

FOPH 1c doc.: PAG Calf Hill with ‘Ditch and Bank’ Review Report 2018-2019

This 2018-19 ‘Calf Hill with Ditch & Bank’ Report is a Review of PAG’s activities over the 2-year period and that of other groups who operate in the area. It is intended to inform PAG’s members of progress and to act as a general record of PAG’s activities. This review is not meant to be a detailed archaeological report. Although the original intention was to concentrate solely on the ‘Ditch & Bank’ system, some days were spent examining Fields 1-3 (as shown on Figures 3 and 4) and especially the summit of Lower Calf Hill. The programme was led by Catherine Rousseau-Jones. Detailed daily 2018 and 2019 reports as pdf’s are available from PAG.



Figure 1: Lower Calf Hill photo taken in December 2013 by Brian Jeffery

In 2018, the FOPH sub-group, Pendle Archaeology Group or PAG, decided to conduct a series of archaeological explorations along the unexplained ‘Ditch and Bank’ system, which is just north of Lower Calf Hill (**Area A** on Figures 2 and 3). The ‘Ditch & Bank’ system is clearly shown on the Lancashire OS 6” Sheet LV of 1844-6.

The aims were to discover, if possible, the ‘Ditch & Bank’s age, extent (both laterally and in geographic length), original purpose and, if possible, its multi-use history from archaeological evidence and historic documentation. The first activity was to field-walk the ‘Ditch and Bank’ system from NGr. 377962 438547 (**A** on Figures 2 and 3) to the western end of Churn Clough Reservoir, so as to evaluate the landscape and select appropriate locations for excavations.

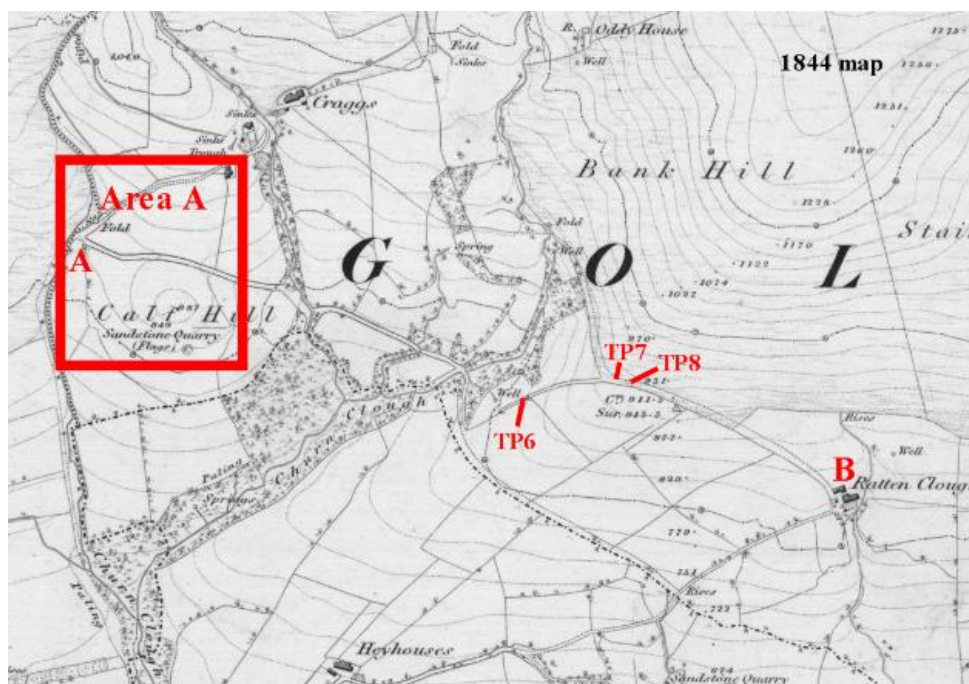


Figure 2: The Ditch and Bank system on the 1844 with the eastward extension test-pit sites.

Unfortunately for us, the 'Ditch & Bank' system was partially flooded when the Padiham Local Health Board (it became a UDC in 1896) constructed its Churn Clough Reservoir between 1881-1885, as shown on Lancashire OS 6" Sheet LV.NE of 1892.

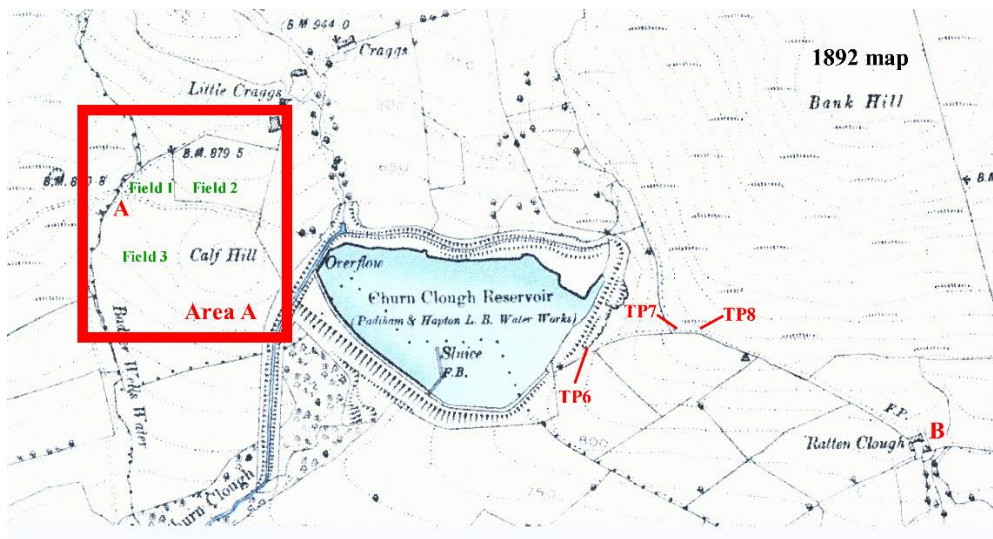


Figure 3: Churn Clough Reservoir and the 'Ditch & Bank' system in 1892

Some members of PAG were also members of the Pendle Forest History Group and the Read & Simonstone Archive, later referred to as PFHG and RASAG, and they were asked to contribute their knowledge of the area from their previous 2008-15 explorations and research. Initially, slow progress by PFHG and RASAG was caused by a lack of manpower (with no criticism intended) and therefore their deliberate decision in 2010 to concentrate on historical research of the Heyhouses area. This covered the boundaries of the Chase of Pendle Forest, as far as Roughlee, the Pendle Forest Laws, the de Lacy vaccaries, the 14C appearance of Heyhouses, the Disforestation of 1507 and the influx of farmers for the New Tenancies, the construction of the 16C St Mary's Church in Newchurch-in-Pendle, the 18C Lower Calf Hill rabbit-warren, the 18-19C rise of the calico-printing industry in Heyhouses, Pendleton and Read (after 1904 aka Sabden), the 19C construction of Churn Clough Reservoir and the Lower Calf Hill's use in both WWI and WWII. This desk-based research covered interviews with local people and visits to local libraries, LRO and TNA. All this material was made available by PFHG/RASAG to PAG/FOPH in early 2015.

The 2018 Season

It was PAG's members, who provided the numbers required to achieve, in the 2018 season, the results expected from the 'Ditch & Bank' project's aims. After a preliminary visit on April 28 2018, PAG members explored the area with a total of 4 trenches (3 in the 'Ditch & Bank' system and 1 in Field 1) and 4 test pits in the 'Ditch & Bank' system for a total of 10 days between 28 July and 26 Sept 2018. Finds covered a bullet, thin modern glass, pieces of chert, a boot heel, an old metal nail, a clay-pipe stem, animal bones, a horse-shoe and small pieces of Victorian pottery. The largest find was a length of iron-bar, which was suspected to be from the original iron railings which once surrounded the whole of the immediate area of the reservoir. Some of these railings are still in position alongside the conifer wood, which is to the east of the reservoir.



Figure 4: Close-up aerial photo showing 'Ditch & Bank' and Fields 1-3

The project's aims (as listed above in paragraph 3) were extended in mid-summer to include geophysical exploration and metal-detection. The geophysical investigations were carried out over a 3-day period on various dates by Mike Woods from MMU, with 2 days on Fields 1-2 and 1 day on Field 3 (as shown on Figure 4). In Field 1 and below the WNW-ESE trending surface 'ridge and furrow', Mike observed some 10m-apart, parallel anomalous lines, trending NE-SW towards the 'Ditch & Bank' system. These were also visible on aerial photographs and a Trench 4 in Field 1 was opened to investigate them. Finds covered animal bones, chert pieces, broken clay pipe, thin glass and Victorian pottery. While they were suspected to be WWI experimental drainage lines, this was only confirmed, after a hint from the farmer, by a further fifth test pit in Field 1 dug in Oct 2018. Further confirmation came from Test pits 3-4 in the 'Ditch', which revealed an operating clay drain. Metal detection on 31 July covered parts of Fields 1 and 3, plus the small areas of the 'Ditch & Bank' system, which had been excavated by PAG members. This turned up various objects of military and agricultural origin, as well as coins dating back to Georgian times.

In the light of the earlier findings of 2018, the aims were again extended in the late summer of 2018 to ascertain some of the 'Ditch & Bank's geographic eastward extent. In late September 2018, it was decided to dig 2 further test pits (Test pits 3 & 4) in the 'Ditch', which confirmed the most important, while intriguing, discovery of the year. At the bottom of the 'Ditch', there was a layer of compacted stones which resembled a 'roadway', but we were not able to ascertain its total width.



Figure 5: The compacted roadway photos from Trench 3 (2018) and Test pit 8 of 1sq m (2019)

The 'Ditch & Bank' system, above this 'roadway' level was confirmed as 2 clay-banks, with a northern one being higher and wider. Each had been originally topped with a dry-stone wall. Only the remains of these walls are visible, so their original heights are unknown. While this concluded the digging for the 2018 season, it was agreed to conduct a further programme of investigations along the 'Ditch & Bank' system in 2019. The aim was to dig further test-pits along the length of the 'Ditch & Bank' system in an easterly direction towards Ratten Clough Farm at NGr.379099 438155 (B on Figures 2 and 3).

The 2019 Season

In February 2019, the test pits, numbered 6-8, were dug at the locations shown on Figures 3 and 4. Test pit 6 was abandoned due to hard ground and interference from the 1881-5 reservoir construction, but test pits 7-8 were more revealing. Both pits had a compacted stone layer at least 2m wide, very similar to the 2018 'roadway' found in the previous year's trenches and test pits. This compacted layer was found at depths down to 18cm below the surface soil.

The 2019 PAG excavation season covered a total of 14 days, which started on 27 May and finished on 12 September. During this time, 4 trenches were opened and 1 trench from 2018 was re-opened. Some days were curtailed or cancelled due to heavy rain. Other than the Test digs 6-8 opened in Feb 2019, no other test digs were planned or executed.

In Field 1, Trench 5 was opened adjacent to the 2018 Trench 4. It exposed the undulations of the 'ridge & furrow' system with finds of animal bone, chert, 'flint', lime mortar and quartz pebbles. In the 'Ditch & Bank' system, Trench 3 was re-opened and extended to re-reveal the cobbled 'roadway' and the lower, more southerly, bank. Finds included chert and small pieces of Victorian pottery.

In the 'Ditch & Bank' system, Trench 3 was re-opened in May and extended southwards to expose the 'roadway' and ascertain its width, but with no success, as we were intruding onto the public footpath. The nearby Trench 6 and its later extension attempted to answer the same aim with the same results in May and August. The Trench 6 extension ran into modern tipped material of 'Nori' bricks. In addition, both digs found chert fragments, pieces of thin broken glass, Victorian pottery and a working clay drainage-pipe system.



Figure 6: photo of Members of PAG in action in May 2019 in Trench 6

In 2018, the opinion had been expressed that the only way to attract new younger and fitter members in larger numbers was to bring in new technology, such as GPS meters, metal detectors and geophysical equipment. All of these had been used in 2018, but it was the latter that provided the most immediate clues to the direction of future investigations. Although the original 2018 aims concentrated on the 'Ditch & Bank', these were extended to include the summit of Lower Calf Hill. This followed Mike Wood's observation of anomalies, ie. circles, during his geophysical examination of Field 3.

On Lower Calf Hill and close to the summit's disused 'flagstone' quarry, Trenches 7 and 8 were opened in July and September. While both trenches were not excavated to a great depth, they did show some interesting soil colour changes and rock patterns. The trenches yielded clay-pipe remains, glass, gun cartridges, chert, possible 'flint', a QEII 2p coin, quartz clasts, Victorian pottery, a piece of unidentified metal and some fossil organic material in gritstone; the latter are likely to be branches from Carboniferous plants.

The finds need to be washed and identified. Whilst the vast majority of them are either a) local specimens of minerals and rocks or b) urban rubbish or litter, a third group c) is potentially more valuable. Limestone specimens are probably glacial erratics, while the 'flint' could be nationally archaeologically important. The local Carboniferous 'chert' does occur on the NW face of Pendle Hill in Mearley and would be a glacial erratic here at Calf Hill. 'Flint', on the other hand, is Cretaceous in age and is likely to have come here from the Cretaceous outcrop, eg. East Yorkshire, by humans.

Review written by Brian Jeffery Member of PAG January 2020.