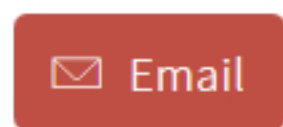


Howardian Hills National Mapping Programme project



The Howardian Hills were designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1987. The requirement for a robust Management Plan provided the stimulus for the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCMHE) to undertake an aerial survey to National Mapping Programme standards (NMP). The results of this work by the RCHME Aerial Survey team helped to highlight the hidden archaeological wealth of this beautiful landscape.



Cropmarks of a multiple ditched boundary at Barton le Street photographed on 23-AUG-1990 (NMR 12029/22) © Crown copyright. HE

The landscape

The range of low hills known as the Howardian Hills are quite well defined geographically. They sit between the higher ground of the North York Moors to the north and the Yorkshire Wolds to the south. The Howardian Hills are made up of undulating Jurassic Limestone and Sandstone. Today the area is largely used for arable farming, but there are extensive areas of woodland – both ancient woodland and commercial coniferous plantations. Large estates dating from the medieval period also lie within the area.



A view northwards of Castle Howard taken on 05-SEP-2012. Sitting in the Howardian Hills, the Vale of Pickering and the North York Moors can be seen in the background (NMR 28331/29) © Historic England

Reflecting the Moors and Wolds

The archaeology of the Howardian Hills has received rather less attention than the neighbouring areas of the North York Moors or the Yorkshire Wolds. However, there are similarities between the distinctive and sometimes varied features found in both.

Square barrow cemeteries were recorded – these sometimes appeared to be associated with trackways. Square barrows are a site type common on the Yorkshire Wolds.

At the barrow cemetery at Slingsby, shown in the photograph below, some of the barrows are situated between a pair of ditches and pit alignments. Their alignment with these features may suggest a relationship between them.

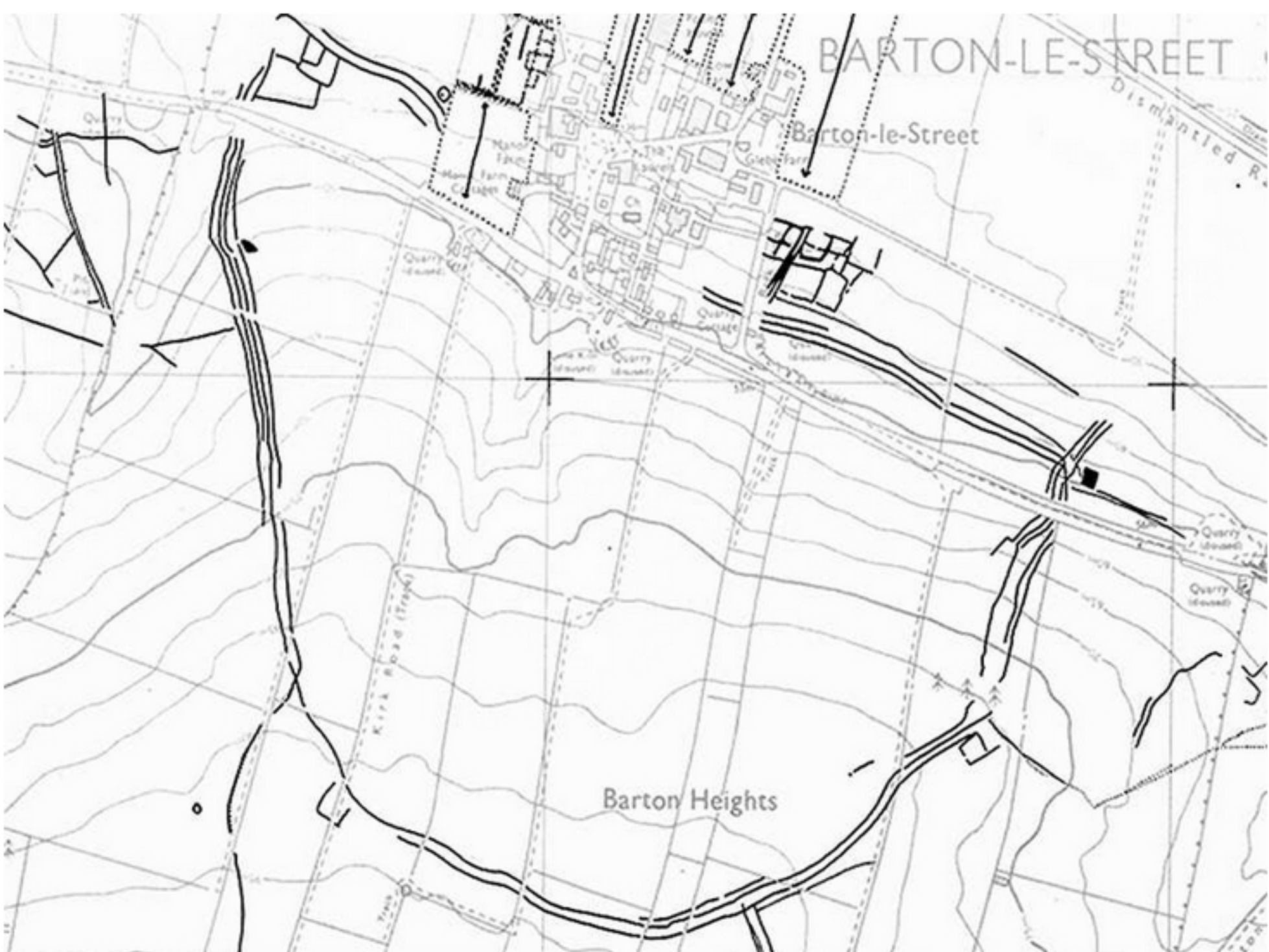


The barrow cemetery at Slingsby photographed on 07-JUN-2011 (NMR 28140/41). © Crown copyright. HE

Prehistoric land division

Cross-ridge dykes are well known on the North York Moors, seen as parallel banks and ditches. Some were recorded at the northern end of the AONB from early photographs, but these now lie in densely wooded plantations.

Extensive cropmarks of parallel ditches were recorded on the slopes either side of Barton le Street. The extract of NMP mapping below shows how these combine to form a sinuous multiple ditched boundary enclosing an area of land to the south of Barton le Street. Similar features are seen on the Yorkshire Wolds and their appearance suggests adaptation and reuse. This could have been over considerable periods of time and they possibly served different functions at different times.



NMP mapping of the prehistoric boundary systems around Barton le Street. NMP mapping © Historic England. Base map © Crown Copyright and database right 2015. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100019088.