

Nordy Bank Hillfort

Methodology for Erosion Repair and Archaeological Recording

Project	Nordy Bank Hillfort erosion repair and archaeological recording
Site address	
Site NGR	357580,284720
Site Landranger	SO585844
Site area	
Client	The National Trust and Foundation for Common Land
Client contact	Renee Wallace
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Fearn
**Heritage &
Archaeology**

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Background

Introduction

This document has been prepared by Fearn Heritage and Archaeology on behalf of Clee St Margaret Parish Council as part of the Our Common Cause Project. Our Common Cause is a three year NLHF funded project which aims to conserve and enhance the heritage of commons and commoning in upland England.

Historical and Archaeological Summary

Nordy bank is scheduled monument 1008390 It is a slight univallate hillfort, described in the scheduling as:

'roughly oval in plan, the earthworks having maximum dimensions of some 260m east to west by 198m north to south and enclosing an area of approximately 3.2ha. The defences include a substantial and well defined rampart averaging 1.5m high around all but the east side, where it is up to 2.8m high.... The line of the ditch is disturbed around the south east quarter of the site where later surface quarrying has encroached onto the earthworks. There are five entrances to the interior of the enclosure, two of which appear to be original features.

The main entrance is believed to lie at the north east corner of the hillfort facing the natural approach along the ridge top. Here the northern section of ditch is interrupted by a causeway across the ditch 9m wide. The rampart is also interrupted at this point, although the entrance gap is only 3m wide and offset from the line of the causeway, slightly to the north. Such offsetting was designed to deflect any direct approach to the interior of the site, particularly by mounted attackers. Both sides of the rampart curve slightly inwards to create a simple inturned entrance. A broadening and lowering of the ramparts flanking this entrance suggest that guard house structures once controlled this gateway.

Various paths cross the fort and link the entrances. Apart from the new entrances and paths, the structure of the hillfort appears to be well preserved. Quarrying has not directly impacted the hillfort and many of the larger and more eroded tracks pass to the north.

Issues and Proposals

Whilst being in good overall condition, the ramparts of Nordy Bank have suffered from some erosion primarily caused by sheep. Eight separate sheep scrapes have been recorded and are shown in fig 1 below. Two of these scrapes (5 and 8) have substantially damaged the ends of the ramparts at entrance points, and stone from the core of the rampart has been dislodged and, in some cases, removed.

The proposals are to train local volunteers including commoners, members of the parish council and interested locals to repair all five of the erosion scars using the method recommended by Historic England. In addition, it is proposed that two of the scars (5 and 8) will be cut back, cleaned up and the section archaeologically recorded. All work will be carried out under the supervision of qualified archaeologists.



Figure 1 - Aerial photograph of Nordy Bank showing locations of scrapes.

Scrape	Description
1	South east facing scrape at one of the original entrances. C. 2m
2	South facing scrape on inner edge of rampart at entrance. C. 2m
3	South facing medium scrape at later entrance/path. C. 3.5m
4	North facing scrape at the same entrance as 3.
5	West facing scrape at original southern entrance to the fort. Very large (4m) with stone layer visible and loose stones.
6	East facing scrape at same entrance as 5 although not as large, c.3m.
7	Small west facing scrape at west end of hillfort. C. 1.5m.
8	East facing scrape at later entrance/path. Stone layer visible. C.4m.



Figure 2 - Scrape 1



Figure 4 - Scrape 5



Figure 3 - Scrape 8

Aims and objectives

Archaeological Recording

- to investigate and understand the construction methods of the rampart
- to gain information to characterise the nature and date the rampart and any phasing.

Erosion Repair

- to facilitate the long-term preservation of the significant remains by repair
- to prevent further erosion of the existing scrapes by infilling and reseeded
- to train local volunteers to enable them to carry out future repairs

Methodology

Erosion Repair

On the larger scrapes a toe board will be placed at the base of the scrape to prevent slippage. This may not be necessary on the very small scrapes.

Hessian sandbags will be filled with soil, taken from elsewhere on the common (but not within the scheduled monument area).

The level will be built up with layers of sand bags, firmed into the erosion scars to re-establish a profile close to the original profile of the ramparts.

All erosion repairs will be covered by a hessian or jute mesh to prevent slippage

An appropriate grass seed mix will be sown over the surface of the sandbags after firming is complete.

Sandbag repairs will be watered as required and regularly monitored to ensure the grass takes and the repairs do not slip or collapse.

Agreement to fence of the larger scrapes in order to allow vegetation to re-establish will be sought.

The area subject to the works shall be recorded by annotated photographs which will be included in the final report.

Archaeological Recording of the Rampart Sections.

HAND EXCAVATION

Scrape 5 and 8 (figs 1, 3 and 4) will be cut back by hand to create a flat section through the rampart. All excavation will be confined to the scrape areas and will not go lower the current level of damage. Archaeological features visible in the section will be left *in situ*.

Excavation will be carried out by professional archaeologists or volunteers under supervision.

Spoil will be retained and used in the repair.

Any variation of the above will be undertaken only with agreement of the client and Historic England.

RECORDING

A Site location plan will be prepared at 1:1250. This will be supplemented by a plan at a suitable scale e.g. 1:250, showing the investigation locations.

Archaeological features and deposits will be recorded in section at 1:20. All sections will be related to the Ordnance Datum using spot heights.

The written recording system used will follow the Museum of London Archaeological Site Manual (Spence 1994). Deposits will be recorded on pro-forma context sheets. Sample registers, finds recording sheets, access catalogues, and photo record cards will also be used where appropriate.

An adequate photographic record will be made of each section. This will be in the form of digital images using a 12MP digital SLR camera or similar. Photographs will illustrate in both detail and general context each trench. The photographic record will also include shots to illustrate the site works. A register of all photographs taken will be maintained.

A Harris Matrix stratification diagram will be compiled during the course of the excavations.

FINDS AND ARTEFACTS

Spoil will be examined for the recovery of artefacts.

All artefactual and ecofactual material recovered should be retained for assessment and will be treated in accordance with Guidelines for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (ClfA 2014c). All identified finds, artefacts, industrial and faunal remains will be collected and retained. Certain classes of building material and modern artefacts may be discarded after recording.

All finds will be washed and processed to ClfA standards (CIFA 2014c).

The finds assemblage will be subject to assessment and storage according to ClfA standards (CIFA 2014c). Bulk finds will be bagged in clear plastic bags. Packaging of all organic finds and metalwork will follow the UKIC/Rescue guidelines, 'First Aid for Finds' (Leigh 1998).

The finds assemblage will be retained for deposition with the site archive. Finds and documentary material, including the paper archive, will be stored in boxes that comply with relevant museum requirements and ClfA standards (CIFA 2014c).

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC SAMPLES

Environmental samples are not anticipated, however, should samples be taken they will be treated in line with Historic England guidance (2011). Provision will be made for the following types of environmental sampling:

1. bulk samples of 30-60 litres, or 100% of the context, for process using a floatation tank for the recovery of charred plant remains from the 'flot' and artefacts such as small bones, mineralised plant remains, charcoal and hammer scale from the residues.

Environmental samples will be assessed for potential by an environmental specialist. Bulk samples will be processed as soon as possible or discarded with the agreement of Historic England advisor. Residues will be treated as part of the finds assemblage.

HUMAN REMAINS

No human remains are anticipated. Where human remains are encountered, their excavation and removal will only be undertaken on receipt of the appropriate licence from the Ministry of Justice. Any consents or licenses required will be obtained on behalf of the client by the archaeological contractor. The District Coroner will be informed.

Should human remains require removal, all excavation and post excavation will be in accordance with current guidance (e.g. Brickley and McKinley 2004).

TREASURE

Should any finds identified as treasure or potential treasure, including precious metals, groups of coins or prehistoric metalwork, be exposed, these will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice (2nd Revision). Where removal cannot take place on the same day as the discovery, suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds.

REPORTING

Upon completion of the fieldwork and any required post-excavation assessment a short report will be prepared. The report will conform to ClfA guidance (2014).

The report will include:

- a non technical summary (abstract);
- introductory statements and background;
- a methodology of the works undertaken including any variation from this method statement;
- a description of the project's results;
- conclusions giving an interpretation of the results in the appropriate context;
- annotated photographs showing the erosion repair work, before and after shots and work in progress.
- illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs;
- a summary of the contents of the project archive and its location
- summary tables of contexts, finds and samples;
- specialist assessment reports where undertaken;
- references and bibliography.

The report will be produced within four weeks of completion of the fieldwork (dependent upon the provision of specialist reports).

An electronic copy of the report will be submitted to Shropshire Museums Service and the Shropshire Historic Environment Record and Historic England.

Fearn Heritage shall retain copyright of any report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides licence to the client in all matters directly relating to the project. Any information deposited in the Historic Environment Record can be freely copied without reference to the originator for research or planning purposes.

PUBLICATION

If significant remains are found, a report or summary may be produced for publication in a suitable journal. Any publication would be agreed with the client and Historic England prior to production.

ARCHIVE

An accession number will be requested prior from the Shropshire Museum Service prior to work commencing. The request will include details of the proposed work, including a grid reference.

A Site Code will be used to mark all documents and records during the excavation.

The final location of the archive will be agreed with the landowner and Historic England. The preferred option is for the archive to be deposited with the Shropshire Museum Service.

The integrity of the Site archive will be maintained. All finds and records will be properly curated and be available for public consultation. Appropriate guidance is set out in 'Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in compilation, creation, compilation, transfer, transfer and curation.' (Brown 2011).

The archive will be deposited within six months of completion of the fieldwork, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed.

The project will be given an OASIS reference number and a digital version of the report will be uploaded to OASIS. The report will include the OASIS ID number.

Health and safety

All work will be carried out in accordance with the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974* and the *Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992* and all other relevant Health and Safety regulations in force at the time.

A Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to starting work. This will be available on site at all times during the work. All volunteers will be made aware of the contents of the Risk Assessment

No-one will enter unsupported excavations of over 1m depth.

Any relevant covid precautions will be taken, depending on the government guidance at the time the work is carried out.

Staffing and timetable

Project management and on-site fieldwork will be managed by Janine Young and Matthew Williams. CV'S are included as Appendix 1.

Works are currently anticipated to take place 16-19 and 23-26 October 2021.

References

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Appendix 1

Staff CV's

Matthew Williams CV

I am a professional archaeologist with 20 years' experience within the commercial and advisory sector. I have a firm background in the management of fieldwork projects and specialise in heritage consultancy, planning advice and fieldwork solutions. I have worked on a wide variety of archaeology and built heritage projects at all stages of the planning process with heritage budgets in excess of £4.5M.

Work Experience and Key Projects

2018 – PRESENT. RSPB RESERVES ARCHAEOLOGIST ENGLAND AND WALES (PT).

I currently cover all aspects of heritage advice to the RSPB. There are four main strands to the role, these are: providing heritage management and planning advice to RSPB land managers, implementing and managing monitoring of heritage assets, managing the RSPB GIS heritage database, and managing volunteers. I also occasionally produce various documents for specific projects, including assessment reports, EIA chapters and written schemes of investigation.

2016 – 2018. WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY – WALES REGIONAL MANAGER

This role involved developing work in Wales and ongoing project management. I was responsible for finding and assessing business opportunities, producing budgets and tenders, producing detailed risk assessments, managing staff and contractors, and ensuring that the correct systems of work were in place. I worked as a project manager largely with renewables and infrastructure clients including Severn Trent Water and HS2. Key projects managed were:

Wylfa Newydd Nuclear Power Station, Anglesey (Balfour Beatty/Jones Bros JV, Horizon Nuclear Power). Large scale open area excavations on seventeen sites within the development area; up to eighty staff were required for a duration of eighteen months. All works were carried out under an NEC3 contract and were compliant with the client's management agreements and health and safety policies (see <https://www.horizonnuclearpower.com/our-sites/wylfa-newydd>).

HS2 Phase 2 Ground Investigation Watching Brief (Atkins, Arup, HS2). Management of fieldwork and report production during geotechnical works across numerous sites. Wessex Archaeology were contracted by different consultants (depending on the site package) and worked with numerous on-site contractors. All data, reports and financials were submitted in line with HS2 requirements and formats.

2011 – 2016. L - P : HERITAGE - PARTNER, PROJECT MANAGER AND LEAD HERITAGE CONSULTANT

I was the lead heritage consultant within L - P : Heritage and worked on a number of large scale developments within multi-disciplinary teams. My role involved giving advice to a range of clients including environmental companies, utilities, architects and developers, and negotiating with both curators and clients to ensure the best outcome for the client and the heritage resource. I also managed staff including appraisals, CPD, recruitment and redundancies.

I produced numerous Heritage Impact Assessments, EIA chapters, and Desk assessments. I also managed site and post excavation work for fieldwork projects and produced fieldwork and Built Heritage reports. I was responsible within the company for keeping up to date with current planning, EIA and Heritage guidance (such as NPPF, DMRB and Historic England advice). I also ensured that our company document and report templates were up to date and in line with current policies and guidance.

Gilston Park, Harlow (Places for People) Planning advice and production of EIA heritage chapter for a proposed 10,000 unit housing development over 1500 ha. This included assessing the archaeological, built heritage and landscape impacts and carrying out geophysics and trial trenching (see <http://gilstonparkestate.com/>).

Tan y Bont, Rhosrobin (Liberty Properties). Trial trenching and production of Heritage Impact Assessment for 339 unit housing development. The application area included a scheduled section of Offa's Dyke which required a Management Plan covering the construction and operation phases of the development.

2001 – 2011. L - P : ARCHAEOLOGY - DIRECTOR AND FIELDWORK MANAGER

I joined L - P : Archaeology in 2001 as one of four directors and we successfully expanded the business from a small consultancy to a national fieldwork unit, providing a wide range of archaeological services from offices across the country. My main role during this period was the initiation, management and growth of the fieldwork department and my responsibilities involved managing projects and staff, organising workflow and ensuring projects were delivered on time and within budget. I developed many of the company fieldwork structures including budgeting methods, recording policy and report templates. I also initiated our site health and safety systems and arranged training such as ensuring all staff had CSCS cards. As a small business I had other responsibilities including staff and personnel management, marketing, financial management of company accounts and directorial duties. I was also involved in setting up and marketing new offices.

2002-2012. TIME TEAM (VIDEOTEXT PRODUCTIONS)

For ten years I was one of three permanent field archaeologists on the Channel Four archaeology programme 'Time Team', and appeared in over 120 programmes including live programmes and documentaries. The work involved liaising with directors and producers, contributing to the direction of the programme, managing trenches and local staff, and interpreting the results clearly and concisely on camera. I also often took part in the experimental archaeology 'cameos'.

2000-2003. READING UNIVERSITY – SUPERVISOR

Supervisor at the Reading University training excavation at Silchester for four seasons. I taught students and volunteers and marked the students as part of the fieldwork component of the archaeology degree course.

1997-2001. OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY/MUSEUM OF LONDON ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICES - TECHNICIAN

Field archaeologist and supervisor for various sites for MoLAS and Oxford Archaeology. Sites included deeply stratified urban sites such as Spitalfields and Leadenhall, (City of London) and extensive rural sites around Heathrow.

Education

2000-2001 - UCL: Institute of Archaeology. MA (Distinction) - Public Archaeology

1994-1997 - UCL: Institute of Archaeology BA (2:1) – Archaeology

Professional Affiliations

Member of the Institute for Archaeologists (5721)

Skills and Qualifications

CSCS Professionally Qualified Person

Public Enquiry Workshop, University of Oxford

NEC4 Contract management

GIS applications

Janine Young CV

I have 20 years' experience working as a heritage professional. I have a wealth of experience of managing heritage assets in a rural setting, advising and working with landowners and managers, producing heritage and conservation management plans and assisting in their implementation. I also have a proven track record as a Heritage Consultant working in interdisciplinary project teams, advising on incorporating heritage into designs, producing EIA's and HIA's and managing fieldwork teams.

Work Experience and Skills

2011-PRESENT NATIONAL TRUST, WEST MIDLANDS ARCHAEOLOGIST (PART-TIME).

My role at the National Trust is wide ranging and covers a variety of aspects in the archaeological and cultural heritage sector.

I am responsible for the ongoing conservation and preservation of all of the archaeological sites across the West Midlands properties and I maintain, update and manage our internal HER which contains over 15,000 entries. I have set up and now manage a large -scale regional monitoring project (HART) which uses teams of trained volunteers at each of our properties to monitor the condition of archaeological features.

I also produce and implement management plans for earthworks and other sites, advising countryside and ranger teams on suitable management for archaeology in the countryside. I also work with tenants and farmers and advise on appropriate farming methods.

I work on multidisciplinary project teams advising on the impact of development proposals on the historic environment and how to incorporate heritage into design projects and providing heritage input to planning applications. I regularly commission fieldwork, evaluation and excavation, produce specifications and manage contractors.

My role also involves creating meaningful visitor experiences and I have designed and managed various successful HLF and other grant funded community projects; these involve working with and training volunteer teams in excavation and other archaeological skills, leading public participations and as promoting projects via social media and the website. I am very involved in the Trust's Land and Outdoors agenda and work with nature colleagues to understand and interpret our current landscapes.

2002-2011 L – P: ARCHAEOLOGY, DIRECTOR AND HERITAGE CONSULTANT

I joined L - P : Archaeology in 2002 as one of four directors and we successfully expanded the business from a small consultancy to a national fieldwork unit, providing a wide range of archaeological services from a number of offices across the country. I took responsibility for company direction and management of staff as well as marketing and development of business procedures. I successfully gained CIFA RO status for the company in 2008. As well as the directorial duties I also worked as a heritage consultant and project manager. I advised on some large scale development projects working on multidisciplinary teams, I regularly produced EIAs Heritage Assessments and DBAs. I also produced Conservation Management Plans for Heritage sites and supervised and ran fieldwork projects of all levels. Whilst at L – P I attended the Villa Magna excavations in Lazio as a site supervisor for five years 2007-2011 supervising teams of Italian students and contributing to the final publication.

2001-2002 BRITISH HERITAGE TOURS – TOUR MANAGER

I devised itineraries for overseas special interest tourist groups to visit the archaeological and heritage sites of the UK and managed the tour groups during their visits.

1999-2001 ROYAL YACHT BRITANNIA – BOOKINGS AND GUIDE

1998-1999 DEVA ROMAN EXPERIENCE – MUSEUM GUIDE

Education

1999-2001 – Leicester University MA in Museum Studies (distance learning)

1995-1998 – Birmingham University BA hons in Ancient History and Archaeology (2:1)

Professional Affiliations

I have been a Member of Chartered Institute for Archaeologists since 2008 and I sit on the RO committee.

I am a branch leader of the Marches Young Archaeology Club