

Ingleborough Archaeology Group

A survey of the north-west flanks of Ingleborough 2007 - 2011

Introduction

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Since 2007 members of the Ingleborough Archaeology Group have been conducting a detailed multi-period survey of the area which lies to the north-west of Ingleborough. The survey grew out of an interest in the meaning of 'spechscaflade', an enigmatic boundary feature somewhere in the vicinity of Ingleborough, originally recorded in the 13th century perambulation of the Southerscales estate belonging to Furness Abbey. Subsequently the survey expanded beyond its initial constraints due to the enthusiasm and dedication of members of the survey team, and ended up covering more than a square mile of land on the north-west flanks of Ingleborough.

Members of the survey team included John Asher, Chris Bonsall, Carol Howard, David Johnson, Yvonne Luke, Pat Ormerod, Jeff Price, Frank Walker, as well as others whose company we enjoyed more intermittently. The accompanying essays have been written by Chris Bonsall, Carol Howard, David Johnson and Yvonne Luke; editing has been a sometimes lively communal activity!

Survey area

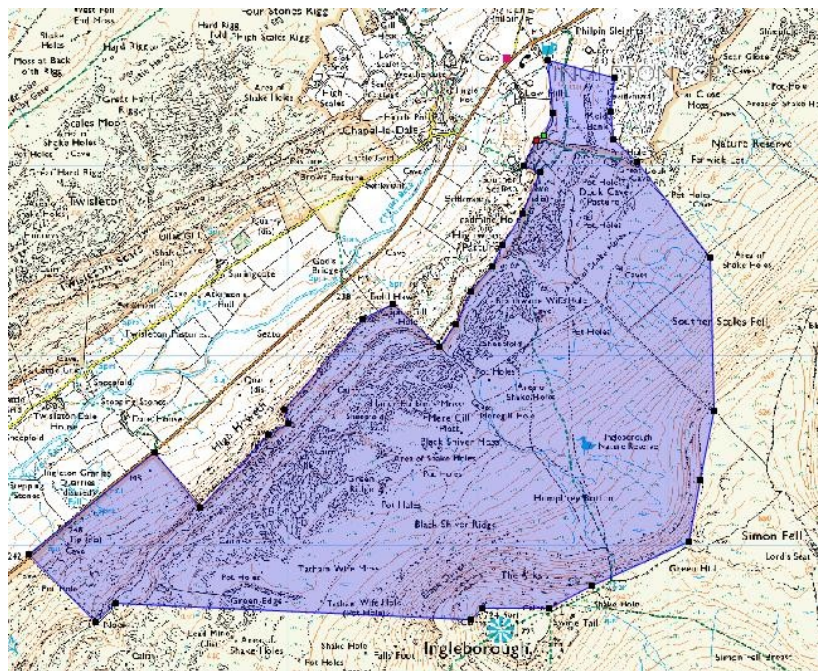


Fig.1 Map of survey area, with Ingleborough centre bottom © Ordnance Survey

The original survey area was defined in order to look a little more closely at the landscape within which the 'spechscaf' and the 'spechscaflade' potentially lay. It covered from Mere Gill Hole across to Black Shiver Moss and from there downhill across the area of limestone pavement and terraces to the enclosure wall above Raven Scar. Once this area had been covered, the group decided to carry on and expand the survey. The area for which we now

have a record extends from just beyond the so-called '400m limestone wall' near Green Bank in the south-west, up the flanks of Ingleborough to encompass the millstone workings and turbarry ground and to the north as far as the Neolithic long cairn complex on Keld Bank. Group members Carol Howard and Jeff Price were interested in doing a survey of the Broadwood type enclosure opposite the quarry on the Ingleton Road, and the survey area was extended downhill to include this field. About 80% of the survey area has now been covered with Level 1 and Level 2 surveys.

Survey methodology

The area includes a wide range of archaeological structures from the Neolithic period to abandoned features of the 20th century farming infrastructure. While the Neolithic long cairns we identified at Keld Bank may be unusual, in many respects the survey area is otherwise typical of upland landscapes all over the Yorkshire Dales. From the beginning we wanted it to be as comprehensive a record as was possible, and covered features up to and including the 20th century. Terms have been taken from the English Heritage *Thesaurus* which forms the basis of entries for the Yorkshire Dales National Park HBSMR.

A huge variety of sites and structures have been recorded. There are many types of cairn from the Neolithic period to the modern, a small stone boulder circle, field systems, an extraordinary variety of simple and complex enclosures associated with farming activities from the prehistoric period to the modern day, minor lead mining and more extensive stone quarrying, together with a turbarry ground probably associated with the deserted medieval village of Southerscales.



Fig.2 At work on ING 007, surveying a possible ring cairn

As a basic minimum each site was photographed, measured, described, provisionally put in an interpretative category and assigned a chronological period (this sometimes changed!), in addition to ten-figure grid references and height above sea level. Carol Howard shouldered responsibility for the **spreadsheet**, entering new data and checking details in the database. Each site has a unique survey number, and those with integral but separate elements were subdivided. The photographic record is linked to this numbering system. Chris Bonsall has been in charge of the **photographic archive**, a high quality digital record of one or more shots of each site, with scale indicated by a metre or two-metre staff. Grid references were established partially with the standard 5-10m accuracy of the basic navigation-grade GPS sets (it usually indicated 5-6m accuracy), such as the Garmin Geko or equivalent, partially with the Magellan mapping and survey-grade equipment which can record centimetric

accuracy. Technical problems with the Magellan have meant that we have had to rely on navigation-grade GPS more than we would have liked. Each entry is given a brief description, but these have been amplified by longer thematic **essays** on a number of subjects, in order to drill down a little more deeply into the archaeological record within the landscape, try and grasp its significance, and help set the different features in their local and regional context.



Fig.3 At work at the base of Black Shiver, amongst the surface quarries

Over 180 individual structures and features have now been recorded at a basic level (Level 1 and 2 survey). In addition to this a dozen or so of the more interesting and significant sites have been planned at an appropriate scale (Level 3 survey).¹ Two different methods have been used to do this – the most frequently used has been the traditional measured survey using tapes and/or metre frames. Individual structures or small groups of structures which were capable of being captured at the scale of 1:20, 1:50 and 1:100 were surveyed in this way. The other has been to use a total station followed up by hand enhancement in the field, a method applied to the complex Broadwood-type enclosure close to the road by the quarry (ING 022).

While choosing to record individual sites and structures at Level 3 is time consuming, and slows down the speed at which the group can cover the ground, it has proved to be extremely rewarding in terms of our increased levels of

understanding, as can be seen from the published **plans**. An effort has been made not only to survey what is obviously important and worthy of enhanced recording, such as the long cairns or stone circle, but to include the odd and bewildering sites with little or no pedigree in the extant archaeological literature in an effort to understand them better.

Conservation record

An additional important impetus for doing the work was to make a record of the extant archaeology for conservation purposes: over 90% of the survey area along with two thirds of the Yorkshire Dales National Park became Access Land in 2005. This is the land which has become legally accessible to the public for walking and roaming through the ‘CRoW Act’. Large areas of the Dales, mostly but not exclusively moorland and unenclosed uplands, which have hitherto been private or accessible only along footpaths and bridleways, may now be visited. The long-term implications of this on the condition and stability of both archaeology and built structures found within these areas is unknown but potentially not good, particularly for any stone structures. The ‘right to roam’ has coincided with an invidious growth in the building of modern cairns and other structures within, above and out of

¹ See English Heritage publications with guidelines on surveying archaeological sites, available online at: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/understanding-archaeology-of-landscapes/>

archaeology. Unfortunately any pile of stones is regarded as a useful source of building material, and this has led to the inadvertent destruction of vulnerable and irreplaceable archaeology. The summit of Ingleborough is a poignant case in point, but this type of activity can be found all over the Dales. Many of the structures within our survey area are made up of relatively loose and accessible stones, and are consequently vulnerable to the removal and addition of material; some indeed are liable to collapse.

Other changes can happen and we have already noticed the creation of one or two new stone constructions on the terraces since we started the survey. It is hoped that the information collected will provide a basic archive against which long-term changes in an upland environment can be monitored and measured in the future. A copy of the archive has been given to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority for inclusion in the Historic Environment Record. It is hoped that the photographic record and descriptions will be useful here. The idea is that in 20, 50 or 100 years time it will be possible to revisit each location and structure and compare their then condition to the record we have made at the beginning of the 21st century. It provides a set of baseline data which can inform future conservation and management strategies, and give an indication of the impact of increased accessibility on the physical remains of the historic environment.

In July 2011 the survey also proved invaluable in providing the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Natural England with sufficient archaeological information to prevent the fencing off of a considerable expanse of limestone pavement close to Harry Hallam's Moss. The fencing had been planned for nature conservation reasons, to help trees and shrubs regenerate through the controlled exclusion of sheep. However, this area of pavement, which includes the historically significant *spechscaf* site (ING 003), contains a wealth of archaeological structures, many of which would have been damaged and/or obscured if the fencing had gone ahead. Thanks to the survey team's efforts it is unlikely to proceed and, as one member of the group noted, this achievement alone has made the whole survey worthwhile. We have also, through our survey work, been able to enlighten Natural England on the archaeological importance of limestone pavements generally throughout the Dales, and highlight the need for archaeological survey prior to any proposed enclosure or other works which may affect them.



Landscape survey is now an integral part of the work of the Ingleborough Archaeology Group. The survey group has moved over to the other side of the valley on Scales Moor, and in due course a further survey report will be published, adding a considerable amount of information to the archaeological record in the area.

Fig.4 Occasionally we all fell down holes. Yvonne is probably at the bottom of this one looking for a place-name ...