

Castleshaw Roman Fort: Archaeological Excavation of land east of the fort defences

2022



Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts volunteers excavating Trench 13

Report written by Norman Redhead for the
Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts

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Background

As part of the Castleshaw Roman Forts Hinterland Survey, the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts (FoCRF) carried out an archaeological excavation of an area of land east of the defences at Castleshaw Roman Fort (Heritage Asset No. 1017837), centred on grid reference SD99830953. The land is owned by United Utilities and farmed by David Hirst.

The 2021 investigations provided, for the first-time, evidence of a defended enclosure to the east of the fort defences (Redhead, 2022). Within the enclosure were ovens, a stone floored possible building and timber structures indicated by post holes. Some geophysical anomalies were found to represent areas of natural shale and bedrock cropping close to the surface, whilst a large 'blank' area of low readings represented post medieval landscaping and levelling of the area adjacent to Husted's Farm which has removed Roman remains. This first stage of evaluation enabled us to define large areas of negative archaeology, but also to identify areas of known Roman archaeological interest and potential. The next stage of evaluation aims to better define the extent and shape of the annexe, along with partially revealed structural remains within the annexe, its relationship with the fort's eastern rampart and ditch, and the course and character of the fort and fortlet roads exiting the east gate and their relationship with the main highway that they join. The 2021 excavation report, which details the results, is lodged as a pdf under the 'Documents' section of the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts website: www.castleshawarchaeology.co.uk and the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record also holds a copy.

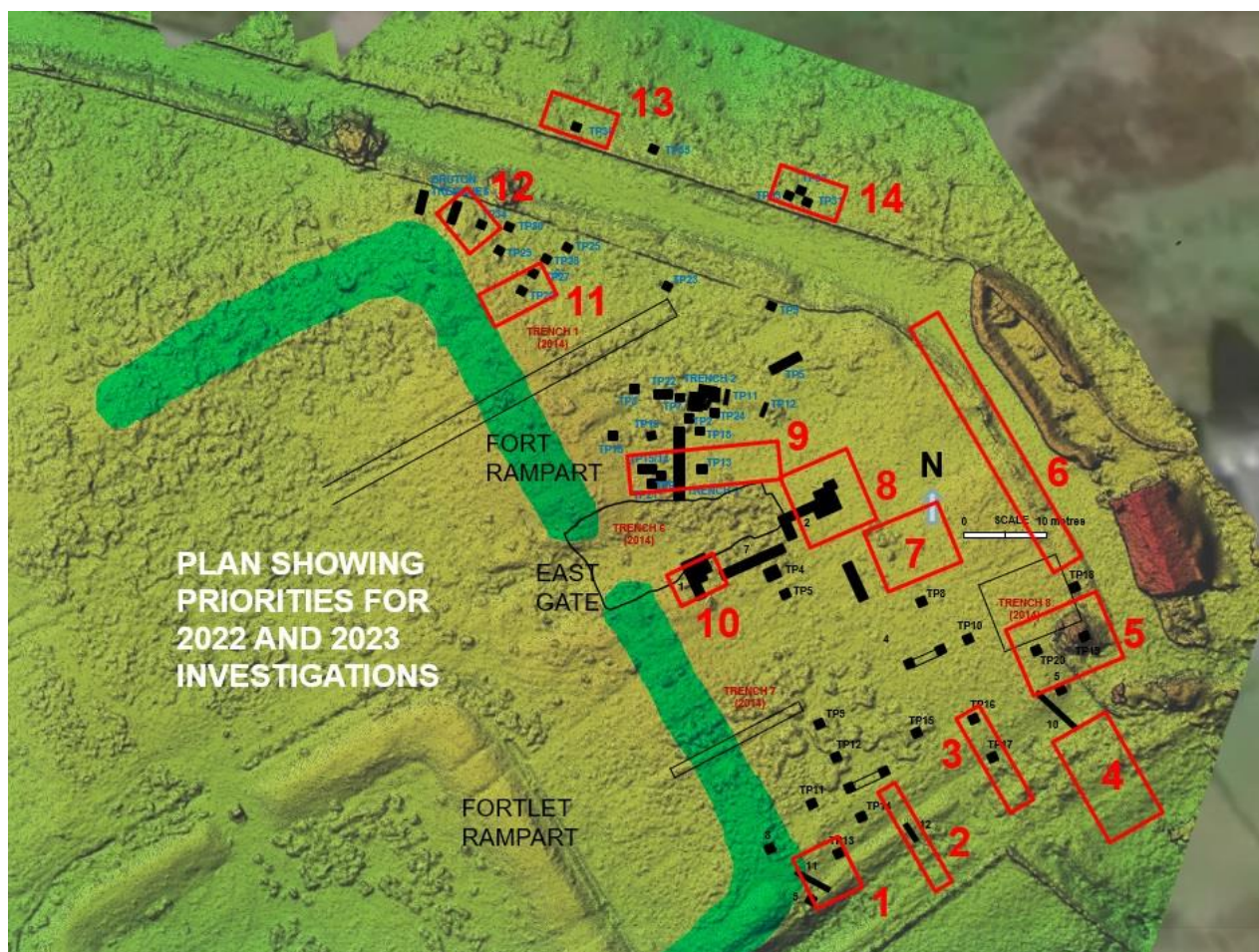
Methodology for the 2022 Investigations

The proposal was to:

Undertake archaeological test pitting and trenching in the area to the east of the Roman Fort's eastern rampart, bounded to the north and east by Dirty Lane and to the south by the former course of Drycroft Lane.

- a) Determine the character, extent and function of Roman remains in those areas of archaeological potential identified in previous evaluations and as set out in the proposal for archaeological investigations plan and key (below).
- b) Better define the extent and character of the military annexe defences first identified in last year's excavations, and their relationship to the fort.
- c) Define the course and character of Roman roads exiting the east gate and the main highway that they connect to.
- d) Examine the layout, function and extent of buildings within the annexe including those partially exposed in previous evaluations.

Investigation of the areas of archaeological potential and research interest identified on the proposals map below were designed to take place over two years. The works were undertaken in relation to research strategies 8, 9 and 10 in the 'Excavation Strategy', which also contains the excavation methodology (Redhead, 2013). Scheduled Monument Consent was granted via a letter from Historic England dated 27th May 2022 (Ref: S00242678).



Proposal for archaeological investigations east of the fort defences 2022

- 1 – Determine the location and character of the fort ditch corner terminus and look for its junction with the annexe ditch.
- 2 – Better define and explore the ditch feature revealed in Trench 12 and understand how it relates to the rampart material exposed in Test Pit 14 and extend the trench southwards across the former Drycroft Lane to see if has a Roman road precursor.
- 3 - Excavate a north to south trench to show the full extent/profile of the ditch and rampart suggest in Test Pits 16 and 17.
- 4 – Examine the site of Drycroft Lane to see if there is evidence for an underlying Roman road here, exploring further the possible stone spread at the southern edge of Trench 10, and taking in a linear earthwork on the opposite (south) side of Drycroft Lane.
- 5 – Investigate the extent and character of the stone surfaces/spreads revealed in Test Pits 19 and 20, determine if the Roman road exists here, and look for evidence for the continuation and potential corner of the annexe rampart/ditch.
- 6 – Examine the roadside verge through test pitting to check for annexe defence remains.
- 7 – Investigate an area of high resistivity readings immediately to the west of the former Husted's Farm. These probably represent the hard standing put down outside the 1980s excavation compound; but are there Roman remains concealed underneath?
- 8 – Examine the extent of the post holes and pits revealed in the eastern part of Trench 2 and further define their character and function.
- 9 – Define the extent and character of the possible road surface found at shallow depth partly exposed in Test Pit 21 (2019). Confirm the edge of the 2014 excavation trench and connect this to the clay oven and stone surfaces revealed in Trench 1. Expose the stone surface revealed in Trench 1 and adjacent test pits (2019) to provide a better understanding of its extent, character, date and function. Re-investigate the stone surface exposed in 2014 adjacent to the rampart beside the east gate and relate this to other features now known in this area.
- 10 – Extend Trench westwards to define the extent and character of the possible stone platform/surface beside the gateway and the relationship/character of the fort and fortlet roads.

- 11 – Define the extent and character of the turf and sod deposit seen in Test Pit 26 to determine if it relates to the fort annexe defences.
- 12 - Define the terminus of the defensive ditch as it rounds the north-east corner of the rampart.
- 13 - Examine the flat area on the north side of Dirty Lane to determine the presence of a possible Roman ditch and other features.
- 14 - Examine flat area on the north side of Dirty Lane to better define the extent and character of a possible Roman ditch and deposit.

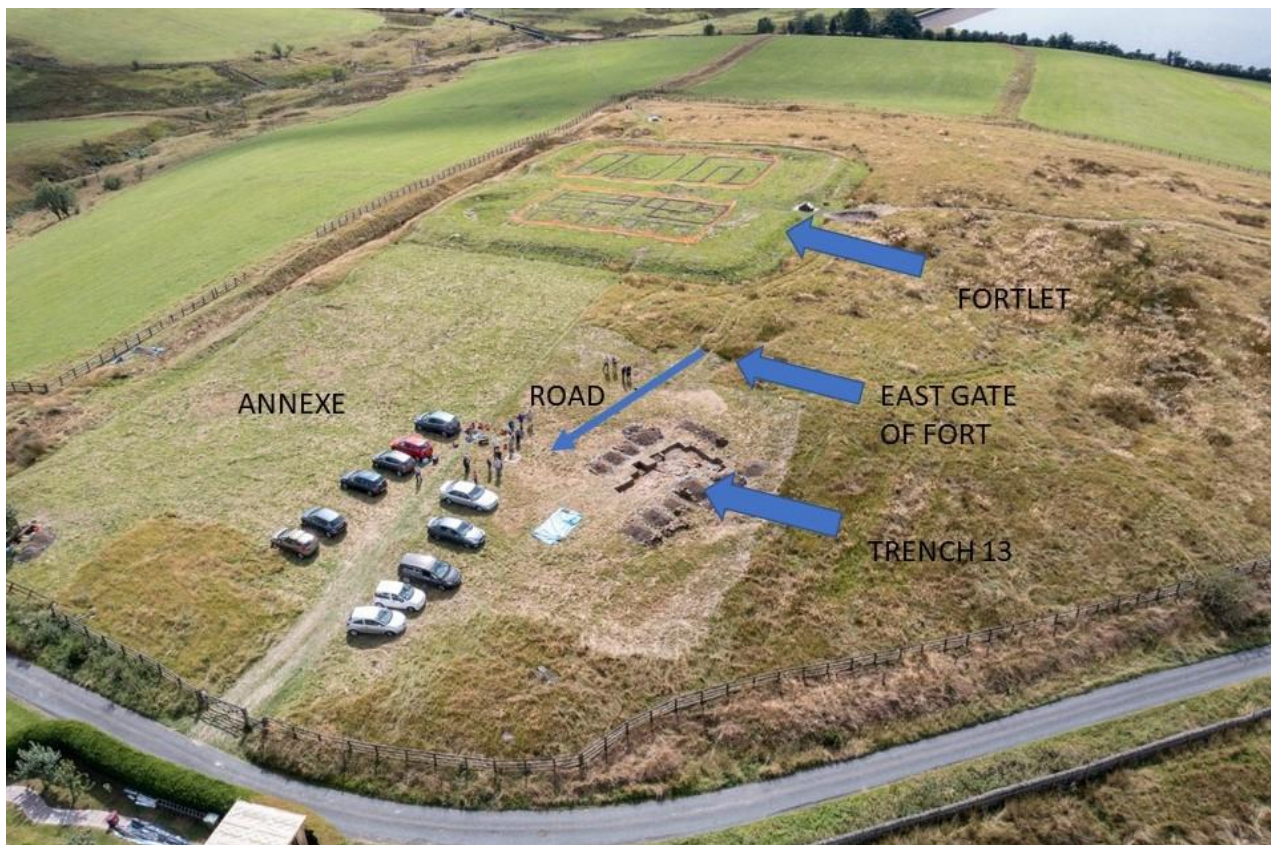
The 2022 excavations took place over nine days: 30th and 31st July and the 1st, 19th, 20th, 21st, 27th, 28th, 29th August. Norman Redhead, former Greater Manchester County Archaeologist, led the excavations which were undertaken by a total of 25 volunteers belonging to the Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts.

For 2022 the focus of investigations were Areas 2,4,5 and 9 of the proposals plan.

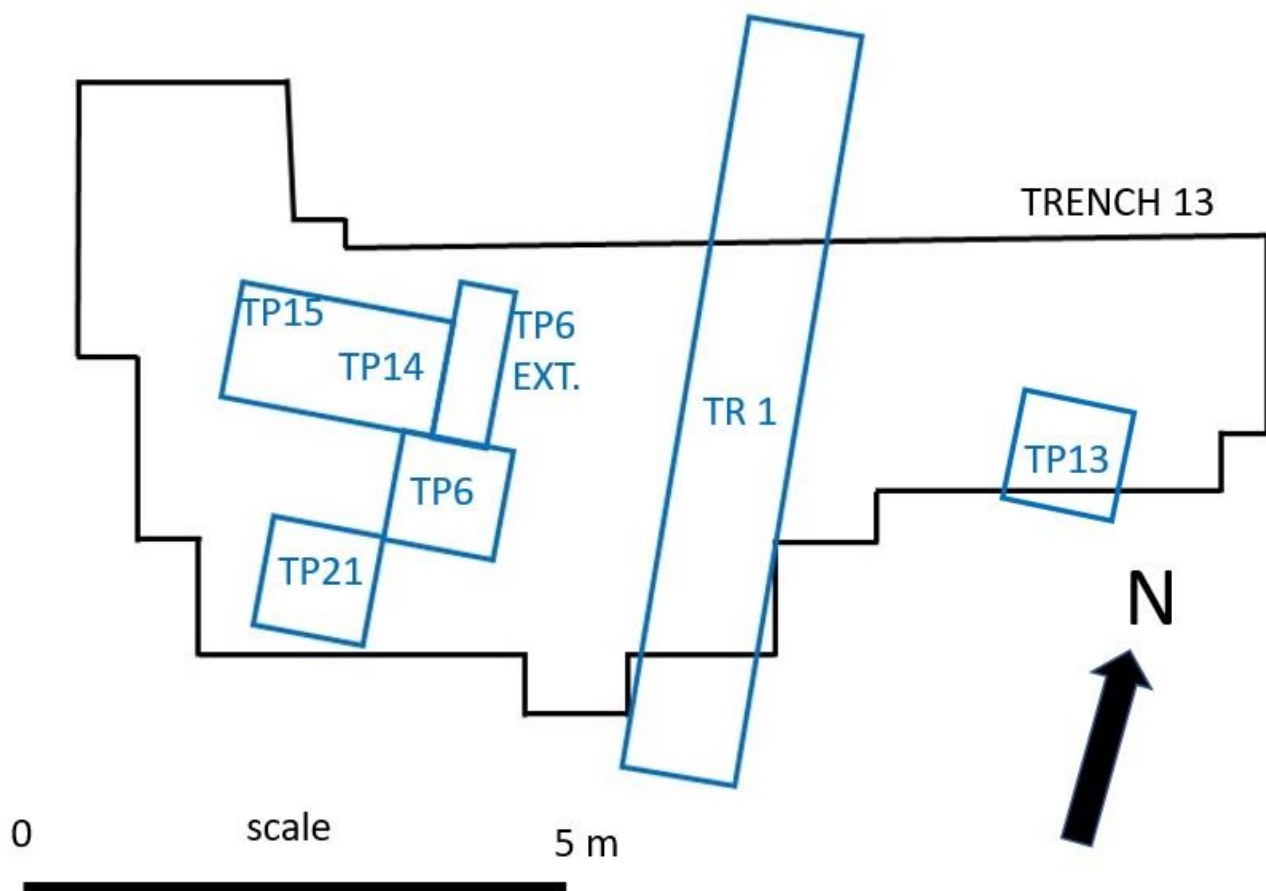
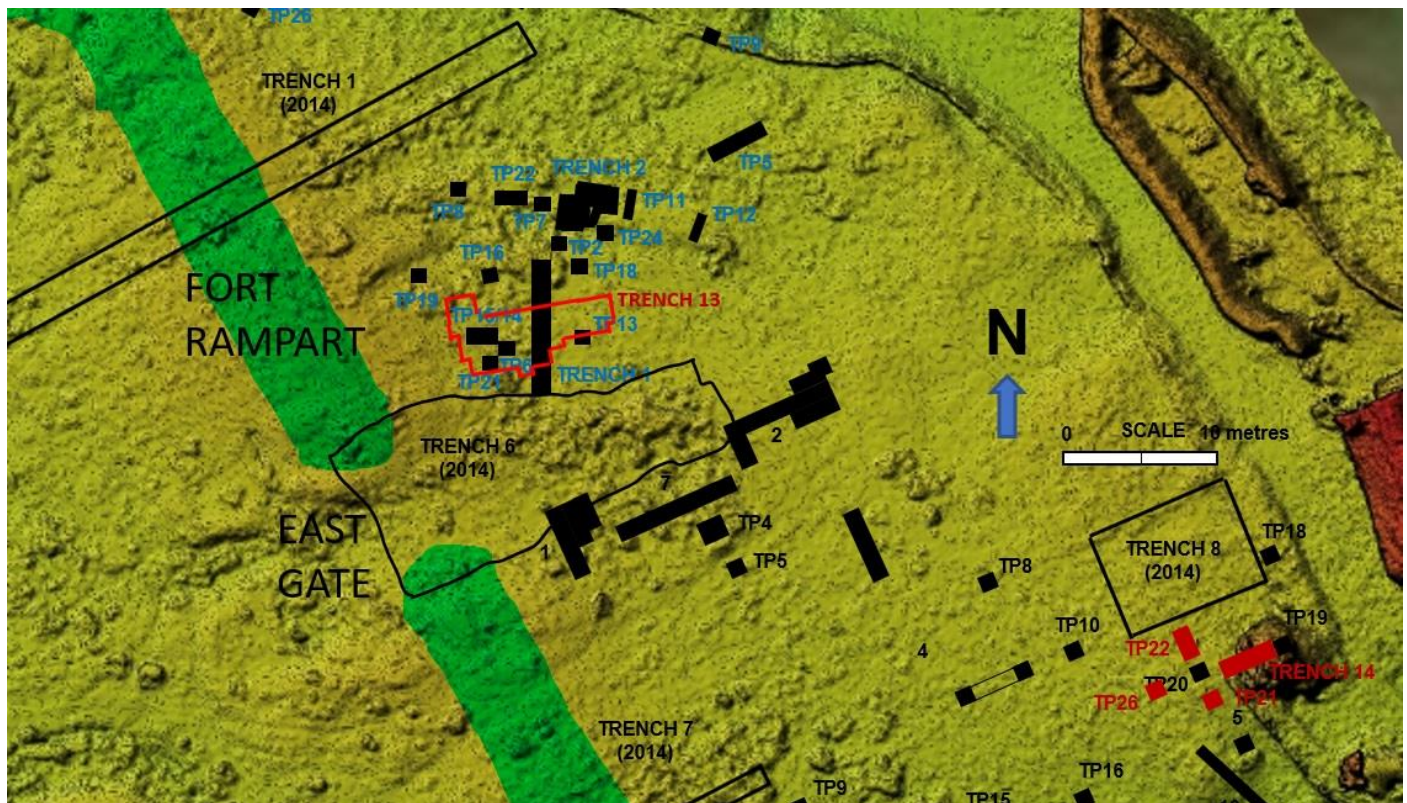
Results

Trench 13

Trench 13 forms part of Area 9 shown on the proposal map for archaeological investigations (above). This was a large trench which focused on a substantial stone surface that had been partly revealed in the evaluation of 2018 and 2019. The trench number continues the number sequence from Trench 12 in 2021. The feature lies just outside the Agricola fort east gate, a little to the north of the fort exit road. The intention was to expose the full extent of the stone platform to form a better understanding of its character and function. Ultimately the trench measured 3.5 metres wide in the western half and 2 metres wide in the eastern half, and 11 metres from west to east. There were incremental small-scale extensions to define the extent of key features, for instance 2 by 1.5 metres in the north-west corner to fully expose a stone platform outlier. Despite two extensions to the east, the eastern extent of the stone surface was not found and will be a focus of attention in 2023. Trench 13 incorporated previous trenches and test pits: Trench 1, TP13, TP 21, TP 6, TP14 and TP15.



Drone photo (courtesy of Joolze Diamond) showing the location of Trench 13 in relation to the fort and fortlet, looking south-west.





Initial de-turfing and excavation in Trench 13.



Oblique aerial photo by Phil Barrett, looking west across Trench 13 towards the end of day 2.

Across Trench 13 was a dark topsoil layer (001) of 15 to 20 cm depth merging with an underlying mid- to dark brown silty clay loam plough soil (002) of a maximum 15 cm depth. This layer produced a range of post medieval pottery and some pieces of iron work and burnt daub, but no Roman pottery. Under the plough soil was a stone surface (F1) which comprised angular medium-sized gritstones, in places interspersed with smaller cobble-like gritstones. F1 occurred in patches across the trench but showed signs of disturbance from later landscaping and plough activity. Under F1, a 1-10 cm deep layer of yellow clay (003) was found to seal a much better-preserved earlier flagstone surface (F2). 003 clearly acted as a levelling and foundation deposit for re-laying the stone surface. In the central area of the trench, F1 was deeper and contained more cobble-sized stones reflecting the more undulating (damaged?) underlying stone flag surface. Patches of charcoal, burnt daub and lead waste were found within the lower part of 003 at the east end of the trench, directly on top of the flagstone surface. Similarly, at the extreme western

edges of the stone platform were found concentrated areas of charcoal and burnt orange daub (but no lead). Towards the western side of the trench, sealed at the base of the yellow clay and directly on top of the stone surface came a glass gaming counter, a possible broken metal sword blade and a couple of small sherds of Roman orange-ware pottery (see finds images below). This confirmed a Roman origin for the stone floors. 003 was found to extend a little beyond the edge of F2, particularly on the western side where it wrapped around the terminus of a trackway (F3) leading on to F2 and also a separate stone platform (F4).



The photo above shows an area of the more cobble-like smaller gritstones interspersed with some larger flat stones which were associated with the yellow clay layer. In the photo below can be seen the upper layer of damaged stones with the yellow layer below, lying over the larger flagstone surface (emerging in the foreground).





The flagstone surface beginning to emerge at the eastern side of the trench. On top of the stone floor can be seen several pieces of lead together with charcoal and patches of burnt red clay suggesting that industrial processes had taken place in this area after the stone floor was laid down. This was then sealed under the yellow clay and replacement stone surface.

The upper layer of stones (F1) died out towards the east where the lower flagstone surface F2 was sealed solely by the yellow clay. F1 was best preserved in the centre of the trench and closer to the cobbled track (F4) in the south-west corner of the trench. In these areas the underlying flagstones were more uneven and it is likely that F1 and the clay deposit 003 were laid down due to wear and tear which was more pronounced closer to the track. F2 comprised a range of stones, some were flagstones laid flat and being up to 60 cm long and 40 cm wide, but there were also many smaller, angular stones filling in gaps. The feature was about 2 m wide at its west end tapering to 1.5 m in the east, and was at least 9 m long. At its western extent the stone platform was at 276.69 m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) and at the eastern extent 276.58 m AOD. The stones were not carefully dressed as you might expect for a floor within a building. Neither were they carefully laid; many overlapped at the edges and the sides of the stone surface were irregular. Furthermore, the surface itself was undulating with only a few patches forming a level surface. The rough nature of the surface was particularly apparent at the west end near the track. The depth of stones varied, with the west end being deeper with three levels evident in places whereas the east end appeared to be only one stone deep. This might be explained by earlier features being infilled at the west end. At this stage of the excavation, only the top of F2 has been exposed so further investigations are required to throw more light on the character of the stone surface and whether or not it overlies any earlier features. However, F2 did appear to be laid over a lower dark yellow clay bedding deposit (004) which appeared along the fringe of the flagstones and in some of the gaps between stones, where the yellow clay was mixed with small gritstone fragments. 004 was particularly evident in the south-east corner of Trench 13 where there was a clear line between it and the paler yellow natural clay. F2 terminates at its west end in line with the track F3 so it is reasonable to conclude that the track gave access onto and was contemporary with the stone surface which appears to have been a roughly-laid working platform which in turn probably gave access to structures and processes being undertaken in this area.



Looking east across the flagstone surface F3, showing its uneven nature. The two white tags are the find spots for the blue glass gaming counter and possible broken-off tip of a sword blade.

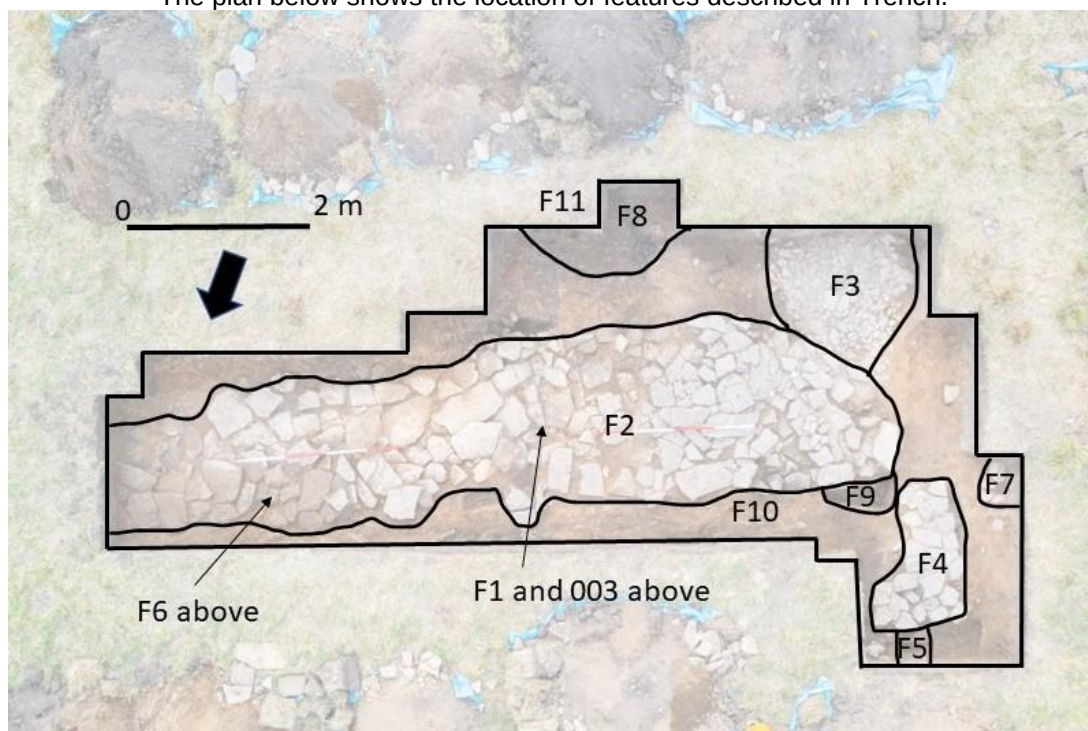


Detail of flagstone surface on east side of Trench 13



Aerial view of Trench 13. Top right is the cobbled area representing a probable track (F3) leading from the main highway near the east gate to the stone floored structure (F2). A separate stone surface (F4) can be seen in the bottom right corner of the trench. On the left, east, side of the trench the flagstones continue under the section edge. Drone photo courtesy of Joolze Diamond.

The plan below shows the location of features described in Trench.

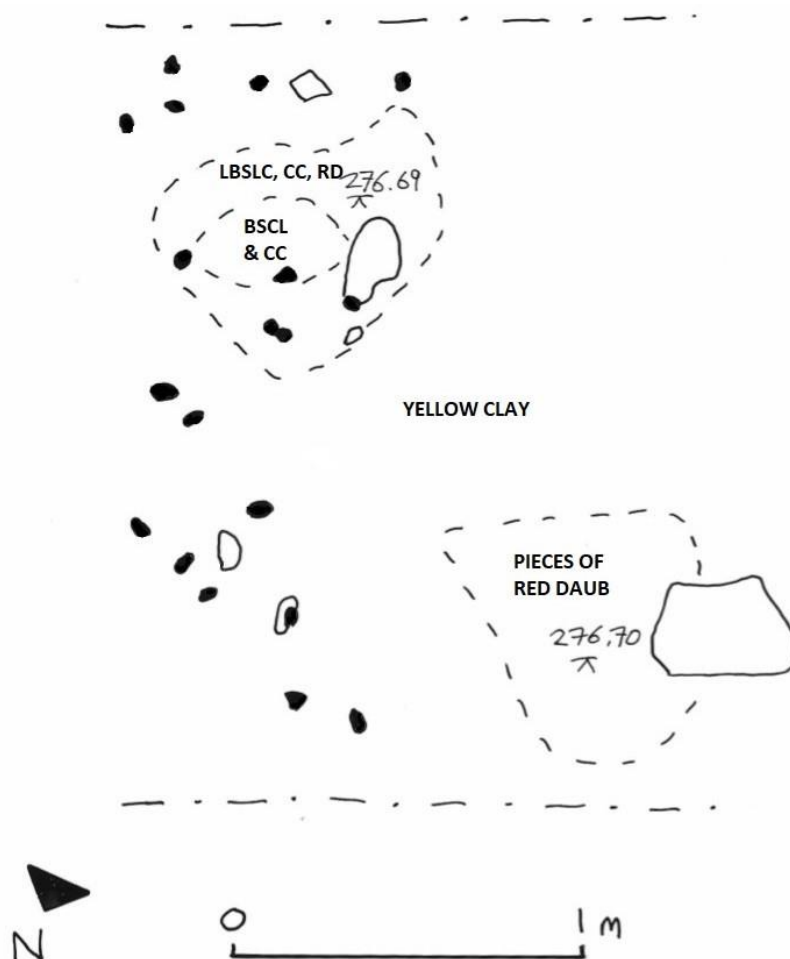


The most easterly 3 m of Trench 13 yielded considerable amounts of small pieces of burnt red/orange daub together with frequent flecks of charcoal. These occurred directly on top of the flagstone surface and also within the lower part of the yellow clay deposit including beyond the edge of the stone platform. The intensity of the burning evidence varied but was particularly marked above the northern side of the stone surface. Here there was a band of charcoal overlying and mixed in with it was a dense concentration of burnt daub. The burnt area was associated with a series of stake holes (F6). It is possible these represent the site of a clay oven with a wattle framework. A similar arrangement was revealed in the southern end of

Trench 1 in 2019. For F6 there was a denser concentration of charcoal and burnt red daub forming a rough circular area of c 60 cm diameter, surrounded by yellow clay. Whilst the stake holes did not form a well-defined pattern, this denser concentration of burning could represent the base and site of a clay oven. The surface of the burnt area varied from 276.70 m AOD to 276.63 m AOD.



Left: north-eastern part of Trench 13 with section showing the fire reddened daub and charcoal lying above the stone platform. Right: stake holes associated with the burnt deposit.



Plan of F6 stake holes and burnt areas.

Key to abbreviations: LBSCL = light brown silty clay loam, BSCL = Brown silty clay loam CC = Charcoal, RD = Red Daub.

The track F3 was revealed in the south-east corner of Trench 13. It was partially revealed by Test Pit 21 in 2018. It comprised small to medium angular gritstones (maximum length 12 cm) packed closely together and was a maximum of 1.5 m wide tapering to a terminus to the north where it met the stone platform F2.

The southern end of the track runs under the trench edge so its length is not yet determined. In the centre of the feature were two adjacent larger stones, maximum length c 20 cm, which had a smooth surface and were laid flat. These may have been used as padstones to support a timber post. Around the edge of the trackway was a deposit of crushed shale in a yellow clay matrix. This appears to form a levelling deposit helping to smooth out the track edges. The possible padstones were at 276.82 m AOD forming the top of a slight camber of the track, which dropped to the sides to 276.72 m AOD on the east and 276.75 m AOD on the west.



The cobbled track F3, looking south. The two smooth, flat stones in the middle of the photo and track may have formed a stone pad.

F4 was a separate stone platform lying just to the north-west of the corner of the large stone platform F2. It ran on a south to north axis and was 1.5 m long and 0.7 m wide at the south end widening to 1.1 m at the north. Its edges were irregular except on the west side where the alignment was quite straight. The north-east end formed a short 'dog's leg'. The stones were regular in size, being around 25 cm in length, and were laid flat. Two levels of stonework was apparent at the north edge of the feature. Between the stones in many places was a matrix of crushed shale and small packing stones which suggest a deliberate attempt to create a smooth surface. This packing/levelling material was not present in F2. The surface of F4 was 276.61 m AOD. In the north-east corner of the Trench 13 extension were two stones lying one above another at a similar level to F4. These were separated from F4 by a gap of 30 cm but could be a continuation of the stone platform.

The stone surface dipped towards the north edge where a gully (F5) was found. F5 appears to run southwards under the stones so the dip could be caused by subsidence into this feature, although this has not yet been examined by excavation. Against the west side of F4 was a charcoal rich deposit which appeared to run under the stones. The charcoal deposit's western edge is curved and runs for 0.5 m. This could be a cut feature or perhaps another oven base that is mostly sealed by the stones of F4. Further investigation is required. The 2019 Test Pit 15 adjoins the south-east corner of F4 and the post hole and section of gully excavated at that time are visible in the photo below, the square corner being the side of the old test pit. The function of F4 is not yet known. It might be another working platform, it may even be the footings of a wall, although there does not appear to be a foundation trench. It seems to belong to a later phase as it lies over a gully on its north side and it may overlie a charcoal filled feature/deposit on the west side.



F4 looking west with the depression in the bottom left corner being TP15 from 2018.



The full extent of the outlying and separate stone surface F4 to the left of the main stone platform

As noted above, F5 was identified at the north end of F4 (within the Trench 13 north-west extension) and partially excavated. A short length of 50 cm of the gulley was exposed and excavated. One of the stones forming F4 was removed to demonstrate that the gulley runs under the stone platform. The gulley formed a 'U'- shaped profile 15 cm wide at the base and around 12 cm deep. The primary fill comprised a loose dark grey-brown silty clay loam with frequent charcoal flecks. Above this was a layer of mid-brown silty clay loam which covered a shelf that was formed next to the eastern side of the gulley. Set into the shelf were two flat-laid red sandstones, one medium the other small sized. On top of the medium sized stone was found a fragment of blue glass melon bead (see below p.21). A charcoal rich deposit of dark grey-brown silty clay loam lay just to the north of the medium sandstone. This was not excavated as it runs into the trench edge and will be part of further investigations of the gulley feature next season. On the west side the edge of F5

stepped up via a more broken-up shelf which only had one small, angled stone which was not deliberately laid flat. The mid-brown deposit came off onto a thin layer of charcoal rich dark grey-brown silty clay loam which, when excavated, revealed a flat surface of natural grey clay with dark brown-orange iron staining. The base of the gulley was 276.20 m AOD. The medium size red sandstone on the ledge was at 276.34 m AOD and the surface of the natural clay on the west side was 276.37 cm AOD.



F5 and north end of F4 viewed from above.

The southern extent of gulley F5 is not yet known, although it is not evident beyond the south edge of the stone platform. Its function is also not yet determined; it could be a drainage gulley but equally might relate to the foundation slot for a timber building, with the possibility that the slot excavated in 2019 in Test Pit 15 forms a right-angle return for the building. With this scenario the sandstone laid along the east side of F4 could be remnants of a floor. Clearly, there is much more investigative excavation to undertake in this area which will be pursued in the 2023 season.



F5 looking south, showing gulley running under the stone platform of F4. A melon bead fragment came from the top of the red sandstone to the left of the gulley.

F7 was a cluster of gritstones lying to the west of the southern end of the smaller stone surface F4 and separated from it by a gap of 30 cm. The stones were of similar dimensions and type to those found in F4. Three stones were laid on top of each other suggesting a fairly substantial structure but, as the feature was only partly exposed in the western edge of Trench 13, it is impossible to say more on its function and extent at this time. Further exploration will be undertaken in 2023. The top stone surface was at 276.72 m AOD.



F7 looking west.

Adjacent to the south-east corner of the stone platform F4 was the one metre square Test Pit 15, excavated in 2019. This had revealed the edge of the main stone platform F2 with what appeared to be a gulley (F9) running east to west alongside the edge, associated with a small post hole. The gulley was excavated to a depth of 276.25 m AOD but space and time constraints meant that it was not fully investigated at that time, although it was felt that the gulley could be a timber building foundation slot. The opening up of Trench 13 has shown that the small post hole marks the north-west corner of F2 so could well relate to a timber superstructure lying alongside the stone platform. The fill of F9 was very similar to that of F5 to the north, which runs at right angles to F9 and could represent the return building slot.



F9 as excavated in the 2019 test pit.

Another possible building slot (F10) could be discerned to the east of TP9 and running parallel with the stone platform F2. The feature took the form of a thin linear band of mid- yellow-brown silty clay loam with moderate flecks of charcoal and occasional gritstones. The feature was 12 cm wide and 1.2 m long and 276.62 m AOD on its surface. Its southern edge showed clearly against what is probably natural yellow clay, whilst to the north was a more mixed yellow clay deposit containing scatters of small angular gritstones, many set on edge. The eastern termination of F10 is defined in a curved edge where it widens out. To the west F10 seems to die out but is in line with the slot F9 in old Test Pit 15. In this area, to the south of the western end of F10 the stones forming the stone platform appear to be subsiding into a depression which could indicate another hidden feature, perhaps a pit or post hole.



F10 linear slot is shown immediately north of the stone platform F2, with F9 to the right (west).

To the north of F9 and F10 and east of the small stone platform F4 was an area indicating intense heating activity. A thin layer of charcoal rich dark grey-brown silty clay loam also contained frequent small pieces of burn daub suggesting an oven or hearth just beyond the north edge of Trench 13. This deposit clearly ran under the edge of Trench 13 so its extent is not yet known. The top of the deposit was at 276.72 m AOD.

Another area of burning was exposed on the south side of Trench 13, partly within the former southern side of Trench 1 dug in 2019 and within adjacent areas. The 2019 excavations revealed evidence for a clay oven (F11) in the form of a semi-circle of burnt red clay and charcoal interspersed with stake holes, and with a central depression representing part of the centre of the oven. Whilst this oven site was not fully exposed in 2022, the opportunity was undertaken to extend sideways as part of Trench 13.



The oven base half exposed in Trench 1 in 2019 (north at the top of the photo).

There was a spread of dark grey-brown silty clay loam with patches of concentrated charcoal and frequent small pieces of burnt red daub. This material was covered a large area and its extent was not fully determined due to it running south under the edge of Trench 13. Immediately west of the oven site, a narrow, linear deposit of almost pure charcoal ran north-west for one metre before widening to end in a rounded shape next to a fire-reddened stone. To the south-west of this was a deposit of shale and small gritstones with no evidence of burning. Just to the north-west of the charcoal was an area of loose grey-yellow shale, roughly circular in shape and measuring 70 cm diameter. South of this shale and running under the trench edge, the charcoal rich soil continued towards track F3. The top of the charcoal-rich soil varied from 276.77 m AOD to 276.80 m AOD. These burnt deposits all appear to be material derived from the clay oven F11, perhaps being rake-out deposits that been shovelled away from the oven after firing or repairs.



The area of burnt clay and charcoal, with a deposit of loose shale (on the far right) separating it from stone surface F2.



The concentrated patch of charcoal and burnt stone are on the left. A patch of shale is in the bottom left corner and it can be seen that the right side of the trench has shale and stones but no evidence of burning so perhaps we are seeing here the rake-out from the oven revealed in 2019 which lies just beyond the top of the photo.



The burning deposit (above photo scale) continued on the east side of the old Trench 1 (to the right of the photo where there is a hole from a sondage in 2019).



Vertical drone photo of Trench 13, taken by Joolze Diamond, on the penultimate day of the excavation.

Based on the excavation evidence to date, the flagstone surface appears to serve a function as a working platform giving access to ovens and perhaps industrial processes of which there is tantalising evidence (such as the spread of lead fragments and burnt areas). Two clay ovens, F6 at the east end of Trench 13 and F11 in the 2019 Trench 1 just beyond the mid-south edge of Trench 13, are represented by concentrations of burn daub, charcoal and stakeholes. In the north-west edge of Trench 13 there is the possibility of a timber-framed structure in the form of a post hole in the 2019 Test Pit 15 and potential linear slots F10 and F5, but further investigation needs to be undertaken to confirm this. Phasing evidence is apparent in the form of clay capping layer 003 covering the original flagstone surface F2, with the clay providing a foundation deposit for a replacement stone platform F1 which has been much degraded by later land-use. F2 is itself founded on a yellow clay deposit. In the north-west part of Trench 13 is a separate, smaller stone platform F4 which lies over the gulley F5 and a possible circular feature represented by a curving edge of a charcoal filled depression. The stone platform appears to be accessed from the road exiting the fort east gate by a cobbled track F3 which was partly exposed in the south-west side of Trench 13. It is interesting to note the the platform runs parallel with the east gate exit road. It is suggested therefore that the stone platform and ovens belong to the late 1st century AD fort phase of activity, rather than the later early 2nd century fortlet.

The finds from Trench 13 comprised mostly post medieval pottery and other artifacts, including metal work and clay pipe fragments, from the top and plough soils. Whilst most of these were 18th and 19th century there were a handful of earlier pot sherds, one of possible 16th century date and three of 17th century origin. In terms of Roman finds, there were three stratified special finds: a blue glass bead from a crack in the flagstones of F2, a possible broken-off sword blade found lying on the surface of F2, whilst a blue glass melon bead fragment came from the side of gulley F5. These are consistent with Roman military use. Several iron objects were recovered in the plough soil but were unidentifiable due to the acid soil corrosion and concretions adhering to the objects. X-rays were undertaken by Karen Barker (Antiquities Conservation) and the plate is shown below. These provided indications of a large flat-headed nail and an arrow head of probable Roman date. The possible sword blade X-ray did not shed any further light on the object. There were also some smaller, more recognisable iron nails of probable Roman date. A large quantity of burnt red-orange daub fragments were found at the east end of Trench 13 and appear to derive from a former clay oven structure. Several pieces had a curvature consistent with this interpretation. This area of the trench also yielded 15 pieces of lead which had been oxidised to a grey-white colour. There were no discernible shapes to the lead which seems to be waste material.



Close up view of the melon bead exterior. We have found several of these over the years at Castleshaw. The last one discovered was on the community dig in 2014. They seem to be common to Roman military sites and may have been used as trading currency or for ornamental purposes.



Blue glass gaming counter found in a crack between stones on the lower stone platform.



Left: a possible broken-off end of a *gladius* sword recovered from the surface of the stone platform. Right: two possible large nails and one smaller one.



X-ray of iron objects from above the stone platform. The possible broken sword blade does not show particularly well. On the right side can be seen a clear profile of a flat-headed nail while above this is a possible Roman arrow or spear head used for puncturing armour and leather.



The assemblage of lead recovered from the area of burning at the east end of the lower stone platform.



The concentration of daub pieces from the surface of the east end of the stone platform and adjacent area.



This larger piece of burnt daub had a curved profile and was 2cm thick.



The finds from the topsoil and upper plough soil layers in Trench 13.



Detailed photo of a possible 16th century glazed Midland Purple ware (left) and three trail-slip wares of possible 17th century date.



More finds from plough soil in Trench 13.



The finds from the lower plough soil layer in Trench 13 including some burnt daub and nails that are likely to be of Roman date.

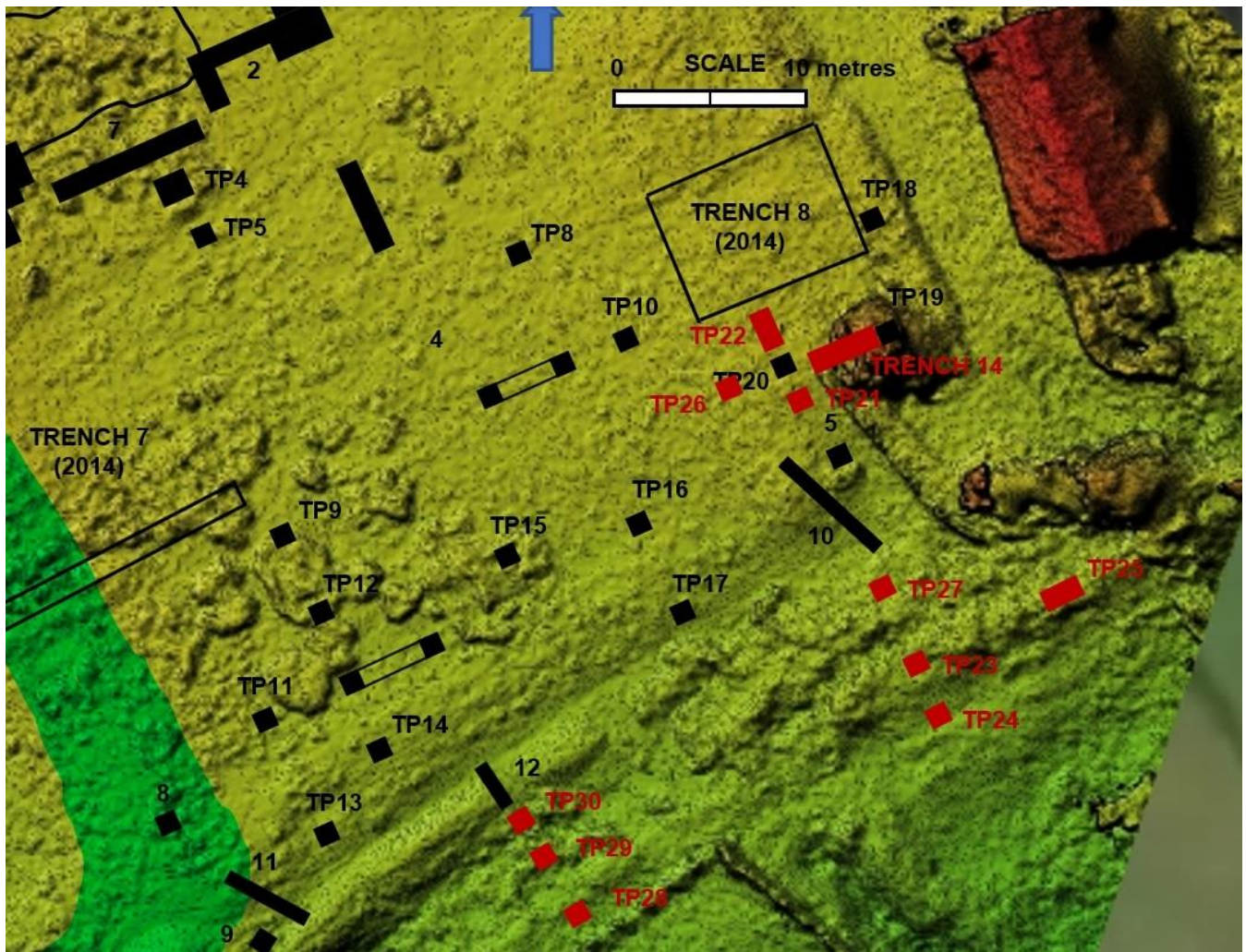
Trench 14

This trench was dug within the archaeological proposals Area 5. It expanded on the 2021 Test Pit 19 to investigate the potential course of the Roman loop road angling from the former east gate of the fort to re-join the highway. Last year TP19 revealed a smooth, tightly jointed gritstone surface (image shown above). It was challenging work as space was limited due to tree roots and several overlying large stones. Was this a floor or yard surface associated with the old cottage site just to the north or could it be a Roman road?



TP19 excavated in 2021, showing the smooth tightly jointed gritstone surface.

The location of Trench 14 and several test pits which were also dug to examine the potential alignment of Roman roads are shown on the contour survey plan below.



2022 Trench 14 and test pit locations are shown in red.



Test pits being excavated on the projected line of the road from the east gate. Last year two test pits found stone spreads in this area which required further exploration. Trench 14 is at the rear alongside the fence (marked by the blue coat).

Trench 14 was initially extended two metres to the west. Despite the difficult digging conditions (roots and confined working space), it was possible to show that the smooth gritstone surface ran right across the trench, either side of a stone wall that ran southwards from the cottage and which is shown on maps going back to 1822. Frustratingly, a modern black (possibly electric) cable was encountered, curtailing excavation beside and across the wall which had been heavily disturbed by the cable trench. It was not clear how far the lower stone surface extended so Trench 14 was continued westwards for a further 2 metres.



The smooth stone surface is visible in the base of the trench and appears to run under the later stone wall (under the right-hand photo scale). More large stones came up on the right of the picture leading to the trench being extending further westwards.

Another possible wall top was encountered with its west side being obscured by an overlapping layer of densely concentrated small, medium and large sized gritstones. These were at various angles and looked like a deposit of rubble rather than a laid surface. The stone layer was sealed by a thin layer of topsoil and the turf. Finds from above and within the stone layer were plentiful and of mainly 19th century date. The stone deposit was similar to that seen in Test Pit 20 from 2019 and in Test Pits 21 and 22 dug in 2022 (see description below).



The gritstone spread occurred at a shallow depth and was revealed adjacent to and partly overlying the wall (seen on the left of this photo).

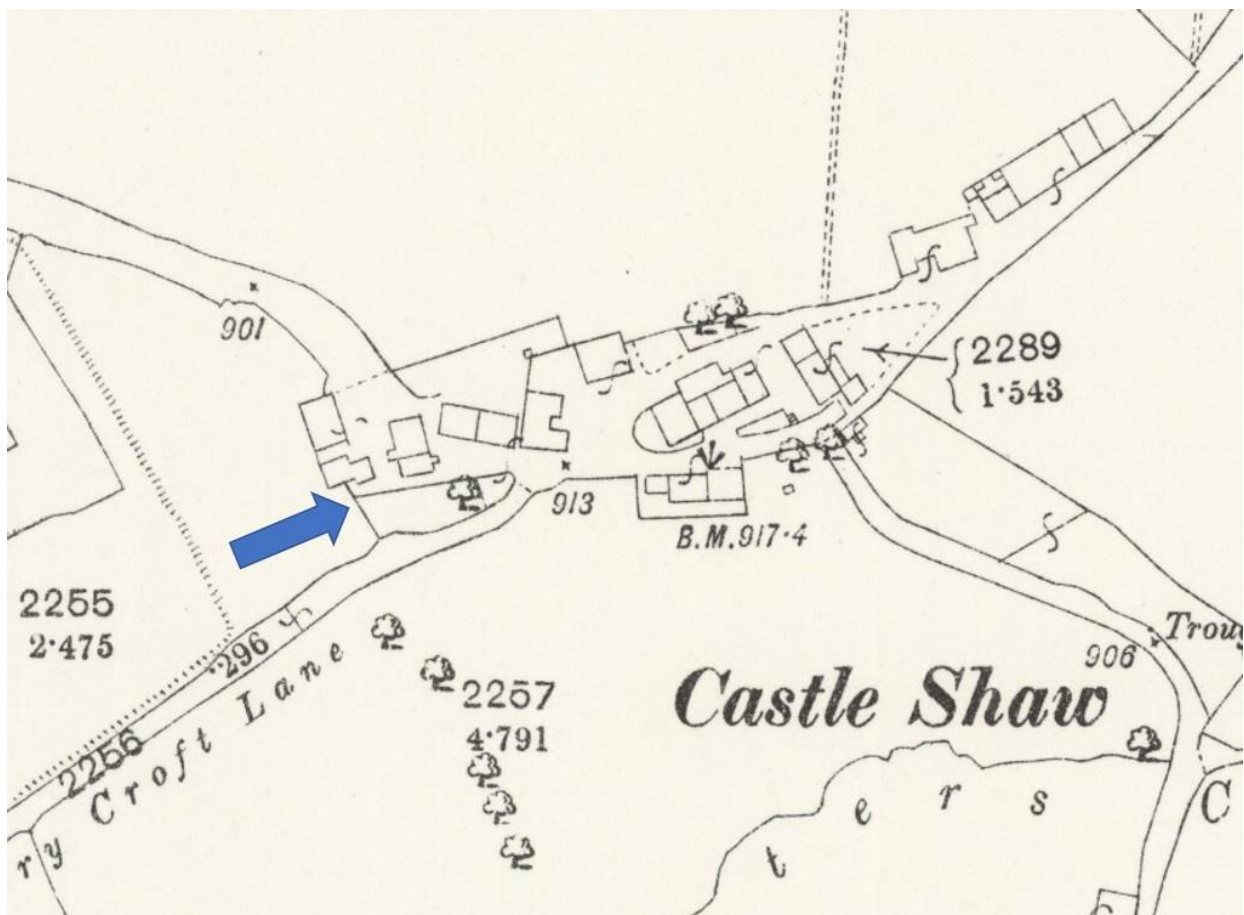
Excavation through the rubble layer found the other side of the wall, with the centre having been smashed by the cable trench. It gave a width of nearly 1.5 m. Clearly this was a very substantial wall. Filling against west side of the wall was deposit of rubble and light brown soil, with frequent pieces of white mortar, sometimes concentrated together. This looks like a demolition deposit. At a considerable depth and sealed by this deposit was a line of large roughly shaped stones. The height of the stones was 277.73 m AOD, compared with stone 'floor' surface revealed further east which was at 277.69 m AOD and 277.64 m AOD, so only a slight variation in height. The line of stones appears to form a narrow wall foundation and it can be argued that a wall return at a higher level is represented by two stones projecting westwards from the substantial wall running south from the cottage described above. However, the lower wall does not truly align with the higher, main wall projection so further work is needed to define the relationship. The west end of the wall was not determined due to time constraints and will be pursued in 2023. But what might be an internal or corner return wall was found when the trench was extended about one metre northwards. This took the form of a line of stones of similar type running at right angles to the west to east lower wall, but the presence of tightly packed rubble made it very difficult within the time and space available so this part of the trench will be expanded next year. The inside corner created by the two walls contained loose rubble mortar and light brown soil which was not excavated. Again, further excavation is required to see if there is a floor level under this deposit or perhaps a cellar. The lower wall alignment is not shown on any maps. Given that medieval pottery has been found from excavations of the cottage site nearby, it is possible that we are looking at part of a medieval antecedent to Husteds Cottage/Farm. There is a slight chance this might be a Roman road kerb or even a building foundation; however, the lack of Roman finds and the preponderance of post medieval pottery in the sealing rubble deposit argue against this interpretation.



Looking east across the western extension of Trench 14 showing the lower stone wall foundation.



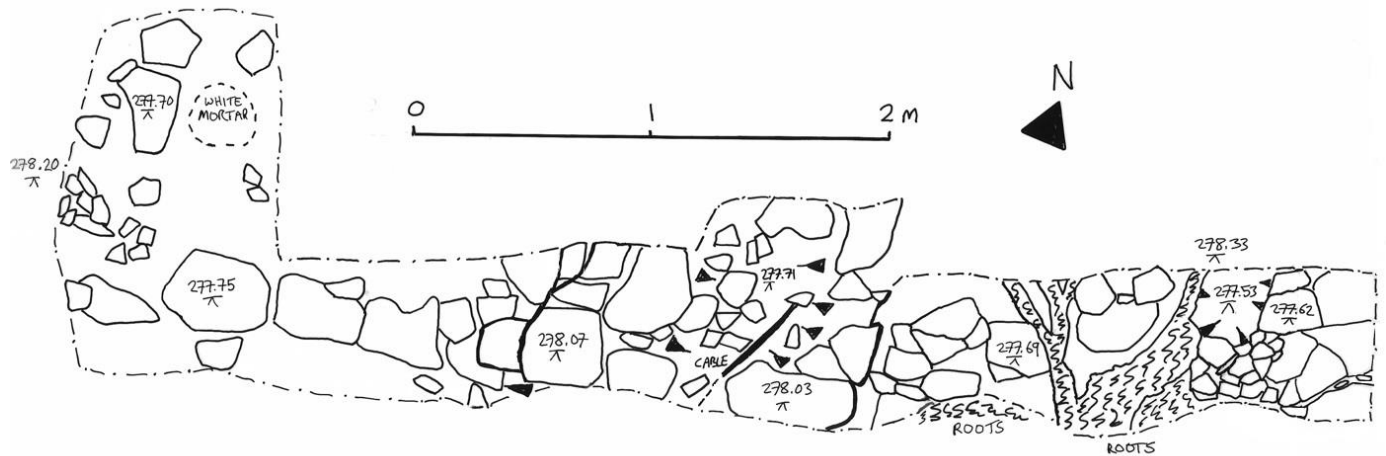
And after further extension of the trench, showing the possible return wall to the left.



OS 1892 25" map extract showing the wall encountered in Trench 14.



View across the cottage excavation in 2014 showing the wall at the far side (arrowed) which ran across Trench 14 next to the fence in the background.



Plan of Trench 14



A Victorian child's shoe sole came from the rubble deposit.



Finds from the topsoil and rubble layer.



Decorative black basalt stone ware (left) and brass button (right)



Sherds from a Buckley ware storage jar from the topsoil layer.



Finds from the stone layer under the topsoil (left) and from the rubble layer immediately above the stones in the base of the trench (right).



A clay pipe stem and fine dark glazed earthenware rim from immediately above the stone wall foundation.

Test Pit 21

This was located 1 metre south of Test Pit 20 which had been excavated on the last digging day in 2021 and had revealed a stone rubble deposit of unknown extent, date and function. TP21 also uncovered a stony deposit. This took the form of densely concentrated small and medium angular gritstones lying just 10 cm under the turf and a thin layer of topsoil. The stones were set in a mid-to dark brown silty clay loam which overlay a mid-brown-yellow clay loam which in turn came off onto a flat stone layer. The upper stone deposit had the appearance of a dump of material forming a wedge-shape, being deeper at the north-east corner of the test pit and may have originated from a demolished cottage which lay in that direction. The clayey material contained a lot of dark glazed earthenware pottery of mainly 18th and 19th century date, with a small number of white, yellow and brown glazed sherds, a piece of iron, a clay pipe stem and a couple of glass fragments. Pottery of this period was also on the surface of and within the underlying stone layer. The bottom stone layer comprised mainly medium-sized gritstones laid fairly flat. Half of this layer was excavated and was found to be only one stone deep, coming off onto natural yellow clay. The turf level was 278.04 m AOD, the top of the lower stone layer 277.72 m AOD and the natural 277.66 m OD



Test Pit 21 looking north with the lower stone layer visible on the left.



Test Pit 21 looking south with half the lower stone layer excavated to reveal natural clay.



Finds from the topsoil layer (left) and from the yellow clay above the stones dominated by black glazed earthen wares.



Second batch of finds from the base of yellow clay and the lower stone layer.

Test Pit 22

This was initially a 1 metre square test pit to the north of Test Pit 20, on the same south to north axis as TP 20 and 21. As with those test pits, a concentrated deposit of rubble gritstone was found at a shallow depth. The stones were randomly deposited in a matrix of dark brown silty clay loam which yielded a large quantity of post medieval pottery (including large sherds of black glazed earthenware), glass fragments, and ironwork. This could be rubbish originating from Husted's Cottage which lay a little to the north-east. Amongst the finds was a displaced orange-red rim sherd of Pennine Gritty Ware. It dates to the 13th to 15th century and, with two previously found medieval pottery sherds from this general area, indicates a medieval origin for the cottage site.

The cut of a possible ditch or trench could be seen running from top to bottom through the middle of the test pit so it was expanded to 2 m length to allow further exploration.



Test Pit 22 showing the rubble deposit and a possible cut.

The top layer of stones formed a shallow deposit 25 cm deep coming off onto a dark brown silty clay loam which also contained post medieval finds. The stones and underlying soil were cut in an east to west direction but the east, west and north sides were not determined being outside the test pit edges. The fill of the cut feature comprised a deposit of loose stones and mid- brown silty clay loam. Under this was a firmer layer of frequent medium to small angular gritstones set in a mid- brown-yellow clay loam. A rim sherd of 18th century yellow ware pottery came from this material confirming that the cut feature was post medieval. The feature was not fully excavated due to time and space constraints. The turf level was 278.20 m AOD, the top of the stone rubble 278.06 m AOD, the bottom of the upper stone layer 277.79 m AOD, the bottom clay and stone layer 277.58 m AOD.



Test Pit 22 looking west showing the cut in the middle of the trench.



Test Pit 22 showing the lower layer brown-yellow clay and stones.



Topsoil finds from TP 21.



Finds from the dark soil and rubble layer.

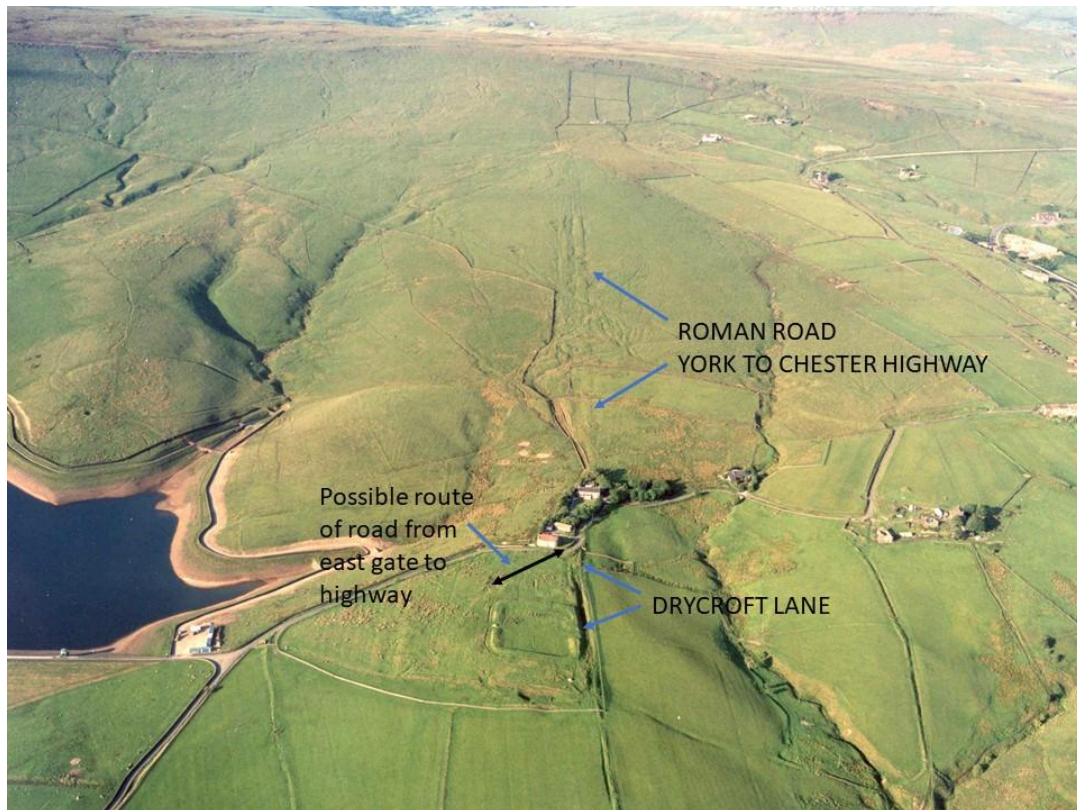


18th century yellow glazed earthen ware rim sherd from the yellow clay and stone layer in base of test pit.

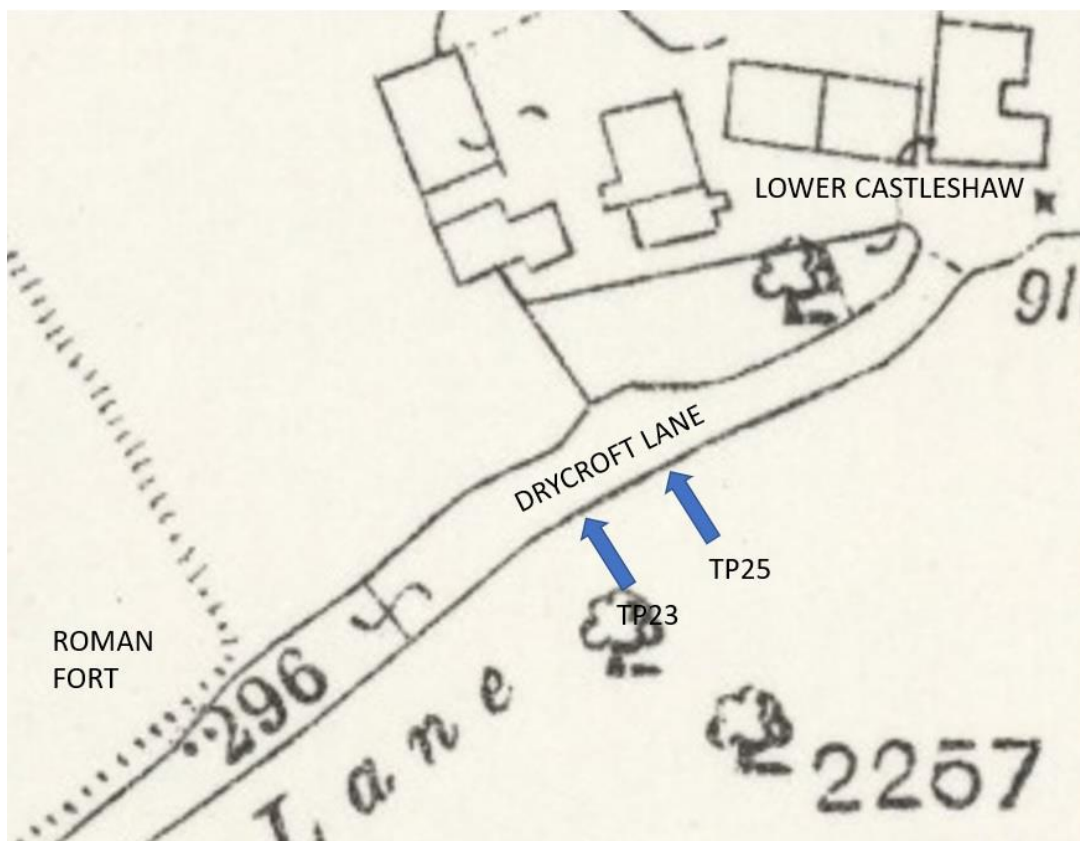
Test Pit 23

This was one of 3 test pits designed to examine the suspected area of the main Roman highway. The road's alignment is lost between the east side of Lower Castleshaw settlement and the west side of the Roman fort so it was hoped that evidence might be picked up for its course in this area where Drycroft Lane commences. Drycroft Lane is an 18th/19th century, now disused, routeway which connected Lower Castleshaw to Castle Cote lower down the valley. It runs immediately south of the Roman fort along the site

of the defensive ditch which it truncates. There is a stone wall mostly hidden by vegetation and much decayed that marked the south boundary of Drycroft Lane. This was targeted by Test Pits 23 and 25 in the hope that the wall sealed part of the original Roman highway. The ground in this area has been much disturbed through 20th century drainage works so perhaps the wall lay on top of a less disturbed remnant of Roman road.



Aerial photo showing Drycroft Lane, the east gate road alignment and the course of the Roman road above Lower Castleshaw.



1892 OS 25" map showing location of test pits over the southern boundary wall of Drycroft Lane.

Turf was removed from TP 23 to reveal remnants of the 19th century wall. The stonework was irregular and survived to a maximum depth of 50 cm and formed the foundation of the wall. It was found to overlie a layer of humic dark grey soil, c 30 cm deep, which in turn overlay a compact layer of small to medium stones in a gritty weathered sandstone matrix with iron pan staining. This layer proved to be fairly shallow, at a maximum 15 cm depth, and came off onto a deposit formed of lenses of light to mid-grey silt interspersed with dark orange decayed sandstone and iron staining. The stone layer died out a little to the south of the wall foundation. Several sherds of dark glazed post medieval pottery came from the grey silt layer ruling out a possible Roman origin for the stone layer above. The grey silt layer suggested a period of considerable water activity in this area. It was excavated to a depth of 25 cm but continued deeper. The top of the turf above the wall foundation was 277.62 m AOD, the top of the lower stone layer beneath the wall foundation was 276.60 m AOD.



Looking north at TP 23, showing the wall foundation material with dark humic soil and stone layer below.



A sondage through the stone layer in the west side of Test Pit 23 revealed a grey silt deposit with orange banding.



TP 23 topsoil finds (left) and pottery from immediately above the stone and clay layer (right).



Post medieval pottery from the silt deposit underneath the stone and clay layer.

Test Pit 24

This was located 2 metres to the south of TP 23. The photo below shows TP24 in the foreground, still being worked on, while TP 23 to the left and TP25 in the background have been backfilled.



Under turf and 15 cm of dark grey topsoil and 20 cm of light brown plough soil, TP 24 was found to contain the same grey silt with banding of decayed sandstone and iron staining encountered in TP 23. This material was very soft and occurred within the north half of the test pit, whilst to the south was a soft light to mid-brown silty clay loam. A lump of light yellow clay lay at the interface. A slot dug along the east side of the test pit showed in the north-east corner the grey silt going down about 60cm to a 10 cm layer of loose gravel in a gritty matrix, which lay over a compact shale natural base. The grey silt appears to fill a cut through the brown deposit and a steeply angled cut into the natural could be seen in east section. There were no Roman finds, with a sherd of 18th century yellow ware coming from the top of the grey silt deposit. So TP24 appears to show the cut of a deep negative feature. The depth of the cut made it difficult to explore further. It was initially hoped that it could be the roadside ditch for the Roman road, but the lack of any stonework and Roman finds together with the silt fill containing post medieval finds make this unlikely – it is more realistic to suggest a connection with 18th century water supply to textile mills in the valley below, as Bruton notes that the lane was also used for several months a year as a water course or reservoir (Bruton 1908). The silt fill was very similar to that seen in TP 23 and also TP 29 (described on page 48). The turf level was 276.79 m AOD and the base of the sondage 275.69 m AOD.



Test Pit 24 after removal of topsoil and plough soil. The edge between the grey silt deposit and the brown soil can be seen running left to right (east to west) across the test pit.



The east section of TP 24 showing cut on left (north) side.



Topsoil finds and (right) light yellow glazed sherds from the grey silt deposit, one having a roulette decoration.

Test Pit 25

Placed 7 metres to the east of TP 23, this test pit explored the remnants of a gritstone wall which was bound with lime mortar which was partially visible on its south side, the rest being obscured under turf. Removal of the turf showed that the wall survived to a maximum of 4 courses. It is shown on historic mapping as the southern boundary wall of Drycroft Lane. Both sides were exposed to better understand the wall width, construction technique and to see if it overlay the Roman highway. The wall was founded on the same uncoursed rubble stonework seen in TP 23.



Test Pit 25 looking north.

A damaged west end of the wall was exposed. A section through this demonstrated that the rubble foundation overlay the same dark grey humic soil as found in TP 23. Wall tumble was evident either side of the wall. It was noted that the rubble foundation was much deeper on the south side of the wall, perhaps acting as revetting material. The wall was 40 cm wide and had a narrow loose rubble-filled core. The top of the wall at its western end was at 278.03 m AOD, the base at 277.45 AOD, and the foundation rubble base at 277.07 AOD. As with TP 23, it can be concluded that the wall does not sit over a Roman road.



Looking south across the wall, showing the dark grey humic soil underneath.



Looking east showing the wall in section and (right) the few finds from the topsoil.

Test Pit 26

This was located 2 metres to the west of TP 20 which had been dug in 2021. TP 26 was designed to check the eastern extent of the stone layer seen in TP 20 and also TP21 and TP22 (described above). It was quite different in character to the test pits to the east. Under 30 cm depth of topsoil was a 20 cm deep deposit of mid-brown-yellow clay loam containing frequent small to medium-sized gritstones, gradually diminishing to the west. This material came off onto a yellow-orange clay loam with fewer stones which was deemed to be sub-natural. Cut into this, in the middle of the test pit, was a circular post hole measuring 19 cm across and 18 cm deep. The post hole was filled with a mixed mid- yellow-brown clay loam with occasional stones. The turf level was at 277.95 m AOD, the top of the sub-natural at 277.53 m AOD and the base of the post hole at 277.35 m AOD. There were no finds from the post hole fill but given it's depth and character it could be Roman in origin.



Looking south-east across Test Pits 26 (foreground), 22 (left) and 21 (in background).



Test Pit 26 looking south, showing the half-sectioned post hole.



Finds from the topsoil in TP26.

Test Pit 27

This was located on the north side of Drycroft Lane 3 metres north of TP 23. A mixed deposit of mid- grey-brown silty clay loam c 15 cm lay under the topsoil of 25 cm depth. A sondage in the north-east corner of the test pit showed that this material went down to a depth of 41 cm on to natural yellow clay. The turf level was at 277.34 m AOD and the natural clay at 277.02 m AOD. A few post medieval glazed pottery finds and a clay pipe stem came from the topsoil. There was no evidence for the Roman road here and it looks as though this area has been disturbed/truncated by previous ground works perhaps for drainage.



Test Pit 27 looking south and (right) the sondage showing natural clay in the base.



The topsoil finds.

Test Pit 28

A visible modern drain disturbed much of the ground within the former Drycroft Lane. This drain ran from the bend of Dirty Lane and took off surface rainwater. In pursuit of the elusive main Roman road, TP 28 was positioned south of the area disturbed by the modern drain. It was located on the east side of Drycroft Lane which can be seen as a hollow-way on the right side of the photo below. In the far righthand side can be seen the rampart of the fort and a gap where the south gateway lies. Excavations in the mid-1990s in the field to the left of the fence found some truncated remains of the late 1st century main road opposite the south gate. In around AD 120 this road had been mostly removed and looped around the back (north side) of the fortlet to allow room for buildings to be erected in the field opposite the south gate. We hoped to find evidence for the main highway continuing eastwards beyond the fort.



Under topsoil and brown plough soil was found a deep deposit of light to mid-brown silty clay loam similar to that recorded in TP24. At c 70 cm deep natural clay was encountered, cut by a possible ditch. These were revealed in a sondage excavated in the south-east corner of the test pit. There were no finds and the potential ditch cut was not explored further. It was intended to come back to this test pit to undertake further

work, but instead it was later decided to excavate 2 new test pits on the same south to north axis in Drycroft Lane and lining up with Trench 12 dug in 2021. The turf was at 276.50m AOD on the south side of the test pit, 267.42 m AOD on the north side, with the shelf being at 275.80 m AOD and the base of the sondage (bottom of the cut feature) at 275.57 m AOD.



Test Pit 28 looking east, showing the shelf on the right and the cut to the left of the shelf.

Test Pit 29

This was positioned two metres to the north-west of TP 28 to look for the 19th century road surface of Drycroft Lane and, hopefully, an earlier Roman road lying underneath.



Excavating TP 29 (left) and TP 30. In the background Drycroft Lane can be seen continuing past the Roman fort rampart. Here it becomes a deep earthwork which is often mistaken for the Roman ditch but is actually the 18th century lane/reservoir cutting through the Roman defences, as demonstrated by GMAU excavations (Start et al 1986).

Test Pit 29 was located 2 m to the north of TP28. It contrasted with TP 28 in that it consisted of soft grey silt interspersed with layers of dark orange decayed sandstone – very similar to the material encountered in TP 24 to the east. This deposit was around 60 cm deep lying under 20 cm of topsoil. There were plenty of finds, mainly comprising 19th century glazed pottery and clay pipe stems but also two pieces of leather shoe soles. Under the grey silt was a very loose deposit of small gritstones and gravel with dark orange-brown iron decayed sandstone and iron staining. This gravelly material produced 19 sherds of post medieval dark glazed earthenware together with yellow and white sherds and a clay pipe stem. Some of the pottery was water-worn. The gravel was excavated to a maximum of 30 cm and formed a wedge-shaped deposit. Under it, revealed in a slot dug two-thirds of the test pit width on its east side, was a compact light to mid-grey clay sloping downwards from south to north. It can be concluded that there is no evidence for Roman archaeology here. Given the 18th and 19th century finds, some of which are abraded by water action, it is suggested that TP 29 lies within the 18th century reservoir which has been lined with clay, and that the gravel and stone deposit forms the metalling for Drycroft Lane. The turf level was 276.39 m AOD on the south side and 276.33 m AOD on the north of the test pit. The top of the gravel deposit was at 275.61 m AOD and the grey clay base 275.30 m AOD.



The grey clay can be seen in the bottom of TP 29 under the photo scale, underlying the gravel and grey silt deposits.



The topsoil finds (left) and from the grey silt deposit (right).



Remains of a 19th century male leather sole (left) and finds from the base gravel deposit (right)

Test Pit 30

This was 1 metre north of TP 29 and just 0.5 m south of Trench 12 which was dug in 2021. Excavation through 15 cm of topsoil showed a mixed mid-grey-yellow clay loam layer with frequent small gritstones which was 10 cm deep and overlay natural firm grey-yellow clay and shale. The natural was visible on the north side of the test pit but in the southern half a different material was present, this being formed of grey silt with dark orange banding as seen in TP 29. A sondage in the south-east corner showed the cut into natural. The test pit was finished at this stage and backfilled. TP 29 has located the north side of the negative feature seen as a cut in TP 28 and the base of which was evident in TP 29. This feature is interpreted as being part of the narrow linear 18th century reservoir which was metalled and used as a routeway (Drycroft Lane) in the 19th century. Once the sunken lane went out of use silt washed down to partly infill it. Three sherds of pottery came from the grey silt, two dark glazed earthen ware and one white glazed of 19th century date. There was no evidence for a Roman road and we must now look further south for this. The turf level on the south side of TP 30 was at 276.45 m AOD, on the north side 276.50 AOD, the natural clay surface being at 276.19 m AOD and the base of the sondage 275.92 m AOD.



Test Pit 30 looking east, with a sondage dug in the south-east corner showing the cut containing grey silt.



Post medieval pottery from grey silt deposit.

Test Pit 31

This was placed 4 metres to the east of Trench 13 and close up to the fort rampart. This spot was chosen because a previous geophysical survey had shown a strong linear anomaly in this area that could represent another stone structure running at right angles to the rampart. This would help inform our excavation strategy for next year. After removing around 35 cm of brown plough soil a silty brown deposit was encountered. A sondage was dug through the corner to test the depth of this layer which was still going down at another 30 cm depth. There were no finds. As this was dug on the last day of the excavation, there was not enough time to pursue this further. There appears to be a considerable depth to deposits here, probably due to its position in the lee of the rampart. Next year it will be more practical to work westwards from the edge of Trench 13 to explore this area further. The turf level on the west side of the test pit was 277.40 m AOD, on the east 277.24 m AOD, with the base of the sondage being at 276.63 m AOD.



Test Pit 31 looking east.

Conclusion

The large area excavation in Trench 13 has revealed the most substantial Roman structural remains yet seen in the recently discovered military annexe. A large flagstone platform (F2) 2.5 metres wide and over 9 metres long has been uncovered. The eastern extent of F2 has not yet been determined. There are two phases of stone floors, the much better-preserved earlier phase being sealed by yellow clay (003) and overlain by an upper, disturbed stone surface (F1). There have been only two small sherds of possible Roman orange ware pottery but from the surface of F2 came a Roman a blue glass gaming counter and a possible broken-off sword blade tip.

There are discrete patches of burning suggestive of hearths and ovens close to the stones and it is suggested, based on current evidence, that the stone platform gave access to cooking and processing areas. A clay oven (F11) was partially excavated in 2019 and lay just outside the mid- south edge of Trench 13. A series of burnt deposits (F8) are probably rake-out deposits from F11. On the east side of Trench 13 concentrations of charcoal and burnt daub, together with stake holes, suggest the site of another clay oven (F6). In this area there was also a concentration of lead fragments which are currently interpreted as being waste material from nearby lead processing of uncertain character. Deposits associated with F6 lay over the stone track. F2 terminates at its west end in line with a stone track F3, so it is reasonable to conclude that the track gave access onto and was contemporary with the stone surface.

On the north-west side of the stone platform there is some evidence for cut features and a possible drain or building foundation slot (F5) has been identified running out from under the separate stone surface (F4) in the north-west corner of Trench 13. A Roman blue glass melon bead fragment came from the side of F5. A possible building slot (F10) runs parallel with the south edge of the stone platform F2 and at right angles to F5. The alignment of F10 continues westwards into the old Test Pit 15 from 2019 where it was partially excavated (as F11) along with a post hole that could indicate the corner of a timber building tight up against the stone platform. It is possible that F9 and F5 meet up under F4. The function of F4 is not yet known. It might be another working platform or it may even be the footings of a wall, although there does not appear to be a foundation trench. It belongs to a later phase as it lies over the gully F5 on its north side and it appears to overlie a charcoal filled feature/deposit on the west side.

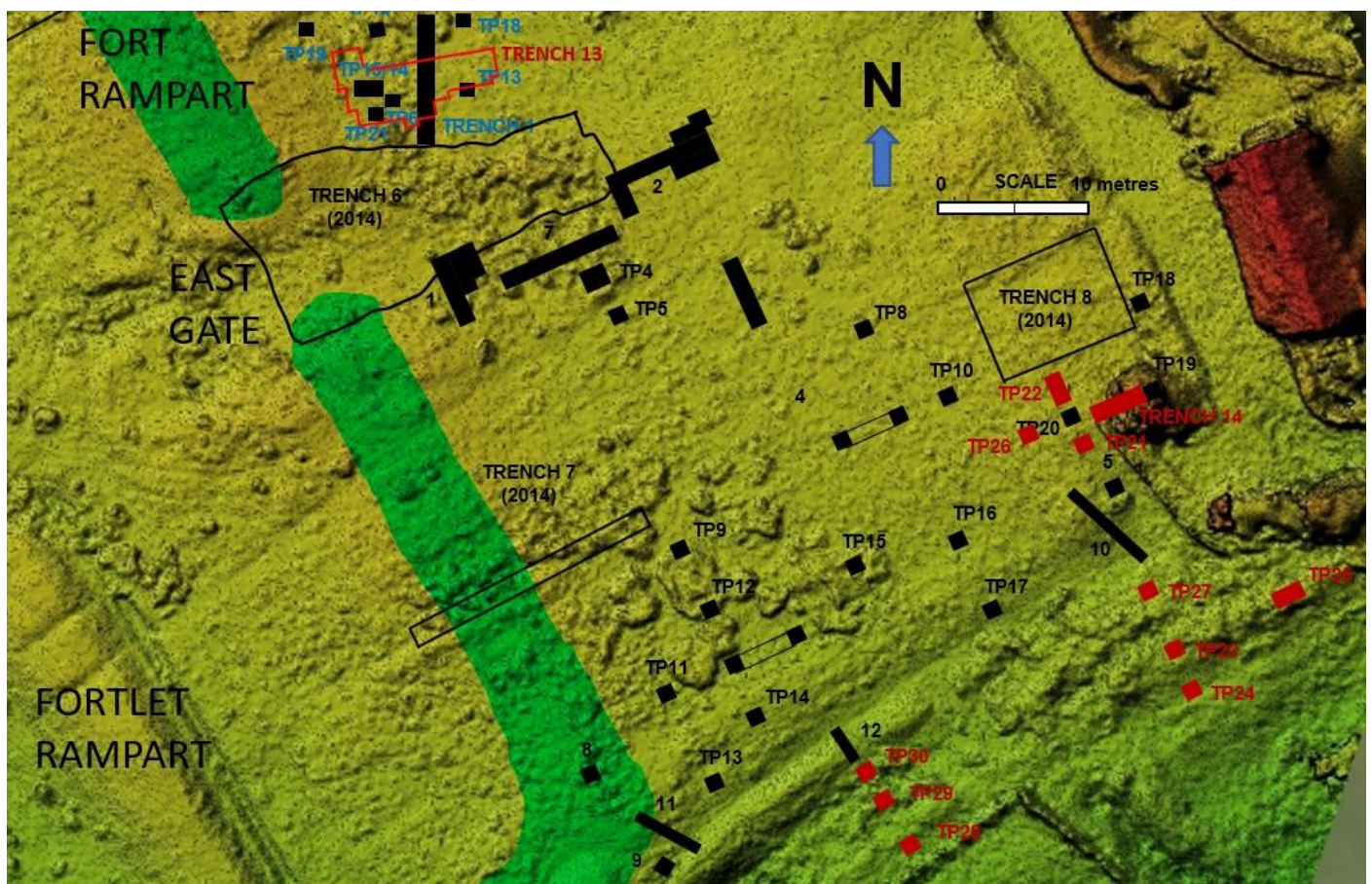
It is interesting to note that the main stone platform F2 runs parallel with the fort east gate exit road, on a roughly north-west to south-east alignment. It is therefore suggested that the stone platform and possible ovens belong to the late 1st century AD fort phase of activity, rather than the later early 2nd century fortlet.

Trench 14 produced stone walls and an early well-laid stone surface. This was a difficult area to excavate with a lot of demolition stonework from the adjacent cottage site overlying earlier stone features. The stone surface appeared to be a floor running under a later stone wall which was present on historic maps going back to 1822. The wall ran north to south from the adjacent cottage site which was the subject of excavation in 2014. What appears to be a lower wall foundation associated with the stone floor runs east to west underneath this later phase wall. Given that medieval pottery has been found from excavations of the cottage site nearby, it is possible that we are looking at part of a medieval antecedent to Husted's Cottage/Farm. There is a slight possibility that the lower stonework is a Roman road kerb or even a building foundation; however, the lack of Roman finds and the preponderance of post medieval pottery in the sealing rubble deposit argue against this interpretation.



This aerial drone photograph, taken by Joolze Dymond, shows the location of Trench 13 in relation to the east gate of the fort. It also shows the location of Trench 14 and Test Pits 29 and 30.

11 test pits were excavated in addition to Trenches 13 and 14. For convenience their locations are shown on the plan below. TPs 21, 22 and 26 examined the stone deposit previously indicated by TP 20 in 2021. TPs 21 and 22 found that this deposit was post medieval in origin and not related to a Roman road running from the east gate. TP 26 demonstrated that the stone spread did not extend this far westwards and it identified a possible Roman post hole.



In his first interim report on his excavations at Castleshaw Roman forts, Francis Bruton describes Drycroft Lane and its previous use as a reservoir (Bruton, 1908, p 11):

'The lane is little better than a stream-bed, and is so marked in the oldest known plans of the Roman forts. It affords a curious example of the ancient water rights of the district. When the mills were running in the valley below, the owner of one of them could insist on a stream being turned down this lane for a certain number of months of the year.'

Thomas Percival's Plan of Castleshaw, dated to 1751 (Bruton, 1908, p 13), appears to show this water feature running at an angle from the south-east corner of the fort rampart. In GMAU's excavations in the 1980s, Trenches 4, 5 and 9 were cut through the lane adjacent to the fort's south rampart. It was clear, especially against the eastern corner of the fort in Trench 9, that the defences had been truncated by the lane which cut cleanly down into natural shale below the rampart (Start et al, 1986, p 45). The base of Test Pit 29 found evidence for clay lining which may have been for a linear reservoir to hold water diverted down the lane. The loose gravelly deposit lying over the clay would have acted as metalling for the lane, with the grey silt with its dark orange banding being the result of water action filling in the lane after it had gone out of use. Finds dating to the 18th and 19th centuries, some of them water-worn, lend support to this explanation. Test Pits 30 and 28 picked up the cut edges of the lane/reservoir feature and it is suggested that Test Pits 23 and 24 also came across this feature, with the cut in Test Pit 24 and the grey silt in Test Pit 23 adjacent to the later stone wall. This latter feature was explored in Test Pits 23 and 25. The wall was found to be sat on a rubble foundation which overlay a dark grey humic layer which in turn overlay a layer of gravel which overlay the grey silt. The wall defined the south side of Drycroft Lane and is shown on all historic maps going back to 1822. This suggest the lane's use as a water feature finished in the early 19th century, or that the wall was rebuilt at a later date. As can be seen in the photo below, the upper part of Drycroft Lane has been heavily disturbed by 20th century drainage. There was no evidence for Roman finds or the Roman road in this area which may have been lost due to this later activity.



Looking west from the top of Drycroft Lane showing the modern drainage channel which runs down the centre of the lane before turning at right angles to the left just before the fence on the far left of the photo. The southern boundary wall of the lane can be seen left of centre (where TP 25 was excavated).

The 2022 excavations have thrown more light on the nature and extent of archaeological remains relating to the recently discovered annexe attached to the east side of the fort. Combined with the results from 2019 and 2021, our current understanding of the annexe is as follows:

- 1) There are shallow remnants of a rampart and ditch running from the eastern corner of the fort towards Lower Castleshaw settlement and Dirty Lane. These defences are marked by a low earthwork. The eastern and northern extent of the ditch and rampart have not yet been defined, but it is anticipated that Dirty Lane forms the boundary. It is suggested that the defences are for a military annexe attached to the east side of the fort.
- 2) The southern half of the annexe appears to be featureless, other than occasional possible post holes. The area is flat and has suffered from post medieval landscaping so that the road running from the fort's east gate to re-join the main highway has been mostly removed.
- 3) The northern half has considerably more archaeological remains; the terrain is more uneven, either reflecting less post medieval disturbance or the difference in Roman activity. A bank of stone ovens has previously been uncovered, and evidence produced for two and probably more clay ovens. Lead waste hints at industrial processes – their exact purpose at present remains unknown. A range of post holes and possible foundation slots indicate timber buildings, although the form of these has not yet been established. A cobbled trackway angles northwards from the east gate of the fort to a long, narrow stone platform which, based on current evidence, appears to give access to ovens and various industrial processes. The full extent of the platform and the processes and features it served are not currently defined.

So why an annexe and not a *vicus*? An annexe was a military enclosure attached to a fort which was dedicated to essential functions not usually undertaken in the fort; this might include the housing of animals, goods in transit, food processing or minor industrial processes. The emerging evidence suggests all of these could be applicable to Castleshaw. Here the fort lies next to the main trans-Pennine highway which would have been busy with travellers who, going eastwards, were faced with a very steep climb up to Standedge. Perhaps draught animals were held in the annexe to be hitched up to wagons before making the ascent. Accommodation, food and drink may have been prepared for travellers and the team looking after the animals. This scenario would accord with the southern half of the annexe being a levelled, blank area which may have been a coral for the animals. The northern half, by contrast, is busy with timber buildings, ovens, and possible industrial processing. Despite the east side of the fort being the flattest, and therefore the most vulnerable side, the rampart is not defended by a ditch – a most unusual and rare situation for Roman forts. This must be due to the presence of the annexe. A *vicus* is a civilian settlement attached to a fort and sometimes defended by a rampart or/and ditch, but it would be unthinkable and unique for there to be no ditch separating the civilians from the fort.

The Agricola fort at Elginhaugh in Scotland was, like Castleshaw, a short-lived site with perhaps a decade of occupation. The site was fully excavated and provides a fascinating and contemporary comparator for Castleshaw. Hanson, in his publication of 2007 describes the excavation and function of what he interpreted as an annexe attached to the fort (Hanson 2007, p 87-100). He pointed out the issue with comparative analysis in that so few annexe interiors have had extensive archaeological investigations, and that defended *vici* may be confused in some instances with annexes. He considered the rampart and ditches surrounding the Elginhaugh annexe to be very slight compared with the fort defences and more to demarcate the annexe as an ancillary enclosure. Similarly at Castleshaw the bank and ditch that have been discovered on the south side of the annexe are much less substantial than the defences of the fort. He also mentions that at Malling and Cargill forts in Scotland the annexe is separated from the fort by only a rampart. This is also the situation at Castleshaw. It is worth noting that Slack fort near Huddersfield, 8 miles east of Castleshaw and probably built by the same unit, also has a section of rampart with no ditch; this coincides with the location of the bath house. It is not clear if the bath house at Slack sat within a defended enclosure and, to date, no bath house has come to light at Castleshaw fort. At Elginhaugh there were several phases of activity in the annexe even though it was a short-lived site. This was particularly true of the industrial processing areas where there was intensive use. The road was the focus for activity, with hearths, ovens, pits and iron working. Foundation slots for simple, timber strip buildings were found. Activity decreased away from the road and in one largely blank area evidence for a possible rail fence was found which may have served to tether horses. Hanson suggested this area was used as a wagon park and for horse grazing. So, although excavations are still at a relatively early stage within the enclosure attached to the east side of Castleshaw fort, the emerging evidence points strongly to a function as a military annexe.

In terms of the archaeological research strategy for Castleshaw Roman Forts (Redhead 2013), the 2022 investigations have contributed to:

Research Objective 8: Understanding how the fort functioned.

Research Objective 9: Understanding the road network.

Research Objective 10. Understanding the immediate hinterland.

The greatest contribution has been towards Objective 8, in relation to emerging evidence for the presence of a military annexe attached to the east side of the fort and its relationship and function in relation to the fort. Objective 9 has seen limited progress due to post medieval disturbance, although some areas of potential Roman road survival can now be dismissed. Objective 10 is all about what is happening immediately beyond the fort defences. The discovery of an annexe on the east side is a major step forward.

It is suggested therefore that the annexe is of late 1st century (Agricolan) date based on its relationship with the fort's eastern defences. The interpretation as a military annexe rather than a civilian settlement (*vicus*) is set out in the conclusion above. This means that we still do not know if the fort was in use long enough to establish a civilian settlement as no evidence has yet been found for a *vicus*, although an extra-mural civilian settlement attached to the later fortlet and dated to around AD 120 was postulated for remains excavated on land opposite the southern defences by GMAU in 1996-7 (Redhead 1997). So, based on our current knowledge, the Agricolan fort at Castleshaw is in a similar situation at Elginhaugh where there was very little evidence for a civilian presence.

Trench 14 has shown potential to inform a research objective for the post Roman period.

Research Objective 23:

The growth of the medieval hamlet: across the region, settlement study has largely focused on nucleated villages and moated sites rather than the origins of more dispersed sites like Castle Shaw. The exact nature of any medieval settlement adjacent to the site remains unknown. Documentary evidence, and the echoes of settlement layout preserved on later maps, would seem to indicate Castleshaw grew up around the road junction and there is no evidence to suggest a more nucleated settlement at this time. However, as yet there is no archaeological dating evidence for the foundation of the settlement. In particular, whether there was an Early Medieval or Medieval precursor of the settlement or whether the hamlet only comes into existence in the 17th century. Research Objective 23.

Archaeological evidence in terms of medieval pottery finds and the possible early wall foundation from Trench 14 indicate a late medieval origin for Lower Castleshaw settlement. Further investigation will shed more light on this aspect of the site.

The recently revised Historic Research Framework for the North West of England (Nevell & Redhead eds, 2023) has a section dedicated to research questions under the Roman agenda theme *R3: Military Activity* (Philpott, 2023, 109). Two of the questions have relevance to the current investigations at Castleshaw:

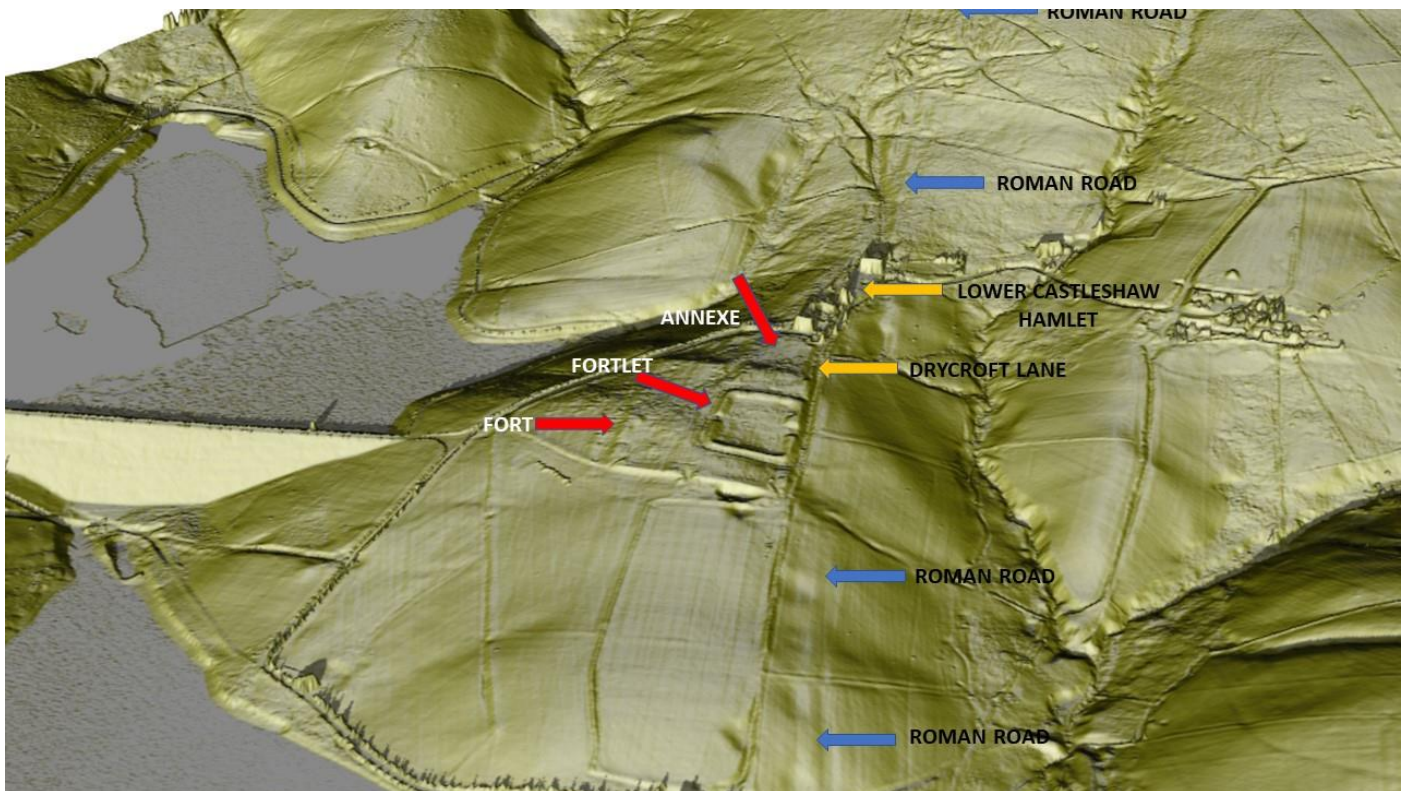
Q11. How can we identify typologies and the development of military sites and Roman road systems?

Q14. What were the date, extent, function and changes over time of extra-mural settlement (vici) in the region?

As set out above, the discovery of what appears to be an annexe attached to the east side of the late 1st century AD fort is a significant advancement in our knowledge of the character, form and development of the Castleshaw site. At the moment, the road system is quite well understood as it approaches the fort but not close up to the fort, so there is more research to do on this. The reference in Q14 to *vici* is interesting as there is a gap in the research agenda relating to military annexes - in terms of their distribution, chronology, form, and relationship to a fort and *vici*. Hanson has identified the paucity of archaeological excavation of annexe sites in Scotland and possible confusion with *vici*; does this also apply to the North West of England?

It is worth noting that only in the last two years has Lidar coverage been made available for the whole of Castleshaw Valley. Elsewhere analysis of Lidar data is producing excellent results on Roman road identification and re-examination of military site. This is a useful tool that Phil Barrett, one of the Friends of

Castleshaw Roman Forts, has been able to manipulate in order to provide unique views of the topography and archaeological interest of the forts and Roman road, as well as other features within the valley landscape. This work is already proving useful, for instance in highlighting the difference in the terrain between the north and south sides of the annexe.



Lidar plot of the forts and Roman highway, east is at the top. Courtesy of Phil Barrett.

Recommendations

For the 2023 excavation season the following programme of targeted investigation is proposed.

Trench 13 will be extended to define activities and structures served by the stone platform. An initial priority is to determine the eastern extent of the stone platform (F2) and to expose more of the stone track (F3) to see how it links with the road as it exits the east gate. The areas around slots F5, F9, F10 and the separate small stone platform F4 will be opened up and the slots excavated to reveal their form and function. The partially visible stone feature F7 will be exposed further westwards towards the fort's south rampart to determine its extent and function. It is also intended to locate and further explore the stone platform on the north side of the east gate that was partially revealed in the 2014 excavation. In the eastern half of Trench 13 there was considerable burning evident alongside F2; this area will be extended to define the extent of the burnt material and to look for ovens/hearths/processing from which it is derived.

If time and resources permit, Proposals Area 8 will be investigated to determine the extent and character of post holes, pits and potential foundation slots found c 25 metres east of the east gate.

The eastern and northern boundaries of the annexe defences need to be defined through targeted test pitting and trenching. The northern arm of the annexe defences may be represented by the potential rampart material seen in Test Pit 30 in the 2019 excavations and the possible ditch in Test Pit 33 just to the north of the kink in Dirty Lane. Further trenching is also required across the southern defences of the annexe to confirm their alignment and character.

Further work is required to locate the main highway immediately east of the Roman fort defences. This also applies to determining the course of the road exiting the east gate to re-join the highway, although it is accepted that a great deal of later disturbance (from post medieval development and landscaping) has damaged the area of potential archaeological interest.

Trench 14 produced several stone walls and an early well-laid stone surface. This was a difficult area to excavate with a lot of demolition stonework from the adjacent cottage site overlying earlier stone features. However, there is still a possibility of Roman archaeology in this area and perhaps a medieval structure. This Trench will be re-visited to resolve the extent, function and date of the structural remains.

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The Friends of Castleshaw Roman Forts during the excavation of Trench 13. Courtesy of Joolze Dymond.

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