

Near the end of Roughbitchworth Lane is a field which has a faint couple of circular features about 100 metres in diameter and this has long been thought to be Iron-age in origin. A local group was formed to investigate this and in August 2022 dug two trenches across it. The Roughbitchworth feature was found to be originally a deep ditch (~2 metres) with a number of circular walls, the outer one probably stone clad. The depth suggests that it was a substantial defensive structure. There were, unfortunately no datable finds in the bottom of the ditch which might have established when it started to be filled in, but a carved flat stone was found, which the archaeologists have suggested may be part of a gaming board typical of those used in the Iron-age/Roman period. Subsequent examination by experts from Sweden suggested that these marks were in fact, Viking Runes, maybe the name of a bored warrior on the defensive wall. Our area was part of the Dane Law as Viking artefacts have been found locally. Also, a metal detectorist found a small ingot of silver in the field nearby; the Vikings did not use coins and would carry silver articles for currency. A flint core was found in the subsoil, suggesting maybe earlier occupation. In the top layers of the archaeology were post holes and in one a datable piece of wood from the 8<sup>th</sup> century was found, showing that the site was in use then. Most of the finds were from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

In March this year Sheffield University carried out a Ground Penetrating Survey of the site. This shows the ground in 3 dimensions, when previously the geophysical survey would only show in 2-D. This illustrates possible archaeology not seen previously which we would like to investigate. We have planned that in the first two weeks in August 2025 we will further investigate these areas by excavation. We are keen to involve as many parishioners as possible to help, especially local children.

We don't know yet what purpose the feature had - whether just for domestic and keeping stock animals or as a small military encampment. An artist's impression is given below of what the site might have looked like if a small farm/homestead.

More information can be obtained from the Roughbitchworth Community Excavation Group's Facebook page.

