

Ingleborough Archaeology Group

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

The Settlement at High Howeth and the adjoining earthworks

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Location

The settlement (ING 120) lies on a natural rise at the foot of the slope below the limestone terraces of Raven Scar. It was built on sloping ground on or slightly above the modern spring line. The site is adjacent to the B6255, at SD72131 75232 with the disused Ingleton Granite Quarries a few metres away, across the road. It is slightly higher than the floor of the valley of Chapel le Dale at approximately 260m above sea level.



Fig.1 ING 120. The settlement from the south-east

Methodology

The topological survey was begun by using a Zeiss-Elta R55 total station linked to a tablet computer running 'Penmap' surveying software. This established the basis for the tops and bottoms of the banks on the site. Using a plot of these results the hachured survey was produced by hand, checked on site, with the details of the stones measured on site and redrawn.

Description

Viewed from above the site appears as a series of enclosures, banks and platforms protected within a perimeter bank with an entrance from the north and another from the north-east. Measuring approximately 70m along its south-west to north-east axis and 55m from north-west to south-east, it is surrounded by coarse but well drained limestone pasture. It lies close to a series of earthworks, incorporating a gently curving bank, which covers an area approximately 20m square (ING 121).

The site is roughly rectangular, although the north-west section follows the curve of the natural bank and the corners are curved rather than angled. Although less pronounced to the south-

east where the structure gains added height from the natural slope, the perimeter bank is an impressive earthwork, remaining in parts to a height of some 0.9m measured internally and 3.5m in width. It has been re-enforced by sizeable pieces of limestone and on the north-west side the bank capitalises on a natural rise to provide a very effective barrier. There is no evidence of stone structures, although scattered pieces of limestone and individual boulders indicate that the site may have been extensively robbed. The banks have also been disturbed by a well marked sheep track running from east to west, from the north-east entrance, cutting across the western perimeter bank.

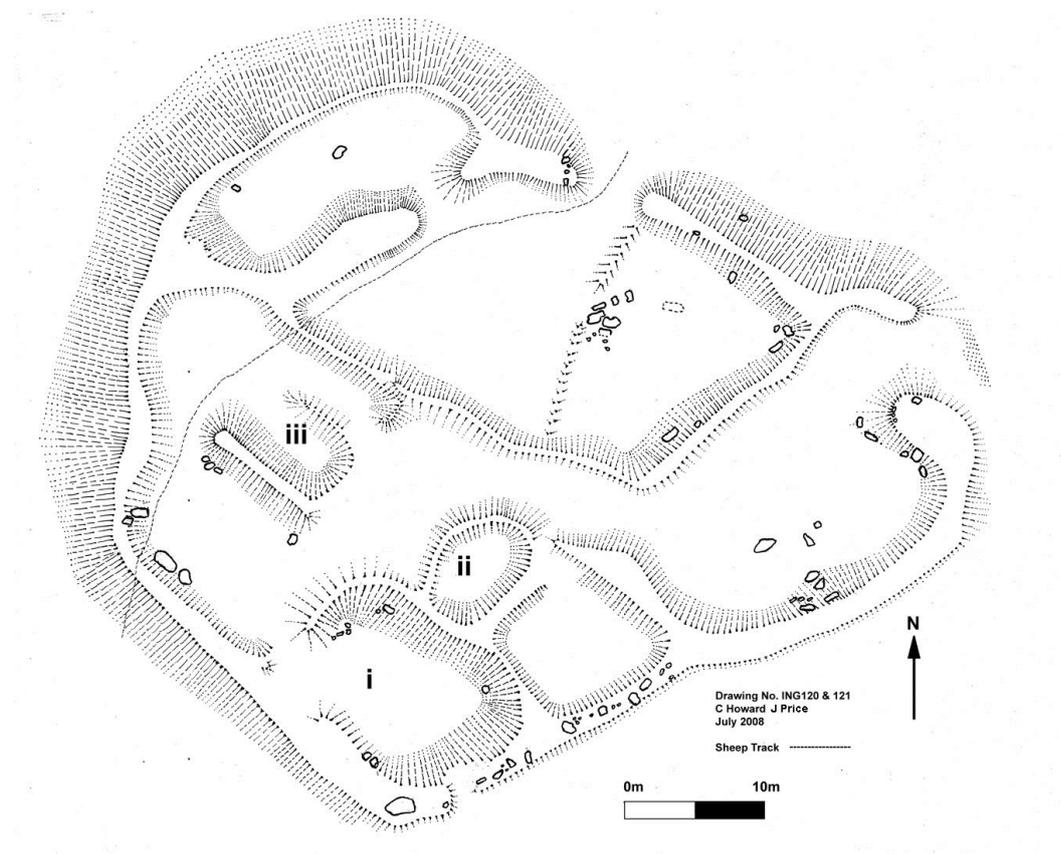


Fig.2 ING 120 The survey of the settlement

Certain features stand out

- The southern enclosure, marked (i) on the survey has much greater depth than the surrounding enclosures and has the only marshy floor in the settlement, still fed by a rising spring, suggesting it served as a watering point for stock and possibly for the farming community. During the winter months the spring rises quite dramatically and floods the enclosure floor before making its way through the low bank at the south-west corner.
- The enclosure shown as (ii) on the survey appears to be the only raised platform. There is no evidence of a structure but it could have served as a foundation for a wooden building. A geophysical survey could provide useful evidence here.

- An interesting feature in the south western section, marked (iii), is the twisting, double artificial bank. There are substantial boulders set against the banks in this area, one example measuring 0.85m in height and 0.95m in width, another 0.6m by 0.6m. They may be all that remains of a robbed-out structure but there is no evidence to support this hypothesis.
- The perimeter bank was a formidable barrier on three sides but not to the south-east and there are no supporting ditches, probably impossible with such thin soil overlying the bedrock. This suggests the need for protection from animals rather than a defensive enclosure.
- The prominent, earthfast boulder at the southern corner measuring 1.10m in height and 1m in width, which appears to have slipped from the top of the perimeter bank.

Interpretation

In the absence of firm dating evidence, we can only offer tentative suggestions. The shape and form of the settlement at High Howeth¹ indicate a Romano-British native settlement and there is landscape evidence within Chapel le Dale to support this hypothesis. It appears to display some of the characteristic features of an Ingleton-type site, which on current evidence suggests a Romano-British provenance.

The Yorkshire Dales Mapping Project identified Broadwood, to the north-west of Ingleton, as the key Ingleton-type site (NY.1216.38.1), described by Horne and MacLeod (1995) as 'a very regular rectangle approximately 65m x 50m internally, with internal subdivisions' and a 'very deliberate, organised form'. Broadwood is about three kilometres to the south-west of High Howeth. The analysis of aerial photography enabled Horne and MacLeod to identify eleven other sites within the region, which demonstrated similar features, none of which, however, had at that time produced reliable dating evidence.

One of these settlements (NY.1251.2.1 SD747 782) is situated near Chapel le Dale near Haws House about four kilometres to the north. A third site (NY.1300.3.1 SD781 698) lies just to the north of Wharfe and is defined as an enclosure and a fourth example (NY 1239.57.1 SD806 680) lies further to the south near Stainforth. Working on the evidence available, Horne and MacLeod assigned these sites to 'unknown', 'unknown medieval' and 'early medieval'. However the 2003 excavation carried out by the Ingleborough Archaeology Group produced dating evidence that confirmed Broadwood was in fact a native Romano-British settlement with a history stretching back into the Iron Age. Specimens sent for analysis gave readings of 55 cal BC - cal AD66 (probability 93.5%), cal AD45 - AD134 (probability 82.0%), cal AD69 - AD221 (probability 95.4%) and cal AD78 - AD364 (probability 93.5%) (Johnson 2004).

The settlement at High Howeth exhibits certain distinguishing features that appear to conform to this pattern of settlement. It is defined by an external bank with organised internal features. In dimensions it approximates to Broadwood's 65m x 50m. It appears to be adjacent to a series of field systems. Although there appears to be no consistent pattern across all the sites

¹ The field name where the site is located is High Howeth. A fact kindly confirmed by Mrs Gardner, who farms the land.

with regard to location and elevation, as at Broadwood and Wharfe, the settlement lies on south-south-west facing slopes and all the sites lie below the 365m contour.

Although roughly rectangular the corners of the settlement are distinctly curved. The majority of the Ingleton-type sites have curved corners, seven curved, five angled, but of the four sites in the immediate locality, three have curved corners. Horne and MacLeod point out that the six most characteristic sites lie close to the route of Roman or Medieval roads and this is certainly true of High Howeth.

The isolated position and prominence given to the boulder at the southern extremity of the site appears to mark it out as noteworthy. It lies on the edge of the settlement on the perimeter bank and, although it has slipped, it appears to have remained in its natural position. It may have had some significance in the site's location.

Despite the extensive monastic holdings of Furness Abbey in the upper part of Chapel le Dale, including the deserted medieval village of Southerscales, we think it unlikely that the site is medieval in origin. Sheep and cattle could be worked and watered here around the central 'yard' area but such an elaborate system of enclosures seems unnecessary and there is no evidence of a bercary. Although the embanked series of enclosures would appear to facilitate stock management on the stinted pastures of a common, this was not common land. The Ingleton Commons lie above the series of scars that make up Raven Scar and the site is outside the monastic holdings of Furness Abbey. Of the many sheep folds scattered over our survey area, none is as elaborate as this. We would not therefore assign a medieval provenance to this site.

The final paragraph of this section required complete reworking from the first edition in light of recent and ongoing work by Ingleborough Archaeology Group members. Sites around the Ingleborough massif are currently under intense investigation and have yielded challenging results. The hypothesis that British communities may well have survived in this area throughout the Roman military occupation and into the early medieval period is gaining ground. Sites around and to the west of the massif excavated by the Ingleborough Archaeology Group have yielded artefacts and radiocarbon dates from secure archaeological contexts dating from the mid-seventh to the tenth century, well into the Anglian period. Details are available in the YDNPA Report Number SYD 13981 written by Dr David Johnson in 2013; in Dr Johnson's article "Excavation of a Late Seventh-Century Structure in Upper Ribblesdale" published in the Yorkshire Archaeological Journal volume 86, 2014 and in the forthcoming report on the Group's excavations in Crummack Dale 2013-2014. The survival of the indigenous population in this area, adapting their culture in response to changing circumstances, is a tempting hypothesis that is being increasingly explored.

Future Work

- With so little archaeological data to work on, the next step should be a geophysical survey of the site. Although our survey did not reveal evidence of hut circles within the site, as at Broadwood, the oval platform in the southern section could be significant and should be further investigated.

- The relationship, if any, between the site, ING 120, and the adjoining earthworks to the north, ING 121, should be further investigated.
- One of the really interesting research questions posed by these Ingleton-type settlements is the date of abandonment of the site. Other areas of research include the reasons why there are so many examples of these particular settlement types in this area and whether or not they all pre-date the Roman invasion.

References

- Horne P.D. & MacLeod D. 1995. *The Yorkshire Dales Mapping Project*. A Report for the National Mapping Programme. RCHME 93-96.
- Johnson, D. editor. 2004. *Excavation of Broadwood Enclosure, Thornton in Lonsdale, North Yorkshire. Report on the excavation of a Romano-British enclosure and 17th century lime kiln*. Appendix 3. Ingleton. An Ingleborough Archaeology Group publication.