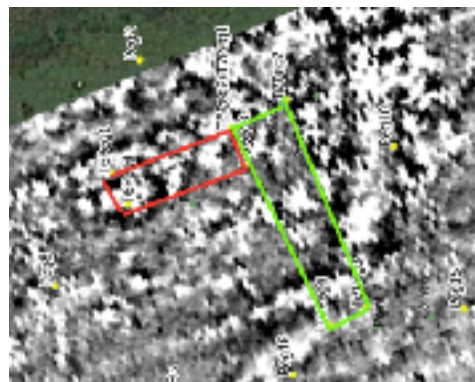


## Dig Diary Day 1: 4th May 2022

After yesterday's industrious day with the digger we were able to make a start on revealing the many features that have become apparent. With our knowledge from previous digs on the site we were able to take off a little more depth of topsoil. Consequently we exposed more features at an earlier stage of the dig. Today has seen a combination of trowelling and judicious use of the hoe in two separate small areas of what is now called trench 6. Almost immediately there's a discernible curvilinear pattern of large stones at the northern end. Kristian's initial interpretation is a roundhouse foundation but there's much more to be done to be certain.

Today's images show the intended position of the



trench overlaid on the geophysical survey map produced in 2018. We deliberately positioned the trench to cover as many features as possible whilst keeping the size of the trench manageable. The second photo is our first drone image of the dig.

## Dig Diary Day 2 : 5th May 2022

A few more volunteers today were able to take advantage of this morning's early rain. The surface was nicely softened making trowelling a bit easier. A lot of progress has been made today to 'clean' the surface but there's still a lot of topsoil to remove from certain parts of the trench. We suspect this could be a consequence of historic 'rigg and furrow' farming procedures. Despite that, we've had our first find of bone, though only a couple of fragments. We've also identified what are probably (and inevitably!) the ubiquitous Victorian drainage channels. Fortunately they don't seem to interfere too much with our features of interest at this point. The attached photo is the most obvious stone arrangement so far exposed. We can only see a very superficial view at this stage so lots more trowelling required.



## Dig Diary Day 3 : 6th May 2022

It's been something of a 'draining' day today. In late afternoon we decided to remove the last semblance of doubt that we have two historical, probably Victorian, drains bisecting



our trench and so our intrepid drain digger John HR set about finding them using the evidence of the typical surface appearance.



This he did, both about 1m below the level of the grass. This has at least enabled us to concentrate our efforts in areas of the trench that we're now confident haven't been disturbed in the relatively recent past. The first photo shows one of these drains. Clear water leaking from it suggests that it's still functional.

The rest of the volunteers, shown in the second photo have been continuing the cleaning of the topsoil from the trench surface revealing more evidence of features to be investigated over the next couple of months.



#### **Dig Diary Day 4 : 7th May 2022**



There was a rather select group of volunteers on site today but despite the smaller than expected numbers we still had a very fruitful day. We have our first find of worked flint (first photo), though this was in a 'redeposit' close to the drain channel dug yesterday. The implication is that the flint was in the backfill of the drainage ditch dug around a couple of hundred years ago. Still, the flint, about 2cm in length, began life as a tool on the site during prehistoric times. The feature worked on today is a collection of deeply embedded large stones immediately adjacent to the drain channel in such a way that the channel has 'truncated' the prehistoric feature (photo 2).

At present we have at least three major features currently exposed and in need of much further investigation, beginning next week. It's highly likely there'll be more.

## Dig Diary Day 5 : 10th May 2022



We split ourselves between soil analysis and 'working' on the site today. There's still a lot of bagged soil to be processed and examined from last year's dig so we need to balance our volunteers between the two tasks. Those on site spent all day working on just one feature, a cluster of deeply embedded large stone immediately to the east of the drainage channel that we uncovered last week (see attached photo) . The geophysical survey image places the prehistoric palisade just to the west of the drain and that will be an area of focus over the next few days. If it's anything like the section of palisade unearthed in 2019 it will be very interesting!

Tomorrow is a bit of a special day. It coincides with our monthly 'Down Memory Lane' Coffee Morning and our guests have been invited to visit us at the Farm to get a look at what's going on, both in the 'laboratory' and at the dig site.

## Dig Diary Day 6 : 11th May 2022

This morning we enjoyed a visit by our Heritage Group coffee morning guests (photo 1). They saw elements of the soil analysis process before heading up to the dig site where Kristian gave a short presentation about our archaeology. All of the guests said they thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to visit.



Late this afternoon it's just possible that we've unearthed the oldest artefact so far found on the site. A piece of worked agate was found by Deb (photo 2) and Kristian's first



interpretation is that it comes from the late Mesolithic to the Early Neolithic period. Several hundred years older than anything else we've found earlier on any of our Hunting Hall digs should that turn out to be true.

## Dig Diary Day 7 : 12th May 2022

We've had a great day today and quite suddenly it felt as though everything began to come together. Not only that but we had our first 'Wow' moment this afternoon. Our embedded stone features began to reveal their shape and the first photo shows a curving feature that until today only indicated the tips of large embedded stones. Possibly the foundation of a roundhouse, an animal



enclosure? Once we begin to excavate these features those questions may be answered.



*'Call that a stone?'* This afternoon everyone who had proudly shown off their personal cluster of embedded stone were eclipsed by Kristian and Deb who unearthed a gigantic dressed stone at the Northern tip of our trench (photo 2). This stone is very reminiscent of the huge ones found in the palisade in trench 3 during our 2019 dig and is laying almost perfectly horizontally and north to south. Maybe coincidental but if this is an intentionally positioned stone the reason could be very exciting. There's lots of careful investigation required

over the next week or so to explain its purpose but I'll keep you posted.

### Dig Diary Day 8 : 13th May 2022



Another amazing day today. A good volunteer turn out including a few very welcome guests. It was great to see landowners Tom and Karen joining us and I hope they enjoyed their time on site. We could work on three separate areas of the trench and photo 1 shows the site in its entirety. Ideally we would use a drone photo at this stage but the wind

has been so strong that the drone would have been over the sea in no time!



The site is becoming so interesting that it's difficult to limit the number of photos. Today's second photo shows the feature that yesterday seemed curved but now looks more linear. Of special interest is that there seems to be multiple layers of stone in this structure. Much more to do.

Yesterday's huge flat stone turns out not to be alone. It now seems to form part of a solid floor surface, almost like crazy paving but constructed with enormous stones. The last photo shows a significant piece of bone wedged between two of the stones. Let's wait and see the extent of this surface. Any finds might reveal its age.

Given that we're only on day 8 of our dig, the current situation suggests there are many more exciting days to come over the next few weeks. We're investigating

three features with a very clear fourth yet to be started. Hope you can help us.

### Dig Diary Day 9 : 14th May 2022

A glorious day today. Although strong sunshine isn't the best for archaeology it made a very pleasant change. Only a gentle breeze too so drone photos to come. More of the large flagstone slabs have been





exposed (photos 1 and 2) but their origin is still for debate. Animal bone and teeth have been found among them, perhaps in a hearth. Lots still to do in this area and I'm sure we'll have a conclusion soon. Investigation also continues in the East to West part of the trench. The second drone photo shows this well but it's not clear yet whether there's any connection between the two pronounced

features. It's been a great first two weeks. Lots more to come I'm sure. Not over the next two days though.



### **Dig Diary Day 10 : 17h May 2022**

My grateful thanks to Deb Campbell for our 'Eyes on the Ground' account of today's proceedings. A combination of yesterday's heavy rain and today's warm sunshine made for a perfect day for archaeology, once again enjoyed by a healthy number of volunteers. The East to West segment of our trench continues to be puzzling. Still two prominent features together with a possible 'cut'

though that must yet be confirmed. There's another obvious feature at the eastern end of this part of the trench that is yet to be investigated.

'Work' continues apace at the northern end of the other limb of the trench (photo 1) with further finds of bone and teeth, probably cattle in origin. Another lovely piece of worked agate too (photo 2). Could this also originate from the earliest days of farming on this site?

Our 2022 dig could well become our most productive to date. It's still very early days and with finds and the revealing of significant stone structures every day things are very promising. Please join us if you get the chance and share these moments with us.



### **Dig Diary Day 11 : 18th May 2022**

Once again we're indebted to our reporters on the ground, Deb and Kristian for today's diary entry. Whilst enjoying the sunshine in the trench we also continue to process the huge number of soil samples from last year's dig. It's a real feather in our cap that, as an amateur group, we are able to examine soil samples for both macroscopic (visible to the naked eye) and microscopic (not so easily seen by eye) elements of the soil. There's lots of potential evidence there to help us age the site.

Meanwhile up at the dig, evidence is appearing in the east to west section of trench 6 of pits and trenches that according to basic archaeology principles (i.e. deeper therefore older) suggesting activity over different periods of prehistory given that they seem to be passing under the obvious stone structures. There's been lots of evidence from our earlier

digs that activity here has been spread over many hundreds of years so we shouldn't be too surprised.

There have been no new discoveries of artefacts today but we shouldn't be disappointed. It's our experience that most of the artefacts appear towards the end of the dig.

### Dig Diary Day 12 : 19th May 2022

Thanks to Carole for today's instalment. (Carole has previous in the news industry so this had better be good!) We had a lovely day today for digging at Hunting Hall, warm, sunny, and a nice wind to cool us down. Two groups of happy diggers in trenches N-S and E-W, both trowelling back to reveal more stones large and small. Some very neat trowelling by Ailsa and Jon was remarked upon. In trench E-W Alan found a metal object, probably copper with a reading of 11-12 (this means something to metal detectorists).

(photo 1) Is it some kind of mount, belt fitment? We wait with bated breath to find out.

Ailsa found two very large teeth (photo attached), which John HR thought were bovine, but there's a possibility of them being from a horse. By the end of the day Kristian revealed a possible curving ditch, noticeable by yellowy clay contrasting with darker soil.



In the N-S trench we continued trowelling back on large stones, some having evidence of fossils in them. Carole found a piece of pot rim which had a definite greenish glaze on it, rather like mediaeval green glazed pottery.

John HR brought from home two drains of differing diameters along with a physical chain which was used to measure distances. A quick google calls this a Gunter's chain, invented in the early 17th century and used as a distance measuring device for surveying. A chain was 66 feet, (22 yards) It will be interesting to see if our drains are an exact chain or two apart. John HR suggested that Julie would rather enjoy seeing them. Now you know what to get her for Christmas Jon.

### Dig Diary Day 13 : 20th May 2022



Once again thanks to Carole for today's report. It's been a day of heavy scraping and the introduction of a mattock for the more stubborn bits, (photo 1) to gradually lower the level of the trench surface to that of the larger stone features. This important to help Kristian see the features in more context and perhaps give food for thought about their significance. For the same reason it's helping us determine whether there's an older surface that passes beneath the very obvious stonework in the east to west limb (photo 2). There have been no finds of





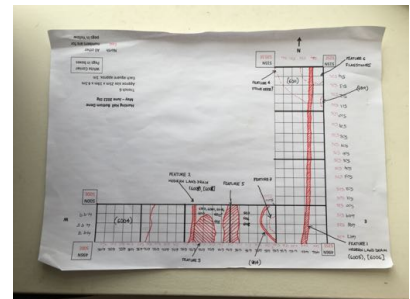
archaeological interest today (you were right Jenny!) however some of the stone surfaces contain very obvious fossil (photo 3)  
The pattern of 'flagstones' at the north end of the trench that were exposed at the end of last week suggests that they continue beyond the current trench walls. All being well tomorrow we intend to carefully remove a little more of the turf and topsoil to determine the full extent of the paved area. I hope that the end of our third week is marked by a very exciting discovery and that tomorrow's report sets the scene for the rest of the dig.

### Dig Diary Day 14 : 21st May 2022

We had a relatively small team on site today so my plans for a major reveal at the end of our third week must wait a little longer. As expected we set about manually extending the north end of the trench by a couple of metres both east and north in order to, hopefully, expose more of the 'flagstone' structure (photo 1). Kristian decided to keep the strip of turf between the existing trench and the extension as a '*stratigraphic control*'. (Editor's note: No, I'm no wiser either). Meanwhile trowelling continued working back in the same part of the trench revealing small and quite subtle features that will get further investigated. A fingernail sized piece of flint has been today's only find.



Kristian is keeping meticulous notes and drawings and Photo 2 shows Kristian's end of week 3 provisional plan of the features. This will inevitably change and be further developed over the next few weeks. It would be great if you can come along, even if it's just to have a look, before the end of June to help make those changes.



### Dig Diary Day 15 : 24th May 2022

Very heavy rain at lunchtime, sufficient to flood our trench, curtailed proceedings early today. Before the rain began we were able to complete the removal of the topsoil in the area under extension allowing trowelling to begin. We were joined in this task by three very welcome visitors who decided to join us and get their hands and knees dirty. I hope we'll see them again.



Meanwhile the analysis of the soil taken during last year's dig continues in the Piggery and today's photos show Joyce in the 'Lab' together with images of some of her work. There's still an

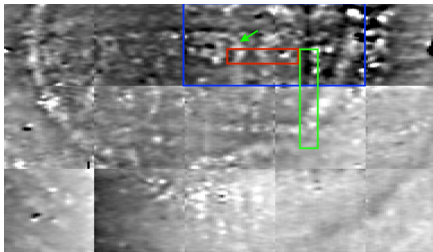


enormous amount of soil to prepare and examine and is a job in which anyone can participate with little training required, though a lot of patience helps! Your assistance in this important part of the project would be much appreciated.



All being well, we shall be on site tomorrow from 10.00. A pitch inspection is scheduled for 09.00 though at the moment it looks as everything should be OK with a good weather forecast for the rest of the week.

### **Dig Diary Day 16 : 25th May 2022**



The current very breezy weather helped dry out the trench (bar just a couple of small puddles where we've exposed the clay base) sufficiently for us to enjoy a full day. A couple of us worked on the 'sludge' from last year to prepare the soil for analysis whilst the rest of us pressed on, particularly in the extended north end of the trench.

We've extended because the superficial appearance of the exposed stones is suggesting a circular structure and photo 1 shows the geophysical survey image on which we've based the position of this year's trench. With a bit of imagination I think it's possible to see a circular pattern in exactly the right place. The extension is not going to expose all of this structure of packed stones but hopefully will be sufficient to let us see all of the 'flagstoned' centre. Kristian has thoughts on what this may be but experience has told us that we need to do much more provide the evidence.

Meanwhile in the East to West part of the trench we are cleaning the area between the two obvious stone structures and revealing very subtle features within Photo 2). I'm sure we'll be at the stage very soon when we can begin sectioning these to determine their purpose and relationship.



### **Dig Diary Day 17 : 26th May 2022**

Another very productive day on site and Kristian is beginning to form more confident opinions in what's going on. There have been no notable finds however the extended area of trench is fulfilling the promise we expected. Kristian has called this enormous area of positioned stones a 'cairn'. It's age and purpose is still to be determined but every scrape of the trowel is revealing more evidence. A lovely, huge individual stone has been



partially exposed within the extended area. It could be patterned. We'll find out more tomorrow. (Photo 1). In addition, we're beginning to uncover pits in this area



that are crying out to be sectioned in the next few days. Cremation pits? Who knows? (Photo 2). In the east to west sector of the trench Kristian believes that we've at last found the palisade and another small widening of the trench will be required to show its relationship to our other features.

Towards the end of the day the very unseasonable wind got up enormously and we were concerned about the tents. Although designed to withstand strong winds every effort was made to make them

safe. Thanks to all who applied themselves in this task.

### **Dig Diary Day 18 : 27th May 2022**

First the very good news. Thanks to their efforts at the end of yesterday our tents survived the incredibly windy conditions of the last couple of days. We left them open to the elements to allow the wind to blow through (photo 1) and we took a lot of kit back to the piggery for safe keeping. Tomorrow the forecast is for a lovely day with much lighter winds so we'll start the day by resetting both tents to their best. It will be good to have our admin office and a tool store back.



We were a bit light on volunteer numbers today so not much has changed from yesterday. More scraping at the north end is showing the huge extent of well embedded stonework associated with the presumed cairn. It's a possibility that the cairn was originally quite high and what we're seeing now is the collapsed



version that may have been robbed out by many later generations of occupants when recycling the stone for other purposes (photo 2). It's worth remembering that this could have been over a period of a thousand years or more! Despite that and to add to our excitement, there's still very clear evidence of multiple pits of unknown purpose beginning to show. As many as possible of these features will be excavated over the next few weeks but that depends greatly on the 'workforce'

available. Please join us if you have the chance and let's get as much out of this year's dig as possible.

## Dig Diary Day 19 : 28th May 2022

Well there we are, half way through our dig and a day of calmness and serenity (relatively speaking!) with the wind back to how we might expect at the end of May. The tents all back to ship shape and the archaeology under way again. We've had a '*How on earth did we miss that*' moment but more of that later.

A good sized crew out today allowing us to work in both of our major feature areas. Cleaning up the extended north to south extension is showing multiple pits. It's not beyond possibility that the cairn we're looking at is a Bronze Age mortuary feature (there Kristian, I've said it and I'll bear responsibility. Fortunately, I don't have my credibility to think about!). Perhaps the multitude of pits that we're seeing are related to burials and cremations: we'll find out in the next few weeks when we 'section' them.

In the east to west section we seem to have unearthed a possible Iron Age roundhouse together with a central hearth. A month or so ago, before we removed the topsoil it was possible to envisage this circular feature by the appearance of the grass growing above so this hasn't come as that much of a surprise.

With the wind having dropped below gale force we were finally able to get the drone up for a photoshoot. It's amazing how helpful it is to get these arial shots to show the relationship between features (photo 1)



Now for the potential find that could be more than useful in ageing one of our features. How we missed it I don't know. Very late in the day we had a visit from Ritchie Blake, one of our local amateur geologists. Within moments he'd spotted a stone within the cairn that was clearly handmade (photo 2). It's a prehistoric hexagonal spindle whorl or loom weight (help us out here Byr !) and was found close to a significant piece of bone and adjacent to the 'flagstones' mentioned several times in earlier diary updates. Could this be grave goods for use in the 'afterlife'. (Again my thoughts, not Kristian's)

## Dig Diary Day 20 : 31st May 2022



Today has been pits. Then even more pits. Despite the Met Office somewhat pessimistic forecast the day turned out lovely (apart from a heavy shower over lunch). We seem to have cleaned back the surface of the trench to a level where numerous pits have become apparent. Photo 1 shows the clearest of these and this lies within the area covered by our potential mortuary feature. The numerous

pits may have had different purposes and we rather hope when we get to 'sectioning' them they will give up their secrets.

It was great to have a young family of volunteers get down and dirty with us and even more pleasing that one of the lads found a significant piece of animal bone (photo 2) at the topsoil interface above and within what we perceive to be our Iron Age round house. Not too far away from what we believe to be the central hearth either.

Allan took time out to demonstrate metal detecting (Editor's note: a skill described by Allan as 'real science'. Pffft) and to give a chance to try out the equipment.

Early ideas for Christmas presents perhaps. All in all, a very pleasing day.



### **Dig Diary Day 21 : 1st June 2022**

A quieter day today in warm sunshine so lots of moistening the surface with water sprays. Rather hard going in further cleaning the trench and a couple of finds of bone. We were fortunate to have a visit from another professional archaeologist, Roger Miket, who

spent a couple of hours with us. Roger immediately identified one of our larger stone finds as an Iron Age quern stone (photo 1). An image sent by Roger shows a similar stone in action to grind cereal.



Photo 3 is an area in the middle of the east to west section of the trench. It sits between two stone features and is proving to be very



complex. In Kristian's opinion it may offer evidence of at least four periods of occupation. Tomorrow we intend to begin the disassembly of the adjacent linear stone feature and hope this will help us to make more sense of this complex situation.

### **Dig Diary Day 22 : 2nd June 2022**

Apart from a shower that helpfully arrived over lunch we had a very pleasant afternoon and the site became a hive of activity with both volunteers and interested and very welcome visitors (Photo 1).

Today also marked a turning point in this year's dig. Although cleaning continued in the majority of the trench we began our first investigation of one of our individual features. As mentioned in yesterday's diary





we started to deconstruct a small part of the linear stone feature in the east to west portion of the trench (Photo 2). We've no idea of the age of this structure but it appears to be more recent than the surfaces that surround it (even though it may be a couple of thousand years old). Once we have removed a sufficient number of the deeply embedded stones we may be able to see how it was constructed and how it relates to its surroundings.

We're still confident that we have an Iron Age roundhouse where the north to south section meets the east to west section of our trench. We've assumed that what appears to be the hearth is roughly central and taken measurements that are consistent with the typical roundhouse diameter of around 8m. It may be called 'treasure hunting' but we're currently making selective searches to confirm its presence and we hope to trace out the entire circumference before the end of our dig.

We're now into our second subscription period and so for those paying by the month we now need to pay our £40 to help Helen keep the books straight!

### **Dig Diary Day 23 : 3rd June 2022**



There was quite a small team on site today (I'm putting that down to there being another attraction against which we're competing). Despite that, it was another industrious day even if progress was slow. Our principal spade wielder, Jonathan, continued his quest to expose the circular structure that we've associated with a roundhouse. Today's photo shows the result of Jon's efforts.

Removal of the individual stones from the linear feature continued. It's fair to say that we believed this structure sat within a ditch but it appears that it may have been built directly on an older surface. This raises more questions about its purpose. A boundary marker rather than a wall perhaps of indeterminate age. With luck we'll find an artefact that dates the structure.

### **Dig Diary Day 24 : 4th June 2022**



As expected, and for all the right reasons with a major celebration in the village this afternoon, our numbers at the dig site were reduced. Many thanks to Deb and Julie for today's diary report. On such a beautiful day it would appear there was a gender related split in today's workforce. Photo 1 shows the combined efforts of the Men At Work attempting to solve the puzzles of the east to west trench. More progress revealing the stones but no conclusions. Seemingly a lot of thought though (perhaps it was a committee meeting!)

Meanwhile in the north to south trench the ladies were engaged in the heavy work (plus ca change!) removing the worst of the Victorian drain ditch and the baked clay to reveal a more resolved surface which continues to suggest the cairn/domestic building will provide us with exciting digging over the coming weeks. In photo 2 Julie points to evidence of another large stone which the Victorian drain gang have attacked!



### **Dig Diary Day 25 : 7th June 2022**

Today, and for different reasons, we were without our guiding lights on site. We took advantage of their absence and began digging out the features with picks and spades to speed things up (sorry Kristian, only joking!). We split our workforce between cleaning the trench, sieving last year's soil and soil analysis by microscopy in the Piggery. There were no significant finds today. It seems we are very close to cleaning the whole surface of the trench i.e. creating a level surface throughout to expose the features that we want to further investigate. Sectioning the features is likely to begin soon.



From the beginning we've been blessed with volunteers who bring an eclectic array of skills to our party. Today, and within only a few minutes, Anne M produced an informal sketch of our site that I felt should be added to our diary. (Photo 1)

### **Dig Diary Day 26 : 9th June 2022**

After yesterday's 'washout' it was a pleasure to get out on the site again in perfect conditions. Damp trench surface, dappled sunshine and little wind, warm too. A good team with a couple of new volunteers and some very interested visitors. We couldn't ask for more. The great news is that we began investigating the numerous features that 'cleaning' has revealed. There are probably more features than we have volunteers so some are bound to remain uninvestigated until next year (unless we have more volunteers). Deb began on a circular 'pit' in the extended trench at the north end and the shout went up for the discovery of a polished stone. Thinking it would be a stone with a mirror like surface I learned that polished in these circumstances means deliberately made smooth to



the touch. We live and learn.



Today's photos have been taken by drone. The first is of activity in the east to west segment of the trench. The second is a vertical shot of the supposed cairn with the flagstones set as the centre and the yellow line indicating the possible extent of the circumference of the cairn. A bit of poetic licence perhaps but there's clearly a lot still to do. As always there's a great atmosphere among the volunteers. Please join us if ever you can.

## Dig Diary Day 27 : 10th June 2022



A bit of a red letter day today. We've all been waiting for the sectioning of our different features to begin and today two of our more prominent features were opened. The first in the extended north end of the trench looks, at least at this stage, to be a post hole (photo 1). If so, it may be linked to a feature from last year's dig and form part of a palisade that marked the perimeter of the Iron Age site on its east side.

The second feature opened today is an oval shaped discolouration of the surface at the angle of the trench (photo 2). It's been apparent for a few weeks now and we always thought its most likely identity was a hearth and that is how it's turned out. The hearth is quite low lying in the trench surface and within just a couple of inches we've found a significant amount of charcoal (photo 3). Even the pattern of the wood is easily discernible.

There are probably several more days work to go on this feature and a find of animal bone would be very welcome.



## Dig Diary Day 28 : 11th June 2022

Today marked the end of our sixth week on site. The great news is that we have permission (and the funds) to extend a couple more weeks so now the end of this year's dig will be Saturday 16th July. The site is so 'busy' that despite the extra couple of weeks we shan't be able to interpret all of our features. Never mind, we'll be back next year I'm sure.

The hearth mentioned yesterday continues to give up a large amount of charcoal (photo 1). However, after excavating about 5cm we are yet to find any





animal bone. An arrangement of stones within has Kristian thinking this pit may have had another purpose, perhaps for heating pots or even making pots. Another possibility is charcoal production. The next few days may tell.

At the north end of the trench we've revealed a little more of the quern stone unearthed a few weeks ago (photo 2). This find may be removed next week for

better examination. In the same location we are still about 5cm above the level of the flagstones so we are slowly building the excitement to hopefully learn more about them, again perhaps next week. One day before the end of the dig I'm sure we'll lift the flagstones to reveal what's beneath.

### Dig Diary Day 28 : 11th June 2022

Another 'Wow' day today and many thanks to Deb as our on the ground reporter for our dig diary. It was always going to be the case that when we began to section our multitude of features we would begin to unearth items of archaeological interest. Today hasn't let us down. In our 'hearth' Karen found a significant piece of Iron Age pottery (photo 1) and elsewhere in the trench a lovely

flint blade (photo 2). We need Kristian to give his thoughts on how old that one is. ((I'm no expert in this but a previous similar find during field walking was identified as Mesolithic!). Let's wait and see.



Once we begin investigating the features we also need to begin the formal recording. As an amateur group we pride ourselves on taking a quite 'academic' approach and like to do things

properly. Photo 3 shows Elspeth and Malcolm recording the charcoal rich feature at the angle of the trench. All in all a very exciting day. Let's hope for more tomorrow.



### Dig Diary Day 29 : 15th June 2022

My thanks again to Deb and Annie for providing the story and photos from today. Yet another fantastic day on site with even more significant finds of bone in the N to S section of our trench (photo 1). Perhaps more

interestingly the bone appears to be at a lower level than our 'flagstones'. That could be quite important in the final analysis.



On a glorious day, we were also fortunate to have a group of visitors from Glendale Local History Society



(photo 2). It was great to see some of our old friends who, for different reasons, have been unable to join us on our more recent digs. We were able to show them not only the dig site but our soil flotation and analysis procedures that are going on simultaneously. Let's hope we can enjoy their company again soon.

It's clear that things are very much beginning to 'hot up', certainly with respect to finds of archaeological interest as we approach the last three weeks of this year's dig. I hope some of you can find a little time to come along and enjoy.

### Dig Diary Day 30 : 16th June 2022



A sweltering day on the dig today. Not as many volunteers as we would have liked but a lot of progress made just the same. I think we're at the stage now where we're reasonably certain that we are investigating an Iron Age roundhouse in the E-W trench. A drone photo taken yesterday appears to show a curving ditch (identified in photo 1) that may have formed the perimeter of the dwelling. We continue to expose the stonework that may have been the foundation. Within there's at least one hearth, perhaps two. Photo 2 shows the continued excavation of the smaller one. Did this predate the roundhouse? Perhaps soil analysis will tell.



The jury is still out considering whether our feature at the north end is a cairn or a dwelling. Photo 3 shows Kristian discussing the possibilities with John HR . (Looks like Deb's having a well deserved nap!) We continue to find bone and charcoal here. I'm certain that we're going to soon find real evidence of the identity of this very predominant feature.



### Dig Diary Day 31: 17th June 2022



Once again, many thanks to our on the scene reporter Deb for today's report.

The bulwark of turf sitting above the flagstones has been removed today revealing .....yet more BIG stones, an assemblage of bone fragments and a tooth which we can't decide is cattle or horse. (So definitely not human then!). We'll take down more of the bulwark tomorrow. More bones and postholes have been revealed in this area too. The protruding very robust bone adjacent to the flagstones that's been staring at us for weeks has now been removed and appears to be a large rib (possibly). One for Peter Rowley-Conwy to examine I'm sure.



Should we ever decide to have a barbecue on site then the one thing we won't be short of is charcoal. Yet more has been found in the roundhouse hearth and we're not yet at the base.



## Dig Diary Day 32: 18th June 2022

We've come to the end of our 7th week on site and so a good time for a 'SitRep'. Our weeks of cleaning the trench have exposed more features than we can reasonably complete within the remaining time we've allowed ourselves. Though we may begin investigating a couple more we are now focussing on three very prominent features.



The most intriguing is the feature at the north end of our 'L' shaped trench. For some time we've been considering whether this was a cairn that may have been related to Bronze Age burials. Investigations over the last few days now suggest that it's more probable that this is a high status Iron Age dwelling. The evidence making us think this way is the extensive "flagstone" floor (photo 1), and the presence of domestic activity such as the quern stone, spindle whorls (now two have

been recovered though one is in fragments) and bone. If this is the case this is a very rare (possibly unique) find in this part of North Northumberland.

There's undoubtedly a second round house at the 'elbow' of the trench (photo 2). The circle indicates its possible perimeter. Within there's a charcoal filled pit that so far has not revealed any animal bone remains. This could mean the pit was for industrial reasons though may predate the roundhouse by centuries.



The third feature being worked out is central in the E to W trench and may involve evidence of several different 'cultural horizons' ; that is surfaces on which people lived and worked over many centuries.

Our principal item of interest recovered today is a scapula (shoulder joint) , best guess from a sheep because of its size (photo 3). This is also from the probable dwelling in photo 1.

## Dig Diary Day 33: 21st June 2022

My grateful thanks to our roving reporter Annie R for today's report.

Today has been sheep shearing day and so provided additional entertainment for all (though Tom may have taken a somewhat different view)

Another very exciting day at the dig with a small group of volunteers and lots more interesting finds coming to light... though for the time being you must watch this space. We've already engaged our experts from afar to help us with interpretation. Sorry to keep you in suspense but we want to get it right.



The southern small trench was broken through today and removal of some of the stones from the large linear stone feature has revealed another post hole (photo 1). Further exploration will reveal any potential links to other post holes within the roundhouse "drip trench" also materialising.

Kristian continues to see 'subtle' features to which we all initially nod in agreement but then turn away scratching our heads (photo 2)



A welcome visitor from Durham that returned to the site, her last visit was in 2019 was most impressed with the hard work that has progressed and the commitment of the volunteers.

Normal service resumes tomorrow at 10am and the team were most grateful to Tom for changing the water bowser, especially during the busy time of shearing. We're desperately short of manpower at the moment for a number of different reasons. Your help would be much valued

## Dig Diary Day 34: 22nd June 2022

My thanks today to both Deb and Annie for their contribution towards today's entry.

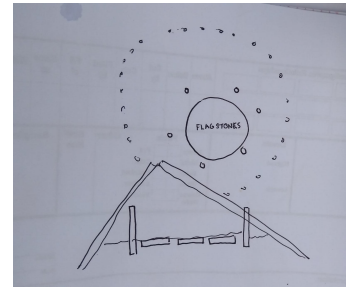
Very hot working weather today, not totally in keeping with the best conditions for archaeology but tomorrow promises to be slightly more civilised.

Ann and John HR worked back from the pits where the larger pieces of bone have been uncovered and have revealed even more bone and a large dark pit in the vicinity of yesterday's large bone find. This is a very 'rich' archaeological area. At the opposite end of the flags, Deb worked back in an effort to catch the edge of the flagstones and found yet more pits and a stake hole.



Meanwhile we have had another welcome visit by professional archaeologist Roger Miket and together with Kristian they shared ideas about the site and considered parallels with other sites and Iron Age 'norms'. The first photo shows KP at work in the tent drawing new illustrations of what may have been the roundhouse

at the north end of our trench (photo 2)



## Dig Diary Day 35: 23rd June 2022

So very hot today! Six digging in the sun and two in the Piggery doing 2021 post-excavation soil analysis, a real team job at the moment.

More and more post and stake holes are now being found every day and their relative situations to each other are consistent with the accepted structure of what now appears almost certainly to be two roundhouses separated by about 15 metres. The one to the north is probably high status. The hearth/pit 'within' the more southerly dwelling has now been completely excavated and the necessary recording has begun. The first photo shows Joce and Carole taking the necessary measurements under the guidance of Kristian. As no animal remains were found within we are probably now reliant on analysis of the soil taken from this feature to identify its purpose



Photo 2 shows Byr (with astonishing reserves of energy despite the hot sun!) clearing the area to the west of the 'flagged' floor. The huge quern stone sits proudly in the mid foreground. Needless to say Byr found yet more features of interest.

Joyce and Brian continue the 'laboratory' tasks of soil analysis in the Piggery. I suspect this element of our investigations will continue long after this year's dig

has finished.

Onwards and upwards (or downwards as the case may be!)

## Dig Diary Day 36: 24th June 2022

A good crew of nine braved the heat today and all will agree it was the pits..... because we keep finding and working on more and more of them!! These included a very deep one and a new one both associated with the flagstones; both dark and rich in colour with multiple small (but identifiable) bones inside!



The hearth which Carole and Alistair attended in blissful domestic harmony has also given up what looks like a very small piece of burnt bone spotted by the eagle-eyed Carole and the strangest find of the day was made by Julian who unearthed a golf-ball sized lump of something which is extremely heavy yet did not respond to the hand-held metal probe. Very strange and we may again need the help of a geologist to look at this.

## Dig Diary Day 37: 25th June 2022

Well, what a wow week we've had. (That's enough alliteration for the time being). If yesterday was the pits, then today has gone to pot, literally. John HR, working close to the flagstones has begun to unearth what may become a whole domestic vessel. For the first time we've found two significant pieces of pottery that fit together precisely (photo 1) and the fact that one of the pieces has a rim makes this very exciting. There's also evidence that this ceramic has been heated over a fire during cooking. It appears that we've also found the base of the vessel but that's going to take a bit of patience to extricate. It seems only to add to our image of domesticity in the high status roundhouse. Also and within just a few centimetres Kristian has carefully removed the bovine animal bone shown in photo 2..



Perhaps even more exciting is that the pit on which Deb has been working undercuts the flagstones implying that there's at least one more surface beneath. This is so deep beneath that it has caused the flagstone above to subside. Could this be our Bronze Age burial feature? We don't yet know. The implication of all this is that there's much more to come from the north end of our trench.

We've now begun to 'section' the presumed hearth in our other roundhouse at the southern end of trench 6. So far nothing more than establishing its perimeter but we're confident that there's dating evidence to be found.

We now have only three weeks left of this year's dig. If you have promised yourself a trip to the site, whether as a visitor for an hour or a volunteer for a day then between now and 16th July would be a good time. Lots to see, do and learn.

### **Dig Diary Day 38: 28th June 2022**

The suspected oval shaped hearth that we began sectioning on Saturday turns out not to be quite as simple as we imagined (nothing new there then!). It now seems to be comprised of several smaller hearths or pits. Kristian suggested this may have been to offer different ways of heating the food. However this does raise our expectations of a few good finds over the next couple of weeks.



Photo 1 shows one of numerous new finds of bone, some of them showing signs of burning, from around the periphery of the flagstoned area. The pit 'undercutting' the flagstones continues to give promise of more to come.



A curious 'pitted' stone (photo 2) has also become apparent. Is this a natural phenomenon or has it been 'decorated'?

### **Dig Diary Day 39: 29th June 2022**

The weather was better than expected and our small team on site got away with a full day. A few welcome visitors too including Kirsten, a budding A level art student who is considering using the site as part of her project. The first photo shows Kirsten being given a 'tutorial' in a more specific art, that is, the very accurate scale drawing that is



afforded to each of our principal features. The second photo shows the feature in question at the north end of the trench. This is the complex pit/posthole arrangement that seems to be from a different period to the flagstones. With only a couple of weeks to go after this one we shall need to soon be getting on with more recording before we close up.



In the hearth in the other roundhouse we're investigating there are more and more small features appearing. Whether this is just a product of day to day 'housekeeping' by regularly moving the 'fireplace' just a few inches or each was used for a different purpose we shall probably never know.

### Dig Diary Day 40: 1st July 2022



A really positive turnout today with two new volunteers, Jordyn and Sarah. I'm sure we'll see them again before we close down in a couple of weeks. Lots of bone and a few teeth found today in and around the north roundhouse (photo 1). Small fragments of bone have been found in the hearth in the roundhouse at the south eastern end, though this feature is a few days behind in terms of investigation. This will produce lots more from what is now a series of smaller features.



Perhaps more importantly though is the find of yet more pottery. This is in a very fragile state and not surprisingly Kristian has taken over its removal. If it's a single vessel it's a big one! Photo 2 outlines some of the pieces and photo 3 shows the master at work.



### Dig Diary Day 41: 2nd July 2022

Another good turn out today but as we're on the run in to the finish we're now very focussed on just two features, although the north roundhouse is taking up most of our attention with very good cause. The wonderful pot filled pit (photo 1) is producing amazing results. Given that we expect Iron Age pottery to present itself as not much more than dust (or at best fragments) check out photo 2,



taken by our resident photographer Brian using a new technique of multi level focus giving us an almost 3D effect.



Our multitude of pits around the north roundhouse continue to keep us interested (photo3). Bone finds have almost become almost the norm. I struggle to imagine a scenario in what is probably a very high status roundhouse in which bits of bone and pottery are left lying around. Perhaps the butler didn't turn up that day.

Just to add to the interest a significant piece of pottery has come from the other roundhouse to the south east. Almost certainly there's more to come.



## Dig Diary Day 42: 5th July 2022



A sizeable team out today with the main focus once again on the north roundhouse (photo 1). The pottery find could be very significant. So much so that Kristian, Deb and Helen put in an extra 'shift' yesterday to remove a little more. There's still lots to come out (Photo 2) but it's becoming progressively more difficult without damaging it. It's vital that as much as possible is taken out before the end of the dig. The pit is bigger than we thought too and

yesterday both bone and teeth were recovered. This probably suggests it was a cooking pot and may have been damaged whilst in use. Analysis of the remains could be very informative about domestic practices at the time.

The eastern roundhouse continues to confuse. It seems each day throws up features that are difficult to interpret. It's quite possible that we won't be able to completely unravel this one before closure. Maybe next year.

To maximise our remaining time we won't be taking next Sunday and Monday as rest days so weather permitting we'll be on site every day until the 16th July, 10.00 until 16.00. The trench will remain open for a few days after that to allow photography and any remaining recording that's required.



## Dig Diary Day 43: 6th July 2022

Today we had the benefit of another visit by Roger Miket. He came at the invitation of Kristian to look at the ceramic filled pit in the north roundhouse and the difficulty we face in removing the pot before we close in a couple of weeks. We can't leave the pot in situ until next year because it will crumble now that it's been exposed to the elements. It's so important to the dig that I suspect we'll contact other experts for advice. Photo 1 shows Kristian, Roger and Deb in discussion.



Deb's recent attention has been given to the pit immediately adjacent to the flagstones (photo 2). This appears to go beneath the flagstones but it seems now to be a very substantial post hole that perhaps was one of those supporting

the roof. There are others close by that probably had the same function.

On Friday (from 10.00) we have a visit from a representative of Natural England. This the body from which we need to 'beg' permission to dig, a process that involves jumping through several hoops every year. If it's at all possible, it would help our cause if you were able to be there, either as a volunteer or visitor. (Not that we're trying to impress or anything!)

### **Dig Diary Day 44: 7th July 2022**



We had quite an exciting morning. We arrived to find one of our tents had made an escape bid during the night. Our intrepid search party found it trying to hide down the river bank (photo 1). Fortunately, being the robust animal that it is, it was rescued with only minor injuries however it's now been put into solitary confinement for its own protection

Elsewhere on site a few measurements and recordings were taken at the eastern roundhouse with a view to suspending activity there for this year. If time and workforce permit we may investigate the hearth a little further.

Yet another very significant post hole has been excavated close to the flagstones. It appears that this may still include the remains of the wooden post (photo 2)

We're all looking forward to meeting Laura from Natural England tomorrow morning.

### **Dig Diary Day 45: 8th July 2022**

Today has been very successful on more than one front. Firstly, the visit of Laura, the representative of Natural England, had a great outcome. Laura was impressed by the scale, commitment and professionalism of our group. She was given a tour of the site (photo 1) followed by a visit to the Piggery to look at the post dig soil analysis. The consequence is that the Farm have been given permission to begin a feasibility study to build a replica roundhouse. Perhaps we'll be given the opportunity to help in the construction.



Secondly we may have mapped the main roof supporting post holes around the eastern roundhouse. We can't investigate these any further at this time. Perhaps next year.



Finally, we have unearthed a feature that is very rich in finds of animal bones and teeth in a small area between our two roundhouses. Photo 2 shows the team working on the area. This has thrown us a bit because it doesn't

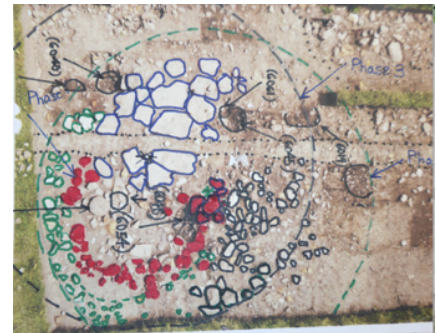
fit with our current interpretation. Perhaps these finds come from a different period and aren't associated with our two roundhouses.

### Dig Diary Day 46: 10th July 2022



It was far too warm today for any energetic archaeology. Instead our concentration was on the pit containing the large pieces of pottery and another large posthole associated with the northern roundhouse. This too may be a feature from different periods, one seemingly passing beneath the flagstones. Measurements began of the features within the eastern roundhouse and photo 1 shows the projected circumference based on the exposed circular ditch at its western perimeter.

Photo 2 shows a page from Kristian's meticulous journal. It's a case of making a judgement about adjacent features and 'joining the dots' in a way that seems to be the most appropriate under the circumstances and the limited information that we currently have. There could be hundreds of years of difference between some of these 'dots' but we don't yet know. More work is required next time to establish the relative timelines to confirm or question these assessments.



This week is likely to be spent mainly on removing as much of the pottery as we can from the pit and continuing the photography, measuring and drawing of the many other features. These will be new skills for many of us. If you fancy it then please join us.

### Dig Diary Day 47: 11th July 2022

A hot day today in more ways than one. On the advice of an expert in Newcastle we started to remove the larger embedded stones surrounding our pottery pit in order to access and carefully begin to remove the ceramics. (Just by the way, the expert implied that we have one of, if not the largest finds of Iron Age pottery in Northumberland!). There's deservedly only one photo today and it's of a very large piece of pottery, that split into two pieces during removal. This could be a base or a rim. I'm sure Graham Taylor, our Iron Age pottery expert will be able to tell us. It's just possible too that analysis may tell us what the pot contained. There's an awful lot more to take out from this pit but it will take extreme patience.



Just to complicate matters there's another adjacent pit that also contains a huge piece of ceramic, this one looking like a bowl. We're told that Iron Age pottery is so poorly fired that it doesn't survive. Well, we can now tell a different story.

The pit immediately south of our flagged area continues to be prolific, so much so that it's been nicknamed the 'tooth garden'. So much bone too.

### **Dig Diary Day 48: 12th July 2022**

A cooler, more pleasant day and a really good sized team out to concentrate on the north end of the trench (photo 1). More recording and further enlargement of the pit containing the pottery continues but no further extraction has been possible. However, the 'Tooth Garden' continues to produce including a 'whopper' that came out today (photo 2). The



jury's still out about the nature of this area (photo 3). Kristian proposed that it could be a ditch into which waste was deposited. If so, it appears it's probably from a different period to our two roundhouses.



In other news, our colleague Roger Miket has announced the much awaited two week dig at Kentstone Farm that lies less than a mile from Hunting Hall. Roger would love our team to be involved from the end of August. Please see the attachment.

### **Dig Diary Day 49: 13th July 2022**

We're now at the stage where our focus of attention is limited to just four features. The photo shows the main pottery filled pit (that even after the photo was taken revealed more) together with a second pit just a few feet away that contains what looks like a large ceramic bowl. Both pits are arrowed in the photo. It's just possible that these pits are older than the flagstoned surface because the large flat stones appear to intrude into each pit. This is probably going to be the source of at least one of our radio carbon dating samples to confirm. Getting the ceramic out is proving very difficult and this part of our trench may remain open for a few more days to give us a better chance.



## Dig Diary Day 50: 14th July 2022



We're almost at the end of our scheduled dig and, in a situation to which we've become accustomed, the finds have begun to come thick and fast. Today we've had yet another 'Wow' find. It's probably an annular brooch (photo 1), found at the northern perimeter of our east roundhouse. It could be early medieval but on balance is more likely Iron Age



based on the context. A second metal artefact that could also be part of a brooch but with slightly less certainty has also been found (photo 2). We'll get the experts view on both of these. Finally, our newest volunteer, Karen, and on her first day of archaeology, found a lovely piece of ceramic that includes an edge, probably from the base of a vessel (photo 3).

More large pieces of pottery have been recovered from the pit that's been featured for the last few days and yet there's still far more to lift.

As we conclude the dig on Saturday and if you've promised yourself a visit then time's running short. We'd love to show you round what's probably been our most successful dig so far.

## Dig Diary Day 51: 15th July 2022

Our penultimate day and it didn't let us down. We unearthed what is probably our best find ever but more of that to come. We took the heavy option to the pottery that remained in the pit and, as amorphous as it is (photo 1), there's a fantastic amount. It's probably been squashed by the pressure of topsoil and stones but there are several kilograms of the stuff that we may be able to use to further our knowledge of the site. We hope that some of it may be examined by academic experts for food remains.



Now to our 'star' find that was recovered today by Julia. It's a worked bone that has been turned into a spoon or ladle (photo 2) and was found in the pit that seems to contain the remains of a large bowl or cauldron. It has lovely evidence of 'chisel' marks and even better, the probable indentations made by human incisors (photo 3). An amazing find. It's our last day of the scheduled dig tomorrow and it's quite frustrating

because we're certain there's far more that this trench has to offer. Next week we'll be winding down and formally recording the trench prior to backfilling in a couple of weeks.



## **Dig Diary Day 52: 16th July 2022**

Well, there we are, another dig done. No 'Wow' finds today (unless one counts a lovely animal limb bone in yet another pit that may also contain ceramic) but yesterday's carved spoon would have taken some beating anyway. We saved the best until almost the last. The 'spoon' would make an attractive addition to any museum.

There's little doubt that this has been our best and most productive dig yet. From memory we've only lost one day to the weather but the unseasonal high winds have caused us a few issues from time to time. There have been a few of our archaeology friends who for different reasons have been unable to join us this year. We really hope that we'll see them on site sometime in the future. That said, we've made some great new friends who've joined us as very welcome volunteers this year. I'm sure they've all enjoyed the experience and we look forward to seeing them next time.



On behalf of Lowick Heritage Group I'd like to thank all those who have volunteered, visited, donated and otherwise shown an interest in our activities. We'd like to say a special thanks to Karen and Tom of Hunting Hall who have once again shown their support and generosity towards our project.

There's only one photo today. It shows some of the great team who've made this year so successful. Great people, great team, great fun, great outcome, great future.