



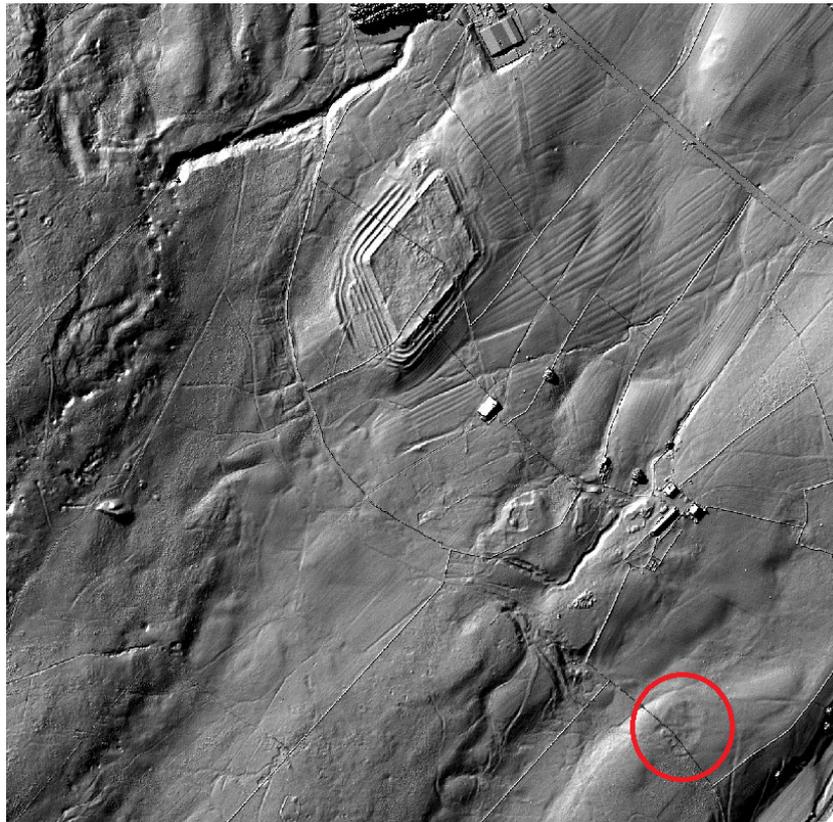
ALTOGETHER ARCHAEOLOGY

Theme 3. The Maiden Way.

Fieldwork module 3b

GILDERDALE BURN EXCAVATION

PROJECT DESIGN



Contents

1. General introduction
2. The Gilderdale Burn settlement
3. Research aims and priorities
4. Methods statement
5. Finds, environmental sampling and human remains
6. Report
7. Archive
8. Project team
9. Communications
10. Stages, tasks and timetable
11. Site access and on-site facilities
12. Health & safety and insurance
13. References

Appendices (bound separately)

1. Altogether Archaeology standard Risk Assessment.
2. Gilderdale Burn module-specific Risk Assessment.

Front cover illustration.

Lidar image of Epiacum (Whitley Castle) Roman Fort (top centre) with the Gilderdale Burn settlement ringed in red towards the bottom-right corner.

1. General introduction

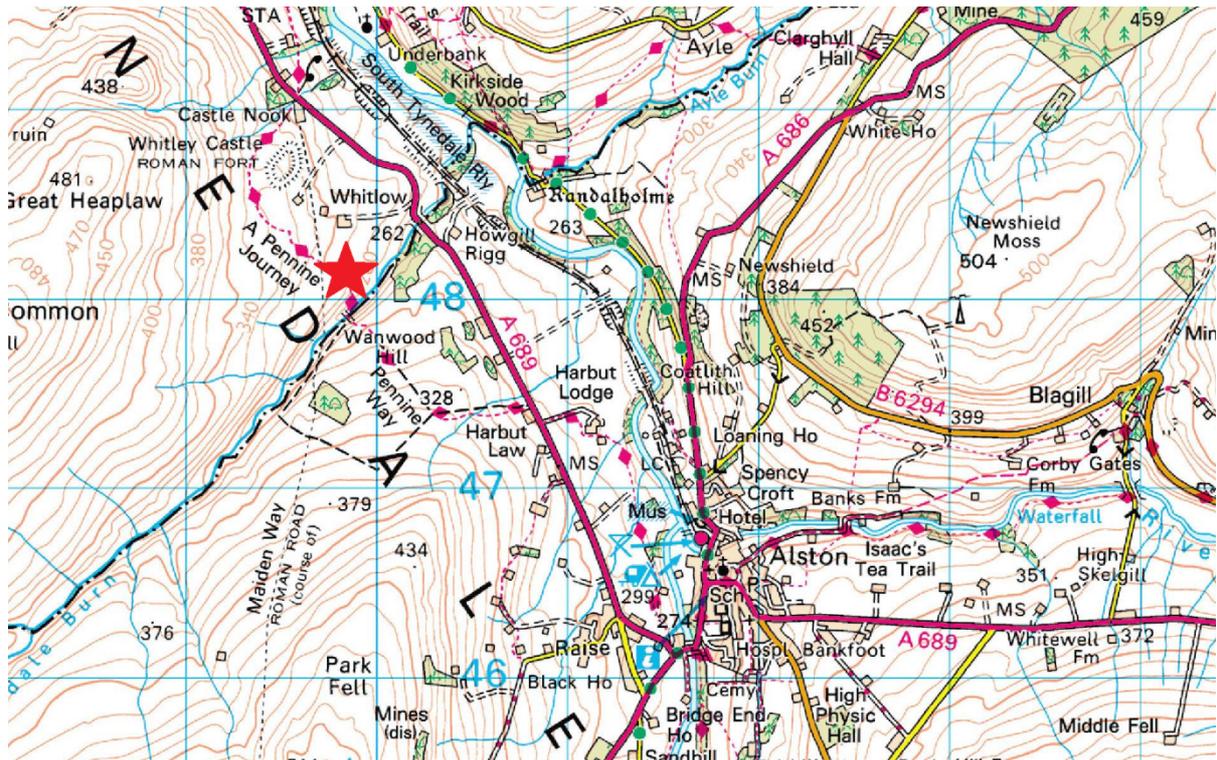
Altogether Archaeology, largely funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, is the North Pennines AONB Partnership's community archaeology project. It enables volunteers to undertake practical archaeological projects with appropriate professional supervision and training. As well as raising the capacity of local groups to undertake research, the project makes a genuine contribution to our understanding of the North Pennines historic environment, thus contributing to future landscape management.

Over an initial 18-month pilot phase, ending in December 2011, the project attracted 400 volunteers and completed a range of fieldwork modules including survey and excavation of prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval sites, and the survey of complex multi-period archaeological landscapes. Details of work completed during the pilot phase can be found on the AONB website.

The current Altogether Archaeology programme runs from September 2012 - September 2015. It involves a range of professional and academic partners, and participation is open to all. Work is arranged according to ten themes, ranging from Early Farming to 20th-Century Industrial Archaeology. Further information, including details of how to register as a volunteer, are available on the AONB website.

Altogether Archaeology Module 3 is entitled 'The Maiden Way Roman Road'. Its aim is to complete survey and small-scale excavation projects along the line of the Maiden Way, which runs through the wilds of the North Pennines on its route between the Roman forts at Kirkby Thore (on the A66) and Carvoran on Hadrian's Wall. This particular excavation, directed by Stewart Ainsworth and Richard Carlton, is designed to provide information about the Gilderdale Burn settlement, close to the Roman fort of Epiacum (Whitley Castle) near Alston. At present, this settlement, and several others like it in the surrounding landscape, are undated. This particular settlement has been identified as having high potential to tell us much about the ways in which people lived here in Roman (and possibly also pre-Roman) times. The excavation has also been designed to assess the effects to which agricultural improvement may have damaged such sites, as the proposed work includes the examination of parts of the site on both 'improved' and 'unimproved' land. As with all Altogether Archaeology fieldwork, comprehensive training will be available to all participating volunteers, and no prior experience is necessary to take part.

This Project Design sets out the reasons, strategy and methodology for the proposed excavation. In format and content it conforms to current best practice including the guidance outlined in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (English Heritage 2006) and the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation (IfA 2008). It is also intended to function as an introduction to the site and the project for all participants



OS map with the location of the Gilderdale Burn settlement, about 2km NW of Alston, marked with a red star. Parking for project participants will be at Whitlow Farm; further details and a large-scale map will be circulated to volunteers in due course. (Source: Durham County Council GIS).

2. The Gilderdale Burn settlement

The site of a small 'scooped' settlement, measuring 70m NNE-SSW by 50m, at NY6881 4813, was first identified from earthworks during the English Heritage Miner-Farmer project in 2010. It is one of about twenty similar sites recorded in the South Tyne valley close to Alston, many with attendant field systems and trackways. No absolute dates are known for any of these sites which have been dated to the Iron Age/Romano-British period by analogy with other sites in the north. The settlement, which contains four, possibly five round house sites and a number of courtyards, shows evidence of two, possibly three different phases of development. At the SW it is cut by a drystone wall on a NW-SE alignment which marks the limit of an intake belonging to Whitlow Farm prior to enclosure of the adjacent common around 1862; each side of the wall has been subjected to different types of land use resulting in contrasting levels of earthwork survival. To the W it is open moorland, with the survival of earthworks and rubble banks being generally very good, although in places a combination of historic hollow ways, footfall along the Pennine Way, and cattle trample has caused some loss. On this side of the wall moorland grasses predominate and parts of the settlement are wet and boggy particularly after periods of heavy rain. To the E of the wall the land has been improved to grassland (originally in the 18th/19th century), resulting in severe degradation of the earthworks, although the plan-form of the settlement is still identifiable. The field today is used for silage and pasture. On both sides of the wall, probable house sites survive, although in different states of preservation.

The site has been surveyed at 1:1000 scale by English Heritage (EH) and a short report has been prepared although not published (Fig 2.2). Although the site was termed 'Whitlow' by EH it is more appropriate to name the site 'Gilderdale Burn' due to its proximity to the Burn to the south and to avoid confusion with a number of other sites to the north which are prefixed with Whitlow. The EH survey indicates that the settlement may have two phases of development and three round house sites, but this has now been re-assessed by Stewart Ainsworth who thinks there may be three possible phases of development and four, possibly five round house sites. Sometimes, when comparable settlements have been investigated elsewhere in northern England, it is found that they have origins in the pre-Roman Iron Age, or perhaps even earlier, but remain in occupation into the Roman period and possibly even beyond.

Geophysical surveys (geomagnetic and resistivity) were undertaken at Gilderdale Burn, under the direction of Duncan Hale of Durham University, in July 2014 (figs 2.3, 2.4). These tend to reinforce the results of the earthwork survey, suggesting that substantial remains of stone walls remain within the ground, even within the ploughed sector of the site.

Gilderdale Burn site is one of two settlements which lies within 250m of Whitley Castle (Epiacum) Roman fort, suggesting that they may be linked in some way with the fort, although as yet we cannot be sure of their chronology. If they were occupied at the same time as the fort, and if the numerous comparable settlements in this area and elsewhere in the North Pennines are of similar date, then perhaps we are looking at some kind of Roman 'miner-farmer' landscape, with at least some of the occupants of the settlements working as lead (and silver) miners in a large-scale operation managed by the Roman military based at Epiacum. If such a system did exist under Roman administration, it may have been similar in many respects to the 'miner-farmer' landscape of post-medieval times. But there is little we can do to address this possibility further without at least some evidence for the chronology of the settlements. This project will hopefully provide some dating evidence for the Gilderdale Burn site, as well as information about the kind of activities that went on within the site and its immediate vicinity. It will also enable an assessment of the potential for further investigation, both here and at other comparable sites throughout the North Pennines.

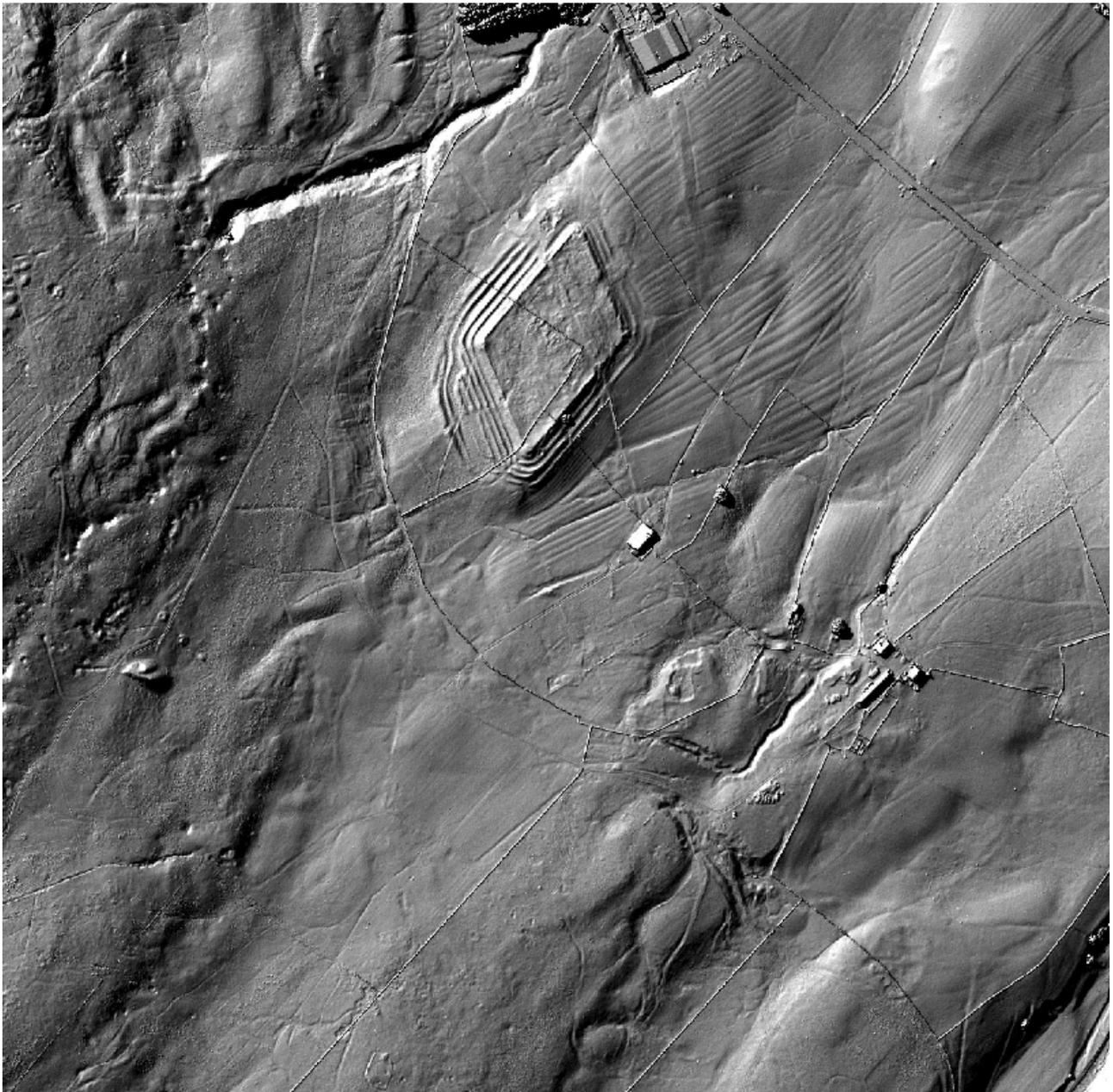


Fig 2.1. Lidar image of Epiacum (Whitley Castle) Roman Fort (top centre) within its complex multi-period historic landscape. The line of the Maiden Way Roman road can be clearly seen, overlain in places by medieval ridge-and-furrow, passing beneath the farm buildings at the top of the image, heading southwards past the fort's eastern ramparts. The Gilderdale Burn settlement is in the bottom-right corner, cut by a field wall, with the portion to the SW of the wall better preserved than that to the NE which is now enclosed within an improved pasture field.

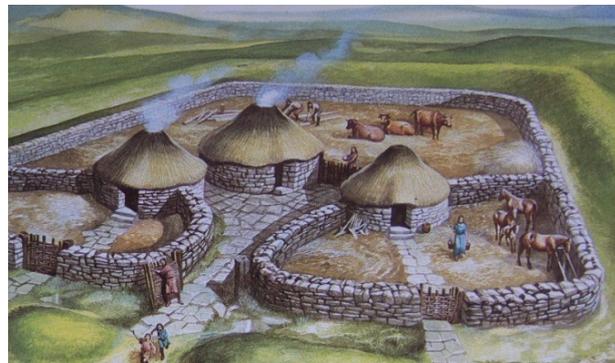
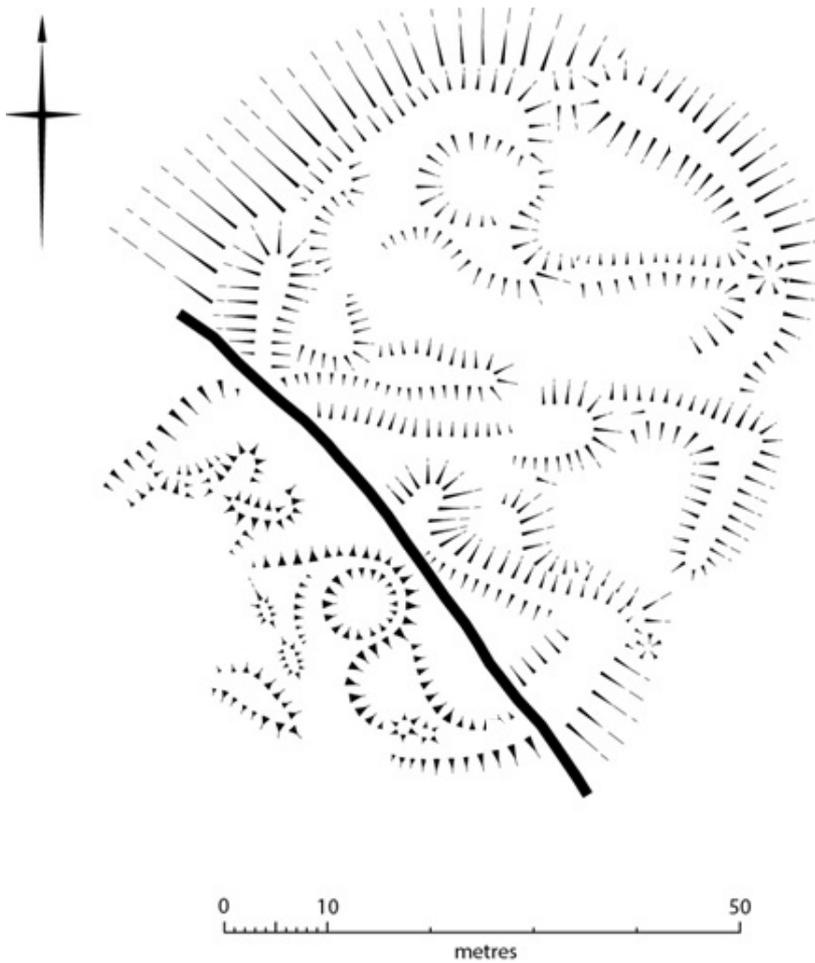


Fig. 2.2. The recently produced English Heritage earthwork survey of the Gilderdale Burn settlement. The dark line is the recent fieldwall that cuts across the site. The visible remains appear to relate to two, if not three, phases, and it is possible that evidence of earlier occupation may lie buried beneath the visible remains. The artist's reconstruction (by Ronald Embleton) is of a broadly comparable, though in some ways quite different, site in North Tynedale; it is shown here simply to give a rough idea of how the houses and paddocks at Gilderdale Burn may have appeared when the site was occupied.

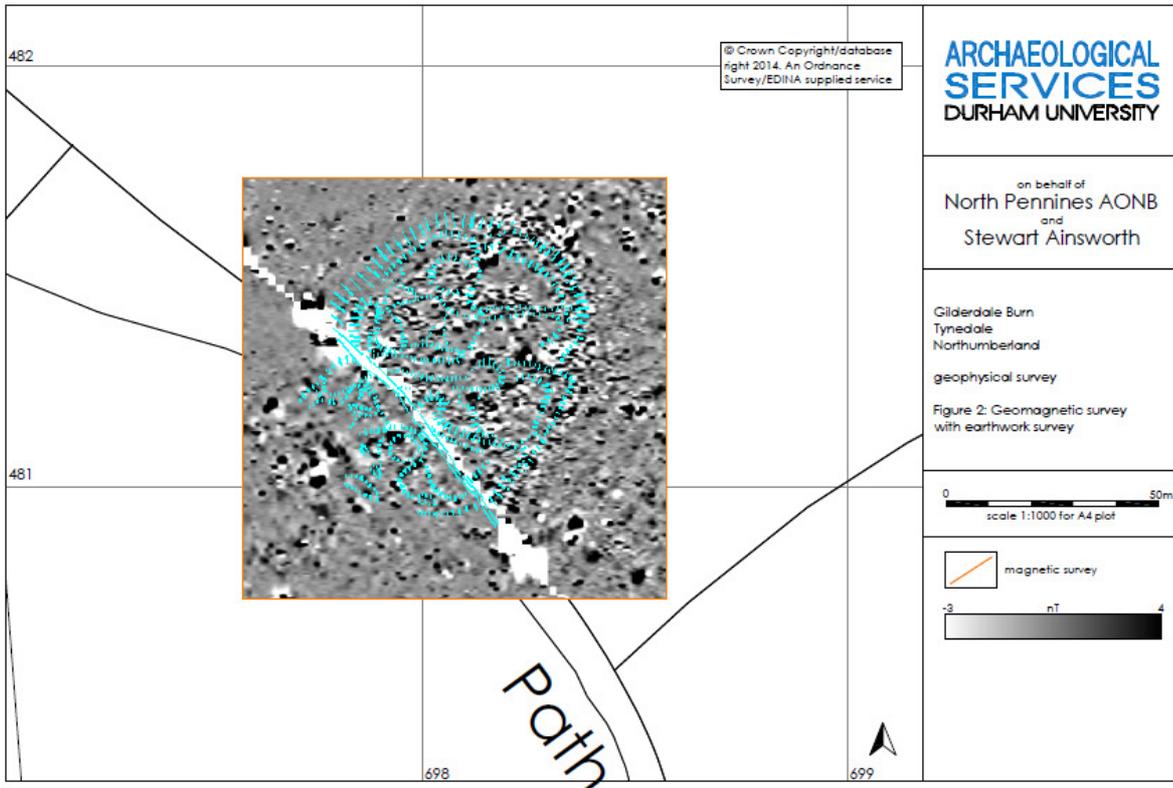
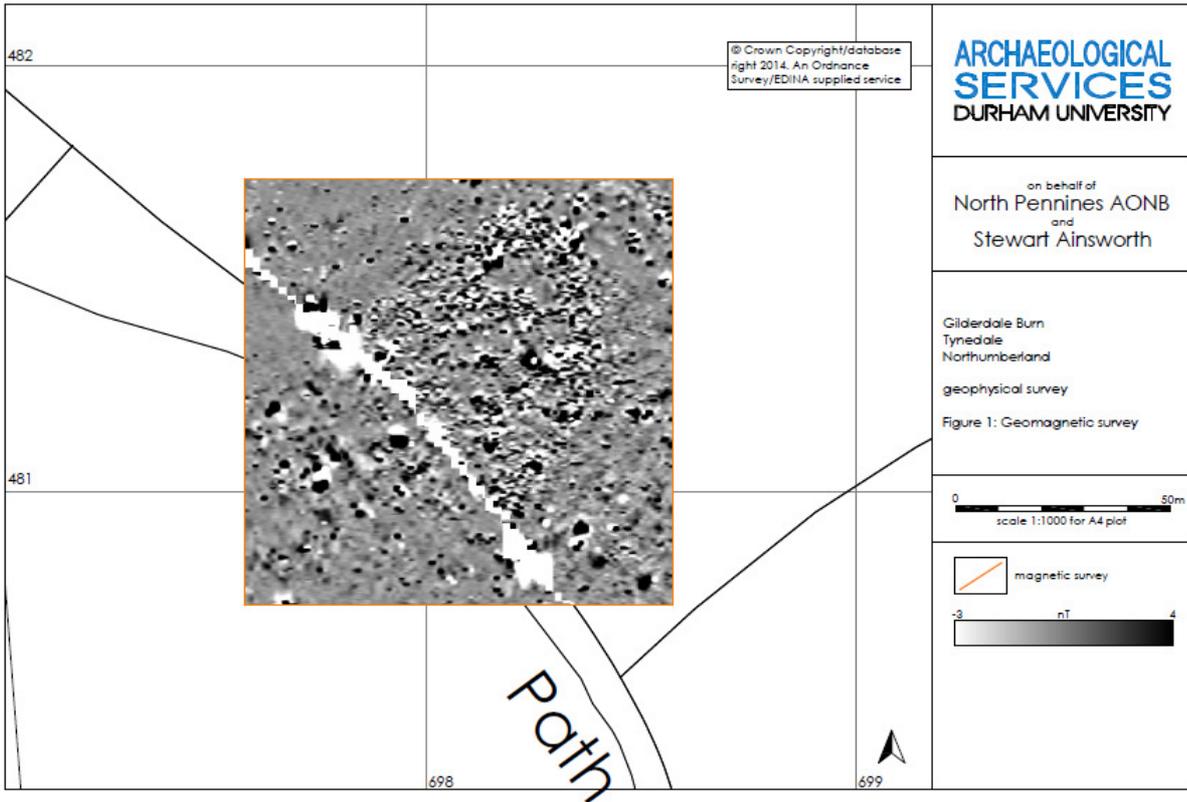


Fig 2.3. Recent geophysical (geomagnetic) survey of Gilderdale Burn. The lower plot shows the geophysical survey results overlain with the EH earthwork survey.

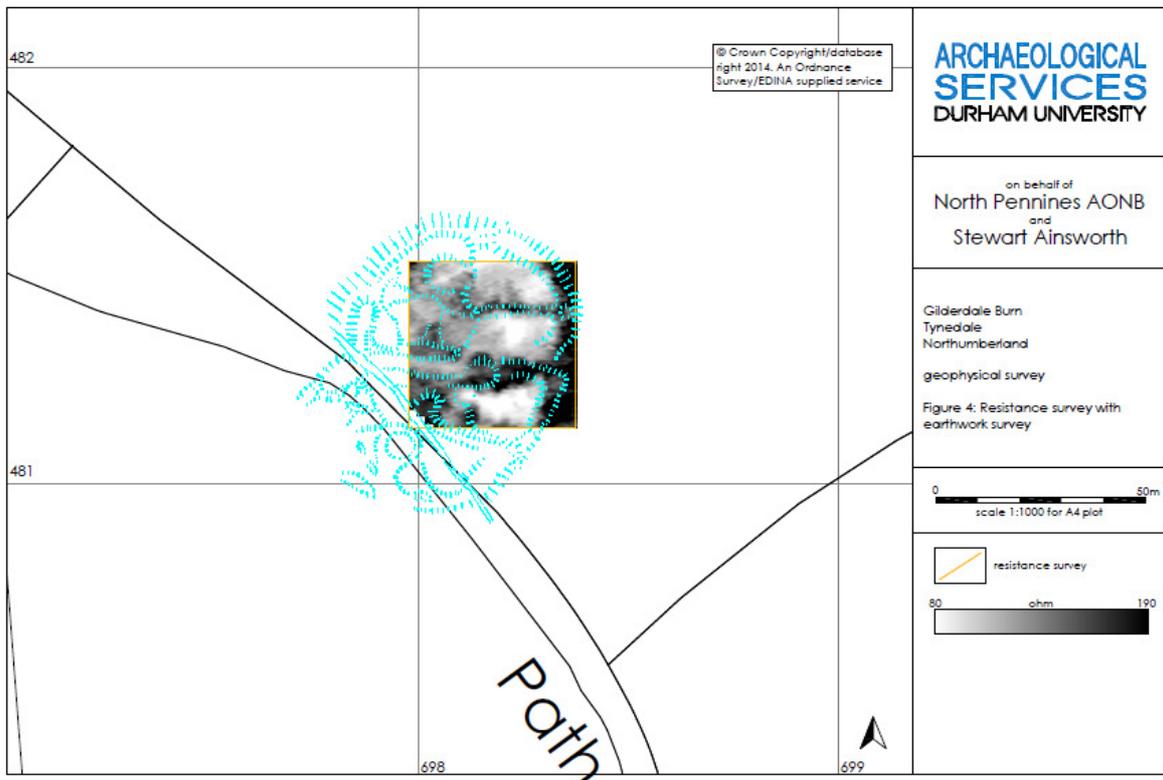
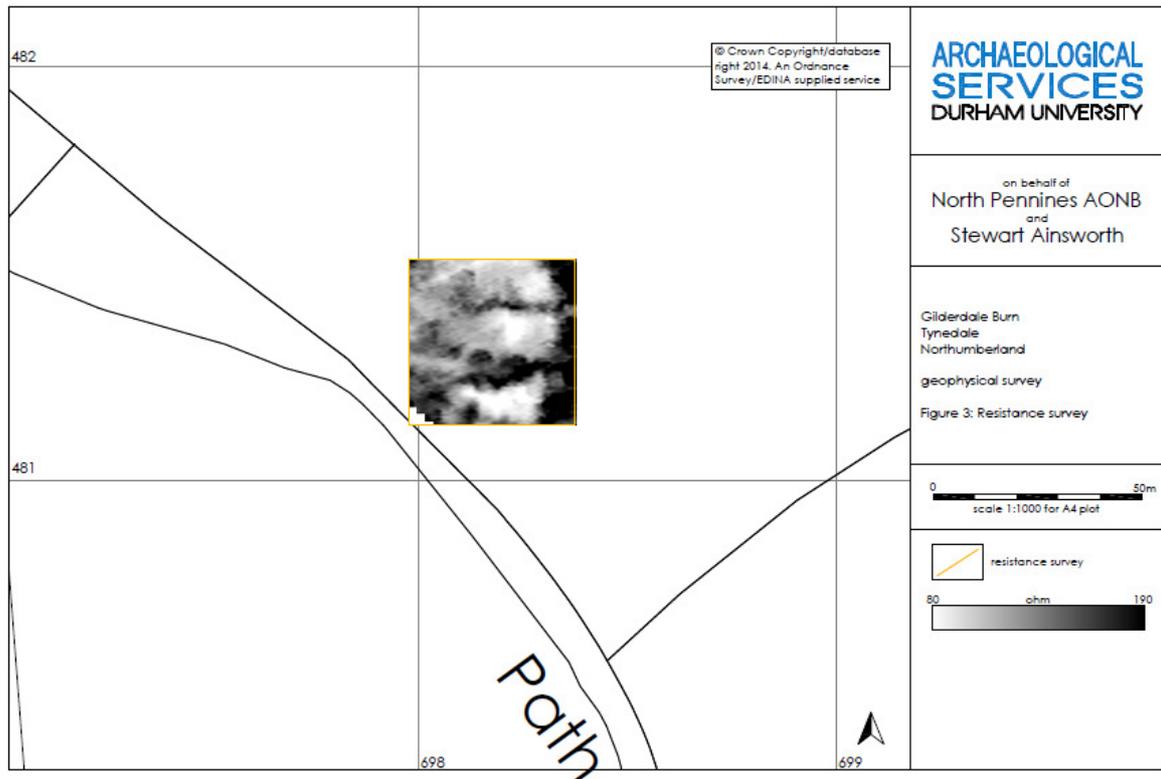


Fig 2.4. Recent geophysical (resistivity) survey of part of the Gilderdale Burn settlement. The lower plot shows the geophysical survey results overlain with the EH earthwork survey.

3. Research Aims

The excavation has 6 primary aims. See fig 3.1 for proposed trench locations.

1. Examination of the best preserved suspected house site to the west of the wall (A) to clarify its structure (it has a stony perimeter but from surface inspection it is not clear if this is a rubble wall or revetted platform for a timber structure) and, if possible, its chronology.

2. Examination of a section of the enclosure bank west of the wall (B) to determine its method of construction and, if possible, its chronology.

Both these elements fall within the suspected latest phase of the settlement.

3. Examination of the clearest of the house sites east of the wall, visible now as a low earthwork platform (C) to clarify its original structure and, if possible, its chronology.

4. Examination of a section of the curvilinear enclosure bank east of the wall (D) to determine its method of construction and, if possible, its chronology.

Both these elements fall within the suspected earlier phase of the settlement and potentially allow a comparison to be made with the settlement remains to the west of the wall to determine relative chronology.

5. Comparison of the results of areas A and B with those of C and D to assess levels of agricultural impact on the site. The findings from this may have implications for the management of this and a large number of the other sites identified during the English Heritage Miner-Farmer survey.

6. Clarification of the site's phasing and chronology in relation to the occupation of Epiacum Roman fort.

Excavation priorities

The plans set out in this document are flexible. Depending on the numbers of volunteers, the complexity of the archaeological deposits encountered, and the weather, it may not be possible to achieve all of the stated aims.

Priority will be given to addressing aims 1, 2 and 4 (trenches A, B, D). However, ground conditions at the time may also affect the choice of excavation targets as the area west of the wall is sometimes waterlogged. If conditions are very wet and therefore unsuitable for the excavation of areas A and B, then work will concentrate on aims 3 and 4 (trenches C and D).

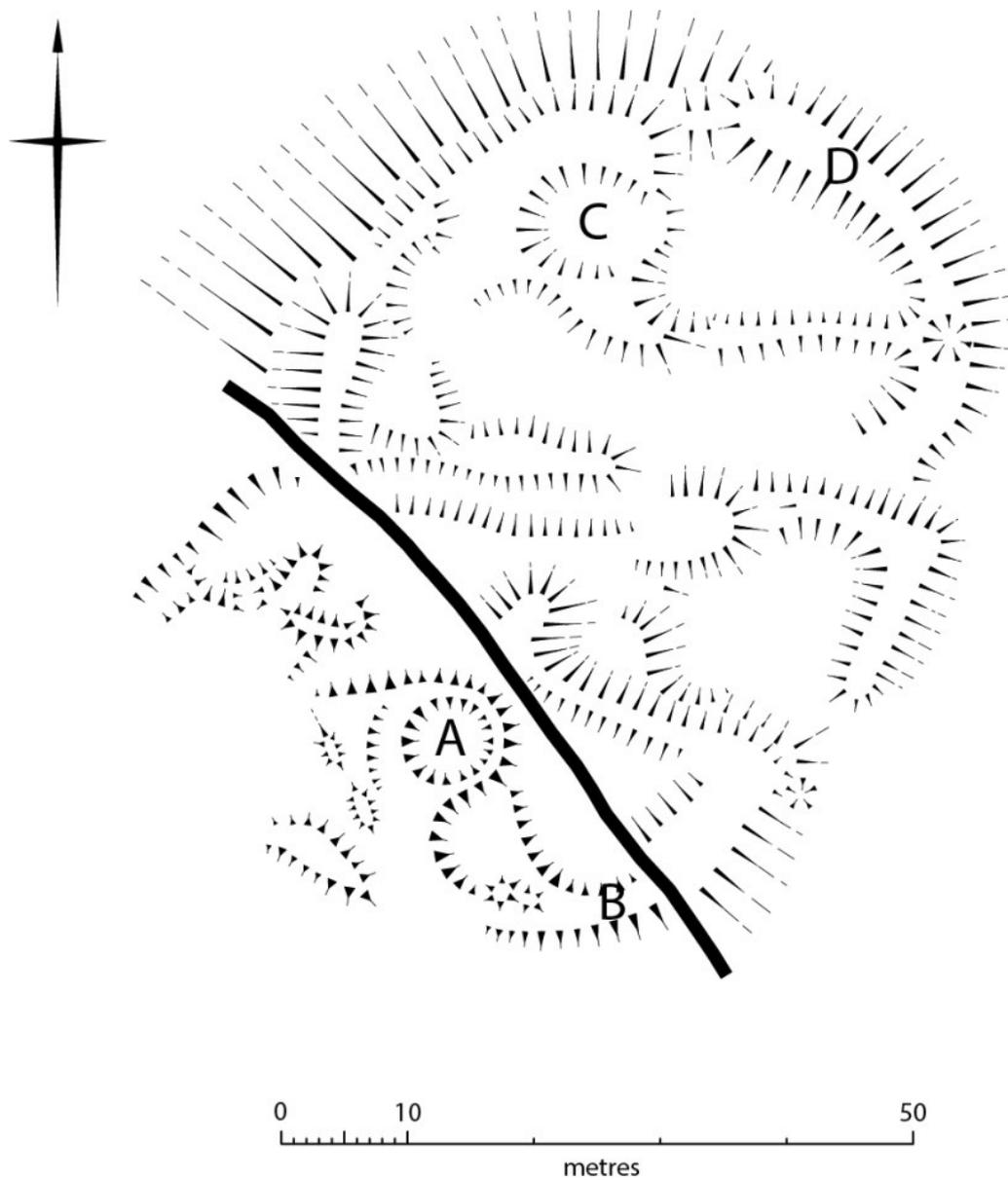


Fig 3.1. English Heritage topographic survey annotated with proposed excavation areas A-D (see text for further details).

4 Methods Statement

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 It is proposed that there will be four separate trenches, as outlined in Section 3, above, but these plans may be amended in the light of ongoing results once fieldwork is underway. These will not necessarily all be completely excavated down to undisturbed natural as this may not be necessary to address the stated aims; decisions as to the extent of excavation within each trench will be made while work is in progress. The exact size of the trenches is yet to be determined; they will be located on the ground in relation to features noted on the topographic and geophysical surveys.
- 4.1.2 The excavation will be carried out in accordance with the guidance given in the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (IfA 2008).
- 4.1.3 The excavation will be directed by professional archaeologists and undertaken by Altogether Archaeology volunteers.

4.2 Excavation methods

- 4.2.1 The excavation areas will be defined by Netlon fencing to prevent animals from entering the area when the site is unattended. The depth of the excavations is not expected to exceed 1 m.
- 4.2.2 The excavation areas will be tied in to the survey points that were established and left *in situ* by the geophysical survey.
- 4.2.3 All excavation will be by hand. Turf and soil will be carefully stored on site and after the completion of the excavation the general topography of the site will be recreated using the excavated materials and then re-turfed, so that upon completion of the work the general appearance of the site will be as close as possible to that prior to the excavation.
- 4.2.4 All archaeological deposits will be recorded using the Archaeological Practice's *pro forma* recording system, as used in previous Altogether Archaeology excavations.
- 4.2.5 A complete drawn record at appropriate scales of all archaeological features and deposits will be compiled. This will include both plans drawn at 1:20, and sections at 1:10. Any animal burrows will be recorded on separate plans. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels will be calculated and plans/sections will be annotated with the OD heights.
- 4.2.6 All potentially significant finds will be three-dimensionally recorded.
- 4.2.7 A comprehensive digital photographic record of the entire project, from the site's original appearance through to the reinstatement of excavated areas, will be maintained. This will record all significant features, finds, deposits and general site working. The photographic record will illustrate both the detail and the general context of the principal features and finds excavated and the site as a whole.

5 Finds, environmental sampling and human remains

5.1 Finds

- 5.1.1 All artefacts from excavated contexts will be retained, except those considered to be of no intrinsic interest from features or deposits of obviously modern date which are not directly associated with occupation of the site. However, in such circumstances, sufficient artefacts will still be retained in order to elucidate the date and/or function of the features or deposits.
- 5.1.2 All retained artefacts will, as a minimum, be washed, weighed, counted, marked (as necessary), identified, and bagged or boxed in suitable containers. Where appropriate, this work will be undertaken on site.
- 5.1.3 Any artefacts requiring conservation or specific storage conditions will be dealt with immediately in line with *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 2001).
- 5.1.4 All artefacts recovered during the excavations on the site remain the property of the landowner. They will be suitably bagged, boxed in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, *Conservation Guidelines no. 2* (UKIC 1993) and, after any necessary conservation (and subject to agreement with the landowner), they will be deposited with the Great North Museum as part of the project archive on the completion of the reporting.

5.2 Treasure

- 5.2.1 If material is recovered that is considered to be covered by the Treasure Act of 1996 all the necessary information required by the Act (i.e. finder, location, material, date, associated items etc.) will be reported to the Coroner within 24 hours. The Portable Antiquities Scheme will also be advised.

5.3 Environmental sampling

- 5.3.1 Multiple samples will be taken from any buried sealed contexts that survive within or beneath the site that might potentially be appropriate for pollen analysis, soil micromorphology, or other analysis.
- 5.3.2 Bulk environmental soil samples for plant macro fossils and small animal bones will be taken from appropriate, well-sealed and dated/datable archaeological contexts. Samples will be 40 litres or 100% of smaller contexts.
- 5.3.3 All pollen and soil samples and the residues and sieved fractions of the bulk environmental soil samples will be recorded and retained with the project archive.

5.4 Human Remains

- 5.4.1 It is thought unlikely that human remains will be found on this site. However, should and such remains be found then they will be fully recorded, excavated and removed from the site subject to compliance with the appropriate legislation and guidance licence. A Ministry of Justice Licence for the removal of human remains will be acquired should it be considered necessary.

- 5.4.2 All excavation and post-excavation will be in accordance with the standards set out in IfA Technical Paper 13 *Excavation and post-excavation treatment of cremated and inhumed remains* (McKinley and Roberts 1993).

6 Report

- 6.1 A brief interim report will be prepared by Stewart Ainsworth and Richard Carlton within two months of the completion of the excavations and it, or suitably edited versions of it, will be submitted to appropriate archaeological journals and newsletters. The interim report will also be published on the AONB website.
- 6.2 An OASIS form will also be completed and submitted.
- 6.3 All finds will be studied by appropriate experts and materials analyses will be undertaken of the existing and any new finds. Environmental samples will be assessed and where appropriate analysed. Funding for these analyses will be sought from the Altogether Archaeology project contingency.
- 6.4 Upon completion of post-excavation work, a final report will be prepared by Stewart Ainsworth and Richard Carlton. If appropriate, this will be submitted for publication in an appropriate journal. It will also be made available via OASIS, and a link to it will be placed on the AONB website.

7 Archive

- 7.1 On completion of the project a cross-referenced and internally consistent project archive will be compiled in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990) and the Institute for Archaeologists, *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (IfA 2009).
- 7.2 The project archive will be submitted to the Great North Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and a copy of the digital archive will be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service.

8. Project team

8.1 In accordance with standard Altogether Archaeology practice, this project will be overseen by a Project Team, as follows:

Paul Frodsham	North Pennines AONB Partnership Historic Environment Officer and Altogether Archaeology Project Manager	Overall project management/coordination
Stewart Ainsworth	Visiting Professor of Landscape Archaeology, University of Chester	Research Director
Richard Carlton	The Archaeological Practice, Newcastle upon Tyne.	Fieldwork Director
Marc Johnstone	The Archaeological Practice, Newcastle upon Tyne.	Fieldwork Supervisor
Rob Young	Archaeological Advisor, English Heritage North-East.	General liaison with English Heritage

8.2 Overall project management will be by Paul Frodsham, assisted if appropriate by other members of the North Pennines AONB Historic Environment Working Group (HEWG). The HEWG is the designated advisory group for the whole of the *Altogether Archaeology* project; it includes the Northumberland County Archaeologist and English Heritage North-East Region Inspector of Ancient Monuments. Paul Frodsham will be responsible for co-ordinating volunteer involvement in the project, and for preparatory work including liaison with the landowner and the provision of site facilities.

8.3 The excavation is being co-directed by Stewart Ainsworth and Richard Carlton, assisted by Marc Johnstone. Richard and Marc are responsible for the provision of all equipment, and for the provision of on-site training to volunteers.

8.4 Fieldwork will be undertaken by Altogether Archaeology volunteers with training and supervision provided by professional staff from The Archaeological Practice, who have extensive experience working on comparable projects with volunteers. It is expected that Paul Frodsham will also be on site for much of the time, but his role will be to assist the fieldwork directors rather than to direct the fieldwork himself. Archaeological Practice staff and Stewart Ainsworth will be jointly responsible for the production of the project report. Paul Frodsham will produce a risk assessment, and will be responsible for health and safety on site throughout fieldwork.

8.5 The *Altogether Archaeology* project has a pool of some 550 volunteers, of whom about 60 are expected to participate actively in this module. Although there must be some flexibility with regard to volunteer involvement, up to 20 volunteers are expected on site each day. Paul Frodsham will draw up a rota showing which volunteers expect to be on site each day, and fieldwork can then be planned accordingly. If the module is oversubscribed then it will be necessary to ration attendance to perhaps 2 or 3 days per volunteer. Some volunteers are more experienced excavators than others, but all will receive an appropriate level of training and supervision. Experience gained here at Gilderdale Burn should then be of value to future projects.

9. Communications

9.1 Paul Frodsham maintains a volunteer database of all *Altogether Archaeology* volunteers, and information about the project will generally be disseminated by email or telephone using contact details contained within this database. For ease of communication, any local people wishing to take part in the project who have not registered with the *Altogether Archaeology* project will be asked to do so, at least temporarily. All communication with volunteers will then be via the *Altogether Archaeology* volunteer database.

9.2 Paul Frodsham, Stewart Ainsworth, Richard Carlton and other project staff will be in daily contact during the fieldwork phase, and will communicate as necessary by email, telephone and face to face meetings as necessary during project planning and post-excavation phases.

9.3 The North Pennines AONB Historic Environment Working Group (the advisory group for the *Altogether Archaeology* project) meets quarterly. A draft report on the results of this project will be presented by Paul Frodsham for discussion at the first meeting following completion of the project.

10. Stages, Tasks and Timetable

This project is divided into three stages and 16 tasks as shown in the table below.

Fieldwork is planned to extend over eight days from Saturday 23 August through until Sunday 31 August (but with no work on Sat 30 Aug). There will be a project start-up meeting and site tour at 10am on Saturday 23 August. Further site tours, including discussion of results so far, will take place for the benefit of volunteers each morning. The working day, in accordance with standard *Altogether Archaeology* practice, will be 10am - 4pm, although there may be opportunities to work later on some evenings. Please try to arrive in the car park for 9.45 each morning that you are attending.

STAGE or Task No.	STAGE/Task	Person(s) responsible	Dates (all 2014)
S 1	PREPARATION		
T 1.1	Finalising of MORPHE compliant project design and EH/HEWG approval.	SA/PF/RY	Aug 12
T 1.2	Complete geophysical survey and obtain report from Durham Univ.	PF	July
T 1.3	Finalise arrangements with landowner re access, parking etc.	PF	20 Aug
T 1.4	Agree health & safety provision and complete risk assessment.	PF	20 Aug
T 1.5	Circulate PD by email, inviting volunteers to register.	PF	12 Aug
T 1.6	Closing date for volunteer registration	PF	19 Aug
T 1.7	Agree volunteer participation rota - inform volunteers.	PF	20 Aug

T 1.8	Organise on-site facilities (tent/portaloos)	PF/RC	20 Aug
S 2	FIELDWORK		
T 2.1	Site set-up	Volunteers/SA/RC/PF	23 Aug (10am)
T 2.2	Fieldwork	Volunteers/SA/RC/PF	23-31 Aug
S 3	REPORT, ARCHIVE & PUBLICITY		
T 3.1	Production of interim project report	SA/RC	Oct
T 3.2	Presentation of interim report to HEWG	PF	Nov
	Interim report placed on AONB website.	PF	Nov
T 3.3	Completion of post-ex, production of final report for publication, deposition of archive. Dissemination of final report to HER/OASIS/AONB website.	SA/RC	2015
T 3.4	Link to final project report placed on AONB website.	PF	2015
T 3.5	Contribution to Altogether Archaeology annual public conference.	SA/RC/PF	tbc

SA = Stewart Ainsworth

RC = Richard Carlton (or Marc Johnstone) (Archaeological Practice Ltd).

PF = Paul Frodsham (North Pennines AONB Partnership)

RY = Rob Young (English Heritage)

11. Site access and on-site facilities

Access for volunteers will be on foot from Whitlow Farm, where ample parking space is available. (This is the same parking area that AA volunteers use for other events at Epiacum, such as the annual molehill survey). The site is a 5 minute walk from the parking area. Further details, including a large-scale map, will be sent to all participants in due course.

Note that volunteers must only use the prescribed route between Whitlow and the site, and must use the gate when passing from one half of the site to the other; at no point must anyone attempt to climb a field wall.

There are no facilities of any kind anywhere near the site, but it is proposed to provide an on-site tent/marquee and portaloos with running water for hand-washing. These arrangements will be finalised and full details circulated to all participants prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

12. Health & Safety and Insurance

12.1 Full consideration will be given to matters of health and safety throughout this project. All work will be undertaken in accordance with the 1974 *Health and Safety Act* and its subsequent amendments, the 2007 *Construction Design and Management Regulations*, and the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (SCAUM) Health and Safety Manual (2007).

12.2 In accordance with standard Altogether Archaeology practice, all work will be subject to the standard AA Risk Assessment and also to a specific risk assessment, covering all real and potential hazards associated with this particular site. A comprehensive health and safety induction will be given to all volunteers at project start-up, and all will be required to read a written statement on health and safety which will be kept on site and which all volunteers partaking in the project will be required to sign, stating that they have read and understood it and that they will abide by its terms.

12.3 Paul Frodsham will ensure that at least one qualified First-Aider and appropriate first aid supplies are on site at all times while fieldwork is in progress. Staff members will be supplied with appropriate safety clothing and equipment, and advice as to appropriate clothing and equipment will be provided to volunteers.

12.4 Given the nature and location of the site, welfare facilities will be minimal. Some shelter will be available in the form of a large tent/marquee, and portaloos with running water for hand washing will be provided. Final details will be circulated to all participants in advance of the commencement of fieldwork.

12.5 All aspects of the Altogether Archaeology project are covered by Durham County Council's comprehensive insurance policy. In addition, Archaeological Practice Ltd staff are covered by their own company's policies.

13 References

English Heritage, 1991, *Management of Archaeological Projects*, London, English Heritage.

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