LATER PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT STUDY DAY AT LOWESWATER

On 10th May the Lake District Archaeology Volunteer Network held a very successful study day on later prehistoric settlement. This was arranged with a view to developing a project to give some structure to our survey work and to provide Volunteers with an opportunity to gain experience of archaeological research. The sites that are the key focus of this work will principally be enclosed settlements which in the past have been termed 'Romano-British' in date (i.e. dating from the second half of the 1st millennium BC to the end of the Roman period). However it will also include unenclosed settlements, field systems and any other features which are thought to belong to this period.

20 Volunteers attended the day which began in the Loweswater Community Hall with an introductory talk by John Hodgson on existing knowledge of the later prehistoric period in the Lake District. This focussed on examples of the types of sites that we will be investigating through the project. We also discussed terminology and we decided that rather than using 'Romano-British', we would instead use the term 'Later Prehistoric' as it is probably a more accurate indication of date, even though many enclosed settlements appear to have been occupied into the Roman period.

John’s introduction was followed by a presentation by Volunteer Supervisor Peter Style of the various later prehistoric sites that have already been surveyed by Network Volunteers. These include the banked enclosure at Haltcliffe on the eastern edge of the Caldbeck fells, a newly discovered enclosed settlement near Ambleside and possible later prehistoric settlements at Scales Beck and Rannerdale, Crummock.

In the afternoon Jamie Lund (Archaeologist for the National Trust NW Region) led a visit to enclosed settlement at Lanthwaite Green which he surveyed some years ago. Although the site has been disturbed in more recent times, the
enclosing bank, hut platforms and surrounding clearance cairnfield are easily spotted on the ground.

Peter Style then took us to the possible enclosed settlement at Rannerdale which he has been surveying with Volunteers this year. The survey of the Buttermere valley which was carried out by Oxford Archaeology North for the National Trust in 2009 had already suggested that the features at Rannerdale might represent a late prehistoric enclosed settlement. However the survey by Peter and colleagues has added very convincingly to this interpretation. An added bonus to this site visit was the fantastic carpet of bluebells at Rannerdale which really are one of the truly spectacular sights in the Lake District. Of course from an archaeologist's point of view the bluebells are equally important as an indicator of the former extent of native woodland (!)

The outcomes of the Study Day will include:

- An initial brief for the project to be compiled by the National Park and National Trust Archaeologists;
- A list of project tasks for which Volunteers can enlist. These will include background reading and research; Level 2 archaeological survey; drawing; photography; report writing; designing an exhibition; and fund-raising;
- An internet discussion forum for Volunteers to share information, ask questions and report on progress. This will be linked to the LDNPA website and accessible to all Archaeology Volunteers.

We intend that the Later Prehistoric Settlement Project will result in a report, possibly for the Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society. We will also look into the possibility of an exhibition on the project which we can take around different venues in the National Park;

We estimate that this phase of the project will take at least two years to complete. As it progresses we will look into taking it forward as a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funds for more detailed research which could include geophysical survey, environmental analysis and excavation.

In the meantime, further general information on later prehistoric settlement provided by Historic England can be found on the internet (use Ctrl+click):

Enclosed Prehistoric Settlements
Prehistoric And Romano-British Settlements with Structures
Banjo Enclosures
Field Systems

Another Historic England publication which will also be of interest is:

The South East Cheviots Project: A Descriptive Account of the prehistoric Landscape

Information specific to the Lake District can be found in the following publication:

SURVEY OF ESKDALE COMMON (SOUTH WEST AREA)

Setting out from Eskdale Green, over 5 days, we field-walked an area high above Eskdale and with views to Scafell and Great Gable to the north. Oxford Archaeology North had previously undertaken detailed surveys for the National Trust of both the Bangarth/Blea Tarn and Nab Gill iron ore mine sites and of Eskdale Moor, leaving the remaining area of the Common 'virgin territory', surprisingly devoid of monuments. Weather on most days was fine but, typical for the Lake District, one day we experienced sun, rain, hail and snow...

A total of 65 monuments were recorded - the great majority new to the LDHER and NT SMR records.

On the steep, craggy, open fell slopes of Fell End, we recorded the footings of 6 small rectangular stone structures each set against a rock outcrop and with an entrance - shepherd's shelters? The other significant finds on this area of the fell included a stone-lined potash kiln and the footings of a rectangular stone building, having the appearance of a shieling.

High above Blea Tarn we entered a hanging valley, enclosed at both ends by relict walls and with the footings of a 6m. diameter circular stone structure set against a crag. Great excitement that we had discovered a hut circle, though, on reflection, it may prove to have been a stock pound.

Our visits to known sites also proved valuable, particularly to correct misrecorded NGRs and to provide updated condition reports and photographs. It took us over 15 minutes of searching to locate the Burnt Mound recorded within sight of the White Moss Stone Circles and two visits to locate Fell End Mine.

Previously recorded Peat Huts were also visited but one, on the west side of Nab Gill, seemed in a most unlikely location - set into a very steep slope and with no sign of a track. Instead, a building associated with the nearby extensive mine workings..?

Again, my many thanks to the team ( you know who you are!) - that's it for field walking this year, bracken bashing here we come!

(Mervyn Cooper)

---

The survey team on Eskdale Moor
LEVEL 1 SURVEYS IN THE SOUTH EAST AREA

It didn’t start well. One land owner didn’t want us to do a survey; and the second didn’t want us just then. So we began with a safe bet: Craggy Wood, a National Park property, behind Staveley. It lived up to its name: a steep hillside and lots of crags. There was not a lot to show in terms of archaeology; some charcoal pitsteads, a few wall features and, interestingly, some infrastructure for the Thirlmere Aqueduct which passes through the woodland.

From there we passed on to Great Tower Plantation, a Scout Association camp site, not far from Newby Bridge. The Plantation was probably created to provide charcoal for the local iron smelting industry; the blast furnace at Backbarrow was just down the road. The site is large and took us 6 days to survey during which time we enjoyed all seasons: snow, sleet, rain and sunshine. Like Craggy Wood, the terrain is also difficult in places with steep hillsides, crags and dense woodland. To try and maintain some semblance of order, we tied brightly coloured ribbons to the trees to mark the boundaries of the sweep and followed a compass bearing to try and ensure that everyone in the line was going more or less in the same direction.

The arrangement worked well until the day John Hodgson joined us. Some Scouts had nicked some of the ribbons between visits so we lost the boundary of the sweep and everything went to pot! We also managed to lose one of the team for a while. Not our finest hour! We did, however, fill in lots of record forms – more than 130 over the 6 days. More than 100 of these were charcoal pitsteads. The first half dozen were interesting; but the general feeling was if we never see a pitstead again in our lives that will be just fine. There were also some ancient trackways (well perhaps not exactly ancient but pre-dating the 1859 OS sheet); several small quarries; and some wall features.

Sadly, the Great Tower, which was to be our piece de resistance, turned out to be no more than a craggy prominence. Still, all good fun.

My thanks to all who helped.

(Jeremy Rowan Robinson)
REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN THE NORTH AREA

I am very pleased to say that after many months of walking over the site of the old Sandbeds lead and copper mine on Caldbeck common, we have finally completed our Level I survey of the area. We have produced far in excess of 120 Heritage Environment Records from what at first glance, seemed to be nothing more than a pile of rubble.

Most of us learned a lot of new things about mining as we came across the site of old buddles (?) stamp mills and settling ponds. The waterway system which consisted of leats linking one into the other and channelling down to where the waterwheel had been, can only be compared with the complexities of Venice and its canal system.

From what seemed to be a somewhat uninteresting task when asked to take on the survey, it turned into a fascinating insight into a unique part of history as we explored and discovered how local men managed to extract the last ounces of ore from the landscape.

Our final survey took place just before Christmas when to our dismay, we saw the devastation that storm Desmond has wreaked on the site. Gone were the remains of the three buddles, the site of the stamp mill had disappeared and several of the leats had been washed away. We were left thinking that it was just in the nick of time we had recorded the remains of what had once been a thriving industry out on the rather bleak common land which lies beneath Carrock Fell.

In recent weeks we have been walking over a piece of land once owned by the Greystoke Estate, not far from Penrith. This land has been acquired by Cumbria Wildlife Trust and has been named ‘Eycott Hill Nature Reserve.’ The nature reserve is covered by an old lava flow with two main outcrops, known as Eycott Hill and Little Eycott Hill. Jointly these are known as Naddles Crags and it is here where we have found the majority of the 18 structures we have come across to date.

The 1861 map of the area shows none of the possible bields, sheilings and other structures we have come across, so we may suppose that they are more recent. The photo shows one such structure. Several banks and enclosures have also been found which seem to suggest that our finds are all part of an animal management system.

Our work will soon be interrupted for a couple of weeks whilst we tackle the bracken which is now beginning to appear on listed sites in other areas of the National Park. Fortunately, it doesn’t look as if bracken will be a problem on Naddles Crags so as soon as we can, we shall be back on the nature reserve and continue our Level 1 survey of the area.

(Tricia Brown)

A MYSTERIOUS MOUND AT SANDBEDS (NORTH AREA)

Over the past three years the northern group of archaeology volunteers have been undertaking a Level 1 walkover survey of Caldbeck Common, to the north-east of Carrock Fell. The team have recorded a large number of prehistoric features, including clearance cairns, hut platforms, enclosure banks and burial mounds. The work has also involved a recording work on the remains of the 19th – 20th century Sandbeds Mine. During this latter work the team encountered an elongated mound above the mine which does not appear to relate to the mineral workings. The mound stands at just below 400m OD on a prominent spur on the north side of the stream valley within which lie the mining remains.

In March this year the team undertook a contour survey of the mound which showed that it stands to a height of c 1.2m and is aligned broadly NW /SE. Its apparent length is c 25m and apparent width is c 10m. The overall shape is slightly trapezoid, tapering towards the NW end. A line of five boulders run along the SW flank of the mound and may possibly be matched by a similar arrangement on the NE side. An arc of four further boulders may mark the NW end of the mound.

The survey underway
Alongside the mound is what appears to be a roughly constructed rectangular setting of stones – possibly a ‘cist’ - which was planned in detail as part of the survey. The ground surface on this side of the mound is very irregular and the impression of the team is that there may be other structures of this type in the area.

On very limited evidence it does appear that the mound is man-made, perhaps consisting of a rubble core flanked by large boulders which appear to have been selected for their angular shape in order to provide stability.

Whilst the date and function of the Sandbeds Mound remain unknown its apparent form and prominent position may suggest that it is a neolithic long cairn, dating to the fourth millennium BC, though other possibilities clearly exist.
GREAT GRANDAD’S ARMY – RIFLE RANGES OF THE LAKE DISTRICT

During the winter and early spring of 2015/6, a group of seven members of the Lake District Archaeology Volunteer Network undertook a Level 1 survey of abandoned rifle ranges within the area of what is now the Lake District National Park. Review of early Ordnance Survey maps was enlightening as it revealed further ranges of which we knew nothing and online research established the historical context with the growth throughout the country of a substantial Rifle Volunteer movement as a home defence force which continued from the early 1860’s through to the beginning of the 20th century and the formation of the Territorials in 1907. The Rifle Volunteer Corps were a sort of early version of the Home Guard; hence the title of the project.

The exercise eventually extended to no less than 18 ranges spread across the present National Park from Aspatria and Troutbeck in the north to Helsfell near Kendal in the south. Survey of the ranges thus identified revealed the presence of both firing platforms and, more impressively, in some cases substantial metal target plates such as on the lower slopes of Silver How above Grasmere. These were bullet proof with targets painted on them but from about 1895 the risk of ricochets from higher velocity and less friable rounds meant that modification was required involving the construction of target hoists with penetrative targets of printed paper, card or canvas; the remains of these were also found at some locations eg Gilpinpark near Crook.

The target plates were sometimes then used for protective purposes or else abandoned. We also found some markers’ or range officers’ huts and numerous butts to absorb stray bullets.

By the end of the project we had been able to establish with some accuracy how many rifle ranges there were in the Lake District and when they were established, although some remained elusive. We knew why they were established, how they operated and who might have used them. In some cases we could date their construction and first use to within a few months eg Hawkshead was operational as early as February 1860 and Silver How by June 1861. For others eg Troutbeck we confirmed that they remained in use until the days of National Service in the 1950’s. That they survive at all is largely due to their remote moorland locations. This is what makes them such an interesting subject of study.

Geoff Cook, Brian Hardwick, Philip Minchom, Nick Russell and Mark Simpson were the other members of the group. Copies of the full Report are available for £5 from them, the authors or through Kendal Historical & Archaeological Society who are thanked for their assistance with the publication costs.

( Kevin Grice & Jeremy Rowan-Robinson
kevin.grice@7hs.co.uk)
## UP AND COMING EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Volunteers Day</td>
<td>Further details later in the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coniston Copper – Survey of Penny Rigg Mill – 3 weeks over late May/early June. Opportunity to survey a 19th century ore dressing and processing plant. Dates to be confirmed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bracken cutting on scheduled monuments</td>
<td>Further details about bracken cutting such as location and time to be announced nearer the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Guided walk for Network Volunteers by Jamie Lund (National Trust NW Regional archaeologist) to Greenburn Mine and environs. In addition to the mine, the walk will take in medieval sites and the moot mound at Fell Foot Farm. Maximum number: 25. Booking: LDNPA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bracken cutting on scheduled monuments</td>
<td>Further details about bracken cutting such as location and time to be announced nearer the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bracken cutting on scheduled monuments</td>
<td>Further details about bracken cutting such as location and time to be announced nearer the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rusland Horizons – Cunsey Forge project – 4 weeks over July/August. Opportunities to take part in Level 2 field survey, geophysical survey and small-scale excavation of a bloomery forge. Dates to be confirmed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rusland Horizons – Cunsey Forge project – 4 weeks over July/August. Opportunities to take part in Level 2 field survey, geophysical survey and small-scale excavation of a bloomery forge. Dates to be confirmed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## UP AND COMING EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coniston Copper – Survey of Low Bonsor Mill</strong></td>
<td>3 weeks over late August/early September. Opportunity to survey a 19th century ore dressing plant. Dates to be confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bracken cutting on scheduled monuments</strong></td>
<td>Further details about bracken cutting such as location and time to be announced nearer the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rusland Horizons – Woodland Survey project</strong></td>
<td>4 weeks over end of September/October. Opportunity to take part in Level 1 survey of woodlands in Rusland Valley. Dates to be confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservation work party south area</strong></td>
<td>Booking: LDNPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservation work party north area</strong></td>
<td>Booking: LDNPA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Annual Archaeology Conference** | Date: 24
2pm – 4pm. Archaeology End of Year Roundup and Thank You Event
Booking: LDNPA |

### Booking details:

Please note that for Level 1 and Level 2 surveys you need to book your place by email with the allocated supervisor above. For all other bookings, unless specified, please email the LDNPA Archaeology volunteer e-mail address.

### Booking Contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Booking</th>
<th>E-mail address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LDNPA Archaeology Volunteers Bookings</td>
<td><a href="mailto:archvol@lakedistrict.gov.uk">archvol@lakedistrict.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDNPA Archaeology Supervisors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricia Brown</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Triciabrown@talktalk.net">Triciabrown@talktalk.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mervyn Cooper</td>
<td><a href="mailto:coopermervyn@hotmail.com">coopermervyn@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Rowan-Robinson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:j.rowanrobinson@btopenworld.com">j.rowanrobinson@btopenworld.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Style</td>
<td><a href="mailto:peterstyle@hotmail.co.uk">peterstyle@hotmail.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/archaeologyvolunteers email: archvol@lakedistrict.gov.uk