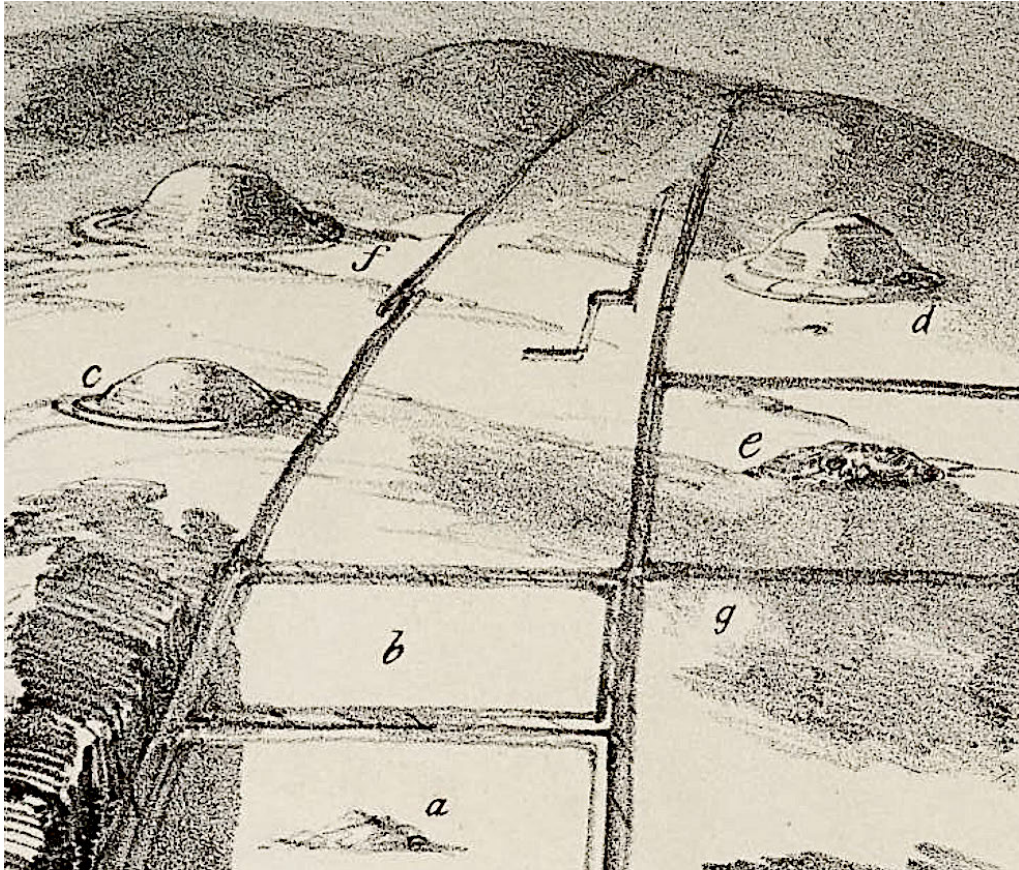


Survey and Assessment
of a field system
in Wykeham Forest
Hutton Buscel



A Report for Forestry England

Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society
Report 68: 2026



**Walkover Survey and Assessment of a field system in Wykeham Forest
West Ayton Moor
Hutton Buscel**

National Grid Reference (approx centre) SE 96498 88405

National Grid Co-ordinates (approx centre) 496498 488405

Historic England List Entry No. 1017154

Historic England Mon. Nos. 65043 (field system); 65055 (Mound B) and 1532813 (Mound A)

North York Moors National Park Historic Environment Record No. 3062

Report 68

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for

Forestry England

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Cover image: A mid-19th century view of the site looking north-west (Tissiman 1850).

Summary

The walkover survey was undertaken at the request of Forestry England to assist with management of part of a scheduled monument situated in woodland forming part of Wykeham Forest, near Scarborough. The report presents a summary of the features visible in the wood located using a plot prepared by Historic England from their LiDAR survey of the site. These comprise the remains of a field system of possible Iron Age or Romano-British date, several prehistoric burial mounds as well as more minor features concerned with the development and management of the wood.

The report catalogues and describes the visible remains and considers these in relation to the rest of the site which extends into the field to the south, but has been levelled by agriculture. The report makes the case that the field system was preceded by an Iron Age or Romano-British square enclosure of which several examples are known in the local area. The earthworks were mapped by the Ordnance Survey in the 1850s but soon after part of the area was planted with trees and the remainder turned over to agriculture. A network of paths at the centre of the new plantation was possibly to open up an area to allow visitors to view the archaeological remains. The site became part of Wykeham Forest in the middle decades of the 20th century.

Contents

Introduction	1
Geology, Topography and Land-use	1
Historical and Archaeological Background	3
Landscape history	3
Cartographic evidence	4
Written accounts	5
Walkover Survey	7
Introduction	8
Methodology	8
Burial mounds	8
Field system	10
Forestry features	14
Interpretation and Discussion	19
Prehistoric Bronze Age burial mounds	19
Square enclosure and track	20
Field system	22
Afforestation and plantation management	23
Acknowledgements	24
References	24

Introduction

On 16 May 2026 a team from the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society (SAHS) undertook a walkover survey of the earthworks of a field system and other archaeological features surviving in deciduous and coniferous woodland within Wykeham Forest. The forest is on the north side of the Vale of Pickering, 7km west of Scarborough and within the North York Moors National Park (Figure 1). The work was undertaken at the request of Forestry England in order to inform future management of the site. The survey used a plot of the surviving earthworks compiled in 2025 by Historic England from airborne LiDAR data to locate and record the details of individual features (Historic England 2025). As well as the field system, these include prehistoric burial mounds as well as traces of more minor features such as disused woodland tracks and boundaries.

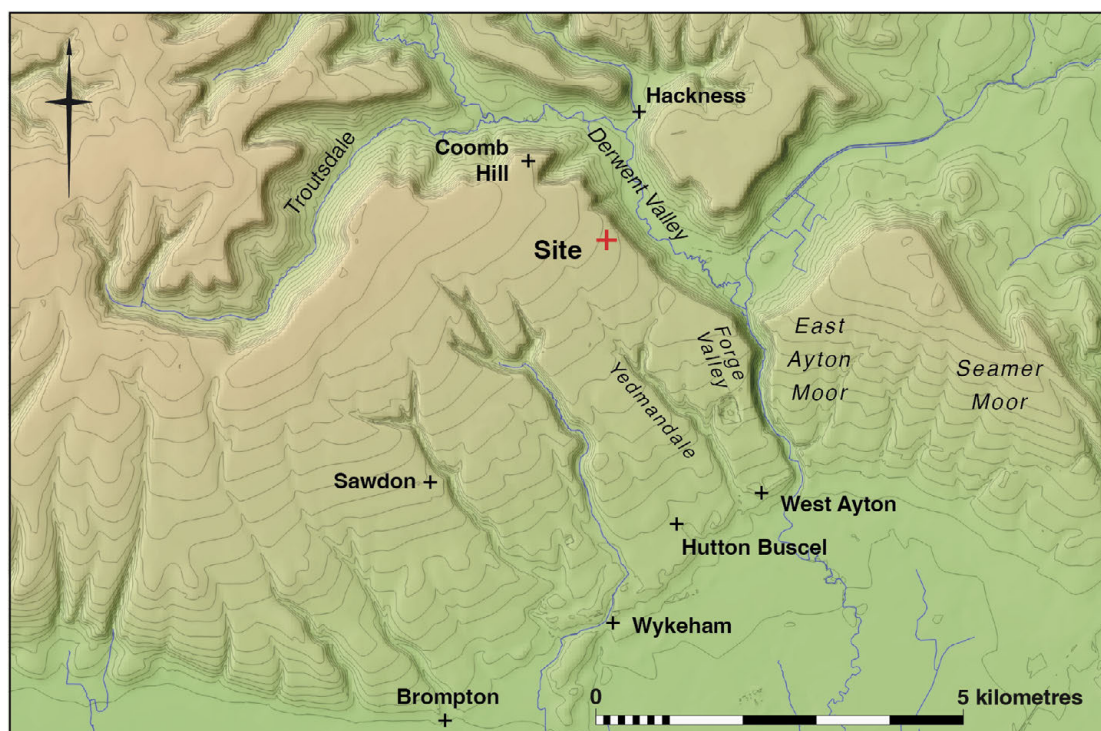


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site and places mentioned in the text.

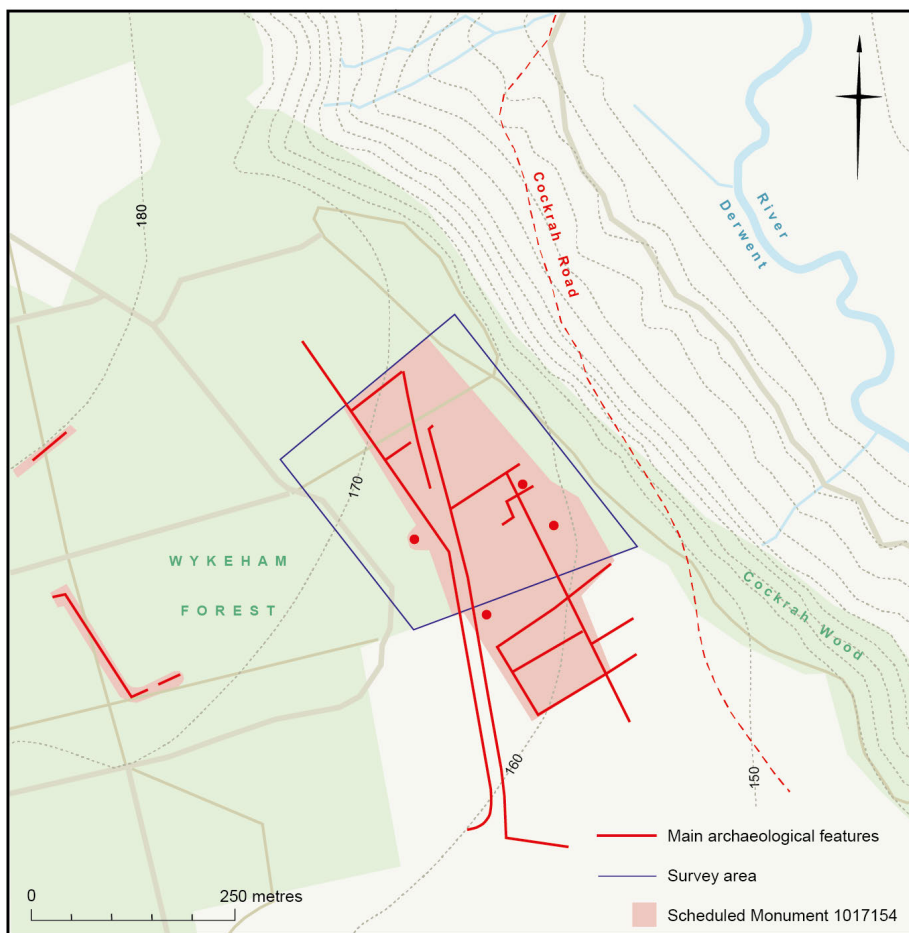
The earthworks are part of a Scheduled Monument first designated in 1933, amended in 2001 (List Entry Number: 1017154). The north part in the wood includes the surviving earthworks of the field system and four Bronze Age burial mounds, though evidence presented below indicates one of these is probably not prehistoric. The scheduled area extends south beyond the woodland boundary for approximately 145m into an adjacent arable field to cover the levelled remains of the south part of the field system and the site of a further burial mound (Figure 2). The same schedule entry includes two much smaller earthwork sites, about 430m to the west that were not included in the 2025 and 2026 surveys. The Historic England LiDAR plot and the subsequent survey by the SAHS covered that part of the scheduled monument within the wood which at about 8.8ha (21 acres) amounts to 75% of the area of the Scheduled Monument. The report presents the results of the survey and assesses the features in relation to the remainder of the site and to the wider archaeological landscape.

Geology, Topography and Land-use

Wykeham Forest is an area of mostly coniferous woodland on the upper slope and crest of a ridge of high ground that rises from the north side of the Vale of Pickering to form part of the Tabular Hills. These hills extend from east to west along the length of the vale, the lower slopes generally supporting productive arable land. The upper slopes, formed of the middle Jurassic lower calcareous grit formation overlain by a thin, acidic soil, are poor for growing crops and consequently the 2700 acres of Wykeham Forest was largely unenclosed heather and grass moorland prior to afforestation in the 1920s. To the north, Wykeham Forest descends the steep escarpment that

defines one side of a broad valley called Troutsdale that cuts into the Tabular Hills. To the east the forest ends towards the crest of the steep-sided valley of the River Derwent where the forest adjoins an earlier belt of trees on the valley side called Cockrah Wood. Further south the river breaks through the Tabular Hills to flow into the Vale of Pickering along Forge Valley.

The site is on the east edge of Wykeham Forest above the Derwent valley on gently-sloping ground that falls from a height of just over 170m OD on the north-west to slightly below 160m on the south-east. The western third of the survey area is under a dense canopy formed by rows of mature coniferous trees apart from a clearing around one of the prehistoric burial mounds. The remainder of the survey area is mostly covered by deciduous ash and birch trees with patches of dense undergrowth including large areas of bilberry that obscure earthworks in some areas. Two burial mounds occupy a single clearing in this part of the site. A modern track crosses the north part of the survey area from an access road in the south-west and heads north-eastwards to join a second NW-SE track following the crest of the Derwent valley. A post and wire fence divides the wood from the field to the south, replacing a ruined drystone wall 3m further into the field that includes three upright boundary stones marked on the 1892 Ordnance Survey map.



*Figure 2.
The main archaeological features shown as earthworks on the 1854 Ordnance Survey map in relation to the survey area and the scheduled monument. Contours in metres.*

The nearest villages are West Ayton, 3km to the south bordering the Vale of Pickering, and Hackness, 2km to the north at the junction of Troutsdale and the Derwent valley. The two settlements were formerly linked by a track called Cockrah Road shown on 19th-century Ordnance Survey maps but which no longer survives as a continuous route. Near the site, its course is represented by a track that descends the slope to the Derwent valley close to the south-east corner of the survey area.

Historical and Archaeological Background

Landscape history

Prehistoric remains survived widely across the upper slopes of the Tabular Hills before the expansion of farmland and afforestation in the late-19th and 20th centuries. In the area that became Wykeham Forest, the first Ordnance Survey maps from the 1850s show large numbers of prehistoric burial mounds located in isolation or in small groups. Of those mounds that survive in Wykeham Forest, the majority are Bronze Age round barrows though earlier Neolithic long barrows and later Iron Age square barrows also occur on the Tabular Hills. There is no known example of a Neolithic barrow in Wykeham Forest although a 'trapezoidal' example is listed by Don Spratt (Spratt 1993, 77), but the grid reference is for a barrow 8km to the south-west in Warren Plantation (Historic England Mon. no. 62646). There are Iron Age barrows in Wykeham Forest, including a group of seven Bronze Age and Iron Age burial mounds recently surveyed on Coomb Hill, 2km north of the present site (Jamieson and Pearson 2025). Earthwork evidence of possible locations used for settlement and livestock management take the form of a number of square or rectilinear enclosures of which some 30 sites have been identified in north-east Yorkshire (Hayes 1988). Definite evidence of occupation is largely absent from these sites and some may have functioned primarily as animal pens. An excavation at the square enclosure on Coomb Hill in 2025 found Iron Age pottery (LS Archaeology 2025), while a round house thought to be from this period survives as an earthwork in an enclosure abutting the Moor Dike, a linear E-W boundary on the edge of Wykeham Forest, 1km to the south-west of the present site (Lax 1996). The boundary itself is probably late Bronze Age in date forming part of a system of mainly N-S territorial land divisions evident along the length of the Tabular Hills.

The only extensive example of a field system in the area of Wykeham Forest is that at the present site. Cropmarks of groups of small plots or fields of probable late Iron Age or Romano-British date have been recorded on lower ground closer to the vale edge near the villages of Snainton and Brompton (Spratt 1993, 160; Knight 2011). On Levisham Moor, some 14km north-west of the present site, the earthworks of seven small rectilinear fields are grouped together at an elevation of 250m, close to the north edge of the Tabular Hills (Hayes 1983). That site is one of nine examples of surviving rectilinear field systems within the North York Moors (Spratt 1978). Another rectilinear field system survived into the 19th century on an isolated tract of former moor 9km to the north-east near the village of Cloughton. Called 'The Hulleys', the site comprised several small rectilinear enclosures defined by stone banks, but the remains were levelled in the 19th century before they were accurately surveyed (Knox 1855, 158-168 and plate 14). Recent fieldwalking and test-pitting of the area recovered concentrations of Iron Age and Roman material (Wastling 2015).

The site is in the medieval township of West Ayton which, with Hutton Buscel township to the west, formed the extensive parish of Hutton Buscel. The parish reached from the middle of the Vale of Pickering in the south into Troutsdale and the Derwent valley to the north where manorial land bordering the river was granted to Whitby Abbey in the early 12th century (Atkinson 1879, 49, 63). In the medieval period open field arable agriculture on the Tabular Hills, characterised by furlongs of ridge and furrow ploughing, did not extend as far north as the area of the present Wykeham Forest (Harrison and Roberts 1989, 88-94). The poorer soils of the upper slopes supported rough pasture used as grazing, evidenced by later farms named after sheep stations or 'cotes', several of which reference their former monastic owners, such as Malton Cote (Malton Priory) and Wykeham Cote (Wykeham Priory). These farms are on the upper slopes of the Tabular Hills, north of medieval arable land at around the same elevation as the present site. The only medieval settlement in this zone is Sawdon, 4kms to the south-west documented in the 13th century (Skaife 1867, 144) and thereafter linked by name with the village of Brompton on the edge of the vale, forming the parish of Brompton-by-Sawdon. The expansion of arable cultivation in this period was further restricted by Forest Law since the north side of the vale formed part of the extensive hunting grounds of the Forest of Pickering, part of the estate of the Duchy of Lancaster. This would have favoured the preservation of open ground in order to encourage animals such as deer and wild boar to roam freely while providing unrestricted opportunities for hunting.

There were two small plantations on the moor top south-west and west of the site when surveyed in the period 1815-17 for Greenwood's map of Yorkshire (Greenwood 1817). The land passed into the ownership of Viscount Downe of Wykeham Abbey, probably in 1848 when the previous owner, George Osbaldeston, sold his estates to clear gambling debts (Cuming 1928, 236). Sometime between 1848-50 and 1890 the site was enclosed, the north part falling within a new plantation of coniferous trees called West Ayton Moor Plantation and the south left open as a field (Ordnance Survey 1854 and 1892). By 1926 the trees had been felled (Ordnance Survey 1928) but soon after the plantation became part of Wykeham Forest as depicted on the 1:10560 scale map revised before 1930 (Ordnance Survey 1958). Shortly after, in 1933, the site was given legal protection as a scheduled monument.

Cartographic evidence

Archaeological features at the present site are depicted on the map published by the Scarborough antiquarian and surveyor Robert Knox in 1820 (Figure 3), with a second version at a smaller scale issued the following year (Knox 1820 and 1821). Though lacking the detail and accuracy of the Ordnance Survey, both versions of Knox's map shows five mounds to the north of a rectangular enclosure labelled 'Camp'. The large-scale version additionally shows the camp divided internally from east to west as does the sketch map of the site that Knox published three decades later to accompany his book on the antiquities of east Yorkshire (Knox 1855, plate 12-fig.2). In this publication he briefly refers to the enclosure as 'Cockera-head partitioned camp whose sides are each 100 paces long', mentioning it alongside the enclosure to the north on Coomb Hill referred to above (Knox 1855, 133 and 155).

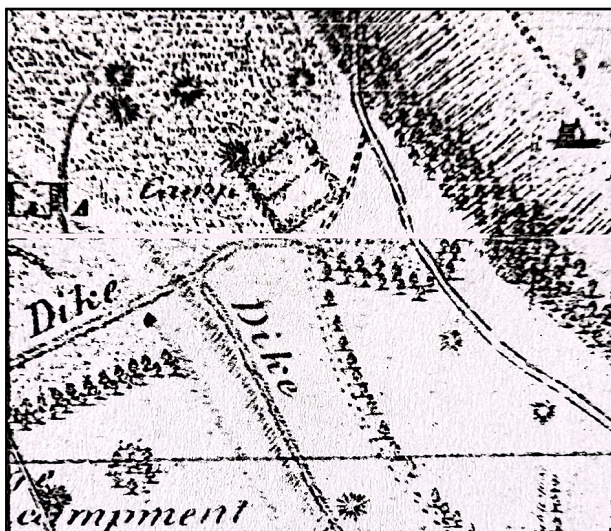


Figure 3 (above). Extract from Robert Knox's large scale 1820 map of the Scarborough area (Knox 1820).

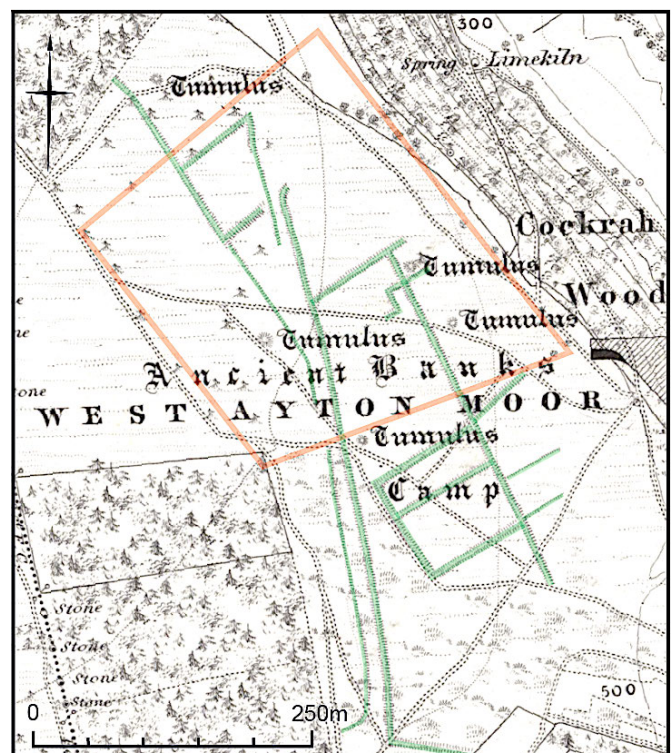


Figure 4 (right). Ordnance Survey map of the site with earthworks highlighted in green and survey area in light red (Ordnance Survey 1854. Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland).

The first edition of the 1:10560 scale Ordnance survey map published in 1854 shows the area in far greater detail than Knox's map and subsequent editions of the larger scale 1:2500 map published in 1892, 1912 and 1928 are invaluable for understanding the archaeology of the site (Figure 4). These maps are referred to extensively throughout this report. The 1854 map depicts the sub-divided enclosure and follows Knox by labelling it 'Camp'. It additionally depicts a pattern of linear earthworks to the north that were overlooked by Knox. Labelled 'Ancient Banks', they are the field system of which elements survive in the survey area while the remainder, including the 'Camp', are in the field to the south of the wood and have been all-but flattened, though the perimeter and internal division is picked out on the Historic England 2025 LiDAR plot.

The map also depicts five burial mounds in the area, the same number as Knox, labelling each one 'tumulus'. Three of these are in the survey area and survive as earthworks while the south mound is in the scheduled area that extends into the field and has therefore been levelled (Historic England Monument Number 65007). The fifth 'tumulus' is north of both the survey and scheduled areas and no longer exists as an earthwork.

When the area was next surveyed by the Ordnance Survey (Ordnance Survey 1892), two mounds were added to the map; one is in the angle between two boundaries and is not labelled (see below Mound D) and the second is labelled 'tumulus' and sited between two banks that define the sides of a north-south track within the field system (see below - Feature 1 and Mound E). On the revised edition of the map published in 1928, the enclosure and tumulus in the field to the south of the plantation no longer exist as earthworks.

Written accounts

In the autumn of 1848 John Tissiman of Scarborough excavated two of the burial mounds with the support of the local landowner and former president of the British Archaeological Association, Lord Londesborough, publishing an illustrated report on the excavation two years later in the journal of that society (Tissiman 1850). The report focuses on the excavation of a mound called 'Way Hagg' - a name that does not appear on Ordnance Survey maps. From an elevated, north-facing view of the site that accompanies the published report, Way Hagg (labelled 'd' by Tissiman) is recognisably our Mound A in the survey area (Figure 5). At the time of the excavation the mound reportedly measured an astonishing 36 yards in diameter (three times the present dimension) and was eight feet high with a small depression on the summit, possibly indicating a previous dig. The reported diameter is clearly an error caused by confusing feet and yards; the near-contemporary Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1849-50 (Ordnance Survey 1854) shows the mound with a diameter close to 36 feet. The figure of 36 yards appears in a published synopsis of the lecture that Lord Londesborough gave to the British Archaeological Association on the excavation in October 1849 and which appeared in print the following week (The Builder 1849). The Association reproduced this account verbatim in their journal two years later, thereby perpetuating the error.



Figure 5. Tissiman's view of the site looking north-west (Tissiman 1850).

Tissiman reportedly commenced the excavation of Way Hagg by digging into the north side of the mound where he unearthed a small pot containing 'wood ashes' at a point 18 inches (45cm) deep and four feet (1.2m) from the summit. Deeper within the mound, Tissiman discovered four stone slabs associated with a burial urn, broken flint arrowheads, a bone pin and a bone or ivory 'ornament'. Each of the slabs was decorated with shallow circular cup marks (Smith 1994, 142).

In addition to the Way Hagg mound, Tissiman's elevated view shows three other mounds (labelled c, e and f) of which e and f (our mounds B and C respectively) along with Way Hagg (our Mound A) survive in the survey area. That labelled c on Tissiman's view is the levelled mound that is within the scheduled area in the field to the south of the wood, which Tissiman dug prior to Way Hagg, reportedly finding an urn. Tissiman depicts the sub-divided enclosure in the foreground of his view referred to by him as north and south camps. He states that the north camp is defined by a ditch, three feet deep and four feet wide. Tissiman also shows a low, spread mound toward the centre of the south camp. However, this is not depicted on the near-contemporary 1854 Ordnance Survey map suggesting it was regarded by their surveyors as an insignificant feature. The view also shows elements of the field system stretching north from the two camps in the form of two major N-S boundaries, with lesser boundaries at right angles which he observed were not as eroded as the earthworks of the north and south camps.

The site receives only a passing mention in Frank Elgee's 1930 pioneering overview of the archaeology of north-east Yorkshire where it is described as a group of Iron Age 'Celtic fields' that enclosed and respected the burial mounds of the earlier Bronze Age 'urn period' (Elgee 1930, 217). The Historic England research record for the site includes comments based on two site visits in the 1950s by John Rutter of Scarborough Museum followed by Basil Pritchard of the Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division in 1972 (Historic England Monument No. 65043). Mention is made in these accounts of the damage caused by deep ploughing, while the earthworks are characterised as a series of ditches, 1m wide and 0.5m deep, with associated upcast banks measuring 1.0m wide and 0.2m high. In a visit in July 1982, field monument warden Tony Pacitto observed that several of the ditches had been recut, probably as part of a post-medieval drainage scheme, and noted a track carried over ditches on stone-built culverts.

The most detailed description of the site accompanies the Historic England scheduling entry with photographs of several individual features contributed in 2022 by volunteer photographer Brian Walker (Historic England List Entry 1017154). The entry identifies two phases of prehistoric field system on different alignments, (but the details are difficult to follow in the absence of an annotated map), along with an associated track and five burial mounds of which two were reportedly no longer visible. These two are the mound in the field to the south and the mound first recorded by the Ordnance Survey in 1892 (our Mound E). The entry identifies evidence for post-medieval changes to the site including recut ditches and a culvert, as previously noted by Pacitto. On the basis of a shared alignment, the account also suggests that field system originally extended 430m to the west to encompass the outlying banks that are included in the schedule.

In March 2025 Historic England undertook a LiDAR survey of the wood at the request of Forestry England to record the earthwork archaeology, though areas of dense undergrowth restricted mapping of some areas. Nevertheless, the detailed ground model that resulted from the survey enabled Historic England to give a new description of the site in their accompanying report to Forestry England, identifying several new features (Historic England 2025). The plot of the LiDAR data also includes features in the field to the south of the survey area corresponding to the outline of the camp recorded on the early Ordnance Survey maps. These features are not commented upon in the report, but they suggest slight traces of the earthwork may still be visible on the surface.

Walkover Survey Results

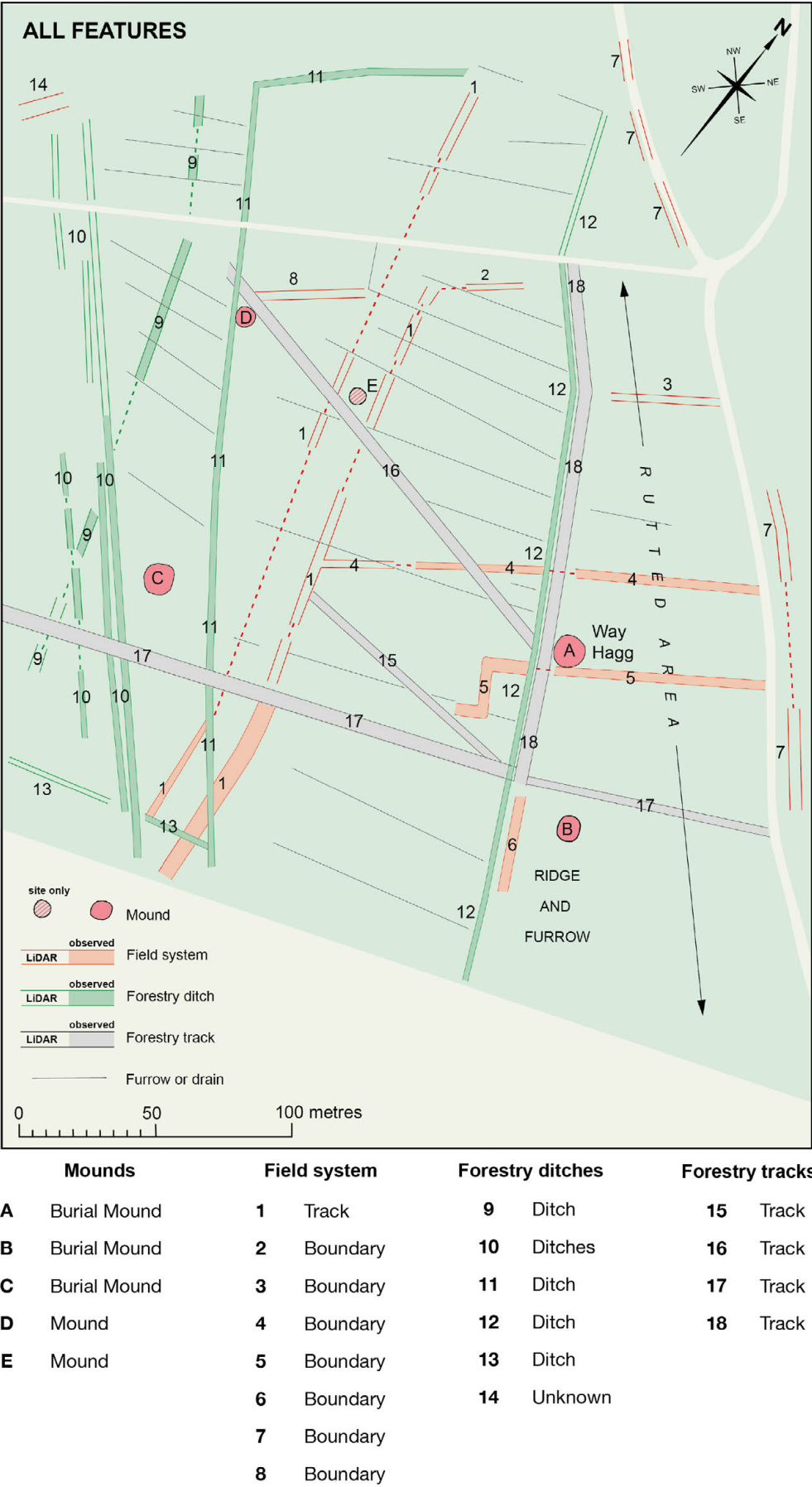


Figure 6. Features on the Historic England LiDAR plot with elements observed during the walkover survey highlighted.

Introduction

The Historic England LiDAR survey delivered a clearer plot of the field system than is currently realisable on the ground due to the patches of dense undergrowth and areas of brash. The LiDAR plot usefully verifies the metrical accuracy of the 1854 Ordnance Survey map which captures the field system and associated remains as a well-preserved archaeological site before afforestation initiated a sequence of changes that fragmented the plan - initially as part of a plantation within Viscount Downe's estate and after with the expansion of Wykeham Forest. The 1854 map, and subsequent editions at a larger scale published in 1892, 1912 and 1928 are particularly useful for distinguishing elements of the field system from features connected with later afforestation and forest management.

The earthworks located by the LiDAR and walkover surveys are divided for ease of identification and description into the categories of (1) burial mounds (2) field system and (3) forestry features (Figure 6). The mounds are given letters A-E and the field system earthworks and forestry features labelled in a single sequence numerically (Features 1-18).

Methodology

The primary aim of the SAHS walkover survey on 16 May 2026 was to identify and describe those earthworks visible in the wood as previously plotted from the digital ground model by Historic England. The ground model was derived from a LiDAR survey undertaken by the same organisation the previous year using an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). A transcription of the LiDAR survey was plotted for the purposes of the present survey at a scale of 1:1000 to locate features on the ground which were then photographed (where possible) and notes taken. Previously, on 26 April 2026 an analytical survey of the three scheduled burial mounds (below Mounds A-C) was completed at 1:500 scale on to the Ordnance Survey National Grid using a Trimble R12i GNSS survey-grade receiver. Positional accuracy was obtained through the Trimble VRS RTK service which delivered real-time corrections from the Ordnance Survey network of active GNSS base stations (OS Net).

Burial Mounds (Figure 7)

The three mounds A-C are clear of trees though extensive growth of heather, long grass and bilberry potentially obscured subtle features relating to their construction or later reuse (Figure 8). Two other mounds in the survey area, labelled D and E, are far less certainly prehistoric tumuli. All these mounds are situated on ground sloping to the south and south-west with the subtle difference that Mounds A and B also straddle a slight east-facing break of slope where the hill top starts to fall away to the crest of the Derwent valley. Their siting would have made the two mounds particularly prominent when viewed from the opposite side of the valley.

Mound A (Way Hagg) shares a clearing with Mound B, 65m to the south-east. It is circular with a diameter of 11m and 1.3m in height (Figure 9). There is a shallow 1.6m wide ditch at the foot of the mound on the northwest extending to the east side. There are several animal burrows on the summit of the mound. There is no clear trace of the excavation undertaken by Tissiman in 1848 on the north side of the mound which may indicate that the earthwork was reconstructed after the dig. A bank at the base of the mound on the south-east is part of a boundary forming part of the field system (see below Feature 5) and a slight north-west facing scarp on the south-west side may be the edge of a NW-SE track first depicted on the 1892 map (see below Feature 18).

Mound B is circular in plan and heavily overgrown on the west side with an estimated diameter of about 10m and height of 0.5m. A break of slope evident on the east side of the mound indicates it was constructed in two phases. A linear depression to the north of the mound is part of a much more recent track (see below Feature 17).

Mound C is sub-circular measuring 12m N-S and 10.5m E-W, 0.7m in height and with a shallow 2m wide ditch on the south-west side. There are two distinct furrows crossing the summit and east side of the mound which may be the 'surface irregularities' noted in the Historic England schedule description and interpreted there as evidence of a past excavation. The features more likely result from deep ploughing connected with the forestry. There are several small animal burrows on the summit.



Figure 7 (left).
Location of Mounds A-E
combining the Historic
England Lidar plot and
walkover survey results.

Figure 8 (below).
Survey plans of
Mounds A-C.

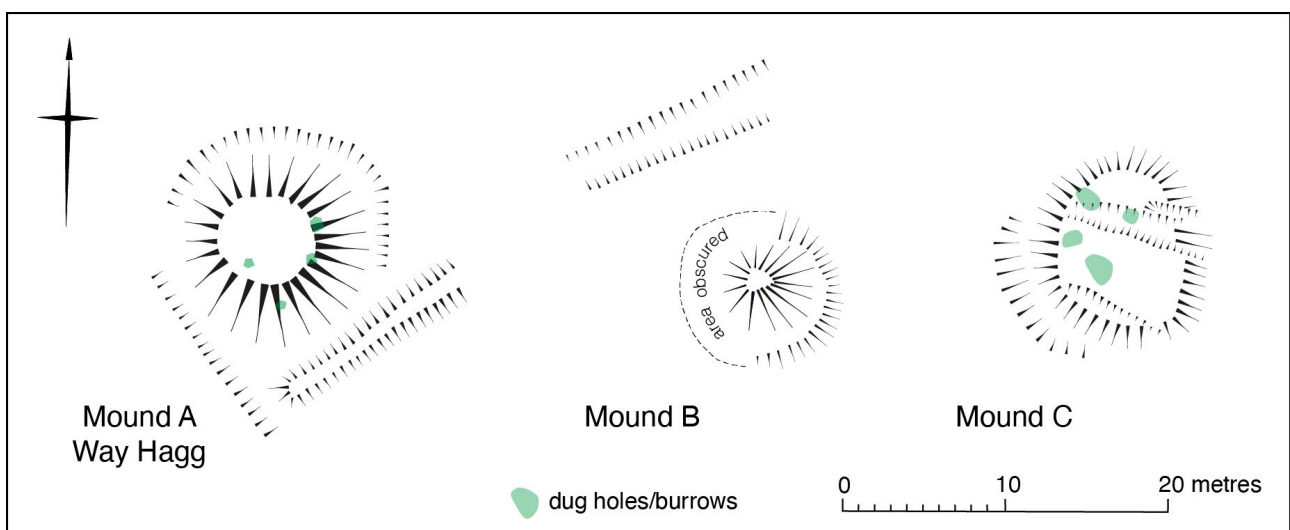




Figure 9 (above). View of Mound A (Way Hagg) looking north.

Figure 10 (below). View of Mound D looking south.

Mound D is sub-circular measuring 9.2m N-S and 8.1m E-W and 0.8m high with a slight hollow on the summit (Figure 10). There is trace of a ditch at the base of the mound, apart from on west where the foot of the mound is cut by Feature 10. There is a shallow hollow on top of the mound. On north side it is abutted by track Feature 16. The mound does not appear on the LiDAR plot and is first depicted as a sub-oval feature on the 1892 Ordnance Survey map in the internal angle between Feature 8 - a field boundary and Feature 11 - a recut ditch. It is not labelled 'tumulus' so presumably was not thought to be a burial mound by the Ordnance Survey. Its omission from the 1854 map may indicate it post-dates the visit by the Ordnance Survey in 1849-50.

Mound E is first depicted on the 1892 map, labelled 'tumulus.' The 2025 LiDAR survey did not record any trace of the feature and the area is too overgrown to establish if any visible remains survive so it may be prudent to accept the schedule description that it was destroyed by forestry activity. The Ordnance Survey identified and labelled the mound as a 'tumulus' but a Bronze Age date is questionable. The mound effectively blocks a possible Iron Age or Romano-British track (see below Feature 1) which would surely have avoided it if the mound was already in existence. As with Mound D, its omission from the 1854 Ordnance Survey map may indicate it is later than 1849-50 when the survey for that edition took place.

Field System - Features 1-8 (Figure 11)

This section considers the surviving remains of the field system in the survey area as depicted on the LiDAR plot. Several sections of linear earthwork and other individual features were obscured by vegetation at the time of the walkover survey, and are therefore indicated in outline only on Figure 11.

Feature 1 comprises two parallel N-S boundaries at the south of the survey area around 12m apart defining the sides of a track (Figure 12). The boundaries are markedly different with the east side being the more impressive (1a). This starts on the south in rough ground 3m into the field and continues north into the survey area for a distance of about 70m. The earthwork is in open ground suggesting it was cleared of trees in the recent past. It



Figure 11. Location of field system Features 1-8 combining the Historic England Lidar plot and walkover survey results.

comprises a 3m wide and 0.3m high bank between two ditches; that on the east is 4m wide and 0.35m deep ditch and on the west, 3m wide and 0.25m deep. The 160m of the boundary north of **1a** is obscured by vegetation, but the LiDAR plot and the 1892 and 1912 Ordnance Survey maps show that it reverted to a single narrow ditch and bank, similar to the other field boundaries. The opposite (west) side of the track (**1b**) is defined by a slight 1m wide bank with a 1.9m wide and 0.2m deep ditch on the east side visible for a distance of 50m. The 2025 LiDAR plot shows that the west side survives as an intermittent earthwork for a further 250m to the north.

Feature 2 The 2025 LiDAR plot indicates an intermittent NE-SW bank with a total length of 30m a short distance from the north terminal of the bank defining the east side of the track (Feature 1). Feature 2 was too overgrown to see at the time of the walkover survey and no bank is depicted in this location on the 1854 map.

Feature 3 The LiDAR plot shows a 40m long NE-SW bank that is not visible on the ground due to vegetation and is not depicted on the 1854 Ordnance Survey map.



Figure 12. East boundary of track (Feature 1a) looking south. Ranging rod is on the central bank with ditches on either side.



Figure 13. Bank Feature 5 looking south seen in profile behind the ranging



Figure 14. Bank and ditch (to left) of boundary Feature 6 looking south with ditch Feature 12 on the right.

Feature 4 is a shallow, flat-bottomed NE-SW ditch 1.8m wide and 0.2m deep, cut at right-angles by a NW-SE ditch (see below Feature 12) with the gap further accentuated by the presence of a NW-SE track immediately to the east (see below Feature 18) shown on the 1892 and 1912 maps. That part of Feature 4 to the north-east of this gap retains a 1.8m wide and 0.1m high bank on its south-east side. The LiDAR plot and 1854 map both show that length of Feature 4 on the opposite (west) side of Feature 12 continues to the field system track (Feature 1).

Feature 5 is 1.0m wide and 0.15m deep ditch where it passes to south-east of Mound A (Way Hagg) with a 1.9m wide and 0.3m high bank on its south-east side. It is cut by the line of the ditch and track mentioned above (respectively Features 12 and 18) and maintains the same dimensions to the west of this gap (Figure 13). This part of Feature 5 makes two sharp, right-angle turns to terminate 6.6m after the second turn where the ditch merges with a later, and much narrower, E-W drainage channel. It was suggested in the Historic England LiDAR report that Feature 5 could be part of a building. The survey found no evidence to support this, though the dog-leg could be where the earthwork wrapped around the corner of a structure that has left no surface remains.

Feature 6 is a 40m long NW-SE bank, 2.3m wide and 0.3m high bank with a 1.5m wide, shallow, flat-bottomed ditch on its east side (Figure 14) and a later ditch (Feature 12) on its west side. The feature is the only surviving length of a long NW-SE bank on the 1854 map and depicted on the right (east) side of Tissiman's view. The majority of the earthwork was to the north where a plantation track replaced it (see below Feature 18).

Feature 7 Five lengths of NW-SE bank are shown on the LiDAR plot close to the edge of the escarpment. They are not depicted on the 1854 map though the two southern lengths may have defined the east edge of the field system close to the crest of the Derwent valley.

Feature 8 The LiDAR plot depicts a single bank aligned NE-SW on the west side of Track 1. The bank was not visible at the time of the walkover survey due to the undergrowth but is depicted on the 1854 map as an earthwork dividing the two west plots of the field system.

Field system summary

The earthwork remains represent a coaxial field system on either side of a N-S linear track. The plot boundaries are mostly single low earthen banks, commonly accompanied by a shallow ditch. The ground conditions meant a clear view of most features was restricted to a couple of points. The Historic England research record characterises the ditches as being 0.5m deep based on the visits by Rutter and Pritchard in the 1950s and 1972 respectively, but none are that deep today. The layout of the field system in the survey area, and to the south, has a broadly rectilinear plan with the track (**Feature 1**) crossing the system at an oblique angle and continuing for several hundred metres to the south (Figure 15). The observed difference in form of the southern 70m length of track boundary in the survey area (**Feature 1a**) compared to its continuation to the north may be evidence that part of the east side of track was aligned along an earlier earthwork.

The major part of the field system lay to the east of the track which as reconstructed on Figure 15 possibly comprised seven plots divided by a straight NW-SE boundary of which **Feature 6** is the only part surviving as an earthwork. The three plots to the west of the Feature 6 boundary comprise two rectilinear plots to the south of the survey area labelled 'camp' on the 1854 map with a longer plot to the north that was open at the south corner. On the north this is bounded by the bank Feature 4 that defines the north boundary of the field system on the 1854 map. The four plots to the east of the Feature 6 boundary probably all continued towards the crest of the escarpment to end at a bank indicated by two earthworks on the LiDAR plot (**Feature 7**). The bank (**Feature 5**) represents a division between two of these plots and continues west for a short distance crossing the NW-SE boundary.

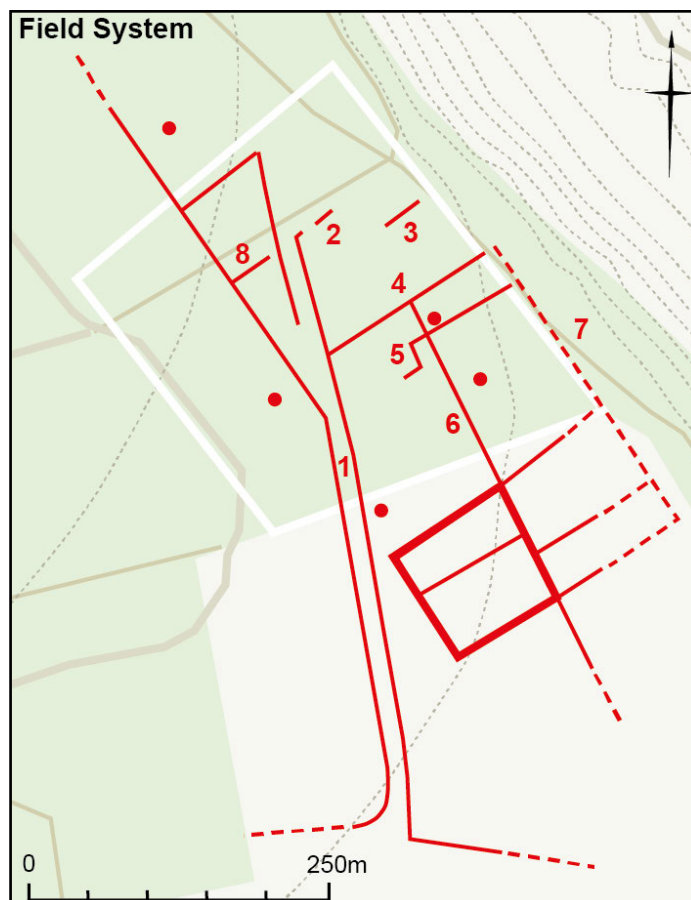


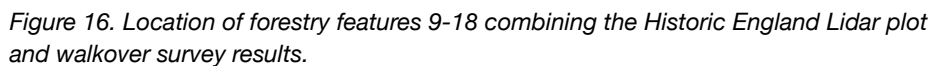
Figure 15. The main components of the field system based on the 1854 map. The 'camp' identified on that map is shown in bold and confirmed Bronze Age burial mounds by dots. The survey area is outlined in white.

The 1854 map shows two plots occupying a triangular space to the west of the track divided by a bank (**Feature 8**) recorded by the LiDAR survey. The south plot was partly open in 1854 with the map showing a 70m gap in the line of the west track boundary. The west side of the two plots is defined by a linear earthwork of which partial remains of the bank may survive but the ditch has been recut (see below **Feature 11**). The recut ditch turns a corner to follow the former north boundary of the north plot back towards the line of the track.

The LiDAR survey recorded two short lengths of bank (**Features 2 and 3**) indicating the field system may have extended further north than shown on the 1854 map.

This section identifies those features in the survey area that relate to the development and management of the site following, or immediately preceding, the afforestation of the moor top (Figure 16).

Feature 9 is a shallow, flat-bottomed N-S ditch towards the west side of the survey area visible intermittently for over 200m. At **9a** the feature is 1.8m wide and 0.1m deep with a bank 3.5m wide and 0.4m high on its east side. At **9b** the ditch is also 0.1m deep but has widened to 2.8m increasing to a depth of 0.25m at **9c**. There is no trace of a bank at either of the latter two points. Notably, the ditch is on the same alignment as the east edge of a plantation immediately to the south depicted on Greenwood's map of Yorkshire in 1817 and in more detail on the 1854 Ordnance Survey map.



Feature 10 represents a group of two, and in places three, closely-spaced and parallel NW-SE ditches on the west side of the survey area that on the LiDAR plot extend for a distance of 270m. The ditches vary in width along their length from 2m - 3.3m and in depth from 0.1 - 0.25m. They are overlain by an E-W track (Feature 17) and cut an E-W ditch (Feature 13).

Feature 11 is a sharply-defined ditch aligned NW-SE for 270m. At the north-west end it turns to the north-east and continues for a further 70m. The ditch begins on the south edge of the survey area. At **11a** the feature cuts across the field system track (Feature 1) while further north at **11b** the ditch is overlain by an NE-SW track (Feature 17). North of this point the ditch widens to 1.9m while retaining the same depth and sharp, v-shaped profile (Figure 16). At **11c** the ditch is 1.7m wide with a 0.5m high bank on the east side which together cut the line of a second track (Feature 17). For 25m before the ditch turns to the north-east it has a 0.3m bank on the west side. At the point the ditch turns (**11d**) it is 2.0m wide and 0.3m deep with a 0.3m high bank on the south side. For almost the entire length apart from where it cuts Track 1, Feature 11 is on the alignment of the west and north sides of the field system on the 1854 map. It is possible that some lengths of bank mentioned above are remnants of that boundary while the ditch is a later recut.



Figure 17. View of ditch Feature 11 looking south crossed by track Feature 17 with steps cut in the north side of the track at 17a.



Figure 18. View looking south of culvert in Feature 12 ditch at 12a crossed by track Feature 17 from left to right on the photograph.

Feature 12 is a NW-SE ditch that extends for 320m north from the south boundary of the wood with two slight changes in alignment. The ditch is clearly defined with steep sides and a flat bottom measuring 1.5m wide and 0.35m deep. The feature is immediately to the west of what had been the main NW-SE field boundary until that was destroyed by a later track (Feature 18) apart from one length to the south (Feature 6). Here Feature 12 is clearly seen on the west side of the bank. At **12a** the ditch continues below Track 17 in a culvert (Figure 18) and further north at **12b** and **12c** it cuts NE-SW field system boundaries (Features 4 and 5 respectively).

Feature 13 appears on the LiDAR plot as an E-W ditch apparently cut by two of the group of north-south ditches forming Feature 10. That part of the ditch to the west of Feature 10 is not visible on the ground and the relationship with Feature 10 is not apparent. The length to the east of Feature 10 is 1.7m wide and 0.1m deep and is exactly comparable to the numerous recent drainage channels that cross the survey area (see below).

Feature 14 as shown on the LiDAR plot as a 10m long NE-SW feature at the northwest corner of the survey area so beyond the area of the field system on the 1854 map. The ground was too overgrown at the time of the walkover survey to investigate this feature.

Tracks (Features 15 - 18)

Feature 15 is a 3m wide length of track aligned E-W and defined on either side by broad, shallow ditches 2.5m wide and 0.2m deep. The surviving length of 100m is shown on the LiDAR plot but much of this is in dense bilberry undergrowth and so not consistently visible on the ground. The feature matches part of an E-W track shown on the 1854 Ordnance Survey map.

Feature 16 is a shallow linear depression around 4m wide and 0.2m deep and is interpreted as the line of an E-W track. At the west it passes close to Mound D and, as the LiDAR plot establishes, it is cut by ditch Feature 11 immediately before it fades out as an earthwork. On the east it is cut by, and ends, at ditch (Feature 12 at a point adjacent to Mound A (Way Hagg). It is not shown on Ordnance Survey maps.

Feature 17 is a 6.6m wide E-W track that is clear to trace on the ground for most of its length. It enters the survey area on the west and the bed of the track clearly infills two of the forest ditches forming Feature 10. Further east it takes the form of a slightly elevated causeway flanked by ditches. The ditch on the north is sharply defined with a width of 1.2m and depth of 0.3m while the south ditch is wider at 3.2m and shallower with a depth of 0.15m. At **17a** the slightly elevated section crosses the ditch Feature 11 where two steps have been cut into the north side of the causeway. Around 110m to the east the track crosses ditch Feature 12 by means of a stone-built culvert (12c), now partially collapsed. The culvert has been noted in earlier accounts and a photograph of that feature and the steps at **17a** were added to the Historic England scheduling document in 2022. East of the culvert the track narrows to a width of 3m to continue east for 90m as a shallow sunken feature. This part of the track is overgrown but shows clearly on the LiDAR image though it is not depicted on the resulting Historic England plot.

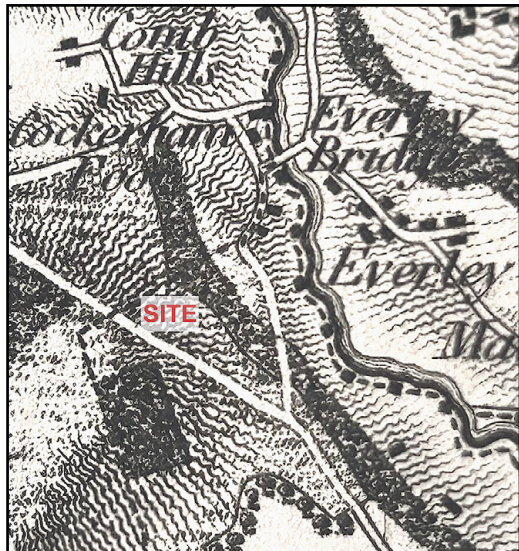
Feature 18 is a track that on the 1892 map branched north-west from the track described above (Feature 17) ending after about 180m at a present forest track. The only evidence this feature on the ground are the gaps where the track cut through two field boundaries (Features 4 and 5) and by the slight scarp marking where it passed the south-west side of Way Hagg (Mound A). It is on the same alignment as the bank forming the long NW-SE field boundary on the 1854 map which it consequently destroyed.

Three groups of features identified on the LiDAR plot complete the record of features in the survey area:

- A large number of narrow, steep-sided furrows cross the survey area as depicted on the LiDAR plot. They are mostly parallel and aligned E-W and result from recent phases of forest management.
- The LiDAR plot depicts an isolated, sub-oval area of ridge and furrow cultivation remains measuring 40m north-south and 20m east-west towards the south-east of the survey area, adjacent to a remnant bank of the field system (Feature 6). The undergrowth in this area prevented investigation on the ground.
- The LiDAR survey identified a band of 'braided hollow ways' extending along the east side of the survey area from the south edge of the wood northwards for 270m and with a width of up to 50m. The report interprets the features as evidence of a former route that passed across this area following the crest of the valley side. The ground is heavily overgrown but several furrows were observed cutting across the earthworks of field boundaries Features 4 and 5. Rather than hollow ways as described in the Historic England report, they appear on the ground as narrow ruts, probably created by the passage of wheeled vehicles.

Forestry features summary

Prior to afforestation the site was in open moorland depicted on Sheet 9 of the Yorkshire map by Jefferys published in 1771 and Greenwood's map of 1817. The earlier of these two maps depicts a track along the escarpment edge that descends to the Derwent valley north of the survey area and passes the site to the east. This route may account for the rutted ground close to the crest of the slope on the LiDAR plot. By 1817 the route down the slope had shifted south to what on later Ordnance Survey maps is labelled the Cockrah Road, thereby



reducing the 1771 route to a footpath as depicted on the 1854 Ordnance Survey map. Where the Cockrah Road meets the crest of the valley, the 1817 map shows a route branching away to the north-west taking it across the present survey area (Figure 19).

Feature 15 matches the position and alignment of this track on the larger scale 1854 map and therefore probably represents a surviving length of this pre-afforestation route across open moor top which continued to Troutsdale. To the west, the shallow north-south ditch **Feature 9** is notably on the same alignment as the edge of a plantation to the south shown on the 1817 map

Figure 19.
The area of the site on Greenwood's map (Greenwood 1817). The Cockrah Road is depicted descending the hill side with a second track heading to the north-west represented by **Feature 15**.

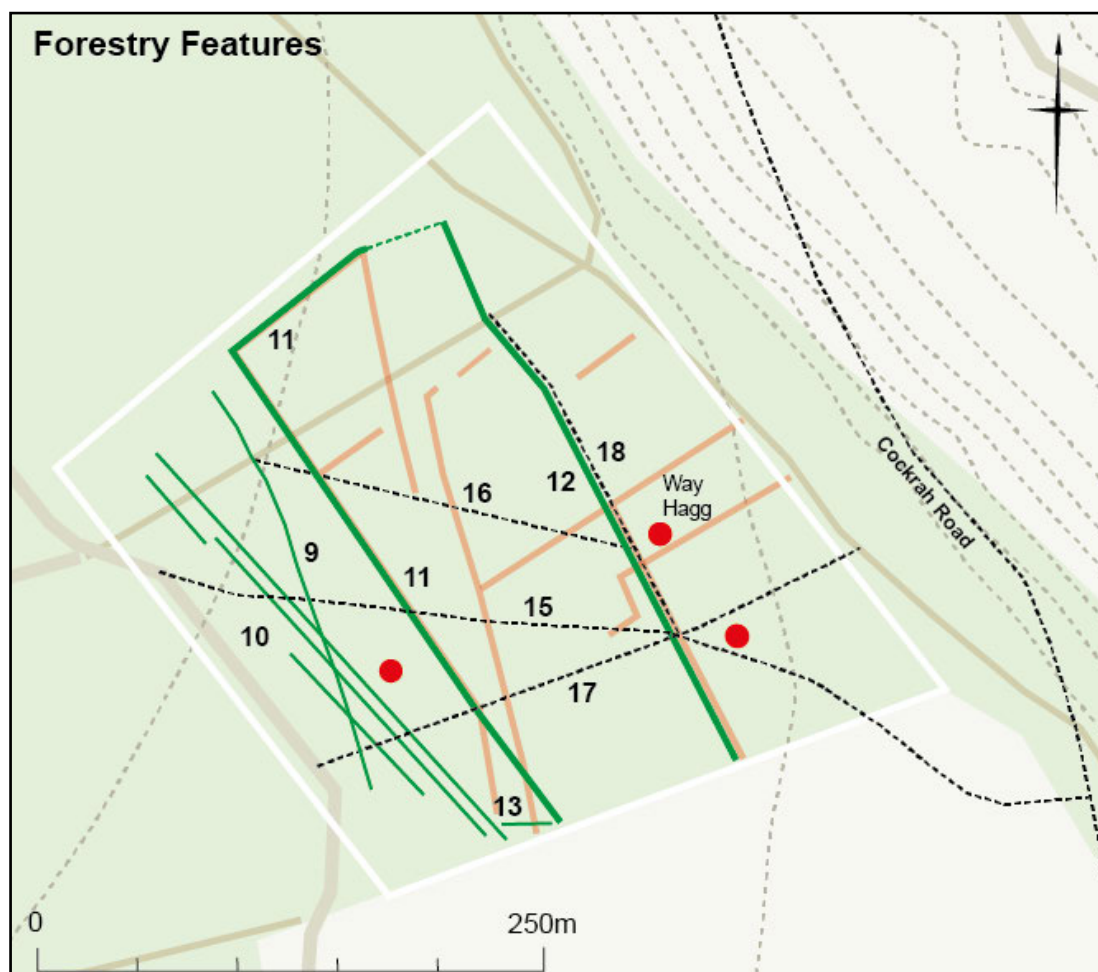


Figure 20. Forestry features with modern map background. Survey area shown with white border. Field system earthworks shown in orange/brown tone and burial mounds in red.

suggesting a much larger area was prepared for planting than was actually used. The group of north-south ditches also evident in this part of the survey area (**Feature 10**), may similarly represent repeated attempts to define a woodland boundary. They date to before 1890 as they are cut by the east-west track (**Feature 17**) shown on the map surveyed that year (Figure 20).

A mostly parallel pattern of drains and furrows, some perhaps quite recent in date, scar the ground surface and cut into many of the earthworks, including one of the burial mounds (**Mound C**). Previous accounts in the Historic England research record mention recut ditches and the walkover survey determined this specifically relates to two long boundaries (**Features 11 and 12**). The ditch **Feature 11** has a very sharp profile indicating it has been recut and on the south (at **11a**) extended to cut across the line of the field system track (**Feature 1**). Along the length of this feature there are intermittent lengths of the bank (at **11c** and **11d**). These may be remnants of the bank shown on the 1854 map though other sections could be upcast from recutting the ditch. The second sharply-defined ditch (**Feature 12**), is on the west side of the long NW-SE field boundary shown on the 1854 map of which the only surviving length is (**Feature 6**) the remainder having been destroyed by a forest track (**Feature 18**). **Features 11 and 12** presumably functioned as drains necessitating the construction of a culvert where the forest track (**Feature 17**) passes over **Feature 12** (at **12a**). Tony Pacitto mentions culverts in the plural in his July 1982 field notes so it is possible that a second culvert was then visible where this track crossed the west ditch (**Feature 11**). The walkover survey found no such evidence at this point, though noted that several steps had been cut into the north side of the track (at **17a**).

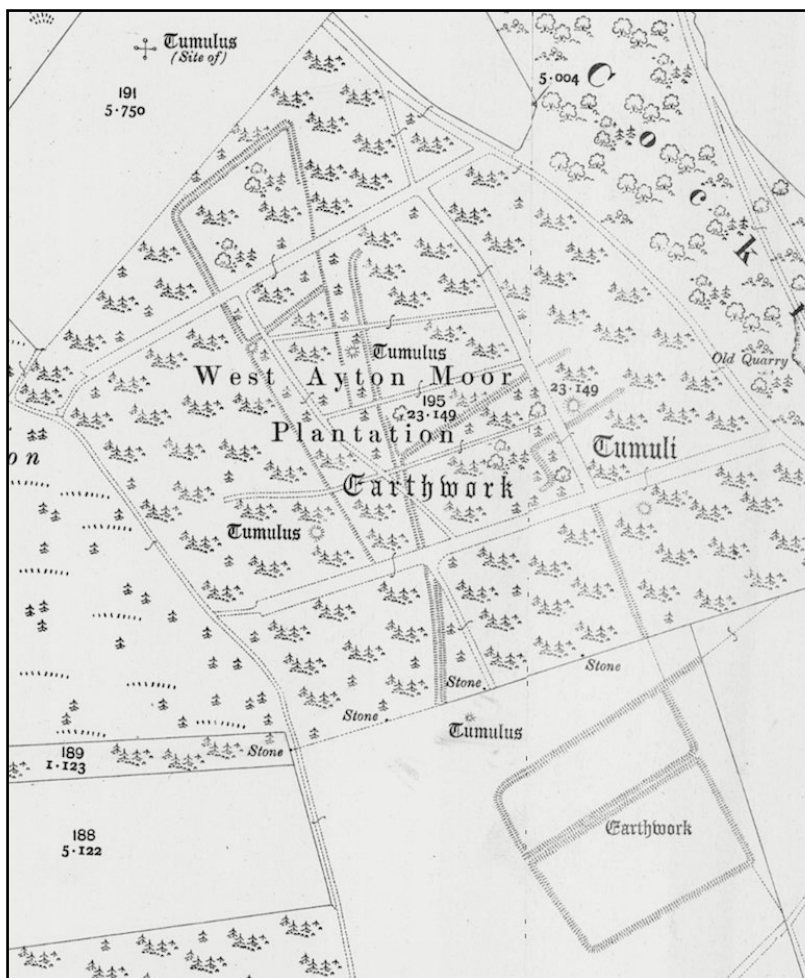


Figure 21. 1892 Ordnance Survey map showing network of paths and tracks at the centre of the plantation (Ordnance Survey 1892. Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland).

The 1892 map shows a network of tracks in the centre of the plantation (Figure 21), north of the broad east-west track **Feature 17**. No wider than paths, they have left no earthwork remains but indicate that access into this particular area was important. The 1892 map also depicts a NW-SE track that has also left little in the way of surface remains (**Feature 18**) but was about the same 6m width as **Feature 17**. This track branched from **Feature 17** and created gaps in the field system boundaries that it crossed (**Features 4 and 5**) and a slight scarp where it passed the south-west side of Way Hagg (**Mound A**). This evidence indicates the track was next to the east side of the freshly recut ditch **Feature 12**. The LiDAR and walkover surveys located an additional track (**Feature 16**) not depicted on the 1892 map that crosses the central part of the plantation diagonally ending on the south-east at Way Hagg (**Mound A**). The track is early in the sequence dating to before 1890 Ordnance Survey map revision- it is cut by the ditch **Feature 11** which itself is overlain by the track **Feature 17** shown on the 1892 map.

Interpretation and Discussion

The preceding detailed analysis of the archaeology provided by the LiDAR and walkover surveys combined with evidence from Ordnance Survey maps and other published sources has advanced understanding of the development of the site as discussed below. The proposed phasing of the site is as follows:

1. Prehistoric Bronze Age burial mounds
2. Iron Age or Romano-British square enclosure and probable droveway
3. Subdivision of the enclosure and addition of further rectilinear field plots to the north and east creating a field system that extended either side of the droveway and east to the crest of the valley. This field system probably dates to the Iron Age or Romano-British periods as accepted in previous accounts, though a medieval or later date cannot be entirely ruled out.
4. Tracks and boundaries mostly associated with the plantation established in the period between the 1854 and 1892 Ordnance Survey maps. They include a network of tracks and paths opening up access to the centre of the plantation.

Prehistoric Bronze Age burial mounds

The earliest earthworks in the survey area are the burial mounds of which Way Hagg (Mound A) is certainly Bronze Age based on the pottery, cup marked stones and artefacts recovered during the 1848 excavation. There are no records of any finds from Mounds B and C, but they can be confidently assigned to the Bronze Age based on their form. The circular mounds are typical of Bronze Age 'round' barrows and contrast with Neolithic 'long' barrows which in this area are elongated earthen mounds and with Iron Age barrows which have a square outer ditch and a sub-rectangular or sub-circular mound when this survives, with four such examples 2km to the north on Coomb Hill mapped as part of the SAHS survey in 2025 (Jamieson and Pearson 2025).

Two of the barrows (Way Hagg and Mound C) are bounded by the partial remains of a slight ditch. This is an uncommon surface feature of Bronze Age barrows on the North York Moors (Smith 1994, 6), presumably because, in most cases, such features are obscured by material eroding off the flanks of the mound. The excavation report for Way Hagg states that the mound was constructed of sand above loose stones (Tissiman 1850), a combination commonly found in the make-up of excavated burial mounds on the Tabular Hills where material also includes earth and sods of turf. While the make-up of Mounds B and C is unknown, the survey found evidence that the former was constructed in two phases, with a distinct break of slope visible where the mound had been raised, perhaps because it returned to use for burial. At Way Hagg, the pottery vessel filled with wood ash discovered in 1848, four feet from the summit, may have similarly accompanied a secondary burial, this time in the side of the mound - perhaps a cremation deposit which could easily have been overlooked by the excavators in their eagerness to dig to the centre. The practice of placing cremations in existing mounds appears to have been common in this area with evidence coming from five of the seven Bronze Age barrows excavated by post-war archaeologist Tony Brewster (Brewster and Finney 1995, 31).

Uncertainty exists over the interpretation of Mounds D and E, neither of which is certainly a Bronze Age barrow. Mound D first appears on the 1892 Ordnance Survey map as a small flat-topped mound in the northwest corner of one of the two plots on the west of the field system. It is not labelled on the 1892 map or on the subsequent revisions of the map suggesting the Ordnance Survey, though they had mapped it, discounted it as a 'tumulus' and it is not included in the Historic England schedule description. The mound visible today is slightly smaller than the three barrows A-C and is more sub-oval than circular in plan. While not fully discounting it as a Bronze Age barrow, it is possible that the feature is later, such as a mound of cleared stones placed out of the way in the corner of that particular field plot, or from preparing the ground ahead of the plantation. Mound E is not shown on the 1854 Ordnance Survey map and can be discounted as a Bronze Age burial mound for the observation that it sits across the line of the track (Feature 1). The track would surely have avoided it if the mound was Bronze Age and therefore already in existence. The mound is described as 'levelled' in the schedule description, was not detected by the 2025 LiDAR survey and its former site is presently too overgrown to investigate on the ground.

The name Way Hagg does not appear on Ordnance Survey maps and consequently its derivation has not captured the attention of place-name scholars. The Old English word 'weg' meaning a 'way' or route and the Old Norse word 'hag' referring to a clearing (Cavill, 2018, 187, 453) combine to offer a reasonable interpretation of the name and are descriptive of landscape features close to the barrow - a track and a cleared area, perhaps relating to the field system. The unique appellation takes us to the after-life of the barrow as a landmark in a landscape largely devoid of striking natural features. From Way Hagg the route north across the high moors towards Whitby is marked by other landmark barrows, namely Bracken Howe, Low Woof Howe, High Woof Howe ending at Louven Howe and Lilla Howe which occupy a natural ridge where several routes converge.

Square Enclosure and track (Figure 22)

The antiquarians Knox and Tissiman and the military surveyors from the Ordnance Survey considered that the two contiguous plots at the south of the field system were akin to a fortification - or in their terms, a 'camp'. Their response to this earthwork is in contrast to the remainder of the field system which Knox ignores, Tissiman selectively depicts and describes and the Ordnance Survey simply label as 'Ancient Banks'. Confirmation of the different character of the so-called camp comes from Tissiman's observation that the north ditch was three feet wide and four feet deep, dimensions that far exceed the surviving remains of the field system. Stripping away the other field plots, we are almost certainly left with an example of a late Iron Age or Romano-British square enclosure measuring around 90m N-S and 86m across, so quite large in comparison with others in the local area. The camp is included in Hayes's inventory of square enclosures in north-east Yorkshire but crucially not as an earthwork distinct from the other 'enclosures' making up the field system. The entry also mistakenly includes details which are of a different site on Hutton Buscel Moor (Hayes 1988, 52). Of the nearby enclosures listed by Hayes, that on Coomb Hill is 55m across and the cropmark example on Seamer Moor 5.5km to the south-east investigated in 2008-10 is 70m across (Jamieson and Pearson 2025; Hall and Hinchliffe 2013)

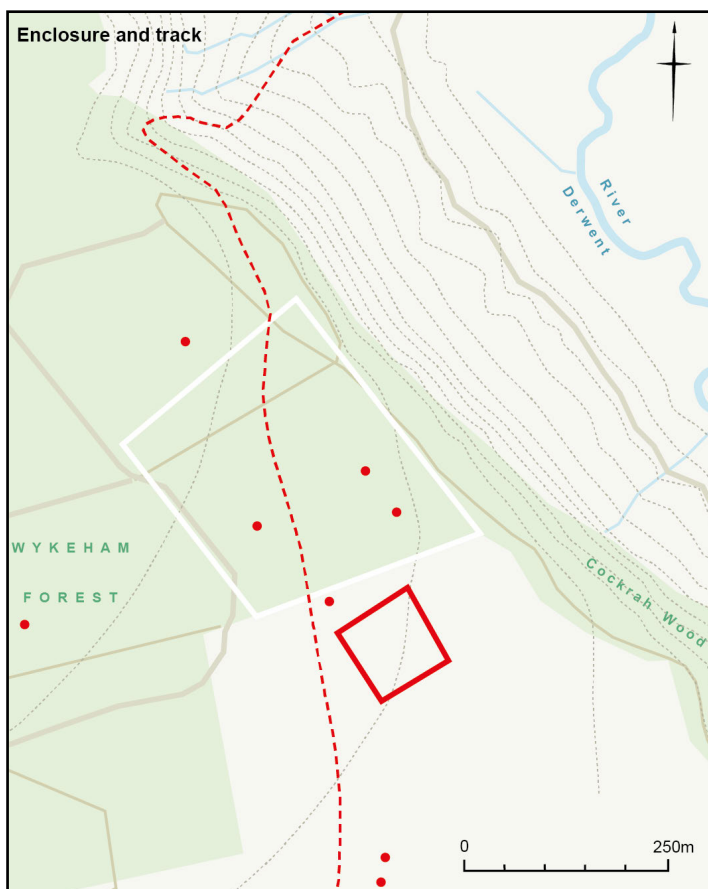


Figure 22. Burial mounds, enclosure and possible droveway track with modern map background. Survey area shown with white border.

The 600m length of embanked N-S track on the 1854 map that passes close to the west corner of the enclosure and through the field system is clearly of pivotal importance in understanding the layout and development of the site. However its chronological relationship to both the enclosure and the field system is not entirely certain. There is no direct plan relationship between the track and the enclosure to determine which is the earlier of the two while further north, the field system appears to abut the sides of the track suggesting the route was there first. However, the reverse chronology cannot be entirely discounted either with regards to the field system. The coaxial alignment of the boundaries either side of the track gives the impression that the route cuts across a previously unified block of field plots.

The onward course of the track north and south is picked out by footpaths on the 1854 map, and by the lie of the land. A footpath in 1854 continued the alignment of the embanked section of track north for 200m to the crest of the escarpment where a sharp hair-pin bend took the route down the slope to the River

Derwent. To the south, the map similarly shows a path continuing south to Yedmandale, itself a natural valley-bottom route that opens into the vale between West Ayton and Hutton Buscel. In the context of a pastoral economy, the route thus defined can be understood as a probable droveway linking lowland pastures in the vale to similar grazing in the Derwent valley to the north. Building on this idea, the route is more likely to be the start, rather than the end of the sequence at the present site, with the enclosure providing a compound next to the droveway for livestock in transit, while the later field system perhaps expanded this function.

The embanked length of track might also have acted as a territorial boundary, the east and west turns at the south end of the track on the 1854 map suggest both banks continued for an unknown distance as land boundaries, dividing up the hill top in opposite directions. Possibly of relevance to this is the survey observation that the east and west sides of the track (Features 1a and 1b respectively) are different in character and in addition, that the east side is potentially of two phases with the 1892 and 1912 maps and the 2025 and 2026 surveys indicating that the earthwork changes from wide to narrow as it continues north through the survey area.

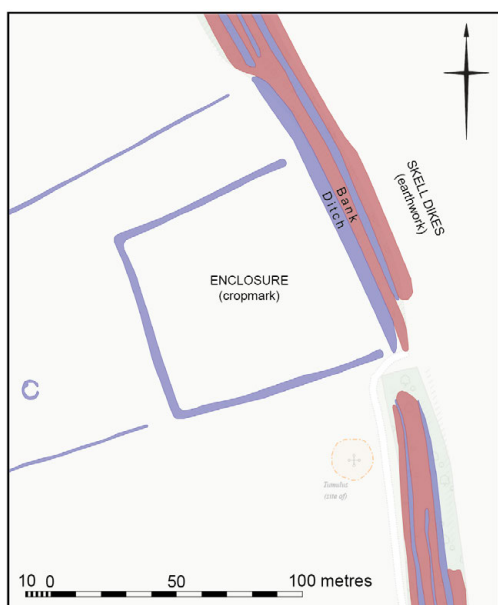


Figure 23. The enclosure and adjacent droveway on East Ayton Moor. Historic England Aerial Mapping Explorer. © Crown Copyright and database right 2025. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number AC0000815036 © Historic England 2023.



Figure 24. The square enclosure and other archaeological features on Seamer Moor in 1820 picked out in red with the turnpike road to Scarborough - now the A170 - picked out in orange on the line of a possible early route (Knox 1821).

Former droveways have been recognised through historic map analysis and cropmark evidence on both sides of the vale, heading on to the higher ground of the Tabular Hills and the Wolds (Wrathmell 2012; SAHS 2018). Collectively these tracks testify to the organised movement of livestock around the landscape over a considerable timespan but which probably centres upon the Iron Age and Romano-British periods. Several other square enclosures in the local area are sited next to probable droveway routes. On East Ayton Moor, 2.6km to the east, cropmarks delineate a square compound about the same dimensions as the present site and in the same topographic location, 200m from the crest of a steep slope overlooking valley-bottom grazing (Figure 23). The enclosure abuts the west side of a droveway conveniently provided by the exterior ditch of a late Bronze Age linear boundary called Skell Dikes (Historic England Monument No. 1532804; North York Moors National Park Monument No.18875). The droveway started on the south on the margins of the vale and continued north past the enclosure to the crest of the steep Raincliffe escarpment. From here, a deeply-incised hollow way defines the course of the route down the slope to an area of lowland pasture offered by an offshoot of the Derwent valley (SAHS 2018, 12-21). Further east on the same ridge top, the square enclosure on Seamer Moor overlooks the point where a defile cuts into the line of the escarpment making an attractive route between the Vale of Pickering and the coastal plain (Hall and Hinchliffe 2013). This is now the line taken by the modern A170 road between Pickering and Scarborough (Figure 24).

Field System

The field system probably did not extend much beyond the limits shown on the 1854 map, though the Historic England schedule document postulates that two lengths of bank 430m to the west may have been part of it. This seems unlikely as land use prior to the second half of the 19th century favoured the preservation of archaeological earthworks so it is safe to assume that more would have survived to be mapped if the field system had extended that far west. It is possible the surveyors from the Ordnance Survey missed more ephemeral earthwork features relating to the field system in this area, but any slight banks or ditches inadvertently omitted from the map have almost certainly not survived afforestation.

Superficially the plot pattern bears comparison with Iron Age and Romano-British 'ladder' settlements found as cropmarks on the lower slopes of the Tabular Hills and, more extensively, on the Wolds to the south. These sites typically comprise one or two rows of rectilinear plots aligned along a track with examples on the Wolds extending over a kilometre. The nearest known example to the present site is on the edge of the vale to the east of Brompton (Knight 2011). However, a key difference with that site, as with most ladder settlements, is that the track forms the main axis while at the present site the plot layout is oblique to the track. Here it is the pre-existing enclosure, not the track, that influenced the layout of the field system, the less-substantial plot boundaries conforming to the alignment of the ditch and bank defining the earlier compound. The close plan relationship between the enclosure phase and the field system phase suggests one may have followed on from the other quite closely in time, though acknowledging also that radical change occurred with the enclosure losing its identity as a single enclosed space when it was amalgamated into the field system. This sequence has parallels with the phasing recorded at sites to the north of the moors in Cleveland. At Ingleby Barwick, Potto and Thorpe Thewles, excavations in the 1980s reportedly discovered occupation sequences where Iron Age enclosures were overlain by Romano-British field systems (Spratt 1993, 147).

The enclosure would have remained a reusable space long after it was constructed and the track also probably continued in use as a route north to the outer reaches of the medieval parish and beyond. This raises the possibility that the sequence outlined above does not belong to the Iron Age or Romano-British periods, as previously assumed, but instead is medieval or post-medieval. Relevant to this, but far from conclusive, is Tissiman's observation from 1850 that a bank forming part of the field system appeared 'more recent, and not broken down' compared to the perimeter of the enclosure.

As part of the medieval landscape, the field system does not fit the plan of a monastic grange which were common across the Tabular Hills and further west around Ryedale in the medieval period (Waites 2007, fig. 23). Grange farms typically comprised an array of buildings, yards, workshops and animal pens within a well-defined enclosure or 'curia'. The nearest example of a grange with this sort of layout was at Malton Cote 6.7km to the south-west, where a sketch plan was made of the earthworks before they were levelled in 1987 (Harrison and Spratt 1989, 92). In a medieval secular context, the manor of Hutton Buscel or forest officials of the Duchy of Lancaster could have established this group of plots or animal pens alongside the route traversing the parish from north to south, taking advantage of the existing enclosure to provide two of the required compounds. It was maybe then the local dialect name 'Way Hagg' - the clearing by the track - first came into use but by 1850 the name had transferred to the adjacent landmark burial mound excavated by Tissiman. Medieval or later reuse of prehistoric enclosures as animal compounds is indicated by an example in Ryedale called Studfold or Studford Ring. The name implies this particular site was brought back into use specifically to corral and manage horses (Hayes 1963, 66-7). Similarly, the recent survey of the Coomb Hill enclosure recorded traces of a narrow bank overlying the perimeter (Jamieson and Pearson 2025). Though the secondary bank is undated, it indicates that this particular enclosure was made secure again, presumably in order to keep livestock.

The ground is now generally too broken up by drains and forest ploughing to confidently locate features within the plots that might shed light on how the field system was used. The position of the field system next to the track and probable droveway, like the enclosure before it, suggests a primary role in managing livestock rather than raising crops, especially when the economics of arable farming required the better soils closer to the vale edge. Also, use

of the plough over a prolonged period within the field plots would inevitably have reduced, or totally destroyed, the earlier burial mounds, but these have survived. The LiDAR survey located a small area of possible ridge and furrow ploughing immediately to the east of the bank Feature 6, so within part of the field system. This identification needs further investigation on the ground, but the area was too overgrown to view at the time of the walkover survey.

Afforestation and plantation management

Soon after the 1854 Ordnance Survey map, the remains of the field system suffered a great deal of damage as a consequence of afforestation, beginning with the establishment of West Ayton Plantation sometime in the 40 years before the area was next surveyed in 1890. Furrows connected with planting trees and drainage are evident across the entire site and are a consequence of the need to proactively manage the forest estate. A short length of track (Feature 15) and a ditch possibly connected with the laying out of the plantation to the south (Feature 9) may be landscape features preceding afforestation of the present site. The group of NW-SE ditches (Feature 10) probably result from repeated renewal of a boundary defining the former west edge of the plantation.

Not so clearly attributable to the needs of forest management is the closely-spaced network of paths (no longer extant as earthworks) and wider tracks (Features 17 and 18) at the centre of the plantation depicted on the 1892 and 1912 maps; a pattern that is not repeated in any of the plantations nearby in this period. The remains of Feature 17 point to this 6m wide track being carefully engineered with one length slightly elevated, drains provided either side and with one, or possibly two, culverts to carry the track bed smoothly over recut ditches (Features 11 and 12). That track, and the second equally wide track branching to the north (Feature 18) facilitated access to the middle of the newly-planted wood and to the network of narrower paths that crossed it. The only reason that suggests itself for such generous access to this part of the wood is the presence of the archaeological remains. The idea that tracks and paths were inserted into the plantation to enable close-quarter viewing of the earthworks is reinforced by an additional track picked out on the LiDAR survey (Feature 16). Traceable on the ground, and possibly earlier than the other paths, the track heads diagonally across the centre of the site to end at what we might surmise was the main point of interest, and its only excavated monument - the Way Hagg burial mound. The ditches on the east, north and west (Features 11 and 12) may have played a part in presenting the earthworks to visitors by framing the central area of interest with drainage their ancillary purpose.

A case can therefore be made for a late phase in the history of the site when access was opened up before 1890 to view the archaeological remains in what was still a young plantation, either for the private interest of the landowner, Viscount Downe, or for a wider audience, the 1848 excavation potentially having aroused local interest in the site. For visitors, the plantation could be accessed from Hutton Buscel or West Ayton or by a much shorter and steeper ascent from the Derwent Valley where the picturesque charms of Raincliffe Wood, Forge Valley and Hackness were a popular tourist draw in their own right in the Victorian and Edwardian periods (Figure 25).

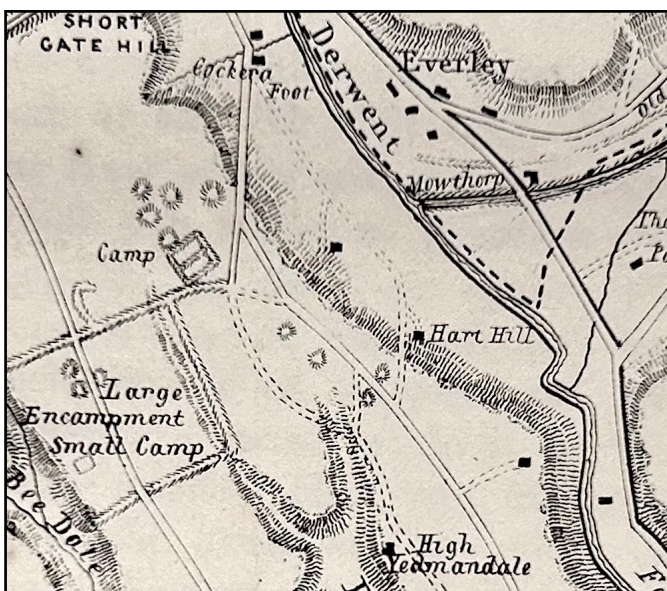


Figure 25.
Extract from a map in a mid-Victorian guidebook with a route (Cockrah Road) highlighted leading from 'Cockera Foot' to the site (labelled 'Camp'). The 'Large Encampment' identified on the map is largely hypothetical (Theakston 1854).

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