



ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERIM REPORT:

HICKLETON HALL PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, HICKLETON, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

NGR SE 4822605154

Site Code: BROD11HIP

OASIS Reference Number: elmetarc1-145603



Report prepared for The Brodsworth Community Archaeology Project
By Elmet Archaeological Services Ltd
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Hickleton Hall POW Camp, Hickleton, S. Yorks DN5 7BA

Interim Report

Summary

In August 2011 an excavation was carried out to assess the extent and form of the archaeological remains of the Hickleton Prisoner of War camp (hereafter 'the Site') this work was carried out during the Brodsworth Community Archaeological Project season of the same year.

Four discrete trenches were opened which revealed the archaeological remains of the various structural aspects of the Prisoner of War camp that existed in the grounds of Hickleton Hall between the years 1940 and 1948.

This interim report details the findings of the excavation and gives details of potential further work to be carried out on the Site.

Hickleton Hall POW Camp, Hickleton, S. Yorks

Interim Report

Acknowledgements

The work was carried out in tandem with the Brodsworth Community Archaeology Project and therefore thanks go to Mr Colin Merrony and Dr Helen Fenwick in this regard.

Archaeological students from Sheffield, Hull and Cardiff helped to excavate the Prisoner of War camp remains and thanks goes to each and everyone of them for their hard work.

Especial thanks to Jim Rylatt whose eye for military base camps set us on this path.

Hickleton Hall POW Camp, Hickleton, S. Yorks

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Project Background

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The Site, Location and Geology

The Site is located at NGR SE4822605154 and is in the grounds to the south of Hickleton Hall and is bound by Hickleton Road to the east and pasture land to the west and south. The current land use is of cattle grazing and the Site is partially covered in trees. The underlying geology of the site is magnesium limestone.

Archaeological and Historical Background

A Prisoner of War camp was created at Hickleton Hall after the use of the Hall by I Corps of the British Army. German Prisoners were initially resident at the camp, who were then replaced with Italian soldiers, then finally displaced persons from Poland and Ukraine. The camp finally closed in 1948 with only the concrete bases of huts remaining (Elmet Archaeology 2013).

No previous work on this site has been carried out although a geophysical survey was conducted at the same time as the archaeological excavations as part of a wider training scheme for undergraduate students and volunteers.

Aims and Scope of the Works

The work carried out on the Site intended to assess the form and function of the underlying archaeological remains of the Prisoner of War camp. This was to be carried out by a geophysical survey of a portion of the site alongside a series of archaeological test pits to identify and assess any geophysical anomalies that were identified by the survey.

Methodology

The top soil and overburden in each trench was excavated by hand until the uppermost archaeological remains were identified or the underlying natural geology was reached. Each archaeological context was sequentially numbered and a written pro forma completed for each context. This formed part of the student training and was controlled by an archaeological supervisor in every case.

Trenches were fully recorded by digital, colour slide and black and white photography and rendered as archaeological scale drawings. Again, these activities were carried out by students under close supervision.

Excavation Results

General

The four test pits were excavated in order to reveal the possible remains of the Hickleton Hall Prisoner of War Camp huts, alongside this investigation several of remains of hut bases were also examined to identify and record the remains. Whilst the Test Pits revealed little evidence for archaeological remains of the camp, several of the hut bases investigated gave an insight into the usage of the huts. These findings are explained in detail below.

Test Pit 1

Test Pit 1 was initially opened as a 2m by 2m square which was later increased to the north by a further meter, making it 2m by 3m. The natural **1009** was compact mid orangey brown sandy clay encountered at a level of 0.25m below the modern ground surface. This was the same material as **1008**, which was numbered in the original 2m x 2m test pit. Above the natural was the two layers **1005** and **1007**, both compact mid brownish yellow loamy sand subsoil. These layers were numbered as the trench was extended and lay approximately 0.20m below the modern ground surface.

A possible shallow tree bole was noted, cut into the layer **1005**. This measured 0.80m by 0.70m with a roughly circular shape in plan and a depth of .10m. The deposit **1004** was compact light whitish yellow silty sand with limestone pebbles and cobble inclusions. The layer **1004** was interpreted as subsoil which contained some glass and red brick fragments.

The subsoil **1003** was compact light greenish grey silty sand with evidence of tree roots and charcoal flecks. Overlying the Test Pit was **1001** and **1002** both topsoil deposits which were given separate numbers as the trench was extended. Both were loose and friable mid greyish brown loam with limestone blocks and frequent roots.

Test Pit 1 revealed no evidence for the prisoner of war camp and appeared to be an area of natural foliage and soil deposition (see Fig.1).

Test Pit 2

A natural fissure ran through **Test Pit 2** numbered as **2007** and **2008** which had a maximum depth of approximately 0.60m. The lowest fill; **2011**, consisted of medium sized limestone blocks which could not be excavated further due to the narrowness of the slope.

The natural fissure **2007=2008** was overlain by the subsoil layer **2006** which was cemented orangey brown clayey sand and contained an 18th Century pot handle.

Further natural layers were identified as **2004** and **2005**, both of which consisted of undulated natural limestone which were overlain by the subsoil **2003**. This was similar to **2006**, orangey brown clayey sand with oyster shell and medieval pottery within the matrix.

The subsoil **2002** was mid greyish brown sandy silt overlain by the modern topsoil **2001** dark greyish brown sandy silt.

No archaeological remains relating to the Prisoner of War camp were identified in **Test Pit 2**.

Test Pit 3

The earliest deposit identified in **Test Pit 3** was **3003** which was dark blackish brown sandy clay. This was cut by a water pipe, running north east to south west and towards the area identified as the Prisoner of War camp shower block. The test pit was not excavated below this level.

The subsoil **3002** was loose orangey brown clayey sand containing some pottery and charcoal, above this deposit was the topsoil **3001**, a friable dark greyish brown clayey sand with charcoal inclusions.

Test Pit 3 had the remains of a water pipe which ran directly to the Prisoner of War camp's shower facilities, which was identified on the geophysical survey.

Test Pit 4

The underlying natural in **Test Pit 4** consisted of limestone bedrock **4005=4006**, overlaying this was the dumped limestone layer **4004**, possibly a remnant of the landscaping of the bank which this test pit was intended to investigate.

The subsoil layer **4003** was light greyish yellow silty sand overlain by **4002** compact mid orangey brown silty clay subsoil containing 18th and 19th Century pottery. The topsoil **4001** was friable mid greyish brown sandy clay with occasional red brick fragment inclusions.

Prisoner of War Hut Bases

An investigation into the remains of the POW camp hut bases in the area revealed that there were substantial remains of the bases remaining in the area (See Fig. 2).

There were 4 hut bases along the roadside wall, all of the same size. These appeared to be a standard construction type with slots for wooden posts in the concrete bases which would support further building. These were not a particularly regimented pattern but ran along the roadside wall at various distances from the road which was uncovered. The road ran from the road across the main Hall entrance, along the parkland area to eventually meet with the Hickleton – Barnburgh road. This feature was excavated at two locations, with the southern slot demonstrated that it appeared to widen at that point. The more northerly slot was less wide but was truncated by the water pipe feeding the showers, running away into the northeast corner of the site and clearly visible on the geophysics. Stratigraphically the road was earlier than the water pipe which was laid across the park to serve the camp showers and is clearly seen in OS maps of the site.

A base was identified as a shower block through the existence of a central runnel for water to be carried away into a drain at the southwest end. The drain was constructed of re-used bricks from the local area and was structurally irregular, suggesting that it had been constructed in an ad-hoc manner. Fixed within the drain was a pipe heading off to the southwest which would be for waste water. This pipe is identifiable on the geophysical survey as a pale line running for some distance. The possible construction of this shower block was wooden with metal sheets attached similar to a Nissen Hut. A large metal attaching pin usually used to fasten metal and wood together was recovered during the work which adds weight to this interpretation. Other finds from this area included a rubber plimsoll base.

The larger base – Block 3 (situated to the south of **Test Pit 2**) was of a different construction to the four bases along the roadside wall. It also had clear access points and pathways leading into it. There were indentations in the concrete floor showing a partition of the block into two separate rooms with possible shelving or similar furniture associated with the internal wall structure. A feature on the north side may have been a chimney stack but is as yet unclear. Finds in this location included pottery, electrical fittings for internal electricity and small fragments of metal.

The other large base – Block 2, was to the west and was seen clearly on the geophysical survey. This base had indentations into the concrete floor which showed the partition of the building into three distinct areas, with doorways between each. A pathway was located at the southeast corner of the building corresponding with the footplate of a doorway. This path lead around the base

of the tree nearby showing the area was wooded at the time of construction (which is also apparent by the age of the trees in the parkland). A large amount of brick material was found which would have been used within the construction of the block. It was of a different construction style to the other blocks. Electrical fittings were discovered along with glass objects and pottery. Another base matching the four on the roadside wall was found on the lower ground down the bank from **Test Pit 4**.

During the 2011 season three further hut bases were identified which will require examination to assess the form and function of these structures.

Discussion and Conclusions

The excavations at Hickleton Hall prisoner of War Camp revealed the archaeological remains of several camp hut bases which identified their possible usage. The test pits which were excavated to identify the geophysical anomalies revealed very little relating to the camp, with the exception of a water main which ran to the shower block, identified in **Test Pit 3**.

There is scope for further work at the Prisoner of War camp to identify and assess the state of preservation of the underlying archaeological remains. This will also include an attempt to identify the extent of the camp's layout and footprint.

Archive and Copyright

Archive

The Archive will be deposited with Sheffield University as part of the Brodsworth Project in due course. This archive will then be dealt with under the terms of the 5 year plan for Brodsworth held by SYAS and written by Dr Helen Fenwick of the University of Hull and Mr Colin Merrony of the University of Sheffield.

The Site archive will be prepared in line with United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (2001), Museums and Galleries Commission (1992), English Heritage (2006) guidelines and the requirements of the local museums service.

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References

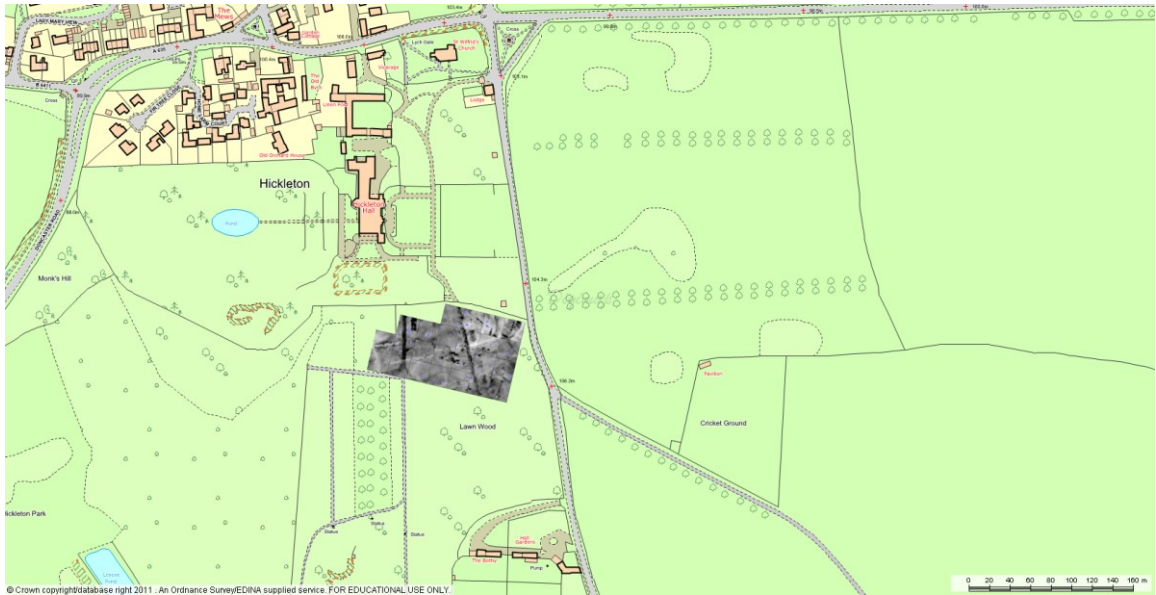
Elmet Archaeology, 2012: *Unpublished History of Hickleton Hall Prisoner of War Camp*

Appendix

Figures



Figure 1: Test Pit 1 East Facing Section



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Figure 2: Geophysical Survey Data