

## **Ingleborough Archaeology Group Project No. 4**

### **Stop Press! Ingleborough Summit Management Proposals**

The wheels are well and truly set in motion now for work to commence on the summit plateau and, as some of you will have heard me say during the Kingsdale dig, the IAG is to be fully involved in many of the stages planned. The entire project will be divided into a number of discrete units, to be separately contracted, out so the process will inevitably be drawn out. However, I have been assured that work will get underway this year but will inevitably run into the summer of 2010.

The various elements of the work are outlined below but it may be useful to set the work in context – why is it being done? Indeed, why does it have to be done? The YDNPA Monuments at Risk Survey identified ‘significant problems’ on the summit which included severe footpath erosion and unauthorised construction of stone piles and shelters on the summit plateau. Stone to do this has been sourced by robbing sections of the perimeter ramparts and by demolishing the plinth of the Hospice Tower. It is clear that the rate and scale of damage has increased in recent years and the size of some stones removed or rearranged indicate beyond doubt that it has involved groups of people rather than individual actions. In 1988 the summit plateau contained five well-established cairns and two then new stone piles. By 2008 this number had grown to at least 26, an alarming increase. In addition, damage has been done to several of the stone circles on the approach to the trig pillar.

#### **Elements of the project**

**Dating research.** Nothing conclusive is known about the summit’s glacial or archaeological history. Was it ice-covered during the height of the Devensian glaciation or did it stick out as a nunatak? Is the man-made structure Iron Age or Bronze Age? Was it a hillfort or a sanctuary/place of communal gathering? To resolve these issues, two forms of dating will be undertaken:

Cosmogenic Surface Dating (CSD) – four samples will be taken based on quartz grains to determine the mountain’s glacial history.

Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) – two samples will be taken from beneath the rampart which will give dates for its construction and, by association, for the circles.

**Partial re-survey of the summit plateau.** Selective surveying of the plateau, plus detailed surveying of the Hospice Tower remains and sections of the ramparts, recording of all modern stone piles and shelters. This will utilise conventional drawing techniques. There will also be a full photographic survey. The successful contractors for this stage will be required to ‘*use the opportunity to develop local survey and recording skills*’ of the IAG.

**Limited excavation.** Two small trenches may be excavated beside the rampart or a ‘hut circle’, no larger than 500mm by 500mm. These will be professionally excavated but ‘with the support of the IAG’.

**Dismantling of modern cairns and shelters.** Such features will be removed though selected ones will be left *in situ* as 'sacrificial examples' and will be monitored in the long-term and controlled. All this work will be fully documented step by step. The base of the Hospice Tower will be rebuilt and stabilised by YDNPA field staff, using traditional materials.

**Monitoring programme.** A programme will be devised for regular long-term monitoring of the summit to check if cairn building creases and to prevent further unchecked disturbance. Volunteers will be involved in this, including the IAG.

**Installation of information panels.** A number of panels will be installed on the approaches to the summit and at the official summit shelter. This will provide interpretative material and pleas for non-disturbance. The IAG will be invited to provide interpretative material.

I am sure all members will be pleased that the Group is to be formally involved in much of the work, and relieved that something is at last being done. Some of you expressed an interest in this work when you filled in the yellow forms in January this year. Any other member is, of course, welcome to 'sign up'. If you want to be involved, please contact me by email through this website. You will receive direct notification when the action starts.

David Johnson

Chairman

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