

A DAY AT THE BRODSWORTH PROJECT 2015

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A SHORT INTRODUCTION

The Brodsworth Project is a landscape archaeology project that focuses on the parish of Brodsworth and the seven parishes which surround it. The extensive land in this area has not been widely developed, nor has it been damaged by the quarrying or coal mining activities which have been widespread in South Yorkshire. The project began in 2001 when Colin Merrony of the University of Sheffield identified it as one of the few locations in South Yorkshire untouched by heavy industry. The University of Hull began working with the project in 2004, and alongside Sheffield developed the project more widely into an annual fieldschool, training undergraduates and engaging the local community. Elmet Archaeological Services Ltd, having formed during one such fieldschool in 2009 began hosting Elmet@Brodsworth in 2011. This extended the fieldschool to a six week period with the first two weeks providing access and training to community participants.

A range of archaeological work has been carried out in the area showing a potentially continuous human/landscape interaction from the prehistoric period, right through to the present day. This makes it both an ideal research area and site for a teaching fieldschool.



The main aims of the project are to investigate the settlement patterns of the area, including the transition between the prehistoric and Romano-British periods, as well looking into the origins of the Medieval villages in the area. The project also studies the development of the landscapes surrounding Brodsworth, Cusworth, Hickleton, Hooton Pagnall and High Melton which had a significant effect on the landscape and its inhabitants. The project utilises a range of archaeological techniques, including excavation, geophysics and other survey methods, fieldwalking and post-excavation processing. In addition to university students from Hull, Sheffield and Cardiff universities, local school children, communities, archaeological societies and many other groups have been involved in the Brodsworth Project.

Elmet's role from 2011 has been to provide archaeological training to as many people as possible, including students on the part time University of Hull BA programme, and groups such as the Oaks group and WEA Digability groups.



At Elmet we work closely with communities to help them explore archaeology through project work and engagement activities, exploring a wide range of archaeological sites, time periods and themes. We provide both social and academic training and education for everyone within the community through the use of educational and recreational archaeological and historical studies. We believe in the ability of archaeology, history and heritage to act as major catalysts in social cohesion and as a vehicle to impart skills and experiences which are worthwhile in the modern world.

We have worked at various sites within the Brodsworth Project study area in past years, including prehistoric enclosures and burials at Bilham and Marr and a prisoner of war camp in the grounds of Hickleton Hall. This year we were working very close to the site of Brodsworth Hall itself.

THE 2015 SEASON

This year we are looking at a field to the south of Brodsworth Hall, identified as potentially containing prehistoric field systems. Earlier in the week we marked out a grid of 20m x 20m squares covering 1.6 hectares and carried out a resistivity survey across the site. The results of this survey identified areas of interest, which then became the basis for a targeted test pitting strategy using 1m x 1m test pits. This resistivity survey will be continued throughout the fieldschool.



The whole of the study area is demarcated into identifiable areas, each area having a code to distinguish them. Our location had previously had 3 test pits nearby, therefore we began our numbering at Test pit 4 which was placed to investigate an area of high resistance in grid square A2. Test pit 5 was located on area of very high resistance on the boundary between A3 and A4. Test pit 6 were located to examine linear features running through the boundary between A4 and A5 and finally test pit 7 was sited at a larger area of high resistance. Work on the test pits has been carried out throughout the week, and they were at varying stages of both excavation and recording by the time we reached the Day of Archaeology.

OUR DAY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The day started with people dividing into teams to work on each test pit.

Test pit 4 had begun to uncover a layer of intermixed limestone the previous day, which now needed removing to uncover what we suspected would be the natural limestone bedrock as seen in other test pits on the site. Russ and Jo volunteered to jump in and have a go!



Test pit 5 was ready to be drawn, having been photographed the day before. As the test pits were 1m x 1m it was a perfect chance to teach everyone how to draw a wraparound section. After being shown how to put the drawing together, as well as drawing techniques and conventions needed, Harvey and Wayne quickly started taking measurements and translating them into a detailed section drawing. These drawings form an essential part of our record of the site.





Test pit 6 needed cleaning back using trowels and brushes on the limestone natural before it could be photographed and drawn. Martin and Helen volunteered, and the test pit was ready for photographing before break. We quickly discovered that everyone on site was too short to get a good plan shot of the test pit, but luckily, Bronwen didn't mind getting a piggy back so we could get a good photo! This was a great help as the aerial photo ladders were back at base.



Bronwen was also busy in test pit 7, cleaning back another clay and limestone context with the help of Jake (who Bronwen likes to call Ryan 2). This was so that once it had been cleared, we could determine what to do next in the test pit. To the joy of both our volunteers on test pit 7, it all needed mattocking out!



Lunchtime brought the much loved tradition of fish and chip Friday, and there was much rejoicing!



Fuelled on copious amounts of chips and tea, in the afternoon everyone learnt how to use an auto set, or dumpy level. We use this to record the height of features and section lines relative to Ordnance Datum levels in order to give our drawings more accurate location and scale information, creating a 3D aspect to an otherwise 2D recording technique.



After photographing in the morning, test pit 6 was ready for drawing. Martin and Helen got started on the second wrap around section of the day, setting it up and starting to record points.



Over in test pit 5, Harvey and Wayne were finishing up their drawing of the sections, and were now able to add in a level point for their string line, completing the record. Once this section drawing is complete, we will be able to draw a plan section using the offset method to record the base of the test pit, as well as more level points, resulting in a more complete record of the excavation and results found in the test pit.



Back at test pit 4, the limestone and clay context had been cleaned back, enabling us to decide what to do next. From the way that this context appears in multiple test pits across site, the red clay which runs closely in between the limestone, as well as how the size of the limestone pieces increases the closer they get to the centre of the paleo channel that runs through the site, we think it could possibly be the remnants of glacial till, which would be swept along and left behind by the movement of a glacier.



At the end of the day we narrowly missed the rain which swept across South Yorkshire shortly after we put our fences back up and carted all of our equipment back to base. We hope that everyone had as good a day of archaeology as we did, especially Bronwyn below with her happy archaeology face!

If you would like to read more about the Brodsworth Project 2015, you can read updates on our blog [here](#), and take a look at the [University of Sheffield](#) and [University of Hull](#) project pages.

