earthwork was noted prior to the Howardian Hills AONB Historic Environment Survey (NYCC 1993) on the southern boundary of Coneythorpe Banks Wood as "modern drainage" (Feature 2 14) The eastern extent of this feature had been severely disturbed and in the main removed by recent forestry activity Further to the west a section of a low bank remained

## **6. Site Assessment**

6 1 The format used to assess each individual site (Appendix 3, Table 3, Figs 8-9 and Overlays 1 to 3) is based on the scheduling criteria given in Annex 4 of Planning Policy Guidance 16 Archaeology and Planning (PPG16) issued by the Department of the Environment Each category (rarity, documentation, group value, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, diversity and potential) has been scored subjectively between 1 and 10, 10 being a maximum score, or high to

low, and also nil to average Totals are also given on Table 3, the maximum score being 70

Monument Period	Highest Score	Lowest Score
Prehistoric	47	43
Post-Medieval	42	32
Modern	25	25

*Summary of Site Assessment Totals*

6.2 Monuments are in danger from forestry work The risks have been assessed as high, moderate or low -

- Felling moderate to high danger when the trees are planted on or very near to the monuments
- Machinery high danger of destroying monuments
- Ploughing/scarification high (some monuments already badly damaged)

6.3 *Prehistoric Monuments*

6.3.1 Three Bronze Age round barrows, Sites 1-3 are listed on the Sites and Monuments Record as individual sites

6.3.2 Sites 8 - 11 represent a section of multiple banks in the central eastern half of Black Moor These monuments have all been assessed on Table 3 and score 47 out of a maximum of 70

6.3.3 There is a great danger that the surviving prehistoric monuments may be damaged further before their importance can be investigated fully

6.3 *Medieval*

6.3.1 No medieval features were observed

6.4 *Post-medieval*

6.4.1 Two hollowways were recorded (Sites 5 & 6), both are currently free from the threat of forestry activity

6 4 2 The racecourse is a noteworthy landscape feature which has unfortunately suffered from the change of land use to forestry this century

#### 6 5 *Modern Features*

6 5 1 The sheep fold is the only modern feature recorded

### 7. Discussion

7 1 The woodland present in Black Moor is represented by areas of modern conifer planting and older mixed plantation, sporadic preservation of features has prevailed Sites 1-3 are good sized mounds showing no signs of previous excavation but are burrowed Traces of the ditch and a possible kerb stone were still visible The most striking aspect of these features is their location, all three are situated close to the edge of the natural scarp and would have been a prominent landscape feature

7 2 Round barrows erected over Late Neolithic and Bronze Age (2000-600 BC) burials are the most numerous class of prehistoric monument in Yorkshire The siting of which generally coincides with crest of a watershed This aspect is characteristic of all three Black Moor barrows

7 3 The relationship of the round barrows surveyed and the linear earthworks is currently unknown The earthworks are approximately 40m to the north-east of Barrow 3, thus they separate the southerly barrow from the two northerly ones

7 4 The earthworks in Black Moor are very impressive Their function is open to question Spratt argued that these multiple dykes could not be thought of in either economic or military terms but that they probably represented different things to different people It is possible that the dykes comprised a system for dividing the terrain into farming territories as much of the alignment is based on natural ridge features Spratt suggests that the dyke system commences with the advent of mixed farming by dividing high and low ground and access to water, all of which are essential for efficient husbandry (Spratt 1989) Previous work has shown many townships on the periphery of the North York Moors have

similar upland and lowland configurations, and have been located on the edge of scarps. This pattern also occurs on the edges of chalk hills in southern England. Many of these dykes are the earliest form of land division and later Saxon strip and medieval parishes are aligned along these divisions. The possible existence of these earthworks continuing into the nearby Yearsley Moor needs to be addressed.

7.5 There is no evidence to suggest that the Roman period did anything other than utilise the landscape in its prehistoric form. No remains of Roman date are known on Black Moor.

7.6 The medieval period is not represented.

7.7 Site 7, the racecourse or training gallop is an important site of regional value as it complements and enhances our understanding of the sport of racing in this part of Yorkshire. If indeed it is a racecourse is likely to be one of the early racecourses like the Hambleton one located at Sutton Bank.

7.8 Even though Black Moor is a small forest area, in comparison to other surveyed areas (MAP 1999 & 2000), the quality and diversity of the archaeological features observed illustrates the importance of such work. The discovery of an hitherto unknown section of multiple dykes has extended our knowledge of this category of feature but only further survey and excavation can reveal the full potential and help in the analysis and research of upland areas in the Prehistoric period. The Howardian Hills Forest Areas reflect many Prehistoric landscape features found on the Tabular Hills of the North York Moors. Whether or not they are directly linked can only be postulated until further work is undertaken on the distribution of these dyke systems.

## **8. Recommendations**

8.1 All existing features are at risk from future forestry work, including felling, plant and machinery damage, and future replanting. It is desirable that any trees growing on features should be removed and any natural regeneration be

regularly cleared. This would avoid disturbance to the archaeological deposits by the root systems. Clearance of trees from monuments should leave the root systems in place to avoid disturbance by their removal. To avoid damage to features and their immediate environs during felling and subsequent replanting, some method of demarcation is advisable. The marking of trees adjacent to a monument with a non-toxic paint or high visibility tape is worthy of consideration. This might form a component of future surveys. When areas are felled it would be advised that a sample of sites with a potential for excavation be examined, to establish the function of the site, e.g. funerary or agricultural.

- 8.2 The Round Barrows (Sites 1-3) and earthwork embankments (Sites 8-11) found during the survey should be protected from burrowing and further planting. The Prehistoric features are in danger from being damaged before their full importance can be assessed.
- 8.3 The additional hollowway, racecourse and sheep fold should be included in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) as an upstanding earthworks.

## 9. Bibliography

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University of Sheffield

**Table 1 Review of Site Information**

Area Name	Site No	Grid Ref	Monument Type	Parish	SMR No	O S 1856	O S 1912	O S 1930	Surveyed March 2002
Black Moor	1	SE 6020 7303	Round Barrow	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby	364 02	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2	SE 6052 7317	Round Barrow	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby	364 01		✓	✓	✓
	3	SE 6059 7286	Round Barrow	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby	364 03	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4	SE 6046 7315	Sheep Fold	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby			✓	✓	✓
	5	SE 6015 7305	Hollow-way	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby	11560				✓
	6	SE 6032 7278 - 6043 7284	Hollow-way	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby		✓			✓
	7	SE 6050 7300 centre	Race course	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby		✓	✓	✓	✓
	8	SE 6060 7299 - 6062 7300	Entrenchment	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby					✓
	9	SE 6061 7296 - 6064 7297	Entrenchment	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby					✓
	10	SE 6061 7294 - 6065 7296	Entrenchment	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby					✓
	11	SE 6063 7291 - 6066 7292	Entrenchment	Brandsby-cum- Stearsby					✓



**Table 2 Site Listing**

Site No	SMR No	Grid Ref	Survival/Condition	Land Use	Description	Management Recommendations
1	364 02	SE 6020 7303	5	OP	Round Barrow very impressive mound with no signs of excavation Traces of possible ditch visible Badly burrowed 12m diameter and 1 15m high	Further archaeological work recommended Monument needs protection during Forestry Work
2	364 01	SE 6052 7317	5	OP	Round Barrow very impressive mound with no signs of excavation Traces of possible ditch visible Badly burrowed 15m diameter and 1m high	Further archaeological work recommended Monument needs protection during Forestry Work
3	364 03	SE 6059 7286	6	OP	Round Barrow very impressive mound with no signs of excavation Traces of possible ditch visible Badly burrowed 15m diameter and 1m high	Further archaeological work recommended Monument needs protection during Forestry Work
4		SE 6046 7315	7	DP	Sheep fold brick structure now covered by earthen bank Only 4m visible	Monument needs protection during Forestry Work
5	11560	SE 5983 7270	7	OP	Hollowway short section of track, gentle 'U' shaped profile	Monument needs protection during Forestry Work
6		SE 6032 7278 - 6043 7284	7	OP	Hollowway old track currently forms part of forest path	Monument needs protection during Forestry Work
7		SE 6050 7300 centre	5	OP/DP	Racecourse only short sections of full circuit now visible	Monument needs protection during Forestry Work
8		SE 6060 7299 - 6062 7300	8	OP	Entrenchment bank and flanking ditches	Further archaeological work recommended Monument needs protection during Forestry Work
9		SE 6061 7296 - 6064 7297	8	OP	Entrenchment bank and flanking ditches	Further archaeological work recommended Monument needs protection during Forestry Work
10		SE 60617294 - 6065 7296	8	OP	Entrenchment bank and flanking ditches	Further archaeological work recommended Monument needs protection during Forestry Work
11		SE 6063 7291 - 6066 7292	8	OP	Entrenchment bank and flanking ditches	Further archaeological work recommended Monument needs protection during Forestry Work

**KEY**

Land Use

DP Dense Plantation  
 OP Open Plantation

Condition

1 Poor  
 10 Excellent

**Table 3 Site Assessment**

Site No	Grid Ref	Monument Type	Period	Rarity	Documentation	Group Value	Survival/ Condition	Fragility/ Vulnerability	Diversity	Potential	Total
1	SE 6020 7303	Round Barrow	Prehistoric	6	Poor	High	5	6	8	8	43
2	SE 6052 7317	Round Barrow	Prehistoric	6	Poor	High	5	6	8	8	43
3	SE 6059 7286	Round Barrow	Prehistoric	6	Poor	High	6	6	8	8	43
4	SE 6046 7315	Sheep fold	Post medieval	2	Good	Low	7	4	3	2	25
5	SE 6015 7305	Hollowway	Post medieval	4	Poor	Medium	7	5	5	5	32
6	SE 6032 7278 - 6043 7284	Hollowway	Post medieval	4	Poor	Medium	7	5	5	5	32
7	SE 6050 7300 centre	Race course	Post medieval	8	Poor	High	5	7	8	5	42
8	SE 6060 7299 - 6062 7300	Entrenchment	Prehistoric	7	Poor	High	8	6	8	8	47
9	SE 6061 7296 - 6064 7297	Entrenchment	Prehistoric	7	Poor	High	8	6	8	8	47
10	SE 60617294 - 6065 7296	Entrenchment	Prehistoric	7	Poor	High	8	6	8	8	47
11	SE 6063 7291 - 6066 7292	Entrenchment	Prehistoric	7	Poor	High	8	6	8	8	47

Key  
 High = 9  
 Average = 6  
 Medium = 5  
 Poor = 2  
 Low = 1