

Heritage of Hart

Anglo-Saxon Hart



A Collections Access and Community Project

The Heritage of Hart Project 2012

Anglo-Saxon Hart

Spring 2012

Robin Daniels

TA 12/03

Front Cover: Anglo-Scandinavian Sculpture of Horseman with spear in Hart Church

This Collections Access project was funded by the Museum of Hartlepool through MLA's Renaissance Scheme

©Tees Archaeology

Tees Archaeology, Sir William Gray House, Clarence Road, Hartlepool,
TS24 8BT

Tel: 01429 523455

Email: teesarchaeology@hartlepool.gov.uk

www.teesarchaeology.com

Contents

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

Summary

1. Introduction

2. The Types of Evidence

2.1 Documentary Sources

2.2 Place-Names

2.3 Pre-Conquest Sculpture

2.4 Surviving Buildings

2.5 Archaeological Remains

3. The Documentary Evidence for Anglo-Saxon Hart

4. Place-Names of the Hart Area

4.1 Cultural Significance

4.2 Settlement Evidence

4.3 Conclusion

5. Pre-Conquest Sculpture at Hart

5.1 Location of the Sculpture

5.2 Chronology and Purpose of the Sculptured Stonework

5.3 Conclusion

6. Surviving Buildings

6.1 The Church of St Mary Magdalene

6.2 Conclusion

7. Archaeological Evidence

7.1 Area to the East of the Village

7.2 Central Area of the Village

7.3 Area to the North-west of the Village

8. Discussion

Appendix 1 Archaeological Finds of Anglo-Saxon Date from Hart

Bibliography

List of Figures

1. Map of Place-Names in the Hart Area
- 2 Baluster Shafts from Hart Church
- 3 Cross Shaft No 2, Hart Church
- 4 Stone Number 8, Crucifixion scene
- 5 Stone Number 7, Crosshead
- 6 Stone Number 1, Horseman with spear
- 7 Stone No 6, Cross Shaft
- 8 Church of St Mary Magdalene, Hart
- 9 Chancel Arch, St Mary Magdalene, Hart
- 10 Triangular Headed Opening, St Mary Magdalene, Hart
- 11 Map showing Eastern, Central and North-Western Archaeological Zones at Hart
- 12 Example of Small Long Brooch from Norton-on-Tees
- 13 Archaeological Interpretation of the Geophysical Survey at Kirkfield, Hart
- 14 Phase I features Highlighted on plan (from Austin 1976)
- 15 Plan of Medieval Manorial Complex (from Austin 1976)
- 16 Twelfth (?) Century Re-organisation of the manorial complex
- 17 Plan showing areas of investigation to North-West of Hart

Summary

There is a range of information available that can shed light on Hart and the Hart area in the period before the Norman Conquest. Documentary evidence confirms that Hart was the administrative centre of a large estate running from Castle Eden Dene in the north to the River Tees in the south. This estate probably belonged to the Northumbrian Royal Family and in the mid 7th century part of it was used to establish the Anglo-Saxon Monastery of Hilde at Heruteu.

The evidence of Saxon Stonework in the church and of archaeological finds in the vicinity of the present village confirm the presence of an important Anglo-Saxon centre here, but have not as yet allowed the identification of its precise location.

In the early 10th century the area came into the hands of Scandinavian warlords and their influence is reflected in the place-names of the area and in the Sculptured Stonework in the church.

The importance of Hart as an administrative centre continued into the medieval period when the area was given to the Brus family who seem likely to have built the present church and the adjoining manorial complex sometime between 1106 and 1119 AD.

1. Introduction

This is the fourth in a series of joint projects involving Tees Archaeology and Hart History Group and supported by Hartlepool Museums through the Renaissance programme.

The previous projects created a 'snapshot in time' record of the buildings of the village; documented the late 1930s establishment of smallholdings in the area and surveyed the evidence for what was happening in the village during the Second World War (Daniels 2010a & b).

The present project has been designed to draw together and examine the evidence for activity in the area of the village between c. 600 AD and c.1100 AD. In the cause of simplicity the whole period is referred to as Anglo-Saxon or Saxon, although from the 10th century onwards there is a significant Scandinavian presence in the area and the period from 900 to 1100 AD might better be referred to as Anglo-Scandinavian. Alternatively the phrase Early Medieval is also used to cover the period from the end of the Roman Occupation in the 5th century AD to the Norman Conquest.

The project looked particularly at information from the church and the adjacent manorial complex and a new geophysical survey was commissioned from Archaeological Services Durham University to look at the area to the east of the present village (ASDU 2012).

While the project and this report draw together what we know to date there are still many unanswered questions which can only be resolved through further archaeological work.

2. The Types of Evidence

2.1 Documentary Sources

There are a range of documentary sources that can be brought to bear, these include Bede's 'History of the English Church' and a number of post Norman Conquest documentary sources. Unfortunately few of these bear directly on a settlement at Hart, they do however provide a context for the settlement.

2.2 Place-names

Place-names throw light on local topography and cultural affinities and can again provide useful context about a settlement and its relationship to those around it.

2.3 Pre-Conquest Sculpture

Craftsmen from the 7th century AD onwards produced decorated stonework based on Christian themes. The presence or absence of this can be a good indicator of centres of power and worship as well as indicating artistic and cultural connections.

2.4 Surviving Buildings

Buildings can provide a range of information about a settlement, from materials commonly in use to the status and date of different parts of a village.

2.5 Archaeological Evidence

This comprises artefacts and the below and above ground remains of buildings and other structures. They can throw a great deal of light on the early history and the development of a settlement.

3. The Documentary Evidence for Anglo-Saxon Hart

There is no direct reference to Anglo-Saxon settlement at Hart; however there is a significant amount of circumstantial evidence which points to an important centre here.

The first reference to Hart occurs in a charter of between 830 – 845 AD, in which Bishop Ecgred of Lindisfarne granted ‘...Billingham in Heorternesse’ to the Community of St Cuthbert (Hart 1975, 138). This may be interpreted as the breaking up of an existing estate.

Interestingly this same estate seems to have been re-unified in 913-915 AD when ‘Raegnald, a Viking, shares out the eastern lands of St Cuthbert, which he has won by conquest. The southern half between Iodene (Castle Eden) and Billingham, is given to Scule....’ (Hart 1975, 141).

Hartness is referred to again in 1070AD when the chronicler, Simeon of Durham refers to a Scottish raid on the area (VCH 1928, 256).

The estate of Hartness passed to the Brus family after the Norman Conquest and it is referred to in the founding charters of Guisborough Priory c.1119 AD (VCH 1928, 256). We gain a better understanding of the extent of Hartness when its villas were listed during a dispute between Gisborough and Tynemouth Priors which dates to 1149-50 (Austin 1976, 73). These included Hart, Thorp, Elwick, Dalton, Stranton, Tunstall, Seaton and Oughton, this does not include Greatham and Billingham both of which were undoubtedly part of Hartness and this suggests that the southern half of the estate had been split off again as it was in 830-845 AD.

‘Hartness’ as a name is derived from the Saxon ‘Heorternesse’ which in turn has two elements ‘Heorot’ and ‘gehernes’ meaning an administrative area (Austin 1976, 73). Hartness is therefore the area administered from Hart.

While we only have direct references to Hartness from the mid 9th century there is circumstantial evidence that can be used to push back the establishment of this estate.

In the mid-7th century AD a monastery was established at Hartlepool and from about 647AD was run by Hilde before she moved to Whitby in 657 AD and both monasteries were run from there. The monastery at Hartlepool was a royal foundation and these were usually based within royal estates and there is little reason to doubt that Hilde's monastery was established within the royal estate that in the 9th century AD was known as 'Heorternesne' (Daniels 2007, 180).

There is therefore sufficient documentary evidence to suggest that Hart was the administrative centre of a large royal Saxon estate from at least the 7th century and it is possible that this land unit went back further in time than this, although there is no evidence to support this.

This function as a centre of an estate must have meant that there was a settlement of some size at Hart and this would certainly have contained the residence of a noble of some standing, administering or holding the land on behalf of the Northumbrian royal family.

4. The Place-names of the Hart area

The township of Hart was a relatively small area around the village that was directly farmed and run for the village. This comprised the village and a number of secondary settlements recorded in the medieval period (Austin 1976, 78). These secondary settlements comprised: - Nelson, North Hart, High and Low Throston, Naisberry and Tunstall. In addition we know of a number of field names of which Kirkfield is the most significant.

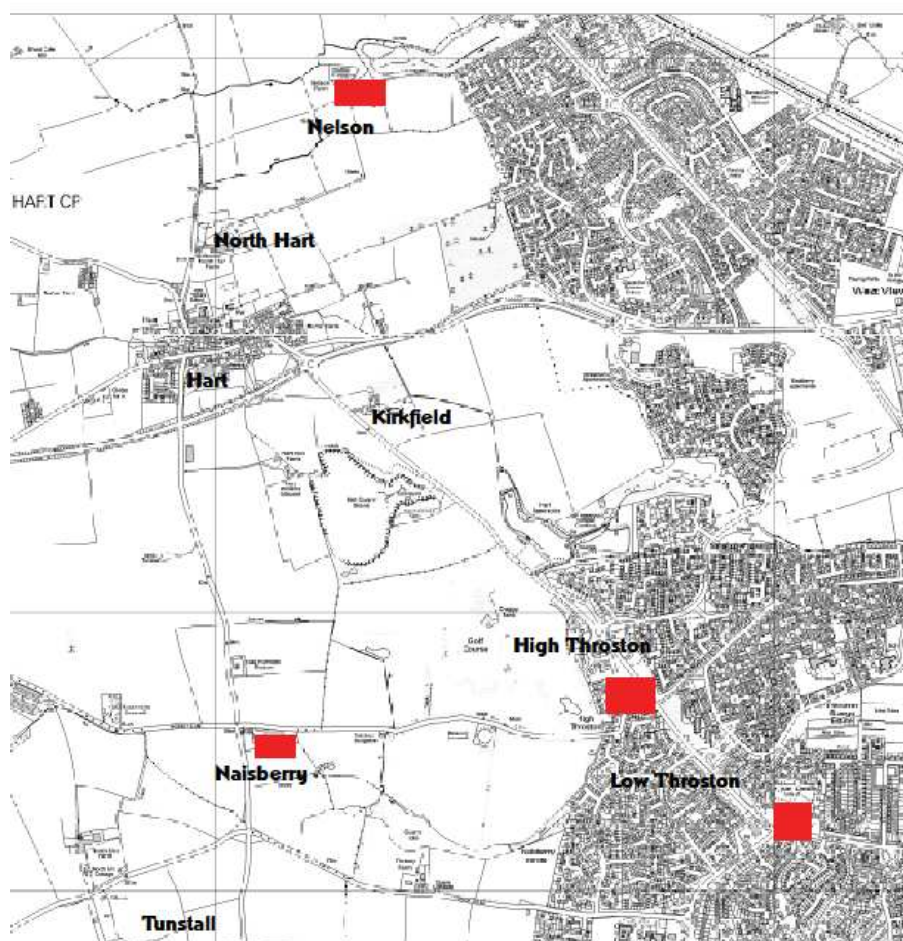


Fig 1. Place-Names in the Hart area.

4.1 Cultural Significance

Place-names can indicate the cultural affiliations of the people who named the settlement or who occupied it.

Throston – ‘Thori’s’ estate or settlement (Watts, 2002, 125). Thori is a Danish personal name and suggests people of Scandinavian origin were important in the area. This Scandinavian influence may date from the acquisition and sharing out of the area by Raegnald in the 10th century (see above).

Nelson – Niel's estate or settlement. Niel is an Old Norse personal name and again suggests Scandinavian influence in the area. In this instance we actually know who Niel was, namely the steward of Robert de Brus II, to whom Robert granted the land in the 12th century (Watts 2002, 83).

4.2 Settlement Evidence

Some place-names indicate specific aspects of a settlement.

Old Kirk / Kirkfield – 'Kirk' is the Scandinavian word for a church and Kirkfield may indicate the previous location of a church or a field owned by the church. It should be noted that the 1770 estate sale map for Hart just describes this area as 'Old Kirk'.

Naisberry – the precise meaning of this is unclear but the first element may be derived from a Scandinavian personal name and the second element from the old English 'burgh' meaning a fortification.

Tunstall – is a Saxon expression meaning a farmstead as opposed to any larger form of settlement (Watts 2002, 126).

This leaves the name 'Hart'. This is clearly derived from the Old English 'heorot' meaning a stag (Watts 2002, 54). Why this name should have been used is not clear, although its application to Hartness and Hartlepool and earlier 'Heruteu'; Bede's name for Hartlepool and meaning Island of the Hart clearly indicates its importance in the area.

4.3 Conclusion

The most significant factor that can be derived from the place-name evidence is the clear presence of people who spoke the Scandinavian language and who exercised some measure of control over the area. This is however tempered by the use of English settlement descriptors such as 'tun', e.g. 'Throston', rather than the Scandinavian equivalent 'by' and this probably indicates that the majority of the population were English speakers.

5. Pre-Conquest Sculpture at Hart

In the 7th century AD stone began to be used once more as a decorative medium. This was developed and fostered by the church and the earliest monuments comprised simple stone grave markers such as those found in Hartlepool at St Hilde's monastery (Daniels 2007, 133 – 142). The next type of monument to develop was the stone cross and this form was the pre-dominant expression of stone sculpture before the Norman Conquest. Other objects were of course carved out of stone including fittings for buildings and some of these are present at Hart as well as the stone crosses.

The complete suite of Pre-Conquest Stone Sculpture at Hart has been documented in 'The Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture' (Cramp 1984) and in publications produced by the church. It is not therefore proposed to catalogue the stones here, but rather to look at the most significant pieces and to draw out what they can tell us about the area. The numbers used here are those in the Corpus.

There are eleven entries for Hart in the Corpus (Cramp 1984, 93 – 97), although this covers more than eleven stones with pieces of baluster shaft (see below) being recorded together. In addition examination of the baluster shafts recorded as corpus No 11a-d indicates that they are in fact the product of drilling in the area being cores produced in the search for coal and a large quantity of these pieces are present at the former Hart Vicarage.

5.1 Location of the Sculpture

All of the pieces are either loose within the church or have been built into the west wall adjacent to the entrance. None of these stones is in its original location. The majority of the stones were found during renovation work at the church in the late 19th century, but there is no record of where in the church they were found. Given the fragmentary nature of all the stones they had probably been re-used to patch the masonry of the church rather than deliberately placed in any particular position in the church.

The majority of the pieces, nine, are parts of free-standing stone crosses that would almost certainly have been intended to stand outside. The other two pieces are fragments of baluster shaft that would have been part of the internal fittings of a church. These pieces are the most significant in clearly identifying that there would have been a significant church building in the Hart area.

Unfortunately we do not know the location of the church building or buildings that this stonework was associated with. There is no particular reason why it should have been a large distance away from the present church. Nor is there a particular reason why it should have been on the present site. The construction of the present church would have resulted in suitable stone being quarried and gathered up wherever it lay and this would include re-using large fragments of stone crosses. The presence of the place-name 'Old Kirk' is an indicator of one such possible location (see below – 'Archaeological Remains').

The destruction and re-use of this material may in fact have been a deliberate act and this is discussed further below ([Surviving Buildings](#)).

5.2 Chronology and Purpose of the Sculptured Stonework

8th Century AD

The earliest stonework in the church is pieces of Baluster Shaft. These would have been internal fittings from a church building. They may have been part of a freestanding construction within the building and do not necessarily indicate that the church itself was stone. They do nevertheless suggest that it had relatively elaborate internal decoration and must have been a significant structure whether built in wood or stone.

The Baluster Shafts clearly indicate the presence of stone masons in the area



Fig 2. Baluster Shafts from Hart Church

and that these had the use of a lathe. The probable context for a 7th – 8th century church is the Anglo-Saxon Monastery of Hilde at Hartlepool Headland. This monastery probably had 'out-stations' at Hart, Greatham and Billingham and

these would have been characterised by churches served by clerics provided from the Anglo-Saxon Monastery. Greatham also has Baluster Shafts while Billingham has the surviving remains of a stone church of this period. The latter may indicate that there is a strong possibility that there were stone churches at Greatham and Hart.

Late 9th to Early 10th century AD

The majority of the stonework (five pieces; Nos 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 Cramp 1984, 93 - 97) belong to this period. There are significant differences between the stonework of this period and that of the 8th century. In the 8th century the stonework was created by Saxon masons based in monastic or ecclesiastical workshops and operating in a wholly Christian context. By the late 9th century the sculpture is being created in a far more secular environment, dominated by Scandinavian nobility who were being converted to Christianity.

The stonework was probably sculpted by the descendants of the Saxon masons who made the 8th century material but it was created to satisfy a secular demand to commemorate the burial place of the local nobility. Its decoration was designed to reflect the interests of that nobility and we see scenes from Norse Mythology and depictions of hunting and warfare mixed with more traditional Christian material.



Fig 3. Cross Shaft No 2, Hart Church

Cross shafts Nos 2, 4 and 5 are decorated with an interlace pattern typical of the period and represent at least two separate free-standing crosses; No 4 and 5 may be from the same cross. It should be borne in mind that the monuments would have been painted, exaggerating the effect of the interlace.

Stone Number 8 comes from the very centre of the cross head and contains a



Fig 4. Stone Number 8, Crucifixion scene

fragmentary image of a figure, overlain by a roundel with part of a spear on one side and a cup on the other. The identification of this with a Crucifixion scene is certain and the quality and style of execution links it to the other cross head fragment, No 7.



Stone Number No 7 was also part of a cross head and was found during ploughing at fields known in 1770 as 'Old Kirk', to the immediate east of the village. The centre of the cross head has a picture of a Lamb with a halo, symbolising Christ,

surr Fig 5. Stone Number 7, Crosshead s, although only two have survived. It is also noticeable for small roundels on the face of the cross and these might represent or have contained something that represents jewels.

Both the cross heads are well executed and may even suggest the presence of a small workshop at Hart. They certainly indicate a centre of some status at this time.

Mid 10th Century



Two stones (Nos 1 and 9) have been dated to this period. Stone No 1 is of particular interest depicting a mounted horseman with a spear and knotted hair. This motif of an equipped warrior is a frequent one in the sculpture of this period in the Tees Valley and may be a representation of the person commemorated by the cross.

Fig 6. Stone No 1, Horseman with spear

Stone No 9 is the bottom part of a cross head and shows the lower part of two confronted animals, raised on their hind legs. Their heads are missing; this is

again typical of a later tradition that shows a range of animal and human figures as opposed to the emphasis on panels of interlace that characterises the earlier pieces.

11th century

There are two pieces that have been dated to this period, Nos 3 and 6. Both are built into the church fabric, No 3 internally next to the south door and No 6



Fig 7. Stone No 6, Cross Shaft

in the exterior of the porch. No 3 appears to show figures but their meaning is not clear, while No 6 seems to be part of a nicely executed cross –shaft.

5.3 Conclusion

The range and quality of the sculptured stonework present at Hart attests to the significance of the location and to the presence of Scandinavian influence in the area. The commissioning of the sculpture may well coincide with the granting of the area to ‘Scule’ by ‘Raegnald’ in 913 – 915 AD.

Unfortunately we do not know where this material was displayed when first set up and therefore it can tell us little about the location of the earlier settlement other than it would have contained a church.

6. Surviving Buildings

The only surviving building of any great age in the village is the church, there are the fragmentary remains (Brus Wall) of part of the medieval manorial complex but this is considered as part of the manorial complex in the following section on archaeological remains.

6.1 The Church of St Mary Magdalene

St Mary Magdalene, Hart was the subject of a study by Peter Ryder in 1997 and this has been drawn on heavily in the following.

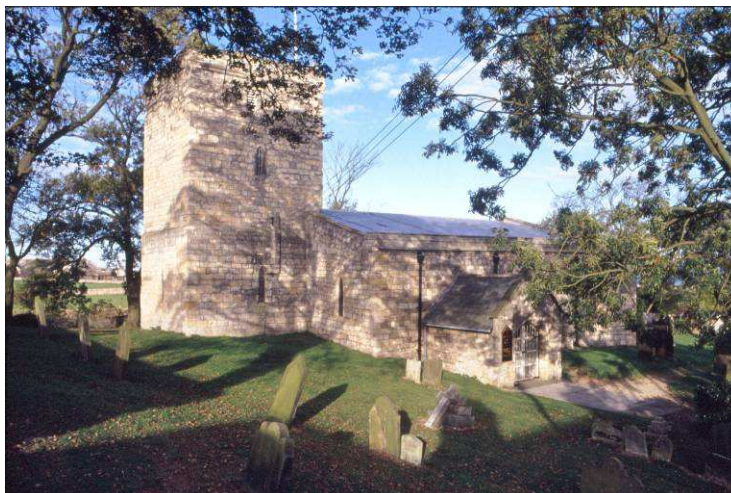


Fig 8. Church of St Mary Magdalene, Hart

The present church originally comprised the Nave and Chancel, the west tower was probably added in the mid-12th century and both aisles were insertions of the 15th century. The chancel was re-built in the 19th century as was the porch. There is some discussion about the date of the Nave and Chancel and it has been suggested that these are of Saxon date.

The main argument for a Saxon date for the church stems from features visible in the Chancel Arch.



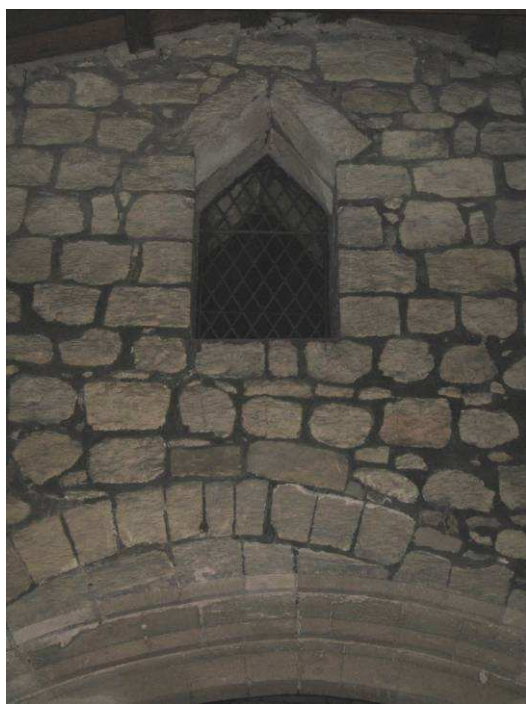
The present Chancel Arch cuts through an earlier, narrower arch and is offset to the south slightly in relation to this. It has been suggested that the earlier arch belongs to a previous church and that the present Chancel Arch is Norman meaning the arch it truncates must be Saxon. In fact the present Chancel Arch is

contemporary to the construction of the south arcade and aisle which were built in the 15th century. The present arch is offset to take account of the fact that the new south arcade is thinner than the previous south wall and it was necessary to offset the Chancel Arch in order to centre it.

If the present arch is 15th century then the previous arch no longer needs to be Saxon. In fact it lines up exactly with the

Norman west doorway and was clearly a part of the Nave as built; it is not an indicator of a church that preceded the present one.

Waldene, Hart



Above the Chancel Arch there is a triangular headed opening which runs right through the wall and the stonework around it is of noticeably better quality than that beneath it. Triangular headed openings are generally seen as characteristic of Late Saxon architecture, but in such instances the head of the opening

comprises two slabs propped against each other and which run right through the width of the wall. This is not the case at Hart where there are no through stones (the same applies to the first Chancel Arch, which if Saxon should have had through stones but doesn't). This triangular headed opening appears to be derived from Saxon practice but to have been executed in a different, more sophisticated, way. It is directly comparable to triangular headed openings of late 11th century date at Durham Cathedral and Jarrow.

These are all consistent with an early 12th century date for the original Nave and Chancel. The triangular headed opening would have served as a doorway and indicates that there was an upper chamber in both the Nave and Chancel and it should be noted that scars on the west wall of the tower indicate that the roof would originally have been higher and steeper creating more space for an upper chamber. The quality of the stonework suggests that it was intended as a location of some status. The church was granted to the Augustinian Canons of Gisborough Priory in c.1119 and the chamber may have been intended to house a member of the order sent to serve the church. This would have been an important post at this time as is discussed in the 'Archaeological Remains' section.

6.2 Conclusion

The balance of probability is that the present church is Norman in date. We know from the foundation charter of Gisborough Priory (c. 1119 AD) that there was a church at Hart at this time and it seems plausible that it was the present one. The evidence for a Saxon origin for the church is not conclusive and the only real indication we have that there was church at Hart prior to the Norman Conquest is the Sculptured Stonework discussed above and not the fabric of the present structure.

7. Archaeological Evidence

The archaeological evidence which has a bearing on Anglo-Saxon activity is in three locations; to the east of the village there are a number of individual finds; the remains of the medieval manorial complex lie in the centre of the

village adjacent to the church; and discoveries made during the construction of a pipeline lie to the north-west of the village. The finds from these locations are set out in Appendix 1 and each location and the evidence they contain will be examined in turn.

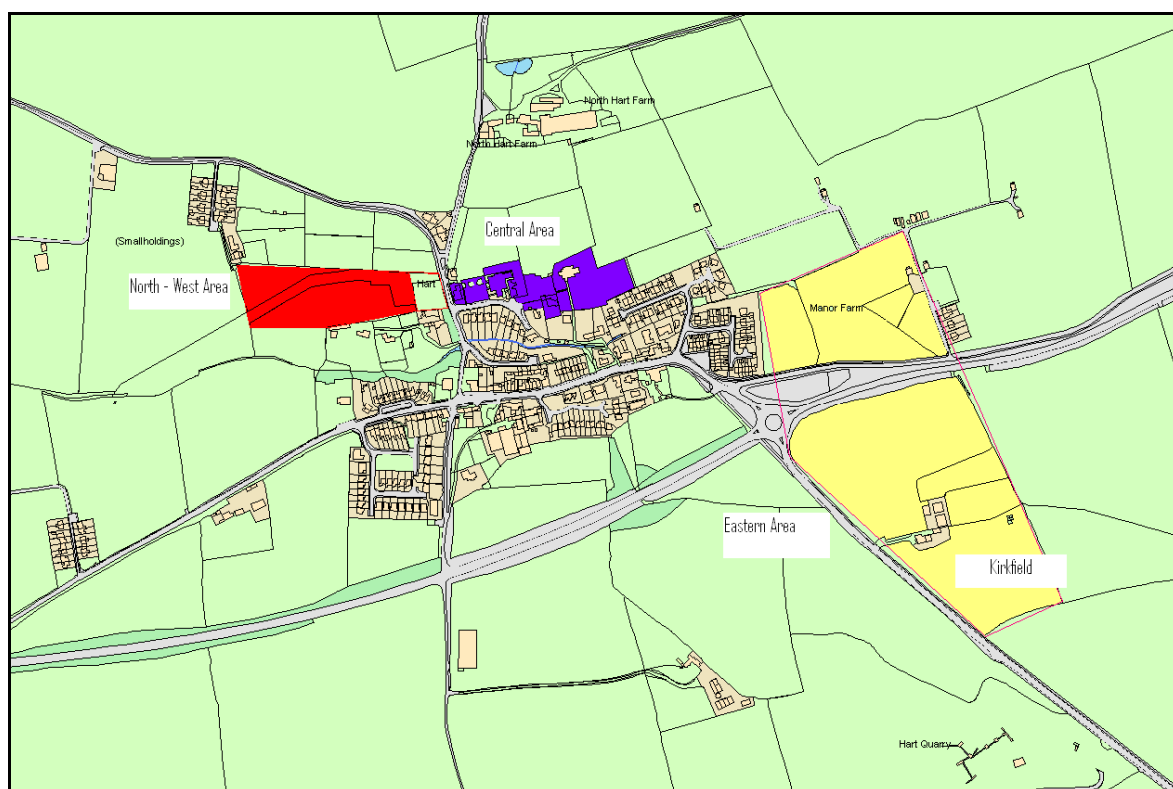


Fig 11. Areas of Saxon activity at Hart

7.1 Area to the East of the Village

This area contains a number of individual finds and has been the subject of a Geophysical Survey as part of this project (ASDU2012).

The precise location of where the finds were made is not known although there is circumstantial evidence linking them to the fields in which they are plotted on the map.

The earliest finds comprise fragments of three badly damaged Anglo-Saxon brooches (see Appendix 1). All three were found by a metal detectorist and

are described as burnt. This burning could well have happened as part of a cremation burial rite, but further evidence would be required to confirm this. Two of the brooches are of a type known as 'Small Long' brooches and which date from the 5th - 6th centuries AD. The third brooch is of a similar date and is a very rare type in the north of England known as an 'Ansate' brooch.



Fig 12. Example of Small Long Brooch from Norton-on-Tees

The Anglo-Saxons arrived in the area around the River Tees in the mid 6th century and therefore these brooches would belong to the first generation of Anglo-Saxon settlers in the area and are the earliest indicators of Anglo-Saxon activity in the Hartlepool area.

It is worth noting that part of an Early Bronze Age (c.1800BC) pot was found not far from this area in 1971 (Tees Archaeology HER 1468: Austin and Thoms 1974). This may have been part of a cremation urn that might originally have been placed in a burial mound that has now disappeared. Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries were frequently sited next old religious sites such as burial mounds and while this is circumstantial evidence it does strengthen the case for Anglo-Saxon burials in this area.

Possibly from the same area are two silver coins one of mid 8th century date and the other of mid 9th century date, while a pin of 7-11th century date was also found. The uncertain location and relative scarcity of the finds makes it difficult to develop any interpretation beyond suggesting significant activity in this area of the village. These finds do however link to the finding of the fine 10th century crosshead in this area and to the name 'Old Kirk / Kirkfield'.

The cross head is discussed in more detail in the section above on the Sculptured Stonework and the discussion here will be based on the implications of where it was found. While there is some discussion about the exact location of the find there is no doubt about its general location, which places it firmly in the same general area as the metal detector finds noted above. Reports suggest that it was found in the area shown as 'Old Kirk' on the 1770 Estate Map.

'Old Kirk / Kirkfield' as a name is derived from the Scandinavian for a church, 'Kirk'. There are however two possible interpretations for the name, the first is that a church had previously stood in the field; the second is that the field belonged to the church or the income from the field belonged to the church. Both are perfectly reasonable explanations, however the find of the cross head has led to suggestions that the first is more plausible. It should however be noted that crosses were sometimes sited to mark the boundary of territories, particular monastic sites and it is possible that this was the purpose of this particular cross.

The accumulation of information from the area to the east of the village led to the decision to use funding from the Hartlepool Museum Service to pay for a Geophysical Survey of the area and with the kind permission of the landowners this took place in March 2012 (ASDU 2012).

The Geophysical Survey was carried out in order to locate traces of activity that might typically include timber buildings such as a church and associated graves. None of these features leave remains that are easily identifiable by Geophysical Survey and particularly if there is disturbance of the site through medieval ridge and furrow and later scatters of material.

The archaeological interpretation of the results of the geophysical is shown below. The survey identified medieval ridge and furrow in the southern part of the site and the whole area was probably cultivated in this way at one time. This may mask or have partly destroyed other features.

Area 1 contains a number of curving ditches and what appears to be an enclosure continuing into Area 2. It is possible that this may have defined the area of a churchyard or a manorial complex. Area 4 also contains some interesting features which may be the remains of ditches or wall trenches for buildings.

The Geophysical Survey has not been conclusive in identifying features of possible Anglo-Saxon date; however it does identify areas where there are some features that might be worth further investigation.

Conclusion

While there is still no conclusive evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity, the weight of evidence is sufficient to make it highly probable that there was a centre of Anglo-Saxon activity of some kind in this area.

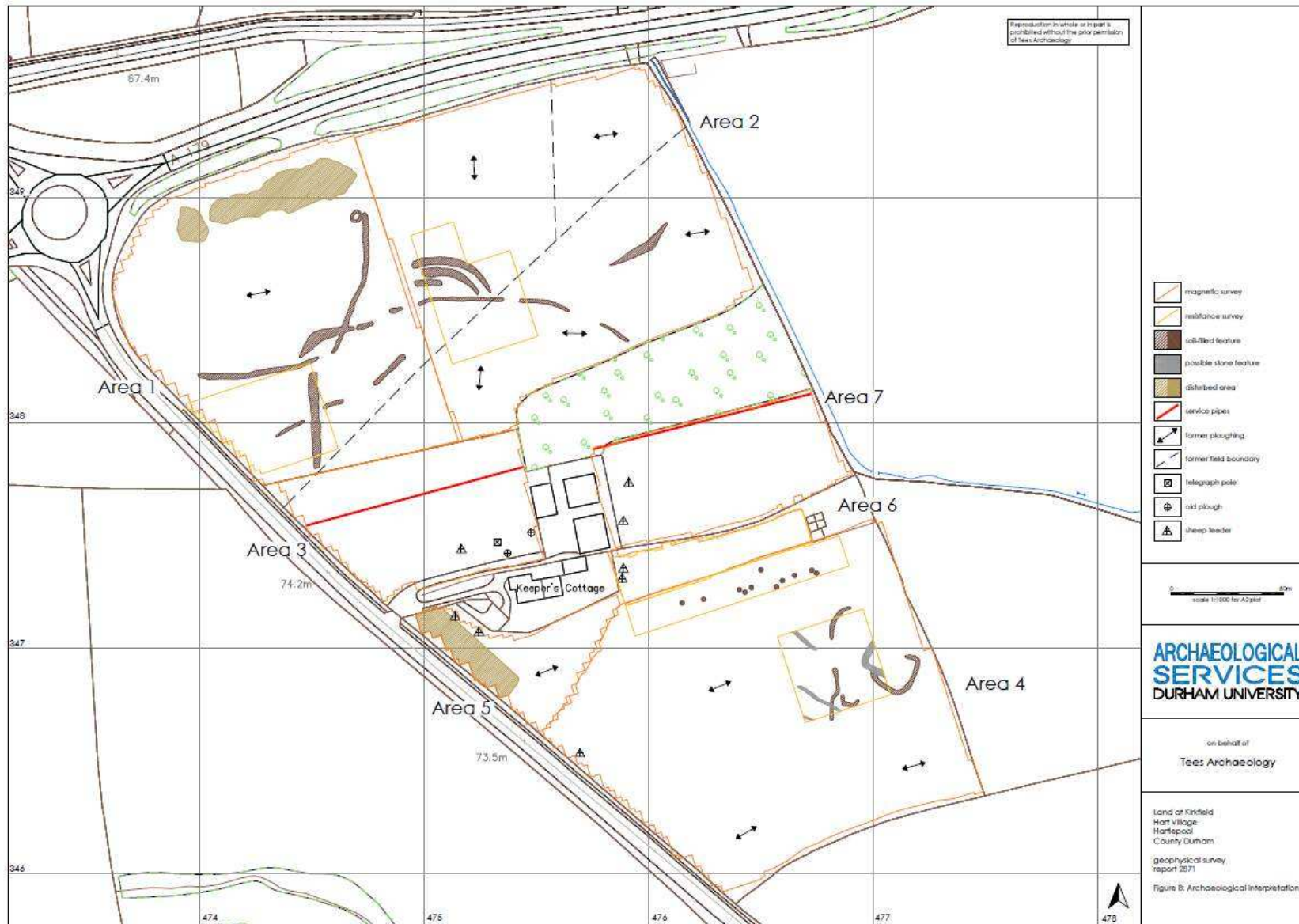


Fig 13.
Archaeological Interpretation of the Geophysical Survey at Kirkfield, Hart

7.2 Central Area of the Village

The central area of the village contains the church and the manorial complex. The church has already been discussed above and it is suggested that this is Norman rather than Saxon in date. The church adjoins and was probably initially part of a manorial complex. Part of one building (the 'Brus Wall') still survives and the area was subject to a series of investigations between 1965 – 67 and 1972 – 73. These are reported on by Austin and he suggests six phases for the development of the site (1976, 84):-

Phase 1 Saxo-Norman: this is represented by traces of timber buildings, fencelines and ditches.

Phase II Early medieval to mid-thirteenth century: two stone buildings were built in what was otherwise an open area, one of these underlay the present boundary wall between the churchyard and the manorial complex, suggesting that there was probably no boundary between the manorial buildings and the church originally.

Phase III Late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries: there was a major phase of construction of substantial stone buildings and these were associated with a lime kiln to the west.

Phase IV Fourteenth Century: no major changes from the previous period, but a ditch was dug across the western part of the site.

Phase V Late Medieval: a period of decline with buildings abandoned, there may have been a move of focus to the south of the excavated complex.

Phase VI Post-Medieval Farm: the medieval buildings fell into disuse or were used as outbuildings for a farm; a new manor house built to the south in the early 17th century.

The first two phases are of interest in relation to Saxon activity at Hart and the key question revolves around the dating of these two phases.

Phase I

This is characterised by a series of gullies, post holes and pits, which clearly indicate activity in the area and probably buildings, but it was so damaged by later activity to make it difficult to understand. It was however noted that a

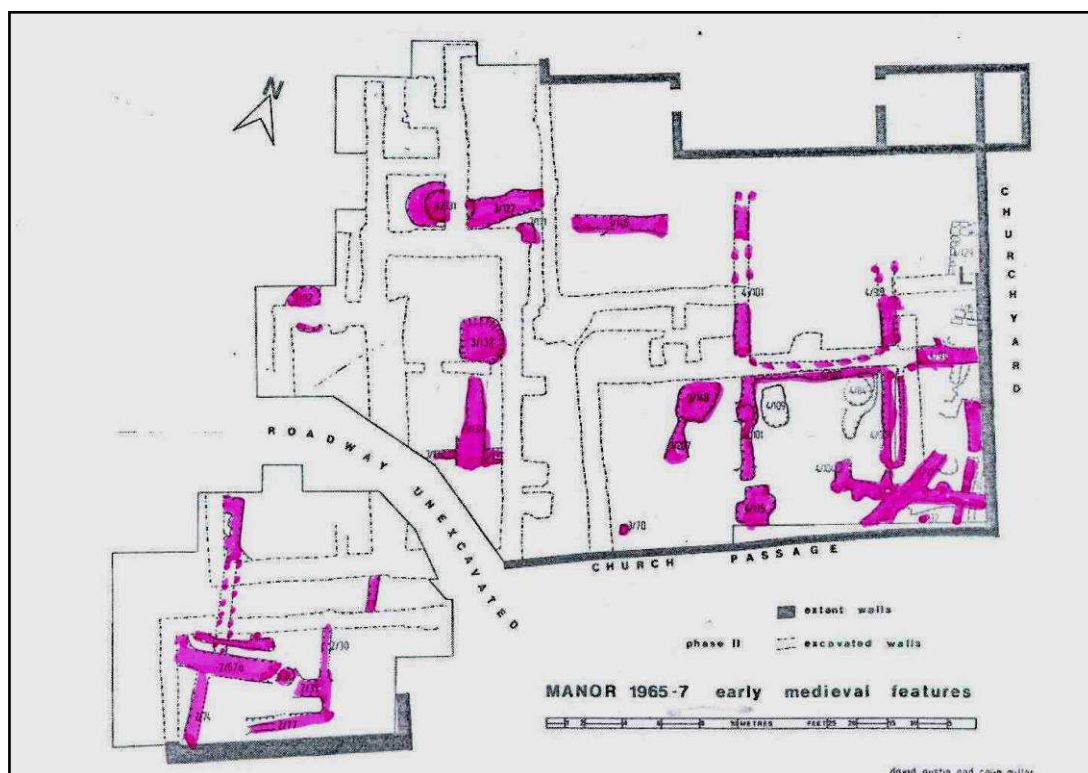


Fig 14. Phase I features Highlighted on plan from Austin 1976

ditch continued beneath the churchyard wall, indicating that this boundary was not present at this early stage in the development of the site. A palisade trench was also discovered and Austin (1976, 87) suggests that this was part of an enclosure around the ridge occupied by the church and manorial complex.

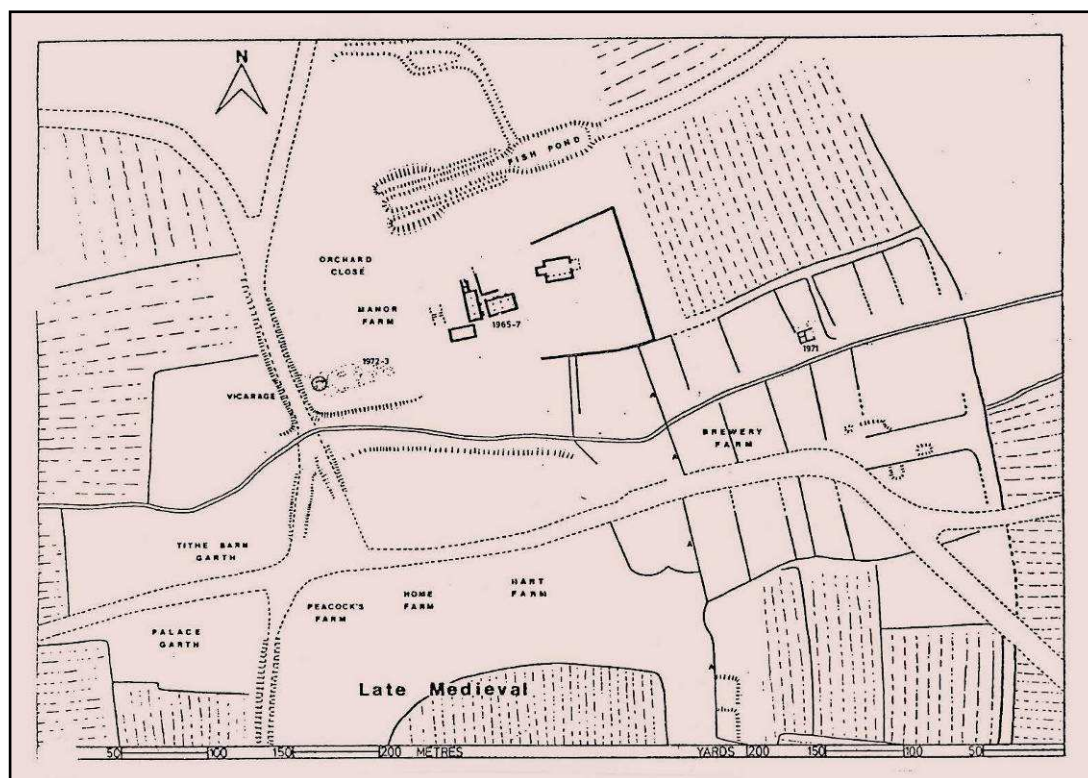


Fig 15. Plan of Medieval Manorial Complex (from Austin 1976)

The evidence clearly indicates an enclosed area containing the manorial complex and the church. The dating evidence for this is twofold, it comprises the pottery found during excavation and the evidence of the church itself. Recent work on the pottery has established that it post dates the Norman Conquest (A Vince and A Sage pers comm). This coincides with the argument set out above that the church also post-dates the Norman Conquest. This would suggest that the manorial complex is part of the Norman take over of the area, rather than a Saxon element.

Phase II

Having established that Phase I post-dates the Norman Conquest, Phase II probably dates from the mid 12th century. Austin (1976, 87) suggests that there was a complete re-organisation of the complex. Buildings **B** and **L** were constructed, the latter extending beneath the present churchyard wall. Austin (1976, 88) suggests that this may have been provided for the Augustinian Canons from Guisborough. This would complement the chambers in the church. It may be that this re-organisation is a result of the Bruses acquiring

the land sometime after 1106 AD and it may be broadly contemporary to the gift of the church to Guisborough Priory c.1119.

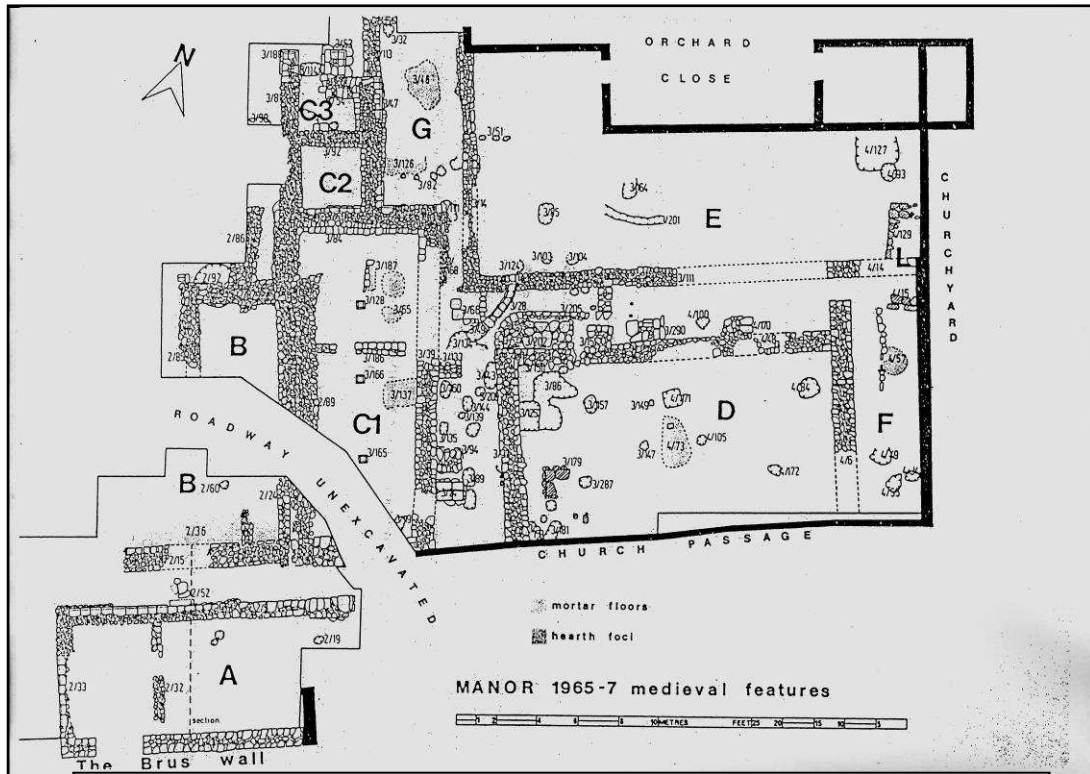


Fig 16. Twelfth (?) Century Re-organisation of the manorial complex

The other buildings (A, C, D, E, F, G) all date from a substantial re-building phase in the late 13th or early 14th century, perhaps associated with the Clifford's acquiring the manor following its seizure from the Bruses as a result of the Scottish Wars of Independence.

Conclusion

The present evidence points to the manorial complex and church being a Norman creation some time after c.1100 AD.

7.3 Area to the North-West of the Village

This area has seen a little archaeological work in connection with the construction of a water pipe through the area. The work happened between 1995 -96 and was carried out by Archaeological Services, University of Durham funded by Northumbrian Water. It is recorded on the Tees

Archaeology HER as no 0992 and Tees Archaeology hold a copy of the report (ASUD 1996)

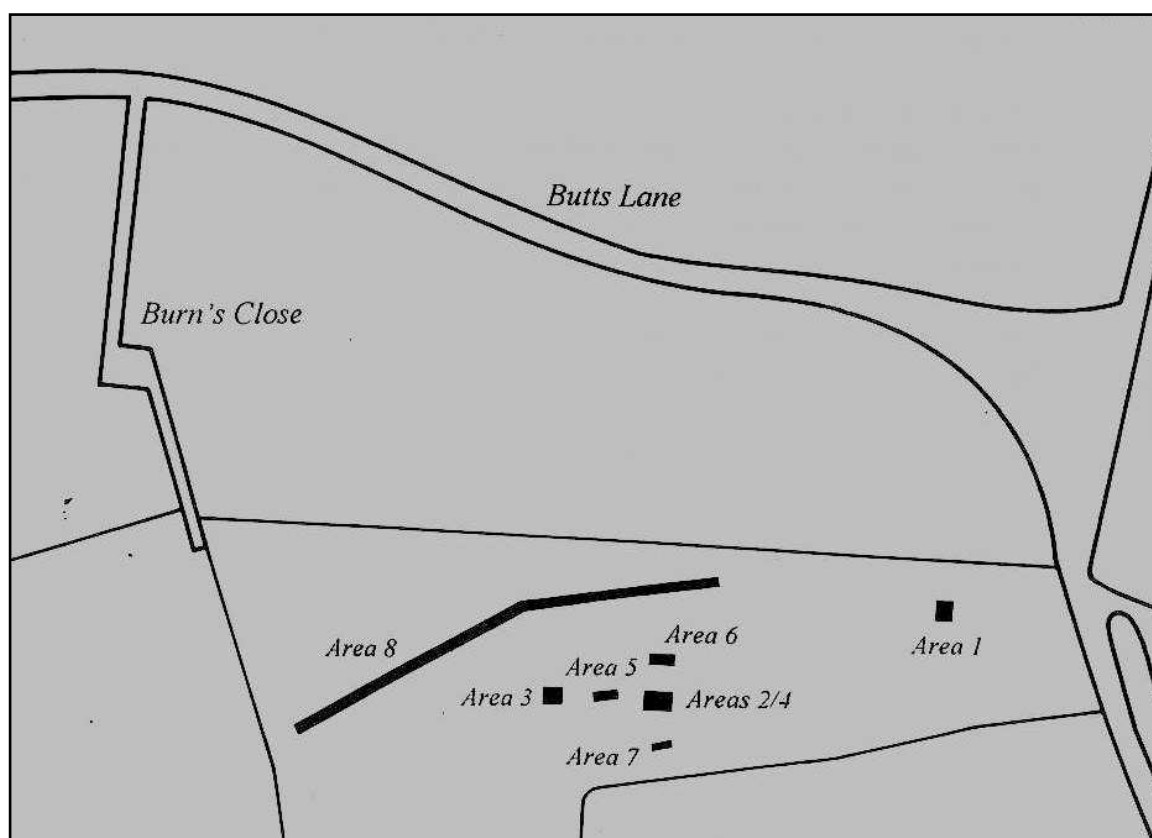


Fig 17. Plan showing areas of investigation to North-West of Hart

Unfortunately only very small areas were examined but these revealed cobbled surfaces (Areas 2/4); wall lines of timber buildings or fences (Areas 2/4 and 6); a rubbish pit with numerous cattle bones (Area 2/4); a post pit and a series of gullies (Area 8). The report concludes that these represent the remains of wooden structures and boundary features based around the brow of a small hill (ASUD 1996, 7).

Unfortunately, and significantly, there was no dating evidence. If these features were of medieval date, as in the central area, then pottery of that date would probably have been found. It is therefore clear that this pre-dates the medieval period, and the question is whether it is Prehistoric or Saxon in date – finds would have been expected if it was from the Roman period.

Conclusion

The balance of probability based on the types of features encountered is that the site probably dates to the period 500 – 1000 AD and it may represent the predecessor of the manorial complex at the present church. The area would certainly repay additional work including Geophysical Survey and large scale excavation.

8. Discussion

There is a wide range of information which sheds light on Hart before the Norman Conquest. It is clear that Hart was the administrative centre of a large royal estate which may have pre-dated the Saxon period. This estate was chosen to host an important royal Saxon monastery, of which Hilde was Abbess, on what is now Hartlepool headland.

The settlement at Hart was therefore of some significance in the earlier Saxon period and this importance continued into the period of Scandinavian raids and settlement in the area in the 10th and 11th centuries. The Scandinavian influence in the area is reflected in the number of place-names that incorporate Scandinavian elements, while the sculptural stonework in the church emphasises the importance of the area as well as the extent of Scandinavian control.

The importance of the settlement continued into the medieval period, when it was taken over by the Bruses as the centre of their estates north of the River Tees and the present church and adjacent manorial complex probably date from this period.

The location of the settlement of the 7th to 10th centuries is still uncertain, however there are a number of clues in relation to areas to both the west and east of the present village. It is possible that the Hart of the Pre-Conquest period had a number of foci and that both locations were in use at this time. The only way in which this question can be resolved is through further archaeological work. Hart is however rare in the area in that there are

substantial clues about the Pre-Conquest settlement which are missing from most other locations.

Appendix 1: Archaeological Finds of Anglo-Saxon Date from Hart

This excludes the sculptured stonework, with the exception of the cross head from Kirkfield, contained in the church and which is comprehensively catalogued in Cramp 1984.

Ref No	Description	Where found	Approx date of Object	Comments
HER 992	Excavation	Burns Close area to west of village	Anglo-Saxon	Traces of timber buildings and boundaries. No artefacts.
HER 3479	Sculpture	Ploughed up in 1967 in Old Kirk Field.	10 th century AD	In fact the location is to the north of the Kirk Field named on maps.
HER 6997 PAS Object ID NCL-F4EAC2	Coin: Base Silver Styca	To east of village	765 – 774 AD	Coin of K Alhred of Northumbria
HER 6998 PAS Object ID NCL-F4CF96	Coin: Base Silver Styca	To east of village	844 -862	Coin of Athelred II.
HER 6211 PAS Object ID YORYM-2093A2	Brooch	To east of Village	5 th - 6 th century AD	Fragment of Small Long Brooch which has been burnt.
PAS Object ID YORYM-20B337	Brooch	Hart	5 th – 6 th century AD	Heavily burnt foot and part of bow of 'Ansate' brooch
PAS Object ID YORYM-1FD1E1	Brooch	Hart	5 th – 6 th Century AD	Heavily burnt Small Long Brooch
PAS Object ID YORYM-54E042	Pin	Hart	7 th -11 th century AD	Head and part of shaft of globular headed pin

HER refers to the Historic Environment Number allocated to a find in the Tees Archaeology Historic Environment Record.

PAS refers to the Portable Antiquities Scheme

Bibliography

ASUD 1996 Archaeological Evaluation and Monitoring for the Burns Close, Nine Acres Sewer Requisition at Hart, Cleveland : Final Report

ASDU 2012 Land at Kirkfield, Hart Village, Hartlepool, Geophysical Survey. Report 2871

Austin, D and Thoms LM 1974 Hart II: A Medieval house area at Hart, Co Durham, Trans Architectural and Archaeological Soc of Durham and Northumberland, New series Vol III, p51 - 68

Austin, D 1976 Fieldwork and Excavation at Hart, Co Durham 1965 – 1975, Archaeologia Aeliana 5 IV, 69 – 132

Cramp R 1984 Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture; County Durham and Northumberland

Daniels, R 2007 Anglo-Saxon Hartlepool and the foundations of English Christianity, Tees Archaeology Monograph Series No 3

Daniels, R 2010a Heritage of Hart: An Historic Environment Survey of the Smallholdings

Daniels, R 2010b Heritage of Hart: An Historic Environment Survey of the Village in World War II

Hart, CR 1975 The Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands

Ryder, P 1997 St Mary Magdalene, Hart: An Archaeological Assessment , unpub

VCH 1928 The Victoria County History of the County of Durham: volume 3, ed W Page

Watts, V 2002 [A Dictionary of County Durham Place-Names](#)