An Archaeological Survey of Hartington Moor on the Wallington Hall Estate, near Morpeth, Northumberland

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'the eye soon finds that it has little more to rest upon than a broad and brown expanse of dreary moors'

Hodgson (1827, 83) of the view from Steng Cross

SUMMARY

An area of unimproved heathland on Hartington Moor, situated some 250 m above OD on the higher western limit of the Wansbeck drainage basin, was chosen for archaeological survey as a piece of landscape intermediate between the higher uplands to the west and north and the lower claylands of central and coastal Northumberland. The aim of the survey was to assess the extent and nature of the upstanding archaeology and associated patterns of land-use. The survey methodology combined field-walking with detailed planning of important monuments and basic documentary research. Results indicated a range of settlement nuclei and associated landuse across the moorland, the whole forming an archaeological landscape, with a sequence of sites dating from the Neolithic onwards, including quite intensive occupation of the area in the Bronze Age and Iron Age through to the Roman period. A change in the pattern of settlement seems to have then taken place, with a decrease in the nuclei represented in the archaeology, and a shift from mixed agriculture to pasture. In all, 170 features were recorded over an area of c. 3 sq. kms.

INTRODUCTION

Between 1986 and 1996, an archaeological survey was conducted on Hartington Moor, to the south and east of Harwood Head on what is now National Trust land. The area lies within the estate of Wallington Hall, 22 km to the west of Morpeth, Northumberland. The study area consists largely of unimproved moorland within the wider extent of Hartington Moor (fig. 1). It was selected with considerable care to meet both research and educational purposes, with the sub-text of providing more information on the archaeology of the Moor for use by the National Trust in its land management programme (now supplemented by Gates 2002).

The research objective was to survey an area intermediate in location and altitude between the archaeologically relatively well-known uplands of the northern Pennines and Cheviots, and the more intensively farmed, and airphotographically more sensitive, lands of central and coastal Northumberland. Pragmatically, such an area also had to be small enough not to invite failure in completing ground coverage with initially inexperienced students. It also had to be reasonably accessible from Newcastle to allow undergraduate participation on a daily basis, with enough archaeological potential to provide students with a range of archaeological field experience. The Harwood area seemed to meet these criteria and, in 1986-87, was the scene of the annual 'fieldwork week' for first-year archaeology students at Newcastle University.

Though not 'marginal' at a regional level or in the sense enjoyed by the lands of the eastern Pennines and much of the Cheviots (*cf.* Young and Simmonds 1995), the Harwood area is markedly peripheral in local terms. It falls into





Fig. 1 Location map of Hartington Moor, Northumberland.

the further western reaches of Morpeth Deanery and the ecclesiastical parish of Hartburn, and our western boundary was the eastern boundary of both the Liberty of Redesdale and Elsdon parish (Hodgson 1827, 2). Hartington Moor is situated 4 km to the west of Hartington Hall and is roughly equidistant at 5-10 km from the villages of Cambo, Kirkwhelpington and Elsdon. Isolated farms lie at Catcherside and Fairnley, respectively on the southern and eastern edges of the study area (fig. 2). There is also a small steading at Harwood Head (NY 973903). Harwood Forest, a large Forestry Commission plantation, stretching towards the Simonside Hills to the north, likewise contains no nearby settlement except Harwood, now a forestry hamlet. In general these places represent settlement documented in the 13th–14th century (Hodgson 1827, 268-288). Only one archaeological site (the 'Earthwork' at NY 986895; fig. 13) appeared in our study area on the OS 1:50000 map (Sheet 81, 1980). Our survey recorded 170 artificial features, mostly minor; but at least 12 were previously unrecorded 'archaeological sites', mainly habitational, funereal or agricultural, and this account is primarily about them (fig. 3; Appendix).

The study area measured 2–3 km in length from west to east, and 1–2 km from north to south; its area was of c. 3 sq. km. Its northern edge was formed by the straight 'Enclosure' road eastwards from Steng Cross/Winter's Gibbet (NY 962907) to the Gallows Hill junction with the B6342; its eastern boundary was demarcated by a modern tree-belt 0.6 km west of Fairnley, stopping at the boundary between Alnwick and Morpeth Districts which we used as our southern boundary westwards to the Elsdon parish boundary. Our western boundary followed that north westwards back to Steng Cross on the watershed between the Wansbeck valley and Redesdale to the west (317 m above OD). From there the Moor generally slopes east and south towards the lower pasture of the Wallington estate, shaped into an undulating landscape by west-east tributaries of the River Hart, the Harwood, Birky, Ottercops and Fairnley Burns. The

whole overlies boulder clay drift geology, with deposits of peat on the higher reaches of the Moor, and alluvium along the line of the Birky and Hart Burns (Robson 1980; Soil Survey and Land Research 1989). The land, always tending to hold water and decidedly boggy in the burns' bottoms, is currently a mixture of rough grassland and moorland, given over exclusively to cattle and sheep grazing. This traditional, non-intensive land-use is a regime deliberately maintained by the National Trust. In the 1990s the high headage of livestock in places broke up the sward, impounding water and creating erosion gullies. Nevertheless, the long-term grazing has led to the well-preserved nature of archaeological features on the moorland (though that quality was anticipated, not known, when the area was chosen for survey).

For the purposes of contextual clarity, we have extended our purview a little beyond the study area, to include some of the important nearby sites already recorded by the OS and/or in the Northumberland SMR: to the north as far as Steng Moss and Manside Cross and enclosed settlement (NY 984920) in Harwood Forest (itself almost impenetrable for archaeological purposes), to the south to the Catcherside area and west to Tod Crag (NY 973891) and on to Ottercops Moss.

Although evidence from field survey in Northumberland has been the subject of detailed study (Jobey passim; locally, since our survey started: Davies 1995, 2004; Davies and Davidson 1990; Sellars and Prothero 1992), work has tended to concentrate either on the hinterland of the Roman frontier along Hadrian's Wall, or in looking at settlement patterns further to the north in the Cheviots or Milfield Basin (Topping 1981, 1993; Waddington 1999). The Northumberland National Park has also been the subject of extensive survey and excavation (Frodsham 2004). Initially conscious of the long tradition of individualistic Northumbrian archaeological fieldwork, our study of a small, discrete landscape block, situated north of the Wall and of no obvious distinction, now can but very modestly indeed complement the many extensive surveys of the county's archaeology carried out since we





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Fig. 3 The main manmade features on Hartington Moor, plotted from archaeological field-walking and air photographs.

began. Our initial framework then, defined by Chapman and Mytum (1983), Miket and Burgess (1984) and Spratt and Burgess (1985), has now been transformed into the overviews of Beckensall (2003) and Frodsham (2004).

Our evidence, however, is not solely confined to cultural matters: as with truly upland areas, it includes indications of environmental changes that have transformed both the upland and its lower reaches since the Neolithic (cf. Burgess 1985; Campbell et al 2002). The study area is fortunate in having the classic palynological site of Steng Moss immediately beyond its north-western corner. There data from core samples indicate a depletion in large tree species from the Late Bronze Age onwards, and an increase in sphagnum bog (Turner 1983, 22). This evidence has subsequently been placed within a broader context of environmental change represented in pollen samples taken from all over Northumberland, some of which include data from historic periods (Bell and Dark 1998; Manning *et al.* 1997; Tipping 1998, 43; Young and Simmonds 1995, 8). The Steng Moss results gave a palaeoenvironmental context for our fieldwork and their enhancement now provides a broad and long-term environmental framework for our interpretation of settlement and land use on Hartington Moor (now also placed in a broad regional context: Brooks *et al* 2002).

THE FIELDWORK 1986–1996

Fieldwork was carried out intermittently over 15 years, beginning in 1986 (Fowler 1987–89). Reconnaissance was followed by a more systematic fieldwalking of the area, recording the location and nature of all archaeological sites and other manmade features. The whole of the study area was mass-walked during that



Fig. 4 *Air photograph of a curvilinear enclosure and associated features looking north to Harwood Head farmstead. (cf. fig. 9; photo: Tim Gates).*

period, some of it twice. While the reconnaissance was executed in a systematic fashion, some limitations existed in the recording of evidence. All bar one or two of the most important sites, including cord rig, were discovered during 1986–87, even if elucidation and a more detailed record came later. A small number of important earthworks were also planned in detail at a large scale by plane table (for the technique, *see* Hogg 1980) but it was only by pulling together results from the initial group-survey that an appreciation of the quantity and quality of the archaeology across this landscape became possible. This appreciation was then enhanced in March 1989, when Tim Gates conducted several flights over the area, resulting in air photographic records of the main sites. In preparing this paper, we have enjoyed access to further photography he undertook for the National Trust in 2002 and been able to take into account the relevant parts of his associated report (Gates 2002; figs 4–6).

Despite occasional forays by one of us (PJF), systematic work stalled until a second phase of fieldwork, instigated by KDS' undergraduate

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Fig. 5 South of Ottercops Burn (centre top to bottom left) and looking west towards the survey's western boundary (top left), this air photograph shows a palimpsest embracing at least two thousand years, including a settlement area with a rectilinear enclosure and hutcircles (left centre; fig. 12), with apparently associated cord-rig on its north, another settlement area with Romano-British and post-medieval structures on a rock outcrop (lower centre; fig. 15), part of a post-medieval walled enclosure (bottom left) and overall, numerous other, mainly post-medieval or undated, features including boundary dykes, walls, banks, ditches and fence-lines, cairns, large enclosures, ridge-and-furrow, tracks, and drainage ditches, and erosion gullies. (Photo: Tim Gates).

needs (Strutt 1996), was carried out by the authors from the summer of 1995 until the end of 1996. Three further monuments were planned using a plane table, and air photographic evidence was transcribed from the Ordnance Survey archive held at the University

of Newcastle. This provided a cartographic synthesis of the archaeological evidence; other sources were then used to create an overall cartographic statement of Hartington Moor's archaeology. It was complemented by a comprehensive research of records and documents

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Fig. 6 Air photograph looking west of the concentric ring enclosure (lower right; fig. 13) on the north side of Birky Burn (top right-bottom left), with (left centre) the edge of an unenclosed hut circle group and a post-medieval agricultural complex south and south east of a (19th century?) coniferous plantation and, overall, the scars of different phases, the latest mid-20th century, of drainage schemes. The sub-peat wall (fig. 8) was recorded in the bend of the drain between the ring enclosure and Birky Burn. (Photo: Tim Gates).

relating to the later history of the area. The Wallington Hall estate maps from 1728, 1742, and 1777, for example, enabled us to demarcate estate land divisions and the line of route-ways across the moor from the border country to the Wansbeck and beyond. For present purposes, the evidence from these individual sources has been combined and updated, together with the results of the early field-walking, the National

Trust site archive and the eighteenth and nineteenth-century cartographic evidence held by the Wallington Hall estate and the Northumberland County Record Office. The whole of our archive, including a longer version of this paper, rests with the National Trust in its office at nearby Scots Gap, and the contents of this report, together with digital copies of the data, are archived with the



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Fig. 7 Map of Neolithic and Bronze Age features on the moorland.

Archaeology Data Service (ADS) at the University of York (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk).

It was clear from early on that the study area contained some 150+ archaeological features, ranging from Neolithic to modern and constituting a complex archaeological palimpsest. None of the evidence is dramatic but collectively it speaks of very many events in a small and apparently 'marginal' area, and a quiet evolution of the superficially 'uninteresting' moorland we look at today.

SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the survey presented here have been divided into rough chronological phases for ease of interpretation. These divisions provide the easiest way of illustrating the distribution of features, and the similarities and contrasts in settlement pattern across the study area. Dating is generally by morphology and analogy; the area produced virtually no direct dating evidence itself.

The Neolithic and Bronze Age Evidence (fig. 7)

Several sites exist on the moorland to suggest a pattern of Bronze Age activity (fig. 7). They comprise settlements, field systems including evidence of clearance, and some evidence of ritual activity, predominantly in the form of cairns (most notably in the vicinity of Tod Crag; Beckensall 1992, 58). The overall lack of visibility for this phase of the landscape must take into account the subsequent development of the upland zone, and the susceptibility of the archaeology to peat growth, natural soil deposition and later cultivation. Much Bronze Age material exists in the areas neighbouring Hartington Moor: field systems and cairns to the north west in Redesdale (Charlton 1982)





Fig. 8 Plan and section drawing of a wall exposed in a drainage ditch, Birky Burn (cf. fig. 6) (1:30).

and, more locally, an extent of comparable evidence to that on Hartington Moor up the valley of the Ray Burn (PJF reconnaissance survey), cairns on Ottercops Moss, and objects such as the Bronze Age hoard found beside the Wansbeck about 1 km east of Wallington Hall and the bronze socketed axe at Elsdon (Burgess 1968; Burgess and Miket 1973).

One of the main 'Bronze Age' implications of our survey lay in an individual discovery rather than in quantity. The remains of a wall were noted in 1988, exposed in the side of, and continuing across, a narrow, modern drainage ditch on the north side of Birky Burn (NY 9865 8945; fig. 6). The drain contained running water, and a fierce crayfish, at the time. The evidence was further exposed and tidied up for full recording on a subsequent ad hoc visit (fig. 8). Though the section was shallow, it was sufficient to show that the two courses of wall were covered by a thin layer of peat. The wall's basal course was well-bedded into the bottom of the drain and had not been moved either by the recent digging or the running water. The surrounding, peat-filled area showed no related surface features. Subsequent auguring to obtain peat samples in localised 'natural' depressions in the wider surrounding area proved abortive since there was no useful depth of deposit, apparently because scouring by water run-off or cultivation had prevented its formation. The wall is undated but we hypothesize that it may provide a glimpse of a buried, pre-peat landscape containing walls, possibly of fields,



Fig. 9 Plan of a curvilinear enclosure and associated features south of Harwood Head (cf. fig. 4) (1:2000).

in the second millennium BC. It certainly hinted at the potential for a buried landscape under the present visible topography. This is an archaeological dimension of Northumbrian moorland which requires further investigation.

Within this potential system of land division, some actual archaeological sites give an indication of the Late Bronze Age settlement type represented in the study area. On the low hill immediately south of Harwood head is a group of cairns and hut stances (fig. 9). It is associated with a slight ditch and cut by a stone-built bank some 120 m long which may be the remaining length of an oval enclosure around the hilltop. Apparently related to it is slight, 4 m-wide rig and furrow which itself seems to overlie possible cord rig near the hut circles. The bank itself is cut by an east-west field wall.

A Bronze Age origin for the hut circles and clearance cairns (and perhaps the slight ditch?) is possible, with perhaps contemporary or later cord rig. The wider rig and furrow and the arc of bank are likely to be either medieval or early post-medieval, cut by an eighteenth/ nineteenth-century field wall. Other unenclosed hut groups occur on this Moor e.g. above the Birky Burn (fig. 6) and east of the concentric rings enclosure on the eastern Moor (NY 990895); and regionally much of the relevant evidence for Bronze Age settlement similarly indicates unenclosed settlement e.g. Houseledge, Black Law and Todlaw Pike, Northumberland (Burgess 1979; Charlton 1982; generally, Gates 1983). Examples of palisaded enclosures nevertheless exist, for instance at Fenton Hill (Burgess 1984). Locally, a slight, sub-rectangular enclosure some 50 m x 30 m across, with an internal ditch or palisade



Fig. 10 Map of Iron Age and Roman period sites.

(NY 993893) is undated but its appearance suggests that it might be relevant to our Bronze Age considerations.

Late Prehistoric Settlement

Although we rely heavily on morphology to distinguish between field evidence, otherwise not absolutely dated, of 'Iron Age', 'late Iron Age' and 'Romano-British' sites, building very much on the results of earlier fieldworkers and excavators (Jobey 1980, 1985), a morphological approach is possible because the settlement units of these periods, represented predominantly by enclosed settlement, are more clearly defined. Two main forms of settlement type occur on Hartington Moor and its immediate environs: strategic settlements such as Catcherside hillfort (NY 989873) and Fairnley Burn enclosure (NY 983886), and domestic settlements, enclosed rectilinear or farmstead sites. Our survey area itself contains only the latter. Clear evidence also exists for cultivation in the form of several areas of cord rig (fig. 10).

Possibly the earliest evidence for cultivation was self-contained and not associated with a settlement, though the complex might have included a hut circle on its south east edge. South of Ottercops Burn cord rig cultivation exists on a small hilltop overlooking the Burn (fig. 11). The cultivated area extends for 60 m, and contains both a change in the orientation of the ploughing and clearance in its centre. Cord rig cultivation is generally regarded as late prehistoric (Halliday 1986; Topping 1989a and b) though it was certainly also in use well into the first millennium AD (Fowler 2002, chapter 9). It is feasible that here the rig is contemporary with a settlement immediately north of the Burn (*discussed below*). It is equally possible that this cultivation pre- or post-dates that settlement; it certainly conveys the impression that it was earlier and is probably but a surviving fragment of a formerly wider extent.



Fig. 11 Plan of cord rig south of Ottercops Burn (1:1000).

The settlement in question is substantial, enclosed and rectilinear (NY 977891; fig. 12). It lies north of Ottercops Burn immediately inside the western edge of the estate and our survey boundary. It consists of a bank and ditch enclosure, with hut circles of different phases and a holloway leading to the enclosure from the west. A large expanse of cord rig cultivation stretches to the north of the settlement, with evidence for at least one clearance cairn.

Superficially the complex appears to consist of a large rectangular enclosure containing a large hut circle, with some scattered hut circles outside it to the north. Analytical field survey adduced much more detail and some phasing in the relationships of the earthworks. To an initial small enclosure and large hut circle were added an additional, encircling bank and an eastern annex. Two hut circles were located along the northern edge of the encircling bank. Cord rig cultivation respects the northern edge of the entire enclosure, but on it were placed, presumably after cultivation ceased, at least locally, four round houses. Overall, our model sees cord rig cultivation and rectilinear

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Fig. 12 Plan of a rectilinear enclosure at Ottercops Burn (cf. fig. 4) (1:1500).



Fig. 13 Plan of the concentric ring enclosure to the north of Birky Burn (cf. fig. 6) (1:500).

enclosure as contemporary, with an expansion of the settlement to the north superimposed on a portion of the cultivated area. The former, similar to typical enclosed settlements such as West Brandon excavated by Jobey (1959; 1962; 1965; 1970; 1977), is probably Iron Age; the latter is later and, with its stonefaced walls, may well be from the early centuries AD.

Of less certain origin is the concentric ring enclosure (NY 986895) situated to the north of Birky Burn (figs. 6, 13). The OS description of the site states that the earthworks represent a 'homestead', suggesting a late Iron Age or Romano-British date for the site. This seems

unlikely. The site is approximately 40 m in diameter, and is formed by three, discontinuous concentric banks, all roughly circular but each actually somewhat angular. An 'entrance' through all three occurs to the south west, another, narrower one occurs through the middle and outer banks on the west, and a less noticeable and sharper break has been made, apparently by a later track, in the outer bank to the north. The two inner banks are quite even, but the outer has a more broken and less even form, as though the bank has been cast up in sections. There are two ditches, one inside the outer bank, the other inside the middle bank – or outside the inner bank.

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Fig. 14 Plan of enclosed Romano-British settlement near Birky Burn (1:500).

This curious earthwork has been interpreted as 'homestead', small henge, hut circle, tree ring; it remains enigmatic despite our detailed plan. Nevertheless that detail now suggests different phases of construction, with perhaps the two inner banks, each with a ditch, being constructed prior to the outer ring. On the other hand, there is a certain symmetry about the two outer banks, each with an inner ditch, similar breaks on the west, and a joint, coherent entrance on the south west with which the inner bank's gap fits awkwardly. The inner bank might, then, be an internal addition to a bivallate earthwork, but in truth no interpretation can be certain on present evidence. Our contribution to the debate is the plan, perhaps to introduce the idea of a multi-phase structure, and to note that the monument stands on its own, with no settlement or evidence of Iron Age or Roman cultivation in its immediate vicinity.

The Late Iron Age – Roman period

Continuation of settlement in the Late Iron Age and Roman period is indicated in two main ways. The Ottercops settlement complex (discussed above) probably continued to be inhabited well into the early centuries AD. The obvious successors to the Iron Age settlement are, however, the three Jobey-type Romano-British farmsteads located along the sides of Birky Burn. They include two forecourt enclosures with associated hut circles (NY 994894 and NY 990893) and a similar cluster of hut circles on a rock outcrop with a detached rockcut yard (NY 978 893). None of these three sites has previously been recorded, so we include plans of two of them (figs. 14, 15); but the type is so well known, and the three are so similar, that further discussion seems unnecessary at this stage except to remark that their spacing and form revive thoughts about settlement plantation (cf. Jobey 1964, 1982).



Fig. 15 Plan of Romano-British hut group and rock-cut enclosure, with post-medieval structures, on rock outcrop (1:500).

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Fig. 16 Map of medieval sites.

A rectangular area defined by a low bank lay north of the easternmost enclosure at NY 995895 and seemed to incorporate it at its southern edge; but we have not recorded this metrically on the ground nor been able to plot it from air photographs. We can but note the possibility of an associated field system and hope others can follow this up (some of this extensive but slight complex is visible on one of Gates' 2002 air photographs, NT01F46). Others among the many undated banks and slight features in the Hartington landscape may of course also be of this period.

Early medieval, medieval and post-medieval periods

A negligible settlement density for the early medieval and medieval phases on the Moor contrasts with the earlier patterns of habitation (fig. 16), though some of the boundary structures may well be within a century or two either side of AD 1000 rather than later. One such candidate is the prominent, markedly straight double-ditched dyke followed by the parish boundary between Hollinghill and Rothley between the Harwood and Birky Burns. Similar as earthworks, but without known historical contexts, are the dykes quartering the area shown on figure 5. Such dykes generally if not individually would seem to indicate a major change in the status of Hartington Moor in the post-Roman period from inhabited farming area to uninhabited distant land where boundaries need to be marked out. The well-evidenced cooling and increased humidity of the climate in the midlater 1st millennium AD may have contributed to this change, though elsewhere in north eastern England evidence indicates continuing and indeed flourishing post-Roman agricultural activity (summarised and referenced in Fowler 2002, 52–54, 64–65).



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Fig. 17 Map of post-medieval sites.

The Anglo-Saxon cross base called Steng Cross indicates a focal point high in the local early medieval landscape, perhaps emphasising rather than marking anew a boundary along the Rede/Wansbeck watershed between contemporary estates punctuated again only 2.5 km to the north east by Manside Cross (Honeyman 1929). Indeed, Watson (1993, 32), following Hodgson (1827, 288), argues that the 'Har-' in 'Harwood' derives from the OE meaning 'hoary' or 'grey' and hence the upstanding stones, in this case on the boundary 'between the baronies of Hartburn and Redesdale.' This boundary is set out in a roll of 19th Edward I and both stones are specified in a survey of 1604 which starts with the memorable words 'The bounder beginneth at the east nuke of Carter'. As it moves east and then south, this boundary eventually passes 'down part of Fallow Burn; from thence to Manshead Cross, so to the Sting Cross; from thence to Blakely Burn stones' (Hodgson 1827, 2). The spelling 'Manshead' rather than 'Manside' for the more northerly of these two crosses recalls other remote, high points in the landscape known to have been early medieval meeting places (Fowler 2002, 73). Whether or not estates formally existed here earlier than post-Conquest documentation, the lonely Steng cross on the moorland skyline seems to reflect a time by which people had broken with the habitational tradition of the Moor and were now living at or near what later became recognisably permanent medieval settlements operating within legally recognised estate boundaries.

While one or two isolated townships such as Harwood and Fairnley lay nearby from at least the 13th century, no permanent medieval settlement occurred on Hartington Moor itself. Desertion was, however, accompanied by temporary occupation, here as elsewhere in

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Fig. 18 Detail redrawn from the 1728 Wallington Estate map(approx. 1:25000).



Fig. 19 Plan of a searchlight and gun emplacement on east Hartington Moor (1:500).

Northumberland, on a seasonal and transhumant basis. Yet the best settlement of sheilings here is surrounded by an integral block of rig and furrow at the confluence of Birky Burn and Ottercops Burns (NY 990893), suggesting some degree of permanence. No direct dating evidence was apparent but presumably the complex is medieval. The occurrence of a few other, apparently later, building foundations and animal enclosures on the Moor (figs. 5, 6) underline rather than contradict its essential desertion for habitation. Throughout the second millennium its prime use was as grazing with periodic and patchy cultivation, but with a surprising amount of scattered activity evident in the remains of boundary and enclosure banks, ditches and walls, sheep stells, guarrying (centre, fig. 4, cutting ridge-and-furrow; centre, fig. 5, between the two trees with shadows) and peat-digging (best visible west of Harwood Head towards Steng Cross, just appearing at the extreme left centre on fig. 4; for its regional context, see Atkinson 1977, 37-41).

A smithy beside the Harwood road (NY 978904) is one of the few sites producing

artefacts. It may well have been contemporary with the earliest, eighteenth-century phase of the steading at Harwood Head itself (fig. 17); this could explain why its northern edge appears to be crossed by, not butting against, the southern edge of that road which, far from being Roman as some may think, can be dated firmly to the mid-eighteenth century. It is absent from the 1728 (fig. 18) and 1742 estate maps, and present on the map of 1777. Its predecessor apparently ran closer to Harwood Burn (fig. 18), probably south of the smithy and indeed south of the farmstead. Earthworks of it may well be among those south and west of Harwood Head today (fig. 4). This premid-eighteenth century road, together with hollow-ways, other signs of tracks and several post-medieval bridges across the various Burns - their abutments characteristically earlier than the present superstructures – indicate that one of the main objectives of people on the Moor was not to dally but to cross it.

A few people were nevertheless forced to stay, however temporarily, during the 1939–45 War. Four sub-circular features (fig. 19) were

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among the very first features recorded close to the existing road at the north east corner of our survey area. The two northernmost features measure approximately 8-10 m in diameter, and consist of a low ditch some 1.5 m across. The remaining two features are less well-defined, comprising two semi-circular ditches. A plane table survey was compared with the 1946 air photographic evidence, and it was correctly inferred that the site was a searchlight and gun emplacement, most probably associated with the CHAIN-HOME radar stations that were established along the Pennines. It is our only military site but it nevertheless continues the long tradition, represented by the two small hill-forts just south of our survey area, and of Hartington Hall and Wallington Hall itself, of defence being a strong element in this landscape.

CONCLUSIONS

The study area is too small for radical conclusions or sweeping generalisations, but eleven points can be made on the basis of this sample:

1. The sheer amount of visible archaeology on the small study area of Hartington Moor -170 recorded features in but 3 sq km plus the evidence of invisible, buried archaeology probably from pre-Iron Age times, is worth remarking on for its academic and managerial implications, particularly as we now know there is even more, and understand it better (Gates 2002).

2. Survey of even a small, apparently uninteresting area of heathland can discover not merely a great amount of field archaeology but a number of individually quite important sites – not a new point but, only some 35 km. from Newcastle, worth re-emphasising.

3. The density and range of archaeological features on and in this study area, intermediate between 300 m asl and 200 m asl, are comparable with that at higher altitudes and suggest, first, that comparable areas on the lower fringes of the uplands (or upper reaches of the lowlands) may well be similar in terms of upland field archaeology, having likewise

witnessed long-term human activity and landscape evolution; and, second, that 'middle' and coastal Northumberland may well have contained similar upstanding evidence before modern agriculture and industry. Further research in comparable areas is needed to test these propositions.

4. The archaeological character of Hartington Moor is not distinctive. The type and range of sites are similar to that on the uplands - particularly cairns, cord rig, late prehistoric curvilinear enclosed settlements, small rectangular Romano-British homesteads, ridgeand-furrow, sheilings and stells; and four of those – cord rig, late prehistoric curvilinear enclosed settlements, R-B homesteads and ridge-and-furrow - are characteristic of Northumberland's middle/lowland archaeology too. It is only with post-medieval features that a hint of difference appears in the form of peatworks, drainage works and twentieth-century military earthworks. On the other hand, there are conspicuous absences: no long cairns, megaliths or megalithic structures, round burial cairns or Roman military works, and no post-Roman permanent settlement (with one small medieval exception). To a certain extent, such absences perhaps reflect the sort of terrain that it is, for the post-Roman Harwood area, exposed, treeless, increasingly waterlogged and with impoverished soils, is not obviously good ceremonial, military or settlement countryside.

5. The extent and nature of the Neolithic/Bronze Age evidence from Hartington Moor is not unique, reflecting the type of feature that is found throughout Northumberland and Southern Scotland, from the cup and ring marked rock at Tod Crag to cairn fields demonstrating land clearance cf. Teesdale, Cheviot and the Simonside Hills (Coggins 1985, 1986; Topping 1989a). These features here represent the most visible elements of an essentially buried palimpsest, and it is no coincidence that fieldwork produced low returns from these periods. Much of this invisibility is due to later farming practice and settlement on the Moor, plus the build-up of

peat and other deposits along the little valleys which has effectively masked earlier features.

'structural' 6. Our results contrast markedly with the artefactual', predominantly lithic, results from comparable intensive survey only a few kilometres away (Davies 2004). We suggest, however, that although we did not record a single flint, the difference is largely the product of survey methodology and long-term land-use. We were looking for surface features; John Davies was looking for small objects. Fieldworkers tend to find what they are looking for and, conversely, not see other evidence. The dissimilarity in our selective data, we would suggest, actually masks an archaeological complementarity: there must be artefacts on Hartington Moor, but the ground is largely heather-covered, not ploughed, so they do not 'show'; there was surely once a range of prehistoric structures in the Bolam area but more intensive agriculture up to the present has obliterated them. Bolam + Hartington probably produces a closer approximation to Neolithic/Bronze Age landscape and land-use in this 'upper lowland area' of southern Northumberland, and perhaps much further afield, than perhaps we have appreciated.

7. The evidence for late Bronze Age clearance and Iron Age cultivation on Hartington Moor is supported by local palynological evidence (Turner 1983) as it is elsewhere in Northumberland (Young 2004). This evidence is augmented in the study area by consistent evidence of farmstead settlement and arable cultivation. This material survives most prominently in the vicinity of the Wansbeck watershed, with the rectilinear settlements and cord rig.

8. The relatively abundant later prehistoric/Roman period material provides comparanda for both higher and lower land. The Ottercops Burn settlement with its round houses, for example, is similar in external characteristics to the Iron Age site at Burradon (Jobey 1970), some 35 kms to the east south east; cord rig, well known on the uplands (Topping 1989 a, b), is now also known on the lowlands e.g. beneath and beside Hadrian's Wall at Denton on the outskirts of Newcastle (Bidwell and Watson 1996; for an alternative interpretation, see Fowler 2002, 211–212).

9. A Romano-British settlement pattern within the survey area appears to be related to three farmsteads along the line of Birky Burn, contrasting with the single medieval settlement, a sheiling, in the same valley.

10. A form of rural habitation is nevertheless evident on the Moor until the second Millennium AD, when the scattered and diminishing population all but disappeared, possibly reflecting the increased humidity and fall in temperature associated with the thirteenth century (Parry 1985). Although some scattered settlement exists for the eighteenth century onwards, with a little diversification from farming in the form of minor industrial activity, habitation takes the form of smallholdings clinging to the fringes and toll-roads of the Wallington Hall Estate. The Moor was essentially turned over to rough grazing as part of the seasonal rotation of farming on the Estate.

11. Such areas as Hartington Moor, apparently superficially 'uninteresting' and often with an archaeological record of only low-level interest, must be surveyed as a matter of course in advance of proposals for land-use change. Such work, building on not merely this survey but similar ones nearby (Davies 1995, Davies and Davidson 1990, Sellars and Prothero 1990), all making the same point, could reinforce the potential of the interfacial zone between upland and lowland as one of sound archaeological preservation and as historically significant landscape in terms of human activity and landscape evolution.

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access once, when excessively wet ground conditions made the area unsafe. Adam Welfare played a key role during the 'student years', and both then and the seasons in 1995 and 1996 various undergraduate students and staff were involved. Thanks are due to Phillip Jefferson, Johnny Godfrey, Mark Jackson and David Strutt. Dr Mark Gillings gave support both in the total station survey work, and during the initial digital rectification of the Iron Age enclosure. The generous help of Alan Williams during the later stages of the fieldwork in 1996 is also gratefully acknowledged. The experience and advice of staff, particularly Keith Blood and Mark Bowden, of the Newcastle office of the then Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for England, was also invaluable. All maps reproduced in this paper, with the exception of fig. 18, are © Crown Copyright/database right 2005 (an Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service).

Our perceptions of Hartington Moor were changed by work commissioned by the National Trust from Tim Gates in 2002: new air photographs and an independent report covering the field archaeology of the whole of the Wallington Hall estate including Hartington Moor (Gates 2002). Gates took some brief account of our work but we were unaware of his until late 2004 at an advanced stage of our paper. We are very appreciative indeed of being allowed access to and use of his material by both parties, though we have resisted the temptation to merge data-sets and interpretations, leaving the two accounts as complementary. We nevertheless thank Tim Gates in particular for so helpfully allowing us to use here for our own purposes three of his superb and previously unpublished air photographs (figs. 4, 5, 6): they help enormously in illustrating the topographical and environmental context of our material.

APPENDIX: LISTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

This section consists of a gazetteer listing and describing the late prehistoric sites on and in the vicinity of Hartington Moor (below), and another of features best described as early to post-medieval (Table 1).

References to sources relating to sites mentioned elsewhere in Northumberland are given in the text where appropriate, but for gazetteers of Iron-Age and Romano-British sites in Northumberland, information can be found in print as follows: stone-built settlement (Jobey 1964); hillforts and settlements (Jobey 1965); cord rig cultivation (Topping 1989); and general inventories (Jobey 1967; 1974).

GAZETTEER OF MAJOR SITES ON HARTINGTON MOOR, HARWOOD HEAD AND THE CATCHERSIDE AREA

?Bronze Age Wall (NY 98658945; figs. 6, 8) exposed in the side of, and continuing across, a drainage ditch on the north side of Birky Burn, buried by a thin layer of peat.

?Bronze Age Hut Group (NY 986893). Unenclosed hut group between Birky Burn and Ottercops Burn.

?Prehistoric Field System (NY 991895). Possible Bronze Age field system, N of an eighteenth-century sheepfold, consisting of rectilinear field boundaries, a clearance cairn and at least one hut circle.

?Prehistoric Enclosure (NY 993893), sub-rectangular, slight but some 50 m x 30 m across, with an internal ditch or palisade, takes in the western end of a ridge along the north side of the Hart Burn. Undated, its appearance nevertheless suggests some antiquity compared to the sharpness of Romano-British and later earthworks.

Catcherside Hillfort (NY 989873). Remains of a curvilinear Iron Age hillfort SW of Catcherside, on modern pasture overlooking Chesters Burn. Medieval ploughing covers most of the monument's extent.

Catcherside Earthwork (NY 990875). Feature visible on aerial photograph taken by T. Gates. A rectilinear feature, similar in shape to the Fairnley Burn enclosure, but ploughing has obscured the site.

Concentric Ring Enclosure (NY 987896; figs. 6, 13). Anomalous circular structure N of Birky Burn, comprising two concentric rings of apparently stoney banks and an outer earth bank.

Cord Rig Site, South of Ottercops Burn (NY 979887; fig. 11). An extent of two-phase cord rig with furrows c. 90 cm apart, and two clearance cairns, also a possible hut foundation. Overlying cord rig shows ploughing at 90 degrees to the original furrow marks.

Fairnley Burn Enclosure (NY 983886). Rectangular defended enclosure consisting of a double rampart and ditch, with an entrance on both E and W.

Harwood Enclosure and Remains of Enclosure (NY 985909 and NY 967907). Rectangular defended enclosure, within the modern Harwood plantation. Part of a similar enclosure was found close to the Harwood road.

Harwood Head Enclosure (NY 973903; figs. 4, 9). A series of earthworks S of Harwood Head, overlain by an 18th/19th century gang-built field wall. A low curving enclosure bank with some stone-work protruding and a slight internal ditch, curves immediately south of (from E-W) 5 cairns, the small southernmost one possibly cut by the enclosure bank; 4 hut circles; a very slight dished oval which may be another one and, c. 35 m further W, a low oval platform. The easternmost hut circle is a typical embanked one; that 5 m to its E is defined by a narrow palisade; and the two c. 15 m S are both shallow platforms defined by slight scarps, each cut by the enclosure earthwork, the one on the SW decisively so. Some 30 m W of it are 2 cairns and 2 very small cairns; the more easterly small cairn and larger cairn may well be cut by the enclosure ditch. Rig and furrow stretches N-S across the enclosure, respecting the low enclosing bank, but running under the field wall. Its width suggests a medieval or later date, and it possibly overlies cord rig in the area of the eastern hut circles. The structural sequence of the four main phases represented seems to be unenclosed round hut settlement with cairns (and cord rig?), oval enclosure, 3-5 m-wide ridge-and-furrow cultivation, stone wall.

Manside Enclosure (NY 984921). A rectilinear defended enclosure consisting of two ramparts and ditches.

Rectilinear Enclosure, South of Birky Burn (NY 977891; figs. 5, 12). Major rectilinear site complex comprising of an enclosure, hut circles within and outside the enclosure, a holloway leading to the site from the W, and cord rig stretching 200 m N.

Romano-British Enclosure (NY 994894; fig. 14). On the E side of Hartington Moor, N of the Hart Burn, a small sub-rectangular enclosure is tucked into the corner of a larger complex, with a large hut circle, flanked by a smaller one to N and S, at its W end on raised ground overlooking a slight causeway, defined by a sunken area on each side, leading to an eastern entrance.

Romano-British Field System (NY 990893) apparently embracing a large area SW, W and N of the previous site, comprising at least one hut circle and rectilinear field boundaries.

Romano-British Hut Group (NY 978893; figs. 5, 15). Probably 3 hut circles positioned on a rock outcrop with signs of post-medieval quarrying appear to relate to an oval, rock-cut depression immediately on their SE in an arrangement of a typical Romano-British enclosed farmstead, as with that illustrated in fig. 14, but without the enclosing wall. The adjacent banks appear to be later, and the footings of a rectangular buildings and associated enclosure, probably postmedieval, lie *c*. 20 m N.

Tod Crag Cup and Ring Marked Rock (NY 973892). A rock outcrop positioned on the eastern edge of Ottercops Moor, on land once used for a coniferous plantation. Much of the ground is now obscured by thick bracken growth, but the rock holds a visible collection of cup and ring mark motifs. Evidence of Bronze Age activity has been recorded in the S.M.R., with a series of cairns and a field system marked to the West on Ottercops moorland.

| Site | Grid Ref. | Description | Period |
|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Steng Cross | NY 963907 | Anglo-Saxon cross base | Early-Med. |
| South of Hart Burn | NY 990893 | Sheilings and rig/furrow | Early-Med. |
| Manside Cross | NY 99 SE | Anglo-Saxon cross | Early-Med. |
| Birky Burn Boundary Bank | NY 98 NE | Boundary bank | Medieval |
| South of Ottercops Burn | NY 983886 | Building foundation/holloway | C18 |
| Knoll South of Birky Burn | NY 978894 | Quarries | Med./post-Med. |
| Harwood Head | NY 978904 | Site of smithy | C18 |
| North of Hart Burn | NY 990895 | Ruined sheepfold | C18 |
| Birky Burn/Ottercops Burn | NY 98 NE | 'Intake' | Post-Med. |
| Birky Burn | NY 98 NE | Sheepfolds | C18 |
| Birky Burn | NY 977896 | Ruined farmstead | C18 |
| North of Ottercops Burn | NY 979893 | Stock enclosure | C18 |
| South of Birky Burn | NY 98 NE | Building foundation | C18 |
| Winter's Gibbet | NY 963907 | Modern replica of gibbet | C18/20 |
| North of Birky Burn | c. NY 987895 | Stack of peat blocks | C18/19 |

Table 1 Medieval and post-medieval features

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