



# ESCRICK DECOY PONDS,

# NORTH YORKSHIRE

## Archaeological Survey Report



**Oxford Archaeology North**

December 2009

**Natural England**

Issue No: 2009-10/976

OA North Job No: L10113

NGR: SE 642 418

**Document Title:**           **ESCRICK DECOY PONDS, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**Document Type:**           **Archaeological Survey**

**Client Name:**               **Natural England**

**Issue Number:**             **2009-10/976**

**OA Job Number:**           **L10113**

**National Grid Reference:**   **SE 642 418**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Oxford Archaeology North would like to thank Julian Small and Margaret Nieke of Natural England for commissioning the project, and for their considerable support. We would also like to thank Escrick Park Estate, the owners of the common, for allowing us to undertake the survey. Thanks are also due to the University of Hull Archives and the East Ridings Record Office in Beverley.

The primary documentary research and visit to Slimbridge were undertaken by Chris Wild, who also carried out the survey, along with David Maron. The report was written by Kathryn Blythe and Chris Wild and the illustrations were by Alix Sperr, Marie Rowland and Anne Stewardson. The report was edited by Jamie Quartermaine, who also managed the project.

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## SUMMARY

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Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was invited by Natural England to undertake a programme of detailed archaeological survey of Moor Head decoy pond and wood at Escrick, near Selby in North Yorkshire (NGR SE 642 418). The survey was carried out on behalf of Escrick Park Estate in order to inform the appropriate conservation management of the pond and to propose reconstruction options for it. A lower level survey of an unnamed pond to the north of Moor Head (referred to throughout as the northern pond) on the Escrick Estate (NGR SE 636 426) was also included in the project. The survey was undertaken in February 2009.

The project comprised a documentary study and a landscape survey. The documentary study entailed an investigation of primary, cartographic and secondary sources, as well as information available online. The survey comprised an English Heritage level 3 survey for Moor Head decoy pond and a level 2 survey for the northern pond. The areas within the woods, around each of the decoy ponds, were also searched for any additional features.

Duck decoy ponds originated in Holland in the sixteenth century, with the first examples in Britain dating to the seventeenth century. It has been estimated that there may have been as many as 800 duck decoy ponds constructed in England. The ponds, generally associated with large houses and estates, take various forms, but all have curved ditches named 'pipes' coming off a large central area of water. Ducks and other wildfowl would be lured into the pipes, generally by the use of a trained dog working with a decoyman. The pipes were screened, and covered with nets suspended over a succession of hoops. The pipes gradually tapered into a low, narrow area, covered with a detachable net into which the birds were trapped.

Escrick was an Anglian settlement, with two estates recorded there at the time of the Domesday survey of 1086, and a manor house was mentioned at Escrick in the fourteenth century. Escrick Hall was rebuilt in the late seventeenth century, and the large private park surrounding it was laid out in 1781. However, the park was expanded in *c* 1825 when the roads to Skipwith and Ricall were laid out to by-pass the village to the south-east and south-west respectively. Moor Head pond is situated immediately west of the Skipwith road, and is likely to have been constructed after 1825. The pond is of regular shape; it originally had three pipes, and was later modified to have four pipes and a central island. The northern pond is not of typical construction, being irregular in shape and originally had only two pipes, which became three. The Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1855 shows the northern pond as apparently bisected by the road, perhaps indicating that it was adapted from an earlier pond.

A book summarising duck decoys in Britain was produced by Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey in 1886, and is a very useful insight into the construction of decoys, the methods of working them, and the extant ponds at the end of the nineteenth century. Payne-Gallwey noted that the Escrick decoys were both out of use by 1886; the northern pond was overgrown and had clearly been abandoned for some time, whilst the Moor Head pond was still being maintained at that date. Ordnance Survey mapping from the early twentieth century confirms this, as the four pipes of the Moor Head decoy are each shown with a footbridge constructed over them, indicating that the pond had become the feature of a walk on the estate.

The detailed survey around the Moor Head pond identified 33 sites of archaeological interest, which include features associated with the medieval/post-medieval use of the land

before it became part of the park, such as ridge and furrow (Site **02**), possible former boundaries (Sites **15/21** and **30**) and associated hollows (Sites **14**, **24** and **26**). The pond (Site **01**) was surrounded by a wood, as decoy ponds often were, to provide cover. This therefore is likely to have been planted at the same time that the pond was laid out. Sites **06**, **09**, **10**, **20** and **33** form the boundaries of the wood, Site **25** appears to be a northern entrance to the wood, and Site **27** is a bank to the north-east of Site **25**, which extends into the wood.

Two spoil heaps (Sites **18** and **19**), containing hand-made bricks, indicate the probable remains of the original decoyman's hut, in the area south-west of the pond. There was also the remains of a slightly later brick structure (Site **16**) in this area. On the east side of the pond a possible hut base (Site **08**) was identified at a short distance to the south of the current hut (Site **07**).

Sites **03-05**, **11-13**, **17**, **22-23**, **29** and **31-32** were all spoil heaps probably derived from recent pipe clearance. Site **28** appeared to be older than the surrounding spoil heaps, although its composition suggests that it was still derived from pipe clearance. Site **22** contained metal bands from the pipe net hoops.

Research into other extant and reconstructed duck decoys in Britain was also undertaken as part of the project. This was mostly desk-based, although a visit was made to Slimbridge in Gloucestershire which has a fully restored decoy used for ringing birds and demonstrations for the visitors to the reserve. A few other sites offer demonstrations of their duck decoys, but the majority, which are in areas such as parks and nature reserves, are maintained and are included within nature and/or historic trails. The search suggested that there were only a small number of maintained duck decoys across the country which are open to the public. The restoration of the Moor Head pond would, therefore, be extremely beneficial in adding to the historical background of the Escrick Estate as well as providing public information on duck decoys. An authentic reconstruction of the Moor Head pond should be achievable without impacting on the existing earthwork features of archaeological significance that were noted during the survey.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was invited by Natural England to undertake a programme of detailed archaeological survey of Moor Head decoy pond and wood at Escrick (NGR SE 642 418) (Fig 1), on behalf of Escrick Park Estate, in order to inform the appropriate conservation management of the pond and to propose reconstruction options for it. A lower level survey of a further pond (referred to throughout as the northern pond) to the north (NGR SE 636 426) was also included in the project. The survey was undertaken in February 2009.

### 1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 **Aims:** the primary purpose of the project was to inform future management decisions with regard to conservation matters relating to the archaeological and historical content of the decoy pond.

1.2.2 **Objectives:** the objectives of the project were:

- To produce an English Heritage level 3 survey for the Moor Head decoy pond and a level 2 survey for a further decayed decoy pond to the north (*Appendix 3*);
- To carry out desk-based research in order to put the results of the survey in context;
- To research previous decoy pond reconstructions and make recommendations for a working reconstruction of the decoy pond prescriptions.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 1*) was submitted in January 2009 by OA North to Natural England. This provided for a programme of desk-based research, and a survey of the two ponds. It has also allowed for research and comparisons with other restored decoy ponds. The work was carried out in accordance with the project design.

### 2.2 DESK-BASED RESEARCH

- 2.2.1 **Introduction:** a limited programme of desk-based research was undertaken of the study area to provide an archaeological and historical background sufficient to inform the field survey.
- 2.2.2 **East Riding Record Office, Beverley (ERRO):** cartographic and primary documents, as well as secondary sources pertaining to the study area, were consulted at the record office.
- 2.2.3 **University of Hull Archives (UHA):** cartographic and primary documents were consulted at the archives.

### 2.3 LANDSCAPE SURVEY

- 2.3.1 **Introduction:** the survey was undertaken as an English Heritage level 3 survey for the Moor Head decoy pond and a level 2 survey for the northern pond (*Appendix 3*). In addition, the areas within the woods around each of the decoy ponds were searched for features such as earthworks and elements related or unrelated to the decoy ponds. The survey involved four elements: Reconnaissance, Mapping, Description and Photography.
- 2.3.2 **Reconnaissance:** the reconnaissance was undertaken by walking the Moor Head site, and aimed to identify, locate and record all archaeological sites and features on the ground.
- 2.3.3 **Survey Mapping:** a detailed topographic survey of the two ponds was undertaken. Because of tree cover, it was not possible to do this using GPS techniques, instead it was undertaken as a total station survey of the sites and the wider area, using control located by differential GPS. The total station survey created an accurate ground plan, showing all historic features, and the surrounding topography.
- 2.3.4 **Photography:** in conjunction with the landscape survey a photographic archive was generated, which recorded significant features as well as aspects of the general landscape. This photographic archive was maintained using black and white 35mm film and also using a digital camera with 8.0mega pixel resolution.
- 2.3.5 **Description:** the data was directly input on site into a Psion palm computer and subsequently incorporated into an Access 97 compatible database. The input into the system was guided by a *proforma* to ensure uniformity and consistency of input. The description incorporated a provisional interpretation of the function and

purpose of a site, where possible, and provided a provisional interpretation of the site's chronology where possible.

## **2.4 FEASIBILITY STUDY**

2.4.1 Research was undertaken into other reconstructions of decoy ponds, elsewhere in the UK, and entailed a documentary search and a site visit of the Slimbridge decoy pond. The other reconstructions studied, largely from an internet search, included the following:

- Boarstall, Buckinghamshire
- Hale, Cheshire
- Abbotsbury Swannery, Dorset
- Nacton (Orwell park, Suffolk
- Borough Fen, near Peterborough

2.4.2 On the basis of these examples a reconstruction for the decoy pond was proposed.

## **2.5 GAZETTEER OF SITES**

2.5.1 All of the information concerning archaeological sites within the assessed area of Moor Head pond has been collated into a gazetteer (*Appendix 2*), which provides details of their location, period, character and significance. Locations are given as ten-figure National Grid References where possible, and the position of each site is indicated on a map of the study area (Fig 5).

## **2.6 ARCHIVE**

2.7.1 A full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (1991) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The archive is provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format, both as a printed document and digitally. The archive will be deposited with the North Yorkshire County Record Office in Northallerton, along with a copy of the report. Digital copies of the archive, report and figures will be submitted to the NMR and ADS. The report will be submitted to North Yorkshire County Council Historic Environment Record and Natural England.

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### 3. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 This section sets out a brief archaeological and historical background of duck decoy ponds and the Escrick Estate, within a context by which the discoveries from the desk-based assessment and survey can be compared.

#### 3.2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.2.1 Escrick is located *c* 10km to the north of Selby, with Escrick Park lying to the south of the village. The duck decoy ponds are located on the eastern side of the park, which is bounded by a road named Mill Hill. Both ponds are situated within woods and are at *c* 8m AOD (Ordnance Survey 1981). Moor Head pond (at NGR SE 642 418) is situated approximately 1km to the south-west of the northern pond (at NGR SE 636 426).
- 3.2.2 The study area is within the Vale of York, a low lying area, which has resulted from the erosion of the underlying soft Triassic or New Red Sandstone. During the last Ice Age this area became a large inland lake, which was subsequently partially infilled with material from the surrounding hills (MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd 1994). The solid geology comprises Permian and Triassic Sandstones (BGS 2007) and the superficial geology comprises clays and gleyic brown sands (Ordnance Survey 1983; BGS 2007).

#### 3.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.3.1 ***Duck Decoy Ponds:*** whilst wild ducks and wildfowl were caught in large numbers from at least the thirteenth century, it was not until the sixteenth century that a method of catching the ducks, involving permanent purpose built structures, was devised. The ducks were caught during the period in summer when they moult their feathers, thereby making them flightless. From the thirteenth century onwards they were caught in areas such as the Fens, by driving them into nets staked out in funnel shapes. This method was made illegal in 1710 to protect the wildfowl numbers, as they were being caught in their thousands, with young, flightless birds also captured (Heaton 2001, 4).
- 3.3.2 Permanent structures known as *eendekooi* appear to have originated in Holland in the sixteenth century (*eendekooi* is from the Dutch *eenden* meaning ducks and *kooi* meaning cage). The Dutch structures comprised a central pond with arms or pipes coming off it, which were covered with net. The first versions of these decoy ponds in Britain were constructed at Waxham in Norfolk in 1620, and at St James' Park in London in 1665. The use of these ponds then spread across England, particularly in wetland areas (*op cit*, 5).
- 3.3.3 The decoy ponds varied in construction and appearance, largely as a result of the local topography. However they each had a central area of water on which the ducks landed, and a number of narrow curving ditches, called pipes, coming off it. The ponds could be purpose built, adapted from existing ponds, or built on the edges of lakes. The number of pipes therefore also varied, but between three to

eight were normally constructed with each pond. Multiple pipes were necessary in order to allow for changing wind directions, as ducks would be likely to turn back from a pipe into which the wind was directly blowing (*op cit*, 7 and 11). The purpose built ponds tended to be between 1-2 acres in size, with a 2-3 feet depth of water, which shelved towards the edges. Flat areas of short grass, known as landings, would be located around the pond to provide areas for the ducks to roost (*op cit*, 7).

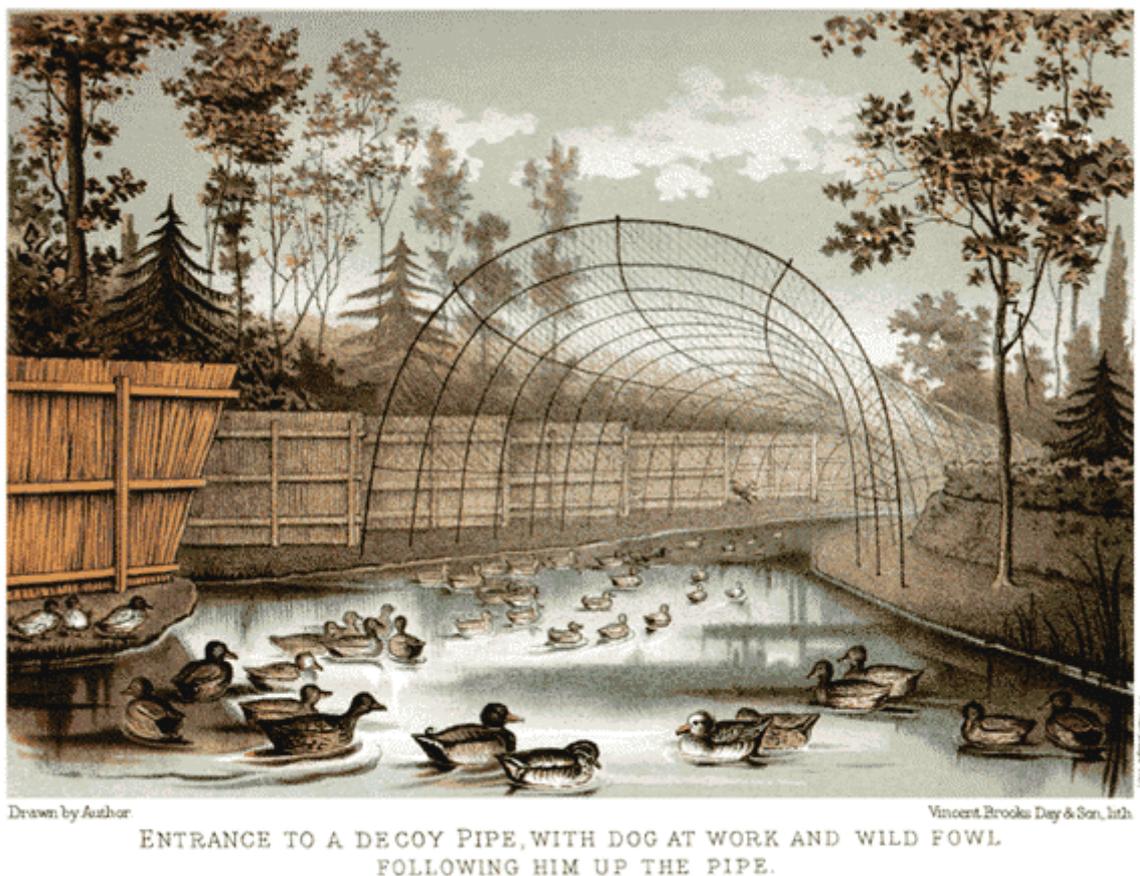
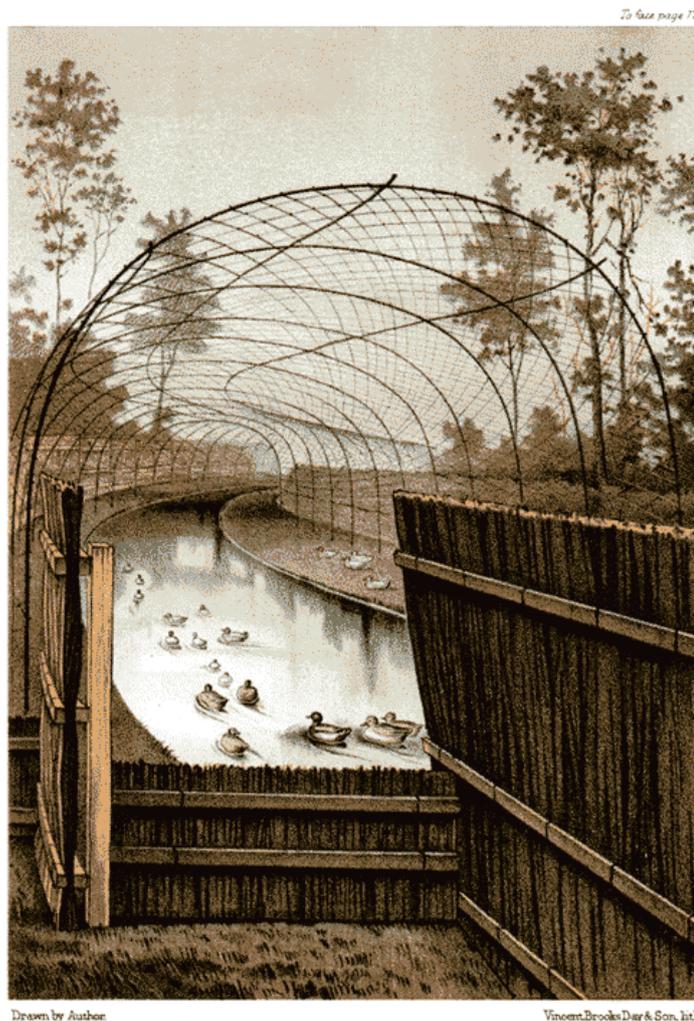


Plate 1: A decoy pipe entrance (after Payne-Gallwey 1886, 179, accessed via <http://www.decoymans.co.uk/>)

- 3.3.4 The pipes tended to be between 55-64m in length, and tapered from *c* 5.5-6.4m in width at the edge of the pond to 0.6m at the end of the pipe (*ibid*). Nets supported on hoops were set up over each pipe (Plate 1). The hoops tended to be of iron, but wooden poles were also sometimes used, and were generally spaced about 1.5m apart. The height of the hoops decreased from *c* 4.5m above the water surface at the pond edge to *c* 0.6m at the end of the pipe. The final *c* 4.5m of the tunnel reached beyond the end of the pipe, and had a detachable net over it, in which the ducks were trapped (*op cit*, 8-9). The ponds were often densely wooded, to prevent the ducks from being startled; however, there was often a clearing at the end of the pipes, so that the ducks saw a gap in the trees and therefore sensed that it was safe to progress down the pipe (*op cit*, 10).



VIEW OF A DECOY PIPE AS SEEN FROM THE  
HEAD SHEW PLACE.

Plate 2: A decoy pipe (after Payne-Gallwey 1886, 179, accessed via <http://www.decoymans.co.uk/>)

3.3.5 The principle behind the ponds was that ducks have a natural instinct to swim towards a potential predator they have seen on land, whilst maintaining a safe distance from the predator within the water (*op cit*, 12-13). Foxes were the most typical of predators, and therefore a fox-like breed of dog, such as the specially bred Dutch *kooikerrhondje* was used; however, in Britain various other breeds of dogs were also used (*op cit*, 14). A decoyman would entice the ducks towards a pipe entrance, often by using feed. The dog would then appear from behind a screen, which would make the ducks curious and encourage them into the pipe. This screen, nearest the pipe entrance, was known as the 'head show', as this is where the dog would first appear. Several more screens were then used along the length of one side of the pipe to provide cover for the decoyman, and so that the dog could appear and disappear ahead of the ducks, which would keep the ducks moving forward (Plate 2). Once the ducks had progressed some distance up the pipe, the decoyman was also able to move, unseen, to the pond entrance and stand where the ducks would see him, which would then make them move away and further up the pipe (Plate 3). The pipes were curved so that the ducks could not see the end of the pipe, and so that any ducks remaining in the pond would not see the ducks being caught at the end of the pipe. The ducks would be killed by the

decoyman on site and then transported to the house, with excess often going to the markets in the nearest towns (Rackham 2000, 179; Heaton 2001, 4, 9 and 12-13). Sometimes the ducks were lured up the pipes by feed alone, with a certain number of tame ducks being allowed to live on the pond in order to entice the wild ones in, who might otherwise be suspicious of an empty pond. Tame ducks could be marked by a notch in the webbing of one foot (Heaton 2001, 15).



DECOYMAN DRIVING WILD DUCK UP THE PIPE.

Plate 3: A decoyman working a pipe (after Payne-Gallwey 1886, 179, accessed via <http://www.decoymans.co.uk/>)

- 3.3.6 Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey's 'Book of Duck Decoys' (1886) is a summary of known duck decoys in Britain at that time. He listed 215 decoys, 188 in England, five in Wales and 22 in Ireland. However, as part of its Monuments Protection Programme (MPP), English Heritage estimated that there may have been as many as 800 duck decoys constructed in England, with a number of examples awaiting discovery (<http://www.eng-h.gov.uk/mpp/mcd/mcdtop1.htm>).
- 3.3.7 The decoys gradually fell out of use in the nineteenth century due to a number of factors including the drainage of wetlands, which caused a drop in the number of wintering birds from the continent as well as British breeding ducks. In 1880 the Ground Game Act was passed, which allowed farmers to shoot wild rabbits and

hares on their land, as they were considered to be doing an enormous amount of damage to crops (Payne-Gallwey 1886, 93-4); this scared ducks away from nearby decoys. Shooting was generally becoming more popular at this time, and this was gradually replacing decoys as a method of killing ducks. Only 44 duck decoys were still in use in 1886, two of which, Thirkleby (owned by Payne-Gallwey) and Hornby Castle, were in Yorkshire (Whitaker 1918, 91-7; Heaton 2001, 6 and 25). By 1918 only 21 decoys were still in use and by 1936 there were only 11. Nacton in Suffolk, operational from 1830 to 1968, was the last pond used for catching and killing ducks. Following this, Nacton was used for capturing and ringing birds, until 1982. Other reconstructed ponds are now also used for ringing birds (Heaton 2001, 31-32).

- 3.3.8 **Escrick:** Escrick was an Anglian settlement, with two estates recorded there at the time of the Domesday survey of 1086. A manor house was mentioned at Escrick in 1323, which was called Escrick Hall by 1557 (Allison 1976). In 1668 Escrick was sold by Baron Howard to Henry Thompson (d. 1700). The hall was then rebuilt by Henry Thompson in c 1680-90 and later the house was refronted and raised from two storeys to three. This work may date to c 1758, which is the date of the surviving rain-water heads, which bear the initials of Beilby Thompson (d. 1799). In 1781 Beilby Thompson secured an Act of Parliament for improvements around the hall. It was at this time that the park was laid out, with a number of changes made to Escrick village to allow for a large private park around the hall. The original reverse L-shaped layout of the village (Plate 4) was heavily altered by the removal of the church and the rectory to an area further north and the demolition of 26 houses by 1809 (*ibid*). In addition new roads were laid out to bypass the village, and link up with the Skipwith and Ricall roads, to the south-east and south-west of Escrick respectively. Trees were planted to screen the hall, and the park was laid out over the former open fields of the village (*ibid*).

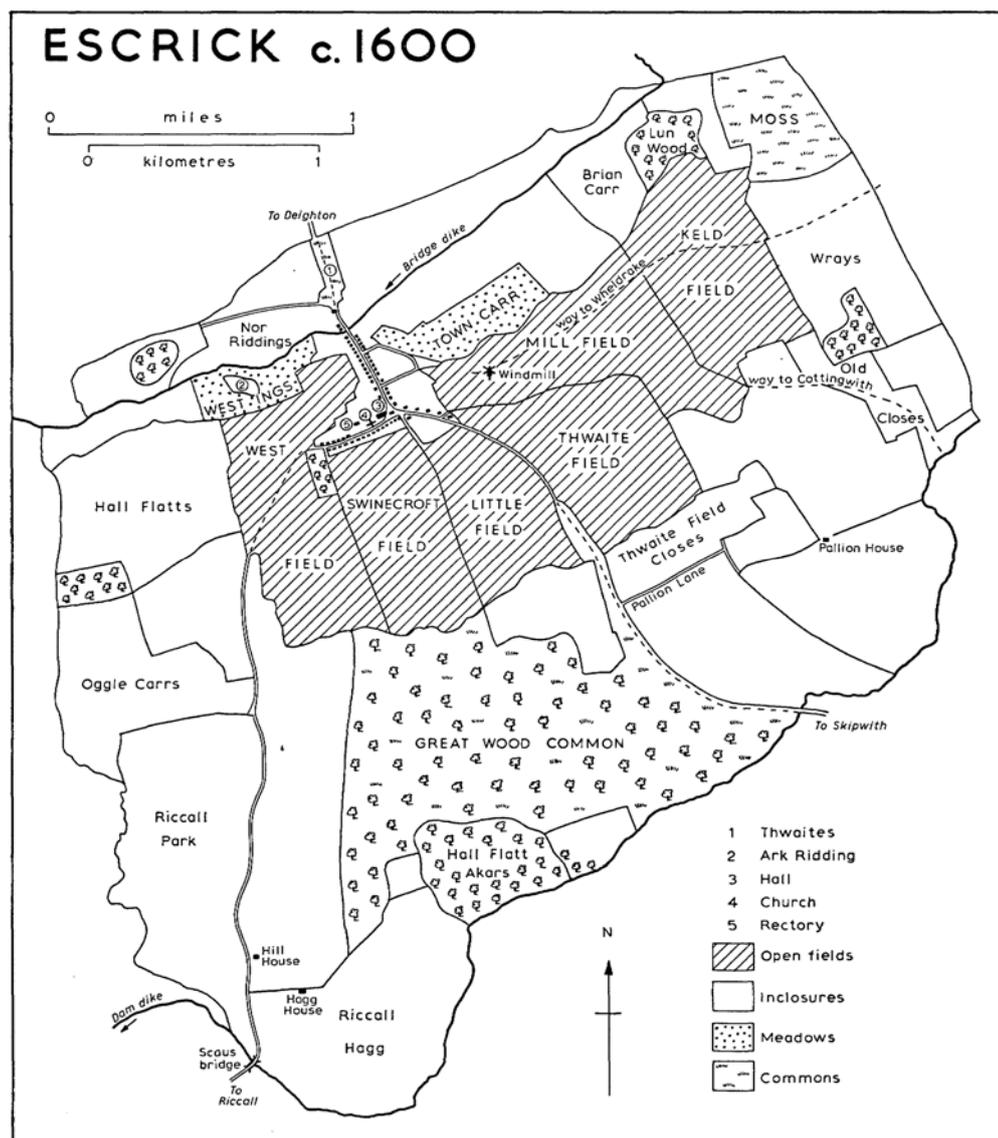


Plate 4: Escrick c 1660 (the northern pond would later be located in the approximate western area of Town Carr/Mill Field, and Moor Head Decoy in Thwaite Field). From a map in the Escrick Park Estate Office (after Allison 1976)

- 3.3.9 The manor was held by the Thompsons until 1820, when Richard Thompson died and it was passed to his sister's son, PB Lawley, who was made Baron Wenlock in 1839. In, or soon after 1825, the Skipwith and Riccall roads were moved further out to the west and east, and by 1847 the park had been extended as far as the new roads. The park was then approximately 450 acres, and was stocked with deer (*ibid*).
- 3.3.10 In 1912 Beilby Lawley, the third baron, died and the Escrick Estate passed to his daughter, Irene, who married CG Forbes Adam in 1920, through which family it subsequently descended. In 1949 the hall and 39 acres of woodland were let to the Woodward Society, and it became the Queen Margaret School for Girls (*ibid*).
- 3.3.11 **Escrick Duck Decoy Ponds:** Payne-Gallwey gives the construction date of the Moor Head pond as c 1830 and states that it was constructed by Old George Skelton (c 1760 - c 1840). The Skeltons were a famous family of decoymen from

Friskney in Lincolnshire (Whitaker 1918, 113; Payne-Gallwey 1886, 12 and 179). Payne-Gallwey thought that the northern pond pre-dated Moor Head pond, but does not estimate a construction date for it. Both ponds were out of use by 1886, and Payne-Gallwey states that the Moor Head pond went out of use in *c* 1860. This was apparently due, at least in part, to the construction of a central island in the pond, which was built to provide an additional landing for the ducks, but acted against the decoyman as the ducks were less willing to be lured from the island to the pipes.

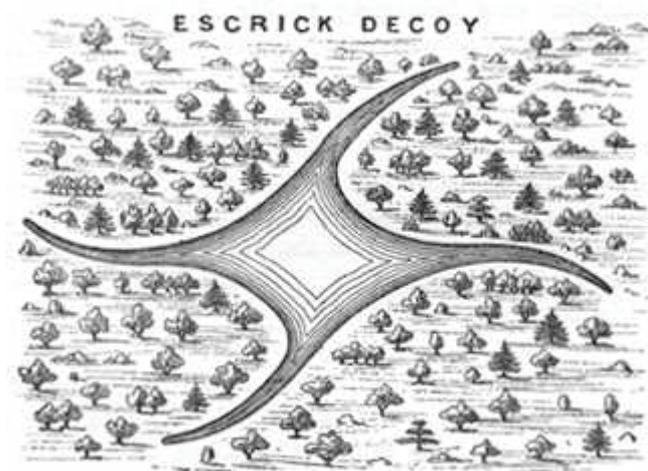


Plate 5: Moor Head Pond, 1886 (after Payne-Gallwey 1886, 179, accessed via <http://www.decoymans.co.uk/>)

3.3.12 In 1886 Payne-Gallwey was able to report that the Moor Head pond was ‘compact, well-shaped, and planted’, with extant features including ‘iron hoops, remains of the screens, and the Decoyman’s hut’ (Plates 5 and 6). The northern pond was less well preserved, however, perhaps indicating that it had fallen out of use at an earlier date. This was described as a ‘stagnant pool overgrown with rushes, no trace of pipes being observable’. However, according to Payne-Gallwey, at its peak *c* 2000 fowl were taken from this pond in a season (Payne-Gallwey 1886, 179-80).



Plate 6: Duck decoy pond at Escrick *c* 1900 (UHA DDFA3 9/72)

### 3.4 HISTORIC MAPS

- 3.4.1 **Introduction:** historic OS mapping was consulted to trace the development of the duck decoy ponds.
- 3.4.2 **Ordnance Survey, 1855, 6" to 1 mile:** the 1855 map (Fig 2a) shows Moor Head decoy pond as approximately bell-shaped: rounded at the northern end and with more angular corners to the south-east and south-west. Three pipes are shown, extending from the northern edge, the western edge, and the southern edge. The western pipe is not curved. A building is shown to the south of the western pipe, and is likely to be a decoyman's hut. A wood is depicted enclosing the pond, and has a fairly irregular shape. The depiction of the trees in the parkland surrounding the wood suggest south-west/north-east aligned boundaries to the north and south of the wood (extending westwards from existing field boundaries on the east side of Mill Hill Road), and a possible north-north-west/south-south-east boundary between them, which may have extended into the wooded area.
- 3.4.3 The northern pond (Fig 2b) is shown as roughly rectangular in shape with its corners to the north, south, west and east, and bounded by a wood. Two pipes are depicted, one curving off from the north-east side, and one heading south-west from the eastern corner. To the east of this main area the pond narrows and then widens out to a further rectangular area, which extends as far as the road. A wider area of pond is shown on the east side of the road, suggesting that the pond predated the road, which probably dates from c 1825 when the Skipwith and Ricall roads were moved out to expand the park. The pond on the east side of the road appears to have two linear banks within it and is surrounded by fields.
- 3.4.4 **Ordnance Survey, 1910, 6" to 1 mile and Ordnance Survey, 1910, 25" to 1 mile:** Moor Head decoy pond is much changed by the time of the 1910 map (Figs 3a and 4a). The pond is depicted as having a diamond shape, with a pipe curving from each of its points. This appears to have re-used the three pipes shown on the 1855 map (with some modifications to the now curved western pipe), but with an extra pipe on the north-east side. Each of the entrances to the pipes is shown with a footbridge across it. This map was produced some time after the pond had gone out of use as a duck decoy, and therefore it seems that bridges were subsequently constructed to utilise this area as a walk. An island planted with trees is shown in the centre of the pond. The wood is shown as enlarged, and in particular it now extends eastwards as far as Mill Hill Road. The decoyman's hut is not shown on this map.
- 3.4.5 The northern pond had seen some alterations by the time of this mapping (Figs 3b and 4b). The north corner appears to have been extended and a pipe is depicted heading north-eastwards from it, although it is shown as segmented possibly indicating that it had gone out of use by this time. The other pipe on the north-east side of the pond appears to have been shortened. Some alterations had also taken place in the eastern corner of the pond, with the pipe that previously headed south-westwards, turning to the north-west, thereby almost creating an island in this area of the pond. A further pipe is depicted to the east of this, which heads off south-eastwards, and then turns to the south. The area of pond that extended to the road appears to have gone by this time, with a boundary being shown in this area. The pond on the east side of the road is also not extant on this map, although the area is shown as marshy.

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## 4. RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 An English Heritage level 3 survey was carried out for Moor Head pond (NGR SE 642 418) and an English Heritage level 2 survey was carried out for the northern pond (NGR SE 636 426).

### 4.2 MOOR HEAD POND

- 4.2.1 A gazetteer of 33 sites (*Appendix 2*) was compiled for the Moor Head pond, which details the individual elements recorded during the course of the survey. The sites are discussed chronologically below, and are shown on Figure 5 and Plates 7-32.
- 4.2.2 ***Pre-1781/1825 layout of Escrick Park:*** an area of ridge and furrow (Site **02**), 35m in length and aligned north-west/south-east was identified to the north-east of the pond. A continuation of the north-east/south-west orientated ridge and furrow is evident as crop marks in the field to the immediate west of the wood (Google Earth imagery). Ridge and furrow is difficult to date, but this area must pre-date the conversion of the open fields into the hall park. The park was laid out in 1781, but was later extended to the new Skipwith road, which was constructed in *c* 1825. Given that the ridge and furrow is located towards the eastern edge of the park it is probable that it was within the later phase of the park, and therefore may be as late as the early nineteenth century.
- 4.2.3 ***Pre-1830 pond:*** two approximately parallel boundary banks, *c* 75m apart, were identified running in a north-west to south-east direction through the wood (Sites **15/21** and **30**). Three areas of hollows (Sites **14**, **24** and **26**) were identified in the area between the boundary banks, and may be associated with them. Formally planted beech trees, which are thought to relate to the original park planting, were identified within this area of the wood.
- 4.2.4 Sites **15** (Plate 7) and **21** are part of the same bank, which is cut by the south-west pond pipe, and are likely to have been a field boundary which pre-dated the laying out of the park, or a boundary contemporary with the park. Site **21** lies to the north of the pipe, and Site **15** to the south. It is probable that the cutting of the pipe, which necessitated the removal of part of Site **15/21**, would have necessitated the establishment of a new south-west boundary for the wood (Site **20**), because otherwise Site **15/21** would have served as the wood boundary. Mature trees were noted along the top of Site **15/21**, which included some stone construction towards its southern end. Site **21** forms the western boundary of a hollow (Site **24**) and which appears to be associated with it.
- 4.2.5 Boundary Bank **30** (Plate 8), which was noted to the north-east of the north-western pipe, was very similar to bank **15/21**, which it ran parallel to, and is also likely to be a former field boundary or park boundary. Site **30** was not traced as far as the pond, but its alignment indicates that if it had once extended this far, it would have been cut by it. Site **30** also bounds the eastern side of a hollow (Site **26**), and may be associated with it.

- 4.2.6 Site **24** is a hollow bounded by bank **21** to the west and by mature trees to the east. It appears to have been a feature of the 1781 park, prior to the construction of the pond. Site **14** (Plate 9) is a similar feature located on the east side of bank **15**, south-east of Site **24** and therefore may be part of the same feature. A rectilinear crop mark feature is shown on the Google Earth imagery immediately south-east of bank **15**, and there is a possibility that it was related to it. Site **26** is a similar feature to Sites **14** and **24**, and possibly pre-dates the ditch that bounds the northern extent of the wood in this area (Site **33**; Plate 10).
- 4.2.7 One possible interpretation of Site **15/21** is that it represents the 1781 boundary of the park, although this can not be confirmed on the present evidence. It is not known as to the function of the group of three hollows, but they clearly related to the linear banks and were part of the pre-pond landscape.
- 4.2.8 **Pond c 1830-1860:** the pond (Site **01**) was constructed in c 1830, and the wood is assumed to have been planted at the same time, to provide the necessary tree cover for the pond and pipes. Sites **06**, **09**, **10**, **20** and **33** form the boundaries of the wood, Site **25** appears to be a northern entrance to the wood, and Site **27** is a bank to the north-east of Site **25**, which extends into the wood. The overall dimensions of the wood are c 200m north/south and c 190m east/west. Formal planting in the wood comprises Scot's Pine and oak, and there are several trees in the north-east corner of hollow **26** that exhibit signs of coppicing and pollarding, indicative of woodland management.
- 4.2.9 Site **06** (Plate 11) forms the very straight north-eastern boundary of the wood, which comprises a line of trees, beyond which is an overgrown track c 5m wide. A ditch surrounds the outer edge of the track, which has a line of possible lime trees on its west side and the modern road on its east side.
- 4.2.10 Sites **09** (Plate 12) and **10** (Plates 13-15) form the south-eastern and southern boundaries of the wood respectively, which each comprise an overgrown line of trees. Site **20** (Plate 16), the south-western boundary, is marked with a line of mature pine trees, and clearly post dates boundary **15/21**.
- 4.2.11 Site **25** is the entrance to the wood, located on its northern boundary, at the northern end of Site **24**. It is possible that the three hollows (Sites **26**, **24** and **14**), which pre-date the wood, were subsequently used as horse riding or walking access points to the wood. To the immediate west of Site **25** is an overgrown bank, and to the east is a ditch (Site **33**). Ditch **33** is steep sided and V-shaped. A bank on the wood side (southern side) is lined with scrub and there are the remains of a wooden post and wire fence along the top of it. A spur of land (Site **27**), of unknown function, projects southwards from the woodside bank of Site **33** into the wood in this area.
- 4.2.12 The main area of the pond (Plate 17) measured c 47.85m north/south and 40.2m east/west and the four curving pipes were extant. The north-west pipe (Plate 18) measured 46.5m in length and tapered from 6m in width at the pipe entrance to 1.4m. The north-eastern pipe (Plates 19 and 20) measured 55.7m in length and tapered from 7.5 to 0.9m in width. The south-eastern pipe (Plates 21 and 22) was 66.2m in length and tapered from 8.1 to 1m in width and the south-west pipe (Plates 23 and 24) was 57.3m in length and tapered from 5.7 to 0.9m.
- 4.2.13 An examination of the historic OS mapping (*Section 3.4*) showed that the north-eastern pipe was later than the others and was not constructed until after 1855. Also at some time between 1855 and 1910 the south-western pipe was re-cut to add more

of a curve. There was no physical evidence for this re-alignment of the south-west pipe, but a yew tree planted at its entrance possibly suggests that the other yew trees in this area were planted at the same time. The north-western and south-eastern pipes had overflows at their respective ends. The present water level was not far below these, indicating that the water levels have not significantly changed. Whilst the north-west and south-east pipes contained water, the south-west and north-east pipes were almost completely dry.

- 4.2.14 No remains of the original decoyman's hut, in the area south-west of the pond, were identified during the survey, although two spoil heaps in the vicinity included hand-made bricks (Sites **18** (Plate 25) and **19**). The remains of a slightly later brick structure (Site **16**; (Plate 26) were also found in this area. On the east side of the pond a possible hut base (Site **08**) was identified a short distance to the south of the current hut (Site **07**; Plate 27).
- 4.2.15 *Post 1860*: a number of sites in the gazetteer are spoil heaps or dumps which mostly relate to clearance of the pipes and/or the pond, some of which appear to be very recent. Sites **18** and **19** contain hand-made bricks, which may have come from the original decoyman's hut, as there appears to be at least one later hut (Site **16** and possibly Site **08**).
- 4.2.16 Site **28** appeared to be older than the surrounding spoil heaps, although its composition suggests that it was derived from pipe clearance. Sites **03-05**, **11-13** (Plates 28-29), **17**, **22** (Plate 30), **23**, **29** and **31-32** (Plates 31-32) were all spoil heaps probably derived from recent pipe clearance. Site **22** contained metal bands from the pipe net hoops.

### **4.3 THE NORTHERN POND**

- 4.3.1 The northern pond was heavily overgrown and full of reeds, but three pipes were still evident, two on the north-east side of the pond and one heading south from the eastern end (Fig 6; Plates 33-37). The westernmost pipe on the north-east side was probably the best preserved, with neat oval edges still evident (Plate 37). At the north-east corner of the pond is a bridge, which separates the former duck decoy pond from the remainder of the pond, which extends as far north as the road. The examination of the historic maps suggested that this area was never used as a duck decoy, but was perhaps the remnants of an earlier pond. A ditch was noted running north-westwards from this area of pond, along the boundary of the park with the road.

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## 5. LANDSCAPE HISTORY

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### 5.1 ESCRICK HALL AND PARK

- 5.1.1 ***Origins of Escrick Hall and Park:*** a manor house was first mentioned at Escrick in 1323, and was called Escrick Hall by 1557; it was sold to the Thompson family in 1668. Beilby Thompson (d. 1799) undertook alterations to the hall and its environs, and was also responsible for laying out the park in 1781. This necessitated a number of changes to Escrick village to allow for a large private park around the hall. The church and rectory were moved northwards, and a number of houses were demolished. The park was laid out over the former open fields of the village, and trees were planted to screen the hall. New roads were also laid so as to bypass the village, and link up with the Skipwith and Ricall roads, to the south-east and south-west of Escrick respectively.
- 5.1.2 The manor was held by the Thompsons until 1820, when Richard Thompson died and it was passed to his sister's son, PB Lawley, who was made Baron Wenlock in 1839. In, or soon after 1825, the Skipwith and Ricall roads were moved further out to the east and west, and by 1847 the park had been extended as far as the new roads.
- 5.1.3 ***Pre-Moor Head Pond Landscape:*** the archaeological survey of Moor Head pond (Site **01**) identified several features which appear to pre-date the pond, including two possible boundaries and an area of ridge and furrow. The ridge and furrow (Site **02**) is certainly pre-1825, probably pre-1781, and may be earlier as its approximate north-west/south-east orientation does not quite align with the surrounding field boundaries.
- 5.1.4 Two possible boundaries (Sites **15/21** and **30**) were identified within the wood that surrounds Moor Head pond. These were both banks with some stone construction and with mature trees along their tops. The banks were aligned approximately north-west/south-east, and were roughly parallel, *c* 75m apart. Site **15/21** was cut by the south-west pond pipe, thereby indicating that this feature pre-dated the pond. Three areas of hollows (Sites **14**, **24** and **26**) were identified in the area between the boundary banks, and may be associated with them, although their function is unknown.
- 5.1.5 Formally planted beech trees, that possibly relate to the original park planting, were identified within this area of the wood. However, this can not be confirmed as the trees are all of a similar maturity, and there is little chronological distinction between the latest element of the park in this area, which could be as late as 1825, and the pond which is *c* 1830. Consequently some or all of these trees could have been planted once it had been decided to plant a wood around the decoy pond. Formal planting in the wood includes Scot's Pine, oak and yew trees. The wood is assumed to be contemporary with the pond, and planted to provide the necessary tree cover for the pond and pipes. Sites **06**, **09**, **10**, **20** and **33** form the boundaries of the wood, which vary between lines of mature trees, banks, ditches and combinations of these. Site **25** appears to be a northern entrance to the wood, and Site **27** is a bank to the north-east of Site **25**, which extends into the wood.
- 5.1.6 ***Escrick Duck Decoy Ponds:*** an examination of the historic OS mapping and comparison of this with the 1886 survey of duck decoy ponds by Sir Ralph Payne-

Gallwey indicates that the northern duck decoy pre-dated Moor Head decoy, which was constructed in *c* 1830. The 1855 OS map shows the northern pond on both sides of the road to Skipwith, and suggests that the pond pre-dated the road. The road to Skipwith was moved twice, once when the park was laid out in 1781 and again in *c* 1825. It is therefore assumed that this road dates to *c* 1825 and that the pond was earlier. In 1855 the pond is shown with two pipes coming off it, and a further area to the east that appears to be ornamental. That the pond does not appear to have been purpose built adds weight to the argument that it was an existing pond within the village fields that was modified some time after 1825 to work as a duck decoy pond. Further changes to the pond, including the addition of two pipes, are shown on the 1910 OS mapping. As Payne-Gallwey stated that both of the Escrick ponds were out of use by 1886, and reported the northern pond as stagnant and overgrown at this time, these changes must have taken place between 1855 and some time before 1886. Payne-Gallwey states that the Moor Head pond went out of use in *c* 1860, which is possible, but would mean that the changes noted between the 1855 and 1910 maps, such as the addition of the fourth pipe and the island, would have had to have taken place very shortly after the production of the 1855 map to have been abandoned by 1860. The evidence from the maps therefore suggests, therefore, that although the northern pond appears to have pre-dated Moor Head pond in construction, or use as a decoy, it was not replaced by the Moor Head pond, but rather both ponds show signs of modifications relating to their use as duck decoys between 1855 and 1886.

- 5.1.7 There are at least two, possibly three, phases of decoyman's hut at the Moor Head pond. The original hut is shown to the south of the western pipe on the 1855 OS map. No remains of this hut were found during the survey, although two of the spoil heaps in the vicinity included hand-made bricks (Sites **18** and **19**). The remains of a slightly later brick structure (Site **16**) were also found in this area. On the east side of the pond a possible hut base (Site **08**) was identified a short distance to the south of the current wooden hide (Site **07**).
- 5.1.8 The 1910 OS map indicates that a footbridge had been constructed over each of the pipes on the Moor Head pond after it went out of use as a decoy. As the pond was located within Escrick Park it was probably used as a recreational parkland feature and certainly looks well kept in a photograph of *c* 1900 (Plate 6).
- 5.1.9 In 1912 Beilby Lawley, the third baron, died and the Escrick Estate passed to his daughter, Irene, who married CG Forbes Adam in 1920, through which family it subsequently descended. In 1949 the hall and 39 acres of woodland were let to the Woodward Society, and it became the Queen Margaret School for Girls.
- 5.1.10 A number of sites in the gazetteer are spoil heaps or dumps which mostly relate to clearance of the pipes and/or pond, some of which appear to be very recent. Sites **18** and **19** contain hand-made bricks, do not have a recent appearance and may be relatively old. Site **28** appeared to be older than the surrounding spoil heaps, although its composition suggests that it was derived from pipe clearance. Sites **03-05**, **11-13**, **17**, **22-23**, **29** and **31-32** were all spoil heaps derived from pipe clearance, some of which appeared to be very recent. Site **22** contained metal bands from the pipe net hoops.

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## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 Research has been undertaken into restored working decoy ponds, elsewhere in the UK, and has been partly desk-based, using online searches to find reconstructed ponds, and particularly ponds open to the public. It has also entailed a site visit to Slimbridge in Gloucestershire, which has a working duck decoy pond.

### 6.2 RECONSTRUCTED DECOY SITES IN THE UK

6.2.1 ***Slimbridge, Gloucestershire:*** the Slimbridge duck decoy pond was visited as part of this project in order to see a reconstructed decoy. The Slimbridge duck decoy dates to 1843 and replaced an earlier decoy to the south. The decoys were both part of Berkley Castle, and the 1843 decoy was located between the Severn and the canal, on an area called New Grounds. The 1843 pond was by Mr Joseph Wilcox of Nash, near Newport in Wales, and of the same design as the Hornby decoy in Yorkshire, and decoys at Glastonbury and Sedgemoor in Somerset (Payne-Gallwey 1886, 93-4). The decoy has a typical ‘crab-shaped’ form, an elongated pond with two pipes at either end, curving towards each other (Plate 38). Payne-Gallwey writes that the decoy took an average of 1370 birds per year, until the passing of the Ground Game Act in 1880. The passing of the act meant that there was a great deal of shooting locally, which scared the ducks away. Following this the average yearly taking of birds from Slimbridge was down to *c* 500 (*ibid*).

6.2.2 In 1946, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust took over the decoy when it established the Slimbridge reserve. The purpose of the reserve was to set up an observatory for researching the wildfowl and to build up a collection of tame wildfowl. It was selected because the marshy topography provided an ideal natural habitat for wildfowl, which was evidenced by the large numbers of geese that wintered there. The extant duck decoy pond was also considered to be an important feature of the reserve as it could be utilised for catching ducks to ring them (The Wildfowl Trust *c*1955).

6.2.3 The reconstructed decoy retains its original shape, with four curved pipes, located within dense scrub and woods (Plates 39 and 40). The pipes have screens constructed on their outer edges only, the inner side of each having netting down to the ground (Plate 41). The screens comprise a longer head screen at the entrance to each pipe, with further small stretches of screen set at a slight angle to the edge of the pipe, to allow access for a dog. The screens are constructed of posts and reeds with horizontal laths, and iron hoops supporting the netting. The final section of the net narrows considerably, as this is the detachable area for gathering the birds in (Plates 42 and 43).

6.2.4 The trust now runs exhibitions set up in a hide, which overlooks the decoy, and in the former decoyman’s hut. Demonstrations of the decoy in operation are also given (Heaton 2001, 33-4; <http://www.wwt.org.uk/centre/122/slimbridge.html>).

6.2.5 ***Boarstall, Buckinghamshire:*** Boarstall decoy was constructed between 1691 and 1697 (Heaton 2001, 21). It was originally a six-pipe pond, but comprised four

- pipes by the time of Payne-Gallwey's description of 1886 and provided ducks for Boarstall House, with surplus birds going to the local markets and to London (Heaton 2001, 21; Payne-Gallwey 1886, 61-2). In 1886 Payne-Gallwey reported that the average yearly taking of birds was *c* 800 (Payne-Gallwey 1886, 62). However, the decoy pond went out of use during the Second World War. In 1963 the pond went back into use, under the direction of the Wildfowlers Association of Great Britain and Ireland, which provided ducks as breeding stock (Heaton 2001, 34).
- 6.2.6 Boarstall was acquired by the National Trust in 1980, restored in 1986, and is now a nature reserve open to the public. The National Trust offer regular demonstrations of the decoy, a nature trail and a visitor centre (Heaton 2001, 8; <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-boarstallduck-decoy.htm>).
- 6.2.7 **Hale, Cheshire:** Hale duck decoy is thought to have been established in *c* 1631 and is located on the north bank of the Mersey. It comprises a pond with five pipes, resulting in a star-shaped form. The pond is surrounded by a five-sided wood, to provide screening, and also by a moat, which was filled with estuarine water at high tides (Payne-Gallwey 1886, 101).
- 6.2.8 The decoy fell into disuse at the end of the nineteenth century, but restoration by a conservation group got underway in the 1960s. Cheshire County Council took on the lease for the decoy, and both Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Halton Borough Council worked on the restoration. This included clearance of the ditches and pipes, and the renewal of metal work over the pipes, along with the construction of new screens. A bridge across the moat was also constructed, and the Decoyman's cottage, a small hut on the island, was also rebuilt ([http://www.bbc.co.uk/liverpool/content/articles/2005/05/11/duck\\_decoy\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/liverpool/content/articles/2005/05/11/duck_decoy_feature.shtml)). Recently the pond has been undergoing further restoration as Halton Borough Council is leasing the pond from Hale Estates to use it as a nature reserve; this has been financed by through the Heritage Lottery Fund (<http://www2.halton.gov.uk/nature/content/localnaturereserves/haleduckdecoy/?a=5441>). The decoy pond is not normally open to the public, except by several pre-booked guided walks held each year ([http://www.visithalton.com/displayProduct.asp?product\\_key=243171&page\\_key=1&channel=vhal](http://www.visithalton.com/displayProduct.asp?product_key=243171&page_key=1&channel=vhal)).
- 6.2.9 **Abbotsbury Swannery, Dorset:** the swannery at Abbotsbury is slightly different to the other sites discussed here, as it was begun in 1393 to provide swans for the Benedictine monastery of St Peters; a practice which carried on until the Dissolution destroyed the monastery in 1539. Following this the swans were supplied to the Strangways family, and in *c* 1655 the decoy pond was constructed to supplement this supply. Birds have been ringed at Abbotsbury rather than killed since 1937 (Heaton 2001, 33; <http://www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk/swannery.htm>).
- 6.2.10 The Abbotsbury swannery is open to the public and the well-maintained decoy pond is one of the features of the swannery, as is the decoy house, which was once home to the swanherd (<http://www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk/swannery.htm>). However the pond does not appear to have been reconstructed with pipe nets and screens, for use as a working decoy pond, rather it is an element of the large thriving swan colony at the site.

- 6.2.11 **Nacton (Orwell Park), Suffolk:** the Nacton decoy was adopted from a mill pond and became a decoy in 1830. Each pipe is overlooked by an observation hut and there are sunken paths allowing for unseen access between the pipes (Heaton 2001, 18). Nacton averaged a take of 3903 birds per year between 1919 and 1969 and following this was used for capturing and ringing birds until 1982 (Heaton 2001, 27 and 31-32). The decoy at Nacton is not open the public, although educational visits for schools and natural history groups can be arranged (<http://www.decoymans.worldonline.co.uk/decoy.htm>).
- 6.2.12 **Borough Fen, near Peterborough:** this decoy was thought by Payne-Gallwey to be one of the earliest decoys in England, dating to at least the late seventeenth century (Payne-Gallwey 1886, 143). The pond has eight pipes and is surrounded by an approximately pentagon-shaped wood. The pond appears to have recently been in working order, and was accessible through open days run by the nearby Peakirk Wildfowl World; however, this is no longer operational, and the pond is currently closed (Heaton 2001, 40).
- 6.2.13 **Other decoys:** in other locations there are disused decoys, which are incorporated within nature reserves and are used as features on nature walks and for activities such as pond dipping. Friskney in Lincolnshire, which was worked by the Skelton family, can now be seen as part of a nature trail (<http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/reserves/nr/reserve.php?mapref=20>). Decoy Spinney at Stoneleigh near Warwickshire is a disused decoy, which can be accessed by arrangement as part of a farm walk (<http://www.warwickshire-wildlife-trust.org.uk/reserves/decoy-spinney.htm>). A disused decoy pond is also featured on a walk through the grounds of Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire (<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-hardwickhall>). Morden Bog, near Wareham in Dorset, is a nature reserve maintained by Natural England, which features a disused decoy (<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/nnr/1006105.aspx>). Titchmarsh in Northamptonshire is a Wildlife Trust nature reserve with a heronry and disused decoy (<http://www.wildlifebcnp.org.uk/reserves/reserve.php?reserveid=116>).

### 6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.3.1 The research has shown that there are only a few restored or reconstructed decoys in the country. There is, though, a slightly larger number of disused decoys, which are maintained as part of nature reserves, or have been made features as part of history and/or nature trails, but there are still not many around the country. A reconstruction of the Moor Head decoy would therefore be of great benefit to the area in terms of local history and educational value. The following is a proposal for a reconstruction of the Moor Head pond at Escrick, and recommendations for the northern pond.
- 6.3.2 **Moor Head Decoy:** the archaeological survey identified a number of spoil heaps (Sites **03-05**, **12-13**, **17-19**, **22-23**, **28-29** and **31-32**). Whilst some of these appeared to be quite old (Sites **18**, **19** and **28**), the others appeared to be of recent date. The spoil heaps are mostly the result of dredging and seriously detract from the appearance of the pond and the wood in which it is located, so that it is difficult to see the pond layout. In addition a number of the dumps have invasive plants growing on them, which could include Himalyan Balsam and possibly knotweed. It is therefore recommended that the spoil heaps are removed.

- 6.3.3 The south-western and north eastern pipes are presently dry, and for them to revert to operational use, they would need to be cleared out. Similarly further clearance should be undertaken on the north-western, which, although containing water, is not fully emptied along its length. Such an operations should be subject to an archaeological watching brief, so that a record can be made of the archaeological deposits. This would provide an indication of the history of usage and clearance episodes.
- 6.3.4 The wood around the pond is overgrown and would require some landscaping to make it more accessible for the public. In particular there needs to be gaps in the tree lines at the end of each of the pipes. These clear areas help to entice the ducks down the pipes as they believe they can see a way out of the pipe and the wood and are therefore happier to progress down the pipes.
- 6.3.5 Once the spoil and overgrown areas have been cleared, then reconstruction of the screens and hoops could take place along each of the pipes. It is important that the existing earthwork features, namely the pond edges and pipes are not damaged or impacted by the construction of any light weight superstructure on top. The hoops should be set to reduce in width and height towards the end of the pipe. It is clear from the spoil heaps around the pond, that metal hoops were used at Escrick rather than wooden, and in the Slimbridge example they have been made of thin tubular alloy, set about a metre apart (Plate 41). It is therefore recommended that metal hoops are again used at Moor Head.
- 6.3.6 The ever decreasing net tunnel ends, in a low, free-standing and sealable net cage, as represented at the Slimbridge example (Plates 42-43). The latter element means that the ducks enter a net cylinder, which prevents them from retreating, and they can then be individually and safely removed through a detachable flap at the end.
- 6.3.7 Payne-Gallwey noted the remnants of screens at Escrick in 1886. The screens were traditionally of reeds, and therefore, if possible, locally sourced reeds should be used. The screens are set in a staggered arrangement, so that they present a continuous 'fence' to the ducks, but in actuality it is possible for the dog and the decoyman to come in and out of the screens as required. The line of screens should extend from the aperture of the pipe, beside the pond, to near the terminus of the pipe and where the net tunnel is converging towards the cage. At this point the decoyman needs to be visible to in effect drive the ducks towards the end net cage (Plate 41).
- 6.3.8 The survey noted overflows at the ends of the north-west and south-east pipes. The present water level was not far below these, indicating that the water levels have not significantly changed. This suggests that once clear the pond would fill up naturally and if necessary drain through the overflows.
- 6.3.9 Information boards, either outside or within the current hide, on the history and use of the pond would be beneficial to the understanding of the site. The pond could also be a feature of a larger nature walk and if restored, demonstrations of the pond in use could be made. Other activities, such as pond dipping could also be carried out at the pond. It would also be useful to inform any visitors of the earlier decoy to the north of Moor Head, and possibly link the two with a path or marked walk.
- 6.3.10 **Northern decoy:** although the northern pond appears to pre-date the 1825 road, the historic map regression would suggest that only the portion of the road on the west side of the road was used as a decoy. The pond is heavily overgrown, and given its

location close to the school it may not be feasible to carry out much work on it. In addition the pond was never of a 'typical' duck decoy design, and therefore would work less well as a reconstruction. However the site would certainly benefit from some clearance of the overgrown vegetation and an information board, to compliment the Moor Head pond.

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Decoy Spinney, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

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English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme

<http://www.eng-h.gov.uk/mpp/mcd/mcdtop1.htm>

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## APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 CONTRACT BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Julian Small of Natural England has invited Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) to submit a project design for an archaeological survey of a decoy pond at Escrick (SE 642418), North Yorkshire, and owned by Escrick Park Estate. The proposed programme would enable the detailed recording of the pond and copse as well as a lower level survey of a further pond at SE 636426. This is in accordance with a project brief by Margaret Nieke, Natural England, and is intended to inform the management of the decoy pond and to propose reconstruction options for it. The survey would entail the production of a detailed survey of the pond and environs, an historical assessment of the site, drawing upon Escrick Park Estate records.

1.1.2 **Background:** the Escrick decoy pond, was a trap for ducks, and had four pipes where the fowl could be herded into nets. It dates to c 1830 and was in use until 1860; in its hey day as much as 2000 ducks were trapped in a season. The characteristic shape of the decoy pond, with four funnels (pipes), is still evident, and there are still original fittings extant.

#### 1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

1.2.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA), which is an educational charity under the guidance of a board of trustees, has over 30 years of experience in professional archaeology, and can provide a professional and cost-effective service. We are the largest independent employer of archaeologists in the country (we currently have more than 200 members of staff), and can thus deploy considerable resources with extensive experience to any archaeological project. We have offices in Lancaster and Oxford, trading as Oxford Archaeology North (OA North), and Oxford Archaeology (OA) respectively, enabling us to provide a truly nationwide service. OA is an Institute of Field Archaeologists Registered Organisation (No 17). All work on the project will be undertaken in accordance with relevant professional standards, including:

- IFA's *Code of Conduct*, (1999); *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*, (1999); *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*, (1999); *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, (1999).
- English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, 1991.
- *The European Association of Archaeologists Principles of Conduct for Archaeologists Involved in Contract Archaeological Work* (1998).

1.2.2 OA North has undertaken a large number of upland landscape surveys for a variety of clients (both private and national agencies such as English Heritage and Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHM(E)) and employs a qualified surveyor (James Quartermaine, BA, DipSurv, MIFA) who has many years (since 1984 in the region) experience of the identification and survey of upland landscapes, having worked closely with the RCHM(E) and the Lake District National Park Authority on a large number of projects.

1.2.4 Since 1982 OA North has been undertaking extensive upland landscape surveys throughout Northern England. Surveys include the Lake District National Park Survey, the Torver Common surveys (Lake District), Haweswater and Thirlmere estate surveys (Lake District), 200sqkm of the Nidderdale AONB (for NYCC), most of the Forest of Bowland AONB (Lancashire), most of the Arnsdale / Silverdale AONB, and a multitude of smaller landscape projects which include the Otterburn Range surveys in the Lake District National Park.

1.2.5 Recently OA North has undertaken a major programme of upland identification survey across the uplands of North Wales, on behalf of the Royal Commission of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW). This has entailed the survey of 250 sqkm of unenclosed upland, and has recorded over 3,500 monuments.

1.2.6 OA North has undertaken numerous upland survey projects for the National Trust, which includes the survey and excavation of the Langdale Axe Factories, the Lyme Park landscape survey (Cheshire), St Catherine's Estate survey (Windermere), Ennerdale Landscape Survey, Addleborough (Wensleydale), Rectory Woods survey (Heysham), a survey around Stickle

Tarn, Great Langdale, the Borrowdale Landscape Survey, and the North York Coast Survey (a survey of NT coastal properties on the coast of the North York Moor).

- 1.2.7 To date OA North has undertaken archaeological field surveys of over 850sqkm of upland landscapes and has recorded over 25,000 field monuments. OA North can justifiably claim to be one of the foremost specialists in the field of upland / moorland landscape recording.
- 1.2.8 OA North has previously undertaken a survey of the western part of Skipwith Common on behalf of Natural England and Escrick Park Estate, and is about to undertake a survey of the Skipwith Back Common.
- 1.2.9 **Community Involvement:** OA North has considerable experience of working with local communities and amateur groups on landscape projects. In particular OA North has been involved in four Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) projects, which are projects sponsored by the Countryside Commission, and funded by the Lottery, and which entail considerable community involvement. The first is an archaeological and historical survey of Lathom Park, in conjunction with the Lathom Trust and involved training of members of the community to undertake documentary and building surveys. OA North supervised the work and edited the final reports.
- 1.2.10 The second project is an excavation and survey of a complex enclosed settlement at Ingleton in conjunction with the Ingleborough Archaeology Group, and entailed training and supervision to complete an intensive investigation of a rural Roman settlement site. The work was undertaken by the local group and OA North undertook specialist tasks, such as palaeoenvironmental work, as well as the supervision of all stages of the investigation.
- 1.2.11 The third project is a survey of St Catherine's Park, funded by LHI, but undertaken on behalf of the National Trust and entailed the training and supervision of a group of local volunteers in the techniques of landscape survey and documentary study (OA North 2005). The fourth project entailed working with the Eskdale Local History Society to survey Muncaster Fell in West Cumbria. OA North has worked closely with the friends of Skipwith Common as part of the survey of the western parts of Skipwith Common.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The primary purpose of the project is to inform future management decisions with regard to conservation matters relating to the archaeological and historical content of the decoy pond. The primary objectives of the project are as follows:
- to produce an archaeological and historical survey;
  - to provide training to the friends of Skipwith Common in archaeological survey recording
  - to research previous decoy pond reconstructions and make recommendations for a working reconstruction of the decoy pond prescriptions.
- 2.2 The following programme has been designed to provide an accurate archaeological survey of the Escrick decoy ponds, set within their broader landscape context.

## 3. METHODS STATEMENT

- 3.1 The following work programme is submitted in line with the objectives of the archaeological work summarised above. It is divided into three elements, initial desk based research (including aerial photography), archaeological field survey, feasibility study for reconstruction, and reporting.

### 3.2 INITIAL DESK-BASED RESEARCH

- 3.2.1 A limited search of documentary records will be undertaken sufficient to inform the proposed survey. The study will entail interrogations of the Historic Environment Record (HER) data held by North Yorkshire County Council, the National Mapping Record and records held by Natural England. The Ordnance Survey First Edition 6" Mapping will also be acquired digitally from the North Yorkshire Council Record Office, as well as any estate plans available. It is anticipated that a search will be made of the tithe maps. A search will be made of archive material and particularly of Escrick estate records that are held at Hull University.

- 3.2.2 **Aerial Photography:** it is anticipated that aerial photography will not significantly inform the study because of the level of tree cover over the site. However, there is a possibility that earlier photographs may show the site at a time when there was a reduced level of tree cover and therefore may be of value. Aerial photographic collections to be consulted will include obliques and verticals held by the NMR in Swindon, and photographs held by the North Yorks HER.
- 3.2.3 Scanned historic mapping will be superimposed onto an OS base, which will provide an important assessment of the locations and character of the features, and will show how the site has changed over time.

### 3.3 FIELD SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- 3.3.1 The survey will be undertaken as an English Heritage level 3 survey for the main Escrick decoy pond and a level 2 survey for a further decayed decoy pond at SE 636426. In addition the areas within the copse around each of the decoy ponds will be searched for additional features. It is proposed to undertake an archaeological survey of the area looking for archaeological features, earthworks and elements related or unrelated to the decoy ponds. The survey will involve four elements: Reconnaissance, Mapping, Description and Photography.
- 3.3.2 **Reconnaissance:** the reconnaissance will consist of close field walking, varying from 10m to 20m line intervals dependent on visibility and safety considerations. The survey will aim to identify, locate and record archaeological sites and features within the environs of the two ponds. Any features identified will be incorporated into the base survey. The survey will aim to identify, locate and record all designed elements of the landscape. All sites identified from the HER/NMR and also the OS first edition maps will be investigated.
- 3.3.3 **Survey Mapping:** it is proposed that a detailed topographic survey of the two ponds be undertaken. Because of tree cover, it will not be possible to do this using GPS techniques, so it is proposed to undertake a total station survey of the sites and the wider area, which will use control located by differential GPS. The total station survey will create an accurate ground plan, which will show all historic features, and the surrounding topography.
- 3.3.4 **Survey Control:** survey control will be established over the site by closed traverse and internally will be accurate to +/- 15mm. It is proposed that the control network be located onto the Ordnance Survey National Grid by the use of Differential Global Positioning Survey (GPS), which will locate to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m.
- 3.3.5 **Detail Survey:** the total station survey will be generated by EDM tacheometry using a total station linked to a pen computer running TheoLT software. The digital data is transferred onto the pen computer for manipulation and transfer to other digital or hard mediums. The survey data will be accurate to +/- 0.01m. The topographic survey will record all structural components and the data will be transferred into CAD and paper plots will be produced for completion by hand survey. The final drawings will be generated within a CAD system, and can be provided in an appropriate format for incorporation within a GIS system.
- 3.3.6 **Profiles:** in accordance with the requirements of the Level 3 survey, it is proposed to undertake a profile survey across the decoy pond, as far as can be achieved with conventional terrestrial access. In practice this means that profiles will be extended across one or more of the pipes, and the points will be obtained within the pond by using a prism on a detail pole to obtain the depths beneath the water.
- 3.3.7 **Site Description and Assessment:** descriptions of the archaeological features will be collated and will be guided by a proforma to ensure uniformity and consistency of input. Each category of significance will be given high, medium or low scores in the field. The description will incorporate a provisional interpretation of the function and purpose of a site, where possible, and will provide a provisional interpretation of the site's chronology where possible.
- 3.3.8 **Photographic Survey:** a photographic archive will be generated in the course of the field project, comprising landscape and detailed photography. Detailed photographs will be taken of all sites using a scale bar. All photography will be recorded on photographic pro-forma sheets which will show the subject, orientation and date. The photography will be primarily undertaken using a conventional 35mm camera with Black and White (HP4) film which will

be maintained to archival standards. In addition a digital camera with 8 megapixel resolution will be used.

### 3.4 PROJECT ARCHIVE

3.4.1 **Archive:** the results of the fieldwork will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format, both as a printed document and digitally.

3.4.2 **Digital Presentation:** the digital data will be collated in AutoCAD, and will combine the survey data with Ordnance Survey base mapping as well geo-referenced historic mapping. This powerful system provides full integration with all major GIS and CAD software packages. The database will be compiled in Access 97 format, as this provides good backwards and forwards compatibility with other versions of the software.

3.4.3 **Site Gazetteer:** the site descriptions and characterisations input in the field to the site PDA will be processed and combined with the records from the North Yorkshire HER. Once the digital gazetteer has been collated and edited, it will be output as an Access Report and input directly into a Microsoft Word format. This data will then be formatted and topped and tailed within word to produce the gazetteer volume for the survey project.

3.4.4 **Photographic Presentation:** the primary access database will have fields defining the photograph number, type and orientation against the individual site. This will then be output as a database report, in order of photograph number, showing the site number, NGR, orientation and photo type. This will then be output as a word file to form the photographic catalogue.

### 3.5 FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR RECONSTRUCTION

3.5.1 Research will be undertaken into other reconstructions of decoy ponds, elsewhere in the UK. This would entail a documentary search, but also selected site visits. Following this research a proposal for a corresponding reconstruction will be submitted for Escrick. The emphasis on the reconstruction will be functionality and most importantly conservation, and to a lesser extent authenticity. It is important that the existing earthwork features are not damaged or impacted on by the construction of the light weight superstructure on top. The proposed reconstruction should be as vandal proof as possible, use locally sourced materials, and would entail the use of all four pipes. There will need to be a mechanism for enabling a water supply to the pond.

### 3.6 REPORTING

3.6.1 The report will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above, and will include a full index of archaeological features identified in the course of the project. The reports will consist of an acknowledgements statement, lists of contents, summary, introduction summarising the brief and project design and any agreed departures from them. The report will identify the significance of the archaeological and architectural evidence and will include the following:

- An historical background of the sites, examining its origins and development
- Description of the topographic context
- Results of the archaeological survey, presented in conjunction with the survey mapping and documentary data, incorporating descriptions, interpretations and dating (where possible) of the individual features.
- An interpretative account of the development of the designed landscape from its inception to the present. The report will highlight those elements of the original design that have either been lost or severely degraded, and those that are at risk of further deterioration.
- An integrated discussion of the works within a historical context.
- A complete bibliography of sources from which the data has been derived, and a list of further sources identified during the programme of work.

- An appendix gazetteer of sites and designed elements which will be based directly upon the project database.
  - An outline of the results of the research into the reconstruction feasibility and recommendations for the proposed reconstruction.
- 3.6.2 The report will incorporate appropriate illustrations, including copies of the site plans, landscape survey mapping, all reduced to an appropriate scale. The site mapping will be based upon the CAD base. These will include the following:
- Site Location Map
  - Site Plans of both decoy ponds
  - Profiles across the pipes of the eastern decoy pond
  - Plans of the site incorporating historic illustrations
  - Photographs of the site and aerial photographs if pertinent
- 3.6.3 **Editing and submission:** the report will be subject to the OA North's stringent editing procedure and two bound and one unbound copies of the report will be submitted to Natural England, and one to the North Yorkshire HER. In addition to the paper copies of the report digital copies of the report and drawings will be submitted in PDF format. The final drawings will be in ArcView and/or AutoCAD 2004 formats.
- 3.6.4 *The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database project Online Access to index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project.*
- 3.6.5 Primary archival material, such as negatives and historical mapping will be submitted to the appropriate museum.

### **3.7 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- 3.7.1 It is proposed that the survey programme incorporate a training element for members of the Friends of Skipwith Common, in the course of the field survey. Two training events will be established in the course of the field work, and would entail training in survey techniques to level 3 standard. The members of the group will be taught how to use the total station, site recognition skills particularly in woodland habitats, archaeological photography and general survey skills. They will also be taught how to draw up the sites from the primary survey data.

### **3.8 CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 3.8.1 The report is designed as a document for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such; it is not suitable for publication as an academic report, or otherwise, without amendment or revision. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project brief and project design, or for any other explicit purpose, can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

## **4. OTHER MATTERS**

### **4.1 ACCESS**

- 4.1.1 It is assumed that OA North will have unrestricted pedestrian access to the study area for the duration of the survey, and that access will be afforded to OA North by Escrick Estate.

### **4.2 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 4.2.1 Full regard will, of course, be given to all constraints (services) during the survey, as well as to all Health and Safety considerations. The OA North Health and Safety Statement conforms to all the provisions of the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Unit Managers) Health and Safety manual, as well as the OA Health and Safety Statement. Risk assessments are undertaken as a matter of course for all projects, and will anticipate the potential hazards arising from the project.

### **4.3 INSURANCE**

4.3.1 The insurance in respect of claims for personal injury to or the death of any person under a contract of service with the Unit and arising in the course of such person's employment shall comply with the employers' liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 and any statutory orders made there under. For all other claims to cover the liability of OA North in respect of personal injury or damage to property by negligence of OA North or any of its employees there applies the insurance cover of £10m for any one occurrence or series of occurrences arising out of one event.

#### **4.4 WORKING HOURS**

4.4.1 Survey works will be undertaken on the basis of a five day week, within daylight hours only.

#### **4.5 PROJECT MONITORING**

4.5.1 Monitoring meetings will be established with the Natural England at the outset of the project. OA North will inform the client of all significant developments, and any potential departures from the agreed programme will be discussed and agreed with them prior to implementation.

### **5. WORK TIMETABLE**

5.1 The phases of work will comprise:

#### **5.1.1 Desk Based Research**

A 5 day period is required to collate all the available data.

#### **5.1.2 Field Survey**

6 days will be required for the field survey

#### **5.1.3 Feasibility Study on reconstruction options**

15 days would be required to complete this element.

#### **5.1.3 Archive and Reporting**

15 days would be required to complete this element.

5.1.4 The project can be undertaken at short notice, subject to the requirements of the client.

### **6. OUTLINE RESOURCES**

#### **6.1 STAFFING**

6.1.1 The project will be under the management of **Jamie Quartermaine BA DipSurv** (OA North Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed. He will monitor the progress of the project ensuring adherence to all agreed programmes and timetables. He will also provide technical back-up, advice, and will have editorial control over the compilation of the full report. He has many years experience of surveying upland landscapes, particularly in the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks. Jamie will provide a post-survey assessment of the results in conjunction with the project director.

6.1.2 The survey would be directed by **Chris Wild, BSc**. Chris has been with OA since 1993, and has undertaken varied and wide-ranging projects. Since 1998 he has been the senior fieldwork buildings archaeologist and surveyor within LUAU/OA North. This role has including a variety of levels of recording and instrument survey work, with extensive experience of Total Station survey, Reflectorless Total Station survey using the TheoLT AutoCAD interface, and GPS survey, and the manipulation of this data to produce report quality drawings via three-dimensional CAD packages. He is competent with many types of photographic recording and regularly implements in-house training on rectified photography and the use of medium format cameras, as well as training in instrument survey and building recording techniques.

6.1.4 Chris has directed projects on a wide range of building and landscape surveys, including medieval castles and farm complexes, early-post medieval housing, and vernacular, industrial, domestic and military structures from the eighteenth century to the present date. Major projects that Chris has undertaken include major building and/or earthwork surveys at Lancaster Castle; Kendal Castle; Bew Castle, Cumbria; Wigmore Castle, Herefordshire; Auchindrain Historic Township, Argyll; Lyme Park, Cheshire; Nenthead Lead Mines, Cumbria; Pilkington's Glass Works, St Helens; Flint Glass Works, Manchester.

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**APPENDIX 2: MOOR HEAD DUCK DECOY POND GAZETTEER**


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**Site Number** 01  
**Site Name** Duck Decoy Pond  
**NGR** 464110 441765  
**Ref no** NMR 1317228  
**Site Type** Duck decoy pond  
**Period** Nineteenth century  
**Source** NMR; Map regression; survey  
**Description** The pond is a four-sided rhomboid shape, with a pipe tunnel in each corner, that was used to catch ducks. The south-east and north-east arms have metal hoops across part of their course, the result of an attempt to reinstate them. The original, metal hoops are gone but fragments can be found in piles of clearance material that lie around the pond. The sides of the pond are steep and very regular. Mature trees are growing around the pond and within the woodland, which bears evidence of its former use as agricultural land and parkland.  
The NMR records that there are cropmarks of several wide ditches leading from the area of the pond to the north. They are assumed to be drainage ditches associated with the supply of water to the pond, although some may represent boundaries.

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**Site Number** 02  
**Site Name** Ridge and Furrow  
**NGR** 464127 441827  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Ridge and furrow  
**Period** Unknown - medieval/post-medieval  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** Broad ridge and furrow, 6m wide, with a maximum height of the ridges of 0.1m to 0.2m. It comprises a small area in the north-east of the wood aligned south-east/north-west, but was indistinct at the time of the survey due to very heavy leaf cover. Ridge and furrow, on a similar alignment, is evident from aerial photography outside the wood. There is a presumption that these are linked and predate the wood and parkland.

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**Site Number** 03  
**Site Name** Clearance mound  
**NGR** 464149 441792  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A small mound of earth and cut wood, possibly the result of clearance of a pipe tunnel of the pond. The dump is sub-ovoid in shape, measuring 4m by 4m by 0.75m high.

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**Site Number** 04  
**Site Name** Clearance mound  
**NGR** 464156 441791  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A small sub-ovoid mound from the clearance of a tunnel, comprising earth and wood, and measuring 4m by 4m by 1m high.

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**Site Number** 05  
**Site Name** Clearance mound  
**NGR** 464145 441760

**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A large dump of material from the dredge of the pond, measuring up to 2m in height. The mound is piled around a large, mature, possible oak, tree; alder is also established on it.

**Site Number** **06**  
**Site Name** **North-eastern side of wood**  
**NGR** 464179 441816  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Boundary  
**Period** Nineteenth century  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** The eastern edge of the wood comprises a line of trees, beyond which was a formerly cleared area, c 5m wide, which is now overgrown with brambles. This formerly served as a track around the top of the wood. A ditch surrounds the outer edge of the track, which has a line of possible lime trees on its west side, and the modern road on its east side. This east side of the wood has a very straight edge.

**Site Number** **07**  
**Site Name** **Decoy Pond hide**  
**NGR** 464148 441729  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Hide/hut  
**Period** Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** The current wooden pond hide, measuring 2m high by 1.75m wide.

**Site Number** **08**  
**Site Name** **Possible hut base**  
**NGR** 464150 441718  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Possible hut base  
**Period** Nineteenth/twentieth century  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A rectangular depression 10m to the south of the hide (Site **07**); it measures 4m wide by 6m long by 0.5m deep at south end. There is no evidence of any bricks to suggest a building, but the shape is that of a hut base.

**Site Number** **09**  
**Site Name** **South-eastern side of wood**  
**NGR** 464170 441699  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Boundary  
**Period** Nineteenth century  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** The edge of the wood, comprising a line of trees and heavy growth of bramble on the field side, with a narrow strip (c 1m) of unploughed land, between it and the ploughed field.

**Site Number** **10**  
**Site Name** **South side of field**  
**NGR** 464133 441664  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Boundary  
**Period** Nineteenth century  
**Source** Survey

**Description** The south edge of a field. It comprises a line of trees and heavy growth of bramble on the field side, with a narrow strip (c 1m) of unploughed land, between it and the ploughed field.

**Site Number** 11  
**Site Name** Clearance mound  
**NGR** 464121 441684  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A mound of dumped material from pipe clearance, c 1.75m high, comprising wood and earth.

**Site Number** 12  
**Site Name** Clearance mound  
**NGR** 464126 441705  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A mound of dumped material c 1.5m high, comprising wood and earth. It was covered in both nettles and seedlings at the time of the survey.

**Site Number** 13  
**Site Name** Clearance dump  
**NGR** 464111 441726  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A large mound of dumped material, 2.25m high, at the edge of the pond; it is similar to Sites 05 and 22. Large amounts of what could be knotweed were growing at its front by the pond edge at the time of the survey.

**Site Number** 14  
**Site Name** Hollow  
**NGR** 464097 441701  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Depression/ hollow  
**Period** Unknown - ?post-medieval  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A depression / hollow that is much overgrown with alder/scrub but has some large mature trees around the edges. It is very overgrown towards the field edge, and contains large fallen trees. It is clear, however, that it did extend to, and respect, field boundary (Site 15). The edges of this depression are indistinct in places but are similar to other features, and possibly formed part of a design to the wood when it was parkland. Alternatively the hollow may be the remains of a former pond.

**Site Number** 15  
**Site Name** Boundary Bank  
**NGR** 464074 441698  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Boundary bank  
**Period** Unknown - ?post-medieval  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A boundary bank with a line of mature trees along its course. At the field end there are stones, medium sized 300mm by 300mm by 200mm and 200 mm by 200 mm by 200mm being typical. This

is an old earth and stone boundary bank. It is clearly long established as some of the trees have great age. The bank is cut by the south-west arm of the pond.

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**Site Number** 16  
**Site Name** Brick Structure  
**NGR** 464081 441719  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Brick structure  
**Period** Nineteenth/twentieth century  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** The remains of a brick structure. A small section of wall remains, 8 courses high by 8 bricks long by 3 bricks wide. There are roofing tiles and ridge tiles in the debris. The walls have collapsed in and out of the structure. The bricks are standard produced and cemented together, and typically measured 250mm long by 120mm wide by 80mm deep.

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**Site Number** 17  
**Site Name** Clearance mound  
**NGR** 464086 441731  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A mound of dumped material consisting of earth and chopped wood, possibly from the clearance of a pipe.

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**Site Number** 18  
**Site Name** Spoil Heap  
**NGR** 464078 441726  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Spoil heap  
**Period** Nineteenth/twentieth century  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A mound of clearance material, comprising a mixture of earth and wood with three whole and three half bricks in it. These were different to the bricks in Site 16, which were more recent. The bricks in Site 18 are 230mm long by 120mm wide and 55mm deep, one was slightly curved, probably as the result of a firing misshape, but was still used.

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**Site Number** 19  
**Site Name** Spoil Heap  
**NGR** 464082 441730  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Spoil heap  
**Period** Nineteenth/twentieth century  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A small mound of dumped material that is a mixture of earth and wood with some broken bricks in it. As with Site 18, this appears to be a well established dump, and could relate to the vanished structure shown in this locality on OS maps. A tree throw by mound 17 has a type of hollow brick pipe in it.

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**Site Number** 20  
**Site Name** South-western boundary of wood  
**NGR** 464017 441749  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Boundary  
**Period** Nineteenth century  
**Source** Survey

**Description** The boundary of the wood by the field: at this point it is lined with large mature pine trees. These eventually connect with boundary **15**, although Site **15** is clearly of an earlier phase than Site **20**, Site **15** being a pre-pond phase and Site **20** is highly likely to be connected with the development of the decoy pond. It is possible that Site **20** was laid out to replace Site **21**, the earlier boundary to its east, through which the pond was cut.

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**Site Number** 21  
**Site Name** **Boundary Bank**  
**NGR** 464032 441769  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Boundary bank  
**Period** Unknown - ?post-medieval  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A boundary bank that is a continuation of Site **15**. The bank includes mature trees and has an old yew to one side of it. The bank is cut by a pipe from the pond, indicating that it pre-dates the pond. The cutting of this pipe may have resulted in the extension of the wood to the line of trees in Site **20**.

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**Site Number** 22  
**Site Name** **Clearance mound**  
**NGR** 464067 441773  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A mound of dumped material, on the north side of the south-west pipe; it is *c* 1m high, and embedded in it are metal bands from old pipe hoops.

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**Site Number** 23  
**Site Name** **Clearance mound**  
**NGR** 464061 441752  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A dumped mound comprising a mix of earth and chopped wood, from the clearance of a pipe. There was no evidence of metal band remains within this dump, which is possibly the result of the clearance of undergrowth around the south-west pipe.

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**Site Number** 24  
**Site Name** **Possible holloway**  
**NGR** 464035 441796  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Hollow/depression  
**Period** Unknown - ?post-medieval  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A hollow or depression that has alder scrub growing in its base along with more mature trees. Boundary bank **21** is one side of the hollow and on the other side are mature trees. The feature respected the boundary bank and could be a feature that was part of the wood when it was a park. It is similar to Site **14** in this respect and the two features may be formerly connected. There is an entrance of sorts from the adjoining field with brambles cleared and evidence of a rudimentary path entering the wood.

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**Site Number** 25  
**Site Name** **Entrance to north-western area of wood**  
**NGR** 464017 881821  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Entrance - clearing

**Period** Nineteenth century  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** The entrance to the wood (see also Site 24). To the east of the entrance is a ditch that runs alongside the wood but there is just a bank overgrown with bramble to the west.

**Site Number** 26  
**Site Name** Hollow  
**NGR** 464040 441835  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Hollow/depression  
**Period** Unknown - ?post-medieval  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A hollow depression that is similar to Sites 24 and 14. Mature trees grow around the hollow, which has alder scrub in it. The boundary between the wood and field at this point is a ditch with water in it. To the east and west the boundary bank is higher than the point where the hollow adjoins the field and this may indicate that the hollow was once connected with the field, and therefore the ditch is a later cut. The hollow could be part of the wood's design when it was parkland. It is possible that the three hollows (Sites 26, 24 and 14). There are several trees in the north-east corner of the hollow that exhibit signs of coppicing and pollarding, demonstrating evidence of woodland management.

**Site Number** 27  
**Site Name** Bank  
**NGR** 464044 441841  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Bank  
**Period** Nineteenth century  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** The boundary where the wood meets the ditch has a spur of land jutting into the wood. It appears to connect with the wood side bank that is lower at this point than it is to the east and west.

**Site Number** 28  
**Site Name** Possible Clearance Mound  
**NGR** 464061 441817  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A small mound that could be clearance material from the pond pipe but appears to be older than Site 29. This mound is more firmly packed and is moss covered. It is sub-ovoid and c1m high. Its proximity to the cleared pipe indicates that it is probably derived from pipe clearance.

**Site Number** 29  
**Site Name** Possible Clearance Mound  
**NGR** 464063 441822  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A small mound of dumped material, possibly from clearance of the immediate pipe. It is c 0.8m high and sub-ovoid in shape.

**Site Number** 30  
**Site Name** Boundary Bank  
**NGR** 464069 441842  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Bank

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**Period** Unknown - ?post-medieval  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A boundary bank which is very similar to Sites **15** and **21**. It has large mature trees growing along it. The boundary extends from the edge of the wood towards the pond which probably cut it. The boundary becomes the east side of feature **26** and was probably connected with it.

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**Site Number** **31**  
**Site Name** **Clearance Mound**  
**NGR** 464094 441803  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A mound that is a dumped deposit of clearance material from the pipe or pond. It is sub-ovoid in shape and 1.5m high, and consists of soil and cut wood.

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**Site Number** **32**  
**Site Name** **Clearance Mound**  
**NGR** 464109 441800  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Twentieth century/Modern  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** A mound, similar to Site **31**, but larger and of irregular shape and was formed of a number of dumps. The two mounds disrupt a section of pine plantation from the edge of the pond and this was probably planted as a landscape feature.

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**Site Number** **33**  
**Site Name** **Boundary**  
**NGR** 464103 441862  
**Ref no** -  
**Site Type** Dump  
**Period** Nineteenth century  
**Source** Survey  
**Description** This is a boundary between the wood and the field, comprising a steep sided v-shaped ditch which has water in the base. The woodside bank is lined with scrub and there are the remains of a wooden post and wire fence along the top of the wood side bank. In the ditch is a water outlet pipe that has a concrete piece around its mouth with 'A W ROOM ESCRICK' on it. This is perhaps a piece of recycled WWII material.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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### FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2a: Extract from the OS 6":1 mile map, 1855, showing the northern pond

Figure 2b: Extract from the OS 6":1 mile map, 1855, showing the Moor Head pond

Figure 3a: Extract from the OS 6":1 mile map, 1910, showing the northern pond

Figure 3b: Extract from the OS 6":1 mile map, 1910, showing the Moor Head pond

Figure 4a: Extract from the OS 25":1 mile map, 1910, showing the northern pond

Figure 4b: Extract from the OS 25":1 mile map, 1910, showing the Moor Head pond

Figure 5: Detailed survey of Moor Head pond, showing gazetteer sites

Figure 6: Survey of the northern pond

### PLATES

Plate 1: A decoy pipe entrance (after Payne-Gallwey 1886, 179, accessed via <http://www.decoymans.co.uk/>)

Plate 2: A decoy pipe (after Payne-Gallwey 1886, 179, accessed via <http://www.decoymans.co.uk/>)

Plate 3: A decoyman working a pipe (after Payne-Gallwey 1886, 179, accessed via <http://www.decoymans.co.uk/>)

Plate 4: Escrick *c* 1660 (the northern pond would later be located in the approximate western area of Town Carr/Mill Field, and Moor Head Decoy in Thwaite Field). From a map in the Escrick Park Estate Office (after Allison 1976)

Plate 5: Moor Head Pond, 1886 (after Payne-Gallwey 1886, 179, accessed via <http://www.decoymans.co.uk/>)

Plate 6: Duck decoy pond at Escrick *c* 1900 (UHA DDFA3 9/72)

Plate 7: Site **15**, boundary bank, looking north-west

Plate 8: Site **30**, boundary bank, looking west

Plate 9: Site **14**, hollow, looking south-west

Plate 10: Site **33**, boundary, looking west

Plate 11: Site **06**, north-eastern side of wood, looking north-west

Plate 12: Site **09**, south-eastern side of wood, looking north

Plate 13: Site **10**, south side of wood, looking west

Plate 14: Site **10**, south side of wood, looking north

Plate 15: Site **10**, south side of wood, looking north-west

Plate 16: Site **20**, south-west boundary of wood, looking south-east

Plate 17: Site **01**, decoy pond, looking north-west

- Plate 18: Site **01**, north-west pipe, looking south
- Plate 19: Site **01**, north-east pipe, looking south-west
- Plate 20: Site **01**, north-east pipe, looking north-east
- Plate 21: Site **01**, south-east pipe, looking south-east
- Plate 22: Site **01**, south-east pipe, looking north
- Plate 23: Site **01**, south-west pipe, looking west
- Plate 24: Site **01**, south-west pipe, looking east
- Plate 25: Site **18**, spoil heap, looking east-north-east
- Plate 26: Site **16**, brick structure, looking east-north-east
- Plate 27: Site **07**, decoy pond hide, looking east
- Plate 28: Site **12**, clearance mound, looking south-west
- Plate 29: Site **13**, clearance mound, looking south-east
- Plate 30: Site **22**, clearance mound, looking south-east
- Plate 31: Site **31**, clearance mound, looking north
- Plate 32: Site **32**, clearance mound, looking north
- Plate 33: General view of the setting of the northern decoy pond, looking north-east
- Plate 34: View of the eastern extent of the northern decoy pond, looking north-west
- Plate 35: View of the northern decoy pond, looking north-west
- Plate 36: The north corner of the northern decoy pond, looking south-east
- Plate 37: The westernmost of the two pipes on the north-east side of the northern decoy pond, looking south-west
- Plate 38: Current aerial view of Slimbridge, with the crab-shaped pond approximately central (from Google Earth)
- Plate 39: The reconstructed duck decoy pond at Slimbridge
- Plate 40: Slimbridge, showing the eastern pipes (under net) of the duck decoy pond, and the river Severn in the background
- Plate 41: Slimbridge duck decoy, screens at a pipe entrance
- Plate 42: Slimbridge duck decoy, the end of a pipe
- Plate 43: Slimbridge terminal of net cage



Plate 7: Site **15**, boundary bank, looking north-west



Plate 8: Site **30**, boundary bank, looking west



Plate 9: Site **14**, hollow, looking south-west



Plate 10: Site **33**, boundary, looking west



Plate 11: Site **06**, north-eastern side of wood, looking north-west



Plate 12: Site **09**, south-eastern side of wood, looking north



Plate 13: Site **10**, south side of wood, looking west



Plate 14: Site **10**, south side of wood, looking north



Plate 15: Site **10**, south side of wood, looking north-west



Plate 16: Site **20**, south-west boundary of wood, looking south-east



Plate 17: Site **01**, decoy pond, looking north-west



Plate 18: Site **01**, north-west pipe, looking south



Plate 19: Site **01**, north-east pipe, looking south-west



Plate 20: Site **01**, north-east pipe, looking north-east



Plate 21: Site **01**, south-east pipe, looking south-east



Plate 22: Site **01**, south-east pipe, looking north



Plate 23: Site **01**, south-west pipe, looking west



Plate 24: Site **01**, south-west pipe, looking east



Plate 25: Site **18**, spoil heap, looking east-north-east



Plate 26: Site **16**, brick structure, looking east-north-east



Plate 27: Site **07**, decoy pond hide, looking east



Plate 28: Site **12**, clearance mound, looking south-west



Plate 29: Site **13**, clearance mound, looking south-east



Plate 30: Site **22**, clearance mound, looking south-east



Plate 31: Site **31**, clearance mound, looking north



Plate 32: Site **32**, clearance mound, looking north



Plate 33: General view of the setting of the northern decoy pond, looking north-east



Plate 34: View of the eastern extent of the northern decoy pond, looking north-west



Plate 35: View of the northern decoy pond, looking north-west



Plate 36: The north corner of the northern decoy pond, looking south-east



Plate 37: The westernmost of the two pipes on the north-east side of the northern decoy pond, looking south-west



Plate 38: Current aerial view of Slimbridge, with the crab-shaped pond approximately central (from Google Earth)



Plate 39: The reconstructed duck decoy pond at Slimbridge



Plate 40: Slimbridge, showing the eastern pipes (under net) of the duck decoy pond, and the river Severn in the background



Plate 41: Slimbridge duck decoy, screens at a pipe entrance



Plate 42: Slimbridge duck decoy, the end of a pipe



Plate 43: Slimbridge terminal of net cage