

Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group (SWAAG)

The Hagg - A Project Plan for 2016 and beyond

1. Introduction and Background

SWAAG has been working at the Hagg site since 2009. It has undertaken topographic and geophysical surveys and has excavated several areas. Reports of the work carried out are on the SWAAG web site at swaag.org.

There has not been any onsite activity since 2014 although work has progressed to draw together the results of previous year's excavations with the aim of developing a unified interpretation as a basis for further work.

SWAAG has also discussed site 103 and the excavation data with several archaeologists with experience of working in the Dales. Although there is no common view, there are several common themes:

- site 103 is Romano-British, and was probably abandoned towards the end of the 4th century AD;
- it is not clear whether the site is a settlement or a site for animal husbandry;
- there would appear to be evidence of settlement/human activity in adjacent fields and perhaps site 103 is only a relatively small part of a much larger complex;
- Historical protocols determined that excavation should not extend beyond the abandonment phase; those protocols should be examined in the next phase of work;
- SWAAG is recommended to return and continue investigations to try and further elucidate the nature and functions of the site.

Bearing those comments in mind, in 2016 SWAAG proposes to revisit site 103 and the surrounding areas, to survey them and to carry out excavations with a view to using the information so gained to inform a more widespread and extensive programme of work in 2017.

This Project Plan, describes the details of the 2016 proposed activities (the "Project") and has been approved by the SWAAG Trustees.

2. Research Questions and Objectives

The activities to be undertaken in 2016 will be directed towards providing information to answer the following questions. Although, it is recognised that as the 2016 work will be largely exploratory, it may not do other than provide information which may be useful in formulating and directing a much larger effort in 2017 to answer these same questions:

- What was the purpose/function of site 103: a settlement, a site for animal husbandry, an industrial complex, some combination of all of those or something else entirely?
- Settlements are often associated with middens, can a midden(s) be identified on site 103 or elsewhere in the surrounding area.
- Was site 103 the focus of activities in the area or was it part of a much more extensive and widely spread complex?

- Is there any evidence of earlier settlements, (e.g. pre Romano-British) on the site and if so, how did they evolve to what was found at the abandonment phase.
- If exploratory work suggests settlement or other human activity in the surrounding area, would more extensive investigations be able to confirm those findings and also show how they relate to site 103.

The primary purpose of the project is to answer archaeological research questions. However, we must recognise that SWAAG is a voluntary, community, archaeology group and that members have varying levels of archaeological skills. Accordingly the Project will also strive to meet the following objectives and to provide SWAAG members with:

- training and experience in archaeological excavation methods and techniques, including digging, planning, recording, context recording and management, finds handling and management, etc;
- training and experience in geophysical and topographical surveying techniques.

3. Excavations, and Finds

All excavations and the retrieval and processing of any finds will be carried out in accordance with standard archaeological procedures under the direction and supervision of a Site Archaeologist (the "SA").

This Project Plan incorporates a degree of flexibility to take account of factors such as ongoing results, the numbers of volunteers available and the weather. Because of those factors the planned evaluation trenches must be considered as tentative.

The approximate locations of the planned evaluation trenches are illustrated in Appendix 2 in relation to the previous excavations which have been carried out at site 103. Appendix 3 is a key to the evaluations trenches, in order of priority, and sets out the objective(s) of each trench.

The initial size of the evaluation trenches is unlikely to exceed 5 metres x 2 metres. A final decision on the size of each trench will be taken following an on-site inspection.

In the event that, for whatever reason, it is not possible to open all of the evaluation trenches, the unopened remainder will be incorporated into the project plan for the 2017 excavations.

The evaluation trenches will be excavated by hand either to the top of the archaeological deposits, or the natural substrate, whichever is observed first. Trenches will be subsequently cleaned and all features investigated and recorded as deemed appropriate by the SA.

During fieldwork the following percentages of features will normally be excavated:

- stake-holes: 100%
- post-holes: 50%
- pits up to 1.5metre diameter: 50%
- pits over 1.5metre: 25% but with full profile excavated

- linear features up to 5metre in length: 20%
- linear features over 5metres in length: up to10%,
- linear features: all intersections and terminus areas to be investigated
- human burials: 100%

Guidance must be sought from the SA before excavating such features.

During fieldwork, turf, soil and stone will be stored in separate piles adjacent to the trenches but not impinging on the areas to be excavated. Upon completion of fieldwork, trenches will be backfilled and the ground surface reinstated as close as reasonably possible to its original profile.

All excavated contexts will be recorded in plan and section and recorded on stratigraphic matrices. Plans and sections will be drawn at appropriate scales (generally 1:10 or 1:20). The excavations will be accurately tied into the OS national grid and accurately levelled relative to OS datum, using traditional survey techniques.

A comprehensive digital photographic record of the excavation will be made. The record will include 'people shots' of excavations in progress as well as standard shots. All images will be retained in the site archive, with an appropriate selection included within the project report.

A comprehensive daily diary will be maintained for the overall site as well as for each excavation site. In addition to site and excavation details the diaries will include details of personnel present each day and the different tasks undertaken each day by each volunteer. The SA shall be responsible for appointing people on a daily basis to complete the diary entries.

All finds will be retained and recorded by context. The SA will undertake any necessary emergency first aid to finds; if further conservation is required this will be done according to the recommendations of appropriate specialists. No finds will be discarded prior to post-excavation assessment.

During and after the excavation, all recovered artefacts will be stored in appropriate conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information.

Any material from secure contexts deemed potentially suitable for scientific analysis will be recovered and stored in appropriate conditions. Advice regarding scientific analysis will be sought from appropriate experts.

It is thought most unlikely that human remains will be encountered at this site. However, should bones of any type be encountered, all excavations in the vicinity should stop and guidance sought from the SA.

4. Surveying

Geophysical (resistivity and magnetometry) and topographic (e.g. GPS) surveys will be carried out as appropriate. The sites to be surveyed will be identified following walkovers of the areas but are expected to include the field to the northwest of site 103 and the wood to the north of site 103. The surveying may be carried out at times other than those reserved for the excavation work.

5. Post Excavation, Archiving and Report Production

The fieldwork programme will be followed by an assessment of finds and samples under the guidance of the SA. All finds and samples will be assessed for their potential for further analysis and conservation/storage requirements. Finds deemed not worthy of retention will be discarded at this point. All retained finds will be cleaned, marked, photographed and/or drawn, and bagged for long-term storage.

Specialists may be called on, as necessary, to examine, process and assess excavated finds and samples.

All finds belong to the land owner. Following assessment of the finds, and subject to the agreement of the landowner the finds will be stored locally.

Following completion of the excavation and any analyses, the excavation work together with the results of the finds analysis and sample analyses, if any, will be promptly written up in a comprehensive report. Copies of the report will be lodged with OASIS, archived at the Swaledale Museum, Reeth and placed on the SWAAG web site.

The matter of an archive for any finds from this 2016 excavation will be considered as part of the project plan for the more extensive 2017 excavation. Possible local archives are, the Swaledale Museum, Reeth; the Yorkshire Museum, Richmond; and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Museum, Hawes.

6. Supervision and Management of the Project.

The excavations, surveying, and all activities associated with them will at all times be under the guidance and direction of the Supervising Archaeologist ("SA"). Changes to the scope of an excavation or any procedure must not be made without first securing the agreement of the SA.

Members of a SWAAG Steering Committee will be responsible for all support activities:

- Project Manager and liaison with land owner - Phillip Bastow
- Logistics - Rob Nicholson/Rod Flint
- Surveying - Mike Walton
- Finds - Rob Nicholson
- Staffing, Communications and H&S - Andrea Dixon
- Project Plan - David Brooks
- Budget - Mike Keenan

7. Health and Safety

H&S safety on the site is paramount and it is the responsibility of everyone on the site to work in a safe manner and to look out for the safety of their co-workers.

A risk assessment has been carried out and will be circulated to all who will work on the site. In addition a comprehensive health and safety induction will be given by the SA to all persons on the site at project start up. Further safety briefings will be given by the SA to anyone who missed the initial briefing, as they arrive on site.

The SWAAG Safety Policy (see the SWAAG web site) will be followed. The policy will be freely available on the site and all persons working on the site must, before they begin work, sign a declaration stating that they have read and understand the SWAAG Safety Policy.

SWAAG maintains comprehensive insurance through Insignia Underwriting. The policy covers all of the activities in the Project Plan and all people, working on site, whether SWAAG members or not. A copy of the Policy Schedule, is attached Appendix 1.

The SA will be covered by his/her own insurance.

Anyone refusing to comply with the Safety Policy or this Project Plan will be asked to leave the site.

8. Training

SWAAG is a community archaeology group made up entirely of volunteers. Some members of the group have rudimentary knowledge and experience of archaeological techniques, other members have none. Members of the public may also participate in the dig and it is assumed, until proven otherwise, that they have little or no knowledge and experience of archaeological techniques.

It is important that all participants in the dig are offered training and experience in the archaeological techniques appropriate to this dig, in order that they may participate fully and effectively. Also the training and the skills acquired by participants can be regarded as an important part of the heritage of the project.

The training will be offered on site during the dig and will be provided by the SA as part of his/her scope of work.

To supplement the on site training all participants will, before the start of the dig, be provided with:

- An electronic copy of this Project Plan; and
- An electronic copy of a booklet called "Archaeological Recording Practices: guidelines for archaeological excavation and recording techniques" published by the Northumberland National Park.

Participants are also encouraged to visit the following web site:

www.jigsawcambs.org

where, under the tab resources/downloads, there are additional user guides which participants may find useful.

9. Site "rules"

The site will be open to members of SWAAG.

Visitors may, subject to the agreement of the Project Manager and SA, participate in the activities. Visitors are not required to pay a fee but will be encouraged to make a donation to SWAAG; the suggested donation is £5/day

Children 18 years of age and under are welcome on the site and to participate in the activities providing they are at all times accompanied by a responsible adult. The SWAAG policy regarding minors is on the SWAAG web site, will be available on site and must be signed by the responsible adult.

The site will be open from 7th to 16th October and the normal working hours will be from 9.30am to 4pm, daily.

All participants and visitors to the site must sign in on arrival and notify the SA of their presence, and sign out on departure.

Alcohol and non-medicinal/recreational drugs are not permitted on the site.

Dogs may only be on site with the prior approval of the Project Manager and must be restrained at all times.

10. Supervising Archaeologist - terms of reference

The Supervising Archaeologist (“SA”) will be an experienced archaeologist but may not be the same person each day. He/she will have the following responsibilities:

- There will be an SA on site each day between the hours of 9.30am to 4pm.
- In the event that the SA cannot be on site, he/she must make arrangements to enable the site to contact him/her for advice if needed.
- The SA will supervise and control all of the archaeological activities envisaged in this Project Plan.
- The SA must agree with the Project Manager (or his nominated deputy) any variations to the activities as set out in this Plan.
- As the site workers are expected largely to be volunteers with little or no previous experience of archaeology, the SA will be required to provide training and guidance as needed.
- The SA will provide support and advice to the post excavation finds management.
- The SA will provide input and editorial support to the writing of the excavation report.

11. Ownership and Permissions

The land at the Hagg is owned and farmed by the Clarke family of Fremington, in Swaledale. The landowner has given specific permission for the work contemplated in the Project Plan to go ahead. The landowner has advised us that there are no requirements to approach any other authorities for permission to excavate.

The site is not a scheduled monument.

Finds from the site are owned by the land owner.

This Project Plan has been lodged with the Senior Historic Environment Officer of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

12. Budget and Financial Authorities

The SWAAG trustees have allocated a budget for the project of £2500, before any costs for finds conservation and analyses, and any samples analyses. Funds to carry out those activities must be the subject of separate applications to the Trustees.

Control of the budget has been delegated to the Project Manager, who may, at his discretion, delegate further but only to members of the SWAAG Steering Committee for this Project.

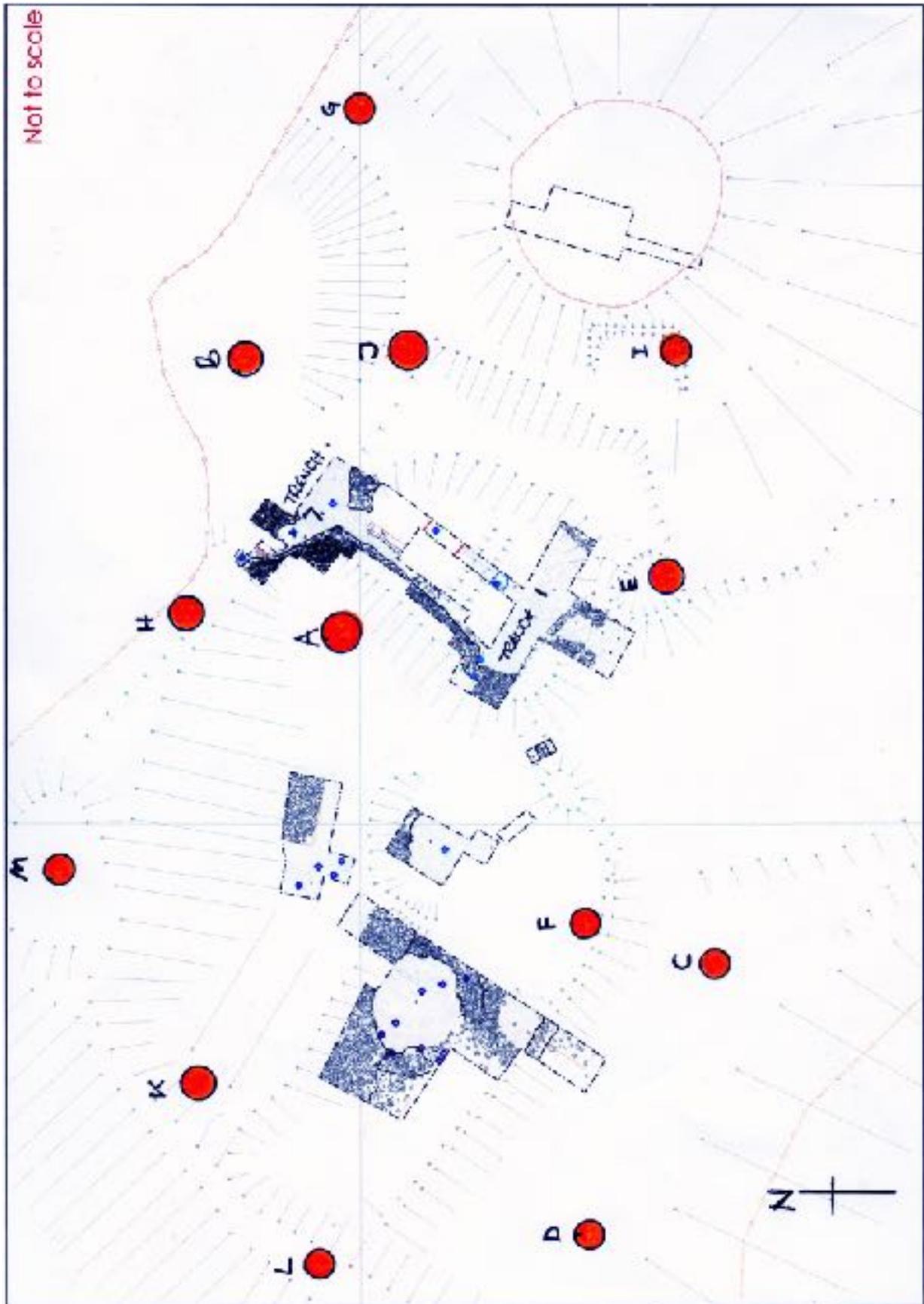
All expenditures should be supported by receipts and presented promptly to the SWAAG Treasurer.

All donations, or any other income, shall be counted and recorded on a daily basis by two SWAAG members and promptly passed to the SWAAG Treasurer.

At the close of the project, the Project Manager shall provide the SWAAG Treasurer with a statement of the Project's expenditure and income.

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Appendix 2. Site Plan showing the location of the Evaluation Trenches



See Appendix 3 for the key to the trenches

Appendix 3. Key to the Evaluation Trenches

Trench Label	Trench Objectives
B	to assess platform/depression to embankment western edge
A	to assess if cobbled surface of trench 7 continues North/East
C	to assess lower platform wall/ track way
D	to assess edge of lower platform/ track way
E	to assess platform [this possible feature may, depending on numbers of volunteers available, be fully excavated, by extending from the Eastern edge of Trench 1]
F	to assess cobbled surface, buildings
G	to assess if a track way exists
H	to assess direction of previous discovered enclosure wall and track way
I	to assess feature /earthwork. Is it linked to the settlement
J	to assess if it is a track way/cobbled area as seen in trench 7
K	to assess outer bank wall /entrance /track way
L	to assess outer bank wall/ construction
M	to assess if platform to settlement or natural.