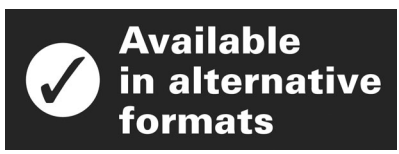
Archaeology and metal-detecting



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Archaeology and metal-detecting

A model for engaging the local community in a greenfield development

Neil Macnab

JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION

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Contents

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Summary

This is a report on a community archaeology and metal-detecting project at Osbaldwick, York, on a greenfield site destined for development as housing. The planning and archaeological background to the project are described, followed by an account of how the local community was involved in the project. The report concludes that, in addition to the gathering of archaeological research data, there were a number of other positive outcomes. In particular, it was shown that:

- archaeology, assisted by metal-detecting, is a good and accessible way to involve the local community in the early stages of an otherwise controversial housing development
- metal detectorists and archaeologists can work together well and constructively
- archaeology, assisted by metal-detecting, offers an opportunity to address what may be difficult relations between a housing developer and the local community in a constructive atmosphere.

1 Introduction

This report discusses a community archaeology project at Osbaldwick, York, on land designated for a housing development known as Derwenthorpe, and its implications for the world of property development. The project addressed two issues, one seen as controversial by archaeologists and the other seen as controversial by conservationists: the use of metal detectors on archaeological sites and development on greenfield sites (i.e. sites not previously used for building), respectively. The project was able to show how community archaeology can help communities to address the implications of the local authority planning process in a non-confrontational manner, as well as serving as a useful tool for archaeological research.

Metal-detecting and archaeology

The thought of metal-detecting still sends shivers down the spine of some archaeologists, fearful of damage to archaeological sites (e.g. Farley, 2003: 11; Council for British Archaeology, 2004a, 2004b). There is certainly a small minority of people who use metal detectors for financial gain and who have damaged archaeological sites in the process. The majority of metal detectorists, however, undertake the hobby for pure pleasure, as a result of a genuine interest in the past. It is these hobby metal detectorists that archaeologists in the UK have begun to work with over the last decade, building up good working

relationships and thereby adding information to the local authority Sites and Monuments Records across the country through the Portable Antiquities Scheme (http://www.finds.org.uk).

In fact, archaeologists have worked with metal-detector users since the 1970s, for example on the royal Anglo-Saxon burial site at Sutton Hoo (Renfrew and Bahn, 1991: 88–9). However, it is only in more recent times that archaeologists and metal detectorists have felt able to work together to establish common working practices and methodologies. Some notable successes have occurred at Ashford in Kent, Caistor St Edmund in Norfolk and Grafton Regis in Northamptonshire (Hunt, 2003). Codes of

Metal-detecting in progress at Osbaldwick

conduct for metal detectorists are now available online (http://www.britarch.ac.uk/cba/factsht2.shtml). The Osbaldwick project, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, provided an opportunity for developing ideas on methodology and working practices, as well as addressing the mutually suspicious relationship between the archaeological and metal-detecting fraternities.

The project involved the local community in archaeological research, with a view to furthering its understanding of the archaeology and history of the land bordering the small suburban village at Osbaldwick, on the eastern edge of York. Participants in the project included members of the local community of all ages, as well as amateur and professional archaeologists and metal detectorists.

Community participation at Osbaldwick

Greenfield development and archaeology

For the conservation lobby, greenfield development for houses, roads and commercial purposes is as contentious as metal-detecting is for archaeologists. Greenfield sites are valued by local communities. They are places for dog-walking, bird-watching, rambling, cycling, horse-riding, jogging and general relaxation. They may be seen as green lungs within an urban sprawl, wild areas where nature flourishes, places to which local people can escape. Green spaces may also be prized by home owners and estate agents, as they can add significantly to the value of property. Having said this, local communities are often not legally entitled to access to greenfield sites and therefore become trespassers. In addition, some sites can be dangerous as they are used for dumping burnt-out stolen cars, motorbikes and other toxic debris. Many sites, such as the one at Osbaldwick, may comprise poor-quality land, with little to commend it except an absence of buildings.

It is clear, however, whatever the quality and use of the land, that a greenfield development is controversial and that local communities find it hard to cross the divide and become involved in the design of a new development, which, in their view, will change forever an area they valued.

Archaeology, planning and housing development

The recent history of the planning process is littered with sites where development has been opposed by conservationists ranging from local action groups to professional eco-warriors. At the time of writing there is increasing pressure from central government on local authorities to increase the nation's housing stock, and this will in some areas inevitably involve taking in

greenfield sites. The development of such sites is not entered into lightly by planners or developers, however, as public opinion is generally strongly against it. Derwenthorpe in York is no exception, as any reader of York's *Evening Press* over the last year or so will know (Titley, 2004).

For archaeologists, working on development-led projects arising out of the planning process can sometimes be difficult as they must seek to balance two opposing objectives: the first to research the past by means of excavations; the second to preserve the heritage undamaged. Developers, for their part, have to consider profit margins, and sometimes find it difficult to reconcile the needs of archaeologists and planners. However, constructive ways of working can be found, and archaeologists can make a positive contribution to development decisions. They can provide assistance in the master planning stages, such as to aid the smooth passage of a proposal through to planning consent by ensuring the incorporation of heritage and archaeology issues from the start.

As the comments in the previous paragraph imply, understanding the planning process is of great importance for archaeologists, and much productive research can be carried out during the course of a development's passage through its various stages. However, archaeological investigation should be a research-driven exercise in which regional and national, as well as local, issues are considered, rather than one solely driven by the exigencies of development. Whilst the research agenda for any given project will be based largely on prevailing views in academic circles, it can also be developed and enhanced by discussion with the local community.

From an archaeologist's point of view the Osbaldwick project created a forum for the discussion of issues and ideas, and for the sharing of skills and methods with metal detectorists and the

local community. From the point of view of those concerned about the development of a greenfield site it created an inclusive environment for the discussion of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation proposals on a one-to-one level rather than in a 'them and us' situation.

The rest of this publication describes the Osbaldwick project. Chapter 2 describes the planning background, Chapter 3 describes the archaeological investigations, while Chapter 4 defines the community archaeology elements of the project and the metal-detector surveys. Chapter 5 highlights all the conclusions from the project, and looks to the future. It is hoped that archaeologists, planners and developers alike will see the benefit of such projects both in creating a constructive environment for the discussion of a development proposal and in allowing valuable research into the archaeology of a site.

2 THE PLANNING BACKGROUND

Introduction: the need for new housing in York

New housing developments are always contentious, particularly when being built on land that has never been developed before. Derwenthorpe, situated adjacent to the suburban village of Osbaldwick, 3 km east of York city centre, is one of these sites.

Recent research by government and by the Foundation has concluded that national housing needs will not be met by the development or recycling of brownfield sites alone (http://www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/derwenthorpe/background.asp). By 2021 the UK will, by some calculations, need as many as another 4,000,000 new homes. Of these, some 60 per cent could be built on brownfield sites, but at least 1,500,000 may be built on undeveloped greenfield sites. This is particularly significant in a city such as York, where little brownfield land is available and some of the housing needs must therefore be met by the development of greenfield sites such as that at Derwenthorpe. House prices within York are also high, in comparison with many surrounding areas, and for many local people they are simply out of reach. The building of new houses may contribute to a reduction in house prices, especially if the property development is carefully managed. Joseph Rowntree Foundation has a long and distinguished track record in housing and social policy, beginning with the pioneering development of a 150-acre site to the north of York in 1904, the garden village of New Earswick. This early 20th century

Map of the York district showing the location of Osbaldwick [based on Ordnance Survey (OS) 1:50,000 map]

development was founded on the twin bases of affordability and a socially mixed community, about which the Foundation continues to feel strongly today (MacDonald, 2003: 9).

How Derwenthorpe meets the criteria

Affordability is one of the cornerstones of Joseph Rowntree Foundation developments, as is the creation of socially mixed communities with a combination of rented, low-cost homes and owner-occupied housing. The Foundation believes that the most

acceptable way to build on greenfield land is to create new communities on the edges of towns and cities, taking advantage of the infrastructure, transport and community networks already in existence. In some instances it can be argued that edge-of-town greenfield developments are more environmentally friendly and sustainable than brownfield sites that have no connection to existing transport and community networks (MacDonald, 2003: 12–13).

The Derwenthorpe development aims to provide 540 new homes on the edge of York that meet five criteria: sustainability, affordability, safety, community values and high-quality design (MacDonald, 2003: 9). In addition, there are three other priorities. The first is that it should be an environmentally sustainable development that will not impact adversely on neighbouring communities. The second is to create a mixed-tenure community with a high quality of life for residents, and the third is to serve as a model for future edge-of-town extensions (Lord Best, 2003: 3).

The nearby village of Osbaldwick

Since 1998 Joseph Rowntree Foundation has, in partnership with the City of York Council, been developing the master plan for the Derwenthorpe development. The aim is to achieve a high proportion of affordable housing, a top-quality design with well-used green space, good traffic management, and a safe and sustainable environment (Lord Best, 2003: 3). Community consultation has been open and direct from the start, even before any designs were drafted (Marcus, 2003: 23). A Community Consultation Panel has been involved in all aspects, from choosing the master planners to giving opinions on a number of key issues:

- creating open green space and landscaping
- retaining some hedgerows
- retaining portions of ridge and furrow earthwork
- the layout of houses and streets
- access roads in and out of the development
- tenure mix and design of housing
- transport, sustainability and environmental issues.

The Derwenthorpe development alone will not solve York's housing problems, and, at the time of writing, it has already taken some five years of planning and consultation to get to the planning application stage. If it goes ahead, however, it will go some way to addressing the city's housing shortage and to developing a model for future greenfield edge-of-town developments in York and across the UK.

The proposed development

The land at Derwenthorpe is already surrounded on three sides by housing areas known as Meadlands, Tang Hall and Osbaldwick Village. The land has been owned since 1930 by the local authority, and has been designated a potential housing site for many years (Marcus, 2003: 22). It was only in 1998, however, that the City opened discussions with the Foundation to develop the site for an innovative housing development (http://www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/derwenthorpe). After a process of community consultation and a design competition, PRP Architects was

Aerial view of the greenfield site at Osbaldwick

appointed as the master planner for the development. The development will have the following:

- rented and low-cost home-ownership homes scattered among fully owner-occupied housing
- high-quality 'lifetime homes', meeting the needs of young families, disabled people and older residents
- residents' involvement in the development and management of the community
- sustainable, environment-friendly principles
- pedestrian-friendly streets, reduced traffic flow, secure homes and safe open spaces
- communal facilities that meet the needs of residents in the new housing and in the surrounding communities.

This approach is intended to be a refreshing change from the infilling of urban and greenfield spaces with as many houses as possible packed closely together, with no thought for transport, community, environmental and sustainability issues.

3 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction: research-driven archaeology and the planning process

Archaeology in the 21st century is an integral part of the planning process in respect of the development of sites for housing, business and industry. The legislative framework within which this has come to pass is formed by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979, which, *inter alia*, defined a small number of Areas of Archaeological Importance, including York, and consolidated the law relating to Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

York has played a pivotal role in the subsequent development of planning procedures in respect of archaeology, with the commissioning by the City and English Heritage of a study of York's archaeology in 1990 (Ove Arup and Partners, 1991). This followed the near fiasco of an inadequate archaeological response to development proposals at the site of a major Roman building at 1–9 Micklegate. The recommendations that Ove Arup made to the City contributed to the development of national guidelines from the Department of the Environment in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* published in 1990 (Department of the Environment, 1990).

As a rule, the local planning authority decides whether archaeology should be a component of a pre-planning investigation into a site proposed for development. The authority will then produce a planning brief and specification, initially for an

archaeological evaluation, which may involve a number of procedures as described below. On receipt of the specification a developer must hire an archaeological contractor to undertake the work; sometimes this involves a competitive tendering process. Depending on the result of the preliminary investigation, developers may be required to produce a mitigation strategy as part of any planning application, either to avoid damage to archaeological deposits or to ensure they are preserved by record through a programme of fieldwork, again at the developer's expense. Development-led archaeology has been the principal source of funding for archaeological contractors in recent years.

Planning policy in respect of archaeology is still under review by central government, which is being advised by the All-Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group, English Heritage, the Institute of Field Archaeologists and the Council for British Archaeology.

Initially, the framework for archaeological investigations at Osbaldwick was no different from that for many other development sites in the city. The investigations required by the local authority were divided into a number of stages, each contributing to the next, and allowing the development of a research framework as the master planning and environmental impact assessment have proceeded. The stages undertaken so far are: desktop study, geophysical survey, earthwork survey and archaeological evaluation. The work has employed the latest investigative tools and methods, following standards laid down by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (http://www.archaeologists.net). In due course, when development plans are finalised, further archaeological work may be required by the City, based on the results of the stages referred to above and of the community project described below.

The desktop study and walk-over survey

A desktop study is the starting point for collating archaeological information before any major development. This will usually include a comprehensive walk-over survey to examine the current state of the site and identify extant earthworks or other archaeological remains. The study will be used to inform the planning process and to develop a research framework based on local, regional and national archaeological objectives. The research framework usually takes the form of a series of questions that require further investigation, relating, for example, to time periods

Detail from the 1852 OS map with the development area shown in green

The Sustrans cycle path crosses the site

in the past in which the site is known to have been occupied or, equally important, in which the site was apparently not occupied. Questions may also be posed about the character of occupation in the past, for example whether it was agricultural, domestic or industrial.

The desktop study for Osbaldwick highlighted an apparent dearth of information for the site before the 12th century. However, by analogy with other sites in the region, prehistoric (before *c.* AD 71), Roman (*c.* AD 71–450), Anglian (*c.* AD 450–850) and Anglo-Scandinavian (*c.* AD 850–1066) occupation was deemed

possible, although very little supporting evidence had been found so far. From the medieval period (12th century AD onwards) the site had been used for arable agriculture, and the remains of slightly degraded ridge and furrow earthworks (showing as linear low-relief banks and troughs), aligned north-west to south-east, were still upstanding in eight out of nine fields.

The area had reverted to pasture in the post-medieval period (after *c.* AD 1500) and the fields were enclosed. Several of the hedges are thought to be exceptionally thick, which, inasmuch as size relates to age, may date them to enclosure of the medieval open fields in the 17th and 18th centuries AD. The only modern disturbance was the construction of a railway (the Derwent Valley Light Railway) in the early 20th century AD across the centre of the site, now reused as a Sustrans cycle route, and the insertion of modern power lines and an electricity substation (Macnab, 1999, 2003).

The only other notable features were several backfilled ponds at the northern end of the site that cut into the ridge and furrow. This suggested that they were post-medieval or modern in date. Some may post-date the construction of the railway, as this would have formed a barrier to livestock that had hitherto usually been watered at Osbaldwick Beck at the southern end of the site.

The desktop study and walk-over highlighted the need for further archaeological investigations. As the ground had clearly not been raised in recent times by dumping and the fields could not be field-walked because they were under pasture, geophysical survey and targeted evaluation trenches were proposed as the best methods for answering questions raised by the desktop study. A comprehensive earthwork survey of the ridge and furrow was also suggested. Together, these would evaluate the state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site and determine the full impact of the development on them.

Ridge and furrow can be seen as horizontal bands across the field

Field-walking

Field-walking is a form of archaeological site evaluation used in areas where the land is under plough. It involves recovering and recording the occurrence of artefactual material visible on top of the ploughsoil. From patterns in the spatial distribution of finds, areas of settlement, craftworking, burial and other activities in the past can be detected. Field-walking was not possible at Osbaldwick, because the site was under pasture, but the distribution of metal artefacts could be recorded by carrying out a metal-detector survey. While this only gives a partial record of the past, certain types of activity, including battles that produce weaponry, munitions and military equipment, and crafts which use or produce metal, may be identified in this way.

Geophysical survey

Geophysical survey involves non-destructive investigation of a site with a view to identifying below-ground anomalies that are human-made (Gaffney and Gater, 2003). These anomalies may, for example, represent traces of ditches, areas of burning, walls and foundations, roads and trackways. Geophysical survey involves either passing different types of energy (seismic, acoustic, radio waves and electric pulses) through the ground and recording and interpreting the feedback as the energy encounters anomalies,

The geophysical survey in progress

or measuring the intensity of the earth's magnetic field or localised disturbances to it in the ground by means of magnetometers and gradiometers (Renfrew and Bahn, 1991: 80–6).

In the case of Osbaldwick, both a fluxgate gradiometer (measuring differences in magnetic intensities) and a resistance meter (measuring degrees of resistance to the passage of an electrical current through the soil between electrodes) were employed. The results of the geophysical survey confirmed the existence of ridge and furrow, which appeared to extend to within a few metres of the north bank of Osbaldwick Beck (not

Results of the geophysical survey

observable during the walk-over survey). This implied that the course of the beck had not altered since the medieval period. Several minor ditched features of archaeological interest were also detected, as well as a number of geological variations (Macnab, 2003).

The geophysical survey was extremely useful in pinpointing certain parts of the site that required further archaeological investigation. This aided the design of the evaluation programme and helped to clarify research objectives.

The earthwork survey

Earthwork, topographic and contour surveys are effective methods of recording and mapping relief landscape features. These features may be very substantial, as in the case, for example, of a major prehistoric earthwork such as the 700-ha ditched enclosure at Stanwick, North Yorkshire (Welfare *et al.*, 1990). Surveys can also, however, pick up subtle changes in topography not visible to the naked eye. They are therefore useful archaeological investigative tools for recording landscapes, such as that at Osbaldwick, which seem to be featureless.

A complete earthwork survey was undertaken using a total station theodolite. The resulting contour plan confirmed the dimensions and preservation of the ridge and furrow, and the positions of the backfilled ponds or livestock watering holes. The furrows, measured from the base of one to the base of the next, were found to be 8–10 m wide, and each ridge was *c.* 5–6 m wide. The width of the furrows suggested a medieval rather than a post-medieval date for their creation, post-medieval furrows being as a rule narrower than medieval (Macnab, 2003).

The archaeological evaluation

Once non-destructive methods have been exhausted, archaeological evaluation by excavation will usually be required. This involves the digging and recording of buried deposits, features and structures in a series of trial trenches. The percentage sample of a development site that a local authority requires to be evaluated by excavation varies, but in York it is usually 2 per cent. The main aims of archaeological evaluation are to:

- establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within a proposed development area by targeting the geophysical anomalies by trench evaluation
- determine, as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, state of preservation, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains on the site
- assess the impact of a development on the archaeology.

The evaluation at Osbaldwick was based on a 2 per cent sample of the site and consisted of 22 trenches of varying sizes, shapes and alignments. The majority of the trenches evaluated a 200-square metre area. Trenches 1–8 were situated to the south of the Sustrans cycle path and, of these, trenches 1–6 were positioned to intercept specific features identified by the geophysical survey. To the north of the Sustrans cycle path trenches 9, 10, 14 and 19 were located to intercept geophysical anomalies.

Trench and pit location plan (based on OS map)

In all the trenches a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket removed the overburden. Hand digging was then used to clean the trenches and excavate the remaining archaeological deposits in order to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve artefacts. All archaeological features were planned, recorded in cross-section, and notes about their nature and the composition of their fills or components were made. The trenches were photographed after cleaning, and archaeological deposits

were photographed before and after excavation. Fifteen geotechnical test pits were also monitored by an archaeologist.

The evaluation trenches appeared to show that much of the original ground surface had been truncated by medieval ploughing (ridge and furrow) and, where the land had been improved, by modern levelling.

The earliest activity on the site appears to have been a series of gullies on the western side of field 3 (trenches 5 and 6). These dated to the Roman period, probably the 2nd–3rd centuries AD, and may have been dug for drainage or to define the boundaries of fields or stock enclosures. Several small post-holes within trenches 2 and 21 may also be of Roman date. The enclosure gully in the south-eastern corner of the site for a possible toft (a small area of enclosed land in which a farm or homestead was situated) pre-dates the ridge and furrow and may date to the 10th or 11th century AD. The gully contained burnt cereal grain amongst its backfills.

Medieval ridge and furrow, probably dating from the 12th century AD, if not earlier, had already truncated the entire development area. Arable agriculture may have continued until the 17th century AD, when the fields may have been enclosed and used for pasture. One of the field enclosure gullies or original hedge lines was located in trench 21. A number of attempts had been made in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries AD to improve the land, with the insertion of land drains. The most extensive of these was in field 4. A modern culvert crossed trenches 16 and 21, a second crossed trench 14 and a third may have crossed the western end of trench 7. Modern features, including pits, post-holes, backfilled ponds, a horse burial, gullies and a sewer trench, appeared in trenches 4, 5, 8, 13, 16 and 18. Field 9 appears to have remained largely unimproved by drainage in modern times (Macnab, 2002, 2003).

Recording an early 20th century horse burial in trench 18

Conclusions

At the end of the process of archaeological investigation at Osbaldwick, it was possible give a broad synopsis of the development of the site from Roman through to modern times. It was possible to identify the extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of the surviving archaeology on the site. Results were summarised in an assessment report (Macnab, 2002) made available to the Principal Archaeologist of City of York Council and to the developers.

It was then possible for the City to make an informed decision that the archaeological deposits surviving on the site were restricted in nature and that the development was unlikely to have an adverse effect upon them. There is no evidence to suggest that the surviving archaeology is of either regional or national importance. In the event, therefore, a watching brief during the development and some limited further investigation of features recorded in fields 1 and 3 are likely to be the principal

requirements of the City when making the ultimate decision regarding the nature of any further archaeological work as part of the planning consent for the development.

4 ENGAGING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Introduction: community archaeology and the development process

Archaeology in Britain has always relied heavily on work by amateurs and volunteers. Indeed one may say that the archaeological profession is rooted in amateur archaeological and historical societies, many of which date from the 19th century. Until about 1970 there were very few professional archaeologists. Those that did exist were based in the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, university departments or museums. The rapid redevelopment of many towns and cities in the 1970s and the motorway construction programme led to the development of many rescue archaeology units, usually run by local authorities and an expansion of the archaeological profession. Opportunities for amateur and voluntary participation remained with many units and with the more active local societies, but it would probably be fair to say that the higher profile archaeological projects were undertaken by professional teams. During the late 1970s and 1980s they were often underpinned by government-funded schemes intended to give work experience to the long-term unemployed in programmes run by the Manpower Service Commission, which provided a large body of cheap labour for archaeology (Start, 1999: 51).

Amateur and voluntary participation in the development-led sector of archaeology has also been affected by the process of competitive tendering for work by contracting units, which has been one result of the use by planning authorities since 1990 of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (see above; Department of the Environment, 1990). Development-led archaeology, in an environment of cut-throat competition, has rarely allowed room for non-professional involvement, especially when health and safety issues, and concerns over time scales, insurance and budgets are considered (Farley, 2003: 19). Recognition of this problem has, however, seen the birth of what has come to be known as community archaeology (Liddle, 1985), whereby local authorities actively promote non-professional involvement in archaeological work.

A new approach

As far as York is concerned, Osbaldwick in June 2000 was the first project in which the local authority's specification for archaeology included a community archaeology requirement, but subsequently at other sites in the city, the local authority has been a pioneer in using the planning process to promote community-based archaeology. John Oxley, the Principal Archaeologist, has taken his cue from a view expressed by the heads of each directorate in the city that an approach different from that adopted previously should be taken at Osbaldwick, not only with the archaeology but with all aspects of the development. It was strongly felt that as the council owned the land, it could have a greater degree of influence on the development process than was usual. The main thread running through the whole process was that the community should be involved in all stages

of the planning process, including archaeology. Osbaldwick was to be a test bed for a new approach to development in the York area and across the nation. John Oxley is also an advocate for allowing greater access to archaeology and the heritage in general, and sees it as his responsibility as Principal Archaeologist to enable communities to take their own initiatives in investigating their collective past (see York's *Evening Press*, 6 July 2004, 'New move to bring York's past to life' (Fletcher, 2004)). The next step locally, it is hoped, will be the creation of a Community Archaeologist for York, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and based at York Archaeological Trust, in 2005.

York Archaeological Trust

York Archaeological Trust is an organisation that has, since its foundation in 1972, had close connections with many amateur groups, volunteers and societies in the surrounding area and has a long tradition of involving them in its work and assisting them in their own archaeological projects. This has included participation in development-led excavations, training excavations, artefact processing and research, and promotion of archaeology to the public through the Archaeological Resource Centre (ARC). Educational outreach activities involve lectures to school, college and university groups, local societies, adult education courses, and the Friends of York Archaeological Trust. The Trust first began to work with local metal-detector users in the early 1970s and a second phase was co-ordinated by staff at the ARC in the 1990s; it continues under the aegis of the Portable Antiquities Scheme. These varied activities have built up a small body of well-informed and motivated people willing to give their time and energy to community archaeology.

Portable Antiquities Finds liaison officer Simon Holmes meets members of local metal-detector groups at the ARC

National and international policies

When viewed from a perspective other than the purely local, the background to the change in archaeology's role in the planning process should probably include two significant changes in national and international thinking on heritage and archaeology that occurred in 1992. At the Rio Earth Summit Agenda 21 was proposed (United Nations, 1993). This has been adopted in a UK government white paper, *The Common Inheritance Agenda 21* (Department of the Environment, 1993) recognises that global environmental objectives will only be achieved by action at a local level. This has led to the development of Local Agenda 21 in which local authorities are encouraged to draw up their own agendas to shape the policies, laws and regulations of their districts (Start, 1999: 58). Chapter 28 of *Agenda 21* (United Nations, 1993) states the following:

> as the level of government closest to the people, local authorities play a vital role in educating, mobilising and responding to the public to promote sustainable development.

Community archaeology is one avenue into this process, helping local authorities meet their Local Agenda 21 commitments in the heritage part of environmental policy.

Also in 1992, at Valetta, the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) (Council of Europe, 1992), was signed. Article 3 (Council of Europe, 1992) states that:

> all archaeological work should be carried out by suitably qualified, authorised people.

This was ratified by the UK government in 2001 and created a storm of debate across the archaeological profession (*Current Archaeology,* 2001a, 2001b). It was feared that all archaeology within the UK would in future be licensed as it is on the continent and in the Republic of Ireland, and such licensing would exclude amateur groups and societies. The UK government has stated openly that it does not intend to introduce a licensing scheme. Central government has asked English Heritage, the Institute of Field Archaeologists and the Council for British Archaeology to draw up guidelines to allow the fulfilment of Article 3 of the Valetta Convention but keep alive the amateur element within UK archaeology, with its commitment to Agenda 21.

Article 3 of the Valetta Convention (Council of Europe, 1992) also proposes:

> to subject to specific prior authorisation, whenever foreseen by the domestic law of the state, the use of metal-detectors and any other detection equipment or process for archaeological investigation.

This part of Article 3 appears to envisage the placing of restrictions on metal-detector users. However, as far as the author is aware, it has been little discussed within the archaeological community at large, and has again not been implemented by the UK government to date.

In Britain national government and non-governmental organisations, as well as regional and local government bodies, are all encouraging community archaeology. This will, increasingly, affect development-led commercial archaeology and the Council for British Archaeology report, *Participating in the Past: The Results of an Investigation by a Council for British Archaeology Working Party* (Farley, 2003), presents a number of relevant recommendations. As a general principle, archaeology should be seen to be about people and communities in the past. By the same token, archaeology will be seen as irrelevant if the public loses interest in it. Community archaeology, based around local people exploring and discovering their historic environment, is, therefore, one way of getting the public involved in commercial archaeology, providing this is built into the planning process. Archaeology is increasingly being seen as a useful tool for promoting social inclusion and a sense of community, which in turn lead to a greater feeling of responsibility for heritage (Newman and McLean, 1998).

The mood favouring the promotion of community archaeology has been reinforced by a number of official documents focusing on the wider question of the community's relationship to the historic environment, such as *Power of Place* (English Heritage, 2000) and *The Historic Environment: A Force for our Future*

(Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2001). The All-Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group (APPAG) has also recently (APPAG, 2003) undertaken an important survey of public concerns. *Power of Place* (English Heritage, 2000) suggests moves towards more local involvement in understanding and interpreting the local historic environment, and one of English Heritage's current goals is to promote public appreciation and enjoyment of archaeology through increased participation (English Heritage, 1997). Local heritage initiatives sponsored by the Heritage Lottery Fund also promote community participation. York Archaeological Trust is involved with an initiative known as the Fulford Battlefield Project (http://www.fulfordbattlefieldsociety.org.uk).

Finally, one should not overlook the growing public popularity of archaeology through the 1990s and the early years of the 21st century, with television programmes such as *Time Team*, *Meet the Ancestors, Restoration* and numerous programmes on the Discovery channel resulting in increased public demand for participation in archaeology.

Engaging the community in archaeological research at Osbaldwick

The archaeological evaluation specification issued in June 2000 to Joseph Rowntree Foundation stated that the archaeological contractor must produce a project design that sets out how it would go about:

- informing the local community about the project prior to any work starting on the site
- incorporating into the project design (in consultation with the Principal Archaeologist) specific requests for involvement in the project

- involving people from the local community in all aspects of the archaeological programme
- communicating with and involving students from local schools
- informing the local community about the results of the project after fieldwork finishes and after the final report has been produced.

In addition, the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust stated in its specification for archaeological evaluation of the site (December 2001) that:

> Joseph Rowntree Foundation and City of York Council have been working closely with the local community from the master planning competition to the present time. A community consultation panel meets regularly, chaired by an independent consultant. It is expected that the panel will be closely involved in the community programme part of the archaeological evaluation. It may be a source of information for interested local people who might volunteer to take part in the on-site trenching work. It might also provide the public forum for the dissemination of information on the evaluation programme. The contractor is to allow for working with the community panel on the community involvement aspect of the programme.

York Archaeological Trust, in discussion with City of York Council, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, proposed the following:

- the promotion of school visits and participation whilst the evaluation was underway
- an open day to be held on 12 May 2002 to present the evaluation findings to the community
- frequent liaison with the community consultation panel to discuss the findings of the archaeological evaluation before, during and after work on site was taking place
- discussion of the results of the archaeological evaluation at an open community meeting in June 2002
- liaison with Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust in the production of posters to give information about what was happening on the site and to publicise the open day.

School visits, led by Dr Andrew Jones, the Trust's Education Officer, and the open day worked well. The speed at which the archaeological evaluation took place, however, made it difficult to incorporate training and community participation during excavation or processing of artefacts and environmental material. The evaluation, involving 22 trenches, took just five weeks to complete.

School visits

Community involvement began with an invitation to seven primary schools, two secondary schools and one special school in the area to visit the excavation. Five schools took advantage of this opportunity: St Aelred's, Tang Hall, Derwent, Hemplands and Burnholme Community College. Teachers and pupils saw archaeologists at work, asked questions, viewed artefacts,

A school party learning about archaeological procedures during the open day

investigated the earthworks, soils and sediments, and were introduced to the development process (Macnab, 2004). The aim of the school visits was not only to let children see archaeologists at work, but also to make links with the national curriculum, particularly local history, geography, mathematics, English and art. The five school visits were extremely successful and both York Archaeological Trust and the schools involved gained a great deal from the experience. Approximately 150 children and 15 adults participated in this aspect of the community archaeology project.

The open day

The open day was held on 12 May 2002. The day was a co-operative enterprise involving York Archaeological Trust, Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, City of York Council, York and District Metal-Detecting Club, Friends of York Archaeological Trust,

residents of Osbaldwick and other local people interested in archaeology. As little exciting archaeology was being revealed during the evaluation, members of the metal-detecting club were invited to participate at the open day. Their remit was to scan the machine-excavated spoil heaps that flanked the trench edges. Each pair of metal-detector users would be assisted by an archaeological volunteer who would aid in the bagging and numbering of artefacts as they were found. The archaeological volunteers also scanned for other finds on the spoil heaps, including pottery, bone, tile, brick and clay pipe fragments. Approximately 30 members of the metal-detecting club participated, ably assisted by about 15 archaeological volunteers. The day was a success, attracting some 200 local people from the surrounding estates who responded to the posters in local schools and around the site. Displays of metal-detected artefacts, archaeological artefacts, aerial photographs and plans of the site were all viewed. The plans for the housing development were a

Metal detectorists scanning the spoil heaps during the open day in 2002

popular topic of conversation, and representatives from Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust were on hand to answer questions. Games and quizzes were devised by Dr Andrew Jones and a questionnaire was handed out, asking people to write down their memories of the area.

The metal-detecting project

During the open day in May 2002 some interesting medieval artefacts were recovered from the evaluation trench spoil heaps. Several metal-detector users felt that further work on the site would be productive, especially as archaeological field-walking was not possible. As a result, an additional phase of site investigation, concentrating on the metal objects in the plough soil, was proposed. This additional phase was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The Council for British Archaeology's recent report cited above (Farley, 2003) highlights the fact that the relationship between archaeologists and metal detectorists is not always satisfactory. It states that positive results can be gained through either combining field-walking with metal-detecting or undertaking field-walking in areas identified by metal detectorists. The metal-detecting project was proposed by York Archaeological Trust on 12 May 2002, before publication of the Council for British Archaeology's report.

The project was designed to build on the open day initiative and to develop a protocol for the investigation of greenfield sites in the UK using metal detectors within an archaeological research-focused framework. The project was also designed to build on the relationships formed during the open day, involving local metal-detector users, amateur archaeologists and members of the local community.

The main objectives of the project were (Macnab, 2005):

- development of a protocol for investigating greenfield sites using metal detectors
- integration of the skills of professional archaeologists, metal-detector users and amateur archaeologists
- surveying a larger area of the site for metal artefacts than was possible during the open day in May 2002
- provision of more opportunities for local residents to get involved with archaeological investigations and to understand the history of their local area
- involvement of the local community in the development process
- production of a travelling exhibition showing the results of research on the site
- organisation of a seminar to disseminate the results of the project
- publication of a report on the project.

Four open days were held on 13 April, 27 April, 11 May and 1 June 2003, at which metal-detector users, archaeologists and members of the local community explored the site further and 895 metal objects were recovered. Various techniques, including use of an electronic distance measurer and a hand-held global positioning system receiver, were tried out and demonstrated to all participants as means of determining the best way of recording find spots.

Surveying find spots with electronic distance measurement equipment

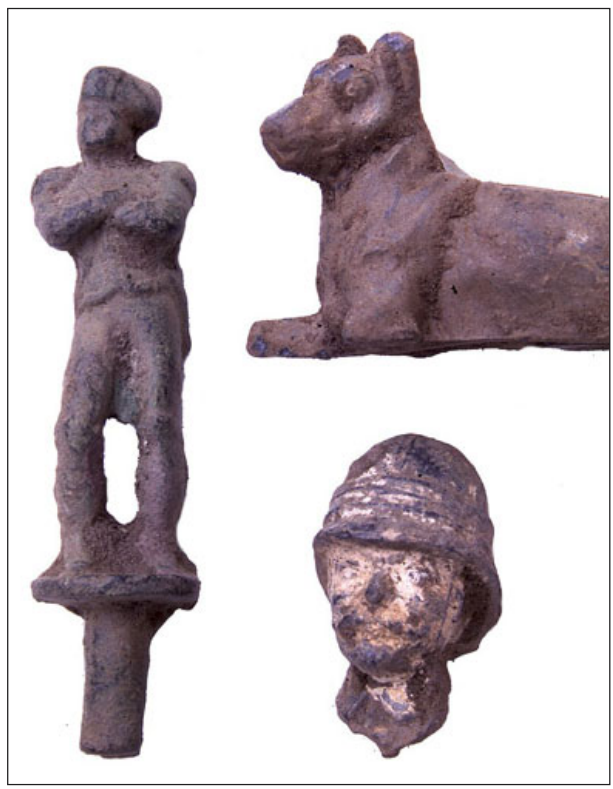
Making records of the artefacts recovered from the site

People of all ages were involved in the open days

A national seminar was held at the Yorkshire Museum on 28 June 2003 with representatives from the metal-detecting and archaeological communities. This facilitated the development of the protocol. A travelling exhibition has also been produced to publicise the project. This exhibition is touring local schools, doctors' surgeries, church halls and community centres. A full account of this project, including the protocol, is also published on York Archaeological Trust's website (http://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/osbaldwick/osbaldframeset-1.htm).

The results of the community archaeological project

Artefacts recovered during the metal-detecting survey have added significantly to our knowledge of the use made of the site in the 19th and 20th centuries, and have expanded the social history of the village. The artefacts included agricultural equipment, animal tags, gun cartridges and railway memorabilia that all relate to the use of the site over the last 200 years. Various fittings may have come from wooden doors and furniture burnt on bonfires.



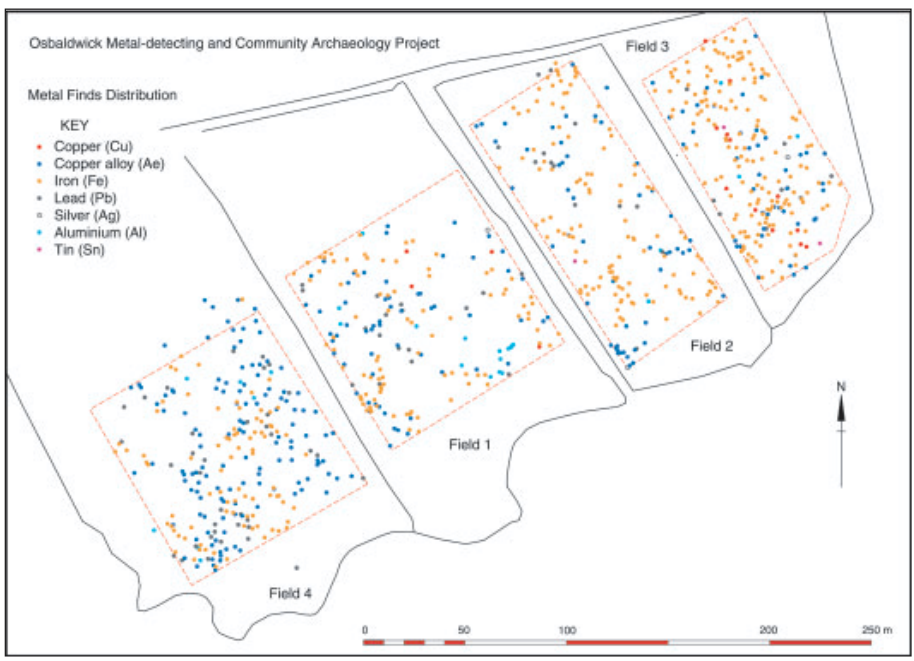
A selection of metal objects found on the site. The curious object on the left may be a tobacco-tamper in the shape of Napoleon

A selection of 19th- and 20th-century coins found on the site

A buckle, locket and medal found on the site

Lead alloy spillages were probably imported with other waste and dumped on the site. Many personal items, some perhaps dropped by walkers using the fields, included buckles, badges, buttons, parts of watches and chains, lockets, tampers for tobacco pipes, toy cars, sets of keys and penknives. The numerous coins, most dating to the 19th and 20th centuries, were probably lost from pockets. Other unusual items, such as cutlery, kitchen weights, thermometers and printers' block letters, may represent scrap-metal collecting and processing by travellers or other itinerant people. A medieval strap-end fragment, a medieval trader's weight and two coins of the late 17th– early 18th centuries were the only items recovered that pre-dated the 19th century.

Significantly fewer pre-19th century artefacts were located during the metal-detecting days in 2003 than were found on the open day in 2002, when metal-detector users searched the spoil



Plot showing the distribution of finds made of iron and non-ferrous metals

heaps of the archaeological evaluation trenches. This supports the argument that metal detectors rarely penetrate deeper than the modern topsoil (*c.* 0.20 m thick) and that the medieval plough soil has remained relatively undisturbed by modern activities on the site, being sealed by the modern topsoil.

A number of positive outcomes from the community archaeological projects may be identified over and above the research data collected (Macnab, 2005).

- Close ties with individual schools have been strengthened, children and adults have learnt about the planning and development of a site, and have participated in archaeological work.

- A protocol has been developed for the archaeological and historical investigation of greenfield sites using metal detectors within a research framework. This may be used as the basis for research at other greenfield sites across the UK in the future.

- Good working relationships were established between all parties involved in the project. It provided hands-on experience for three interest groups, metal-detector users, amateur archaeologists and professional archaeologists, as well as involving individuals from the local community. All parties gained valuable experience by sharing skills and knowledge, and discussing the best way to achieve the project's goals. This has improved our understanding of the contrasting aims and methods of each interest group.

- Local people were empowered by participation in an archaeological investigation.

- A non-confrontational environment for the discussion of the planning and development process was created.

The keys to successful community archaeology projects of the type described above are: firstly, good communications between all participating groups; secondly, discussion of the objectives of each type of community activity with all participants; and, thirdly, the rapid dissemination and discussion of the results. Community involvement in the archaeological investigation of greenfield sites provides a great opportunity for local people to take part in integrated research into the history and archaeology of their immediate surroundings. It also creates a constructive environment for the discussion of a development proposal.

5 Conclusions

Beyond Osbaldwick: where do we go from here?

The experience of Osbaldwick has been a real catalyst for community archaeology in the York area. City of York Council is starting to introduce a community archaeology requirement into the development process, and involvement of the local community has been part of the archaeological specification at several other sites since 2002, including Monk's Cross Roman camp and 'The Starting Gate' Roman site. The overwhelmingly positive response from the majority of participants in the community aspects of the Osbaldwick project has had a major impact on the city and its planning and development control departments, with important implications for the place of archaeology in the planning process in the future.

Osbaldwick has also been a catalyst for further outreach and community-based projects in which York Archaeological Trust has become involved, including those ongoing at the time of writing to investigate the medieval Battle of Fulford (http://www.fulfordbattlefieldsociety.org.uk) and a Roman site at Blansby Park, North Yorkshire. Both of these involve the use of York and District Metal-Detecting Club, enthusiastic local amateurs, local residents, university students and school children. They involve a certain amount of professional archaeological input, both on a voluntary and a paid basis. The Trust's outreach work also continues, with strong links being forged with many of the

participating primary schools and Burnholme Community College. Talks on community archaeology at Osbaldwick have been given to a number of local societies.

Research-driven community archaeology as a tool in other greenfield site developments

It has been shown in this report that community archaeology is an ideal and very adaptable mechanism for any greenfield site development, in creating a constructive framework in which not only to discuss development plans but also to undertake valuable archaeological research. The main focus at Osbaldwick was a series of metal-detector surveys. Distributions of metal-detected finds, although not particularly significant at Osbaldwick, may on other greenfield sites be very revealing, hinting at areas of military

Community archaeology day at Blansby Park

activity, settlement, industry or burials. The protocol devised for the Osbaldwick project, which forms a basic set of techniques and methods to further archaeological knowledge, could be transferred to any greenfield site in the UK. The protocol may be seen against the background of other research priorities in rural areas in general; for example, English Heritage has highlighted topics such as the erosion of finds from stratified contexts by ploughing, the degradation of metal in ploughsoil, the mobility of material of all kinds in the ploughsoil and the blurring of spatial patterning in artefact distributions by ploughing (Darvill and Fulton, 1998). Clearly there is a great need for further discussion of techniques and methodologies, as well as further integration of disparate groups such as responsible metal-detector clubs, amateur archaeology groups and societies. At Osbaldwick itself, further metal-detecting will probably be required as part of a planning condition imposed on the developer before the construction programme commences. This will involve examination of the buried medieval subsoil deposits only sampled during the open days but shown to contain artefacts not detectable from the grassed surface of the fields.

In addition to metal-detecting surveys, there are many other ways that community archaeology can be developed for a range of different types of project, depending on funding and resources, including:

- schools outreach
- local oral history
- field-walking
- documentary research and cartographic analysis

- geophysical surveys
- earthwork, topographic and contour surveys
- building surveys
- shovel-pitting and test-pitting
- training excavations
- environmental sampling and processing
- artefact analysis and research.

All of these could be undertaken as stand-alone projects or could be integrated into more comprehensive local history projects.

Community archaeology and development: the way ahead

According to some sources, 1.5 million new homes may have to be built on greenfield sites across the UK by 2021 (www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/derwenthorpe/background.asp). National government and local authorities will therefore have to find ways of negotiating the hazardous minefield that is greenfield site development.

Local communities often believe they are powerless to stop or influence development. This feeling of powerlessness can emerge in a number of contexts, for example in open meetings, where 'the powers that be' are leading the meeting from the platform and the 'powerless' are sitting listening. It is easy to see how hostility, frustration and anger can be expressed by the 'powerless' when faced with this 'them and us' situation.

As part of the solution it is necessary to look for non-confrontational environments in which new developments can be discussed. Such environments allow the planning process to proceed more easily and make development a slightly less bitter pill to swallow. As already noted above, one approach utilised at Derwenthorpe has been the creation of a community consultation panel, which has sought to provide a forum at which all the parties affected by the development can meet the planners, developers, land owners, land agents, planning consultants and architects. This has enabled the community to raise concerns about the development with the appropriate people and has allowed master planners and architects to find creative design solutions.

As the Osbaldwick project has also shown, a community archaeology project has the ability to create a non-confrontational environment for discussion. Although, for their part, developers, construction firms, architects and planning consultants often fear archaeology, as it creates a vision of setbacks, delays and cost implications, it is now widely accepted that archaeology has a great deal of appeal to the general public. It creates excitement and enthusiasm. It can unite communities by bringing together people of differing ages, political standpoints, ethnic and religious affiliations, and social classes, to give them roots and a sense of identity and place. It is no surprise, therefore, that community archaeology is being seen by government agencies as integral to combating social exclusion, and to the rebuilding of urban and rural communities throughout the UK and Europe (Newman and McLean, 1998: 153). In addition to the research aspects, a community archaeology project can therefore create an environment in which a development can be discussed in a productive manner and help to divert energy that could be manifested as hostility and aggression into more productive outlets. The continuing work of a community archaeology group

can also integrate new residents after a development has been completed.

Development does not have to be seen as a process that inevitably destroys green spaces, driven by the desire to make money by cramming as many houses as possible into every space. Thoughtful, responsible development can and should work with local communities affected by it in order to create dynamic developments, which have built in to them real solutions to the concerns of local communities. A community archaeology project can make a surprisingly good forum for encouraging this, with a further benefit of continuing to build and invigorate communities long after a development is complete. The environment created by community archaeology enables discussions to take place between developers and conservationists as well as between archaeologists and metal-detector users. Within this environment bridges are built, friendships are formed, working relationships are forged, debate is fuelled, ideas are distilled, skills are shared, and our knowledge of the history and archaeology of an area is advanced.

It is not being suggested, of course, that the approach described above produces smooth, fast, easy, predictable results. The discussion of any development proposal is controversial. However, in creating non-confrontational environments in which discussion can take place, the powerless are empowered and local communities are integrated into a process that they sometimes believe they have no means of influencing. Community archaeology, within the context of a development proposal, enables local people to get involved in the development and planning process and to raise their concerns about it. Heated debate may take place, but this occurs in an atmosphere where everyone has another purpose: seeking to discover more about their collective past.

It is clear that the investigation of greenfield sites using community archaeology creates a great opportunity for local people to become involved with research into the history and archaeology of their immediate surroundings. It is hoped that community and landscape archaeologists, planners, developers, housing association professionals, land owners, land agents and architects will all see the benefits of such projects. These benefits far outweigh the efforts needed to set up such projects, both in creating a constructive environment for the discussion of development proposals and in integrating communities.

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