

Cairn Survey report Nov 2021

Yvonne Luke

The survey of the Round Cairn complex on Sleights Pasture, Weysedale, has not been at all straightforward this year – the planned July survey was postponed due to the presence of cattle in the field, and unfortunately just when the weather improved in September and we could get back in I fell ill. By the time I emerged the weather had turned! Nonetheless there has been some progress and I am looking forward to finishing the survey next year.

- **5m Grid.** The planned 5m grid, covering the whole of the site, was surveyed in, courtesy of John Cuthbert and Bob Moore on the Total Station. Luckily the yellow marker paint is reasonably long lasting and only needs to be renewed every month or so. This has given us a firm and accurate structure onto which the baseline tapes can be fixed.
- **Measured survey.** The core of the cairn complex has been divided into four quadrants based on the cardinal points (magnetic north), and survey of the SE quadrant has been completed, thanks to Bob Moore, Mike Short and David Gibson. The NE and NW quadrants have been partially completed thanks to Clare Leigh, Sarah Moorhouse, Vicki Lewis (a new IAG member) and Abigail Nixon, a friend from Ilkley who has offered to help (especially when I don't have a car). Approximately a third of the core area has now been surveyed.
- **Field walls.** An initial analysis of part of the field walls near the cairn (which appear to contain sandstones likely to originate from the cairn) was undertaken with Mike Short and Clare Leigh (with a guest appearance by Helen Goldie, our team geologist!)
- **Drone survey.** A drone survey of the site and much of the surrounding area was undertaken by Tony Hunt, using his special software alongside more traditional aerial photo methods.
- **Skills training.** Three IAG members new to measured survey have been given training in how to do it. For the rest it was a (rather demanding) refresher!
- **Blog.** An on-going diary of the survey work can be viewed on the IAG website - <http://www.ingleborougharchaeologygroup.org.uk/Sleights%20Cairn%20blog.html>

We have finally met the farmer Rodney Beresford, who has kindly given us permission to do the survey. We also met Andrew Hinde, the new Natural England adviser based at Colt Park and discussed the proposal for the all-weather field trackway which is being currently examined for the upper dale for cyclists, pushchairs, wheelchairs and walkers. This may affect the cairn, and I am planning to meet David Johnson on site soon, as he is responsible for completing the archaeological audit of the affected fields. I will update him with the results of the survey so far.

Huge thanks to the members of the Cairn Survey team, for braving the weather and persevering. We are getting there!