

Ingleborough Archaeology Group

Field walking exercise, Bleak Bank farm, Clapham, 22 April 2010

A field walking exercise was undertaken in part of a field that was due to be planted with potatoes as a community project, and the Group was invited to undertake the exercise. The intention was that the field walking would be carried out between harrowing of the ploughed area and the ridging operation but time constraints on the part of the tractor driver meant that the field had not been harrowed when we went in – it was in its raw ploughed state. This meant it was impossible to lay out a grid, as the ground surface was too uneven, so the exercise was undertaken by using furrows as guidelines for walking. In spite of this the exercise was considered to be worthwhile and successful and a representative sample of artefacts was recovered. After all, even with a harrowed field and a full grid, it is not possible to retrieve every object.

The range and type of artefacts recovered are considered a representative sample of what one might expect to find in any given location on the fringes of the Dales. Pot sherds show a date range from the medieval period through to the nineteenth century, thereby in keeping with known occupation history in the area.

The presence of chert and flint lithics is perhaps surprising as there has been no evidence locally of Mesolithic activity. The source of the chert is as yet unknown.

Site details

The area investigated lies adjacent to and north of Old Road, between Clapham and Ingleton, directly east of the eastern entrance to Bleak Bank Farm, at NGR SD7243 7106. The ploughed area covers approximately 0.2ha.

On the day of the exercise the weather was dry and breezy and generally quite overcast but conditions were bright.

As the area had only been ploughed a day or two prior to the exercise the ploughed surface was fresh. Given that weather conditions had been dry for some time, the plough ridges were generally firm and the soil very dry and consolidated.

A sample of soil was taken for analysis. It is a brown, silty sand, very friable and crumbly when dry.

The impossibility of laying out a grid precluded precise location of finds but the spread of artefacts was dispersed rather than concentrated in any one area of the ploughing. As the field had not been ploughed since the Second World War, and the ridges and furrows were fresh, there was no evidence of the artefacts having been washed downslope. The distribution of finds indicates that most of the material resulted from the

spreading of midden deposits across the area historically, and from re-scattering by subsequent ploughing activity. The railway coat button find can probably be explained by someone having worn the jacket or coat in question for general farm work after it had been replaced by a newer coat.

Participants

Six members of the Group took part in the exercise.

Artefacts

Pot sherds	38
Coin	1
Coat button	1
Clay pipe fragments	7
Lithics	8

Pot sherds

Manganese mottled ware	7 sherds	late 17 th /early 18 th century
Slipware, brown	3	late 17 th /early 18 th century
Slipware, brown, striped	1	1830s
Brown-glazed kitchen ware	11	glazed internally and externally
	4	glazed externally

Two are rim sherds, the remainder body sherds; dominantly late 17th or 18th century.

White-glazed tableware	1	body sherd, 19 th century
Cream and brown tableware	1	body sherd, 19 th century
Blue & white tableware	2	body sherds, 19 th century
Blue & white tableware	1	hand-painted design, 1830s
Glazed Staffordshire Yellow ware	1	base sherd, late 17 th /early 18 th century
Locally made Black ware	1	body sherd, late 16 th /early 17 th century

Incompletely reduced	1	externally glazed, body sherd of large vessel, 13 th to 15 th century
Press-moulded or hand-thrown	2	sherds from the same vessel, either a plate or dish with thumbled rim, late 17 th /early 18 th century, fire-blackened
Glazed ware	1	body sherd with a hint of green glaze, late medieval or early post-medieval
Unglazed	1	small body sherd, medieval

Miscellaneous

Clay pipe bowl, intact	1	date range 1660-1680, York type
Clay pipe stem	3	wide bore, early manufacture
	3	narrow bore, late (19 th century) manufacture
Halfpenny coin	1	of William III (1702-14), inscribed 'GVLIIEMUS TERTIUS' on the obverse face and 'BRIT...' on the reverse face
Coat button	1	brass, stamped 'London, Midland, Scottish Railway Company', 1922-1948

Lithics

Flint struck flake	1	patinated and heated
Chert struck flakes	4	
Chert	1	probably worked
Chert	1	natural

Dated 9 June 2010

Compiled Dr David Johnson
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