

Norton Community Archaeology Group

A Project Design for

Stapleton's Field Excavation

2012 & 2013



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Project Design: Stapleton's Field Excavation 2012 and 2013

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1 Introduction

1.1 Norton, Hertfordshire

- 1.1.1 The historic parish of Norton (part of the Civil Parish of Letchworth since 1906) is situated toward the north-western edge of an upland area in a small group of Hertfordshire parishes where the drainage is northwards to the Great Ouse and Cam. Like many areas of early agriculture, the Norton area has easily worked soils, mostly suitable for long-term exploitation. There is certainly no difficulty in producing surpluses of basic crops using prehistoric type techniques on these soil types and the surrounding hills are ideal for sheep and other pastoral farming. It is no coincidence that Domesday Book shows this area to have been densely settled and wealthy in 1086.
- 1.1.2 The village core forms Area of Archaeological Significance 190 in North Hertfordshire District Council's Local Plan (Fenton & Langford 1993, 23). To its south, the open space of Stapleton's Field was designated Archaeological Area 94, citing crop mark and excavated evidence for prehistoric to medieval activity (Fenton & Langford 1993, 12). This area is the focus of the current Project Design.
- 1.1.3 The land at Stapleton's Field is owned by Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, which granted permission for the previous excavations at various board meetings in the relevant years. Permission for the 2012 and 2013 excavations from Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation is conditional upon acceptance of a formal Project Design by both Hertfordshire County Council and Natural England because the entire Letchworth Garden City estate forms a High Level Environmental Scheme. This document aims to meet that condition.

1.2 Norton Community Archaeology Group

- 1.2.1 Norton Community Archaeology Group was established by local residents in the summer of 2006 to research the archaeology of the historic parish of Norton. The Group is supported by North Hertfordshire District Council and Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation as well as the Heritage Lottery Fund and a number of other financial sponsors. Although most participants are amateurs, the summer excavation work is directed by North Hertfordshire District Council's Archaeology Officer, Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews, and advised by local archaeologist Paul Palmer. In addition, some of the volunteers have received formal archaeological training or have worked as professional archaeologists. In 2010 and 2011, the Group also engaged a professional archaeologist for the duration of these summer excavations to assist with supervision.
- 1.2.2 In 2007, the Group undertook a training excavation in Church Field, focusing on the site of a post-medieval barn demolished in the 1930s, in the north-western corner of the field. It established that the barn was built in the early eighteenth century; medieval and Bronze Age features were found beneath its floor. This training was undertaken to produce a core group of members familiar with the disciplines of archaeological excavation and recording.
- 1.2.3 In 2008, the Group undertook a more ambitious excavation in the centre of Church Field across a possible building platform and the hollow way crossing the field. As a result of extremely difficult digging conditions, this excavation had only reached late medieval deposits by the end of the excavation. In the following year, the Group completed the excavation across the building platform, identifying the corner of a pounded clay floor and the remains of demolished cob walls.

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The associated artefacts suggest that demolition took place during the thirteenth century. A levelling layer spread over the demolished structure, presumably obtained from nearby, contained Romano-British pottery. Although the surface of the trackway in the hollow way was exposed, little progress was made in understanding the context of the various layers exposed by a modern ditch dug through the trackway. The site was protected with geotextile and topsoil reinstated at the end of the fieldwork.

- 1.2.4 In 2010, the group excavated three trenches in Stapleton's Field. One (Trench I) was located across a large circular anomaly on the western side of the footpath known from aerial photographs and the 1996 geophysical survey, which has been suggested to be a henge (Fitzpatrick-Matthews & Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2009, 19). Two further trenches (Trenches II and III) were excavated towards the north-western end of the field (Trenches II and III) to investigate anomalies recorded in a magnetometer survey of 1996 and discovered evidence of Roman activity. A new trench was also excavated in Church Field close to the former Shefford Lane to investigate the trackway, which demonstrated that the village high street did not extend beyond Shefford Lane to the north-east.
- 1.2.5 In spring 2011, the group opened a fourth trench in Church Field, over the site of an apparently spiral anomaly located by resistivity survey. This lay across a hollow recorded in an earthwork survey carried out by North Hertfordshire Museums in 1985 and thought to have been a former property boundary, between the locations of the 2007 and 2008-9 trenches. The work failed to locate the cause of the anomaly and found that this part of the field contained a considerable depth of deposits dumped in the post-medieval period.
- 1.2.6 In the summer of 2011, the group re-opened Trench I in Stapleton's Field and excavated a new trench at right angles to it (Trench IV). This season's work confirmed the status of the monument as a henge, albeit one of unusual morphology. This is the site that is the subject of this Project Design.

2 Archaeological Context

2.1 Archaeological Data

- 2.1.1 The historic landscape of Norton is archaeologically diverse. The core of the village, with its medieval church and pre twentieth-century Listed Buildings, forms Archaeological Area 190 as defined in the North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan (Fenton & Langford 1993, 23). Well preserved earthworks of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing, house platforms, enclosures, the village street and abandoned quarries survive to the north and east of the village core and have been partly investigated by both North Hertfordshire Museums (in 1985-6) and the Community Archaeology Group (since 2007). Commercial archaeological units (including The Heritage Network, based in Letchworth Garden City, and Archaeological Solutions, based in Hertford) have also carried out work in the core of the historic village.
- 2.1.2 The parish church of St Nicholas dates from the early twelfth century with later additions and there has been a little archaeological work carried out in the churchyard during improvement works. To the south of the modern village, a central to high medieval (tenth-thirteenth century) settlement was excavated by North Hertfordshire Museums in 1988 (Matthews & Burleigh 1989, 27). Further south, regionally important prehistoric and Romano-British settlement has been found at Blackhorse Road and excavated by Letchworth Museum and North Hertfordshire Archaeological Society between 1957 and 1973 (Moss-Eccardt 1988), while the eastern part of the parish lies north of the nationally important Late Iron Age and Roman town of Baldock (Burleigh & Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2010, 21ff).

2.2 Prehistory

- 2.2.1 The earliest known archaeological evidence from the historic parish of Norton dates from the Upper Palaeolithic (i.e. before c 11,000 BC), consisting of an end scraper, found at Wilbury Road (Letchworth Museum Accession No 1960.87). A Mesolithic handle core was found on Norton Common, close to Westholm, in December 1926 (Letchworth Museum Accession No 3910). The context of deposition of neither of these finds is known and Mesolithic activity, especially, is poorly understood in North Hertfordshire. Robin Holgate (1995a, 9-10) has suggested that while earlier Mesolithic activity (c 11,000-6700 BC) was concentrated in the river valleys, later finds on higher ground are evidence for a movement away from the rivers, perhaps as a result of rising water tables. This hypothesis needs confirmation through further fieldwork.
- 2.2.2 Beginning around 4000 BC, Neolithic populations were the first to make large-scale alterations to the landscape that survive as field monuments or as buried remains (see 3.3.1 below). Although there is a relative dearth of known sites in Hertfordshire, this may be a reflection of patterns of discovery rather than evidence for the thinly-spread prehistoric population suggested by Tom Williamson (2010, 23). The early Neolithic material from Norton consists largely of flint tools found as surface finds, including several from Wilbury Hill and its environs, and a scraper from Eastholm.
- 2.2.3 Closer to Stapleton's Field, part of what appears to be an unusually narrow cursus monument of Neolithic date was excavated by John Moss-Eccardt of Letchworth Museum in 1963 on the line where the A1 motorway was to be built (Moss-Eccardt 1988, 49; Site Code GLVI). The ditches were 1.2 m wide at the top, with a v-shaped profile, 0.9 m deep and generally around 7 m apart. Residual flints of Neolithic character and the sealing of the ditch by a deposit containing a sherd of third millennium BC Grooved Ware pottery suggested that the cursus was probably constructed in the later Neolithic. A later phase of use, possibly in the Early Bronze Age, was indicated by posts found in several of the ditch sections excavated. The ditches were traced for a distance of 244 metres and aerial photographic evidence indicates that they may be more than 500 m long, running from the Ivel Springs towards Nortonbury. In his draft report (but not in the subsequent publication), the excavator suggested that they might have formed "a *droveway*

rather than any ceremonial feature" (Moss-Eccardt 1985, 90), although the apparent focus on the Ivel Springs is suggestive of a more ritual function, while the width of 7 m is too narrow for a drove road.

- 2.2.4 Excavations also undertaken by Letchworth Museum during the development of the industrial estate at Blackhorse Road to the south-west of Stapleton's Field in 1958-67 revealed evidence of occupation during the third millennium BC (Moss-Eccardt 1988, 44-7). A group of six large pits situated towards the south-west of the area investigated appear to have been quarries for fresh chalk or flint and their deliberate backfills contained quantities of prehistoric ceramics and animal bones. Although these pits may have been dug initially to extract flint, the nature of the artefacts recovered from them and their rapid filling suggests a ritual context. At the eastern end of the site, a post-hole produced a flint backed knife, a shallow pit contained an antler pick and a ditch contained bones of a bear.
- 2.2.5 A large D-shaped enclosure identified on the highest point of the site at Blackhorse Road and dated by its excavator to the Iron Age (Moss-Eccardt 1988, 67) is more likely to be a Neolithic type. No positive dating evidence for its construction was recovered during its investigation, although one of the palisade postholes produced unfeatured potsherds said to be of Iron Age character; these will need to be reassessed. Similar enclosures are known from south-west England, where they are of later Neolithic date (pers. comm. Mike Parker Pearson 5 January 2012).
- 2.2.6 A range of Neolithic pottery types was found across the site, including three styles of Impressed Ware (Ebbsfleet, Fengate and Mortlake styles), Grooved Ware, six Rusticated Beakers and one Necked Beaker. One of the Beakers recovered from these pits was associated with carbonised wood that produced a radiocarbon date of 3590 ± 130 bp (BM-284; 2312-1608 Cal BC at 2σ), while another containing Ebbsfleet pottery produced dates of 3520 ± 150 bp, 3310 ± 150 bp and 3830 ± 140 bp (BM-186, BM-187 and BM-283; 2271-1483 Cal BC, 1975-1275 Cal BC and 2666-1890 Cal BC at 2σ). These dates appear to be rather late for Impressed Wares, raising the possibility that the ceramics were residual in their contexts.
- 2.2.7 Nearby, an L-shaped enclosure was excavated by the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust in 1997 at the east end of Works Road, about 250 m to the south-east of Blackhorse Road in the historic parish of Willian (Humphrey 1997a, 5). To its south-west, a small and undated hengiform monument, with the crouched inhumation burial of a child at its centre, was cut by a Bronze Age ring ditch. The flint assemblage from this site has been compared with that from Blackhorse Road, suggesting that it was contemporary and perhaps the location of further occupation.
- 2.2.8 The burial mounds characteristic of the Bronze Age have largely disappeared from the landscape as a result of later ploughing, but the ditches from which the chalk to make the mounds was quarried often show up as cropmarks. There are numerous such ring ditches throughout Norton, with a concentration of at least eight between the core of the village and the railway line, in and around Stapleton's Field (see 2.5.3.1-2.5.3.2 below). An example excavated at Works Road in 1997 produced evidence for at least four separate episodes of ditch cutting (Humphrey 1997a, 6).
- 2.2.9 Late Bronze Age activity was identified during rescue excavations by The Heritage Network at Cade Close in 2010, to the north-west of Stapleton's Field (Jones & Ashworth 2011, 10-11). Several linear features were identified as well as a large, irregular pit that seems to have functioned as a pond, perhaps for watering cattle. It appears to have dried out periodically, with the formation of a turf line, although it was not completely filled until the later second millennium AD. Analysis of pollen from the pond suggests that it lay in a grassland environment—probably pasture—with areas of hazel scrub (Rackham 2011, 26).
- 2.2.10 At Blackhorse Road, a series of enclosures was built from the sixth century BC through to the Roman conquest (Moss-Eccardt 1988, 67-72). Each is thought to have been a single farmstead, with timber roundhouses and storage pits, occupied by perhaps just one extended family. One of the most spectacular finds was the rim of an iron cauldron, dating from the second or third

century BC (Moss-Eccardt 1965, 177). As well as the domestic occupation, ritual activity is shown by the construction of an Early Iron Age pit cluster to the north, excavated in 1988, which seems to have been dug and backfilled almost straight away (Matthews & Burleigh 1988, 27). Contemporary Early Iron Age occupation was also found during excavations carried out by Letchworth Museum in 1956, in advance of building work at Hawthorn Hill, two kilometres west of Stapleton's Field (MacFarlane 1956).

2.3 Late Iron Age and Roman

- 2.3.1 By the end of the first millennium BC, Norton was in the immediate hinterland of the developing *oppidum* at Baldock (Burleigh & Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2010, 21 ff) and the route of the Icknield Way at Blackhorse Road became formalised between large side ditches; gaps through them gave access to the enclosures to the north (Moss-Eccardt 1988, 52). Excavations by Letchworth Museum at Hawthorn Hill in 1930 and 1955 revealed occupation debris that may be indicative of a villa, confirmed by work carried out by Norton Community Archaeology Group in 2009 (James 2009, 3). Percival Westell (1936, 5) dated the site to the second century AD but the presence of Iron Age pottery suggests that it was established at an earlier date.
- 2.3.2 Finds of Roman material were made during building work at St Nicholas's School in 1907, 1995 and 1998 (Westell 1926, 277; Turner 1999, 24), and at 20 Church Lane in July 1967 (North Herts Museums SMR 651), suggesting that there was also Roman activity close to the core of the historic village. This was confirmed by finds made during test-pitting by Norton Community Archaeology Group in Church Lane during 2007 (Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2007a, 3). Numerous Roman finds have also been found at Wilbury Hill, including coins ranging in date from Julius Caesar to Constans, copper alloy objects, a lead weight and a quern (Westell 1926, 280; 1927, 336). A number of other sites in the parish have produced Late Iron Age and Romano-British material, although most of the finds have been made during the digging of foundations, with little indication of the original context of deposition.
- 2.3.3 A very large villa complex has been identified on the right bank of the River Ivel, south of the village of Radwell. Aerial photographs have revealed elements of its surrounding estate, including ditched enclosures, a trackway and buildings that may have been barns, on the rising ground to the east of the main complex. It is possible that land on the left (west) bank of the Ivel, in Norton, also formed part of what was clearly a wealthy establishment.

2.4 Medieval and later

- 2.4.1 There is very little archaeological evidence for the early medieval period, as in North Hertfordshire generally: one or two sherds of pottery found in the historic village may date from the second half of the first millennium AD, but there are no definite structures of this date. A cemetery dating from the early seventh century was one of the first discoveries at Blackhorse Road in 1957 (Moss-Eccardt 1971, 32). This lay on the parish boundary between Norton and Willian, considered a typical location for a Pagan Saxon cemetery, which has been thought to show the antiquity of such boundaries.
- 2.4.2 Excavations at St Nicholas's School in 1995 and 1998 revealed evidence for occupation from the tenth to thirteenth centuries, including a possible cellared building (Turner 1999, 17). This may be evidence for the origins of the village in the century before the charter of 1007. There is contemporary evidence from a site excavated in 1988, where Kristiansand Way now runs (Matthews & Burleigh 1989, 30), where a group of twenty-four cellars and large pits was found; it may well have been the site of the *Rodenhanger* mentioned in the charter of 1007 as being "together" with Norton.
- 2.4.3 Documentary evidence shows that Norton was a possession of St Albans Abbey from 1007 until its Dissolution in 1539 and that the Abbey falsely claimed that it had owned it from the late eighth century. The Abbey did not maintain a grange in the village, although its manor house was located at Nortonbury from the early fourteenth century on (Giles 2003, 19). The present church

dates from the start of the twelfth century, while the mention of a priest by Domesday Book in 1086 suggests that it replaced an earlier structure.

2.4.4 Following the Dissolution of St Albans Abbey in December 1539, the manor passed into lay hands. Cartographic data, beginning in the late seventeenth century, shows that the village layout was subject to constant change, which may be confirmed by documents and by the distribution of historic buildings. This presumably was characteristic of earlier settlement, as suggested by the work of Carenza Lewis of the University of Cambridge on medieval villages across East Anglia. The Inclosure Award of 1796 led to major reorganisation of the landscape within the parish, with most roads outside the built up area being completely realigned to form the pattern that survives to the present.

2.4.5 The final major change to the landscape was the creation of Letchworth Garden City in 1903. As one of three manors purchased to create the estate of First Garden City Ltd, Norton became the focus for much of the workers' housing established north of the railway line to service the industries established in the eastern part of Willian, to its south. The consolidated Common established in 1796 survived to become a "Peoples' Park" and the village centre retained its historic character, although there was some new building along the south-western end of Church Lane.

2.5 Previous Research

2.5.1 Aerial Photographs

2.5.1.1 Stapleton's Field has yielded good aerial photographic evidence, in the form of both crop marks and soil marks. From them, numerous ring ditches have been identified across the south-east facing slope (Hertfordshire HER 1032, 2312, 2425, 2426, 2720, 4448, 7419, 7420, 7421, 7422, 7423 (these last two east of the A1M) and 7767) and other features, some linear (HER 2427), on the north-west facing slope. The ring ditches form part of a monument complex, including a cursus and the monument to be investigated in Stapleton's Field, similar to complexes identified in the Ouse and Ivel valleys in Bedfordshire (Luke 2007, 41).



Figure 1: Aerial photograph taken on 1 July 1976 (© G R Burleigh)

2.5.2 Geophysics

2.5.2.1 In 1996, a geophysical survey of Stapleton's Field was carried out by GeoQuest Associates as part of a feasibility study for North Hertfordshire District Council into locating a new cemetery for Letchworth Garden City here (Hale 1996a; 1996b). A fluxgate gradiometer was used, which allows for rapid and cost-effective investigation, although the presence of high tension power lines in the south-eastern part of the field meant that this area could not be surveyed. The survey demonstrated the existence of seventeen anomalies, some corresponding to those visible on aerial photographs and others that had not previously been recognised. In particular, a pair of ditches running south-east from close to the end of Church Lane and an enclosure apparently attached to the north-eastern ditch were important additions to the known archaeology of the field.

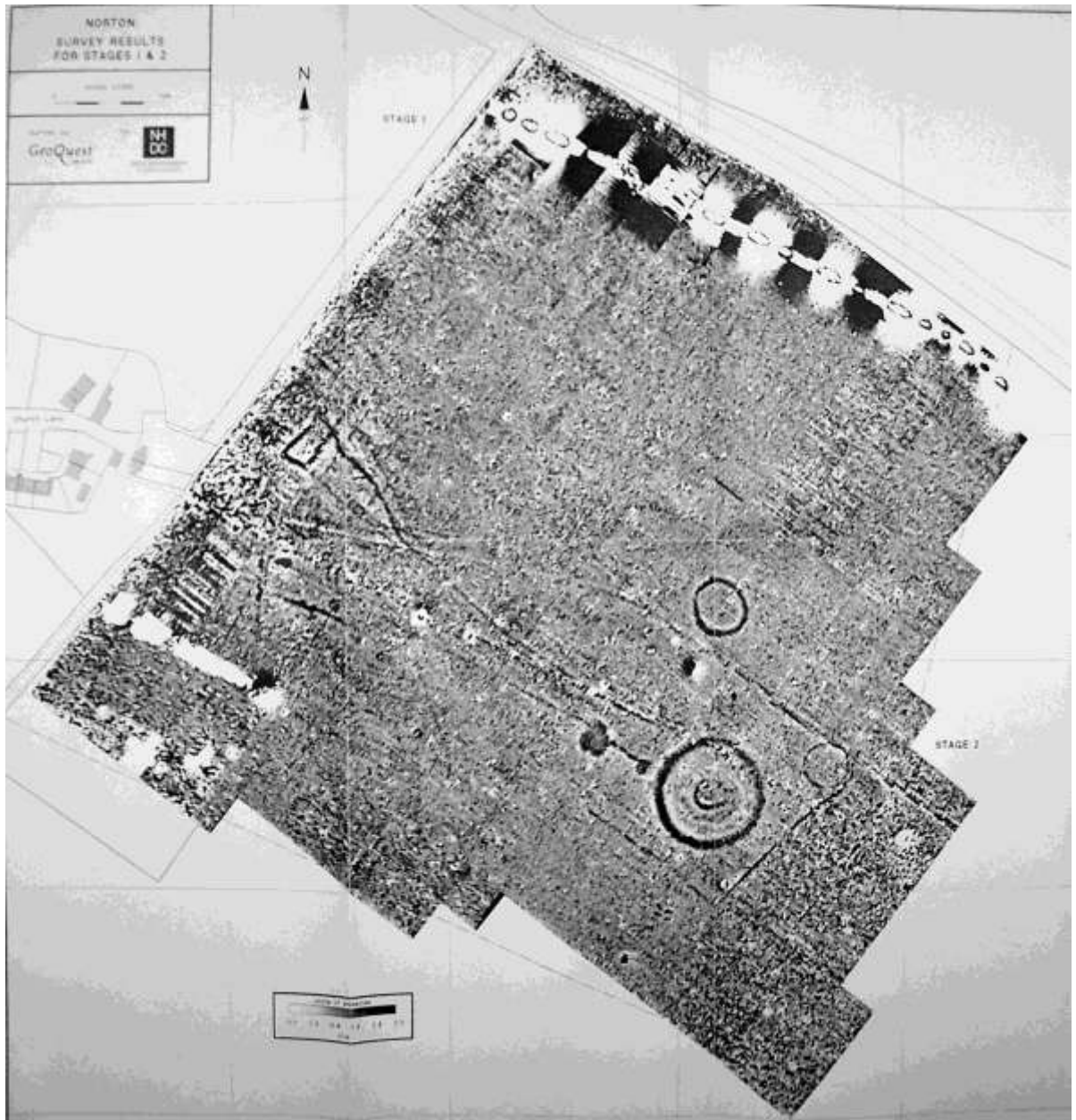


Figure 2: the 1996 geophysical survey (© GeoQuest Associates)

2.5.2.2 The monument proposed for excavation was described from the results of the geophysics as three concentric anomalies (two negative and one positive; RD1, RD2 and K1) corresponding to HER 2312. The outer negative anomaly is around 55 m in diameter; the positive anomaly is 27 m in diameter and the inner negative anomaly 14 m in diameter.

- 2.5.2.3 The feature has previously been described as a “double ring ditch” (HER 2312) with a feature between the two negative anomalies (interpreted as ditches) showing high resistivity, interpreted as a ring of cobbles or ‘kerb’. Kerbed barrows and ring cairns are not otherwise known in the region; GeoQuest Associates were based in County Durham, where such monuments are found and lack of familiarity with the archaeology of North Hertfordshire appears to have misled them into an implausible interpretation. They also speculated that the ‘kerb’ might have been a Roman period ‘embellishment’, although their grounds for doing so are not explained (Hale 1996b, 5). This is extremely unlikely and an alternative explanation as a henge was proposed (Fitzpatrick-Matthews & Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2009, 19).
- 2.5.2.4 The “double ring ditch” is surrounded by a three-sided rectilinear anomaly, interpreted as a ditched enclosure. This contains, in its eastern corner, a smaller ring-shaped anomaly, interpreted as a ring ditch representing a ploughed out burial mound. The association of these three groups of anomalies appeared deliberate and worth further investigation.

2.5.3 Excavation

- 2.5.3.1 In 1959-61, John Moss-Eccardt, then assistant curator of Letchworth Museum, excavated a ring ditch, with a diameter of approximately 17 m, in Stapleton's Field (Hertfordshire HER 1032). This is not reported in his 1988 publication of sites in the Letchworth area and it is understood that the site records were stolen around the time of the excavation. Part of a biconical urn of Middle Bronze Age date was found and although its original context is not clear, if it derives from a central burial, it suggests that the mound dates from about 1800-1600 BC. The site probably lay towards the north-eastern edge of the field, where there are unclear hints of ring ditches on aerial photographs. This was one of the areas where some early geophysical survey was carried out for Moss-Eccardt.
- 2.5.3.2 In 1963, Moss-Eccardt excavated a section through a second ring ditch, 30.5 m in diameter, north of Norton Road (Moss-Eccardt 1988, 47-9; Site GLV; Hertfordshire HER 4765). A central pit, assumed to be the grave, contained only soil and appeared to have been redug on at least one occasion; four other pits and two postholes were also found inside the ditch. The primary silts of the ditch contained finds ranging from Impressed Wares in the primary silts with Beaker and Collared Urn sherds higher in the fills, although it is unclear how they related to the presumed mound.
- 2.5.3.3 Part of another ring ditch, estimated to be around 20 m in diameter, was excavated by the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust in 1997 at the eastern end of Works Road, around 650 m to the south of the Stapleton's Field henge, in the historic parish of Willian (Humphrey 1997b, 12). Four separate episodes of ditch cutting were observed, the final being done in discrete segments. It had cut through an earlier hengiform monument (described by the excavator as an “*oval ring gully*”) with opposed entrances to the east and west and a central burial in an oval grave cut aligned north-east to south-west containing the crouched inhumation of a child with head to the north-east (*ibid.*, 11).
- 2.5.3.4 Excavations at Blackhorse Road to the south-west of the field between 1957 and 1973, again by John Moss-Eccardt, revealed an extensive and multi-period prehistoric settlement (Moss-Eccardt 1988; 2.2.3 above). The earliest phases of activity dated from the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age transitional period in the third millennium BC, associated with Impressed Ware and Beaker styles. After an apparent hiatus of a thousand years or so, a series of enclosures was constructed from the Early Iron Age onwards (Hertfordshire HER 188), with occupation continuing into the Roman period (Hertfordshire HER 1288 and 9678). It is noteworthy that there was little evidence for second millennium BC activity on the site, despite the numerous nearby ring ditches, many of which are presumably of this date, suggesting that contemporary settlement must have been located elsewhere.

2.5.4 The Work of Norton Community Archaeology Group

- 2.5.4.1 The 2010 season of work in Stapleton's Field ran from the topsoil stripping on 17 August to the final day of excavation on 29 August; additional recording work was carried out on 3 September before the final backfilling on the following day. In 2011, topsoil stripping took place on 27 July and work continued to the final day of excavation on 28 August. The working day ran from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm, Wednesday to Sunday. Three days were lost entirely to bad weather (heavy rain on 26 August 2010, 4 August 2011 and 25 August 2011), while work had to end early on 29 August 2010 and 18 August 2011 (also owing to heavy rain).
- 2.5.4.2 During the excavation of 2010, the "double ring ditch" (HER 2312) yielded evidence of a date in the first half of the third millennium BC in the form of Grooved Ware ceramics and struck flints. It also became clear that the previous interpretation of the feature as a burial monument was almost certainly incorrect and that its first phase consisted of an external ditch, with an internal bank and no trace of a central mound. The centre of the site consisted of activity deposits rich in organic material including animal bone and carbonised wood, with localised patches of *in situ* burning. This appears to confirm the identity of the monument as a henge, albeit one of unusual morphology.
- 2.5.4.3 During the 2011 excavations, it was found that the internal penannular ditch with a gap to the east visible from aerial photography and geophysical survey was cut into the activity deposits inside the bank as a secondary feature. It also cuts the inside of a chalk bank that surrounds the central part of the monument. At one stage, the inner ditch developed a turf line across its width. Perhaps contemporary with the cutting of the ditch, a massive post was erected in the centre of the monument, its packing including a few sherds of Grooved Ware. Aerial photographs and geophysical survey suggest the presence of further postholes around the inside of the inner ditch. The outer ditch proved to be sealed by extensive deposits of colluvium in both trenches and it is unclear if any of the deposits excavated were elements of the ditch fills.
- 2.5.4.4 The ceramics retrieved from the site were predominantly Neolithic (apart from later types from subsoils, colluvium deposits and cut features). There appear to be sand tempered Grimston/Lyles Hill types (Gibson & Woods 1990, 59), shell tempered types, Impressed Wares (Gibson & Woods 1990, 61) and Grooved Wares (Gibson & Woods 1990, 64) represented among the assemblage associated with the monument. No clearly Beaker types were identified and there was no Bronze Age pottery. Precise dating will depend on obtaining radiocarbon dates from organic materials retrieved from sealed deposits.

3 Aims and Objectives

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The Group's principal objectives, as set out in its Constitution, are to "encourage the Community to explore and investigate the historic Civil Parish of Norton, Hertfordshire, and its surroundings in order to further the knowledge of the area". These broad aims were focused at an early stage of the Group's existence as a series of research topics, from which a six year programme of work was planned to investigate these questions. Following the acquisition of geophysical equipment and reflection on the research topics during 2009, modifications were made to the detailed work programme.
- 3.1.2 Investigation of what has previously been suggested to be a Bronze Age landscape (Fitzpatrick-Matthews & Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2009, 19) formed archaeological research topic A1. Owing to the likely sensitivity of the archaeological deposits, its investigation was deferred until members of the group had received sufficient training and gained adequate experience on more robust remains. There is now a team of experienced volunteers who are capable of dealing with the more demanding techniques necessary for the investigation of this landscape.
- 3.1.3 The initial seasons of work in the field by Norton Community Archaeology Group in 2010-11 involved the excavation of four trial trenches, designed to investigate a representative sample of the principal monuments (with the exception of definite ring ditches). This work demonstrated that it is a multi-period landscape of considerable regional importance. Trenches I and IV examined the supposed "double ring ditch", reinterpreted as a henge and the ditched square enclosure apparently surrounding it. It is this monument that forms the focus of the proposed season of work in 2012/13.

3.2 The National Context of the Norton Henge

- 3.2.1.1 Given the apparent importance of the site and the surrounding landscape further expert consultation has been taken regarding Neolithic monuments. Keith Fitzpatrick Matthews (NHDC Archaeology Officer) has a long-standing relationship with Chester University and lecturer Dr Anne Teather. Anne shares the view that this is an important landscape of national importance:

Stapleton's Field henge could prove to be an unusually early henge monument, referred to in the literature as 'formative' henges. All the 'formative' henges identified to date have been found in Wales and the west of England, so if the identification is correct, this makes the Stapleton's Field henge the most easterly yet discovered and of national significance. However, even if it proves not to be of the 'formative' type, its unusual form and degree of preservation make it a rare type of site in eastern England and deserving of considerable further investigation.

Anne Teather (University of Chester)

- 3.2.1.2 On 5 January 2012, a visit to site was arranged for Anne Teather along with Professor Mike Parker-Pearson of the University of Sheffield, the Stonehenge Riverside research project and a recognised expert on Neolithic monuments.
- 3.2.1.3 Anne is keen to work closely with Keith and NCAG on the excavation strategy and interpretation of the finds from this significant monument and its wider landscape to ensure that the discoveries and opportunities are maximised. These experts also recognise the need to be inclusive of our Group and the community, and support us in our aims to learn more of the heritage of this area.
- 3.2.1.4 Relatively little is known as the development of henges beyond western England and Wales. The Norton henge may be an exceptionally rare monument in terms of its age, development, location, wealth of artefacts and state of preservation. It presents an exceptionally rare opportunity to add to the knowledge of habitation of the region as well as adding to the wider body of knowledge.

- 3.2.1.5 Through a special relationship with North Hertfordshire District Council and its Archaeology Officer, Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews the Group has, over five years, developed sufficient skills and expertise to excavate this monument. This is a major opportunity and a responsibility to engage the members in understanding their prehistoric heritage. This will entail further promotion, briefing, training, funding and participation in the main summer excavations of 2012 and 2013.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Background to the Neolithic in Britain

- 3.3.1.1 The term Neolithic (New Stone Age) is currently employed broadly in British archaeology to define a period between about 4000 and 2200 BC (Pollard 2008a, 9). It was originally used to describe a set of technological developments observed in the archaeological record across Europe; these have been associated with the onset of agricultural practices, increasing sedentism and the development of social complexity.
- 3.3.1.2 It has been hypothesised that peoples' perceptions of the world began to change during the Earlier Neolithic as they entered a new relationship with plants, animals and the landscape (Whittle 2009, 100). Pollen evidence suggests decreasing forest cover, large scale mining of flint is attested, and domesticated animals and crops were introduced from overseas (Thomas 2008, 58). Pottery was also produced for the first time, alongside a variety of new lithic types such as polished stone tools and leaf-shaped arrowheads. These would have affected the ways in which social interaction occurred as their use, manufacture and exchange became more formalised (Thomas 2008, 75). Finally, an increasing investment in the landscape is evident (Pollard 2008, 7), which can be recognised in the building of domestic and monumental structures. These included chambered tombs, wooden mortuary structures, long barrows, causewayed enclosures and cursus (Cummings 2008, 136).
- 3.3.1.3 By the Later Neolithic, beginning before 3000 BC, these monumental traditions were well established and evolving to produce new forms (Pryor 2004, 231; Harding 2003, 20). The distribution of ground stone axes increased and new ceramic types developed, with more complex decoration than earlier forms. These included Impressed Wares (seen locally as Peterborough type wares), which have been thought to be associated with the dead, and Grooved Ware pottery, more commonly associated with the living (Bradley 2007, 133- 134; Pryor 2004, 232). In particular, the increasing importance of circularity in monumental forms, reflected in the construction of henges and stone and timber circles, has been a focus of recent research (Last 2011, 2; Edwards 2004, 59).
- 3.3.1.4 There is some evidence for the regeneration of woodland during the Later Neolithic in East Anglia (Brown & Murphy 1997, 14), for reasons that are not altogether clear, but which may be connected with the consolidation of farmland replacing the earlier pattern of shifting areas of cultivation as the soil became exhausted. How far this is likely to be reflected on chalk downland, where the woodland was always sparse, is unclear and could potentially be investigated through pollen analysis of different contexts and monuments in Stapleton's Field.
- 3.3.1.5 Although much of our understanding of the British Neolithic is based on data from western Britain, particularly the sometimes spectacularly preserved field monuments of these areas, the south-east is amongst those regions where new data is beginning to emerge (Cotton & Field 2004, xxi). While the area generally lacks upstanding Neolithic monuments (a consequence of lengthy ploughing (Luke 2007, 45)), numerous sites have been discovered in recent years that are representative of the Neolithic as a whole and potentially offer a different regional perspective on the development of settlements, monuments and landscapes (Barber 2004, 5, 10). A variety of nationally important sites have also been recognised including the Cissbury flint mines (West Sussex), the causewayed enclosures of the South Downs, Wauluds Bank and the landscapes around Cardington and Biggleswade, all three in Bedfordshire (Barber 2004, 6; Luke 2007, 48).

3.3.2 Henges

- 3.3.2.1 A henge can be defined simply as a circular or oval ditch with an outer bank and either one or more entrances, usually built between about 2800 and 2200 BC, though earlier examples from before 3000 BC are known (Pryor 2004, 235; Last 2011, 5). Their size can be as little as five metres across and as large as 350 m (Darvill 2010, 152), although smaller examples are often classed as 'hengiform monuments' and the larger as 'henge enclosures'. Many have a flat internal space that may hold the remains of structures and features that are seemingly unrelated to the outer earthworks (Parker Pearson 2005, 25; Last 2011, 2; Darvill 2010, 155). The forms of these internal structures vary widely (Edwards 2004, 70) and classifications of henge types have not yet taken this variation into account (Bradley 1998, 118).
- 3.3.2.2 Additionally, a number of henge sites do not fit this general description, the most famous being the eponymous Stonehenge, where the bank lies inside its ditch (Luke 2007, 48). The term 'formative henge' has been proposed for Stonehenge and similar sites, including Flagstones in Dorset and Llandegai in Gwynedd (Last 2011, 2; Darvill 2010, 152). With their supposedly atypical features, they have been interpreted as the earliest known henge monuments (Harding 2003, 13). Jan Harding (2003, 20) suggests that formative henges and classic henges are of independent origin, with the former developing from causewayed enclosures and related monuments. However, henges are unique to the British Isles and developed within a relatively short time frame, which has been thought to indicate that they represent the formalisation of a shared concept of monumentality or ritual behaviour (Megaw & Simpson 1979, 158). There is therefore a probable continuum of tradition from the causewayed enclosures of the middle of the fourth millennium, through formative henges to the classic henges of the third millennium.
- 3.3.2.3 Mike Parker Pearson (2005, 93) has described henges as "*the zenith of a knowledge made concrete*", a knowledge that was probably related to cosmological belief systems. It is possible that as this knowledge developed, it could not easily be translated into concrete form and that formative henges represent early attempts to interpret cosmological beliefs that developed over time into the more readily recognised classic henge type (Harding 2003, 20). A gradual evolution of morphology has also been suggested for earlier monument types that were not abandoned after c 3000 BC but for which no new examples are known (Whittle 2009, 82). In East Anglia, for instance, some causewayed enclosures and cursus continued in use into a period when Beaker pottery was being produced (Brown & Murphy 1997, 16).
- 3.3.2.4 Henges are often found closely associated with these earlier Neolithic sites, such as cursus (Last 2011, 7) as in Norton, and seem to follow in the tradition of causewayed enclosures in that their construction frequently consisted of discontinuous ditches or pits (Thomas 1996, 193; Whittle 2009, 98). Similarly, the material culture found within henges seems to suggest they may have performed the same types of function as the older monument types (Megaw & Simpson 1979, 158; Whittle 2009, 99). The appearance of prestige items such as Grooved Ware pottery, ground stone axes and animal bones suggests that significant gatherings and feasts took place inside them (Bradley 1998, 95; Bradley 2007, 133; Thomas 1996, 185) and they may have provided a place for people to gather for both social and economic reasons (Pryor 2004, 256).
- 3.3.2.5 Though finds are often sparse, they appear to show varied patterns of activity (Last 2011, 5) with structured deposits of artefacts in special places such as entranceways and postholes, which suggest a symbolic aspect to their use (Bradley 1998, 95; Thomas 1996, 202). Whilst this has few twenty-first century parallels, the worldview of Neolithic peoples may not have separated symbolic and functional activities into different realms in the way that modernity does (Last 2011, 5). The survival of a depth of stratigraphy in the centre of the henge at Stapleton's Field may provide an opportunity to examine patterns of structured deposition in parts of the monument where such data often does not survive.
- 3.3.2.6 An enduring problem in studies of monuments has been that they focus either on their functions or on their meanings and associated cultural practices rather than an integration of the two approaches (Whittle 2009, 83-4). For example, functionalist approaches often emphasise how

many hours the construction of large earthworks would have required and cite reasons from social cohesion techniques to territorial markers (Cummings 2008, 146-7). Symbolic approaches tend to examine the form of the henge itself, scrutinizing location, often in low-lying areas and in close proximity to water (Megaw & Simpson 1979, 148), orientation, sometimes aligned with the movements of astronomical bodies (Pryor 2004, 253), and internal space, possibly emphasising boundaries representing exclusivity within a community (Thomas 1996, 196). Others still have focused upon the use of henges as creating a 'cultural memory' through their lasting nature and continued reuse (Edwards 2004, 68; Cummings 2008, 154). It is clear that all these factors – and others – need to be taken into account to understand either an individual henge or henges in general; the landscape of the Stapleton's Field henge certainly lends itself to a phenomenological approach to both the monument and its landscape.

- 3.3.2.7 Whilst it is clear that the meaning of a monument and the activities associated with its use would have changed over hundreds of years, only recently has there been a formal appreciation of the importance of contemporaneous geographical variation (Barnatt 1998, 92). The great variability in henge structures and the lack of extensive excavation makes it difficult to generalise about their nature (Last 2011, 5); generalisations have been too heavily influenced by that of examples in Wessex, which cannot be regarded as typical (Barber 2004, 1). Instead, the individual features and regional characteristics of these must be taken into account to produce an informed argument about form and function (Barnatt 1998, 92).

3.3.3 Site Specific

- 3.3.3.1 As noted in 2.5.4.2 above, the work of the Norton Community Archaeology Group has shown the monument in Stapleton's Field to be complex and unusual but of henge type. Although aerial photography and geophysical survey have revealed the basic layout of the site and its general morphology, the discovery through excavation that the inner ditch is a secondary feature, rather than primary, as originally suggested, demonstrates that there is a great deal more that could be learned about the monument. Moreover, the evident survival of a reasonable depth of stratigraphy in the centre of the monument that post-dates the construction of the bank suggests that the site has considerable potential to add to our understanding of the nature of activities that took place inside henges.
- 3.3.3.2 The presumed later Neolithic date of the site (assessed solely on the basis of the ceramic assemblage recovered so far) combined with its form suggests that the monument it is an unusual type of henge (although as already noted, notions of what is 'unusual' are based largely on excavated sites in western Britain, which may not be typical of those in the east). The outer ditch and berm between it and the chalk bank are sealed by a colluvium deposit that appears to contain only Early and Middle Neolithic pottery (Grimston/Lyles Hill type ware, shell-tempered ware and Impressed Wares); this suggests an early date for its initial construction, although this needs to be confirmed by the excavation of ditch deposits and the recovery of datable material from the primary fills, as the material could derive from activity higher up the slope. The central activity deposits, which have only been sampled, appear to contain Impressed Wares and Grooved Ware, as do the fills of the secondary, inner ditch. This appears to confirm an early date for the first phase.
- 3.3.3.3 The data recovered in 2010-11 suggests that the monument was initially constructed with an outer ditch and internal bank, which is typical of the form that Frances Healy has referred to as a 'formative henge' (Burrow 2010). However, it is unusual in possessing a berm of 5 or 6 metres between the ditch and bank; a similar feature is known at Maumbury Rings (Dorset). It is not clear where the entrance to the monument was located, although there are suggestions from the 1976 aerial photograph and the 1996 geophysical survey that it lay to the east. There are also indications from the survey that the bank was interrupted at this point, with hints of a portal setting consisting of two sets of three large postholes.

- 3.3.3.4 Additionally, the presence of a berm between the outer ditch and the bank with hints of activity taking place in this area offers an opportunity to test Julian Thomas's (1996, 196) hypothesis that the different forms of contemporary ceramics in use are evidence for social exclusion or, at least, differentiation. Whilst Impressed Wares are the commonest Neolithic pottery type so far recovered outside the bank, Grooved Ware appears to dominate internally. The date at which the colluvium began to form post-dates the construction of the bank, against which the soil piled up, and although its relationship with the outer ditch is not yet known, its formation appears to be during the Neolithic as it contains only Early to Middle Neolithic material, including daub.
- 3.3.3.5 The inner ditch has been shown by its stratigraphic position to be a secondary feature, which reduced the area inside to a diameter of only 7 or 8 m. This is small for a henge, although some hengiform types can be considerably smaller than this. It is evident that some time elapsed between the construction of the bank and the excavation of the inner ditch, as the accumulation of deposits in the centre of the monument, now truncated by ploughing, had reached a depth of at least 0.3 m. Perhaps contemporary with the digging of the ditch, a massive post was set up in the centre of the monument; aerial photographs and geophysical survey suggest that there were additional posts around the inside of the inner ditch.
- 3.3.3.6 The identification of the site as a formative henge or hengiform monument is a significant step in the recognition of a class of monument that is uncommon in the region, although a Class II henge is known 2 km to the south-east, in Weston (HER 2583). Here, the monument survives as a low earthwork consisting of a slightly raised central area and a ditch 7-10 m wide; the bank appears to have been destroyed and it is unclear whether it lay inside or outside the ditch. The site is Scheduled as an Ancient Monument.
- 3.3.3.7 The presence of a cursus at Nortonbury, only a few hundred metres from the Stapleton's Field henge, raises the possibility that use of the two overlapped. While the cursus may have been of earlier origin, the presence of Impressed Ware in the cursus at Springfield Lyons (Chelmsford, Essex) (Kemble 2001, 52) indicates that use could continue into the third millennium BC. Dating evidence for the Nortonbury cursus is poor: the excavated northern ditch section was sealed by the third in a sequence of silts filling a large, irregular doline. One of the fills of this periglacial hollow – it is unclear which – contained Grooved Ware.
- 3.3.3.8 In addition, the hengiform monument and L-shaped enclosure at Works Road, together with the six shafts at Blackhorse Road may have been contemporary with the later phases of the Stapleton's Field henge. While it subsequently appears to have formed the focus for the development of an extensive barrow cemetery on the south-facing slope of the hill, represented now only by ring ditches visible on aerial photographs, it is unclear if any of these is contemporary with its use or are a development following its abandonment. As a monument complex, it is comparable with local examples in the Ouse and Ivel valleys (Luke 2007, 41).
- 3.3.3.9 Brown and Murphy (2000, 10) have identified "*the development and integration of monuments, fields and settlements*" in the Neolithic and Bronze Age as an important topic that could be illuminated by the archaeological resource in East Anglia. There is little doubt that the complex of monuments spanning all periods from the Neolithic onwards found in what may be termed the 'Baldock Bowl' has the potential to address not only this research topic but could also add a wide ranging temporal dimension. A directed programme of trial trenching on monuments associated with the Stapleton's Field henge – the Nortonbury cursus, the numerous ring ditches and possible settlement sites – and their dating by high precision radiocarbon (and, potentially, other techniques, such as optically stimulated luminescence) could show how the landscape developed and changed through time.
- 3.3.3.10 Targeted excavation of those parts of the monument likely to yield the best evidence for its construction and use (the hypothesised locations of the terminals of the outer and inner ditches, the entrance through the bank and the deposits in the centre of the monument) is proposed for the summers of 2012 and 2013. This will take the form of an area excavation, best suited to

identifying features such as ditch terminals and to understand spatial patterning within the deposits in the centre of the monument. The presence of daub in Neolithic deposits is significant and raises the possibility that there may be one or more structures on the site, either a building contemporary with the monument or preceding it. Should the remains of such a structure be revealed, appropriate advice will be sought on an approach to its excavation and recording.

- 3.3.3.11 It is also intended to examine the small ring ditch known from geophysical survey and aerial photography to lie to the east of the monument. Only one section across the ditch is intended, with the aim of recovering datable material. If a central burial pit is identified, this will also be targeted for excavation. Its proximity to the henge may be an indication that it was constructed while the older monument was still in use.
- 3.3.3.12 The rectilinear enclosure known to surround the monument will also be targeted. A section across it excavated in 2010 suggested that it filled during the later medieval period and perhaps dated from that period. This was a puzzling discovery, given its evident spatial association with the monument; a further section will be excavated across it to recover additional evidence for its date.

3.4 Education

- 3.4.1 Education is an important element of the Group's aims. In addition to the general aspiration of making local residents more aware of the heritage of their community, specific educational goals can be met with the proposed project. One of the Group's purpose is to make the techniques of archaeology more accessible to the public and to train inexperienced volunteers in archaeological methods and techniques. Any beginners will be paired with an experienced volunteer and trained in the archaeological disciplines and standards in use on the excavation.
- 3.4.2 To enable research on the site to feed into the aims of the Higher Education sector, links with University departments that have a focus on Neolithic and Bronze Age studies will be explored in the hope of mutually beneficial exchanges of ideas. In particular, data from the project will be made available before wider dissemination to research students and academics, subject to the acknowledgement of Norton Community Archaeology Group as the originator and copyright holder of the data.

3.5 Public Involvement

- 3.5.1 It is intended to involve more residents of Norton in the project than in previous seasons' work, either in the excavation, post-excavation work or other activities relating to the site. In this way and through the use of targeted publicity it is hoped that public awareness of the heritage of Norton will be heightened.
- 3.5.2 Opportunities for involvement for local residents (free of charge for residents of Letchworth Garden City) include:
- participation in excavation;
 - participation in finds processing;
 - participation in survey work.
- 3.5.3 It is also intended to involve other community groups, such as local archaeological and historical societies, with opportunities to engage in the processes of excavation and other research.
- 3.5.4 This is perhaps a unique opportunity for this community to research and understand the activities of the earliest inhabitants and add to the body of knowledge of such monuments. This opportunity is wholly consistent with the aims of the Group to establish a sense of the community's heritage and to learn about our past. We are discovering the earliest efforts of humans to settle in this area. The henge also plays an important part in revealing the sequence of settlement, a sense of place and origin.

3.6 Public Outreach

3.6.1 Throughout the excavation, the wider public will be kept informed of its progress in a number of ways:

- A daily blog (including photographs and videos) will be maintained of discoveries, provisional interpretations and other significant events in the course of the project.
- Regular updates will appear in the local media (and, if appropriate, the national media);
- Regular updates to local councillors (North Hertfordshire District, Hertfordshire County and Letchworth Garden City Parish) and sponsors;
- The archaeological community will be kept informed through specialist media;
- Organised visits by local groups will be arranged;
- An open day on the site at the end of the dig.

3.6.2 Following the end of the excavation, summary statements may be produced in a variety of formats:

- Public lectures to local groups including (but not limited to) the Norton Community Archaeology Group;
- An interim publication (in Herts Past & Present or the CBA Mid Anglia Newsletter);
- A summary report to be made available as a PDF download from the Norton Community Archaeology Group's website.

4 Methodology

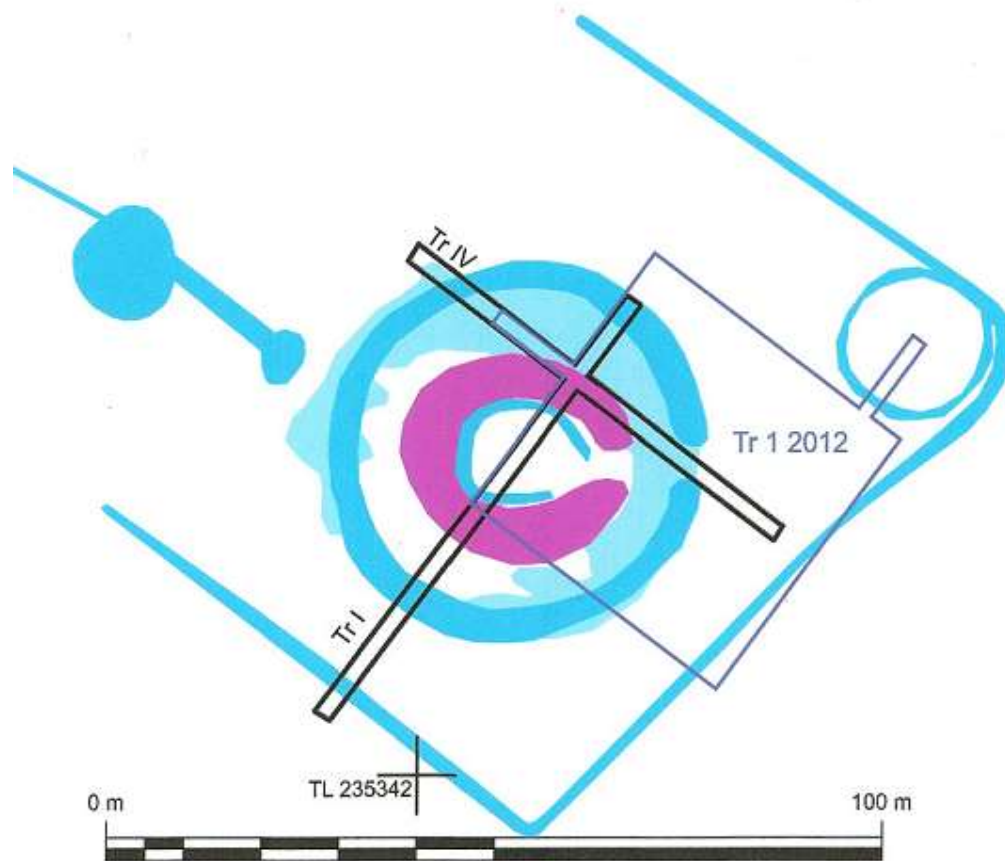
4.1 Geophysics

- 4.1.1 A geophysical survey of the entire would assist in the interpretation of the complex of monuments known from aerial photographs and the magnetometer survey of 1996. The 1996 survey was limited by the presence of high-tension power lines in the south-eastern part of the field, which prevented the use of the equipment in that area. Soil resistivity survey, while also affected by such lines, is still possible beneath them. It is also hoped that features visible on aerial photographs but not detected by magnetometry will be more amenable to soil resistivity.
- 4.1.2 The priority for the 2012 season is the investigation of the site of the henge. Although much of it showed well in the 1996 magnetometer survey, its north-eastern side was crossed by a twentieth-century ditch containing a great deal of ironwork that caused spikes in the readings. These masked more subtle magnetic variations, particularly around the area where the entrance to the monument is thought to have lain. Soil resistivity is not affected by ironwork in the soil, so a clearer picture of this part of the monument will be obtained.
- 4.1.3 In future seasons, other parts of the field will be targeted. It will be particularly important to examine the south-eastern part of Stapleton's Field. This is where aerial photographs have revealed the presence of at least five ring ditches close to the electricity pylon and one photograph from the dry summer of 1976 appears to show an otherwise unrecorded triple ditch of probably late Middle Iron Age date.

4.2 Excavation Strategy

- 4.2.1 The excavation in Stapleton's Field for summers 2012 and 2013 will continue the research and fieldwork NCAG began in summer 2010. A new trench will be excavated across the eastern quadrant of the henge. The 2010 Trench I will form the north-western edge of the quadrant, while the south-eastern part of 2011 Trench IV will be completely subsumed within the trench, which will be regarded as Trench I. It will measure 40 × 40 m, giving access to a complete quadrant of the monument, a section of the outer rectangular enclosure (of possibly medieval date) and a ring ditch to the east of the henge.
- 4.2.2 The trench will be opened using a mechanical digger with a toothless ditching bucket (attached to the back actor of a JCB type excavator), removing the topsoil in spits under archaeological supervision. The spoil will be placed in heaps around three sides of the trench, at least two metres from its edge. This will be supervised by the NHDC Archaeology Officer. Care will be taken to ensure that the mechanical excavator does not penetrate the geotextile layer. Following the mechanical excavation, the trenches will be cleaned and all deposits and features recorded.
- 4.2.3 After topsoil has been removed and the spoil heaps consolidated, their locations will be marked off with hazard tape mounted on road pins. No other fencing will be provided, as the field will be under grass during the excavation with no livestock present. As the trench is located behind a fence, at least five metres west of the public footpath and will not be more than about 0.35 m deep in general, there is no major risk to the general public.
- 4.2.4 Consideration will be given to the mechanical removal of at least part of the colluvial deposit to the east of the monument. This will be undertaken only where it poses no threat to the survival of stratigraphy relating to the construction and use of the henge.
- 4.2.5 A site grid will be established, based on that established in 2011. Grid points will be marked with metal pins at five metre intervals. The metal pins will be removed at the end of the season, but an attempt will be made to retain the base line pegs.
- 4.2.6 Following the initial stripping, all exposed surfaces will be cleaned initially by hoe and then by light trowelling to define archaeological deposits and features below the subsoil. Finds will be left

in situ unless already disturbed by the mechanical excavator. Once the trench has been cleaned, it will be planned at a scale of 1:20.



4.3 Excavation Methodology

- 4.3.1 Excavation of all archaeological deposits will be by hand. Small discrete features, such as postholes, will be completely excavated; linear features, such as ditches, will be sampled in sections of not more than 2 m in width. Each deposit will be drawn before excavation, recorded during excavation using *pro forma* record sheets and a minimum 5%/20 litre sample retained. The purpose of excavation will be to ascertain the character, depth and date of deposits, to obtain indications of their formation processes and to recover artefactual and ecofactual material to assist in their interpretation.
- 4.3.2 All finds will be retained. They will be assigned unique identifier numbers, located in three dimensions and, where considered desirable, photographed *in situ*. They will be bagged individually and a basic record made on *pro forma* record sheets at the time of excavation.
- 4.3.3 Some ecofacts may be separated out for radiocarbon dating. These will be wrapped in aluminium foil to avoid contact with other organic materials and air dried. They will be kept separate at all times from other classes of find.
- 4.3.4 The temporary bench mark established in 2011 will be used to establish a new temporary bench mark, away from the edge of excavation. Consideration will be given to siting a permanent marker on the fence beside the public footpath.
- 4.3.5 During excavation, plans of all archaeological deposits and features will be drawn at a scale of 1:20 on polyester drafting film. Some small and/or complex contexts may be planned at 1:10. Sections of excavated features will be drawn at a scale of 1:10; general sections of trenches will be drawn at 1:20.

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- 4.3.6 Spoil will be scanned for artefactual and ecofactual material by sieving as far as possible to assess recovery rates of different classes of material, although no additional archaeological material was recovered during the 2010 season using this technique. If it proves not to be worthwhile, sieving will be abandoned early on in the excavation.
- 4.3.7 An environmental sampling strategy has been prepared to allow 5% or 20 litre soil samples to be taken from contexts likely to yield usable data. The samples will be processed off site before being sent to an appropriate specialist.
- 4.3.8 The physical security of all archaeological deposits, features and artefacts, both on and off the site, will be a central concern and all reasonable measures will be taken to ensure their protection before, during and after excavation. A system of logging all finds on and off site, with a record of their off-site destination, will be maintained throughout the excavation.
- 4.3.9 At the end of excavation, the exposed archaeological horizons that remain will be protected by a layer of geotextile. All excavated soil will be replaced by mechanical excavator to restore the field surface to its original level.

4.4 Recording Procedures

- 4.4.1 To facilitate the production of an overall project archive consistent with the highest professional standards currently accepted in Britain, the following recording procedures will be applied.
- 4.4.2 The site will be assigned a unique alphanumeric code that will be used to identify all records, finds and samples relating to the project. For this project, the code is NOR/SF '12.
- 4.4.3 A continuous context numbering system will be operated, continuing the numbering starting in 2010. Context records will be compiled on individual pro-forma record sheets. Each context will be described in terms of soil details, stratigraphic position, dimensions, artefact content, samples and interpretation. The context system will be cross-referenced to all other records, including plans and sections, and may be stored in an electronic form as well as written paper documents. A separate set of registers will be maintained for samples, registered finds, levels and context sequence.
- 4.4.4 A Harris matrix will be compiled and maintained during the course of the investigation.
- 4.4.5 Soil descriptions will be standardised, as far as possible, to conform to the use of sorting charts, roundness index, percentage of area, grain size, texture, consistency and colour (expressed in terms of Munsell soil colour codes).
- 4.4.6 All plans of excavated features will be drawn on polyester film at a scale of 1:20 (or 1:10 if necessary in order to show detail) and related to the site grid. Conventions for marking slope, coarse components and so on will follow those in the site manual. Plans of intermediate contexts may be drawn in the spaces provided on the pro-forma record sheets or on polyester film, as appropriate. Any burials encountered will be drawn at a scale of 1:10 (or, in the case of near-term foetuses, neonates or small animals, at 1:5). A register of plans will be kept, continuing the numbering system established in 2010. Sections through features will normally be drawn at 1:10. If required, long sections to demonstrate stratigraphy or sedimentary sequences will be drawn at 1:50 or 1:20. A register of sections will be kept, continuing the numbering sequence established in 2010.
- 4.4.7 All plans and section drawings will be annotated with absolute heights in metres above Ordnance Datum derived from the established TBM. A separate record of levels will be maintained on pro-forma sheets cross-referenced to the relevant drawings.
- 4.4.8 A full digital photographic record in both colour and monochrome will be maintained illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. Digital monochrome photographs will be taken using the monochrome setting of the site camera. The

photographic record will also include working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological work. A register of all photographs will be kept.

- 4.4.9 At the end of each working day, all written and drawn records will be returned to the relevant files and kept with the rest of the records. No records will remain on site and all will be taken off site by the site director or his appointed deputies. At the end of each week, all records will be checked for consistency and accuracy.

4.5 *Artefact and Ecofact Recovery*

- 4.5.1 Artefactual evidence will be collected and treated according to the following general strategy.
- 4.5.2 All artefacts will be retained. Very recent material and unstratified animal bone may be discarded following initial processing and recording, according to criteria contained in the written Disposal Policy (Appendix 3). A record will be maintained of all material disposed of in this way, including written descriptions and photographs. Some may be retained, however, particularly if important in establishing the recent date of deposits and features.
- 4.5.3 Ecofactual evidence will be collected and treated in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Environmental Archaeology* (English Heritage 2002). All macroscopic evidence will be collected and treated in the same manner as described for artefacts.
- 4.5.4 All material will be recorded during initial post-excavation sorting and, if disposed in accordance with the Disposal Policy, will be offered in the first instance as an educational resource to St Nicholas JMI School.
- 4.5.5 Unstratified objects from topsoil or other modern deposits will normally be retained for recording; where they are to be disposed of, this will be according to the criteria outlined in the disposal policy.
- 4.5.6 Metal detecting equipment may not be used on any property owned by Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and will therefore not be permitted on site.
- 4.5.7 Should human remains be encountered, the Project Director will obtain a licence from the Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA) and will ensure that the conditions of its issue are observed. Until such a licence is obtained, the remains will be carefully covered with polythene held in place with topsoil.
- 4.5.8 All registered finds (excluding bulk finds) will be recorded in relation to the site grid and their height above Ordnance Datum. The register of these finds will form part of the archive.
- 4.5.9 In certain circumstances where unusual or extremely fragile and delicate objects are found, their recovery will be undertaken by appropriate specialists.
- 4.5.10 All finds and samples will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, stabilised, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the guidelines set out in UKIC's *Conservation Guidelines no 2*.
- 4.5.11 All excavated objects will be deemed to form an integral part of the site archive (excepting those discarded in line with the Disposal Policy).
- 4.5.12 Soil samples of a minimum of 5% of the deposit or 20 litres will be collected from all contexts judged likely to contain significant small or microscopic ecofactual material. This will normally include all sealed prehistoric archaeological contexts. These samples will be submitted to an appropriately qualified specialist for processing, recording and reporting.

4.6 *Post-Excavation Strategy*

- 4.6.1 During the excavation, initial washing and sorting of bulk finds will be undertaken; prehistoric pottery will not be washed, but will be brushed gently following air drying. Any finds not sorted by the end of fieldwork will be dealt with as soon as possible afterwards. A record will be

maintained of all finds on pro-forma sheets, detailing quantities, weights and other details by context.

- 4.6.2 Following the completion of the fieldwork stage, the site archive, comprising the excavation records and any materials recovered, will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. A Harris matrix for the site will be compiled, together with an overall site summary and a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual resource.

4.6.3 Review

- 4.6.3.1 When the initial post-excavation work is complete, a review of the quality, character and significance of the data will be carried out in association with period and materials specialists to consider which of the data collected might be expected to contribute to the research aims of the project and to be of a high enough quality to proceed with a formal assessment.

4.6.4 Assessment

- 4.6.4.1 The assessment stage is designed to allow decisions to be made about the potential of the data to address research questions raised in the Project Design and to contribute to wider research questions, and the nature of any future programme of analysis leading to publication. In association with period and materials specialists, an Assessment Report will be prepared comprising:

- A statement of the research aims of the fieldwork and an illustrated summary of the results to date indicating to what extent the aims were fulfilled or extended.
- A summary of the quantities and potential for analysis of the information recovered for each category of finds, dating and environmental data.
- A list of the project research aims revised in the light of the results of the fieldwork and post excavation assessment.
- A list of the methods that will be used to achieve the revised research aims.
- A list of all the main tasks involved in using the stated methods to achieve the aims and produce a report and research archive in the stated format, wherever possible linking each task explicitly to the relevant method statement and indicating the personnel and time in days involved in each task.
- A provisional report synopsis, broken down into chapters, section headings and subheadings, which will explicitly reflect the revised research aims of the project.
- A list of the personnel involved indicating their qualifications for the tasks undertaken.

- 4.6.4.2 Provisional publication options indicating potential publisher(s) and report format.

- 4.6.4.3 The Assessment Report will include an updated Project Design which will allow for further analysis to take place, leading to a research archive and publication.

4.7 Publication

- 4.7.1 An Interim Report will be published at the end of the season. This will be made available on the Norton Community Archaeology Group's website as a PDF file for downloading and versions may be submitted for publication in traditional media such as *Herts Past & Present* or the *CBA Mid Anglia Newsletter*.

- 4.7.2 Academic publication will occur in a forum such as *Hertfordshire Archaeology & History* for results of local significance; consideration should be given to wider publication (either in a national or international specialist journal or in monograph format) in the event of discoveries of more than local or regional significance. Appropriate academic advice will be sought should this wider publication be deemed necessary.

Project Design: Stapleton's Field Excavation 2012 and 2013

- 4.7.3 Norton Community Archaeology Group's website (url <http://www.nortoncommarch.com>) promotes its activities and provides a repository for interim reports, pictures and data about the excavation and related activities.
- 4.7.4 A weblog is maintained throughout all fieldwork projects that provides a day-by-day account of the work (url <http://nortoncommarch.wordpress.com>). This gives an insight into the developing interpretations of the sites being investigated and acts as a public site diary.
- 4.7.5 A small but permanent display area has been made available in Letchworth Museum in which pictures of the excavation and some of the finds can be displayed. The Museum is due to close to the public at some point in 2012, so this may not prove possible. However, a new District Museum to replace it will open in Hitchin Town Hall late in 2013 or early in 2014, which will provide a venue for the display.
- 4.7.6 It is also planned to produce a small popular publication about the archaeology of Norton incorporating the results of this and other fieldwork.
- 4.7.7 The Group generates mobile displays for local events to promote the Group's work and achievements.

4.8 *Archive*

- 4.8.1 The full archive of the present project, including the documentary records created by the Group and the material archive will be deposited with North Hertfordshire District Council's Museums Service after the end of the current programme and following full academic publication of the results.
- 4.8.2 NHDC Museums Service will also provide storage for elements of the archive following the completion of initial post-excavation work. This does not affect the copyright provisions outlined in 5.7.3 below.

5 Structure and General Practice

5.1 General

5.1.1 The project will be undertaken by the Norton Community Archaeology Group. The origins and aims of this group have been described in 1.2 above. The Group currently has a membership of approximately 100 individuals.

5.2 Project management

5.2.1 The project will be administered, co-ordinated and the fieldwork directed by Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews BA, Archaeology Officer for North Hertfordshire District Council. Post-excavation research and analysis will also be managed by Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews.

5.2.2 The project director will be supported full time by a supervisor, Caoimhín O'Coileáin.

5.3 Staffing

5.3.1 The remainder of the project staff will be volunteers. These fall into 3 categories:

- Qualified volunteers who have an archaeological degree. There are at least 3 of these.
- Experienced volunteers who have experience (in some cases substantial) of other excavations.
- Inexperienced volunteers who require training and guidance from the others.

5.4 Specialist Support

5.4.1 Ceramic finds will be assessed initially by Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews, who will decide on the appropriateness of further specialist analysis.

5.4.2 Lithics & stone objects will be analysed by Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews.

5.4.3 Metal objects will be analysed by Gilbert Burleigh.

5.4.4 Animal bone will be analysed by a suitable specialist.

5.4.5 Heritage Network (a local professional archaeological company) and Dr Anne Teather (University of Chester) can be called upon to advise in any circumstances outside the Group's collective experience.

5.5 Permissions to Excavate

5.5.1 Permissions to excavate on this site in 2012 and 2013 are noted at Appendix 8.

5.6 Health and Safety

5.6.1 All work will conform to the regulations contained in:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1994
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- Work Equipment Regulations 1992
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Any other such guidelines and regulations as may be in operation at the time of the fieldwork.

Project Design: Stapleton's Field Excavation 2012 and 2013

- 5.6.2 A Risk Assessment will be prepared before the excavation commences (as an example, the Risk Assessment for 2012 forms Appendix 4). A First Aid Kit will be maintained in each working area by a designated and qualified First Aid Officer (currently Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews).

5.7 Insurance

- 5.7.1 The project is covered by North Hertfordshire District Council's Public Liability Insurance and Employer's Liability Insurance, Travelers Insurance Company Limited Policy Number UCPOP 3686257.
- 5.7.2 The project is also covered by Norton Community Archaeology Group's own Public Liability Insurance and Employer's Liability Insurance, Aviva Policy Number 24765101 GHC/000111.
- 5.7.3 Copies of current certificates are attached at Appendix 9.

5.8 Copyright and Intellectual Property

- 5.8.1 For the duration of the project, all statements on the fieldwork will be the copyright of the Norton Community Archaeology Group. No individual will be permitted to publish any written, drawn, photographic or other information about the project or its discoveries without the prior express, written permission of the Norton Community Archaeology Group Steering Committee.
- 5.8.2 Following the deposition of the project archive with North Hertfordshire Museums Archaeological Service, copyright will subsist in North Hertfordshire District Council.

6 Programming and Resources

- 6.1 The Project Programme is attached at Appendix 5.
- 6.2 The resources and timetable are as follows:
- Locating the trench is planned for Saturday 7 July.
 - Stripping topsoil from the trench on Wednesday 11 July.
 - The excavation is planned to commence on Thursday 12 July and end on Sunday 19 August inclusive, excluding Mondays and Tuesdays.
 - Proposed working hours: 9.30 – 1 and 1.30 – 4.30.
- 6.3 Principal roles are shown in Appendix 7.
- 6.4 The Project Director and/or Supervisor will be on site throughout the day and excavation cannot take place without one being present.
- 6.5 The remainder of the staff will be experienced volunteers or volunteers who are supervised by others. In addition, it is intended to outreach to the local community in as many ways as possible. These will take the form of:
- Involvement of volunteers from the local village and beyond
 - An Open Day on Saturday 18 August.
- 6.6 Finds will be processed on site where this does not pose a risk to the integrity of the archive or the survival of the finds.
- 6.7 Apart from the Project Director and the Supervisor, the staff will be unpaid volunteers. The Project Director's costs will be borne by NHDC. The cost of the Supervisor, the post-excavation specialist work and equipment costs will be met either by the volunteers themselves, by sponsorship or by grant application.
- 6.8 A budget for the excavation (exclusive of post-excavation analysis) is presented in Appendix 6.
- 6.9 It is hoped that NCAG hire a cabin or oasis unit so that finds can be processed safely on site and records can be kept inside as a protection against the elements.

7 Bibliography

A bibliography is included as Appendix 9.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Questions

Potential archaeological research – as at January 2012

The main focus of the archaeology section within the community group for the next two seasons will be the continued investigation of the Henge feature and related features in Stapleton's Field.

A comprehensive geophysical survey of the Henge and its environs in the field will be carried out.

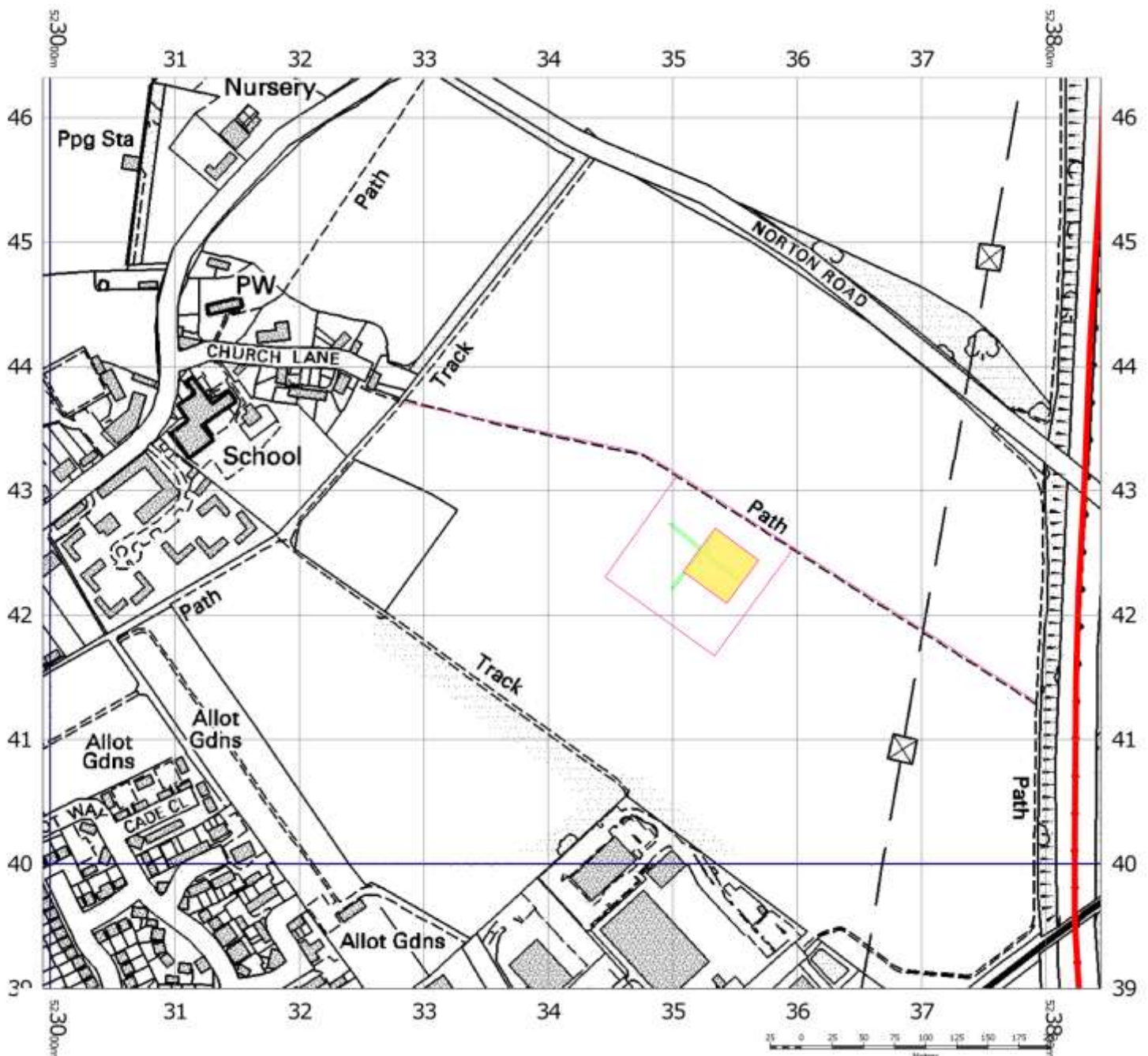
The proposed excavation is a fantastic opportunity for the group; it will enhance our knowledge of the prehistoric occupants of the area. It will also provide excellent practical experience for the members and allows them to develop their skills base in the discipline of field archaeology.

The research will focus on the construction and development of the henge and its relationship to other features in the vicinity.

The unusually large number of finds will provide an insight into human occupation and use of the site and dating evidence.

The entire landscape of this research area and more notably the henge is of national significance, which has attracted interest from the University of Chester and Mike Parker Pearson, who will be able to share considerable knowledge in this area.

Appendix 2: Location of the Excavation



Trenches excavated in 2011 are shown in green; the main area proposed for excavation in 2012-13 is shown in yellow (additional spurs may be excavated as necessary to extend the trench beyond the 40x40 m square shown here).

Appendix 3: North Hertfordshire Museums Archaeological Service Disposal Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Disposal Policy was originally produced for the specific purposes of addressing the collecting policy of the Norton Community Archaeology Group's excavations. The collection policy of North Hertfordshire Museums Archaeological Service is outlined below (Section 2) and conforms to the standards set out in a recent policy document produced by the Society of Museum Archaeologists (Brown 2007). Originally written by Neil Rushton in 2003, it is subject to annual amendment and revision, and the current version is available from the North Hertfordshire District Council website (the most recent revision can be found at http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/deposits_policy_april_2008.pdf).
- 1.2 The basic principle for archaeological projects directly supervised by North Hertfordshire Museums is one of complete finds retrieval. Whilst this is an ideal that can rarely be achieved, it is nevertheless the case that no decision about finds disposal (or lack of collection) should be made in the field. Classes of material that are often not retained – such as post-medieval ceramic building materials or unstratified animal bone – will be kept for at least initial recording.
- 1.3 A second important principle is that of maintaining the integrity of the archive. This is defined as the complete physical (including digital) record of an archaeological project, including all surviving primary evidence (artefacts, ecofacts and samples). There are no academic grounds for splitting or dispersing an archive and such a course of action will only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances (for instance, where a project takes place on the properties of more than one landowner and one refuses to deposit finds made on his land, those finds from elsewhere on the site will be accepted at a part archive).
- 1.4 The archive produced by any project should also aim to be “stable, ordered and accessible” (Brown 2007, 1) for deposition in a recognised long-term repository (in this case, North Hertfordshire District Council's accredited Museums Service).

2 Site Collection Policy

- 2.1 Guidelines for the selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological archives by museums have been set out in some detail by the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA 1993), discussed in Perrin (2002, 9-10, 24 and 30) and form the subject of a recent policy document (Brown 2007). In particular, Duncan Brown (2007, 29 ff.) sets out specific guidelines for the retention and disposal of artefactual and environmental categories. NHDC Museums Service adheres to these guidelines and standards and will implement them in regards to all deposited archaeological archives. This includes archives generated by fieldwork undertaken by or supervised by the Museums Service.
- 2.2 NHDC Museums Service makes a strong presumption against retaining unstratified animal bone and unworked stone of local geological origin unless they have a demonstrably intrinsic value for future research (SMA 1993, 33-34). These items should be recorded, sampled and then disposed of by the archaeological project manager prior to deposit. Worked stone items such as fragmented roof slate should not be retained after recording (although a sample may be kept). The Museums Service maintains the right to make decisions as to retention and dispersal of all deposited archaeological archives. Unprocessed environmental items and waterlogged items will not normally be accepted for deposit by the Museums Service.
- 2.3 Precious metals older than 300 years old are usually subject to the Treasure Act 1996 and must be dealt with accordingly (DCMS 2002). The definition of ‘Treasure’ was extended in January 2003 to include all prehistoric metal finds when the finds come from a group of two or more objects (DCMS 2002, 9-10). Every effort will be made by the Museums Service to acquire the entire assemblage of treasure in order to maintain the integrity of the archive, but if resources are not available then priority should be given to retaining the assemblage intact and in the public domain if another appropriate museum is able to acquire it (SMA 1993, 25).

- 2.4 The archaeological treatment of human remains in the form of inhumations and cremation requires special sensitivity and is subject to the *Burial Act 1859*. The SMA and the MEG have set out the standards and guidelines for the selection, retention and dispersal of human remains (MEG 1991; SMA 1993, 36-37). These guidelines will be adhered to by the Museums Service and the dispersal of skeletal material will only take place after extensive consultation with relevant experts.
- 2.5 The documentary and digital archives will always be retained in full by the Museums Service.

3 Disposal Policy

- 3.1 By definition, NHDC Museums Service Archaeological Service has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. There is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the museum's collection except as set out below.
- 3.2 In those cases where the Museums Service is legally free to dispose of an item (if this is in doubt, advice will be sought), it is agreed that any decision to sell or otherwise dispose of material from the collections will only be taken after due consideration. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds. Once a decision to dispose of an item has been taken, priority will be given to retaining the item within the public domain and, with this in view, it will be offered first, by gift or exchange, to Registered or Accredited Museums, before disposal to other interested individuals or organisations is considered. Preference will always be given to educational establishments in these instances.
- 3.3 In cases in which an arrangement for the gift or exchange of material is not being made with an individual Registered or Accredited Museum, the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of material. This will normally be through an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal* and other professional journals as appropriate. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of the objects involved and the basis on which the material will be transferred to the other institution. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed.
- 3.4 If the decision is taken to dispose of an object or specimen by sale, it cannot be offered for sale unless the Museums Service still has title to the material after the provisions in the Transfer of Ownership have been followed.
- 3.5 A decision to dispose of an object or specimen, whether by exchange, gift or destruction, will be the responsibility of the Museums Service, acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff. Full records will be kept of all such decisions and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records, where practicable.
- 3.6 In the event of the Museums Service being formally dissolved, the Museum's archive will pass *in toto* to its designated successor as local Accredited Museum.
- 3.7 Any monies received by the Museums Service from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the archive from which the items have been removed. This normally means improvements relating to the care of the collection.

Bibliography

- Brown, D H 2007 *Archaeological archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. London: Society of Museum Archaeologists
- DCMS 2002 *The Treasure Act 1996: Code of Practice* (Revised 2002). London: H.M.S.O.
- Perrin, K 2002 *Archaeological archives: documentation, access and deposition. A way forward*. London: English Heritage
- SMA 1993 *Selection, retention and dispersal of archaeological collections: guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. London: Society of Museum Archaeologists

Appendix 4: Risk Assessment

Project	Stapleton's Field Excavation 2012	Method Statement No: 1.0
Effective Period	1 July 2012 to 30 August 2012	
Site Code	NOR/SF'12 (Stapleton's Field: Norton).	
Proposed Excavation Dates:	11 July 2012 to 19 August 2012.	Review Date: 30 June 2012
Description	Excavation of one 40m x 40m area in field land and spur (see Appendix 2)	

Details of tasks to be carried out	Potential Hazard	Before Control Measures Applied			Control Measures	After Control Measures Applied		
		A Likelihood	B Severity Rating	Overall Risk Rating A x B		A Likelihood	B Severity Rating	Overall Risk Rating A x B
Opening and closing of the excavation	Mechanical Excavator operations Risk of serious injury or death.	1	3	3 Low	See note X1 below	1	1	1 Low
Set out grid & carry out excavation	1. Slips/trips/falls Hidden unidentified hazards, concealed objects, loose cables, ice, oil, water. Risk of serious injury.	1	3	3 Low	Refer to SSWD 13	1	1	1 Low
	2. Lone Working Accidents, violence. Risk of injury or death.	1	2	2 Low	Refer to SSWD 14	1	1	1 Low
	3. Effects of Exposure Cold, wet & windy weather; heat and sun	3	4	12 Medium	Refer to SSWD 17	1	1	1 Low
	4. Weils Disease etc. Rats' urine within standing or running water causing potentially fatal illness.	1	5	5 Low	Refer to SSWD15	1	5	5 Low
	5. Aggressive Livestock Injury from aggressive bulls etc.	?	?	?	Refer to SSWD12.2	?	?	?

	<p>6. Crossing road to car park and toilet Injuries from cars.</p>	1	5	5 Low	Refer to SSWD16	1	5	5 Low
<p>Open event: Proposed for 18 August 2012</p>	<p>Hazard and Control Measures re Guests to the site:</p> <p>As above plus further controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitations to advise that appropriate footwear is required. • Clear site signage to be installed at all regular points of access to Stapleton's field. • Vehicle access to be limited to unloading/loading as agreed with the landlord/farmer and outside the times of the advertised open event. • Guests kept to designated areas. • Two (min) designated first aiders. • The meeting area and viewing route to be strimmed of weeds to reduce the trip hazard. • Site signage to direct visitors to the meeting point. • The excavation to be fenced off. • One vehicle and driver to retained on site. (A key holder to the gate to be agreed with the landlord/farmer). 							

Project Ref.:	NOR/SF'12	Version:	1.0	Date of Issue:	15 February 2012
Project Location:	Stapleton's Field, Norton, Letchworth Garden City, Herts				
Project Description:	Community excavation of one 40m × 40m area in field land and spur				
Description of Activity:	Working on Site – Archaeological excavation and recording				
QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED					
Project and Excavation Director is a member of North Hertfordshire District Council's Museums Service					
TRAINING REQUIRED					
Briefing of volunteer site staff before commencement of fieldwork. Planned for 21 st June 2012					
EXPERIENCE REQUIRED					
Team leaders should have at least 6 months site experience.					
PLANT & TOOLS REQUIRED					
Trowels, shovels, buckets, hoes, wheelbarrows Total station					
SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIRED					
See Note x1 below. Otherwise none					
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT REQUIRED					
Warm clothing including footwear and optional waterproof clothing; sun block and head covering.					
SPECIFIC CONTROL LEGISLATION, STANDARDS					
<i>The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974</i> <i>Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 & ACOP L24</i>					
ADDITIONAL REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION					
North Hertfordshire District Council Health and Safety Manual					
CONTACTS FOR ADVICE & GUIDANCE					
Ros Allwood, Museums Manager – 01462 435197					
PRINCIPAL HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS					
To ensure that all voluntary staff working on site understand and work to the required safety standard to protect themselves, their colleagues and any other person who may be affected by their work. Staff and volunteers must also work to the safety standards required by the management on the site.					
AUTHORISATION, COMMUNICATION, REPORTING AND RECORDING REQUIREMENTS					
Authorisation for working on the site will come from the Site Director or Site Supervisor. Any health and safety issues which arise should be addressed to the Site Supervisor in the first instance. Reporting of accidents will be undertaken in line with statutory requirements and the council's requirements, as contained in NHDC's Health and Safety Policy.					

GENERAL

Hazards:

- Slips/trips/falls
- Lone working
- Weils disease/biological hazards
- Crossing road
- Effects of exposure

Precautions:

Before commencing work:

- Check for livestock in fields, particularly potentially aggressive animals such as bulls

Staff should have experience of:

- Working with experienced member of staff
- Other Health and Safety Practices (all applicable health and safety legislation should be disseminated via safety induction by Site Director. The Site Director is responsible for provision of welfare facilities including facilities for washing hands)
- Attended the pre-excavation briefing

Mark and Avoid

- Mark off with high visibility tape any areas to be avoided.
- Enquire of the farmer/landlord of any other known risks (e.g.: spraying or treatment of the site area)

Excavation

- All excavation work is to be undertaken only under the supervision of experienced volunteers when the Site Director and/or Supervisor is present. No site work of any type may be undertaken at any other time.

SLIPS/TRIPS/FALLS

- Check topography for obvious hidden hazards
- Keep a tidy site
- Remove all trip hazards and substances e.g. ice, oil, diesel, water
- Ensure the correct footwear is worn
- Mark any non-removable hazards
- Secure loose cables
- Ensure sharp objects are covered to prevent anyone impaling themselves.
- Avoid unstable areas if possible.
- Remove from the working area tools not in current use.

LONE WORKING

No lone working is permitted. Excavation will only be carried out with teams of two persons as a minimum, when the Site Director or Site Supervisor are present.

WEILS DISEASE

- Avoid standing or running water where rats may be active.
- Wash hands before handling food or eating.

CROSSING ROAD

- Under 16s to be supervised when crossing Norton Road.

EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE

- Ensure correct warm and water-proof clothing is worn particularly on cold wet and windy days
- Ensure suitable sun protection (individual equipment).


WELFARE FACILITIES AND SITE RULES

- No eating in the trench
- No smoking on site
- No running on site
- No alcohol or non-prescription drugs on site
- No lone working
- No entry into excavations without permission from the Site Manager/Director
- No obstruction to Public Rights of Way
- Any person under 16 years of age to be supervised by a parent or guardian (with prior agreement of the Chairman of NCAG) or by prior agreement with the Chairman of NCAG and a NCAG Member "buddy".
- Require any person who disregards these requirements and/or endangers themselves or others to leave the site. (By Dig Director, Dig Supervisor, Team Leader or NCAG Committee Member).
- All staff have access to a toilet and washing facilities provided at Bickerdike's Garden Nursery.

Note x1: Correct PPE at all times. (Only essential senior staff required for supervision, direction and archaeological oversight allowed on site with hard hats, high visibility jackets and steel toe capped boots when mechanical excavation plant on site)

AUTHORITY

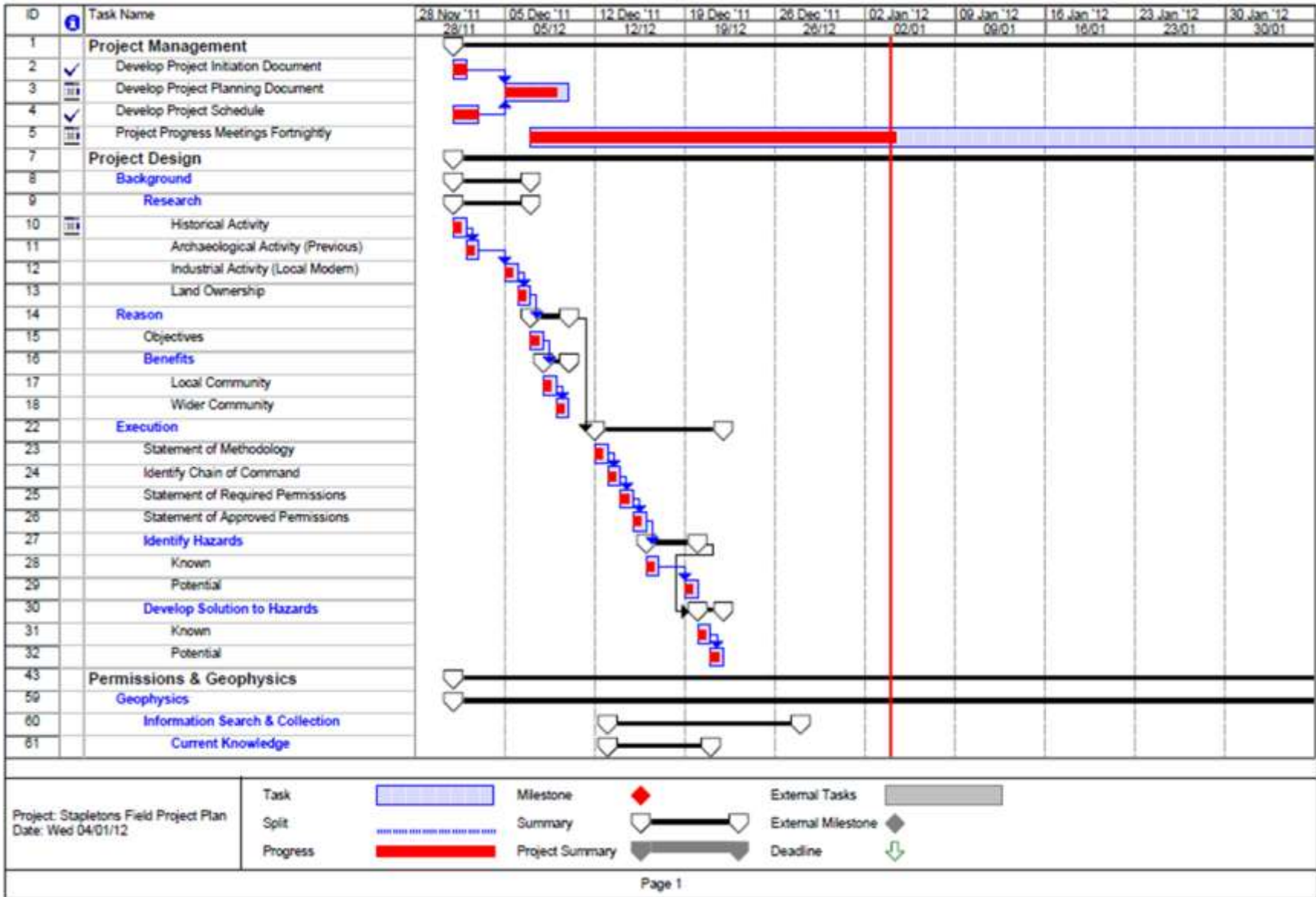
Prepared by Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews

Authorised by: Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews Position: Project and Excavation Director	Signed: 
Date: 15 February 2012	Revised:

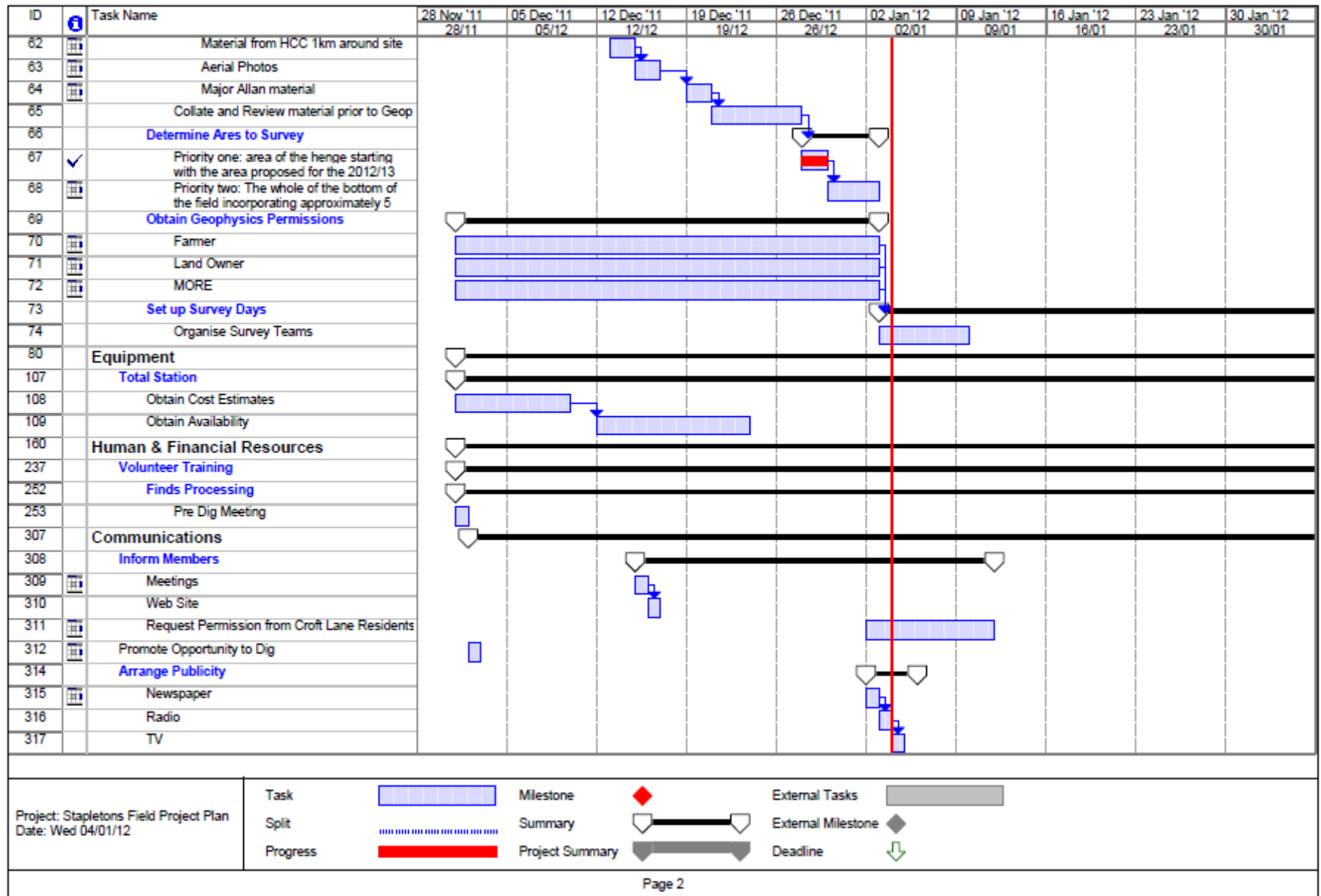
Appendix 5: Project Programme

Jim Skipper has provided the group with a work programme to follow so that all everything needed to proceed with the Summer 2012 excavation is accounted for. This is outlined in the following pages:-

Project Design: Stapleton's Field Excavation 2012 and 2013



Project Design: Stapleton's Field Excavation 2012 and 2013



Appendix 6: Budget

The additional cost for the proposed excavations in 2012 and 2013 is as set out below

		Year 4 7/11-6/12	Year 5 7/12- 6/13	Yr of dig
	£	Budget £	Budget £	
k. Staff costs. Additional cost of 2012 supervision	2000		2000	12
Additional cost of insurance	400	200	200	12 & 13
1e.13 Finds Storage Boxes	220	220		12
Sample buckets	500		500	12
Printing of finds sheets	80	80		12 & 13
Finds labels	300		300	12 & 13
Fencing (stakes and plastic roll)	200	100	100	12 & 13
Sample buckets	500	500		12
1e.14 Finds bags (range of sizes)	120	60	60	12 & 13
Hire of digger & driver	500		500	12
Hire of digger & driver	200	Additional cost	200	12
Hire of Total Station	600	600		12
Geotextile	500		500	12
Allocation of Savings	6120	1760	4360	

Project Design: Stapleton's Field Excavation 2012 and 2013

Additional expert analysis, dating techniques etc	XXX		XXX	12 & 13
2013 dig supervision	5000		5000	13
1e.1 Planning frames	50		50	13
Paint	30		30	12
1e.7 Hand tools, barrows, tool box etc. (Generally borrowed: NHAS)	150		150	12
Additional recording: tapes, boards, toolbox, pens etc	200		200	12
2013 Excavation "Open Event"	300		300	13
1e.9 Permatrace	200		200	13
1e.13 Finds Storage Boxes	200		200	13
Printing of finds sheets	60		60	13
Records storage boxes	66	33	33	12 & 13
Hire of Total Station	600		600	13
Toilet: Hire and attendance (years 3-5)	1000	500	500	12 & 13
Geotextile	600		600	13
Hire of digger & driver	700		700	13
Finds shelving	500	500		12
On site store / Records office		Nil	Nil	12 & 13
	9656			

Total additional cost over current budget			
for "scaled up" 2012 and 2013 excavations	£15776	(Excluding C14 dating, Oasis unit and fencing etc	

Appendix 7: Roles and Responsibilities

Strategy and Planning

Keith Fitzpatrick Matthews: Facilitator and expert

Mike Parker-Pearson & Anne Teather: Further expert advice and consultation

Keeley Hale: Project Design

Jim Skipper: Planning and project management

Chris Hobbs: Permissions, sponsor liaison and funding

Pauline Gimson: Geophysics

Greg Ford: Pre dig briefing / Research on total stations and operation of total station

Phil Thomas: Coordinate dates and diary

Nigel Harper Scott: Kit (other than total station)

Mick James /Nigel Harper Scott /Sophia Brookes: Finds processing/Process coordination.

Tony Driscoll: Stationary

Philip Dean: Resourcing, daily schedule of resource (inc Team Leaders/First Aid cover)

Chris Hobbs/Keeley Hale: Reports to the NCAG Committee

On Site

Keith Fitzpatrick Matthews: Excavation Director

Caoimhín O'Coileáin: Excavation Supervisor:

Keeley Hale, Greg Ford, Tony Driscoll, Nigel Harper Scott: Team Leaders (per feature)

Sophia Brookes/Christl Squires: On Site Finds processing / process coordination.

Tony Driscoll: Stationery/Onsite Records

Post Excavation

Mick James: Off site finds management, records management/supervision of processing

Keith Fitzpatrick Matthews: Archive, interpretation and report

Mike Parker-Pearson & Anne Teather: Further expert advice and consultation

Appendix 8: Permissions

Stapleton's Field

Below is the current status regarding permissions required for the 2012 and 2013 summer excavations in Stapleton's Field as at 20 January 2012:-

LGCHF (Landlord) and Contract Farmer.

Permissions required: Site access, permission to carry out geophysics surveys and to dig, cabin, toilet, vehicle access,

A detailed meeting was held with the Letchworth garden city Heritage foundation and the farmer on Monday 16th January. A detailed risk assessment was issued prior to the meeting.

Minutes are awaited from the director of property: Adrian Brace.

In principle suggestion from the foundation and farmer were as follows:

- Permission for geophysics survey in was requested as an early priority.
- It was proposed by the farmer that 1ha to be fenced off with stock proof fencing enclosing the area of the henge.
- Legal permission for access to be agreed with James Squire.
- The farmer to agree the derogation with English nature (Andrew Mills)
- Parking would be approved on the lower field for the open day.
- The farmer requires a list of members and copies of insurance certificates. Sent to A Brace by C Hobbs: 21/01/2012).
- Open Day: 18th August (approximately three vehicles during the morning with one vehicle retained onsite during the afternoon and three then used to clear the site after the event).
- Lockup delivery and Open Event is to be agreed with the farmer.

HCC: project design

Natural England (LGCHF derogation)

LGCHF have entered into a management agreement with Natural England. This agreement covers the site of the henge. Any permission to dig requires derogation from this agreement. This must be requested by LGCHF from Natural England. The proposed wording to Gary Hodgetts (gary.hodgetts@naturalengland.org.uk), Andrew Mills (andrew.mills@naturalengland.org.uk) and Kate Batt (kate.batt@hertscc.gov.uk) is as follows:

Subject: NORTON COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP - SUMMER EXCAVATIONS 2012 & 2013 - NATURAL ENGLAND DEROGATION

Dear Andrew

As you know NCAG carry out an annual archaeological excavation. They have prepared the usual Project Design which is attached. This has been approved by Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews who is the NHDC Archaeology Officer and the Director of the excavation. We ask please that you issue to us a formal derogation from the Environmental Stewardship Scheme permitting an

archaeological dig in Stapleton's Field, Norton (NGR TL 233343) between 1st July and 31st August 2012 and 2013 as per the attached Project Design. This email has also been copied to Kate Batt of HCC for approval.

Highways. No issues

Home Office: No human bones issues apparent.

Croft Lane Training Dig

The gardens/land in Croft Lane is of specific archaeological interest in attempting to date the development of the village. We know that the village has a history spanning at least 6000 years but we aim to discover more about settlement along Croft Lane. This is currently unknown beyond the earliest maps of about 1650. Properties of interest to us are 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 18, 22, 26, 36, The Den and the farm. We hope to dig at approximately 6 locations.

It is proposed to use this opportunity as a training dig for new members prior to the summer dig.

The proposed dates are **6 to 9 April 2012.**

The proposed dig would take the form of a small 'test pit'. This would be of 1.5 metre square, to a depth of no more than 1 metre and would be fully reinstated.


The current status regarding permissions is as follows:

1	Agreed in principle
2	Agreed: Julia Hinton: 01462 684048
5	Not called.
8	Agreed: Dianne Kercher. (Front only. May be attending mother. Just back from New Zealand)
9	Called: on phone.
18	Possible
22	Agreed: Joanne Jones: 01462 481681
26	Agreed: Sue and Graham Steele: 676985 07800895299 (House built by old farm cottages. *** We need to check this out).
36	Agreed: Paul Derbyshire: 07808794090
11 (The Den)	Agreed: (Loo) Jane and Greg
The Farm (1)	Agreed: Mark and Anne Barrett: 680208 07753724822 (in meadow)
The Farm (Farm House)	Agreed but: Gill Woodbridge is a tenant: Need to seek agreement of LGCHF (Lisa Stukely).

Further work is in progress.

Appendix 9: Insurance Certificates

NHDC Certificate of Employers Liability Insurance

TRAVELERS 

Certificate of Employers' Liability Insurance (a)

(Where required by regulation 5 of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (the Regulations), one or more copies of this certificate must be displayed at each place of business at which the policy holder employs persons covered by the policy)

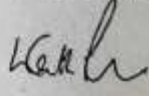
Policy No.	UC POP 3686257
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- Name of policy holder** North Hertfordshire District Council
- Date of commencement of insurance policy** 01 April 2011
- Date of expiry of insurance policy** 31 March 2012

We hereby certify that subject to paragraph 2:-

- the policy to which this certificate relates satisfies the requirements of the relevant law applicable in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Island of Guernsey, the Island of Jersey or the Island of Alderney (b); and
- (a) the minimum amount of cover provided by this policy is no less than £5 million

Signed on behalf of Travelers
Insurance Company Limited
(Authorised Insurer)



Keith Purvis
General Manager

Notes

(a) Where the employer is a company to which regulation 3(2) of the Regulations applies, the certificate shall state in a prominent place, either that the policy covers the holding company and all its subsidiaries, or that the policy covers the holding company and all its subsidiaries except any specifically excluded by name, or that the policy covers the holding company and only the named subsidiaries

(b) Specify applicable law as provided for in regulation 4(6) of the Regulations.

(c) See regulation 3(1) of the Regulations and delete whichever of paragraphs 2(a) or 2(b) does not apply.

Where 2(b) is applicable specify the amount of cover provided by the relevant policy.

Travelers Insurance Company Limited
Registered in England 1034343
Registered office: Exchequer Court, 33 St Mary Axe, London, EC3A 8AG

NCAAG Certificate of Employers Liability Insurance



CERTIFICATE OF EMPLOYERS LIABILITY INSURANCE (a)

(Where required by regulation 5 of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998, one or more copies of this certificate must be displayed at each place of business at which the Policyholder employs persons covered by the Policy)

Agreement Number: 24765101 CHC

Policy Number: 000111

Name of Policyholder

Norton Community Archaeology Group

Date of Commencement of Insurance: 01/04/2011

Date of Expiry of Insurance: 31/03/2012

We hereby certify that subject to paragraph 2:

1. the policy to which this certificate relates satisfies the requirements of the relevant law applicable in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Island of Jersey, the Island of Guernsey and the Island of Alderney, or to offshore installations in territorial waters around Great Britain and its Continental Shelf (b)
2. the minimum amount of cover provided by this Policy is no less than £5 million (c)

Signed on behalf of
Aviva Insurance Limited
(Authorised Insurers)

Authorised Signatory
Igal Meyer
Chief Executive UK Insurance

Notes

- (a) Where the employer is a company to which regulation 3(2) of the Regulations applies, the certificate shall state in a prominent place, either that the policy covers the holding company and all its subsidiaries, or that the policy covers the holding company and all its subsidiaries except any specifically excluded by name, or that the policy covers the holding company and only the named subsidiaries.
- (b) Specify applicable law as provided for in regulation 4(6) of the Regulations.
- (c) See regulation 3(1) of the Regulations and delete whichever of paragraphs 2(a) or 2(b) does not apply. Where 2(b) is applicable, specify the amount of cover provided by the relevant policy.

It is recommended that you retain a copy of each Employers' Liability certificate issued to you.

Aviva Insurance Limited
Registered in Scotland No 2118. Registered Office: Pillarville, Pe II, PH2 0NH
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

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