THIMBLEBY MOOR, THIMBLEBY, NORTH YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2011, Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd (EDAS) were commissioned by the Thimbleby Estate and the North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPA) to undertake an archaeological survey on Thimbleby Moor, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 471 956 centred). In summary, the project involved the production of a detailed measured earthwork survey of the archaeological remains, augmented by a detailed descriptive record and report. The work was required to provide background information and details of the archaeological landscape of this part of Thimbleby Moor, to increase knowledge and to assist with future management strategies.

Prior to the survey taking place, the survey area, which covered c.11ha, was believed to contain elements of a prehistoric landscape, comprising small irregular fields, ruined wall alignments, several cairns and at least one enclosure.

The survey has confirmed the presence of these features, which almost certainly form part of a multi-period archaeological landscape on the moor. The natural topography was an important factor in the placing and organisation of a prehistoric settlement at the core of the survey area, which made use of a north-facing scarp as a boundary for some of the smaller enclosures radiating out from a larger, sub-square central enclosure. It is difficult to find published parallels for this form of settlement in the North York Moors, although it does have some similarities to another site recorded on Low Locker Moor, some 3km to the south-east of Thimbleby Moor. However, the Low Locker Moor site is more complex and extensive than that at Thimbleby, although elements of the Thimbleby site do extend beyond the survey area, and it is quite possible that there are additional features surviving beneath the heather. Both sites represent the characteristic 'valley settlements' which usually lie in the extreme heads of the dales.

It is also possible that some of the holloways recorded within the survey area relate to the prehistoric settlement, but they are more likely to be post-medieval in date. They may represent former routes running across the moor depicted in 1771, or they could also be associated with a former alum works located to the north-west of the survey area. The southern half of the survey area, with its numerous linear depressions, possible terracing and banks, is perhaps the most confusing. While many of the features recorded here are likely to relate to late 20th century vehicular movement, some may be much earlier.

The apparent distinct division between the area of the settlement and the cairnfield to north-east is also significant. If the two are contemporary, then the placing of the cairns away from the settlement may represent the division of the landscape into different zones, and these zones may have been imbued with ritual and religious as well as agricultural significance. Alternatively, if the two are not contemporary, then it is possible that cairns were cleared to either build or make way for the settlement.

1 INTRODUCTION

Reasons and Circumstances for the Project

1.1 In January 2011, Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd (EDAS) were commissioned by the Thimbleby Estate and the North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPA) to undertake an archaeological survey on Thimbleby Moor, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 471 956 centred). In summary, the project involved the production of a detailed measured earthwork survey of the archaeological remains, augmented by a detailed descriptive record and report. The work was required to provide background information and details of the archaeological landscape of this part of Thimbleby Moor, to increase knowledge and to assist with future management strategies, in particular the replacement of temporary grouse butts with more permanent ones.

1.2 Prior to the survey taking place, the survey area, which covered c.11ha, was believed to contain elements of a prehistoric landscape, comprising small irregular fields, ruined wall alignments, several cairns and at least one enclosure. The scope of the archaeological survey was defined by an EDAS methods statement, which was produced after discussions with Graham Lee, Senior Archaeological Conservation Officer of the NYMNPA (see Appendix 2).

Site Location and Description

1.3 The survey area lies in a north facing area of heather moorland overlooking the valley of the Oakdale Beck, c.2km east of the village of Thimbleby and 2.5km south-east of Osmotherley (see figure 1). Thimbleby Moor lies to the north-west of Black Hambleton, a prominent hill at the very northern edge of the Hambleton Hills, within an area of prehistoric remains that does not appear to have been subject to a significant amount of previous detailed investigation. The underlying solid geology comprises Middle Jurassic Sandstones overlying soft Lias Shales (Cowley 1993, 8).

1.4 The survey area occupies an elevated position in the central part of Thimbleby Moor at c.280m AOD. It had an irregular pentagonal shape in plan, measuring a maximum of 460m long (east-west) by 310m wide (north-south) (see figure 2). The area was bounded to the east, west and north by open moorland, and to the south by coniferous plantation, and it was accessed via a trackway branching off the unclassified Osmotherley and Hawnby road.

1.5 The majority of the survey area was heather moorland, parts of which had been subject to periodic burning in the past, as part of a grouse management regime. This had resulted in a mixed vegetation cover across the survey area; in some areas, the vegetation cover was relatively short grass, but in others, the heather was over 0.50m high. Although all parts of the survey area were inspected thoroughly, the varying depth of the vegetation has almost certainly influenced the results of the survey.

Survey Methodology

1.6 The aim of the project was to produce an archaeological survey of this part of Thimbleby Moor, to aid any future land management and understanding. As noted above, the scope of the work was defined by an EDAS methods statement (see Appendix 2). The work was undertaken in two main phases.

Phase 1 desk-top survey

1.7 Information relating to the survey area was obtained from the North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPA) and English Heritage's National Monuments Record. This comprised records of previous historic research and archaeological activity, aerial photographs, past management and land ownership records, and historic maps and plans. No other historic, cartographic or documentary research (for example at the North Yorkshire Record Office) was required to be undertaken, but relevant published secondary sources were consulted. A full list of the sources consulted, together with their references, is given in the bibliography below.

Phase 2 detailed site survey

1.8 A detailed Level 3 survey (as defined by English Heritage (2007, 23-29) of the whole of the survey area was undertaken to record the position and form of all features considered to be of archaeological and/or historic interest. The survey was carried out using EDM total station equipment. Sufficient information was gathered to allow the survey area to be readily located through the use of surviving structures, fences, walls, water courses and other topographical features. The survey recorded the position at ground level of all earthworks, structures, wall remnants and revetments, water courses, paths, stone and rubble scatters, fences, hedges and other boundary features, as well as any other features considered to be of archaeological or historic interest.

1.9 The survey was integrated into the Ordnance Survey national grid by resection to points of known co-ordinates. Heights AOD were obtained by reference to the nearest OS benchmark (set at 269.09m AOD and located on a gate stoop close to the public car park on the Osmotherley to Hawnby road), and contours plotted across the site. Control points were observed through trigonometric intersection from survey stations on a traverse around and through the survey area, and the locations, descriptions and values of the bench marks and control points are stated in the final survey data. On completion of the EDM survey, the field data was plotted at a scale of 1:1000 and re-checked in the field as a separate operation. Any amendments or additions were surveyed by hand measurement, and the results digitised back into the electronic survey data. The resulting survey was produced at a scale of 1:1000 and presented as an interpretative hachure plan using conventions analogous to those used by English Heritage (1999; 2007, 31-35).

1.10 The EDM total station field survey was undertaken at the end of January 2011, with low glancing light across the survey area providing good survey conditions. The hand enhancement of the EDM survey was carried out on the 3rd and 4th February 2011, again in similar good weather conditions.

1.11 For the purposes of description, each identified component within the survey area was assigned a unique number, although it was subsequently decided not to use *pro forma* record sheets compiled from an Access database as described in the initial methods statement (see Appendix 1). Nevertheless, data collected on each identified site included a summary description and preliminary interpretation of extant remains (e.g. dimensions, plan, form, function, date, sequence of development), locational information (including ten figure grid references obtained from OS map bases or the EDM survey data), mention of relevant documentary, cartographic or other evidence, and management details such as an assessment of current condition and threats. The vegetation conditions meant that only a selection of identified components were photographically recorded, using a

Panasonic Lumix digital camera with 10 megapixel resolution; English Heritage photographic guidelines were followed (English Heritage 2007, 14) and each photograph was normally provided with a scale. More general digital photographs were also taken showing the landscape context of the survey area and of specific components. A total of 29 photographs were taken, and all were clearly numbered and labelled with the subject, orientation, date taken and photographer's name, and cross referenced to digital files etc (see Appendix 1).

Report and Archive

1.12 This report forms an archive report for the survey area, based on the information gathered during the fieldwork and organised around the numbered components. The report assembles and summarises the available evidence for the survey area in an ordered form, synthesises the data, comments on the quality and reliability of the evidence, and how it might need to be supplemented by further field work or desk-based research. The survey report also contains various appendices, including photographic registers and catalogues, and a copy of the EDAS methods statement.

1.13 The full archive, comprising paper, magnetic and plastic media, relating to the project has been ordered and indexed according to the standards set by the National Archaeological Record (EDAS site code THM 11). It was deposited with the NYMNPA on the completion of the project. Details of the project, and an uploaded pdf copy of the report have also been added to English Heritage's OASIS (Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations) project.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

2.1 As noted above in Chapter 1, no new primary research was required as part of the survey work. However, relevant published secondary material was consulted, together with available material relevant to previous work undertaken on or around the survey area. The following chapter discusses how the interpretation and understanding of cairnfields and other related prehistoric features in this part of the North York Moors has developed during the 20th century, to place the Thimbleby Moor survey into context; the section on cairnfields is primarily taken from a previous EDAS survey report on a cairnfield at Scotland Farm, near Hawnby, North Yorkshire (Dennison & Richardson 2011).

The Prehistory of the North York Moors

2.2 Manby, King & Vyner (2003, 82-91) provide the most recent overview of the prehistory of the North York Moors, and the following section is taken entirely from this, with particular emphasis on the Hambleton Hills.

2.3 In terms of their prehistory, the North York Moors are both the most intensively published and palaeo-environmentally researched area of Yorkshire. Apart from the higher parts of the Central Watershed above the 300m contour, in c.4000 BC a forested environment prevailed across the whole of the North York Moors. Neolithic activity, as evidenced by flint and stone axe finds, has a wide distribution across the Moors, with the greatest density from the Corallian areas of the Tabular and Hambleton Hills. This distribution of axes complements that of Neolithic long barrows. However, Neolithic round barrow and cairns are less well investigated, but their siting may be significant, with locations on the edge of slopes and dales preferred and favoured over summit and crest positions. Archaeological field walking over cultivated land in the southern half of the Hambleton Hills indicates intensive 4th to mid 2nd millennia BC activity across these uplands. Again, the earliest surviving monuments here are long barrows. Round barrows have a primary burial association with early 2nd millennium BC ceramic types found in this area.

2.4 Major cultural changes in the mid 2nd millennium BC marked the end of barrow construction, and visual evidence of human activity becomes difficult to recognise, although it is possible that the major linear earthwork systems of the Tabular and Hambleton Hills developed from this time up to the end of the 1st millennium BC. The western escarpment of the Hambleton Hills contains several hillforts which command extensive views over the Cleveland Plain and the Vale of York. At least two of these are likely to have been earlier structures perhaps dating to the Bronze Age which had been modified during the Iron Age.

Bronze Age Cairnfields and Settlements in North-East Yorkshire

2.5 In his pioneering work *Early Man in North East Yorkshire*, Frank Elgee (1930, 120) noted that the region's moorland might well have been called the 'Land of Barrows', with over 3,500 being shown on the mid 19th century Ordnance Survey maps and perhaps more than 10,000 having existed originally. What Elgee describe as 'clustered barrows' would now be termed cairns or cairnfields; Elgee thought that these 'smaller mounds' were piled over bodies rather than cremations, and that they formed the burial places of the people rather than the chiefs and leaders, who were buried in the larger round barrows (Elgee 1930, 121-122). The

majority of the 'clustered barrows' described by Elgee were situated in dry moorland at heights of between c.150m and 300m, on gentle slopes facing directions placed between east, south and west, and adjoining settlement sites. Some of the larger barrows formed alignments which are still followed by modern parish boundaries (Elgee 1930, 122- 130).

2.6 In 1971, Fleming provided a useful summary of the then state of knowledge about cairnfields in north-east Yorkshire, noting that cairnfields normally occur at heights of between about 183m to 305m AOD (Fleming 1971, 20-24). Sometimes they comprised only one or two cairns but elsewhere, as on Danby Rigg or at Iron Howe, there could be hundreds. At Iron Howe, there were irregular walls, sometimes enclosing small fields, within which cairns were located, sometimes being built into the walling. The cairns themselves were described as being usually ovoid, but they could also be round or long, measuring between 3m-5m long and 2m-3m wide. The associated 'walling' led Fleming to believe that the cairns were connected with the growing of cereals in small plots, many of which had first to be cleared of stones, and that the primary purpose of the walls was too to dispose of unwanted stones at the field's edge; it is now generally thought that these walls are really irregular lines of stones, which could have been cleared from the fields and then placed against or at the bottoms of existing hedges or other boundaries (Graham Lee, NYMNPA archaeologist *pers. comm.*). Fleming also noted that Elgee had demonstrated that most slopes on which the cairns were positioned faced south, south-west, or south-east, but that they were also common on virtually flat ground, with both slopes and levels being dry. Dating was hampered by a paucity of finds from excavated cairns, with the Bronze Age being tentatively suggested, but one feature that was commonly reported from excavated examples in north-east Yorkshire was the presence of charcoal and traces of burning in and under them, suggesting that scrub had been burnt off before clearance took place. There was sometimes an association between cairnfields and ring cairns, noted elsewhere such as in the Derbyshire Peak District.

2.7 Fleming concluded by suggesting that the north-east Yorkshire cairnfields had developed during the Bronze Age, following the exhaustion of the poorer soils at higher levels by the immediate ancestors of those responsible for the cairnfields. This was perhaps because the fertility of lower slopes could be maintained for rather longer than that of higher ground, possibly due to the folding of animals on stubble to provide manure, and thereby continuing cereal farming for some time after the reduction of much of the higher land to heather moor. The barrows occurring within some cairnfields may have been a remnant of earlier occupation, or could be the cemeteries of those who made the cairnfields. The cereal farming practiced in these cairnfields may have continued to decline and to have been replaced by a greater pastoralism during the Iron Age. However, caution was advised against the development of too broad conclusions from the then available evidence, as there must have been the same considerable local variation in the economies of the Bronze Age as there was during the medieval period.

2.8 Fleming's conclusions were broadly followed by Spratt and Simmons (1976, 201-204), who noted that independent dating evidence for cairnfields was still lacking but neither was there any convincing evidence that they were other than Bronze Age, and probably early Bronze Age (1700-1300 BC). Cairnfields were noted to have attendant walling, sometimes associated with collared urns and occasionally with ring cairns. The very large numbers of monuments usually ascribed to the Bronze Age indicated widespread activity across lower and higher ground, with evidence for both pastoral and cereal farming, and perhaps also for some hunting on higher ground.

2.9 By the late 1980s, further, more intensive fieldwork had begun to place the cairnfields within their wider landscape setting (e.g. Spratt 1989, 31-37; Spratt 1993b). It was suggested that many Bronze Age round barrows had been placed in conspicuous positions on watersheds or in long lines spaced out along ridges because they formed boundary markers between territorial units or 'estates', and that these units had been long-lasting, influencing later medieval and modern township boundaries. The remains of about 70 cairnfields had been recognised in the North York Moors, formed by a mixture of stone cairns up to 5m in diameter and the remains of walls, but also sometimes with lynchets and roundhouses, with access frequently via hollow ways. It was stated that the cairns were most likely to be field clearance cairns, 'with funerary activity an infrequent event', possibly connected with pastoral farming and commanding the view of the valley below them. In the 1990s, surveys of the cairnfields on Great Ayton Moor (Vyner 1994, 7-11) and Danby Rigg (Harding & Ostoja-Zagorski 1994, 16-97) have emphasised the complexity of these multi-period landscapes.

2.10 The survey area at Danby Rigg was very large, over 2km in length, and by far the largest category of monuments recorded was cairns (820 recorded with a further 60 possible examples), concentrated between 240m and 295m AOD (Harding & Ostoja-Zagorski 1994, 16-61). The majority measured less than c.5m across and c.1m in height, and they appeared to be scattered haphazardly across the survey area, with a distance of between 10m to 20m between cairns. The cairns occurred in the largest numbers on the northern slopes of the Rigg, becoming scarcer on the plateau. Interspersed with these cairns were stretches of bank, although only in the northern central part of the survey area did they resemble anything close to the systematic placing of banks to create defined stone-free areas. Even here, the impression was of roughly rectangular chunks of land separated off, rather than a specific field system. Six or seven ring cairns were also recorded, and a single large barrow-mound, with a section excavated across the prominent Triple Dykes at the southern end of the survey area. Surface examination and excavation of a sample of the small cairns showed that they usually consisted of unsorted tumbled stone, without kerbs or other features.

2.11 The valuable general discussion of cairnfields given by the authors of the Danby Rigg survey included a number of important observations (Harding & Ostoja-Zagorski 1994, 61-66). It was noted that few such sites in the North York Moors lay below 200m or above 300m AOD, and that all were on gently sloping land above water courses, with the latter being more important than the direction of the slope. More recent research suggests that cairnfields lie up to c.315m AOD (Graham Lee, NYMNPA archaeologist, *pers. comm.*). It was also thought to be no coincidence that the lower limit of cairnfield distribution coincided with the upper limit of present-day agriculture, and that it was highly likely that cairnfields had once extended further down valley sides, although not onto the valley bottoms themselves. The earliest phase of the Danby Rigg cairnfield was proposed to have occurred when large naturally-occurring earthfast boulders were augmented by smaller, moveable, stones as a result of human activity, so that the initial siting of the cairns was essentially random. When this first phase had occurred was not certain, with any early Bronze Age date by association with the ring cairns and barrows being described as speculative. However, given that there is no clear association between cairnfields and Neolithic monuments, that post-Iron Age occupation of the higher moorlands is generally taken to be an exception (not necessarily correctly), and that a medieval date seems highly unlikely, a Bronze Age date was thought most likely. This was not necessarily the same for the ruined walls and banks recorded, which could possibly have ranged in date from coaxial field systems to post-medieval enclosure. Although there is some evidence

from Danby Rigg that irregularly-shaped areas of land had been deliberately cleared of stone, there was little positive evidence that arable farming had taken place.

2.12 Alternative suggestions were therefore made. Firstly, cairnfields may actually have been used for grass production to support an animal population, perhaps cattle, either for grazing or making hay; cattle require more and higher quality grass than sheep, and so stone clearance was necessary to create grazing areas. Secondly, the stone clearance had come about through soil deterioration caused by environmental stress. Soil deterioration was initially due to woodland clearance during the Neolithic and Bronze Age, creating exposure which was exacerbated by grazing and arable cultivation. Stone clearance was undertaken in response to declining crop yields as soil deterioration continued (Harding & Ostoja-Zagorski 1994, 61-66).

2.13 It was furthermore noted that cairnfield creation was a selective process, and that not every 'suitable' location had been utilised in this way, possibly indicating a pattern of land holding and exploitation requiring the clearance of a defined area only large enough for particular production needs. In Derbyshire, for example, it has been suggested that discrete cairnfields might represent the clearance activities of small settlement groups, each with its own area of land to farm. On the North York Moors, environmental evidence suggests that, rather than one massive episode of woodland clearance during the Bronze Age, there were numerous and repeated small-scale clearances followed by regeneration, with woodland surviving between. It was also possible that utilitarian activities such as stone clearance were not separated from ritual ones, and the two aspects might well be represented in a 'complex' cairnfield such as Danby (an idea developed in more theoretical detail, but using field evidence, by Johnston (2000, 57-70) on Northumbrian cairnfields), as opposed to 'simple' examples where only the smaller stone cairns were present. Finally, the dating through excavation of the triple dykes at the southern end of the Danby Rigg survey area to the early medieval period, rather than the previous assumption that they were Bronze Age by association with the other features on the Rigg, raised the possibility that the cairnfield had been exploited for grazing and then perhaps modified during the same period (Harding & Ostoja-Zagorski 1994, 66-69 & 79-82).

2.14 The most recent summary of current understanding of the North York Moors cairnfields and the landscapes of which they are a part was given in 2003 (Manby, King & Vyner 2003, 69-70 & 83-91), as part of a more comprehensive overview of research into the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods in Yorkshire. This follows an earlier discussion by Spratt (1993b). The recent summary rightly stresses that, within Yorkshire's three major geophysical divisions (Eastern Yorkshire, the central Yorkshire lowlands and the upland Pennine range), there is a complexity of geological and environmental factors determining the past potential for human settlement. Furthermore, there are also local variations in the historical processes of monument survival and the development of archaeological research. Therefore, while the North York Moors is one of the most intensively published and palaeo-environmentally researched areas of Yorkshire for these periods, the interpretation and dating of some landscape features such as cairnfields remains problematic. Generally, apart from the higher parts of the Central Watershed area above the 300m contour, a forested environment prevailed across the whole of the North York Moors block in c.4000 BC. These forest conditions, together with a postulated climactic improvement during the early 2nd millennium BC, provide the environmental setting for round barrow construction on the Central Watershed. Although there were earlier localised clearing events, a widespread reduction of

the prevailing woodland did not take place until late in the 1st millennium BC when moorland vegetation spread, leading to an environment with a reduced subsistence potential. This also had the effect of limiting agricultural exploitation in the medieval period and later, thus increasing the rate of survival of cairns, walls, dykes and barrows on higher moorland, compared to the deep dales and valleys.

2.15 Manby, King & Vyner describe a spread of small stoney cairns as being one of the characteristic site types of the Cleveland Hills. Excavations of such features, such as those undertaken on Danby Rigg, have been unable to confirm the date and purpose of the cairnfield but, in a reversal of earlier ideas, it was thought that field clearance was doubtful, along with the agricultural value of such stoney soils. At Iron Howe, in Hawnby, a major concentration of small cairns occurs in conjunction with an extensive system of walling. This walling is in some cases so fragmentary as to suggest that the two are associated, with the cairns perhaps representing 'the continuation of ritual cultivation activity after local denudation of soil', i.e. that the cairns post-date the walls and are constructed by partly dismantling them. It may be possible to differentiate these types of cairns from others by size; on Great Ayton Moor for example, 'clearance' cairns ranged from 1.5m to 5.0m in diameter, whereas burial mounds were usually in excess of 6.0m. More recently, the excavation of a small clearance cairn on Fylingdales Moor by Blaise Vyner has produced a radiocarbon date of around 1300 BC (NYMNPA Historic Environment Newsletter 2010, 5).

Previous Archaeological Investigations and Research

2.16 In 1989 and 1993, based on the distribution of surviving Bronze Age round barrows and cairnfields, Spratt proposed that the Jurassic sandstone area of the North York Moors had been divided into a number of Bronze Age territories or 'estates'. Each estate comprised a cairnfield, a stretch of grazing land on the hills, meadows in the dale, and access to water supplies. The influence of these estates may have been extremely long lasting, as they are very similar to medieval townships which had similar requirements for their mixed farms. The survey area at Thimbleby Moor was proposed to fall outside an estate which included Osmotherley, the southern boundary of which was suggested to be the Oakdale Beck. Spratt marked cairnfields on an accompanying figure to the south of the Oakdale Back but apparently to the west of the survey area (Spratt 1989; Spratt 1993a).

2.17 A number of prehistoric sites are listed on the NYMNPA Historic Environment Record (HER) and English Heritage's National Monument Record (NMR) in the vicinity of the survey area. Several earthfast boulders exhibiting prehistoric cup marks have been noted just to the west and north of the survey area (HER 7141.01-03 & 7142; Brown & Chappell 2005, 264), while a small cairnfield has been noted just to the west (HER 14881). To the south of the survey area is the stone alignment or row known as 'Nine Stones' (HER 4768; NMR SE49NE27). This comprises four upright stones, c.1m-1.5m tall, arranged in two pairs, one pair being utilised to define the later township and present parish boundary between Thimbleby and Over Silton which runs in an east-west direction across the highest part of the moor. The lines or rows of stones are c.40m long (north-south) and set 10m apart, on an approximate north-south alignment; the juxtaposition of the monument with Black Hambleton to the south-east may be significant. The four substantial stones stand at the north and south extremities of the monument, with prominent water solution grooves running down one of the stones at the north end. There are at least four other fallen stones visible amongst the heather, which may be associated with the monument, while the long sides of the monument may be

marked by slight banks/ditches, although the depth of heather here makes interpretation difficult.

2.18 As far as can be established, Thimbleby Moor has not been subject to any previous detailed archaeological survey. In contrast to other prehistoric cairnfields, no 'Tumuli' or 'Stone Folds' are marked on the Ordnance Survey 1857 6" to 1 mile map of the moor (see figure 3). However, the features subject to the archaeological survey are noted on the HER and the NMR (sites 12455 and SE49NE27 respectively). D R Brown and D A Spratt noted an extensive system of small irregular fields, tumbled stone walls and cairns covering the northern slopes of the moor after heather burning on aerial photographs in 1976 (Moorhouse 1977, 4). The complex, centred on SE 4700 9550, was sketch-mapped by P Brown and his plan also includes a small enclosure; a visit to the site identified a large cup marked boulder as well as several other smaller examples while a further visit by Barbara Brown identified an impressive cup-and-ring boulder adjacent to a modern farm track which is arguably one of the most impressive of its type (Brown & Chappell 2005, 124-127); these marked stones all lie outside the EDAS survey area. A subsequent visit to the site by NYMNPA archaeological staff noted many cairns between 1m-2m in diameter, with others up to 3m-5m, and up to 0.7m high, extending along the contours between the breaks of slope. Aerial photographs taken in January 2001 and January 2002 show that survey area was a patchwork of standing heather and mown ground, but not recently burnt, while a later photograph taken in May 2009 shows a combination of revegetated and old heather (*www.googleearth.com*); it is clear that the area has been subject to periodic burning as part of the usual heather management regime for grouse moorland.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY AREA

Introduction

3.1 A description of the identified features within the survey area is given below, based on information gathered in the field. For ease of description, the features have been grouped into several basic categories, and the specific site identifiers are given in bold type, e.g. (**25**). However, it should be noted that these groupings are for descriptive purposes only, and a discussion of the survey area as part of a wider, complex, multi-period landscape is given in Chapter 4 below. Reference should also be made to the survey plan (figure 4) and the copies of the photographs appended to this report. Appendix 1 provides a catalogue of all the photographs taken as part of this project.

Location and Topography

3.2 The survey area is located on a north facing area of heather moorland overlooking the valley of the Oakdale Beck (see figure 2). There are extensive views from Thimbleby Moor through the Oak Dale gap across the Cleveland Plain as far as the eastern edge of the northern Dales. To the north and west, the west end of the Cleveland Hills are visible, taking in a wide panorama of unenclosed moorland. To the south, the ground surface continues to rise gently towards the drystone wall parish boundary, to the south of which is an extensive area of plantation on Over Silton Moor.

3.3 The survey area had an irregular pentagonal shape in plan, measuring a maximum of 460m long (east-west) by 310m wide (north-south). Within this block of land, the ground surface slopes down from a maximum height of 292m AOD on the southern edge to 265m on the north side. This slope is not even but comprises a series of natural north-facing scarps separated by areas of relatively level terraces, and it seems certain that this natural topography had a significant effect on settlement within the survey area. The principal entrance is from a trackway which partly defines the survey area's northern boundary. The majority of the survey area was covered by heather moorland at the time of survey - this had been most recently been burnt off to the north-west and south-east of the central prehistoric settlement, while the settlement itself was largely free of heather. The north-west part of the survey area was covered with long, thick grass within a locally marshy area. As noted above, although all parts of the survey area were inspected thoroughly, the varying depth of the vegetation has almost certainly influenced the results of the survey.

Cairns (Sites 1 and 2)

3.4 A large number of probable and possible cairns were recorded within the survey area (see figure 4). They have been sub-divided into these two very broad categories, those that can be identified with some certainty and others which are less definite but which are still possible cairns. Within these categories, there is some variation, which may be due to different degrees of preservation as much as significant differences in date or purpose. More significant is the marked concentration of cairns (with the exception of one or two possible outliers) in the north-east part of the survey area. Together, they appear to represent a cairnfield lying to the north-east of the core of the prehistoric settlement (see Site 3), at a lower elevation on gently sloping ground between the settlement and the modern trackway running along the north side of the survey area. It should also be noted that the areas to the north of the trackway and to the east of the survey area were

not examined in detail, and it is possible that the cairn field extends further in these directions. In terms of their size and shape, the cairns are similar to those recorded at Scotland Farm, near Hawnby, North Yorkshire (Dennison & Richardson 2011).

Cairns and probable cairns

3.5 A total of 20 cairns and probable cairns (**1**/**1** to **1**/**20**) were identified which, as noted above, have a marked concentration in the north-eastern part of the survey area. However, there are two cairns within the core area of the prehistoric settlement itself, and it may be significant that they are of slightly different form to those lying below the scarp. The first cairn (**1**/**7**) lies at the north end of a low sinuous bank containing a high proportion of stone. It is sub-rectangular in plan, measuring c.7m long by 4m wide, and standing up to 0.50m in height; it may actually represent a former structure, rather than a cairn. The second cairn (**1**/**12**) lies at the east end of a similar bank. It has a sub-oval or tear-drop shaped form, measuring c.5m long and standing 0.30m high (see plate 1). It too may represent a structure rather than a cairn, although less convincingly so than the cairn to the west. There is a small ring of flat stones to its immediate north (*2/380*).

3.6 Of those cairns below the prehistoric settlement, the majority are represented by sub-oval or sub-circular mounds, the largest of which (for example, **1**/**10** (see plate 3)) are up to 6m in diameter and stand up to 1.20m high. However, most are between 4m-5m across, and stand only 0.50m high (see plate 2). Most are well vegetated, with a thick covering of grass and heather, but where this covering has thinned, the cairns can be seen to contain a high proportion of stones. These stones are sub-rectangular or sub-square in shape and less than 0.30m long, and in several cases, larger stones around the base may form the fragmentary remains of a kerb. None of the cairns preserved any visible evidence for cists or other internal structures. One cairn (**1**/**8**) may mark the terminus of a sinuous bank running down the north-facing scarp from the core of the prehistoric settlement.

Possible cairns

3.7 A total of 13 possible cairns (**2**/**1** to **2**/**13**) were identified within the survey area, distributed fairly evenly around the plateau on which the prehistoric settlement (**3**, see below) is located, but with a concentration to the north-east, amongst the cairns and probable cairns. It is these that are most likely to represent actual cairns, and some are of a similar size to the more definite cairns and probable cairns, but are generally lower, being less than 0.50m high. Some examples are smaller, averaging c.2m in diameter (*1/352; 2/360*).

3.8 Away from this area, the possible cairns are less convincing, partly because they are located apart from the apparent main focus of the cairnfield and partly because they are set amongst thick heather in ground crossed by tightly packed linear depressions (see below). Of these possible cairns, one of the westernmost examples (**2**/**3**) is the most interesting. It is represented by a low vegetated oval mound, some 5m long, and with a 0.80m long stone at the east end. Lying across the centre of the mound, there is a larger stone, 1.70m long, 0.50 high and 0.30m wide, tapering slightly to one end (*1/353*). It may have been dug out of the mound or otherwise disturbed from its original position, and has the appearance of a gate stoop, although there is no visible evidence for the presence of former gate fittings.

Prehistoric Settlement (Site 3)

3.9 The remains of a prehistoric settlement were recorded on the central part of the survey area. The core area has a sub-oval plan, measuring c.160m long (east-west) by a maximum of 100m wide (north-south), and is located on a natural terrace. The north side of the terrace is defined by a steep, slightly curvilinear, north-facing scarp, while to the south, the settlement appears to extend no further than the area crossed by numerous linear features and vehicle tracks (Site 4/3, see below). All parts of the settlement are defined by spread, sinuous, partly-vegetated banks, the best preserved of which are 1.0m wide and 0.70m high (see plate 3), and all contain a very high proportion of angular stone rubble, but apparently with few large orthostats.

3.10 The settlement appears to take the form of a central enclosure, which has distinct clusters of smaller features at the east and west ends, and from which banks radiate outwards, perhaps defining smaller enclosures, particularly along the north side. The central enclosure appears to be sub-rectangular in plan, measuring c.90m long by a maximum of 40m wide (**3**/**1**). However, the plan form of the stone banks that represent its boundaries might indicate that this central enclosure is actually sub-square in plan, measuring c.40m long by 35m wide, with the east end actually forming one of the smaller enclosures that radiate outwards. The interior of the central enclosure appears to be largely empty, and there are noticeably fewer of the large surface stones which are so widespread across other parts of the survey area. The single clearly visible internal feature is located towards the north-east corner, and comprises a sub-circular bank, 8m in diameter and with a narrow opening on the north side. The bank itself stands up to 0.50m high, and is built from stone rubble, now with a luxuriant covering of moss. The interior of the feature is slightly sunken.

3.11 To the east, there is distinct cluster of small, apparently conjoined structures or enclosures, each defined by vegetated stone banks. At the west end of this group of structures, two banks define two sides of a sub-oval depression, 0.50m deep and c.12m long (**3**/**2**). To the east of this, there may be as many as four further conjoined structures or enclosures. The best preserved of these is D-shaped in plan (**3**/**3**), with no apparent entrance or break in the banks defining it. It measures 12m long by a maximum of 7m wide. The north side is continuous with a longer stretch of north-east/south-west aligned bank, which continues for a distance of at least 15m beyond the enclosure. It can possibly be traced as far as 55m to the east, where it enters an area of fragmentary remains, similar to those within the core area of the settlement, but much less well preserved (**3**/**4**). The principal visible feature here is a c.25m length of north-east/south-west aligned bank, running north-east down the gentle slope, but there is at least one earthwork that might represent a cairn with short lengths of bank running off two sides.

3.12 To the immediate south and west of the central enclosure, the remains of associated banks and features are also fragmentary, and difficult to interpret. There are fragmentary remains of low curvilinear banks to the south (**3**/**5**), which might once have formed radiating enclosures similar to those still visible to the north, together with at least one sub-circular feature c.8m in diameter (**3**/**6**). The remains to the west were perhaps once a cluster of smaller structures and enclosures similar to those described above at the east end of the central enclosure (see plate 5). Described from east to west, there appear to be three conjoined features comprising two sub-triangular enclosures with a possible sub-rectangular platform slightly above them to the west (**3**/**7**). To the south of these, a partly-surviving north-east/south-west aligned bank has further structures attached

to its north side; at the north-eastern end, there may be another D-shaped enclosure (**3**/**8**) similar (but slightly smaller) to that described above, with two sub-rectangular structures to the south-west. This area in particular might benefit from more detailed survey at a larger scale, when the vegetation is low.

3.13 As has been noted above, there may once have been attached enclosures radiating out from the central enclosure, and these are particularly well-preserved to its west and north sides. These potential enclosures average 30m wide internally, with their side banks diverging slightly away from the central enclosure. On average, these banks extend for a distance of 35m away from the edge of the central enclosure. Their northern limit appears to be defined by the top of the north-facing scarp forming the north edge of the terrace on which the settlement is located. The top of this scarp has been artificially enhanced with a stone rubble bank in at least two places. Internally, the radiating enclosures appear largely empty, although one contains a central cairn (1/7) that might actually form the remains of a structure. The west side of this enclosure comprises two banks running parallel to one another, with a narrow gap between; similar features within medieval complexes in the Yorkshire Dales have been suggested to have formed an arrangement whereby stock could be driven against a wall and directed through the gap into an adjacent enclosure or field. At least one north-east/south-west aligned bank can be seen continuing beyond and below the top of the north-facing scarp, terminating at a cairn (1/8). In addition, what may be a degraded stone bank is visible some distance to the north-west of the core area of the settlement, set back from the crest of another natural north-facing scarp. These features may suggest that the enclosures forming the core area of the settlement lay within a wider system of enclosures and fields, which are difficult to discern at present due to current levels of vegetation.

Holloways and Other Trackways (Site 4)

3.14 The survey area is crossed by numerous linear depressions of varying width and depth, some of which are clearly modern vehicle rutting most likely associated with the management of the moor for grouse shooting. The depressions are concentrated within the north-east and southern parts of the survey area, and it is noticeable that they avoid the terrace containing the prehistoric settlement (Site 3). This does not necessarily infer that some are contemporary with it, as other factors may have determined their route, such as the relative ease with which the ground could be traversed, or their eventual destination.

3.15 The two areas of most marked holloway earthworks are located to the north and west of the prehistoric settlement. The northern area (**4**/**1**) comprises approximately parallel, slightly curvilinear, depressions with a general north-west/south-east alignment (see plate 6). These holloways are most prominent where they cross a north-facing scarp, being up to 5m wide across the top and 2m deep, with near vertical sides. Within the survey area, the holloways have an average length of between 60m-70m. Once they have crested the scarp, they become much shallower and eventually fade, although their alignment may be continued for a distance of another 70m by a shallow depression which can be traced as far as a possible cairn (**2**/**8**). It is considered unlikely that these holloways have been created wholly by vehicle use, although they may of course have been used by vehicles subsequent to their formation.

3.16 The holloways within the western part of the survey area (**4**/**2**), like those in the northern area, are again most visible where they cross a north-facing scarp, in this case the one defining the north edge of the terrace on which the prehistoric

settlement is located. At c.4m wide and 0.60m deep, they are less prominent than those to the north. There are at least three holloways within this grouping (with another two shorter depressions to the immediate west), and they are visible for a distance of over 140m, all following the same curving north-west/south-east alignment.

3.17 The east ends of these holloways may once have been continuous with others which form the most extensive group of linear depressions and trackways within the survey area (**4**/**3**), a band of earthworks almost 300m in length and 100m wide, all on a west-north-west/east-south-east alignment. Some of these holloways are clearly relatively modern in origin, having being created by wheeled vehicles, but others may be older. Perhaps the most prominent is the holloway running along the north side of the group. The central portion of this holloway is represented by a relatively straight linear depression, 120m long, 4m wide and up to 0.70m deep. At its deepest, the depression is relatively steep-sided, but it has a more flattened profile towards the outer ends; there is a spread bank of a similar width running parallel to the western part. The central section may once have been continuous with further earthworks to the east and west. To the east, there are two parallel shallow linear depressions, with a concentration of large stones on a similar alignment on the north side. At least one of these stones (Site 5/1) has been deliberately set upright, but its relationship to the linear depressions is uncertain; indeed, they may go around it. Other stones here could have been thrown up or removed from their original positions when or as the linear depressions formed. To the west, there is a pair of similar but narrower linear depressions, again with some large stones to the north and south.

Stones (Site 5)

3.18 There are numerous stones of varying size scattered across the survey area, apparently deposited as a result of both natural processes and human activity. The survey attempted to record the position of all the visible larger stones (generally those more than 0.70m long, or projecting more than 0.50m above the ground surface), together with those stones which appeared to have been deliberately set on edge, or which may have been marked in some way. A total of 49 stones had their positions recorded; these are indicated on the survey plan but only two have been numbered individually where they were thought worthy of individual description. It should also be noted that there may be other large stones presently obscured by heather.

3.19 The most prominent stone (**5**/**1**; see plate 7) recorded within the survey area that has been deliberately stood upright is located to the east of a possible cairn (Site 2/13). This stone has a triangular form above the ground, and stands 0.80m high. It measures a maximum of 0.90m wide across the base, and is 0.50m deep. There are several shallow solution grooves to the eastern side, although they could have been artificially enhanced. Some 20m to the north-west, there is a stone bearing a possible cup mark (**5**/**2**). This stone is lying flat, and measures 0.50m long by 0.30m wide; the possible cup mark is positioned towards one of the long sides, and is 0.10m in diameter (see plate 8). Manby, King and Vyner (2003, 89) note that within the North York Moors, rock-art motifs are limited in scope being predominantly simple cup-marks, commonly incorporated into cairns and the kerb structures of barrows, although this is not necessarily borne out by Brown and Chappell's work (2005). The possible cup mark on this stone is very similar to the 'cupholes' noted on other larger stones at the Wheat Beck site (see below) (Browarska 1997, 40).

3.20 The majority of the other stones recorded within the survey area that may have been set upright are generally less prominent than the largest examples described above. For example, there are three to the south of a possible cairn (**2**/**3**) and on the north side of a trackway (**4**/**3**). All stand between 0.30m and 0.50m in height, and averaging 0.50m long and 0.30m wide.

3.21 Elsewhere, other clusters of recorded stones may indicate more extensive structures which are currently difficult to discern within areas of deep heather cover. Probably the best example lies to the west of the prehistoric settlement (Site 3), where seven stones were recorded within the heather here; they might form the most visible remnant of further enclosures or structures associated with the settlement itself. There are also areas where the stones occur less frequently. These are principally in and around the prehistoric settlement and within the cairns to the north-east, but there are also fewer visible stones to the south of a prominent linear depression (Site 4/3). The stones begin to become more evident again on the southern edge of the survey area, forming part of an extensive area of surface stones, shallow pits and scrapes which run at least as far as the Nine Stones monument.

Other Earthworks

Terraces

3.22 Two areas of possible terracing were recorded within the survey area. The first (**6**/**1**) is located towards the south-east corner, where there are at least four north-east facing banks or scarps, standing up to 0.70m high and spaced at 3m-4m centres. Although this area is crossed by numerous vehicle tracks and linear depressions (see Site 4/3), the possible terraces are on a slightly more acute north-west/south-east alignment. One of the terraces has a prominent stone that appears to have been set upright on it, similar in appearance to another example (Site 5/1) to the north. There are much lower north-east facing scarps on a similar alignment to the south, but it is possible that these (and perhaps also the terraces themselves) might reflect underlying geology or the weathering of natural landforms.

3.23 The second area of possible terracing (**6**/**2**) lies almost at the opposite end of the survey area, just beyond its north-west corner. Here, there are three parallel north-facing scarps, rather denuded and less than 0.50m in height, but perhaps retaining fragments of stone-facing or edging. They are set on a slight north-east/south-west alignment, and may once have been associated with the fragmentary remains of a stone bank to the east, set close to the edge of a natural north-facing scarp.

Banks

3.24 In the south-west part of the survey area, there are several features resembling spread banks (**7**), sometimes with a slight depression or ditch running parallel to one side. These banks are all set on a north-west/south-east alignment, very similar to that noted in the area of possible terracing (Site 6/1) to the east. They are slightly sinuous in plan, up to 20m in length, and stand up to 0.70m high.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Given the apparent lack of previous detailed archaeological survey on Thimbleby Moor or in the immediate surrounding area, it is difficult to draw anything other than very broad conclusions about the landscape recorded by the survey. Nevertheless, a number of suggestions can be made.

4.2 The most obvious one is that Thimbleby Moor preserves a complex and almost certainly multi-period archaeological landscape. The local natural topography was an important factor in the location and organisation of the prehistoric settlement at the core of the survey area, which made use of a terrace with a north-facing scarp as a boundary to some of the smaller enclosures radiating out from the central enclosure. Although it is difficult to find published parallels for this form of settlement in the North York Moors, the settlement does appear similar to parts of that recorded on the south side of Wheat Beck, on Locker Low Moor some 3km to the south-east of Thimbleby Moor (Spratt 1993b, 115-116 & 118; Browarska 1997). This site appears to comprise a mixed farming settlement with a round hut, enclosures, long field walls, fields, lynchets and tumuli. However, the Wheat Beck site is more complex and extensive than that recorded at Thimbleby, although it was noted above that elements of the Thimbleby site do extend beyond the survey area, and it is quite possible that additional features remain beneath the heather. Both sites represent the characteristic 'valley settlements' which usually lie in the extreme heads of the dales, and which are very common in the Snilesworth/Hawnby area (Spratt 1993b, 115).

4.3 It is possible that some of the holloways recorded within the survey area relate to the prehistoric settlement, but most are more likely to be post-medieval in date, perhaps representing former routes striking out across the moor to the south-east from Osmotherley - some broadly east-west tracks are depicted across the moor on Jeffreys' 1771 map but these had been abandoned by the time of the Ordnance Survey 1857 map (see figure 3). There was also an alum works in Big Wood to the north-west of the survey area, and these north-west/south-east aligned holloways may have been associated with moving material to and from these works. The southern half of the survey area, with its numerous linear depressions, possible terracing and banks, is perhaps the most confusing. While many of the features recorded here are likely to relate to vehicle usage in the second half of the 20th century, some may be much earlier.

4.4 The apparent distinct division between the area of the settlement and the cairnfield to north-east must also be significant. If the two are contemporary, then the placing of the cairns away from the settlement may represent the division of the landscape into different zones, and these zones may have been imbued with ritual and religious as well as agricultural significance. Alternatively, if the two are not contemporary, then it is possible that cairns were cleared to either build or make way for the settlement. An additional walkover survey to the east, north and west of the present survey area (not to the south as this is badly disturbed by plantation) would be useful to try to establish the extent of the cairnfield, and to investigate the area of pits/surface stone scatters between the survey area and the 'Nine Stones' monument.

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1857 Ordnance Survey 6" to 1 mile map sheet 57 (surveyed 1854)

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6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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6.2 The topographical survey was undertaken by Shaun Richardson (EDAS) and Dave Kempley (Benchmark Surveys), with the resulting data being hand-enhanced by Shaun Richardson. Shaun Richardson produced the fieldwork records and photographs, and a draft report, and Ed Dennison completed the survey drawings. The draft report benefited greatly from comments made by the NYMNPA archaeological staff. The final report was produced by Ed Dennison, with whom the responsibility for any errors remains.

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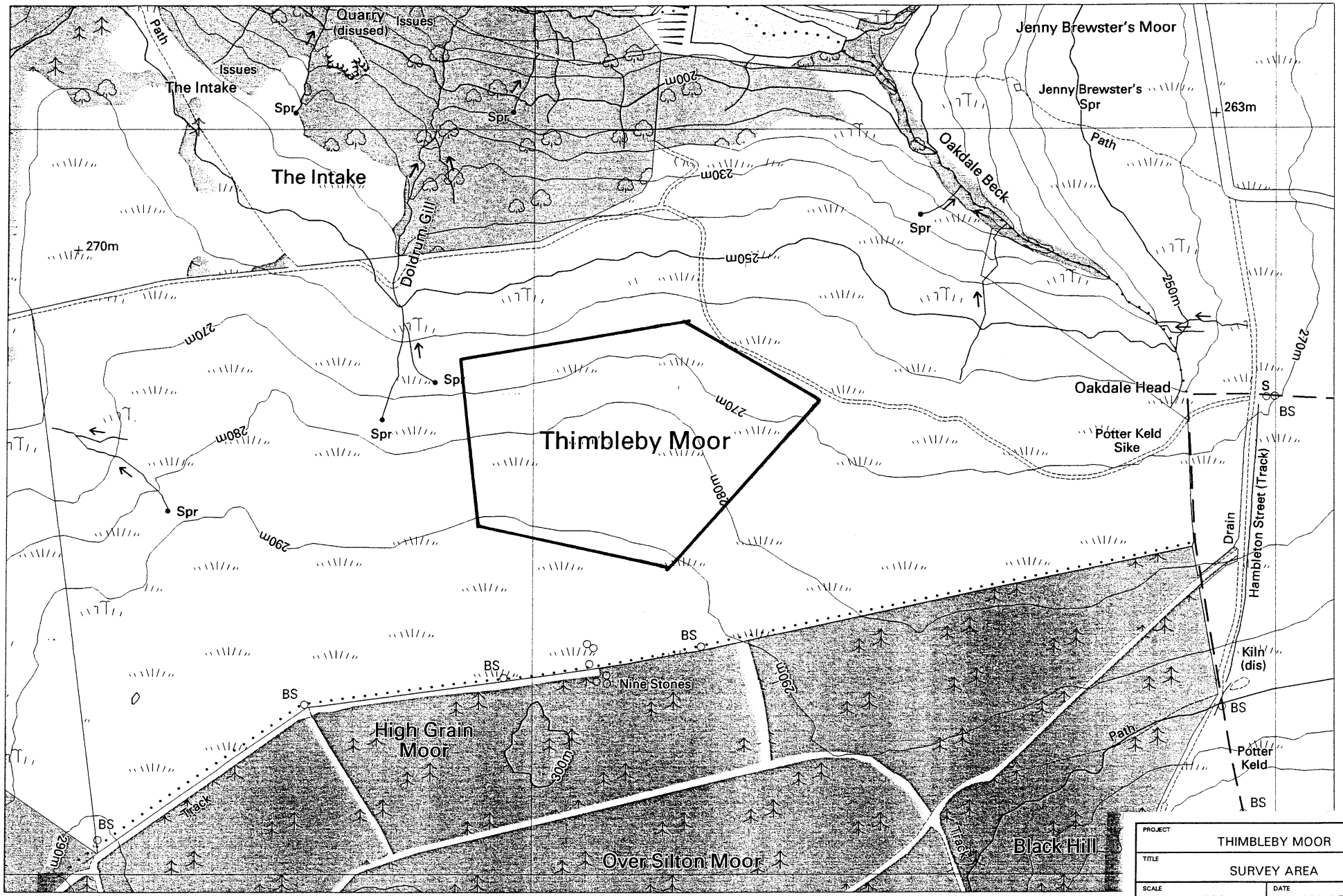
SCALE: NTS	DATE: MAY 2011
EDAS	FIGURE: 1



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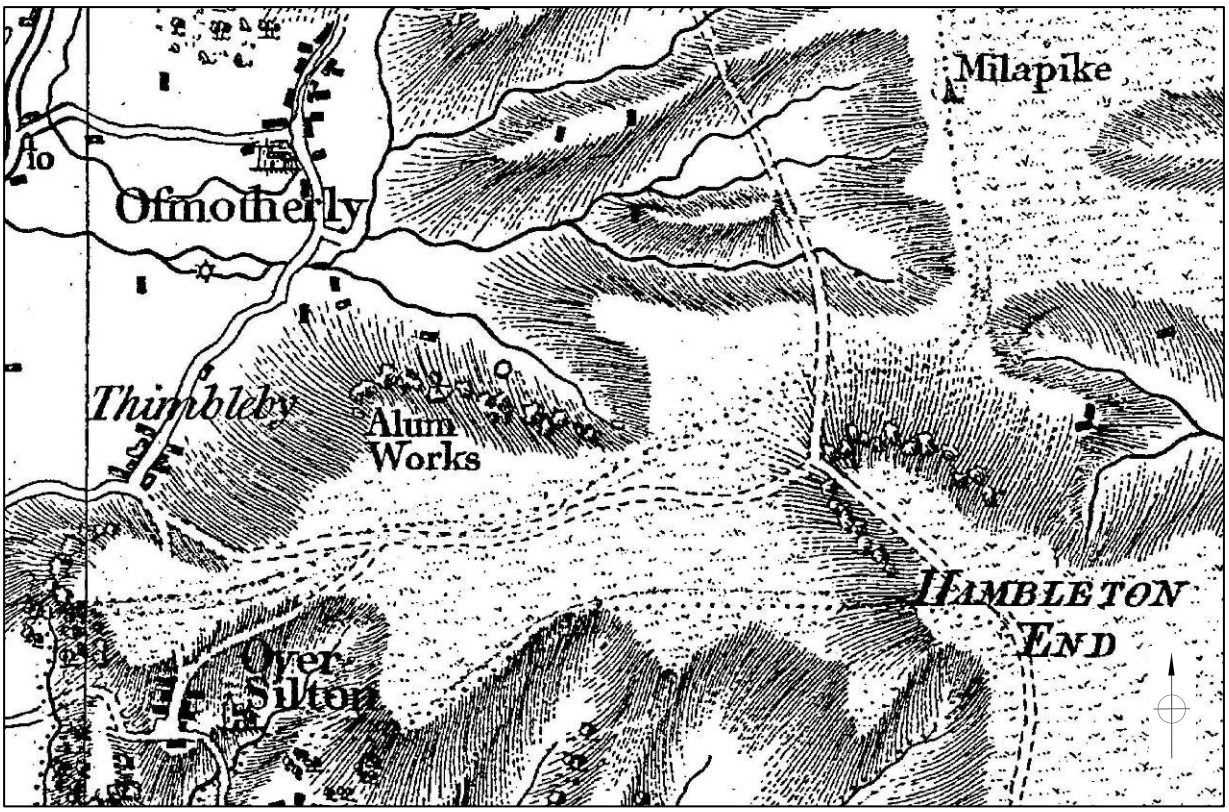
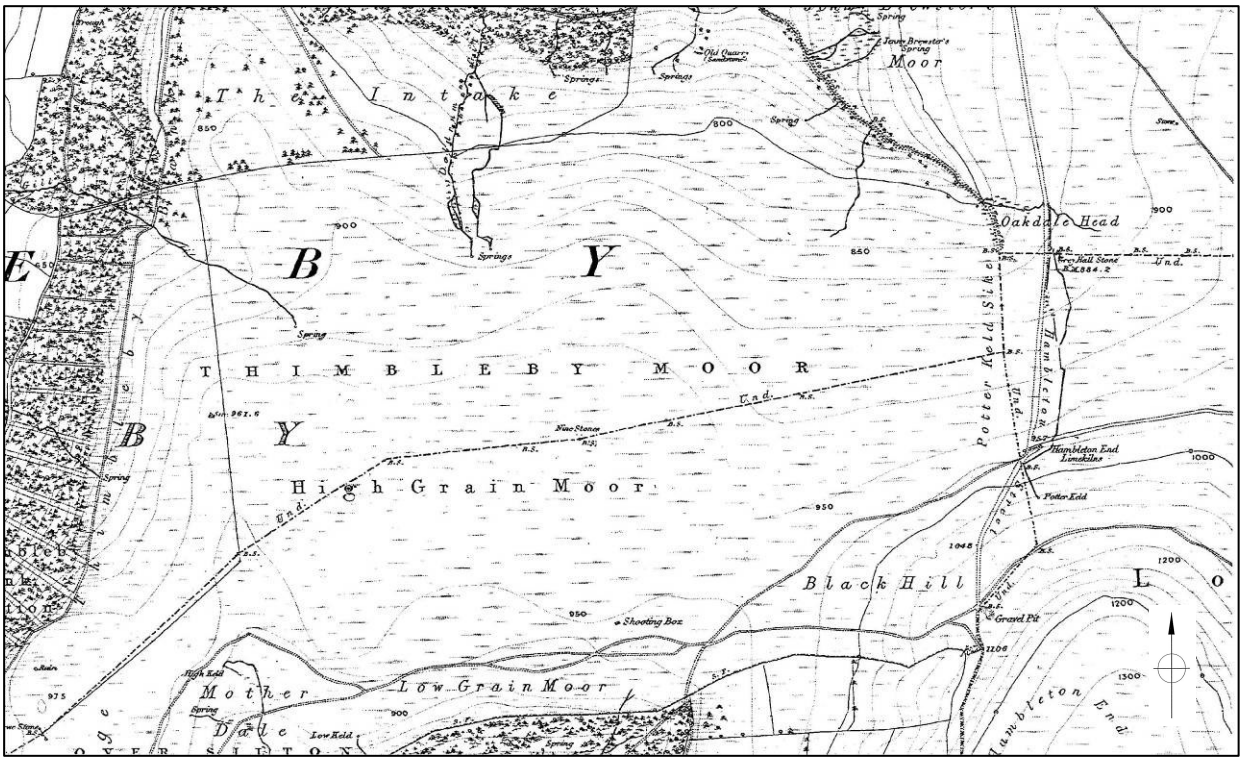
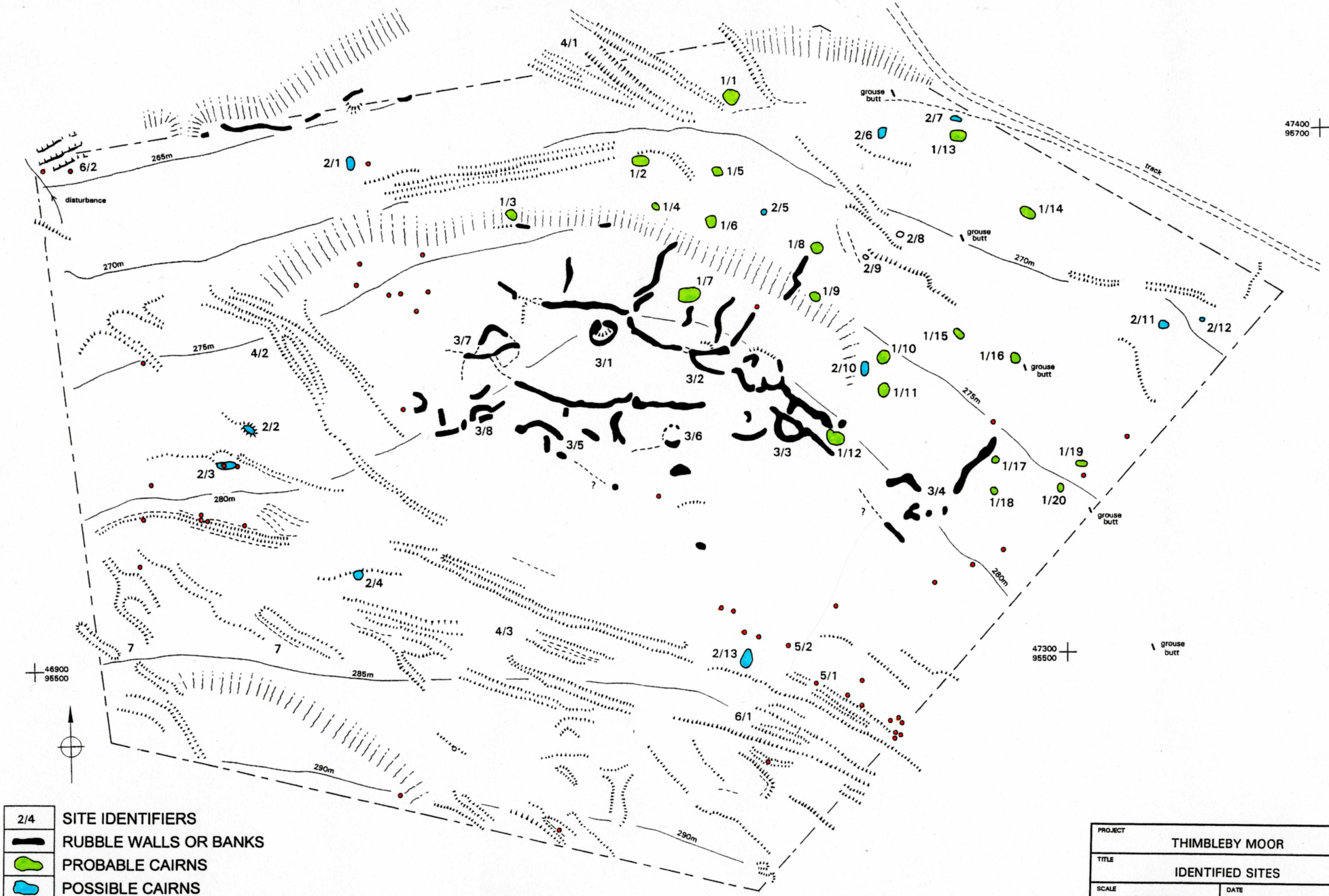
TITLE	SURVEY AREA
SCALE 1:5000	DATE MAY 2011
EDAS	FIGURE 2





Top: Jefferys' 1771 map (plate 3).
Bottom: Ordnance Survey 1857 6" map sheet 57.

PROJECT	
THIMBLEBY MOOR	
TITLE	
HISTORIC MAPS	
SCALE	DATE
NTS	MAY 2011
EDAS	FIGURE 3



PROJECT	THIMBLEBY MOOR
TITLE	IDENTIFIED SITES
SCALE: AS SHOWN	DATE: MAY 2011
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Plate 1: Cairn 1/12, looking NE (photo 2/379).

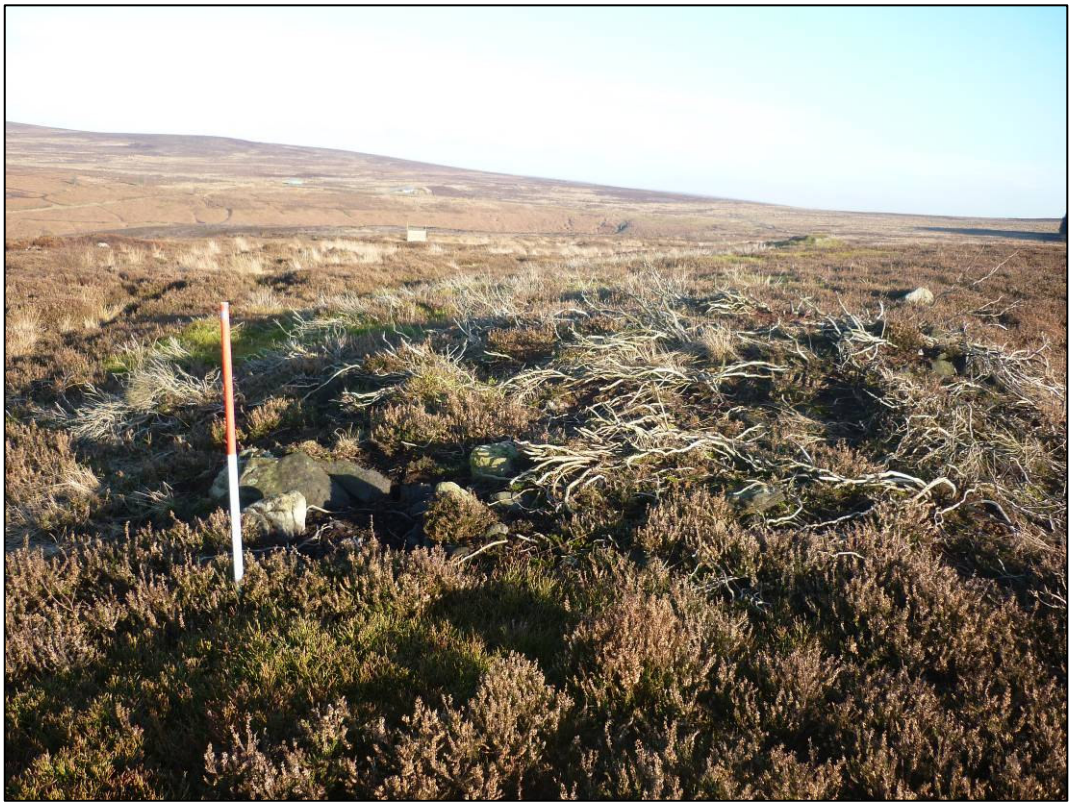

Plate 2: Cairn 1/2, looking E (photo 1/350).

Plate 3: Cairn 1/10, looking N (photo 2/381).

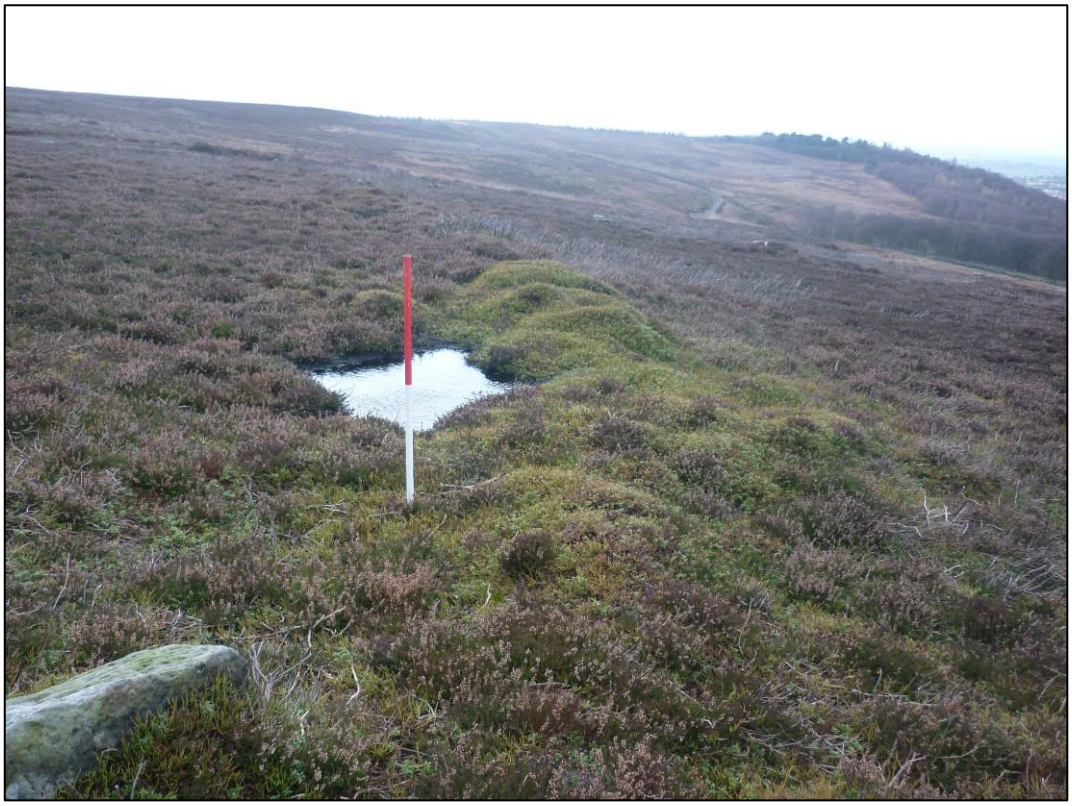

Plate 4: Typical vegetated wall line within settlement core (3/1), looking W (photo 2/375).

Plate 5: Possible settlement enclosures (3/7), W end of settlement core, looking NW (photo 2/373).

Plate 6: Typical holloway of group 4/1, looking NE (photo 1/349).

Plate 7: Standing stone 5/1, looking SE (photo 2/367).

Plate 8: Possible cup marked stone 5/2 (photo 2/369).

APPENDIX 1

Photographic Register

Film 1: Colour digital photographs taken 3rd February 2011
Film 2: Colour digital photographs taken 4th February 2011

Film	*Frame*	*Subject*	*Scale*
1	348	Cairn (1/1), looking NE	1m
1	349	Typical holloway of group 4/1, N edge of survey area, looking NW	1m
1	350	Cairn (1/2), looking E	1m
1	351	Detail of edging to cairn (1/2), looking NE	1m
1	352	Typical possible cairn (2/1), looking N	1m
1	353	Stone within possible cairn (2/3), looking N	1m
1	354	Typical possible upright stone in W part of survey area, looking SW	1m
1	355	Typical possible upright stone in W part of survey area, looking SE	1m
1	357	Typical possible upright stone in W part of survey area, looking NE	1m
2	359	Typical possible upright stone in W part of survey area, looking S	1m
2	360	Typical possible cairn (2/2), W part of survey area	1m
2	361	Possible spread bank (7), SW part of survey area, looking NW	1m
2	362	Possible upright stone within possible terracing (6/1), SE part of survey area, looking S	1m
2	363	Possible terracing (6/1), SE part of survey area, looking S	1m
2	364	Possible terracing (6/1), SE part of survey area, looking NE	1m
2	365	Typical 'pit' and stones feature covering area between S edge of survey area and Nine Stones, looking SE	1m
2	367	Standing stone (5/1), looking SE	1m
2	368	Possible cup marked stone (5/2), looking W	1m
2	369	Detail of possible cup marked stone (5/2), from above	1m
2	370	Detail of possible cup marked stone (5/2), from above	0.30m
2	371	Typical possible upright stone, SE end of survey area, looking SE	1m
2	372	Most prominent of E/W linear features (4/3) in central part of survey area, looking W	1m
2	373	Possible prehistoric settlement enclosures (3/7), W end of settlement core, looking NW	1m
2	374	Sub-circular feature within settlement core (3/1), looking S	1m
2	375	Typical vegetated wall line within settlement core, looking W	1m
2	378	Cairn (1/7), looking N	1m
2	379	Cairn (1/12), looking NE	1m
2	380	Circular feature north of cairn (1/12), looking N	1m
2	381	Cairn (1/10), looking N	1m


1-348.JPG


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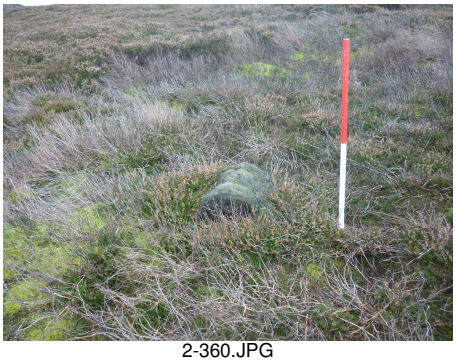
2-359.JPG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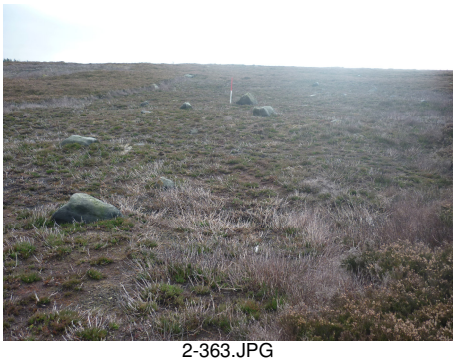
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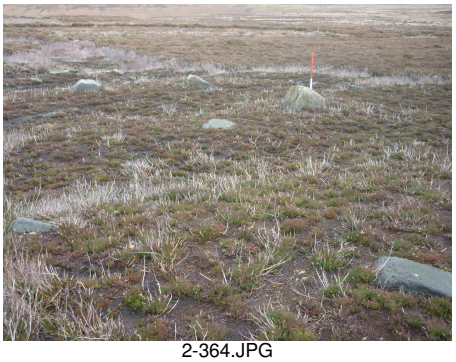
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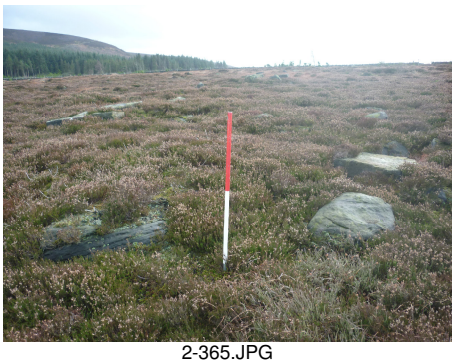
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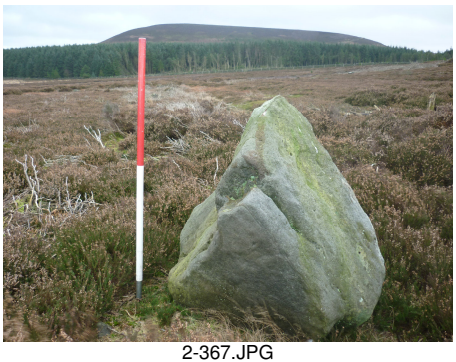
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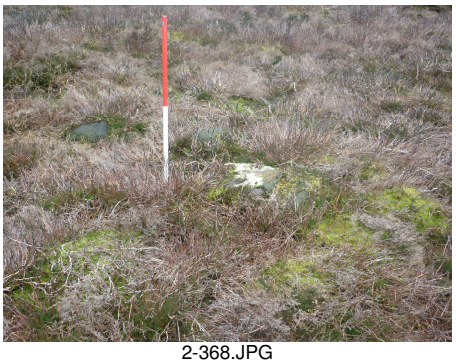
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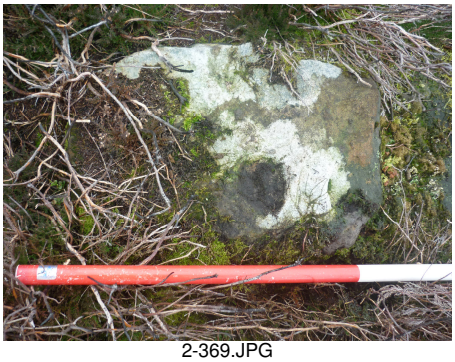
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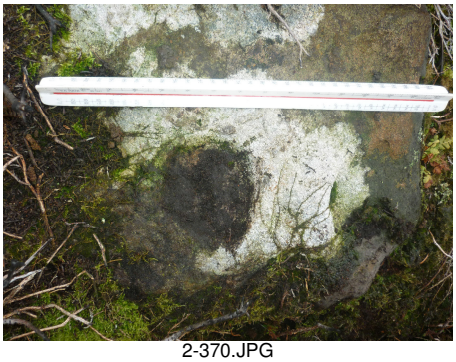
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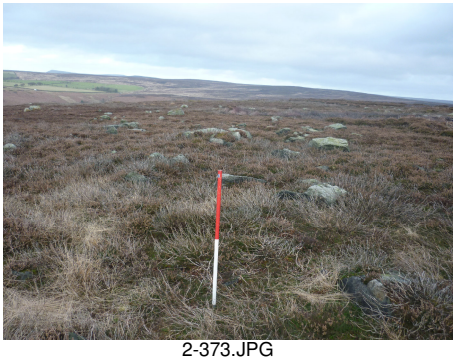
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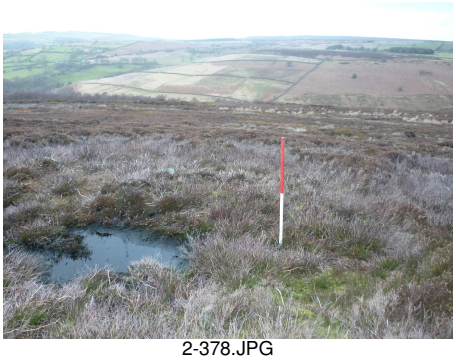
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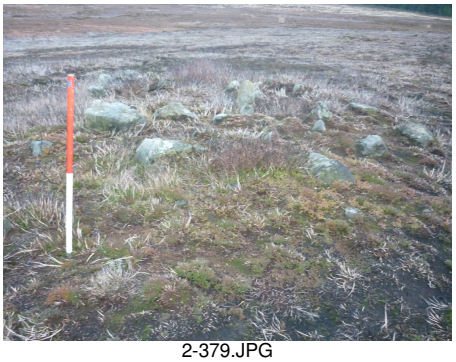
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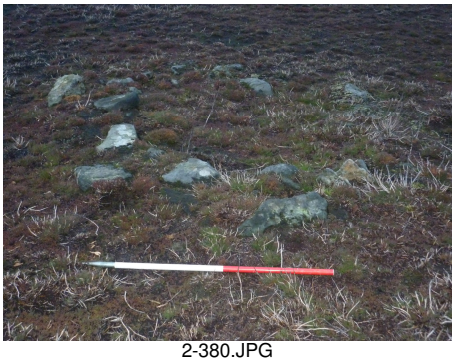
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APPENDIX 2

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF A PREHISTORIC LANDSCAPE, THIMBLEBY MOOR, THIMBLEBY, NORTH YORKSHIRE

EDAS METHODS STATEMENT

Introduction

An archaeological survey is required of the remains of a prehistoric landscape, comprising small irregular fields, ruined wall alignments, cairns and at least one enclosure, on Thimbleby Moor, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 473 956 centred). The area of the required survey covers c.11 hectares and the work is required to provide background information and details of the archaeological monuments on the moor, to increase knowledge and to assist with future management strategies. The archaeological survey will correspond to a Level 3 survey as defined by English Heritage (2007 *Understanding the Archaeology of Landscapes: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*).

Objective of the Project

The objective of the project is:

- to produce an archaeological survey of the landscape, to aid future management and understanding.

Survey Methodology

Phase 1 desk-top survey

Information relating to the prehistoric and other monuments within the survey area will be obtained from the North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPA) and English Heritage's National Monuments Record. It is expected that this information will comprise records of any previous research and mapping (including previous walkover surveys), aerial photographs, past management and land ownership records, and historic maps and plans. It is assumed that these organisations will not charge for any data supply, and that the NYMNPA would be able to provide Ordnance Survey base maps.

No other historic, cartographic or documentary research will be carried out (for example at the North Yorkshire Record Office), unless specifically requested. If this work is required, additional charges may be made.

If possible, the Phase 1 desk-top survey would be completed in advance of the Phase 2 survey work, so that it might inform and enhance the subsequent site work.

Phase 2 detailed site survey

A detailed Level 3 survey of the whole of the survey area would be carried out to record the position and form of all features considered to be of archaeological and/or historic interest.

The survey would be carried out using EDM total station equipment. It would be a divorced survey, although sufficient information would be gathered to allow the survey area to be readily located through the use of surviving structures, tracks, fences, walls, water courses and other topographical features. The survey would record the position at ground level of all earthworks, structures, wall remnants and revetments, water courses, paths, stone and rubble scatters, fences, hedges and other boundary features, and any other features considered to be of archaeological or historic interest. The survey would also record areas of differential vegetation and areas of major damage/erosion.

The site survey would be integrated into the Ordnance Survey national grid by resection to points of known co-ordinates. Where possible, heights AOD would be obtained by reference to the nearest OS benchmark/spot height, and general contours plotted across the site. Control points would be observed through trigonometric intersection from survey stations on a traverse around and through the site.

On completion of the EDM survey, the field data would be plotted and re-checked on-site in a separate operation. Any amendments or additions would be surveyed by hand measurement, and the results digitised back into the electronic survey data.

The resulting site survey would be produced at a scale of 1:100 and/or 1:500 (depending on the complexity and density of identified monuments) and presented as an interpretative hachure plan using conventions analogous to those used by English Heritage. Depending on the client's specific requirements, the final product arising from the site survey would either be a hand-drawn hachure plan or an AutoCad (or equivalent) electronic survey drawing. Larger scale plans, at 1:10,000 and 1:2,500 scale, would be used to put the survey area into context (OS map bases to be provided by NYMNPA).

Each identified site or complex within the survey area would be given a unique site number and description, using pro forma record sheets compiled from an Access database (see Appendix 1 below). The pro forma record sheet includes a summary description and preliminary interpretation of the extant remains (e.g. dimensions, plan, form, function, date, sequence of development), locational information (including ten figure grid references obtained from OS map bases, survey data or hand-held GPS systems), mention of relevant documentary, cartographic or other evidence (if applicable), and management details such as an assessment of current condition and threats. Liaison would be undertaken with the NYMNPA to ensure that the database format, as well as keywords etc, would be compatible with the NYMNPA HER.

Each identified site or complex would also be photographically recorded using a digital camera with 10 megapixel resolution. English Heritage photographic guidelines would be followed and each photograph would normally be provided with a scale. More general digital photographs would also be taken showing the landscape context of the area and of specific sites. All photographs would be clearly numbered and labelled with the subject, orientation, date taken and photographer's name, and would be cross referenced to digital files etc.

Survey Products

The precise nature of the products arising from the archaeological survey has yet to be determined. However, it is envisaged that a survey report and archive will be required.

Archive survey report

An archive survey report for the site will be produced, based on the structured gazetteer of identified numbered components. The report will assemble and summarise the available evidence for the survey area in an ordered form, synthesise the data, comment on the quality and reliability of the evidence, and how it might need to be supplemented by further site work or desk-based research.

It is envisaged that the report would include some or all of the following:

- a contents list;
- acknowledgements;
- a non-technical executive summary;
- site code/project number;
- dates of fieldwork visits;
- national grid reference and address;
- overall site plan;

- statutory designations;
- a brief account of the project plan, research objectives, survey methodology, procedures and equipment used;
- details of the archaeological background to the site;
- an account of the recorded archaeological features within the site, and of the evidence supporting any interpretation, cross referenced to the general site plan(s);
- preliminary conclusions, including an assessment of the significance of the identified sites, and the importance of the findings in relation to the other remains on the site and in the region as a whole;
- details of any identified management issues and preliminary recommendations for improvement;
- a bibliography and list of sources consulted;
- selected colour digital images, at no less than 5" by 4";
- selected figures;
- final survey drawings, reduced to A4 or A3 size.

The survey report would also contain various appendices, including the structured gazetteer of sites/components, photographic registers and catalogues, and a copy of this Methods Statement, together with the details of any departures from that design.

The number and distribution of reports would be determined by the client. It is expected that a draft copy of the report would be made available for discussion with the NYMNPA and/or Natural England. Appropriate copies of the final approved survey report would then be provided as hard copy (comb bound reports), as well as a CD containing electronic copies of the report (as pdf files) and digital copies of the gazetteer/database and photographs.

Archive deposition

A properly ordered and indexed project archive (paper, magnetic and plastic media) would be deposited with the NYMNPA HER at the end of the project. It is expected that the archive will contain field and final ink drawings, written accounts, structured catalogues and indices, and project management records. Any drawn records would be presented as wet ink plots on standard "A" size matt surface stable polyester film sheets.

OASIS Compliance

EDAS subscribe to English Heritage's OASIS (Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations) project, and all EDAS projects are fully OASIS compliant. Prior to the start of the fieldwork, an OASIS online record will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. All parts of the OASIS online form will be subsequently completed for submission to English Heritage and the NYMNPA HER. This will include an uploaded pdf version of the entire report.

Modifications

The programme of recording work may be modified in accordance with the professional judgement of the staff undertaking the work, insofar as the overall provisions and objectives of this methods statement would not be changed. Any variations in the project would be discussed and agreed in advance with the client and Natural England.

Health and Safety, and Insurance

EDAS would comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 while undertaking the project. A full copy of their Health and Safety Policy is available on request.

The site is privately owned and EDAS would indemnify the landowners in respect of their legal liability for physical injury to persons or damage to property arising on site in connection with the survey, to the extent of EDAS's Public Liability Insurance Cover (£5,000,000). If required, a risk assessment could also be produced prior to any site work.

Programme

The project would be undertaken by EDAS, who are registered as an archaeological organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists.

The project would be undertaken by Ed Dennison and Shaun Richardson of EDAS. Both have some 20 years experience in non-intrusive earthwork and topographical survey, and they have undertaken numerous walkover and detailed surveys of specific monuments and of areas of historic landscape throughout Yorkshire. Within the North York Moors National Park, these surveys have included several farm/estate management walkover surveys, for example in Glaisdale and Westerdale (1998), Bransdale (2001) and at Cawthorn Woods (2005), as well as detailed topographical surveys of archaeological monuments, for example Cawthorn Camps (1998), Hood Hill Castle (2000), various prehistoric remains on Lockton High Moor (2004) and Waterfall Gill Pond near Scawton (2009). EDAS have also undertaken several erosion surveys on archaeological monuments for the NYMNPA, for example Danby Beacon (1997), Levisham Moor Bercary site (2001) and the Horcum Dyke (2002), and have recently completed a survey of a prehistoric cairnfield complex at Scotland Farm, Hawnby (2010). Detailed CV's can be provided if necessary.

The nature of the ground conditions means that it is imperative that the site survey work is undertaken during periods of low vegetation growth. The site work would therefore ideally be carried out in December 2010-January 2011, depending on speed of commission and other access arrangements, with draft survey information available as soon as possible thereafter and reporting complete by the end of March 2011.

Ed Dennison, EDAS
25 November 2010

APPENDIX 1: EDAS SURVEY GAZETTEER

The pro forma gazetteer provides details of each item of archaeological, architectural or historic interest occurring within the survey area. The following explains the terms that are used.

Within the survey area, each identifiable site or component is allocated a number. The sites or components are based on coherent units, such as a building or specific earthwork, and site/component reference numbers are used throughout the associated survey report and accompanying drawings.

The *Location* section identifies the component and provides sufficient information for it to be readily located.

i) Grid reference: the national grid reference (NGR) of the component given as a 10 figure reference (i.e. to the nearest metre). The NGR is qualified as to whether it is accurate, centred, general or approximate, or linear. It should be noted that for linear components, the quoted NGR only relates to the survey area and may not be their full extent.

ii) Height (AOD): the height in metres, to the nearest whole meter, above Ordnance Datum of each component. For some components a height range is given.

iii) Parish: the current Local Authority parish in which the site or component is located.

The *Concordance* section provides a link to any other identifiers recorded elsewhere for the same site (e.g. SMR and NMR number).

The *Description* section provides information concerning the appearance and other aspects of each site or component within the survey area. "n/a" signifies that this information is not appropriate to a particular site or component.

i) Type: the type of site/component, from a keyword list based on that produced for English Heritage's National Monuments Record.

ii) Form: the current form of the site/component, e.g. earthwork, documented site etc.

iii) Period general and Period specific: the period or date of the site/component, from a keyword list based on that produced for English Heritage's National Monuments Record, e.g. Post-medieval/19th century.

iv) Land use on and around the site: from a keyword list based on that produced for English Heritage's National Monuments Record, e.g. pasture.

v) Vegetation cover: from a keyword list based on that produced for English Heritage's National Monuments Record, e.g. pasture.

vi) Inspected by: the name of the inspector and the date on which the site/component was inspected by EDAS as part of the project.

vii) Photographed by: the name of the photographer and the date on which the site/component was photographed by EDAS as part of the project.

viii) Surveyed by: the name of the surveyor and the date on which the site/component was surveyed by EDAS as part of the project.

ix) Description: a description of the site/component. This includes a simple description together with plan form, dimensions, any recognisable sequence of development, and an interpretative discussion, covering function, date and historic background where appropriate and known. Where external bibliographic, cartographic or other sources of information are used, these are referenced to a specific source by number.

x) References: where external sources of information are used in the description above, these are referenced by number to a specific source or details of that source.

The *Management* section provides basic information concerning specific conditions and threats identified for the component at time of inspection, and any recommendations concerning management.

i) Site importance: an assessment of the importance of the site/component (e.g. National, Regional, Local etc).

ii) Condition: an assessment of the condition of the site/component at the time of the survey. Condition utilises a condition grading system (e.g. above average, good, medium, low etc) as well as further descriptive text as necessary.

iii) Vulnerability: an assessment of the vulnerability of the site/component at the time of the survey. This also utilises a grading system (e.g. high, medium, low etc) as well as further descriptive text as necessary.

iv) Damaged by: Descriptive text which details the causes of damage to the site/component, at the time of the survey (e.g. stock or human erosion, vehicular damage etc).

v) Recommendations: a brief summary to suggest a management strategy for the site/component.

Name of Project: site gazetteer

Site No: **Site Name:**

Location

NGR 1: **Qualifier1:** **Height (AOD):**

NGR 2: **Qualifier2:** **Parish:**

Concordance

SMR/HER No: **NMR No:** **SAM No:** **Other:**

Description

Type: **Form:**

Period general: **Period specific:**

Land use on site: **Land use around site:**

Inspected by: **Vegetation cover:**

Photographed by: **Film/Frame No:**

Surveyed by:

Description:

References:

Management

Site importance: **Condition:** **Vunerability:**

Damaged by:

Specific management recommendations:

First compiled by: **Last updated:**