



## Hunting Hall Dig 2022: Review and Preliminary Interpretation

15<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Kristian displayed a series of slides. The second attachment is a digitised image of Trench 6 derived from drone photographs taken at the end of this year's excavation. In his opinion, the predominant features found to date belong in the Iron Age. Although the site has given us some evidence of earlier periods, such as the finds of a few flint tools and possible Bronze Age stone structures, these are insufficient evidence at this stage to confidently point us towards earlier periods of occupation. However, preliminary stratigraphic interpretation indicates that the site was occupied over an extended period during the Iron Age

There is strong evidence of a cobbled floor roundhouse at the north end of trench 6. The ceramic rich pit lies at the centre of this structure. Though it was initially felt that the ceramic debris represented pottery, either during manufacture or damage afterwards, another interpretation is that this could possibly have been a ceramic oven that was subsequently crushed.

The image shows the flagged area lies eccentric to this roundhouse. It is possible that this floor was laid after the roundhouse fell out of use and the flagstones were for the purpose of industry. Any dateable evidence provided by the presence of the quern stone and spindle whorl were not discussed at this stage.

There is some evidence, though not as obvious, of a second roundhouse at the eastern end of the north to south limb of the trench. Twin ditches and several post holes indicate a structure of about 8.5m diameter but more work is needed to confirm its use. Within this structure was found a charcoal rich pit that contained little in the way of animal remains. Evidence of its purpose may lie with soil analysis.

Lying just within the northern perimeter of this structure is a curious oval shaped pit, lying east to west, and in which was found a copper alloy annular ring/brooch. No further investigation was made of this pit as this find was made very late in the dig. The size, shape and orientation of this pit may indicate a burial feature and this will be fully investigated at a later date.

The linear feature in Trench 4 from the 2021 dig may be a continuation of the linear stone structure at the extreme edge of the eastern extension of trench 6. Evidence from other Iron Age excavations in the North East suggest that linear palisades were built around small clusters of roundhouses. It was suggested that the unexplained second linear feature with the appearance of a low wall found towards the centre of the east west limb of trench 6 may form a rectangular structure enclosing at least four roundhouses (one in trench 4, three in trench 6) aligned parallel with the river. It's possible we may find a return 'wall' during a future dig.

The area immediately to the south of the cobbled roundhouse contains a ditch that warrants further investigation.



## **Plans for 2023**

It was decided that provided funding and permissions are in place then we shall dig during May and June again. Only one day was lost to the weather this year and late spring/early summer is considered to be the optimum period for archaeology.

The third attachment indicates the possible trench sites. Investigating the area between trenches 4 and 6 together with further investigation of the eastern roundhouse including the possible burial feature are the primary objectives. If time permits it may be possible to extend the deep feature in trench 5 found during the 2021 dig.

(It was noted that at some time in the future we must recover all of the plastic sheet used to protect the exposed surfaces of all of the trenches so far investigated)