



# Howburn Excavations 2009

## Site Introduction

The site you are visiting/digging is a multi period one and was found by fieldwalking. Pre historic pottery has been found in this field but the main finds are lithics.

Flint, chert and pitchstone have been found, much of the local radiolarian chert dates to Mesolithic times and the Arran pitchstone is mostly Early Neolithic. Some of the flint probably dates to these times also; however, distinctive tool types which are found here are much older, dating to the Upper Palaeolithic period, possibly up to 14,000 years old. This time was just after the last Ice Age had melted away and just before a sudden cold period which saw the return of ice sheets in northern Scotland.

For the first time in Scotland certainty of evidence of these early people has been found here at Howburn, making this the earliest known site in Northern Britain. The people who camped here may have travelled across the area of the North Sea, which was dry land then. They may have hunted reindeer and elk roaming the landscape which was grassland with thinly wooded birch trees.

Our work is to retrieve as much of their flint from the plough soil as will be possible, while we hope we may find dateable features to narrow the time scale. In the process we will find other pre historic material.

The exercise is simple, we shall trowel and record objects from one metre square blocks of ground, and hopefully this will allow a better picture of how these ancient people lived here. Come and dig the dream of finding Scotland's earliest people.

The Biggar Archaeology Group hopes you enjoy your visit or digging experience.



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## Site Safety

### Map Refs

1:10,000	NT 04 SE
OS Landranger	No 72
OS Pathfinder	No 447
Site NGR	NT 082 436

The rules must be followed for your safety and enjoyment and also that of others.

Car parking **MUST** only be done at Howburn Farm; it is on the A721 and 1km NE of Elsrickle village. It is important that you follow and obey all signage to and from the site and car park. We wish everyone to enjoy their time at this dig and arrive and depart safely. The A702 road is notoriously dangerous with fast moving traffic, therefore **NO** access to the site will be allowed from the road. Parents and guardians of children are especially asked to ensure that children are closely supervised en route from the farm and to and from the site. The walk to the site through fields will take 5 – 10 minutes.

It is important that all people excavating ensure that tetanus inoculations are valid. This is **YOUR** responsibility.

Instruction by site supervisors must be followed whether digging or just visiting.

Diggers should wear appropriate clothing to suit weather conditions and gloves are strongly recommended. Kneeling pads make digging more comfortable. Bring your own food.

All tools and equipment will be provided and a toilet will be on site. A covered shelter will be on site. If in any doubt check the weather forecasts before coming.

This Project is insured for public liability by Biggar Museums, and a First Aid kit is available, please ask supervisors if required.

All persons arriving on site will be asked to sign a declaration stating they have read, understood and accept site safety and procedure instructions.