

INTO THE AFTERNOON...

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It is almost time to go home, and I have found something else to do! I finished reassessing my data (for now) and am now writing a new chapter, which I only decided to do about a month ago. But fear not! Most of the groundwork is done and it is now a case of bringing it all together under one heading. Although I am studying the wider landscape of Broxmouth, I am also incorporating detailed site analysis into this. How does this work I hear you ask? Well, I'm still not sure! There are certain aspects of a site assemblage that can tell you about the wider landscape – the pollen and charcoal evidence for example can tell us about plants grown in the area but can also tell us if crops were processed on site and masses of charcoal can indicate in situ burning. I am not an expert in any of these fields so needless to say I am making use of published reports! However we unfortunately don't have evidence for this at our site so I am examining the sequence of ditch deposits and episodes of recutting and maintenance. Still don't get it? Well there are formulas out there for working out how many man hours it would have taken to dig out a ditch and whilst we can never know the exact number of people or days, we can compare this relatively to other sites. For example at Broxmouth, there is evidence to suggest that some parts of the ditch only reached 1.5m deep whereas near the south west entrance, the ditches reached 3m deep. This suggests the extra material was used to heighten the ramparts and combined with the rather impressive entrance structures, this suggests that there was a deliberate attempt to monumentalise the entrance. This raises questions over how many people would have been required to do this, as well as the amount of wood to create the entrance structures. Examining the nature of the ditch deposits also reveals whether maintenance was a regular thing or more infrequent. Consequently, one can then speculate over the function of the site during a particular episode of its biography. After all, this site was a magnet for activity over a thousand years and did not serve just one function during this time.

So all of this is being compared to other excavated sites to look at resource use and relative frequency of creation and maintenance at these sites. An added dimension is the visual impact these sites would have had and not just the finished product, but the spectacle of seeing so many people working at a site. So needless to say, lots to think about! And I am running out of words...

The project will be published as a monograph but all of this is not intended to be an end to this work. I hope that people will utilise the archive to carry out their own research and maybe prove (or disprove) some of my theories! The archive will be preserved for future generations to explore and utilise in their own way and it will be a valuable research resource. Archaeology doesn't stop once the trowel is put down and it is important to disseminate archaeology whether its a published report or an online resource so that people can access and enjoy their heritage and so fellow archaeologists in the future can utilise it for their research. Working on a post-excavation project has made me appreciate the process and hard work that continues even after digging tools are downed, although I am itching to get back out in the field again!

