

**MAP  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE LTD**

**Manor Farm  
Flotmanby Lane  
Muston  
Filey  
North Yorkshire  
TA 0810 7988**

**Flotmanby Carr Bird Scrapes  
MAP 10.49.2011**

**Archaeological Strip and Record Report**

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<b>Date:</b> 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2011	<b>Date:</b>

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**Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Summary**

*An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out by MAP Archaeological Practice Ltd on land to the rear of Manor Farm, Flotmanby Lane, Muston, Filey, North Yorkshire (TA 0801 7988) on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2011 as part of the Cayton and Flixton Carrs Wetland Project. The work involved monitoring four bird scrapes of varying sizes opened across two fields to the north of Manor Farm, following the success of two scrapes undertaken in the previous year. The total area covered by the new scrapes was 1440m<sup>2</sup>.*

*No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered during the Watching Brief.*

**1. Introduction**

1.1 This report sets out the results of an Archaeological Watching Brief that was carried out on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2011, at Manor Farm, Flotmanby Lane, Muston, Filey, North Yorkshire, (TA 0801 7988, Fig. 1) which involved monitoring the works associated with the creation of a series of “scrapes” – shallow depressions in which standing water would accumulate seasonally to provide nesting habitats for varying species of wader birds. The Watching Brief was undertaken as part of the Cayton and Flixton Carrs Wetland Project. Due to the archaeological significance of the Vale of Pickering landscape and the organic preservation offered by rich peat deposits, North Yorkshire

County Council ruled that all scrapes should be archaeological monitored.

1.2 The Vale of Pickering floodplain and the former shoreline of historic wetland areas form an important undesignated archaeological resource. Large areas of farmland have not been investigated for archaeology but may contain undiscovered Historic Environment Features. In order to comply with Natural England guidelines on the protection of heritage in Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) activities an Archaeological Watching Brief was deemed the appropriate measure in order to take reasonable steps to ensure that any archaeological information uncovered in the process of HLS capital works was recorded.

1.3 All work was funded by Mr Chapman.

1.4 All maps within this report have been produced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Licence No. AL 50453A.

## **2. Site Description**

2.1 The site lies to the west of Muston village, on the northern side of Flotmanby Lane, Filey, North Yorkshire (Fig. 1). The site is bounded by agricultural land to the north, east and west and Flotmanby Lane to the south.

2.2 The Watching Brief was undertaken across the width of two separate fields. The west field lay to the north of Manor Farm, whereas the east field (referred to as Old Scurf) lay to the north-east. Both fields ran east to west and had been separated by a series of drainage dykes. Due to the low lying area the fields had retained a permanent sward of grassland used for sheep grazing. The area to the south of the east field is characterised by a series of natural spring wells.

### **3. Historical and Archaeological Background**

- 3.1 One of the most important Early Mesolithic sites in Europe lies due west of the site, Star Carr. The wetlands which formerly covered large areas in the Vale of Pickering have internationally important archaeological significance on account of discovery of Late Paleolithic and Early Mesolithic activity. Work over the last 35 years at Star Carr has produced evidence for activity in this region dating between 9000BC and 8500BC. Most importantly are perhaps the high volume of preserved organic material including worked timbers, plant and faunal material as well as worked flint which allows archaeologists to be able to reconstruct the environment at that time. Recent discoveries have also included preserved wooden trackways and platforms which could suggest the earliest evidence of carpentry in Europe (Conneller *et al*, 2011).
- 3.2 On the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map the site lay towards the west of Muston village and was referred to as East Flotmanby, it is not until the 1970 Edition that the site becomes Manor Farm.
- 3.3 A watching brief was undertaken by the Landscape Research Centre during August (2010) at Manor Farm, Muston. A total of nine bird scrapes were opened up across two fields covered with deep peat. Although these scrapes yielded no archaeological material to note the scrapes to the south of the fields proved to be successful in accumulating standing water almost instantly.
- 3.4 Similar bird scrape projects have been conducted by the Landscape Research Centre further west of the site, at Willerby Carr (2011) and Potter Brompton (2010). Sixty-four scrapes were excavated at Willerby Carr, no archaeological evidence was observed. The sixty-three scrapes observed at Potter Brompton revealed evidence of peat fires as well as large amounts of timber laying at the interface of the peat

surface and underlying water-laid clays. The deposits implied areas of open water possibly related to the post-glacial lake Pickering.

- 3.5 Due west of the site at Church Farm, Folkton, a series of twenty-two bird scrapes were undertaken by MAP (2011) in September of this year. The scrapes failed to yield any evidence of archaeological activity.

#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

- 4.1 The aims of the Archaeological Recording Brief were to observe the excavation of a series of bird scrapes and to record and recover any archaeological remains on site, and to prepare a report summarising the results of the work.

#### **5. Methodology**

- 5.1 The archaeological work involved the supervision of the excavation of a series of bird scrapes- shallow depressions in which standing water would accumulate seasonally to encourage wading bird populations to reoccupy former wetland landscapes. The bird scrapes were linear, circular and rectangular in shape and designed to form a natural pond like impression. The scrapes were deliberately positioned to avoid any 'known' archaeological features or sites and methodically placed following the success of two scrapes undertaken in previous years (PIs. 2 & 5). The new scrape within the west field was an extension of previous scrape No. 17 undertaken during the watching brief in 2010 (: PI. 2). Whereas the three scrapes within the east field surrounded a previous scrape (PI. 5) undertaken at the start of 2010. Three scrapes were chosen for the east field because the field contains a vast amount of rush plants and disturbing this area of grassland would be most cost effective for the farmer. The field also lies close to a series of natural springs, which should encourage the standing water to accumulate.

- 5.2 The bird scrapes were created with the use of a tracked 360<sup>0</sup> mechanical excavator, fitted with wide ditching bucket, operating under close archaeological supervision.
- 5.3 All work was carried out in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct (IFA 1998).
- 5.4 A photographic record of the monitored works was maintained throughout the Recording Brief on a high-resolution digital camera.

## **6. Results (Pls. 3, 6, 7, & 8)**

- 6.1 A total of four bird scrapes were opened up, across the two fields. The total area covered by the scrapes was 1440m<sup>2</sup>.
- 6.2 Scrape 17 was extended west in the most westerly of the two Flotmanby Carr fields. The scrape was narrow and linear, 360m<sup>2</sup>. Turf and topsoil, up to 0.15m in depth lay directly above the black waterlogged peat. The average depth of the scrape was 0.30m (Pl. 3). Occasional fragments of modern ceramic field drains were also intermittently revealed across the length of the scrape.
- 6.3 The three scrapes in the most easterly of the two Flotmanby Carr fields covered a total area of 1080m<sup>2</sup>. The Scrape in the north-east corner of the field was small and circular (Pl. 6), the average depth up to 0.40m. Turf and topsoil, up to 0.15m, lay above the black desiccated peat up to 0.35m in depth. A linear scrape (Pl. 7) running east to west in the south of the most easterly field had an average depth of 0.35m, the scrape was notably wetter than the circular shaped scrape possibly due to its location close to the natural spring wells. The last scrape excavated was more rectangular in shape (Pl. 8) and lay in the south-west corner of the east field. The average depth of the scrape was 0.35m with its deepest point reaching 0.45m, turf and topsoil lay above the black wet peat. A ceramic modern land drain ran though the centre



of the scrape. No evidence of peat burning was revealed in any of the scrapes.

- 6.4 No archaeological features, deposit or finds were revealed during the Watching Brief.

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1. The absence of any archaeological deposits may be due to the relative shallowness of the bird scrapes, which only at best grazed the top of natural peat deposits, through which archaeological features would be cut. Archaeological observation was also at times made difficult with the nature of the desiccated peat, which tended to break up in large lumps than exposed in clean spits. It should also be made clear that although the programme of scrapes was intended to avoid any 'known' archaeological sites the absence of any archaeological features, finds or deposits should not be deemed an absence of activity in this region.

## 8. Bibliography

- |                               |      |  |
|-------------------------------|------|--|
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| The Landscape Research Centre | 2010 | Flotmanby Carr Bird Scrapes. Archaeological Watching Brief.  |

The Landscape Research Centre	2010	Potter Brompton Bird Scrapes. Report of the Archaeological Watching Brief.
The Landscape Research Centre	2011	Report covering an Archaeological Watching Brief during the creation of a number of Bird Scrapes at Willerby Carr.



Figure 1. Site Location

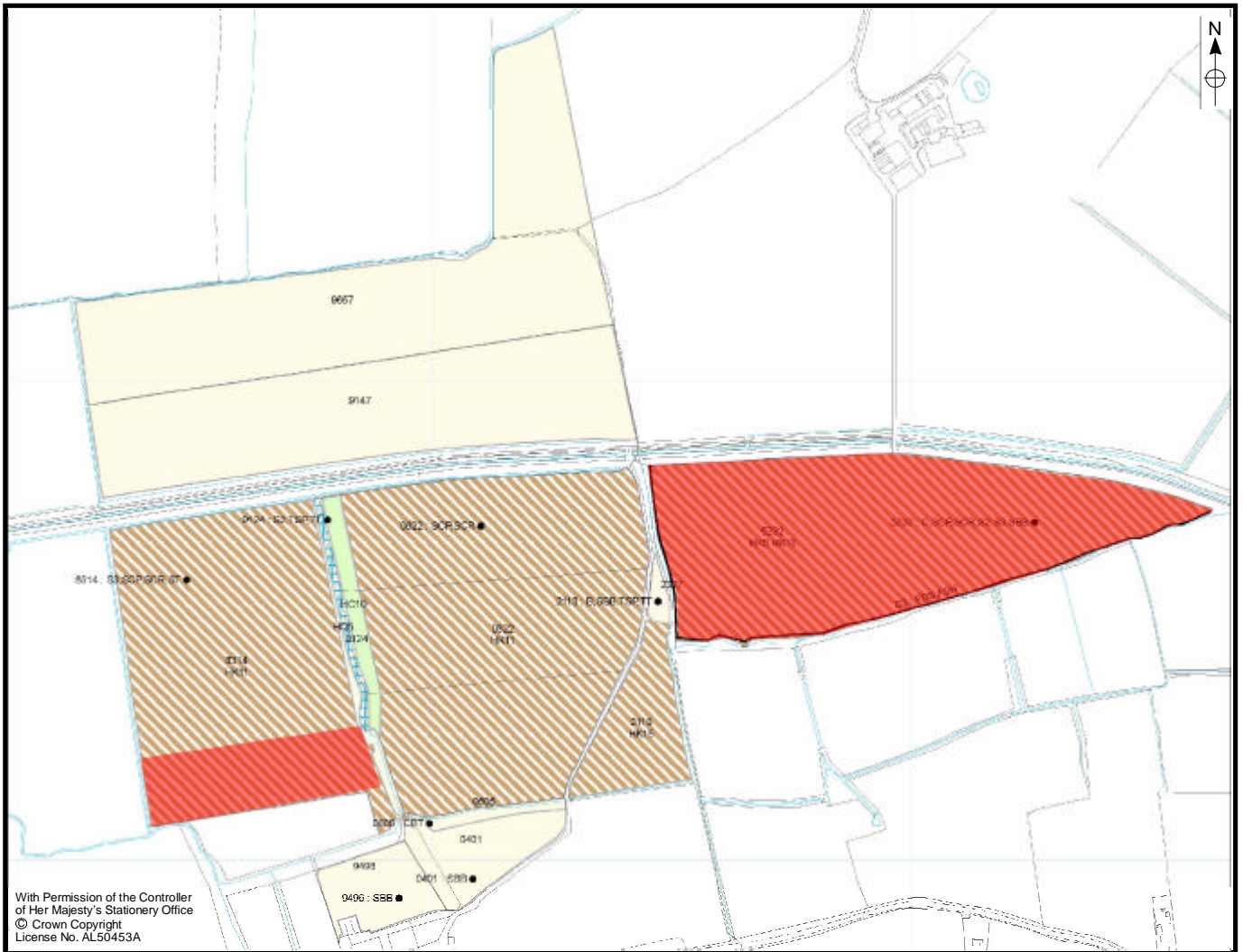


Figure 2. Areas of Archaeological Watching Brief.



Plate 1. General View of Site (West Field). Facing North.



Plate 2. Previous Scrape No. 17 from WB in 2010.  
(West Field). Facing East.



Plate 3. Extension to Scrape No. 17 (West Field).  
Facing East.



Plate 4. General View of Site (East Field). Facing South-west.



Plate 5. Previous Scrape (East Field). Facing North.



Plate 6. North Eastern Scrape (East Field). Facing West.



Plate 7. Southern Scrape (East Field). Facing West.



Plate 8. South Western Scrape (East Field). Facing North-east.