

Newsletter 4

December 2018

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**We are a local
voluntary group
exploring the
hidden aspects of
our rich heritage
spanning thousands
of years.**



BEYOND THE WALL

Welcome to our fourth Newsletter. Thanks to all of you who sent articles. Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and another exciting New Year's archaeology.

At the end of one year we look back to all we have achieved and look forward to what is to come. I hope this newsletter will stimulate your continued interest.

Dates for your Diary

- NOWTAG AGM and presentations
Wednesday 6th February 2019
Hexham Community Centre, 7pm.
- Greyside Farm molehill survey & test-pitting, March 2019
- Rattenraw enclosed settlement excavation, 2019

Membership

Membership for the coming year runs from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. Subject to changes at our coming AGM our rates are: £10 single, £15 couple, £5 students or on benefits.

All our subscriptions go to the cause of furthering our commitment to community archaeology.



Rattenraw Level 3 Survey. Photo by Bill Pointer (2018).

AGM and Review of 2018

On Wednesday 5th February 2019 we will be holding our Annual General Meeting at which we elect officers and committee members for the coming year, have a financial report and deal with any other business raised in advance by members. The AGM, starting at 7.00pm in Hexham Community Centre, should not take long. The main event of the evening, starting at 7.30pm, will be an illustrated review of the group's activities during 2018. This will include the Carr Hill Rock Art de-turfing, the two surveys at Rattenraw and the survey at Greyside near Newbrough. This review will be open to the general public. We'll send you full details during January.

Networking News

Since before the launch of our group in 2013 we have enjoyed a close working relationship with Northumberland National Park that has contributed substantially to the success of our activities. We have also sought to engage effectively with professional and academic archaeologists in order to both inform our work and to make a meaningful contribution to the enhancement of the local archaeological record. In turn the quality of our work and the group's credibility has been widely recognised.

On behalf of the group I have had the opportunity to give presentations of our work to the likes of Newcastle Society of Antiquaries, Archaeology Scotland, Council for British Archaeology North and Newcastle University MA students.

During 2018 I was invited to represent the group on the North-East Region Research Framework working group. As a result the forthcoming English Heritage research framework will include two of the sites on which we are working, at Ravensheugh Craggs and Rattenraw Farm, as designated priority sites. We have also secured the inclusion of Ravensheugh Craggs as one of just three north-east region prehistoric sites in the specifications for Durham University's '*Belief in the North-East*' Project.

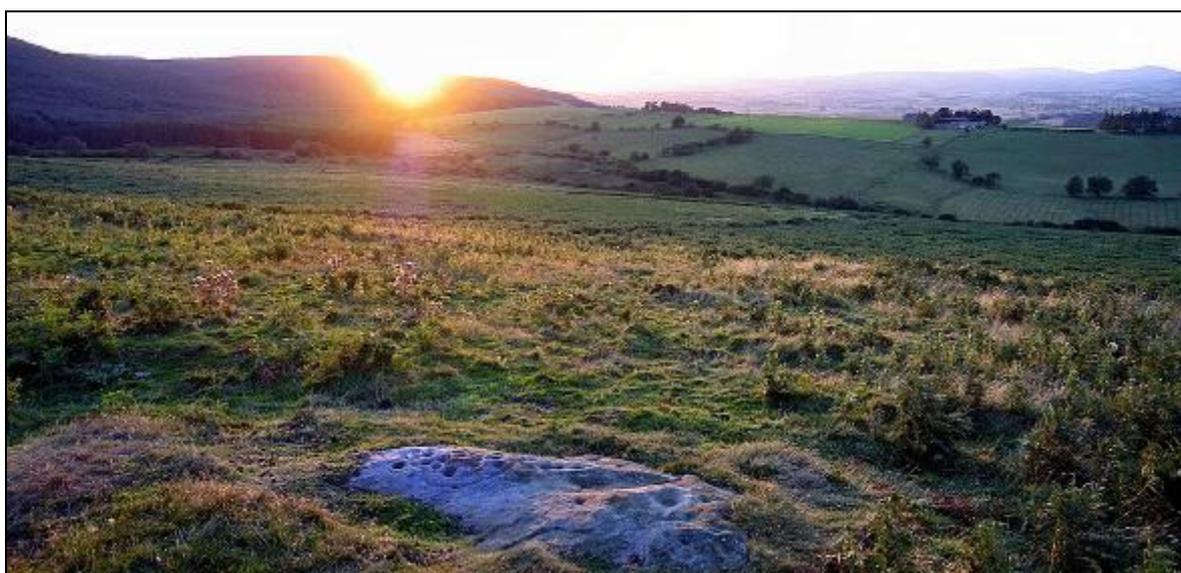
We are also now working closely with the '*Revitalising Redesdale*' project, enabling us to further build on the work at Rattenraw which we started of our own accord with our Level I walkover survey in February this year, as well as enabling our members to participate in other activities being organised as part of this major HLF funded multi-faceted project, of which more details in a separate article.

Phil Bowyer

Made of stone but built on sand – what now for rock art research?

This was the title of a talk by Don O'Meara, Historic England's Science Advisor for the North-East and Hadrian's Wall, given to North of the Wall Tynedale Archaeology Group on 27th January 2018.

Rock art research could of course cover a multitude of things including those archaeological questions of why they were done, who did them and when? What more could we find out about the motivation of those who did the carvings by targeted excavation or larger landscape studies in the vicinity of some of our iconic cup and ring marked panels?



Horseshoe Stone, Lordenshaw. Photo by A Curtis (2005)

Heritage at risk is a main element of Historic England's *raison d'être* and a considerable headache for our rock art heritage. There are several reasons: it's out there in the field doing daily battle with the weather, beasts of the field, vegetation and people; there is quite a lot of it, the land the panels are on is often remote and nearly all privately owned; we don't care enough, and doing anything would be too expensive. Rock outside is difficult to conserve and can be perceived as being immutable and permanent.

A building at risk can be renovated, stone-work rebuilt and pointed; a Roman altar or centurial inscription can be removed to a museum. Don said that in a recent study only 50% of Roman inscriptions identified along Hadrian's Wall in the last 300 years can still be found.

To me, a collection of Roman altars still look good in a museum, as they do at Chesters, but a museum collection of rock art just doesn't work for me. They look dull, out of place and wholly irrelevant. I want to see where they were made, out in our land of far horizons with the raindrops falling and the skylarks singing. However much the landscape may have changed since the days they were carved, it is often the places as much as the carvings that seem to pass their messages down the ages.

So is our rock art at risk? Undoubtedly. The reasons are many – agriculture, industry, quarrying and development, to name a few. Perhaps in our upland landscape, neglect is often the case, although usually accidental or benign. Natural erosion will erode carving from friable rock over time. Lichens and mosses may damage rock surfaces but as early natural colonists, if undisturbed, will lead eventually to soil and turf cover. Do we accept this as inevitable or aim to cover some panels over? What then for public access and enjoyment of our heritage? Bury and forget seems to go hand in hand with benign neglect (like last year's 'lost' panel of Beanley Moor).



Tod Crag. Photo by A Curtis (2005)

As a means of identifying and managing risks, the work of Aron Mazel and the CARE of rock art project are clearly of importance. Only when people go out and monitor can we know what is happening. In the Kilmartin area, several important panels are on public display with access managed and controlled as do some other countries. The only site that comes close in Northumberland is Roughing Linn but we do little to encourage and inform visitors even there. Budgets are limited and how can this be funded anyway?

Over the last 50 years much has been done to record what we have. Our rock art has been described, illustrated, laser scanned and 3D modelled by photogrammetry. Databases have been created but can be as easily abandoned. New scientific methods are being tried, including recently portable-x-ray fluorescence. Landowners and tenant farmers come and go, as does their tolerance to strangers on their land looking at prehistoric rock carvings. Perhaps a rock art theme park would do the trick (although never for me).

So what now for rock art research?

This report was written by Andy Curtis, rock art enthusiast and natural sceptic. Views expressed are mine alone and I apologise for any unintentional distortion of the talk or later discussion. It was included in [Issue 19 of Kate Sharpe's Rock Articles](#).

Burdhope Crag Roman Marching Camp

*The dig by Wessex Archaeology took place in September 2017 and a report of our volunteer efforts was included in last year's Newsletter. The following article by **Malcolm McCallum** brings us up to date with following their publication of the full report.*

This Roman marching camp is on the MOD Otterburn Training Area (OTA) at OS Grid centre NY 82846 98689, on the north side of the Sills Burn and opposite Bremeium Roman fort at High Rochester. It shows up well on Goggle Earth.



An outer fragmented rampart surrounds the inner, traditional playing card shaped, Roman marching camp. The eastern part of this outer rampart overlooks a steep drop down to the Sills Burn and in 2012 a landslip caused the scarp edge to move closer towards it. As further landslips threatened to destroy this part of the rampart, Landmarc (on behalf of the OTA) contracted Wessex Archaeology (WA) to investigate it before it disappeared down into Sills Burn. Having obtained the necessary permissions to excavate a protected site from Northumberland National Park and English Heritage, WA organised a dig and asked for volunteers.

An intrepid group of volunteers from NOWTAG, Altogether Archaeology, Coquetdale Archaeology and others met up and helped with this dig between 21/08/17 and 09/09/17. Given the nature of the moorland with tussocky grass, reeds and boggy areas it was quite hard work despite the use of a suitable mechanical digger to remove the overburden. We also had to carry up and erect safety barriers to prevent any of us disappearing down the land slipped area into the Sills Burn! The following is based on the WA report received courtesy of the good offices of Karen Collins of Revitalising Redesdale.

The rampart was constructed with turves laid on top of each other in a similar fashion to the construction of the early Hadrian's Wall. No Roman or Romano-British material was recovered from either the ditches or the rampart itself. However sufficient organic material was recovered which gave a radiocarbon date of between 200 BC to 547 AD – so this confirmed that this was a Roman rampart, perhaps with a palisade on it and it was in use throughout the Romano-British period.

A metallised stone surface was also uncovered leading from the exterior of the marching camp and this lay above some remains of clay pipes which were dated to circa 1690–1710. There was evidence in the central Roman camp of bell-pit mining which would fit with the 17th and 18th century small scale coal mining and traces of coal were found in the material excavated from the rampart and ditches. The position of the clay pipes confirmed that the metallised surface was not Roman but post medieval. A stone-built hearth was also identified on top of the rampart bank and a charred cereal grain, recovered from the associated spread of heat affected silts, gave a radio carbon date of circa 1690 to 1927, again not Roman but post medieval.

One other artefact of interest was a copper disc, found by our own Andy Curtis, which was probably a button with a possible rear loop attachment but WA concluded it was not further dateable. An iron blade fragment was recovered from the turf/topsoil layer but could not be dated and one piece of iron smithing slag, not further analysed, and two small fragments of burnt animal bone were also recovered but not identified.

So, all in all, this site was confirmed to have been Roman but continued in use through post medieval times and up to modern times – now by the British army. This was an interesting dig and the resources available to WA meant that good paleoenvironmental analysis in respect of pollen and plant remains together with radio carbon dating was able confirm the dates this site had been in use.

The members of NOWTAG and Altogether Archaeology who took part were Malcolm McCallum, Andy Curtis, Martin Green, Elaine Vallack, Joan Raine and Greg Finch.

Malcolm McCallum

Society for Landscape Studies Conference, 22 September 2018

This was held at Newcastle University and sponsored by the McCord Centre for Landscape and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne. This year, dedicated to the North-East, the by-line was '*From Tees to Tweed: new perspectives on landscape history and archaeology*'. The opening talk was by Rob Young, *Lithics in the landscape*, putting into context the Mesolithic site excavated by Altogether Archaeology volunteers at Cow Green. David Astbury described how he had buckled the Newcastle University computing system by building a massive GIS system of nearly every boundary, settlement and track-way in Northumberland to carry out a statistical analysis on orientation. Although his findings passed me by, the effort seemed wonderfully impressive. After tea, Rob Collins talked about Hadrian's Wall, how it was in place for such a long period of time and what may have happened at the end. Sam Turner took us into the early medieval period explaining the impact of Christianity on land ownership and settlement, a theme continued after lunch by Max Adams and his Bernician Studies Group. They were identifying patches of ancient woodland remaining in the landscape which provided clues to ancient land boundaries often traceable for long distances along obscure Northumberland rivers (Lynn, Font, and Hart). Several people expressed an interest in the ability to date boundaries using a portable gizmo to analyse the time sand last saw the light but probably not so easy, cheap or accurate as it sounded. Caron Newman brought us into the C18th with the evolution of a designed landscape, that of Rothley Lakes near Wallington where Capability Brown may have been active providing a deer park, eye-catching follies, artificial lakes and serpentine paths (now overgrown and needing students to find them). Changes introduced in the 1930s depression were the subject of Ronan O'Donnell from Durham University with the planned model village of Swarland, Heartbreak Hill in Cleveland and an instructional centre at Hamsterley Forest. Lastly, and a little out of period for reasons of availability, was Richard Carlton on the landscape of Lindisfarne with a talk bringing us up to date on the new season of excavation on the Heugh.



Rothley East Lake. Photo A Curtis (2010).

A Rock Art 'Excavation' at Carr Edge, Northumberland

The Mason says: Rocks happen by chance. No-one here bolts the door. Love is so sore.
Briggflatts by Basil Bunting (1972).

The following article leans heavily on the draft report of our 'excavation' for which I have to thank Phil Bowyer (Chairman of NOWTAG) and Jon Welsh (AAG Archaeology) as well as all the other professionals and amateur volunteers who took part. The personal views, mistakes, omissions (and some of the wild conjecture) are of course all mine

I first visited Carr Edge Farm to look at the rock art over 20 years ago, the main focus being on *Carr Hill a*, an outcrop of sandstone sporting a cup with multiple rings and another smaller cup and multi-ring motif. Both motifs have radial grooves. It had been recorded by Stan Beckensall. A nice panel of rock art for a location in south Northumberland, south of Hadrian's Wall in the crook of land north of the South Tyne and west of the North Tyne rivers. It must have been exposed to the elements for a long time but had been well carved. It had survived weathering and the quarrymen operating nearby. I also learned how the motifs, both on one end of the outcrop, can vanish in flat light and come alive in the rare strong sunny days of winter with the sun low in the sky, particularly after rain.



Carr Hill a viewed in winter sun. A Curtis (2016).

The few other panels previously recorded in the vicinity of *Carr Hill a* were not so exciting, cups which didn't always seem definitely artificial, on outcrops with signs of quarry activity; *Carr Hill d* with its multiple cups above a high quarry face perhaps an exception.

There is higher land to both south and north and the panel lies close to the high point of a col or pass between two deep valleys, North Tyne in the east and Meggie's Dene Burn in the west. An ancient routeway perhaps. Could there also be an association with a spring located in the arable field just south of the panel. Views are limited but Warden Hill with its large hill fort and prominent location above the river valleys is clear to the south-east. Being there feels nice – it does at many rock art sites – is it geography or prehistory? Stan's 'Power of Place'.

In 2005, on a rocky knoll 200m north-east of *Carr Hill a*, a team of the Northumberland & Durham Rock Art Project (N&DRAP) made two new discoveries. *Carr Hill 9* is a boulder sloping steeply into the ground. With only one cup visible above its turf cover, the team peeled it back to reveal an array of cups and grooves. It is a stone that seemed to blur the distinction between natural erosion features and rock art. Our finding of distinctive peck marks in the two lower-most cups shows that this was man-made. How could I ever have doubt it?



Carr Hill 9 capture from 3D model.

The most amazing find of the N&DRAP team was *Carr Hill 10*, the 'little man', an incised warrior figure about 30cm long, on a flat sandstone slab, holding a square shield in one hand and a spear in the other. Close by was another fainter figure (a different shape – female perhaps – and with facial features) and a group of linear grooves terminated by small cups. Figurative art is not so common and appearance of the figure led to its identification with the Romano-British god, *Cocidius*. The grooves below had been tentatively identified as two letters, *C* and *M*, possibly equating *Cocidius* with *Mars*.



Carr Hill 10: *Cocidius*, faint attendant and grooves. N&DRAP (2005)

With the permission of the landowner and assistance of professional archaeologists, this knoll was the location of a deturfing project this summer by Tynedale North of the Wall Community Archaeology Group. Our aims were to investigate these and other turf covered outcrops nearby to see if we could find more rock art, investigate a spread of stones on the east slope as evidence of a possible cairn, and investigate evidence of quarrying, particularly if it could be proved to be Roman.

The knoll itself shows clear signs of small-scale quarrying for sandstone, hollows on the west side and close to the summit, and straight cuts running along low outcrops, but when this was done is not clear. A large number of roughly squared blocks must have been cut somewhere for the well-built drystone walls bordering our field, presumably dating from times of land enclosure.

Apart from the rock art, the only possible prehistoric features we had located nearby were a limited set of field boundaries on the slope due north, beyond the broad rig and furrow ploughing that almost surrounds the knoll. Gorse cover and a dead sheep made our efforts unpleasant at times; the turf was dry and difficult to cut, hindered by our use of non-metal tools to avoid any possibility of damage. We also wanted to see if we could use photogrammetry as a suitable tool to visualise faintly carved figures with no contact of the rock surface and a possible means to avoid the vagaries of natural light. Our 3D models can all be viewed on the NOWTAG account on [Sketchfab](#).



Cocidius in gold: capture from 3D model with artificial surface and lighting

In all, 15 areas of bedrock were deturfed. So what did we find?

The most interesting area (I) was that due north of the bedrock containing the *Cocidius* carving and continuous with the same rock surface.



3D model of deturfed Area I annotated: 1 'Cocidius'; 2 new group of figures; 3 cup marks; 4 peck marks; 5 scooped depression

A new group of carvings, barely visible in flat or overhead light made an appearance due north of *Cocidius*, incised only faintly on a flat rock surface at a slightly lower level. We have had inklings of other faint carvings on the same rock but been unable to confirm they are real and not random association of markings on the surface. Photogrammetry didn't help. If they are incised figures they are not at the level of simple visualisation.



Captures from 3D model of new faint figures in Area I, N of '*Cocidius*'. Are there three figures here or just two?

The width of the carving around the head of the right-hand figure in particular gives rise to a question of whether this figure may be hooded. It has been speculatively suggested that the group may be a depiction of the *Genii Cucullati*, or *Hooded Spirits* that are found across the Romano-Celtic territory between Britain and Pannonia. A few miles NW of our site a relief carving of three hooded figures was found at Housesteads Roman Fort. Less than two miles away, at the head of Meggie's Dene Burn, lies Coventina's Well, adjacent to Brocolitia Roman Fort, where an altar to triple water deities was excavated. Photos of both can be seen here.

Close examination of the 3D model of deturfed Area I suggest the rock surface north of *Cocidius* may have been artificially altered. Firstly, there is a step down of 2-3cm from the surface which carries the warrior figure, a ledge that curves down from the NW corner of the area and then runs more straight to the SE edge. Several areas of rock appear to be marked with small circular depressions ('peck marks') and there is a large scalloped edge hollow resembling an incomplete basin at the NE corner. Has something been removed from the surface? If so, what was there before, why and when was it done?

Could there have been cup and ring style rock art here? Our only evidence for such speculation is the two cup marks found in the centre of the slab, possible the remnants of their incomplete removal on a slightly higher surface of the outcrop. The old problem of natural verses artificial, writ large. Rocks don't happen by chance, but are subject to erosion by ice, freeze thaw weathering and what man thinks of doing to them. The supposed 'letters' below the *Cocidius* carving could also be interpreted as cup and groove rock art of a much earlier tradition.

Excavation of the rock art site at Hunterheugh Crag in Northumberland by Waddington, Johnson, & Mazel in 2005 (*Archaeologica Aeliana* 5th Series, vol.34 p.29-54) identified that part of the rock surface apparently below a Bronze Age cairn was heavily quarried and earlier rock art removed, possibly for reuse in Bronze Age funerary contexts. New and cruder motifs had been carved on the fresh stone surfaces. However, both periods of carving did conform to a cup and ring tradition which is clearly not the case at Carr Edge.

Our putative cairn site seemed a lot less like a cairn when the turf was removed. More a random stone scatter, possibly associated with quarrying activity showing as scooped hollows just to the west. We did find deep, linear grooves in some of the deturfed areas which could have been artificially made but to no obvious intention or pattern. There was some evidence for quarrying in one or two areas but hand quarrying techniques have little changed since Roman times and reveal nothing of their date. Later quarrying also often obscures evidence of earlier quarrying.

Photogrammetry using close-up photographs can prove a useful technique to examine the fainter carvings. It does allow visualisation independent of natural lighting but still dependant on interpretation by eye and brain which are often easily deceived. A comparison of the same figure imaged using raking light photography is also useful. I have even wondered if the figure in the capture on the left is sporting a large phallus (as big as himself) and some kind of headdress! Perhaps that just says more about me!



Capture of 3D model of new figures in Area I and raking light photography by C Namirski

David Shepherd & Frank Jolley in 2016 (Rock Art Research vol.33) addressed the finding of unexplained grooves found in sandstone surfaces in the South Pennines and of their numerous unsuccessful attempts to secure an archaeological or geological explanation. Some grooves appeared to be associated with 'cupules'. A theory was produced from Australia that they could have been created by the friction of tree roots. Natural or artificial is always going to be a problem in such circumstances and there seems no way that the alternatives can be tested. I find my scepticism about single cups or a few cups and grooves gets no better. I've seen too many 'natural' cups, basins and grooves sitting on flat rock surfaces and I still need a couple of surrounding rings to get me out of the bed in a morning!

Like the peck marks in the lower cups, I'm always the first to be pleased when proved wrong. *Love is so sore.*

Andy Curtis

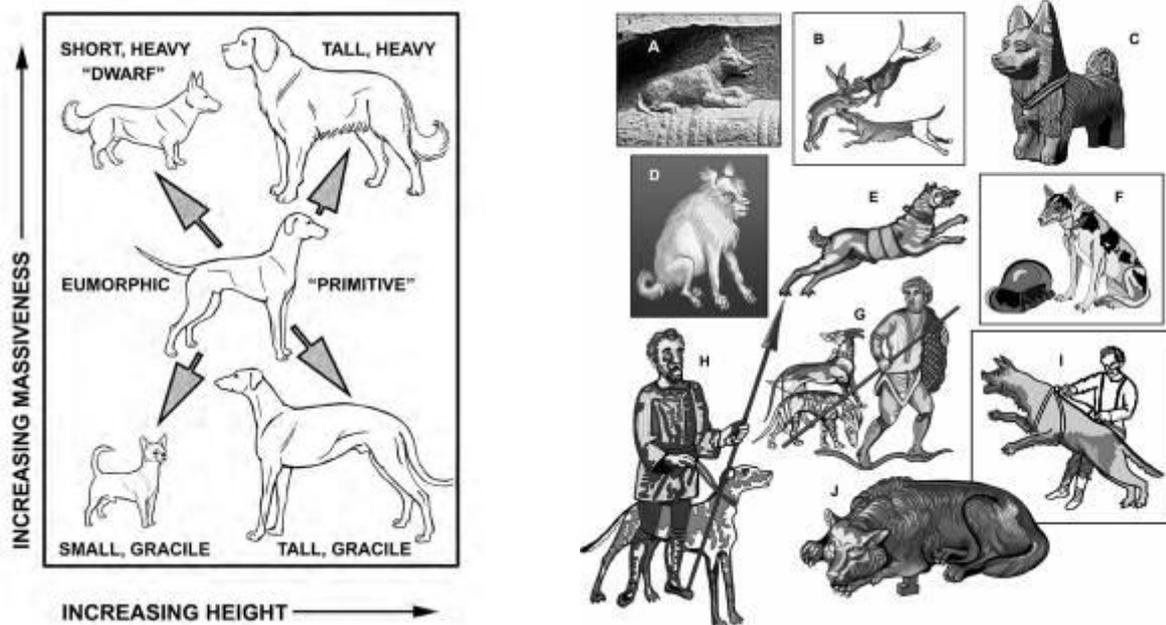
From article published in [Kate Sharpe's Rock Articles Issue 20](#).

Roman Shaggy Dog Story

The 2,000-year-old remains of a dog with its fur still intact was one of this year's finds during the annual excavation season at Vindolanda Roman Fort. Samples have been sent for analysis to determine the dog's breed. A spokeswoman said the fact the dog's fur was so well-preserved was 'incredible'.

The site has been well known for its dog bone remains for some time and they have been recovered from every Vindolanda context and time period. In addition to bones, many examples of paw prints have been found in roof tiles from dogs wandering over the wet clay. There is no evidence that they were butchered for food unlike the bones of cattle and horses also found, but were used extensively in hunting wild game and appear to have been bred for that activity.

Dog bone remains have been categorised into at least 8 types ranging in size from toy breeds of 27cm up to large mastiffs of 70cm. That dogs were bred and raised at Vindolanda is indicated by the remains of a beehive-shaped wattle dog-house associated with juvenile and gnawed dog bones. Like the Roman soldiers themselves, there is evidence that some dogs may have been sourced from long distances.



Dogs from the European Mesolithic and Neolithic are thought to have originated from dingo-like ancestors. Dog types distinctively different from dingoes in height, limb stoutness, and skull shape become common in the Iron Age. Small dogs appear in the late Iron Age and become common in the Roman period. The different types have many similarities to but are not identical or as diverse as modern breeds.

DNA analysis from bone samples and the recent furred specimen will answer more Roman doggy questions.

Read more in *The Dogs of Vindolanda* Parts 1 and 2: **Archaeofauna** 25 (2016): 79-126.

Greyside Farm Landscape Survey



In February of this year we were able to complete our Level I survey of a large area on Greyside Farm, to the west of Meggie's Dene Burn, and due north of our previous survey on the western side of Carr Edge Farm. The western part of the area, extending as far as Park Dam, revealed only its network of old boundaries, superseded by straighter enclosure-period walls and fences.



Old boundary west of Dipper Wood. Photo A Curtis (2018)

The eastern part of the area proved to be the most interesting and was really the reason we were there. Just north of the boundary wall, a Romano-British settlement was indicated on the HER with remains of three round-houses. Sadly, little remained of any associated field system.

East of this site on a ridge overlooking the valley of Meggie's Dene Burn was a very interesting area of large enclosures and a field system with broad rig and furrow, presumably dating to the medieval period. The ploughed area was roughly a furlong in length, east to west over the ridge, and two or three sets of furrows appeared to be divided by linear runs of stones. Whether these really represented un-ploughed baulks (divisions between individual furlongs) or were purely an artefact of ploughing over a stony ridge was the basis for much discussion and is unresolved at present.

To the north of this area, high above the Burn, was another enigmatic banked enclosure with small walled cells on its south side, previously described as probable animal pens. Close inspection showed clear signs of former occupation in the form of a medieval or post-medieval farmstead. Pottery shards, lime and coal can readily be found particularly where moles have been at work. Looks to be a suitable site for our proposed molehill survey. If only we could find someone who knows about pottery (Lorraine!)



Collection of pottery, lime mortar and coal from molehills close to north-east enclosure.

The report of the [Greyside level 1 Survey](#) is on our website.

Coquetdale Archaeology Group's Border Roads Project

Congratulations to our friends in Coquetdale Community Archaeology Group for winning a prestigious national award for their three year project on Border Roads.

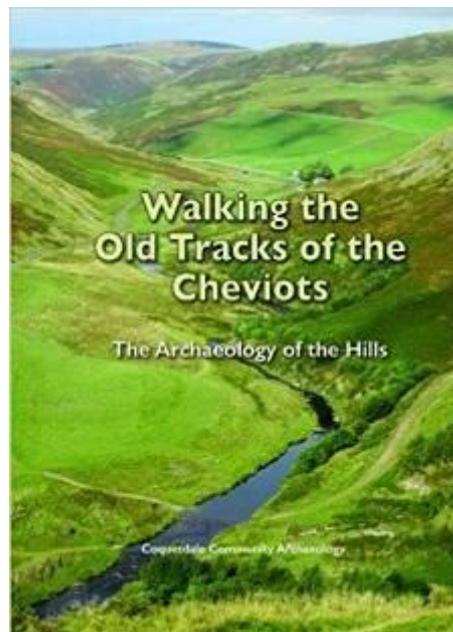
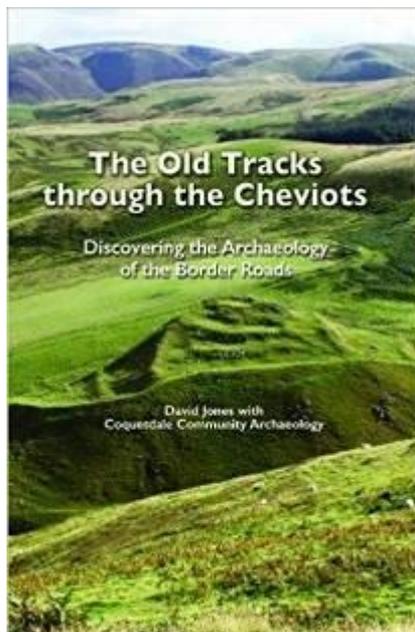
National Parks Volunteer Project of the Year Award 2018 recognises and celebrates the contribution of outstanding volunteers working across the 15 National Parks in the UK.

The group's pioneering 'Border Roads' project, which investigated and documented the history and archaeology of the ancient routes through the Cheviots, beat strong competition from volunteer-led initiatives in Dartmoor National Park and Exmoor National Park to win the title and a £1,000 bursary.

Launched in 2014, the project was funded by Northumberland National Park Authority and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Some 90 volunteers have spent four years researching, documenting and communicating the archaeology along the Border Roads – the old tracks that now connect England and Scotland.

As part of the project, the group has published two books; 'The Old Tracks through the Cheviots', which is a record of the archaeology and history of the Border Roads. The second is a walking guide; 'Walking the Old Tracks of the Cheviots', and aims to encourage people to explore the routes for themselves. They have also run archaeology sessions and field trips for schools and given talks to hundreds of people from various local interest groups.

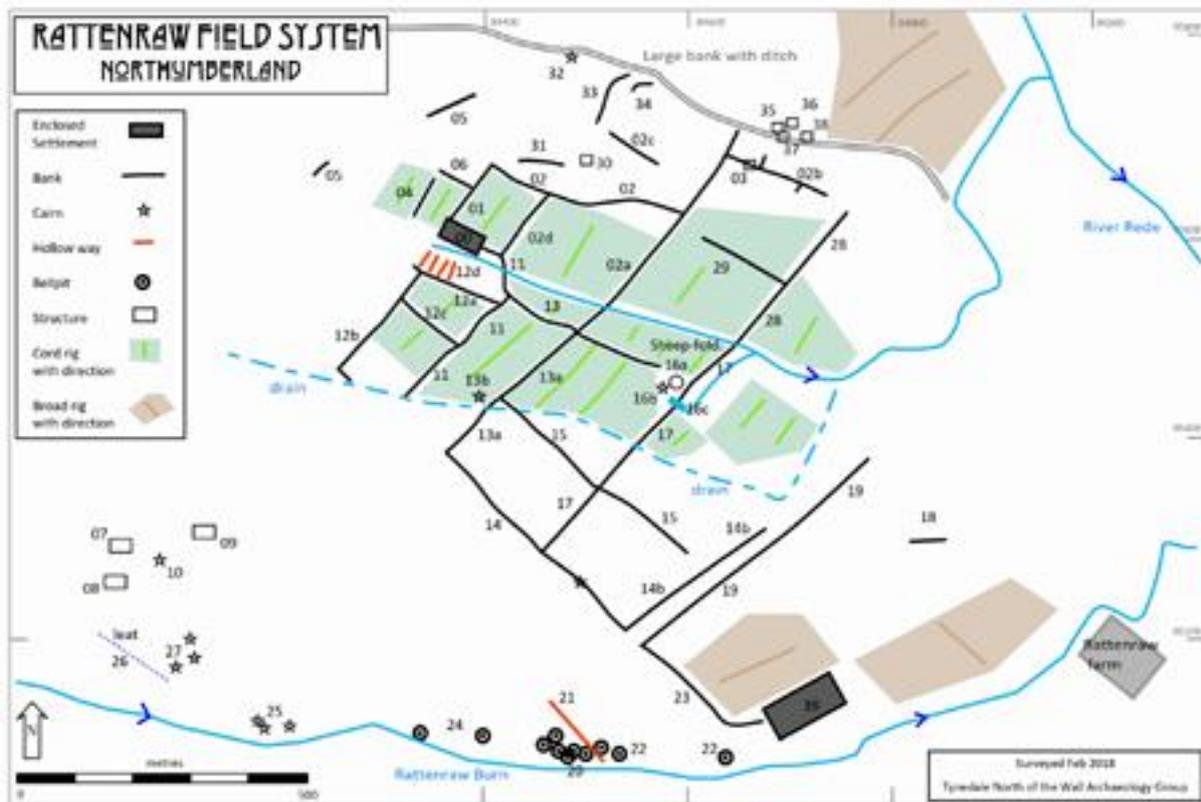
The winners for the National Park Volunteer Awards 2018, which are sponsored by Columbia Sportswear, were announced at Kendal Mountain Festival on Saturday 17 November.



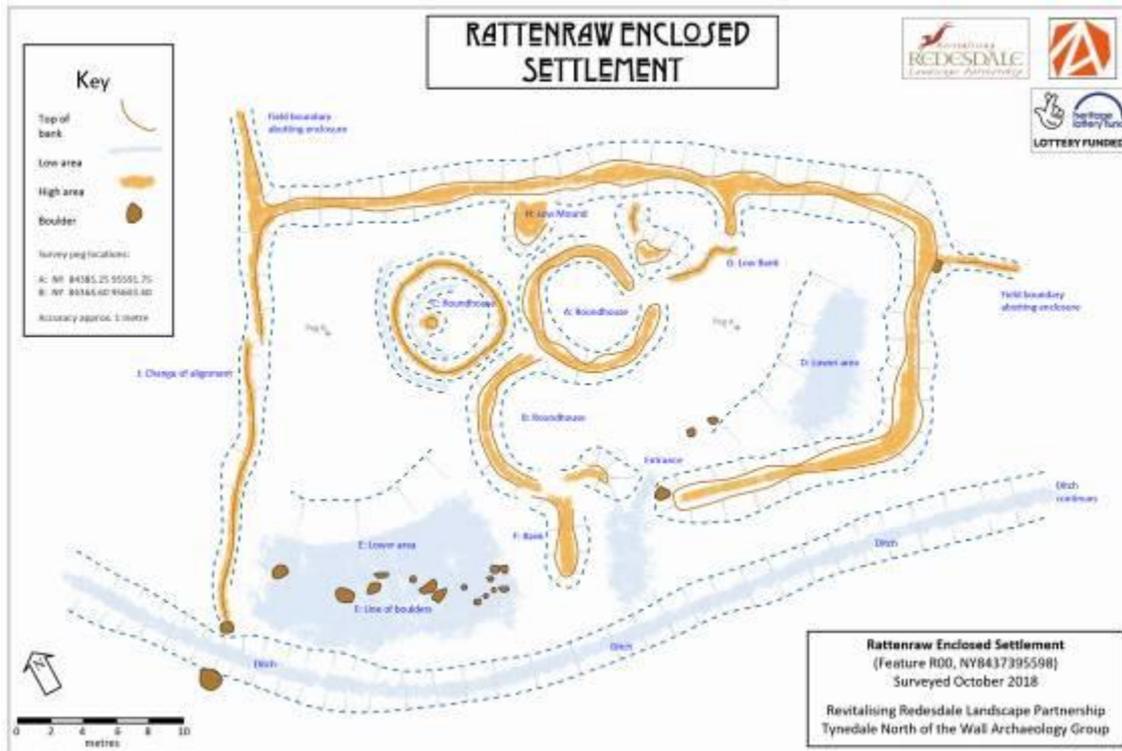
Much more on their [Border Roads website](#).

Rattenraw Revisited

In February members of our group undertook a Level 1, 'walkover', landscape survey of parts of Rattenraw Farm. Despite having to curtail the survey after just 3 days, when the 'beast from the east' snow storm arrived, excellent work by the volunteers enabled us to complete the principal objectives, including the recording of the exceptionally extensive Iron Age field system and three associated enclosed settlement sites.



In October we returned, this time working in conjunction with the Revitalising Redesdale project, to conduct a detailed survey of the enclosed settlement (R00). Members of our group worked alongside new volunteers from Redesdale to create a plan drawing of the recently discovered site.



There remain significant unanswered questions concerning the site, including:

1. **Chronology of the site.** The form of the site makes it highly probable that it was built and occupied at some time within the Iron Age or Romano-British periods. The proximity of Dere Street and the Roman fort at High Rochester could lend support to the view that the extent of arable activity indicated by the surrounding field system with its extensive cord rig would have been related to requirements arising from the Roman occupation. The likelihood of these circumstances does not however eliminate the possibility of pre-Roman or post-Roman occupation of the site.
2. **Relationship to nearby enclosed settlement sites.** Similar considerations of chronology apply to the two scheduled enclosed settlement sites on Rattenraw Farm. (list entries [1008994](#) and [1009372](#)). Was there contemporary occupation of the three sites, or was construction and occupation sequential? Charlton and Day identified an extension on the enclosed settlement west of Rattenraw farmhouse, suggesting a sequence of construction within the settlement. At site R00 are the apparent structural differences between round house C and roundhouses A and B also indicative of a sequence of construction and occupation?
3. **Relationship of site R00 to the ditch adjacent to its southern perimeter.** The proximity of a prominent ditch immediately south of the probable entrance to the enclosure raises questions. If the ditch was contemporary with the occupation of the settlement, and if the hollow ways upslope to the south of the ditch are indicators of livestock having been driven into the enclosure, this does not appear to be particularly conducive to the functionality of arrangements. There are indications that the ditch has been augmented. Although the ditch does have the appearance of a largely natural feature, there are examples of features of comparable length and depth having been artificially created.

4. **The western enclosure bank.** The remains of enclosure bank along the western side of the settlement is noticeably lower and narrower than the northern and eastern banks, and the eastern section of the southern perimeter bank. There are also signs of a slight change of alignment part way along the western bank. Whilst it could be suggested that this may be indicative of the western part of the enclosure, including roundhouse C, having been constructed and occupied earlier or later than the eastern side it must be noted that the structure of northern bank is consistent along its full length.
5. **The western section of the southern perimeter.** There is today no visible bank associated with the line of large boulders that may indicate the remains of the western section of the southern perimeter. There are indications of short sections of stony banking immediately adjacent to the ditch, but these would appear to be consistent with either up-cast from, or a small retention wall for, the ditch.

Work at Rattenraw will continue during 2019. Full reports of both surveys are available on our website www.tynedalearchaeology.org.uk

Working with ‘Revitalising Redesdale’

[‘Revitalising Redesdale’](#) is a multi-faceted 5 year project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund that includes various community, environmental and heritage elements. Back in May Andy Curtis, Martin Green and I met with the project’s Heritage and Engagement Officer, Karen Collins, to discuss how our group could work with *Revitalising Redesdale*. We arranged that continuation of the work we had started at Rattenraw would be undertaken in conjunction with the project.

In September we gave a presentation at the launch of the ‘*Lost Redesdale*’ community archaeology project. At the same meeting Paul Frodsham gave a presentation on the Redesdale LIDAR project.

In early October Andy, Martin and I led a Level 3 detailed measurement survey of the newly discovered enclosed settlement at Rattenraw on behalf of *Revitalising Redesdale*. Several members of our group participated alongside local volunteers from Redesdale. It was great to have the opportunity to introduce newcomers to the delights of community archaeology and to provide them with some training in survey skills.



The reports on both our initial Level 1 survey and the subsequent Level 3 survey have already been circulated to members, but if you missed these you can find them on our website www.tynedalearchaeology.org.uk

Work at Rattenraw will continue in 2019. There are plans to carry out a professionally-led excavation at the enclosed settlement and to conduct a Level 3 detailed survey of a farmstead site which we identified during our initial Level 1 survey. There are also parts of the farm on which we need to complete the Level 1 walkover survey.

Our engagement with Revitalising Redesdale also provides members with the opportunity to participate in other elements of the project. I know that some of you are already involved with the LIDAR Project and with the Battle of Otterburn project. For details of these and other aspects of Revitalising Redesdale please contact Karen Collins at Karen.Collins@nnpa.org

Phil Bowyer