

**MAP
ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE LTD**

**10.21: Church Farm
Folkton
Scarborough
North Yorkshire
TA 0537 7978**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Authorised By.....

Date.....

**Church Farm
Folkton
Scarborough
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Folkton Bird Scrapes

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Summary

An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out by MAP Archaeological Practice Ltd on land to the rear of Church Farm, Folkton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire (TA 0537 7978) between the 12th and 16th of September 2011 as part of the Cayton and Flixton Carrs Wetland Project. The work involved monitoring twenty-four bird scrapes of varying sizes opened in a number of fields in the former wetlands of Flixton Carr, covering a total area of 7,100m².

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 between the 12th and 16th of September 2011, at Church Farm, Folkton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, (TA 0537 7978, 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 Bryan Found.

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 in the core of the village of Folkton, on the northern side of Carr Lane, which leads off the northern side of the A1039 Filey Road (Fig. 1). The site is bounded by dwellings to the east, agricultural land to the north, Folkton church to the west and Carr Lane to the south.

2.2 At the time of the Watching Brief the site ran across the length of six separate fields, all varying in size which had been separated by drainage dykes. Due to the low lying area the fields had retained a permanent sward of grassland used for cattle grazing.

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 One of the most important Early Mesolithic sites in Europe lies 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 The site of the famous Folkton drums lies south of Church Farm at the top of Folkton Hill. The drums were discovered in 1889 when a round barrow on Folkton Wold was excavated. They had been placed in the oval grave of child and were made from local chalk and had been elaborately carved. The custom of burying individuals with 'elaborate' grave goods had begun around 3000BC (Longworth, 1999).
- 3.3 The medieval village of Folkton was in existence by the time of the 1086 Domesday Survey, the settlement being recorded as *Fulcheton* the name meaning 'farmstead of a man named Folki' (Smith 1937). Folkton has also been referred to as Folkton Carr deriving from its topography, meaning low lands.
- 3.4 In the Nineteenth century the site lay within the core of Folkton village and by the end of the century Church Farm, Grange Farm to the west, Manor Farm to the south and St John's Church, were all in existence.
- 3.5 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 aswell 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.

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 L-shaped, elongated and sub-circular in shape and designed to form a natural pond like impression. The scrapes were deliberately positioned to avoid any 'known' archaeological features or sites.
- 5.2 The bird scrapes were created with the use of a tracked 360⁰ 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)

- 6.1 A total of twenty-four bird scrapes were opened up, in varying sizes across the stretch of six fields, south of the river Hertford. The size of

the scrapes ranged from much larger scrapes measuring approximately 1000m² to much smaller scrapes measuring only 100m². The total area covered by the scrapes was 7100m².

- 6.2 Natural deposits of dark brown desiccated peat were intermittently revealed in the base of the bird scrapes (Pls. 3-6). A uniform deposit of brown silty clay topsoil lay directly above the peat, and had a maximum depth of 0.35m. No evidence of peat burning was revealed in any of the scrapes.
- 6.3 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 very dry conditions and 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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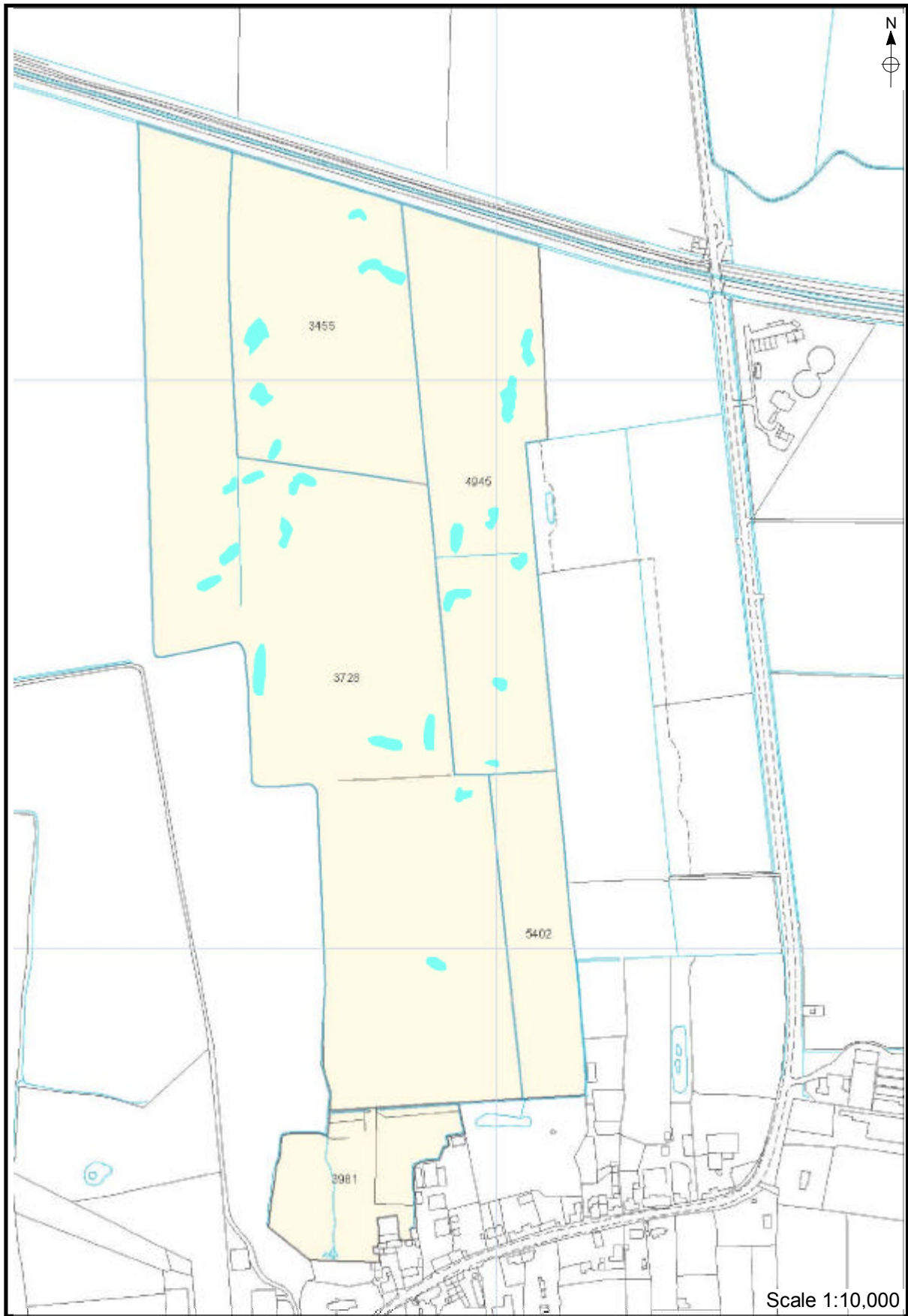


Figure 1. Areas of Archaeological Strip and Record.



Plate 1. General View of Site. Facing South.



Plate 2. General View of Site. Facing East.



Plate 3. Scrape from Northern end of Site. Facing North-west.



Plate 4, Scrape from Eastern end of Site. Facing North.



Plate 5. Scrape from Southern end of Site. Facing North-east.



Plate 6. Scrape from Western end of Site. Facing South-east.