

Scargill Terrace Monument MNY69528

Conistone with Kettlewell, North Yorkshire

Archaeological Excavation Report

Seasons August 2018 & September 2019



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Introduction

The site referred to in this report as Scargill Terrace is a broad flat terraced area of rough sheep pasture in Upper Wharfedale within the Parish of Kettlewell with Starbotton in the County of North Yorkshire.

The name Scargill Terrace has been used only to identify the site for the purposes of this report and is not an Ordnance Survey recognised name.

Positioned at Ordnance Survey grid reference centroid SD 983707 and at a gently undulating height of around 373m OD, the terrace is bordered on one side by a rough outcropping cliff of boulder strewn limestone typically around 5m in height, whereas on the parallel edge the land drops away sharply to a lower terrace at a height of around 366m OD. The field is currently used as rough sheep pasture.

The northern and southern extents of the site are contained within post-medieval stone enclosure walls however the archaeology can be seen to extend beyond these boundaries on both sides and continue on the same height contour in an approximate N-S direction.



Fig.1: Drone image of the site. ©R. Stroud 2018.

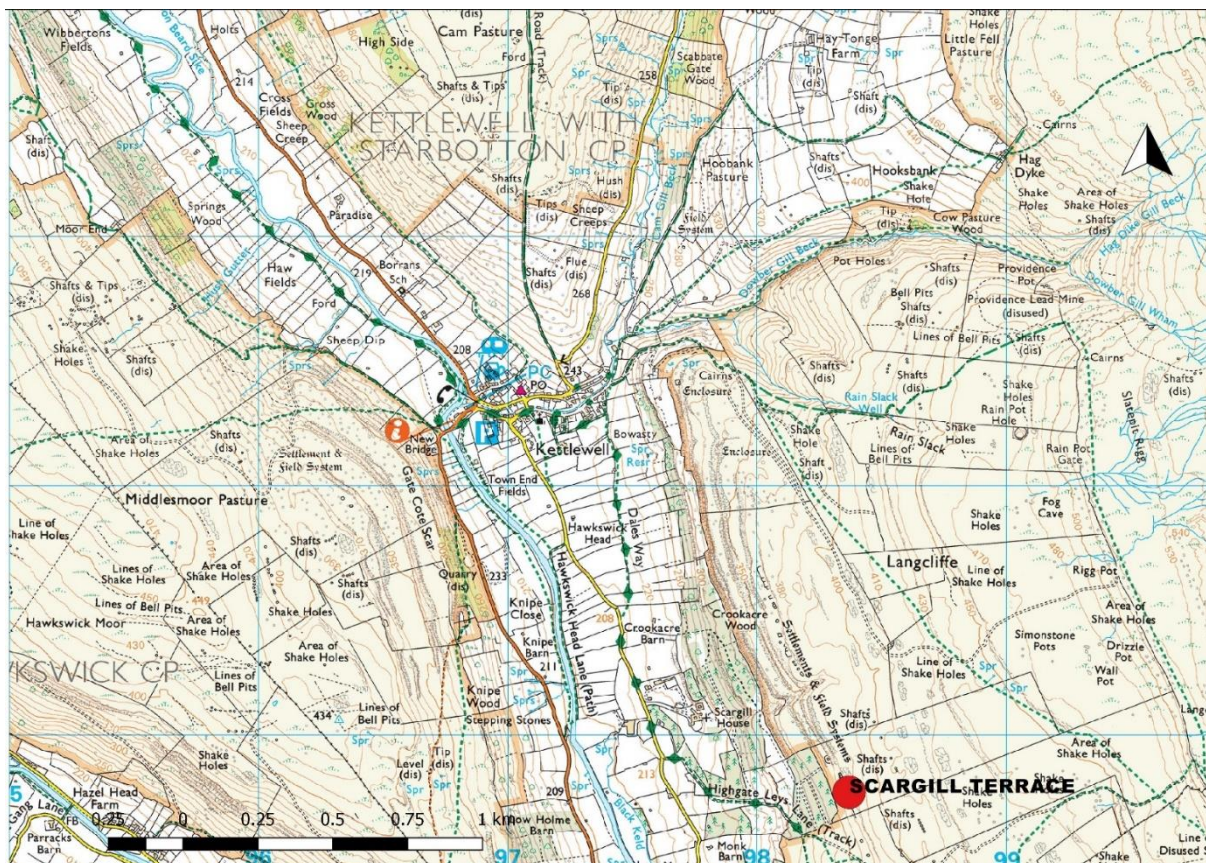


Fig.2 Site location within Upper Wharfedale

During a fieldwalking exercise in 2015 a small number of flint and chert tools and one barbed and tanged arrowhead were discovered in molehills distributed across the plateau of Scargill (see Fig.3 below). The visible remains of field enclosures, hut circles and boundary features were observed and a decision was taken to record 250m of the 350m site by carrying out a basic topographical survey using tapes and offsetting.

Subsequent desk-based research found that historical and archaeological information on the site was scant, however an entry was found on the Yorkshire Dales National Park Historical Environment Record (HER) which describes the adjacent (and probably continuous) site as ‘late Prehistoric Romano-British’ (MYD42141), interpreted from aerial photography. The hut circle and subject of this excavation is now recorded on the HER as MNY69528.

It was unclear if the earthworks were contemporary with the lithic scatters and if a Romano British Iron Age date was a reasonable attribution based on what appeared to be a multi-period site. With such a paucity of intrusive archaeological work in the area, there is little comparative data to draw on therefore permission was sought to excavate from the landowner. In this instance a derogation for any stewardship scheme was not required however Natural England were consulted in advance of the work.



Fig.3 Chert and flint tools found on Scargill terrace during fieldwalking 2016

1. Aim of excavation

In line with a current Doctoral research project ‘Investigating the evidence for Neolithic settlement in the Yorkshire Dales’ the aim of the excavation was to attempt to determine a date period for the site and any sequence for the lithics.

2. Objectives

1. To place a series of 1x1m test pits excavated to at least 0.50m or bedrock level to recover any lithic implements which may be in stratigraphic order.
2. To place a trench across the diameter of a hut circle from the entrance and to recover any evidence of a threshold, domestic artefacts and central hearth.
3. To place a small trench across the apron of a large orthostat to reveal if this was intentionally placed or natural. The orthostat is positioned as a southern outlier to most of the surviving structural archaeology within the surveyed area.

4. Site location

The site is located off the minor road called Conistone Lane which runs from Conistone to Kettlewell. From this road a footpath signposted Highgate Leys Lane (part of the Dalesway route) turns up the hillside. After approximately half a mile the site is accessed by turning left away from the Lane and is just above the conifer plantation belonging to the Scargill Movement. The grid reference is centroid SD 983708.

5. Site History

Conistone village and surrounding fields were thought by Dr. Arthur Raistrick to be Saxon in origin (Raistrick and Chapman, 1929) with settlement found to be well-established by the time of the Domesday book. The Conistone to Kettlewell area has a well-recorded history as being part of the vast monastic sheep farming estates owned by the monks of Fountains Abbey who operated an administration centre at Kilnsey, approximately 2 miles away (White, 1997).

A short distance above the site there are a series of bell pits; evidence of the thriving lead mining industry of the Medieval and Post-Medieval period.

Recently the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Historic Environment Record Team have recorded a number of nearby finds and settlement evidence on the HER as MYD 42141,4183 and 50612 which although are not directly on the Scargill terrace site, may represent a linear expansion of settlement on the same contour line.

No previous intrusive archaeological work has been undertaken at this site to the author's knowledge.

6. Methodology

6.1 Excavation methods

All work was carried out by deturfing with spades then using hand trowels. Context sheets were completed to record trench measurements, soil conditions, compaction, stratigraphic relationships, and find details. Colour digital photographs of each trench were taken as well as drone footage of the site from above. Plans were drawn for trenches with any archaeological features. Trenches and some finds have been recorded in digital 3D photography by Richard Stroud and are available for viewing online via Sketchfab. These can be viewed at <https://sketchfab.com/rockrich/collections/upper-wharfedale>

6.2 Test Pits

The trenches were placed at irregular intervals to avoid rocky ground but close to the long edge of the terrace where an earthwork of soil and stones appeared to delineate a boundary on the western side. Beyond this boundary, the land drops away. The locations chosen had a reasonable depth of soil, tested ahead of excavation by probing.

Each trench was de-turfed by spade then all subsequent work carried out by trowel until either bedrock was reached or no archaeology detected.



Fig.4: Test Pit 3 excavated to bedrock.

6.3 Hut circle trench

The hut circle appeared to have two low orthostats forming a S-W doorway or entrance. In order to capture evidence of any threshold and central hearth, one single trench was placed through the entranceway to the central point of the circle. Deturfing was carried out by spade and all subsequent work done by hand trowelling.

6.4 Orthostat trench

A single orthostat used as a sheep rub had a small trench (0.90 x 1.80m) placed in the apron at the front of the orthostat to determine if the rock was intentionally placed or natural, and if there was any archaeology in the foreground.

This is particularly relevant as a similar large earth-fast orthostat excavated near the Chapel House Wood site on the opposite valley side was previously found to have a number of inhumations placed around it. (Fletcher 2009, 2011).

7. Results

7.1 Fieldwork

The work was undertaken over two weekends in August 2018. The conditions were dry but somewhat overcast. The turf topsoil was extremely hard and dry due to a prolonged hot summer without rain. Generally, the turf topsoil was around 100mm in depth then a light grey-brown sandy silt soil was encountered which had thin lens of clay intermixed however this was difficult to see as the ground conditions were so parched. Under the 20cm level, the soil was more friable. Limestone bedrock was encountered at around 0.50m in depth with most of the trenches.

7.2 The Test Pits

The test pits dimensions were all 1x1m square.

Test Pit 1: no archaeology, bedrock was reached at 0.50m

Test Pit 2: 2 small flint fragments (waste) and part of a horseshoe

Test Pit 3: 1 white/mottled grey flint end scraper on a broken blade

Test Pit 4: no archaeology, bedrock was reached at 0.56m

Test Pit 5: 2 small flint fragments (waste)

Test Pit 6: 1 small flint fragment (waste) and one microlith blade

7.3 Trench 7 The Hut circle

The trench dimensions were 1m x 4m and this was ample to cover the centre point as the hut circle itself was approximately 6m in diameter. The threshold paving was apparent at a depth of 0.25m and consisted of a slightly curving/diagonal line of flattish stones (contexts 003,004). At the point where the southern side of the threshold met the entrance orthostat, a small round stone (small find 12) was found placed so its flat surface was flush with the paving. The surface with pitting or scarring was face downwards.

Two sherds of pottery (small finds 9,10) were found on opposite sides of the threshold. The trench was further excavated (contexts 005,006) and a small mound of stones was revealed at the centre point of the circle (context 007). These were found to be sitting on the limestone clint bedrock with a thin matrix of soil in between the stones and there was no evidence of any burnt stone, charcoal or heat affected material.



Fig.5: Trench 7 turf removed.



Fig. 6: Stone pile at centre point of hut circle trench 7.

A further pottery sherd (small find 14) was found along with some crumbs in the protected surface of a gryke and just before the trench midpoint 4 small flint fragments were recovered from the soil (small finds 13,16).

As the excavation reached solid bedrock the mound of stone at the centre (context 007) was deconstructed and carefully observed for any artefacts, bone or evidence of its purpose but no further archaeology was detected. This trench was backfilled after being recorded.

7.4 Trench 8 Orthostat

The trench dimensions were 0.90m x 1.80m and captured the small apron in front of the upright boulder.

This area was a previous find-spot for a flint scraper and as an outlier to the southern end of the settlement it was felt it might have served some purpose.

A grey chert thumb scraper (small find 15) and the distal end of a rabbit humerus (small find 11) were recovered at a depth of 0.20m (context 002). This trench was then backfilled to allow the available excavators to concentrate on trench 7.

7.5 The small finds

7.5.1 Flint and Chert

The flint and chert recovered from the test pits was almost wholly waste apart from the white/mottled grey Wolds flint end scraper on a broken blade (test pit 3) and the flint narrow blade microlith from test pit 6. The fragments found in trench 7 were also white or grey flint with no evidence of any retouch or working. All that can be deduced from these are that flint was present on the terrace and that tools were worked and waste produced.

It was noticeable that almost all the flint and chert was in the upper 0.20m of soil. Bioturbation of small tools and waste is highly likely at Scargill due to the energetic activity of moles, rabbits and sheep trampling in the soft shallow soil of the terrace.

The chert scraper from trench 8 is a mid-grey colour and may have been produced from a local source of raw chert found in the Malham area (Evans *et al.*, 2007).



Fig.7: Lithics from (L-R) Trench 003, 006 and 008.

7.5.2 Bone

The small distal end of a rabbit humerus found in trench 8 was heat affected and blackened and assumed to be cooking remains. The orthostat would have afforded some shelter for a fire on an otherwise exposed hillside, however there was no signs of any heat damage at the base of the rock.

7.5.3 Stone Object

The small smoothed stone found inserted into the threshold of trench 7 measures 80 x55mm and is made from a dense grained basalt type sandstone. It was noticeable in the trench due to its much darker colour than the surrounding limestone and on excavation it was immediately obvious that it was a useful hand-held tool, fitting comfortably into an adult palm.

The edge is ground just enough to give it a slight facet and one exterior surface has a dimple at the centre as if there was an intention to create a shaft hole tool but then the idea abandoned. This surface is pitted and scarred, and this could be due to the tool being used as a roughened surface to grind or crush.

The best interpretation of this object is that it is a muller or one- handed grinder that was used with a saddle quern. Another suggestion is that it is a cushion stone used in metalworking as a surface to hammer the metal against, or as a whetstone. Three cushion stones found in an Early Bronze Age grave with a Collared Urn and Battle Axe in Sandmill, Wigtonshire, Scotland were found to have artificially smoothed and flattened surfaces that were ‘almost polished’ (Clarke *et al.* 1985:296).



Fig.8: Stone Tool, obverse, profile and reverse views.

Structured deposition of quern stones in Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age contexts are well recorded and the Middle/Late Bronze seems particularly associated with deposition associated with the decommissioning of house structures. A study in South West England found 62% of querns or associated stone rubbers deposited were in roundhouses and other structures and covered a date range of 1890-700 *cal.* BC (Watts, 2012).

7.5.4 Pottery

Four surviving sherds were recovered from within the hut circle with 2 sherds being located at either side of the threshold. All are body sherds made from a mid-brown friable fabric which has pitting due to burnt out organics such as grass or cereal grains which were used to temper the clay matrix and prevent spalling. One small sherd has a quartz inclusion and a possible line of pinprick decoration and may have been from the neck/rim area of the pot and a small single (>1mm) piece of grog is present on one of the larger sherds.

The two larger sherds are both heavily heat affected and blackened on both interior and exterior surfaces and no decoration can be determined. All four sherds appear to be from the same vessel. The larger sherds were placed on a diameter chart and a vessel size of around 10cms diameter is indicated.

The fabric is typical of a Late Bronze Age date and other larger diagnostic sherds of a similar fabric have been recovered nearby on Highgate Leys Lane and are currently curated by Craven Museum as part of the Richardson Collection.

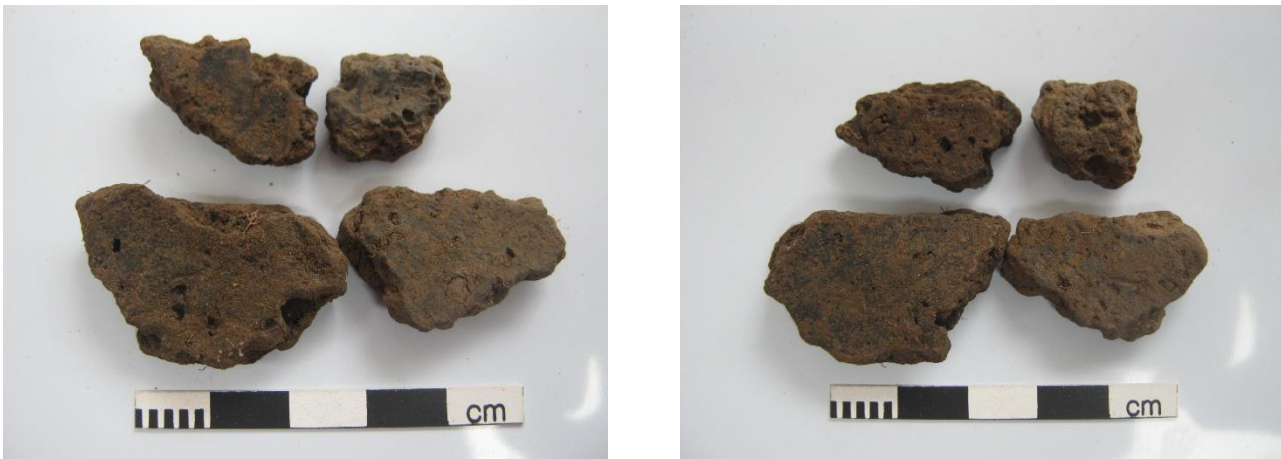


Fig.9: Pottery sherds, obverse and reverse.

8. Discussion

The presence of flint and chert tools from the Late Mesolithic, Neolithic and Early Bronze Ages aligns well with other mixed period scatters found in Upper Wharfedale and the distribution of lithic tools in this area appears to be more prevalent at a height of 250-400 metres.

Excavation was intended to test the possibility of finding any lithics in stratigraphic sequence and although flakes and implements were recovered it was clear there had been extensive bioturbation of the soils. The recovery rate and tool type per square metre can be paralleled with some of the transects opened in Upper Wharfedale by the Yorkshire Dales Hunter-Gatherer Research Project (Donahue and Lovis 2000) which sought to intercept Mesolithic sites.

At Scargill, the test pits were placed to investigate the northern end of the terrace where most of the implements had been located during fieldwalking and where homogenous and unseparated soils were found making the identification of stratigraphy difficult. This was a problem encountered in the North East by Young when attempting to identify the stratigraphy associated with the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition (1989:164).

From the northern end of Scargill Terrace it is possible to gain long distance views towards the converging valleys either side of Cam Hill, and in a westerly direction the fell tops of Hawswick Clowder and Kilnsey Moor can be seen.

These locations have also been mixed period lithic scatter find-spots and although it is conjecture, inter-visibility of these hillside and hilltop sites may have been crucial in maintaining contacts between settlements in prehistory.

Local chert sources around Malham have been identified (Evans *et al.*, 2007) and the importation of flint from the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Wolds, particularly during the Neolithic period suggests the existence of a vibrant trade network. This is backed up by numerous scattered sherds of Langdale Axe material in

Upper Wharfedale found by local flint collectors John and Bob Richardson. Much of this material is now in Craven Museum collections.

Seen as a casual hunting loss, the flint barbed, and tanged arrowhead did not appear to be associated with any other artefacts.

The recovery of Late Bronze Age pottery found around the hut circle threshold and within the interior suggests the hut circle was in use from around 1000 BC and probably into the Early Iron Age however this can only indicate a date for the hut circle and not for the rest of the structural remains on the terrace.

The deposition of the stone tool wedged into the doorway entrance may have been an act of closure or abandonment. No apparent use for the small pile of fairly loose stones in the centre of the hut circle could be deduced other than it may have been an unused hearth, however as the feature was effectively halved with the other part hidden in the section still unexcavated there could be yet more to discover about its true purpose.

The orthostat trench had only begun to yield some evidence, and this needs further excavation down to bedrock to confirm if the rock has been placed in position intentionally. This trench was backfilled and restored.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

Despite the short duration of this excavation (two weekends) the Team has been able to recover a number of chronologically diagnostic artefacts which help to date the use of the hut circle. Further work of a longer duration has the potential to substantially add more data about the development of the site over time. The Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date attribution is not inferred for the remainder of the unexcavated site however as further investigation is needed. As a case in point, a small piece of diagnostic Samian Ware was picked up at the edge of an unexcavated mid-terrace possible hut circle feature and this may indicate a linear expansion of the site towards the north in the Romano-British Iron Age.

The structural evidence for rectangular enclosures relating to possible Monastic sheep farming needs to be untangled from the earlier earthworks and if possible, any further investigation needs to include the settlement in the adjacent field.

The pottery sherds would not look out of place in an earlier period, possibly Late Neolithic, and any schedule of further work should include a comparison of pottery types as an assemblage rather than in isolation.

It should be noted that access to the site has logistical problems, it is at a height of 360m OD and requires a steep climb up through rough terrain. Apart from a farmers' quad, vehicles cannot access the site, and this can be a logistical and health and safety/fitness challenge.

2019 Excavation Report

Introduction

A 5-day excavation was planned for September 2019 with the intention of opening a 2m wide trench to annexe the 2018 trench on its southern edge. Unfortunately, due to extremely inclement weather and the potential impact to health and safety by working on the open terrace, this work was conducted over 3 days only. All details outlined in sections 1-6.1 in the 2018 document apply to the 2019 excavations.

10.1 Trench 9: Annexe trench

The trench edge from the 2018 season was not visible but using the plans from 2018, a 2m x 5.60m trench was placed adjoining the previous one on its southern edge. The aim was to further explore the hut circle on the interior of the perimeter orthostats.

Following the de-turfing layer, a homogenous brown clayey-sandy soil was encountered and was hand trowelled across the surface of the trench to a depth of around 40cm (002). Assorted finds of very small flint fragments and pottery crumbs began to appear although the density of scatter was more common at the lower end of the trench.

At the top north eastern edge of the trench and at its highest point (376.8m OD) the scree and rocks outcropped with a surrounding compacted topsoil and at approximately 10-20cm depth, a horizontal layer of corroded iron fencing had conglomerated with the soil to form an artificial iron pan (004) which was difficult and laborious to trowel through.

Most of the ironwork was removed from the trench with the debris filling 2 large carrier bags.

10.2 Results

As it became clear the weather was going to be an issue, a 1m north - south sondage (006) was placed from the middle of the trench to the perimeter to investigate some partially buried stones which may be a wall section. Two flint flakes were located at the northern end of this 1m sondage and in section, a stone typical of those visible within the perimeter, was found sitting on a bed of smaller possible foundation rubble.

The line of stones in the section of (006) continued just below the turf level and appears to divide or partition the circle up. Alternatively, it could be an earlier phase perimeter to the hut circle and is certainly a feature that requires further exploration. Figure 1. below, shows an overhead view of sondage (006) and (008) under excavation.



Fig.1: *Overhead photo of sondage (006) to the right and sondage (008) excavated to bedrock to the left of the scale.*

Numerous pot crumbs and sherds were recovered from the lowest part of the trench therefore another sondage (008) was cut to explore an area behind the orthostat at the ‘front’ of the circle. This orthostat had a small overhanging ledge facing the interior of the circle which seemed to have acted as a sill protecting some small rounded stones (small find 026) which were completely fire blackened (Fig.2). These stones most likely represent burning event(s) in the lee of the rocks however the bedrock beneath and around did not show any signs of being exposed to heat.



Fig.2: Fire blackened stones in position below the small ledge in (008), bedrock visible below.

Pottery was also found dispersed across the same area with several small sherds appearing blackened from burning. It is possible that the sherds may have all come from the same pot.



Fig. 3: Sherd group from context (008)

At the final stage of the excavation, a rim sherd (Fig.3 above) was recovered from sondage (008) with a scatter of further body sherds and crumbs extending into (002). The rim sherd is from an undecorated Late Bronze Age jar having a diameter of 25cms measured across the widest extent of the flaring rim. All the pottery found so far in 2018 and 2019 is the same mid brown thick fabric having a roughened texture due to the inclusions of small stones, sand and grits. Given the abundance of stone materials in the area, it is reasonable to assume this a local fabric.

In the same area of the hut circle as the pottery and burnt stones were found, several pieces of ironstone, that could not be refitted, were recovered. Such reddish material is characteristic of Coal Measures strata rather than having a local origin (D. Shepherd, pers. comm). There was no sign of burning or blackening and no apparent purpose could be assigned to the presence of these rocks.

10.3 Discussion

Poor weather interrupted this excavation making it difficult to work and preventing a full excavation of the whole trench. That said, it quickly became clear that the focal area for recovery of finds was the front or lower end of the trench (002/008) and to the right of the so-called doorway or entrance. The presence of a Late Bronze Age pot is further evidence of the feature being in use sometime during period c.1000-700 cal. BC and therefore earlier than the Romano-British Iron Age date, which is often assumed for features of this type, in this locality.

Flint and chert finds were all small pieces, and none were worked tools and should be considered waste. The distribution was in line with the dispersal encountered during excavation of the test pits in 2018 where a depth of around 40cm for flint is usual.

An unexpected feature of the excavation was the north-south sondage section which revealed the possibility of a line of partitioning orthostatic stones just under the grass surface and potentially dividing the circle up into sections. This requires further investigation.

There was no evidence of an occupation layer in the trench or any sondage however the trench was not fully explored. The location of the majority of finds and the fact that bedrock was at 50cm depth across much of the trench suggests that the hut circle could have been empty of soil when in use as a habitation and made more comfortable with a floor strewn with ling, bracken or other organic material. Similarities can be drawn with the results for the hut circle excavated in 2019 at the rear of Scargill House, where no occupation layers were found, and bedrock reached at 0.50m.

The reason for the apparent homogeneity of the soil in the hut circle could be due to a combination of animal manuring, windblown material and hillwash as well as millennia of use of the area for sheep farming.

Notes: levels on Trench 9 have been calculated using hand-held GPS and are accurate to 3m.

10.4 List of small finds

Small find number	Context
01 Flint fragment	002
02 Pottery	002
03 Flint flake	002
04 Chert fragment	002
05 Charcoal or burnt pottery crumbs	002
06 Flint fragment	002
07 Pottery crumbs	002
08 Pottery crumbs	002
09 Charcoal or burnt pottery crumbs	002
010 Pottery crumbs	002
011 Pottery crumb	002
012 2 small potsherds	002
013 Chert fragment	005
014 Flint fragment	002
015 Nutshell?	002
016 Pottery	002
017 Pottery	003
018 Flint	003
019 Stone blade?	002
020 Pottery	003
021 Pottery	002
022 Pottery rim and body sherds	008
023 Pottery?	005
024 Pottery Samian?	008
025 Flint	006
026 Burnt stones (left in situ)	008

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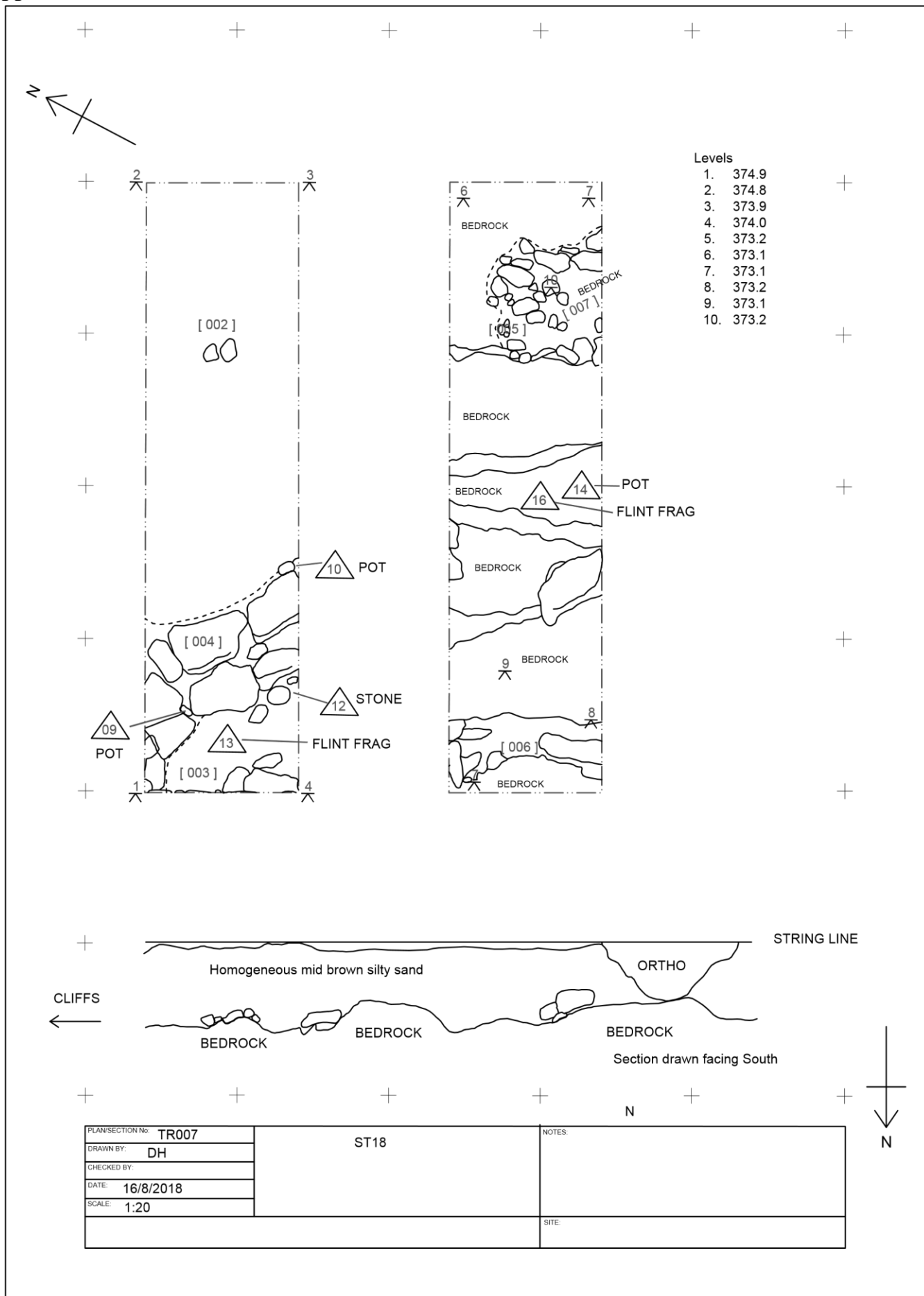
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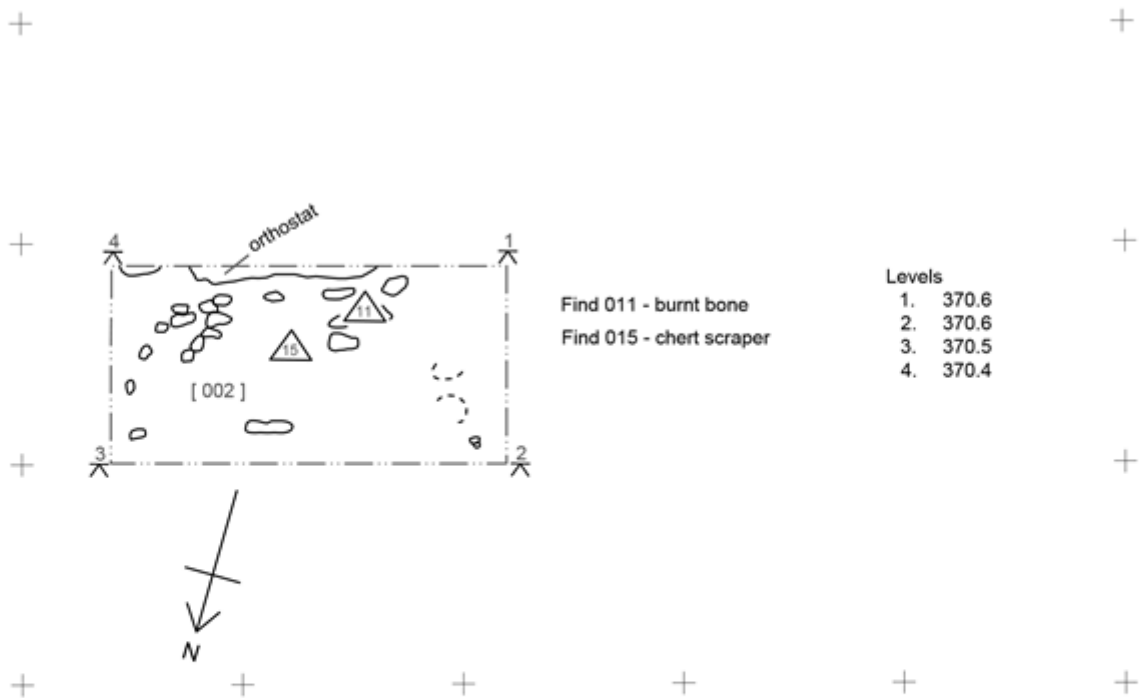
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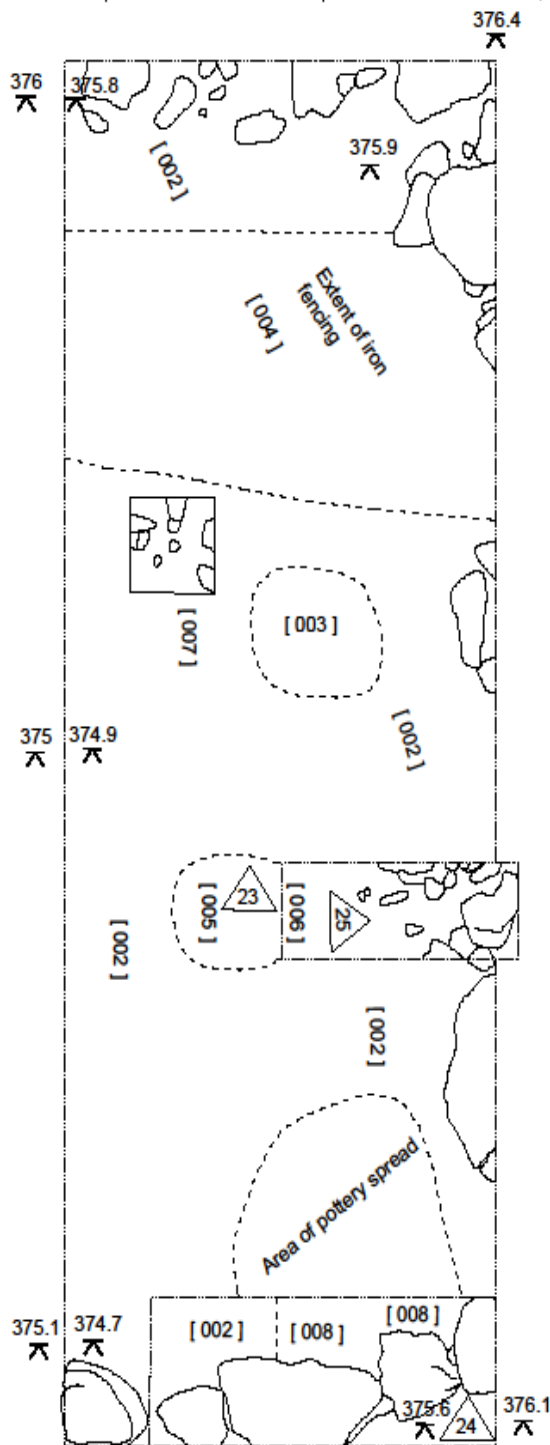
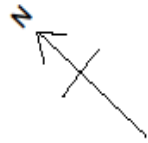
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Appendix 1 Trench Plans





PLANSECTION No: ST18	TR008	NOTES:
DRAWN BY: DH		Homogeneous mid-brown silty sand/clay lens
CHECKED BY:		
DATE: 11/8/2018		
SCALE: 1:20		SITE:

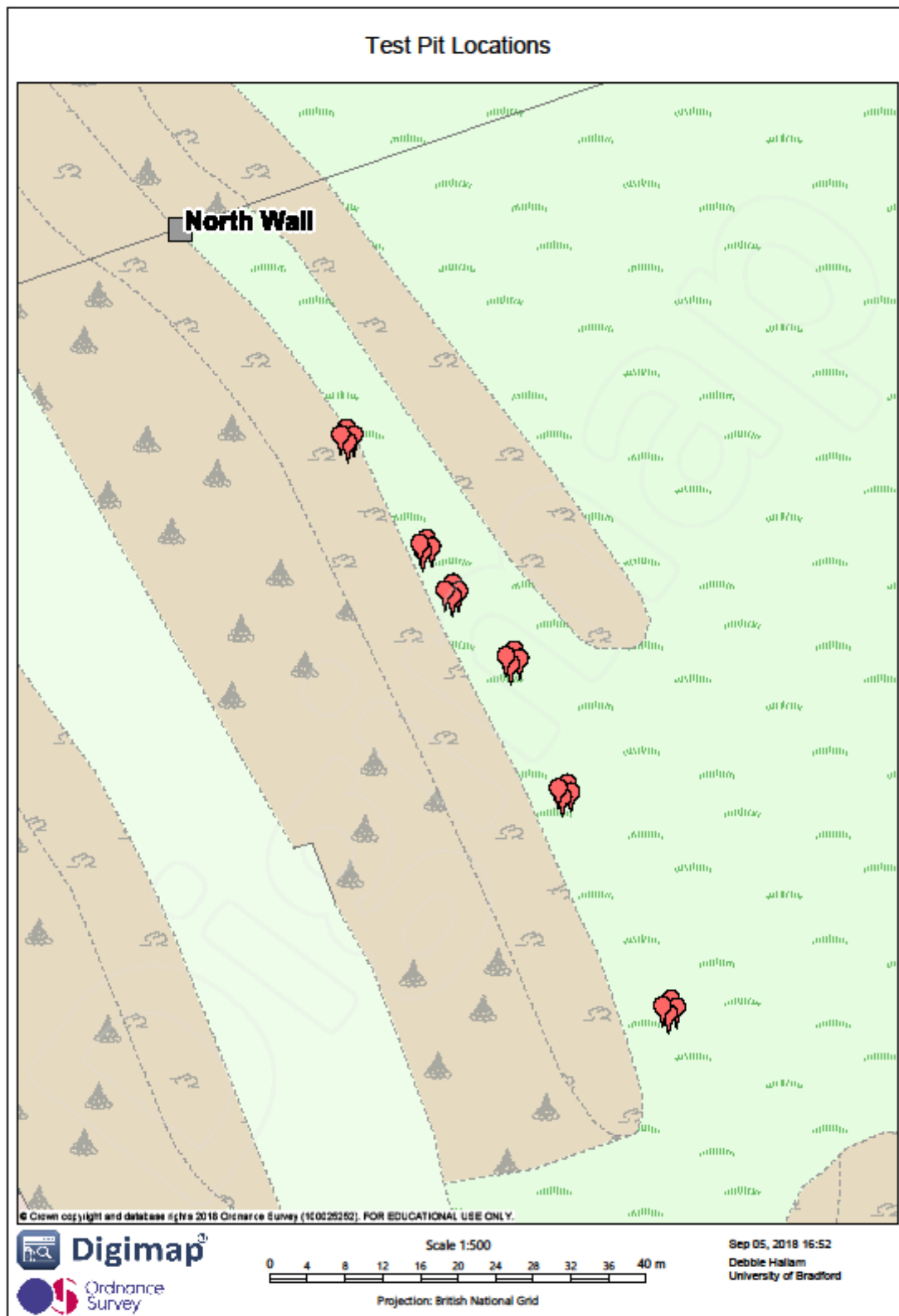


scale 1:10 [006]

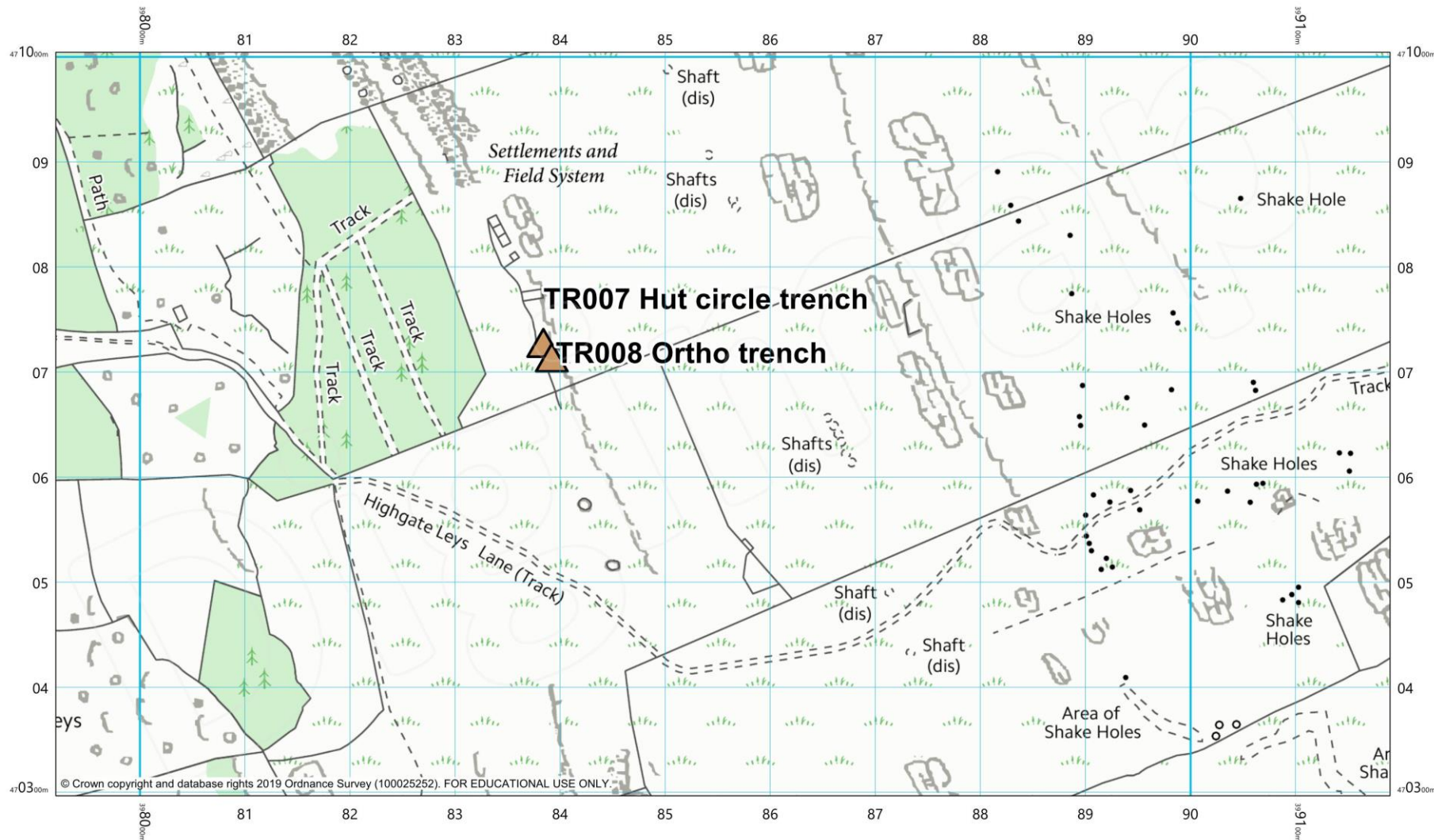
Section of sondage 006

PLANSECTION NO: ST019	Trench 9	NOTES:
DRAWN BY: DH		
CHECKED BY:		
DATE: 2/10/2019		
SCALE: 1:20		
		SITE: Scargill Terrace

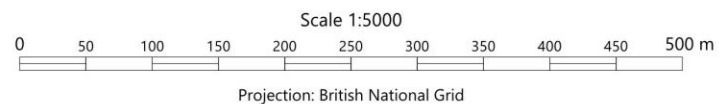
Appendix 2 Test Pit Locations and grid refs.



Trench locations



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Jun 07, 2019 15:43:22
University of Bradford

Test Pit Number	Easting	Northing	HASL
1	398394.870	470705.979	373.918
	398393.984	470706.207	373.844
	398394.400	470707.847	373.890
	398395.293	470707.681	373.959
2	398294.191	470949.123	370.579
	398294.951	470948.422	370.558
	398294.312	470947.693	370.466
	398293.546	470948.441	370.458
3	398302.644	470937.433	370.302
	398303.202	470936.625	370.312
	398302.292	470936.158	370.289
	398301.972	470936.939	370.308
4	398305.470	470932.733	370.509
	398306.060	470931.919	370.527
	398305.420	470931.402	370.532
	398304.650	470932.035	370.464
5	398311.998	470925.663	370.810
	398312.562	470924.814	370.793
	398311.615	470924.167	370.699
	398311.096	470925.075	370.705
6	398317.584	470911.557	370.615
	398317.998	470910.687	370.599
	398317.112	470910.187	370.534
	398316.649	470911.092	370.553
Hut Circle trench			
007	398387.1	470718	373.35
	398390.1	470720.6	373.544
	398390.7	470719.8	373.577
	398387.6	470717.2	373.364
Orthostat Trench			
008	398394.87	470706	373.918
	398393.98	470706.2	373.844
	398394.4	470707.8	373.89
	398395.29	470707.7	373.959