

THE SURVEY OF THE ENCLOSURES ON SCALES MOOR.

Having completed the Cairns Survey of Scales Moor, we continued our field investigations concentrating on the archaeological evidence of enclosures within the landscape. That prehistoric activity impacted on this area was proven by the chance discovery in 1986 of Thaw Head Cave, on the face of Twisleton Scars, with archaeological material including human remains and animal bones - pig, domestic cattle and sheep - dating to between c.2100 and 1000BC.¹ Further information on this early period is available in our introduction to the [Cairns Survey](#).

Scales Moor lies on the flanks of Whernside, at about 380 to 400 metres. It is an area of rough moorland grazing with good limestone pastures on the south and east facing terraces. The area of the survey was confined to the land designated as open access, excluding the improved pasturage on the lower slopes and valley bottom.

The sites, identified during the initial walk-over by members of the IAG, were revisited and a number selected to carry forward. Grid references were recorded on a spreadsheet with the details described, measured and photographed. As a working definition of an enclosure, we insisted that there had to be evidence of a bank or wall on at least three sides. Within the wider definition of the term we identified stock enclosures, putative dwellings, shelters and sheep runs. Enclosures serving as shooting stands or butts were not included in this survey, but are listed within the [survey of field sports](#) on the moor.

There is little evidence of settlement in these marginal uplands until well into the Bronze Age, but we identified a number of interesting, probably prehistoric, sites. For example E053 is a long, earthen, grassy bank surmounted by stone delineating an area at the southern extremity of the moor at Ewes Top overlooking the Lune Valley and Morecambe Bay. Shelters and a cairn have been built within the area in more recent times, although the base of the cairn could date back to the prehistoric.

A number of D shaped enclosures lie at the base of the escarpments along the terraces, for example the two adjoining enclosures at site reference E003. Three circular banks, E014, E023 and E047 appear to be hut circles, although it is equally possible that they are simply the remains of burial cairns. As the huts would have been simple wooden structures on low stone walls, timber-roofed, with turf and heather thatch, little would survive but the raised grassy banks we see today.

E001 is something of an enigma. Lying at the height of 334 metres on the edge of the moor facing Ingleborough across the valley, the small grass enclosure is embraced by a natural circle of huge limestone boulders and orthostats with some deliberately placed to seal the gaps between the stones. This is the one site for which we would suggest some ceremonial significance.

Firm dating evidence was obtained from the excavation of the enclosures on Brows Pasture during the summer of 2012, confirming their status as farmsteads or longhouses of the Anglo-Saxon period (Johnson 2013). For example site E031 is a D-shaped enclosure containing a rectangular structure, the putative longhouse, E032. In contrast to the walls of other enclosures, most of the walls in these structures were double skinned with rubble infill. A similar site, probably a single farmstead, E048, was identified on a wide grassy terrace NE of Twisleton Scar End.

¹ *Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Sites Register: Historic Environment Register Number MYD2306.*

Enclosures on the terraces, defined by stone walls running across the terrace and along the terrace edge, appear to be later - possibly medieval. They run in straight lines and incorporate more stone than earth; E030 is a good example.

Enhanced natural features, usually at the base of the limestone escarpments, for example E058, are impossible to date without intrusive investigation. An impressive example built deep into a natural limestone bay, E057, has well built limestone walls still standing to a height of 2.4 metres. The central dividing wall has the appearance of a parliamentary enclosure wall but large orthostats are incorporated into the base and the external walls appear much older. The entrance forms a distinctive V shape, indicating that it was designed for gathering cattle, which would explain the height of the walls. Cattle were farmed on the moor as extensively as sheep but they were smaller in build than modern breeds with shorter legs. A similar V shaped entrance can be seen in the sheepfold E046.

The head dyke separated the summer pasture from the good quality grazing or arable land below and was reinforced by a formidable enclosure wall. The stock pound E043 with its two bays and with access through the wall was incorporated into it and the sheep run E007 utilises the wall along one side.

The two most striking stock enclosures on Scales Moor are the communal sheepfolds; Hard Rigg Fold, E029 and the fold on Hurreys, E046, which probably date back to the 17th century when the moor was open common pasture. Hard Rigg Fold is now ruinous but Hurreys Fold retains its impressive walls to a height of 1.80 metres, strikingly similar to Harry Hallam's Fold directly across the valley on the Ingleborough terraces.

The moor was converted into stunted pasture in 1810 and Hurreys Fold must have been the main gathering ground where all the sheep grazing on the moor were brought in to shelter in severe weather, for clipping, sorting and treating. Hard Rigg Fold may have still been in use but its days were probably numbered. The scale of these folds suggest they may have been built for a multiplicity of purposes including horse and cattle management, in addition to sheep, and reference has already been made to the V-shaped entrance to the stock pens in Hurreys Fold, with a sheep-creep in one internal wall. Unlike Harry Hallam's Fold there is no evidence of water within the pens but for the sheep this would have been less of a problem. That the site of Hurreys Fold has long been a scene of human activity is demonstrated by the sub-circular bank, E047 that runs beneath the north wall of the main enclosure. Details of E029 and E046 are recorded on the spreadsheet. For further information on Harry Hallam's Fold and details of its use see p.56 of the IAG publication on the Ingleborough Survey (Luke 2012).

Although traces of enclosures are scattered across the moor, there is a notable concentration on the terraces and wide areas of moorland colonised by coarse grass and moss were avoided. Few of the enclosures contain water features but E051 is an exception. The water features on the moor are detailed in a separate survey.

There are smaller folds which were maintained into the last century, for example E050 and E015, but the pitfalls in suggested dating are many. The small D shaped enclosures and other tiny cells are usually accepted as prehistoric but Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his notebook entries for 1802 records how in Eskdale he saw "Inclosures made on the screes partly for saving the sheep from falling down, partly to reserve the grass for the hogs²" (Hudson 1991).

Farming practices such as these are timeless but having completed this section of stage 2 of the investigation, it is now planned to carry our researches forward with detailed surveys of the two communal sheepfolds on Hurreys and on Hard Rigg.

² *Year-old sheep*

References

Hudson, R. 1991 *Coleridge among the Lakes & Mountains* The Folio Society

Johnson, D. 2013. *Excavation of two Anglo-Saxon-period farmsteads in Brows Pasture, Chapel-le-Dale, North Yorkshire*. Kettlewell: Yorkshire Dales Landscape Research Trust

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