

The brigantia archaeological practice



***A DESERTED MEDIAEVAL VILLAGE
off EDEN LANE, PETERLEE, C^O DURHAM***

A report to Peterlee Town Council



December 2004

THE BRIGANTIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE

BRITANNIA CHAMBERS
18a HORSEMARKET
BARNARD CASTLE
Co DURHAM DL12 8LZ



Tel./fax: 01833 630125 Email: enquiries@brigantiaarchaeology.co.uk

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**Survey by Percival Turnbull & Deborah Walsh
Report text by Percival Turnbull
Drawings by Deborah Walsh**

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‘Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And Desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries:
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.’

Goldsmith: *The Deserted Village*.

A DESERTED MEDIAEVAL VILLAGE off EDEN LANE, PETERLEE, C^o DURHAM

INTRODUCTION

1. On instructions from Peterlee Town Council, a topographic archaeological survey, augmented by a desk-top study of documentary and cartographic sources, was undertaken of an earthwork site of Eden Lane, Peterlee. The site is plainly that of a deserted mediaeval village, and has for the past century and a half been associated with the supposed pre-Conquest settlement of 'Yoden'.
2. Fieldwork was carried out in the autumn of 2004 by Percival Turnbull and Deborah Walsh, of this Practice, who have also been responsible for the production of this report.
3. The site is situated at (National Grid Reference) NZ 43204171, occupying a small area of open grassland on the north side of, and within the greater development of, the 'New Town' of Peterlee, which was first designated in 1948. It is an exposed site, near the edge of a distinct escarpment which drops sharply to the sea on the east. It claims extensive views to the north (where the skyline is dominated by the mediaeval tower of Easington parish church); the prospect to the south is now to some extent masked by landscaping and building. The farmhouse of Horden Hall lies less than a kilometre to the north, and that of Eden Hall a similar distance to the south.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4. On the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey, here dated 1861, the area of the Eden Lane earthworks is designated 'Quarry Hill'. To the north of the earthworks (sketchily but positively shown) is a 'Quarry': to the east of the earthworks are two smaller disturbances which are marked 'Old Quarries'; the suggestion seems to be that the northern one, not 'Old', is still in use at the time. This large northern quarry still dominates the area to the north of the earthworks (in an interesting illustration of the rapid growth of folklore, it is worth recording that some locals now refer to the quarry as 'Dead Man's Valley', and say that it was the grave of (for some reason) American servicemen during the Second World War). On the First Edition the earthworks are clearly shown and marked as 'Site of Supposed Village'. On later editions up to 1900 the landscape is virtually unchanged, though the village has been labelled 'Yoden'.
5. The fairly dense occupation of this part of County Durham is a result of the rapid expansion of the Durham coal industry in the second half of the 19th century (the first colliery at Horden was opened as late as 1900) and of the growth of Peterlee itself a century later. In the remoter past, however, the area was much more thinly populated. The traces of prehistoric settlement continue to be to some extent exiguous, despite the steadily growing contribution of aerial photography. Scatters of flints indicate Mesolithic and Neolithic occupation, but substantial evidence of the

nature, or indeed of the presence, of later prehistoric settlement is harder to find, despite the example given by the extensive and important Iron Age settlement at Catcote, near Hartlepool a short way to the south. It is possible that some sort of high-status Roman presence is indicated by the gold armlet found in the 19th century at Shotton Hall (Durham SMR 161); there is also a *sestertius* of Severus Alexander from Horden, but too much should not be conjectured on such a flimsy basis.

6. Settlement and burial of the Anglo-Saxon period are similarly ill-represented in the archaeological record; eastern County Durham has none of the extensive village sites and rich, mixed cemeteries more familiar from eastern Yorkshire (although a pagan cemetery is known at Norton, on the other side of the Tees). A magnificent exception is the fine glass claw-beaker of the 6th century, found at Castle Eden, still adhering to the skull of the Anglo-Saxon notable with whom it was interred, and now in the British Museum. The burial is of a particularly early date, and has interesting Kentish affinities, the vessel itself being a Frankish import. It belongs, of course, to a period several centuries before our first record of Horden and Ioden.

7. If one is to ignore various developments of the later Industrial Revolution, and of the Enclosure movement, the mediaeval landscape of the area is represented reasonably well by the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey map, which shows a thinly populated agricultural countryside. The village of Easington, with its important church, stands at the north of our area, 3 to 4 kilometres from the Eden Lane site. South of Easington the country is cut by a steep gill or dene, characteristic of the Durham coast and originally a product of glacial retreat; in the dene is the village of Little Thorpe and immediately south of it lies Horden Hall, a farmhouse of *circa* 1600 occupying a site of much greater antiquity. South of the Eden Lane earthworks lies Eden Hall, probably the site of the *villa* of Little Eden, and south of this again the emphatic and well-wooded trough of Castle Eden Dene and the village of Castle Eden. To the west of this line of settlements lie the more inland mediaeval clusters of Shotton and Haswell. All of the significant places known from documentary sources to have existed in the high Middle Ages are there, but most are represented by single farmsteads or very small clusters of buildings.

‘YODEN’ AND THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

8. It is necessary to examine critically the statements, frequently made, (firstly) that the site represents a pre-Conquest village, and (secondly) that the village was called Yoden. The source for these assertions is the writings usually attributed to Simeon of Durham, a Benedictine monk of Jarrow, later of Durham, who lived until the 1130s though the relevant documents probably date from the period 1102-09. His chief work is the "*Historia ecclesiae Dunelmensis*", written between 1104 and 1108, giving the history of the bishopric down to 1096. He also wrote "*Historia regum Anglorum et Dacorum*" (concerning the period from 732 to 1129). The first part, down to 957, is based on an unknown northern annalist who made large use of Asser; the next part, to 1119, follows Florence of Worcester; the remainder is an original composition: it is clear that Simeon had access to documents which have failed to survive centuries of destruction and Dissolution. For the purposes of this report, use has been made of the transcription given by the Surtees Society, LI (1868). Although he was writing about a time long before his own, Simeon's history is usually

considered to be fairly accurate; it should not, however, be taken as a *contemporary* source.

9. Three passages of Simeon's writing appear to have relevance to the present investigation. They may be considered in the order in which they appear in the manuscripts:

“Nam Ethred, superdictus abbas, emit a praefato rege Guthred, et a Danorum exercitu, qui sibi sub eo terram diviserant, has villas, Seletun, Horetun, duas Geodene, Holum, Twinlingatum, et eas Sancto Cuthberto contulit.”

“Quibus fugatis et tota terra superata, divisit villas Sancti Cuthberti, et alteram partem versus austrum dedit cuidam potenti militi suo qui vocabatur Scula, a villa quae vocatur Iodene, usque ad Billingham. Alteram vero partem dedit cuidam qui vocabatur Onalafball, a Iodene usque ad fluvium Weorram.”

“Tempore eiusdem Eadwardi regis Tilred Abbas de Hefresham villam quae vocatur Iodene Australis emit”

10. The context for these passages lies in the seizure of York, about the year 913, by the Hiberno-Norse king Ragnald; this brought the kingdom of York under the dominion of Dublin. To reward his military supporters, Ragnald gave them land in south and east Durham which had formerly been the property of the Bishop of Chester-le-Street (the see which was shortly to be moved, with the relics of Cuthbert, to Durham); the lands had originally been awarded in the 880s to the Community of St Cuthbert by the pagan Guthred in return for the support of Eadred, the Abbot of Carlisle, in Guthred's claims to the throne of Northumbria.

11. The first passage relates to the original acquisition by Eadred for the Community of St Cuthbert of the possessions, which include six named *villae*.

12. The second passage deals with Ragnald's division of the lands among his supporters. He is shown to give 'to a powerful knight called Scula' the land stretching from the *villa* of Ioden as far as Billingham; the other moiety, from Ioden to the River Wear, is given to someone called Onalafball (= 'Olaf Ball'?). The final passage refers to the acquisition by Abbot Tilred, in the time of King Eadward, of a *villa* which 'they call South Ioden'.

13. Caution should be exercised in the interpretation of the word '*villa*', used by Simeon and by virtually all mediaeval sources. Mediaeval Latin is a sadly degenerate offspring of its Classical forebear, and often imprecise. This word appears to have been applicable to anything from a single farm to a scattered estate or a substantial settlement; it should certainly not be assumed to indicate the presence of any sort of nucleated settlement- *id est*, it is not cognate with the word 'village'. At as late a date as 1900, several of the place-names cited by Simeon survived as single isolated farmsteads, and we should not *assume* that any given one was ever anything more. Matters are further complicated by that fact that many of the regular villages of County Durham, especially those of two rows facing each other across a green, have

been shown to be planned settlements of the later Middle Ages; this raises the possibility that sites which were simple farms in the Late Saxon period might have been re-established as villages five centuries later, only then to be abandoned.

14. The *villae* mentioned by Simeon are plainly clustered together within the same area. They are:

Seletun =Monk Hesledon?

Horetun =Horden

Holum =Hulam

Twinlingatum =?

Duas Geodene = 'Two Geodens' = *Ioden* + *Ioden Australis* = Ioden + South Ioden

15. The name of Ioden appears inescapably to be equivalent to 'Eden'. It is by no means clear when it came to be referred to as 'Yoden': the early form 'Geodene' supports a consonantal sound at the beginning, and the consonant Y is not, strictly speaking, available to the Latin scribe. 'Yoden' certainly seems to be a post-mediaeval construction and is probably a creation of Surtees, who seems to have transcribed 'Yoden or Joden' from Simeon's 'Geodene'.

16. At least since the time of Longstaffe (1852) it has been assumed that the Eden Lane earthworks, occupying a windy site with extensive views to north and to south, was the Ioden at which Ragnald divided the lands of Scula and of Olaf Ball; indeed, it seems that this idea originated with Langstaffe. The site lies, however, within the township of Horden. It seems very odd that Ioden should be within Horden; South Ioden, therefore, would have to be within the township of Little Eden. The township boundaries are known to reflect considerable continuity with mediaeval manorial boundaries. It must be far more likely that both Iodens lie within Eden township (they should certainly be within the *same* township); this would probably indicate a location for Ioden near Eden Hall, and for South Ioden at Castle Eden (where there is a deserted mediaeval village site, though admittedly of a later mediaeval form). Against this, we do have a reference to an early transfer of ownership of South Ioden, apparently on its own, to Abbot Tilred; this does not, however, substantially weaken the argument that both Iodens should be in the same township, since cases of multiple proprietors were common.

17. After the reference *tempore Eadwardi Regis* (and cited above) to South Ioden, the two Iodens are referred to together. The references are clearly to Eden, a fact which was apparent to Surtees (1816, vol. I, 40-45) if not later to Longstaffe. After the Norman Conquest, Eden became the lordship, and probably the seat, of Robert de Brus and his successors. There was a chapel there, and it is probable that a fortified manor-house of this powerful family gave rise to the name of Castle Eden. There is considerable documentation (epitomised by Surtees) until the village eventually became depopulated, the existing settlement of Castle Eden being of later origin.

18. The identification of the Eden Lane site with Ioden seems to have begun with Langstaffe (1852) who, apparently in ignorance of Surtees, wrote:

19. ‘The Yoden, which distinguished itself from South Yoden, and from the north side of Eden Dene overlooked Hartness, has dwindled to a farm-house or two. But the site of its village, perhaps, exists in a field about half-way in a line between Horden Hall and Eden Hall. The field is full of ruins within, as it appears, a bounding trench, and on their north side is a large cone, doubly or trebly trenched in a semi-circular manner, from the top of which a commanding and beautiful view of the sea-coast is acquired.’ (The ‘cone’ referred to is mentioned also in the excavation report of 1885 *vide infra*: it is there made clear that this is a slightly inaccurate description of the natural hill which rises to the north-east of the earthworks).

20. Ineluctably, we are drawn to the identification of the Eden Lane site with the late Saxon *villa* and later mediaeval village of Horden. This is supported by an earlier exegesis by David Austin (undated MS, believed to be 1973), unknown to the present authors at the time they first reached this conclusion.

21. In the 12th century (and after a long gap in documentation since the sources collected by Simeon) Horden had a simple tenurial arrangement; the manorial Lord of Horden acknowledged the Bishop of Durham as tenant-in-chief and was the only freeholder. The extent, or even the existence, of any village at this time is not indicated, but it is entirely possible that the manor consisted of a single farm worked by *villeins* who lived immediately around the manor house.

22. The first certain reference to a village at Horden (or, at least, to lands farmed by villagers) is as late as 1335, during an inquisition following the death of one of the Lords of Horden. The gist is summarised by Surtees:

23. ‘The manor of Horden is valued with respect to demesne lands which extend...to 400 acres which are valued *per annum* at £24. And there are 31 acres of meadow value *per annum* £4 13s. *Item* there is an orchard there valued at 10s. *Item* villeinage rent...valued *per annum* £7 20s 4d (*sic*).’

24. This allows a reasonably full reconstruction of 14th century Horden. As well as the manor house, there are 400 acres of land farmed directly on behalf of the Lord, bringing in an income of 1s *per* acre. There are 31 acres of particularly valuable meadow land, and an orchard; the peasants are farming on their own behalf land with a rental value of (presumably) £8 0s 4d. At the same valuation as the demesne lands this would suggest an area of about 130 acres; the rental is actually likely to be much less, and the acreage correspondingly more (it seems that the value of the demesne lands is calculated on their actual productivity; that of the villeinage lands should logically be based on their rental value to the Lord rather than on their productive value to the peasants).

25. A century later, a new valuation shows sweeping changes to the social and economic landscape of Horden (reflecting changes general in the north):

‘ In the manor a close called Le Parke value *per annum* 2s and a close called Hakelaw of 30 acres value *per annum* 12d. There are in the same manor 400 acres of demesne

land value 6s and 200 acres of pasture value *per annum* 12d. And there is in the same manor a certain waste vill called the vill of Horden, a parcel of the aforesaid manor, in which vill are 8 messuages and 8 cottages waste which are valued nothing and 200 acres of land which are valued at 16s *per annum*, 6 acres of meadow value per annum 18d, 200 acres of pasture which are valued *per annum* 2s.’

26. The scene is very different. Pasture land has replaced meadow; the village is abandoned (at our first clear glimpse of it!), but the villeinage lands are still accounted for; land has been enclosed and the manor house apparently surrounded by a park. Pasture apart, the amount of demesne land is unchanged; since it was neither pasture nor meadow, it was probably arable.

27. The total value appears to have dropped from £36 13s 4d to a mere £1 1s 6d. So dramatic a decline seems unlikely, and the most probable explanation is that the two surveys have been valued on different bases (perhaps of real income in 1335 and of rental value in 1431). It is difficult to say with confidence that the picture is of economic *decline*, especially if the Lord can be seen improving his personal amenities in such a fashionable and obvious way as the creation of a park, but it is evidently one of economic *change*. The obvious context for this is the late mediaeval trend over much of England, especially in the east, for landed proprietors to adopt a new and more profitable means of production by enclosing lands to create extensive sheep-walks. This process involved the fragmentation of long-standing feudal patterns of obligation and the dispossession of a great part of the English peasantry. Many explanations have at different times been postulated for the depopulation of mediaeval villages, the most commonly cited being war, famine and plague; in fact, seigneurial policy was a much more common cause of desertion.

28. Accepting, then, that the Eden Lane earthwork site represents the remains of the mediaeval village of Horden, it would seem to have been part of the lands given, shortly after 923, by Ragnald to Onalafbal, *alias* Olaf Ball. It is probable that no distinct village existed until well after the Norman conquest; the regular, two-row-with-green plan to which the site has generally been understood to conform (*e.g.*, Austin, unpub.) suggests an origin in the high Middle Ages, even as late as the 14th century, when it would have been laid out by the manorial proprietor as a ‘model’ settlement for eight tenant families. Some time in the early 15th century the Lord of Horden decided to convert his manor into a modern sheep-farm; this involved the eviction of the peasant tenants and the beginning of the enclosure of the landscape. The manor house prospered as the centre of the remodelled estate, so that the owners were able to rebuild in fashionable style in about 1600. Until the gradual industrial development of the area towards the end of the 19th century, and apart from the steady growth of enclosure, the landscape changed little after the abandonment of the village.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE SITE

29. The first occasion on which the attention of archaeological enquiry was focussed on the site was in 1884 when, prompted by Longstaffe’s identification of the earthworks with ‘Yoden’, excavations were undertaken under the direction of the wife of the then owner of Horden Hall. The investigation (Middleton, 1885) must have been on a small scale, and is unlikely to have observed more than what would now

seem the crudest standards of technique and stratigraphic control. The published report is very brief, and may be quoted at length:

30. 'The site in question has, within the past few weeks, been excavated by Mrs. Rowland Burdon, the proprietress of the Horden Hall estate. It was thought probable, from the name of the place and the occurrence of such antiquities in the neighbourhood, that Saxon remains might be found, and it was surmised that possibly the site might have been previously occupied by the Romans. But the use of the spade has proved it to be mediaeval only. The mounds cover foundations of the rudest description, consisting entirely of mere shapeless masses of un-hewn stone, chiefly the magnesian limestone of the district.

'The following objects have been found, viz. :-

'Part of a knocking stone or grinding stone, used for grinding or bruising barley, etc., by the agency of a round, flattish stone held in the hand. The rock of which it is composed is a somewhat coarse sandstone.

'A hone, or sharpening stone, of the the usual hard siliceous schist.

'A large number of pieces of green salt-glazed pottery, of the common mediaeval type, made probably between the 14th and the 16th centuries. The glaze was produced by coating the pottery with molten lead, and when the baking was almost completed, introducing a quantity of salt into the hot kiln.

'One or two fragments of brown-glazed pottery.

'A bronze buckle, or "girdle-end," of about the 16th century.

'A few bones of domestic animals.

'Shells of the periwinkle (*Littorina littorea*), limpet (*Patella vulgata*), mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) and the large *Cyprina islandica*.

'There were abundant traces of fire, together with remains of charcoal and fragments of coal.

'Some of the mounds, including one well-marked semi-circular one, proved to be earthworks only.

'The foundations are, probably, those of herdsmen's or quarrymen's huts, which were built, doubtless, mainly of turf, wood, and wattle. They are clustered on the south and west of the conical hill named by Mr. Longstaffe, which must have afforded grateful shelter from the north-east winds so prevalent on this coast. There is a large disused quarry west of the hill.'

31. It is worth noting that during the 1884 investigation no object was found of a date necessarily inconsistent (given a reasonable margin of error) with that of the documented 15th century desertion of the village of Horden; certainly, no early mediaeval pottery seems to have been found. The 'knocking stone or grinding stone' may have been a 'creeing trough', a stone mortar used in the preparation of the coarse barley meal which was an important part of the diet of the Northumbrian peasant and a common find on sites of the later mediaeval and early post-mediaeval periods.

32. Knowledge of the site as that of a deserted mediaeval village was sufficiently enduring to ensure its identification on successive Ordnance Survey maps (*vide supra*) and, in 1953, its protection by inclusion in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments as (County number) Durham 54.

33. In 1954 the site was visited by an Ordnance Survey Field Investigator who described the remains (as NMR number NZ 44 SW 2) in traditionally terse manner:

‘A deserted mediaeval village with a large disused quarry on its northern perimeter. The site is bounded on the south by a long bank, 3.0 m wide and 0.5 m high. The internal banks vary from 1.0 m to 4.0 m in width and up to 1.0 m in height. They are somewhat indistinct in part but form the usual pattern of rectangular and sub-rectangular enclosures. No finds were made.’

This description is clearly of a well-defined and well-preserved site, with impressive earthwork survival.

34. A crucial point in the history of the Eden Lane earthworks came in 1972 when, at the invitation of the Peterlee Development Corporation, a detailed survey of the site was undertaken by David Austin (apparently under the *aegis* of the Deserted Mediaeval Village Research Group). On this occasion the remains were correctly identified as those of Horden, rather than of ‘Yoden’, mediaeval village. The survey is considered in more detail below, but at this point it is worth considering Austin’s summary, published by the DMVRG (1973):

35. ‘The survey...records the traces of the village’s final form around the year 1400 (documents suggest Horden was completely abandoned by 1435). Its basic structure, confined by the areas of stonework, is two rows of houses, one each side of an open space or green, and each house has a toft behind it, marked off by earth banks lying at right angles to the green. Later activity, notably two abandoned quarries, interrupts this pattern and causes a confusing picture.’

36. Despite some difficulties of interpretation, then, the site is shown here as still in good condition, clear and coherent. Following completion of the survey, the site was prepared for ‘a new covering of grass so that the area might be used as a park of archaeological interest with easy access for the public’ (DMVRG, 1973). This work involved spraying with weedkiller to kill the coarse grasses. In the autumn of 1972 the ‘soil was rotovated to remove the grass roots and prepare the ground for seeding. Work was begun with a heavy machine drawn by tractor, until areas of superficial stonework were struck, presumably building rubble over or near house sites. In areas of no stone the heavy machine continued in use, but over the rubble areas a small hand held rotovator was employed to ensure the minimum of disturbance’. In fact, as Austin’s account makes clear, the site was, not once, but twice subjected to the rotovator.

37. The next examination of the site was made a few years later, and is described in a Field Investigator’s Report of 1980. It is sufficiently brief to be quoted in full:

‘This is no longer recognisable as a deserted Mediaeval village site. It is completely overgrown with rough grass, partly covered by rubbish and tracks and mutilated by drainage and dumping on the East. All that is evident are fragments of slopes all much overgrown and barely discernible. (Remains do not warrant depiction for publication). Site only (no intelligible remains). ‘

38. Unless the Investigator of 1980 had very different standards from those of his colleague of 1954 and from the surveyor of 1972, something fairly dreadful seems to have happened to the site; inevitably, we must see this despoliation as the direct consequence of the passage of the rotovator in 1973.

39. Our latest inspection, before the present survey, is contained in the Description of the Monument attached to the entry for National Monument no 34579 in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (dated April 2001). This describes the site thus:

40. ‘The monument includes the earthworks and buried remains of Yoden medieval village which lies on the magnesian limestone plateau of East Durham. The plan of the medieval settlement of Yoden is of a type familiar to this part of County Durham in which parallel lines of tofts or houses with crofts or garden areas to the rear face on to a village green. At Yoden the main green runs east-west through the village. Beyond the tofts and crofts would lie the communal open fields where the crops were grown. The tofts and crofts at Yoden survive as visible earthworks up to 0.5m high forming rectangular and subrectangular enclosures. The green around which the tofts and crofts were arranged is no longer obvious on the ground, but it is clearly shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map. Traces of this green can be expected to survive below the ground. Deep ploughing has removed any potential earthworks to the east of those presently visible, although archaeological deposits relating to the medieval settlement can also be expected to have survived below ground. A post-medieval quarry has destroyed part of the settlement to the north.’

41. This description appears to confirm the abrupt deterioration of condition observed in 1980, while not attaching to it so much importance as did the Field Investigator of 1980 (the scheduled status of the site was, after all, confirmed after this reappraisal under the Monuments Protection Scheme). It is not made clear (and it is not obvious to the present writers) why traces of the green should be ‘expected’ to survive below ground or, come to that, why archaeological deposits may be ‘expected’ to have survived the deep ploughing which has entirely erased so much of the earthwork evidence. Even within the better-preserved part of the site, the maximum height of earthwork would seem to have been reduced from about 1.0 m in 1954 to 0.5 m. Nevertheless, the report concludes by saying that ‘Yoden mediaeval settlement is well-preserved and retains significant archaeological deposits’.

THE SURVEY of 1972

42. The surveying team which, under the direction of David Austin, visited the site in 1972 recorded an earthwork site which was well-preserved and coherent, though rather overgrown. Some time after the preparation of the earthwork survey, and after the re-seeding of the site, additional information was added, in the form of

areas of stonework revealed by the process of rotovating. The form of the village remains is described in some detail in an accompanying note, which is here quoted at length:

43. 'This survey records the final form of the village around the year 1400. Its basic structure, affirmed by the areas of stonework, is two rows of houses, one each side of an open space or green, and each house has a garden or toft behind it, marked off by earth banks which are in places capped by stone walls. Later activity, and perhaps some earlier, interrupts this pattern and causes a confusing picture.

'It is to be assumed, without evidence either documentary or material, that both quarries shown were started after the village was abandoned and had ceased to function. One note of caution has to be struck, however: the smaller quarry has been dug in the old green area on land formerly common to the villagers, and the larger one to the north abuts onto the sunken lane on its east side, while its southern edge, marked by a bank, runs parallel to the old house line. All this may suggest that the quarries began life while the buildings were still standing or at least while their position was still known and respected. Perhaps in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, they were begun to exploit what had become waste land. This early quarrying may account for the mounds on the village green, which could be explained not as house platforms, but simply as topsoil dumps which were put out of the way of the houses.

'At the north-west end, the earthworks show the best preserved toft in the village. The house..... faces onto the green, and the property behind seems to have been divided into two. The bank at the north end of the property probably ran eastwards as a "toft-tail" splitting off the tofts from the open fields. At the south-west corner, another well-preserved toft shows that on this side the properties were larger, but still maintained the same basic shape, although the houses themselves seem to be built on platforms raised above the level of the green. The toft-tail line to the south was marked by a low bank and fence, projected onto this survey from an early Ordnance Survey map. This difference in size possibly suggests that the division between the eight messuages and the eight cottages in the documents was apparent on the ground also: the north side of the green for the cottagers, and the south for the messuages. It is difficult however to pick out the boundaries of eight properties on either side, and there may have been some amalgamation or distortion of adjacent tofts in the period of the village's final decay. The south side also has a bow-shape to it which is echoed by the toft-tail bank. The bend may have been caused by the need to swing the village street line south of the eastern hillock. but at other similar villages in Co. Durham (e.g. Dalton Piercy and Elwick) the bow-shape appears for little reason, which may suggest some unknown significance in the form.

'Both lines of houses end in the east on very much the same line: the northern against a sunken lane which ran down the hill towards Horden Hall; the southern against a very slight bank and ditch which seems to mark off an area where untraced properties may have been or where once there was a common enclosure. This eastern portion of the village seems to have had no dwellings on it; the earthworks ... appear from the air photographs to be part of a system that cut across the line of the village and may be part of an earlier settlement. The limit of the village area proper is the eastern bank which is a headland of the open field (the rigg and furrow). This bank then swings westwards on the line of the house frontages on the north side of the village. To the

north of this bank and east of the sunken lane are the very clear: ridges of the open field, the crests of which are marked by dotted lines on the survey.

‘This interpretation of the survey may not be complete or even totally accurate, and only excavation can clarify the situation further.’

44. The plan produced by Austin corresponds remarkably well to the less detailed village plan shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1861. Unfortunately, it is not possible to work out from the 1972 survey quite how many crofts and tofts were represented by surviving earthworks; given the relatively small size of the deserted village, however, the figure of eight crofts referred to in the valuation of 1431 (and supported by the divisibility by eight of sums mentioned in other documents) appears perfectly plausible.

THE SURVEY of 2004

45. The present survey was undertaken during the autumn of 2004. The ground cover comprised thick tussocky grasses, thistles and weeds through which clear broad paths have been maintained. On the higher ground at the east of the site, deep, narrow furrows, the result of machine rotovation, were strongly evident; any earthwork evidence which may once have existed on this hillside has been entirely obliterated. To the south and south-west of the site recent development has involved landscaping which has created abrupt slopes of dumped material extending to the very edges of the site. This appears to overlie the east-west boundary bank shown by Austin as the southern limit of the earthwork complex. Towards the southern edge of the site are also visible a number of fresh-looking disturbances, including dumps of building rubble which appear to have been used to fill some fairly substantial holes.

46. Although the fairly dense vegetation on the site made the recognition of earthworks difficult, it was immediately evident that the well-preserved and coherent site described in 1972 had been generally eroded and survived only as a series of slight discontinuous earthworks, most of them very hard to define and some only discernable as changes in the vegetation. A certain amount of subjectivity was, therefore, necessarily involved in the survey of 2004.

47. A grid of control points was established on the site, from a baseline along the south edge, using a Hilger and Watts optical theodolite. Archaeological features were then surveyed by plane table and tape. A scale of 1:500 was used for the survey.

48. The best preserved area of earthworks comprise a series of three banks extending north to south for a length of approximately 20-25m, with an average width of 6m, near the eastern extent of the site. The banks stand to a maximum height of 0.5m but are generally much lower. To the east of these what initially appeared to be a further bank was in fact a narrow and rather indistinct terrace cut into the slope of the hill, the profile of which appears to have been largely eroded by later activity. Immediately to the north of the three linear earthworks, a single low flat-topped mound with a diameter of approximately 5m was recorded. This may represent the eastern end of a discontinuous bank, as the western extent of the earthwork could not be clearly defined. A more distinct linear earthwork lies immediately to the north

running parallel to the main quarry edge. This is evident for a distance of just over 30m as a narrow bank approximately 2.5m wide with a maximum height of no more than 0.3m.

49. To the west of the earthworks a narrow terrace extends east to west, falling away to the north and running approximately parallel to the modern path. The profile of the terrace becomes shallower at its western end and terminates before it reaches the southern side of the small quarry, which is deep enough still to be very obvious. On the east side of the small quarry a further terrace continues westwards for a distance of 35m although with a much shallower profile probably in response to the natural topography. To the north of this a shallow depression includes at its lowest point a small hole, 3-4m in diameter, which appears to be of recent date. Further earthworks occur to the north in the form of narrow terraces curving east to west close to the south-western edge of the large quarry. A slightly curving bank at the eastern end of these terraces extends for 8m on a north-west to south-east orientation.

50. To the south of the central path, earthworks were visible only at the western extent of the site, in the form of two slightly curving terraces orientated approximately north-south and falling away to the east. Immediately to the west of them a low bank, with a maximum width of 5m, extends directly north to south for a distance of about 25m.

51. It is interesting that neither the survey of 1972 nor that of 2004 has been able to identify the distinct circular feature, which proved to be entirely of earth, mentioned in the 1885 excavation report. It is possible that the feature had been wholly removed before 1972; perhaps it was removed by the excavators.

52. The earthworks recorded in 2004 may be seen as the severely mutilated remains of those surveyed in 1972. In the intervening period much has disappeared, all that remains with any clarity being the series of mounds in the area of Austin's 'village green'; the quarries; and some linear features representing boundaries. All that has survived to 2004 was recorded in a much higher state of preservation in the 1972 survey, though much visible in 1972 can no longer be seen. In some places, small disturbances appeared to be of very recent date.

INTERPRETATION

53. Despite the assertion that the Eden Lane earthworks represent the remains of a 'two-row village with green', there are difficulties in reconciling this with the site as surveyed and interpreted by Austin. The plan has long been recognised (Roberts and Austin, 1975) as typical of planned villages- 'townish villages'- of County Durham during the high Middle Ages, and it is dominant among the village plans which can still be reconstructed within the County. Austin (unpub) considered the Eden Lane site to represent such a layout; he saw the northern of the two rows of tofts as having been partially destroyed by the large quarry, and the southern row as surviving in fairly good condition. He was then left with the problem of a series of very distinct linear mounds occupying much of the area of the 'village green', and suggested that they might represent spoil-heaps from post-desertion quarrying. This is unconvincing. The mounds in question show a distinct regularity, and share the alignments of the other earthworks; they are not particularly adjacent to either the large or the small

identifiable quarry, and *prima facie* look as if they should be considered as part of the village layout. If this is indeed the case, the coherence of the site as a 'two-row village with green' is largely lost. Against this, it could be argued that the 'toft' immediately to the south-west of the large quarry is fairly convincing as the extreme north-western plot of a conventional two-row village but the matter is by no means clear.

54. The general more-or-less regular linearity of the earthworks is undeniable, but the exact form of the village must be a matter of some doubt because the area of the supposed green is encumbered by fairly regular earthwork features which are hard to explain. The most that can be said is that the balance of probability suggests the usual two-row-with-green layout, but that the matter is not entirely clear. The vestiges of toft boundaries visible on the 1972 plan to the east of the eastern edge of the large quarry and of the 'sunken track' east, in turn, of the quarry suggest a fairly symmetrical village plan, more-or-less bisected by the north-south axis of the 'sunken track'.

55. Of this more-or-less coherent plan of 1972, a great deal has been lost. The plan of 2004 shows nothing to the east of the great quarry, apart from some vague terracing: the whole hillside is now deeply scored by the closely-spaced furrows of recent (post-1972) cultivation. Virtually everything to the south of the southern edge of the 'village green' has also been obliterated, though towards the western side some extremely exiguous north-south banks, visible only as vegetation changes, appear to reflect the toft boundaries so confidently drawn in 1972 (in their present state, they rather resemble severely eroded rigg-and-furrow, and were initially interpreted as such). A small fraction is still discernible of the curving corner at the extreme north-west of the complex. The 'sunken track' which in 1972 could be seen skirting the eastern rim of the great quarry can still be made out, but is not a particularly emphatic earthwork feature; it is currently used as an informal footpath which follows the narrow space between the bottom of the eastern hill and the edge of the great quarry; to this extinct, its very existence as an archaeological feature may be illusory. The large quarry is unchanged, effectively since the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey, and the small quarry in the green area is almost equally well-defined.

56. Effectively, only the best-preserved of the earthworks visible in 1972 can still with any confidence be identified; the situation may be presumed to be the same as was described by the Field Investigator of 1980. By far the best-defined earthworks are the group of three elongated mounds, interpreted by Austin as probably quarry spoil, in the area which has always been considered to be village green. Unfortunately, if Austin is correct about this, the features are not likely to be mediaeval (and, of course, if they are indeed mediaeval, it is difficult to agree that the 'village green' has been correctly understood, which has in turn obvious implications for the taxonomy and interpretation of the village).

CONCLUSIONS

57. Based on all of the foregoing, it is possible to make the following statements about the Eden Lane earthwork complex:

- (A) The site is clearly that of a deserted mediaeval village.

- (B) The identification of the village with Simeon's 'Yoden' has never had much of an evidential basis, and the site is almost certainly that of the mediaeval Horden.
- (C) It is very unlikely that this is the site of a pre-Conquest, 'Saxon', village; any settlement of that period is more likely to have been on the site of or immediately around Horden Hall. The site has at least some of the characteristics of a planned village of the later Middle Ages, and may not be much older than its first mention in 1335. It was deserted by 1431.
- (D) At some point between 1972 and 1980 the earthworks have suffered considerable damage, and have lost most of their detail and intelligibility. This damage appears to have been done by the re-seeding programme of 1973. There are some indications of more recent damage on a smaller scale.
- (E) The rather severe judgement of the site given in the 1980 Field Investigator's report seems generally more accurate than the description written as part of the Monuments Protection Programme in 2001: certainly, it is now difficult to agree with the opinion that the site is 'well-preserved'.
- (F) A pessimistic view of the site might now suggest that it might be difficult to justify its protected status as an Ancient Monument; or, at least, that the scheduled area might justifiably be reduced. It might be useful to determine more exactly the nature of the elongated mounds on the area of the 'green', particularly since these represent by far the best-preserved (in fact, virtually the only well-preserved) part of the earthwork complex, and appear important to an understanding of the nature of the site as a whole. It would be worth considering a programme of small-scale test excavation here and elsewhere within the earthworks, to determine the nature and date of what does still survive.

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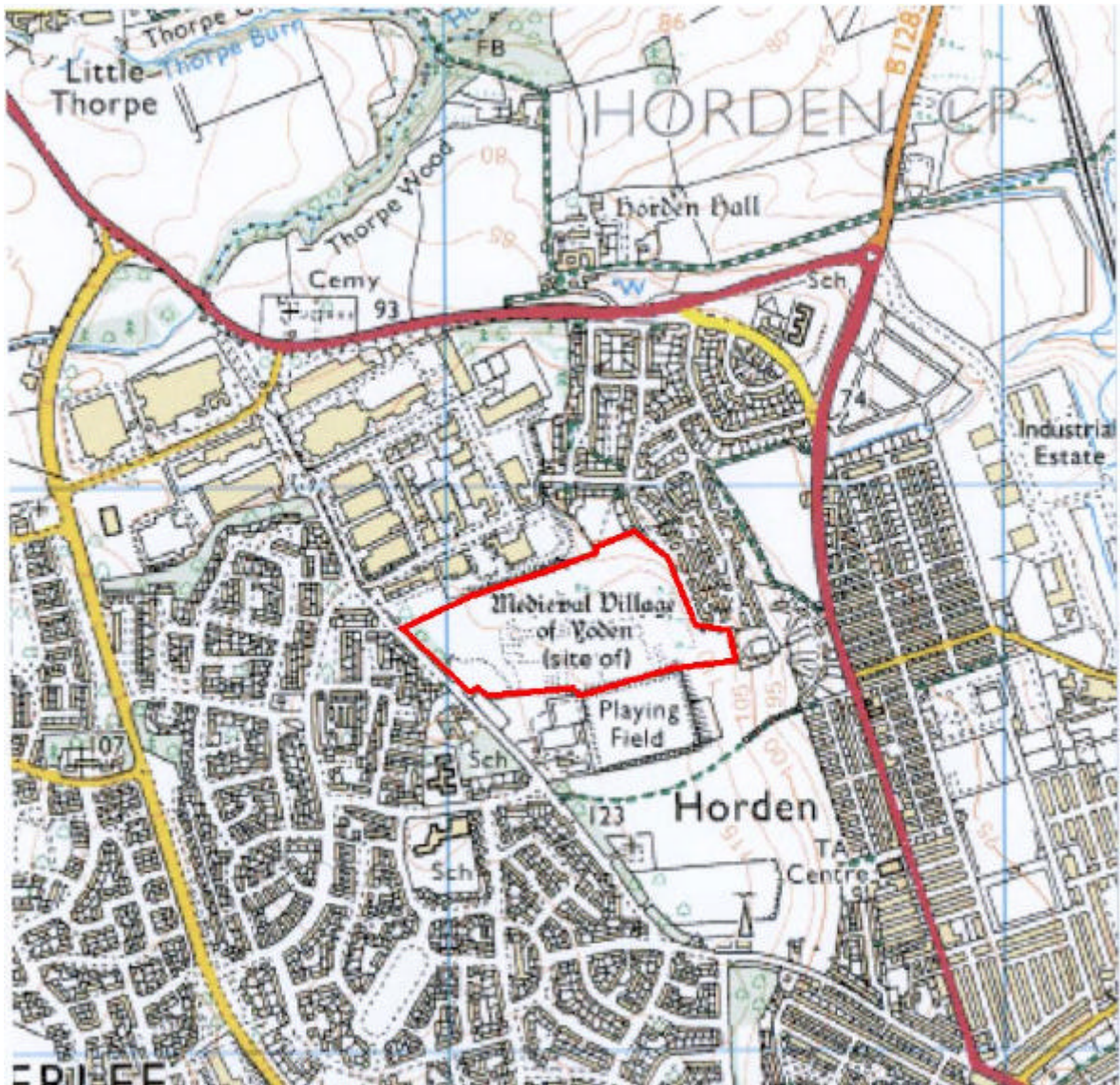
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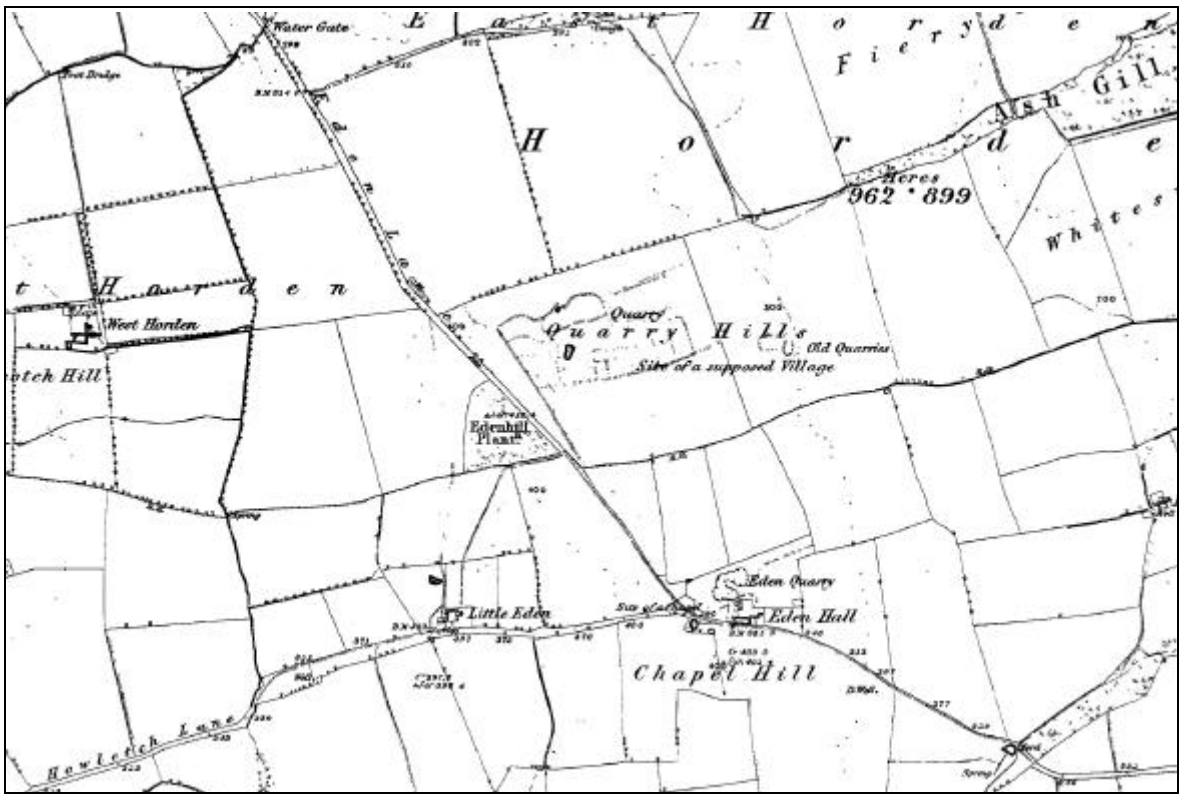
EDEN LANE EARTHWORKS



The brigantia
Archaeological
practice

Fig. 1

Site location (red border)



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Fig. 2

First Edition OS (1861)



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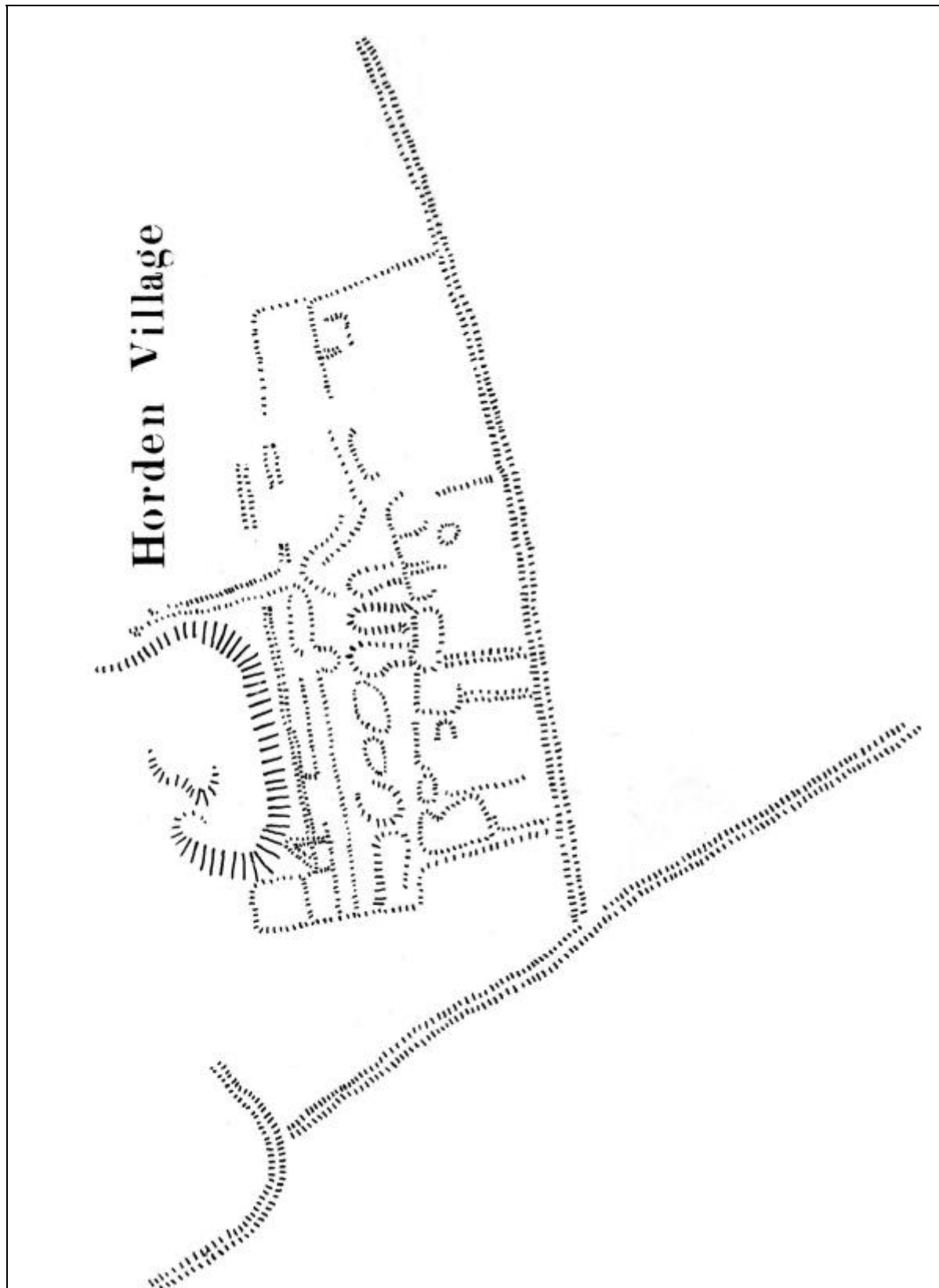
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Fig. 3

Detail of 1861 OS map



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Fig. 4

The 1972 survey (not to scale; north to left)



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Fig 5

View across site towards eastern hill



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Figs. 6&7

Well-defined earthworks on the 'green'



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Fig. 8

Landscaping spoil over south edge of site



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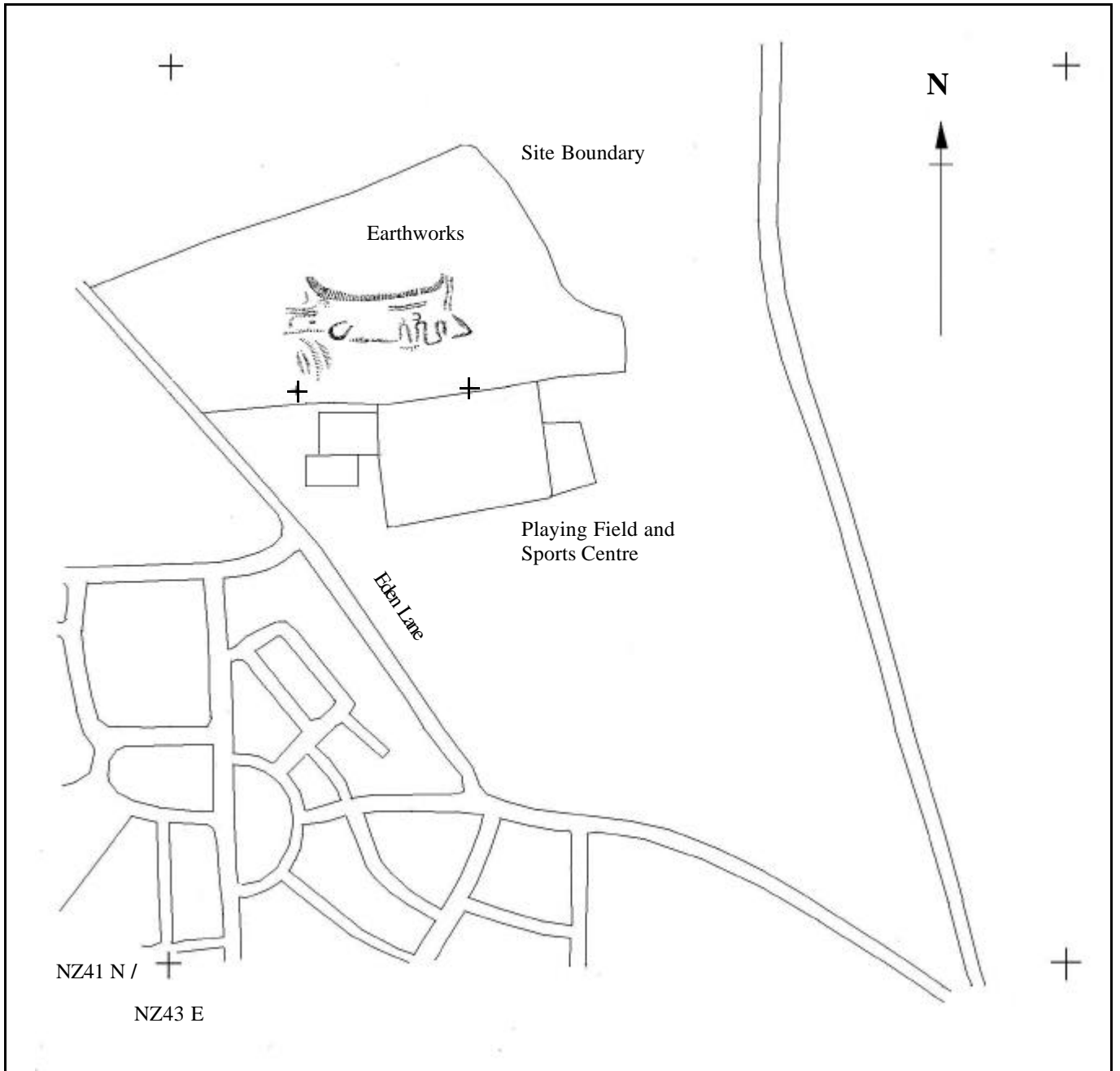
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Fig. 9&10

Recent disturbances in southern half of site



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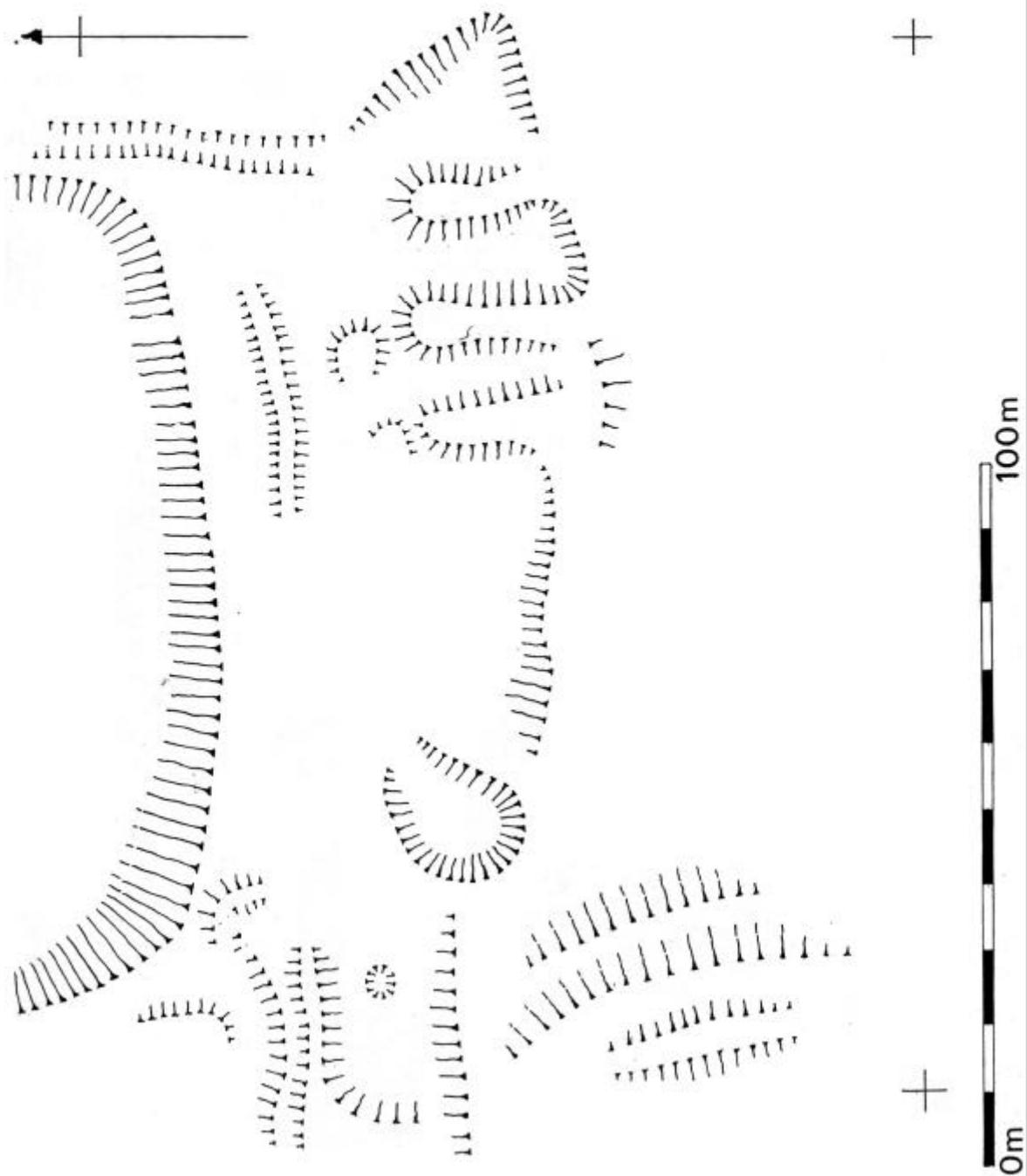
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Fig. 11

The survey of 2004 (location)



**THE BRIGANTIA
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Fig. 12

The survey of 2004 (reduced from original)



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