

# **Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group**

## **The Swaledale Big Dig Project**

### **Grinton-Fremington Dyke excavation**

#### **Project Design**

##### **1. General Introduction**

The Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology group (SWAAG) is a group of enthusiasts in the northernmost Yorkshire dales who contribute to the knowledge base of the history of our dales through archaeological and related activity.

SWAAG, affiliated with the Swaledale Museum, began work in July 2009 under the guidance and supervision of Tim Laurie FSA, the leading expert on prehistoric landscapes in the area.

SWAAG's work covers archaeology, landscape and geophysical surveying, geology and local botany, including study of a wide range of sites from prehistoric through Romano-British to medieval and lead mining. SWAAG maintains a comprehensive website including a database of our archaeological reports, Tim Laurie's publications, photographs and records of botanical and geological interest and general Historic Environment Records.

##### **2. Introduction to the Swaledale Big Dig Project**

Following a LEADER-funded project in 2011-2012 to explore local topics of interest and develop members' excavation and surveying skills under supervision, SWAAG was awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £76,000 in autumn 2013 for the Swaledale Big Dig project to run to April 2016.

The Swaledale Big Dig engages the communities of the civil parishes of Grinton and Reeth in Swaledale in uncovering the history of three villages, Grinton, Fremington and Reeth. It involves local people, parish councils, schools and community groups in a process of discovery leading to digging a large number of test pits by members of the public overseen by the local archaeology group, SWAAG, and advised by colleagues at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA).

Uncovering, interpreting and recording the past history of the settlements is a primary objective. A lasting legacy of skills is vital. External professional oversight will be kept at the level necessary to achieve the project objectives whilst encouraging skills development within the community.

Phase One of the Project provided training in a wide range of conventional archaeological techniques including initial documentary research, field walking, geophysics and excavation so to provide an enduring skills base.

Phase Two has involved the application of these techniques in the field.

Phase Three will involve widespread dissemination of the results of the project through local meetings, a written report which will be published by SWAAG, brochures and in the local media.

### **3. Grinton-Fremington Dyke excavation**

#### **Background and context**

1 Erosion around a breach in the Southern section of the westernmost of the Grinton Fremington dykes 220 yds W of Dyke House, Grinton, Yorkshire Dales National Park . SE03639822 provides the opportunity to test through excavation whether datable material can throw some light on the date of the dyke.

This dyke, SM number 1004043, N Yorks 1212 forms part of a group of dykes in the Grinton-Fremington area of Swaledale. Most of those on the south side of the River Swale are scheduled, those on the north are afforded no such protection.

2 Various theories have been put forward as to the date of the dykes and as to whether they form part of a coherent system or were constructed at different dates. Fleming (1994) argued that they were the boundaries of an early medieval polity in Upper Swaledale but recently Ainsworth et al (2015) have discounted this theory and suggested that this dyke, and perhaps the other cross-valley dykes are late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age in date. Investigation by SWAAG of a stream erosion break through the dyke on Harkerside provided C14 dates which suggest a pre-Norman Conquest date (ASDU 2013).

3 Agricultural vehicle use of a gap immediately north of the unclassified Grinton – Scabba Wath road, has created sections through the embankment. Increased vehicle and animal use, necessary because of the very narrow nature of sections of the walled road, is likely to poach and erode the area which together with natural erosion and slope stabilisation will result in further loss of the embankment.



North section across bank. SE03639822. IMG\_0908 7/7/2015



South section across bank SE03639822. IMG\_0901 7/7/2015

#### 4. Aims and Objectives

SMC consent has been granted for this project (Historic England letter of 9 September to Peter Denison-Edson, SWAAG, ref. S00116152).

#### **4.1 Summary aims and objectives**

The primary research aim is to attempt to secure dating evidence for the dyke.

The research objectives are to:

1. Excavate trenches to produce a clean surface through to the base of the dyke
2. Take samples of environmental material
3. Take a core sample from the ditch.

#### **4.2. Aims and objectives background and detail**

It is therefore proposed to archaeologically clean and record the exposed sections of the bank as indicated and to excavate narrow trenches beneath them to the level of the adjacent field to the west. These trenches which would be dug by hand would be no more than 0.5m wide and 0.4m deep.

**4.3** This work will increase our understanding of the construction of the bank and may reveal a pre-embankment ground surface. Should dateable material be exposed this will be scientifically sampled and dated. SWAAG has earmarked funding for such dating from its HLF funded Big Dig project due to be financially completed by April 2016 which, with the limited possible limited weather window, gives an additional degree of urgency to the proposed work.

4.4 The proposed work does not include extending the trenches across the ditch to the east to provide a full exposure of both the bank and ditch. This would be a rather more intrusive approach, rendered technically difficult because of the unconsolidated nature of the deposits in the causeway. It would require mechanical removal, storage and reinstatement of the recent causeway material in order to ensure that any sections across the ditch could be properly and safely investigated. The proposed work would be designed to ensure that it would not prejudice further excavation should that be deemed appropriate as a pure research exercise and resources and consents acquired. Although the extent of silting - or water erosion - in the ditch is not known previous activity in this location means that there may be a higher likelihood of historic damage to, and loss of, "primary" deposits although conversely its proximity to the road might have provided some protection against erosion.

6 The existing gateposts are not suitable as a permanent stock barrier so the opportunity may be taken to use the cut of the extended trenches to install new gateposts.

7. Reinstatement will be under the supervision of the YDNPA's Countryside Archaeological Adviser and may include the use of soil blankets or turves to stabilise the embankment edge.

## **5. Project team**

The excavation and recording work will be undertaken by suitably experienced SWAAG members working to ClfA standards under the supervision of a professional archaeologist, Miles Johnson, Countryside Archaeological Adviser with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Post excavation and writing up would be led by SWAAG with YDNPA providing editorial support and advice.

## **6. Methods statement**

### 6.1 General

Three days are to be allowed for the excavation.

Fieldwork will be undertaken by volunteers from SWAAG.

Excavation will be by hand.

Digger numbers will be influenced by the constrained site and affected by the number of SWAAG volunteers available.

All excavated material will be sieved and spoil stored outside the SM area in the adjacent field.

Should suitable deposits be identified, samples will be taken for environmental analysis and radio-carbon dating.

Parking will be in the adjacent field.

A tent and portable toilet will be provided in the adjacent field outside the SM boundary

6.2 All works will be carried out with and with due regard to the guidance given in the IfA Standards and Guidance for Archaeologists (IfA 2008, updated 2013) and the conditions imposed by the Scheduled Monument Consent approval letter dated 6 September 2015.

6.3 Any significant archaeological deposits will be recorded as follows:

Drawings will be produced of the archaeological features encountered, for sections these will normally be at a scale of 1:10, and plans at a scale of 1:20 unless other scales would be more suitable. An appropriate height above sea level derived from an Ordnance Survey datum will be given on all drawings.

All features will be recorded photographically incorporating appropriate scales

Written records will be made using a series of pre-printed pro formas.

Where possible the site will be levelled to the Ordnance Survey datum.

6.4 The Project Design incorporates a degree of flexibility; decisions will be taken according to factors such as ongoing results, numbers of volunteers attending, and the weather.

6.5 Ground will be reinstated at the completion of the excavation.

6.6 Finds will be processed, assessed and conserved as set out in the Management of Archaeological Projects (2nd Edition, 1991). All finds and samples will be assessed regarding potential for further analysis and conservation/storage requirements. Any finds deemed not worthy of retention will be discarded at this point. All retained finds will be cleaned, marked, photographed and/or drawn, and bagged for long-term storage.

6.7 Specialists will be called on, as necessary, to examine, process and assess excavated finds and samples.

6.8 Finds will remain the property of landowners but permission will be sought for significant finds to remain with the Project archive.

6.9 Should finds be judged to be of national importance by the supervising professional archaeologists, the opinion of those archaeologists will be taken as to protection and treatment.

6.10 Treasure. If material is recovered that is considered to be covered by the Treasure Act of 1996, all necessary information required by the Act (i.e. finder, location, material, date of find, associated items etc.) will be reported to the Coroner within 24 hours. The Portable Antiquities Scheme will also be advised.

6.11 Human Remains. While it is considered unlikely that human remains will be found, all such remains will be fully recorded, excavated and removed from the site subject to compliance with the appropriate legislation and guidance licence. A Ministry of Justice Licence for the removal of human remains would be required should it be considered necessary. All excavation and post-excavation would be in accordance with the standards set out in IfA Technical Paper 13 Excavation and post-excavation treatment of cremated and inhumed remains (McKinley and Roberts 1993).

## **7 Reports and Archive**

7.1 All written material will be preserved in hard-copy and digital formats. The full results will be preserved and publicly accessible on the YDNPA Historic Environment Record (HER) and on the SWAAG website, and will be backed-up in the British Library digital archive.

7.2 The project archive will be prepared to the standard specified in Appendix 3 of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990). The archive will include all of the project records, to include all paper, plastic and digital media will be assembled in

accordance with the standards set by the National Archaeological Record. The archive will include

- Copies of all relevant documentary material
- Bibliographic, cartographic and pictorial sources
- All survey control information
- All digital survey data
- Final field and ink drawings
- All digital photographs in an appropriate format
- All written accounts and gazetteers
- All documentary material including Project Management records.

7.3 A report on the results of the works will be produced, which will cover the following broad headings

Introduction

Background

Location

Topography and Land Use

Aims and Objectives

Methodology

Results

Finds

Discussion and Conclusions

References

Recommendations for further archaeological work, if applicable, will be set out in the conclusions, but any such follow-up work will not form part of this project.

7.4 Archaeological finds will be conserved as appropriate and lodged together with the project archive in the Swaledale Museum, Reeth or the Dales Countryside Museum.

7.5 All digital material will be backed up in the British Library digital archive via the SWAAG website.

7.6 SWAAG is registered with the Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations project (OASIS). An OASIS form will be completed for this project. It is understood that after

validation by the HER, and with the agreement of all the parties concerned, the project report may become a publicly accessible document.

7.7 All copyrights will rest with SWAAG unless otherwise indicated.

## **8. Project review**

The project will be subject to continuous review by the supervising archaeologist on site.

## **9. Land ownership**

We have agreement from the landowners.

## **10. Health and safety and insurance**

Full consideration will be given to matters of health and safety throughout this project.

SWAAG has Health and Safety and Child Safeguarding and Protection Policies which can be consulted on the SWAAG website.

All aspects of the excavation are covered by SWAAG's comprehensive insurance policy.

## **11. Maps and photographs**

To be sent separately

## **12. Bibliography**

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