

Paula Ware's Talk to FFH on 20th January 2018

The site is situated 3kms south of York, within the parish of Fulford and consisted of a number of agricultural fields bisected by a dyke known as Germany Beck. The site lies on the southern edge of the fulford fluvio-glacial gravel terrace, that is mantled by soils of the Brown Earth series. This is one of very few areas of this soil type in the Vale of York.

In 1995, MAP was commissioned by Persimmon Homes (Yorkshire) Ltd, Robert Pilcher and Hogg the Builder to undertake an archaeological Assessment for an area of land around Germany Beck, Fulford, York. The archaeological reports were to provide the necessary information to accompany a planning application for housing. The site had been allocated for housing since the 1980's and in 1995 was still within Selby District Council Area.

The archaeological advisors to the LPA were North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit. All work was undertaken to agreed specifications. The boundary changes in 1996 meant the land came into the jurisdiction of The City of York Council

Growing up in York in the 1960's I had the privilege of attending numerous talks and events hosted by a marvelous historian called Miss Wright. She brought the history of York to life including the Battle of Fulford. So much so that in the hot summer of 1976 visitors to York taking a pleasure trip on the Ouse were greeted by girl on a tree trunk floating in the water pretending to be a Viking.

With these memories in mind I told my colleague who was undertaking the desk based assessment not to forget the battle of Fulford

The cartographic and documentary sources have allowed us to establish a chronological development of Fulford.

The twentieth century has had the most dramatic impact on the landscape altering the contours and vistas. The removal of hedges and woodland to form large arable fields.

Fulford Cemetery, a feature that has greatly altered the character of the land south of Germany Beck, was consecrated in 1915 and was accessed via a new road and bridge.

Marginal land was utilised with the insertion of a municipal tip.

In 1948 this area of Fulford saw the laying out of the recreation ground on the south bank of the Germany Beck between the cemetery and the A19. This involved dumping of soil so as to form a relatively level area of land, altering the natural contours.

The insertion of housing estates in the 20th century absorbed Fulford into the suburbs of York losing much of its rural identity. Prospect Terrace, leading westwards from Fulford Main Street was begun in 1905, and this can be seen as the first development in the village of essentially urban character. The 1940s and 1950s saw the building of the council housing on Fordlands Road, and in the late 1950's and 1960's new estates were built in the Cherrywood Crescent and Heslington Lane areas.

The construction of the A64 ring road and the up grade of the A19 also alters the perception of the landscape. The antiquity of a route, which linked the pre-Domesday settlements of Fulford, Esrick, Naburn and Riccall is not in doubt but the present A19 bears no physical resemblance to this.

The area around Germany Beck has been greatly modified by drainage engineering over the years and subjected to substantial 'improvement' by engineers in the 1970s resulting in a rather uniform watercourse. The stretch of the beck that runs eastwards from the A19 crossing is regularly cleaned out, leaving an entirely artificial dike.

Gate Fulford village itself was beginning to expand beyond its medieval boundaries by 1853, with housing development to the north of the Heslington road. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1853) illustrates changes to the agricultural landscape established by the Enclosure Award. Many of the fields to the west of the A19, at the northern-western end of the parish, were occupied by gravel pits, one of which had its own light railway leading to a staith on the Ouse. Nurseries or market gardens were established to feed York's growing population.

In 1880 York tramways company established the horse drawn tram from Castle Mills Bridge to Fulford. From 1910 to 1935 it was an electric tram but in Nov 1935 the automobile bus took over.

A bleach works was established in 1804 and used occupied by well-established Fulford family the stablers who were landholders and linen cloth makers.

Whilst the Domesday Survey demonstrates that Gate and Water Fulford both existed as separate estates in 1086, it is far from certain what form the villages took at this time. The 1759 Enclosure Award Map of Gate Fulford and Estate Maps of both Gate Fulford (1745, and Water Fulford (1767 show both settlements to consist of two rows of regular tofts (rectangular plots of land), each of which contain a farmhouse and its outbuildings. The tofts are aligned along a village street, with access to the rear via back lane.

The regular plan of both villages suggests that they were planned settlements. This is significant in that planned medieval villages are comparatively rare and are generally held to be of post-Conquest date. The consensus of opinion is that the majority of post-Conquest medieval planned villages were the result of a re-ordering of the earlier settlement pattern.

In Yorkshire the main motor for post-Conquest planned settlements was the need to re-order and rationalize the previous settlement pattern in the light of the depredations caused by William I's campaign of 1069. This was so severe that it prompted Symeon to state that "*there was no village inhabited between York and Durham*" (Stevenson ed. 1855). In the case of Gate Fulford, the 20% loss of value recorded for the estate (referred to above) may have led to the replacement of the original Anglo-Saxon settlement in the vicinity of St. Oswald's church by a new planned village situated 500m to the south-east.

Whilst a degree of caution should be exercised when using maps that were drawn many centuries after the foundation of a village, it is clear that the 1759 and 1767 maps give a wealth of clues about the history and form of both the Fulford settlements and their agricultural economy.

Gate Fulford

The 1759 Enclosure Map for Gate Fulford shows two rows of at least 15 regular crofts aligned along the village street, which also formed part of the road between York and

Selby. A back lane is shown which runs along the rear of the majority of the village properties. The termination of the back lane on the east side of the village coincides with the northern end of a regular block of at least 6 rectangular properties that appear to represent a later extension of the village onto the village green, which lay immediately south of the village. The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1853) locates the pinfold in this area. This would have been used to hold animals that strayed into open fields for which a fine was paid for their release.

One area of Open Field lay at the north end of the township on either side of the York road, which apparently divided the cultivated land into two units. The field on the west side of the road was bordered on its western side by meadowland along the Ouse. The boundaries of the eastern field were formed by the Fulford to Heslington road to the south, Low Moor to the east, and the York to Heslington road to the north.

Another possible Open Field lay immediately on the east side of the village, suggested by the parallel, curving form of its northern and southern boundaries. The western boundary of this area was formed by the back lane of the village, the southern boundary bordered the low land at the north side of Germany Beck, the eastern boundary was formed by a lane dividing the field from East Moor, and the road between Fulford and Heslington formed the northern boundary.

Fieldwalking in 1995 of part of this area that still remained as arable field recovered a spread of medieval pottery. The concentrations were greatest on the western part of this field, an area for which no details of ownership were shown on the Estate Map. The significance of this is unclear; perhaps this area had been enclosed by agreement at an earlier date or represent clearance into wasteland.

The township's valuable meadowland or Ings lay to the west of Gate Fulford village, extending alongside the Ouse to the west of the Open Field. Rough common grazing on East Moor fringed the eastern boundary of the township. East Moor was enclosed by the time of the 1745 Estate Map, but the exact date of enclosure is uncertain.

It is tempting to equate that part of Gate Fulford township that lies to the north of Germany Beck with the estate recorded by the Domesday Survey. The dimensions given, 1 league long and $\frac{1}{2}$ league wide (c. $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles x $\frac{3}{4}$ mile), approximate to the size of this land block.

Analysis of the Gate Fulford Estate Map suggests that there were a number of phases of land reclamation and improvement in the area during the medieval period. Two separate enclosure blocks, for example, are shown immediately to the south of Germany Beck. These are '*Damlands Field*' to the west and '*Abbey Crofts*' to the east. Damlands Field was mentioned in a deed of 1332 as *les Damlandes* (St Mary's Chartulary, DD88/9).

The name means "*water confined by an embankment*" as in the sense of an artificial canal or drain (Smith ed. 1937, 110). The presence of enclosures and artificial drainage indicates a regime of agricultural improvement, whilst the name '*Abbey Crofts*' is a strong indication that the Abbey was at least partly responsible for the reclamation of land in this area. A thin scatter of medieval sherds recovered during the fieldwalking of Abbey Crofts (Area I) suggests that this area was being cultivated and improved through the spreading of night-soil.

The Estate Map shows a lane separating Damlands Field and Abbey Crofts from a large enclosed area labeled '*Old Inclosure*'. This area is shown as '*New Field*' on the Enclosure Map. *Newfield* is mentioned in 1330 (DD88/9) and is probably the "*New Ridding which abuts upon Tylmire*" mentioned in 1258 (DD88/9). Further indications of land improvement during this period come from the grant of six acres of land in *Nether Intake* by John Warthill to Henry de Kepax in 1331 and a 1335 reference to *le Brekes* (DD88/9).

The Estate Map labels the lane between Damlands Field and Abbey crofts as "*lane from west to east moor*", indicating that New Field was fringed by rough common pasture on both sides. The southern end of the township remained a boggy area during the medieval period and was described as the desmesne fishery of St. Mary's Abbey in the 1447 Manorial Court Roll (YAD DD 88/1). The citizens of York were entitled to common pasture in Tilmire, which also included a turbarry for the cutting of peat for use as fuel.

Germany Beck runs in a relatively straight east-west course between Fulford East Moor and the river Ouse (Pls. 3–5). At its eastern end the beck takes a right-angled turn to run along the boundary separating Fulford East Moor from Heslington West Moor. The regularity of its course strongly suggests a man-made feature, and the documentary sources contain evidence of its likely origin.

An indenture dated 6th August 1484 between the Lord Mayor and Commonaltie of York and the Abbot and Convent of St. Mary's Abbey concerning grazing rights in Fulford states that the citizens of York should only have rights of pasturage in those fields: "*lying and being on the north side of the New Dyke... of the which Dike one end butts of the Water of the Ouse and the other end of the same Dike eastwards butts upon Fulforde Moore*" The phrase "*New Dyke*" in this context appears to be completely unambiguous; it clearly relates to a newly-created landscape feature. With reference to medieval drainage in the Vale of York in general, Sheppard states:

As the only traceable watercourse that runs between Fulford Moor and the Ouse, Germany Beck would appear to be the "New Dike" that the document refers to, and is therefore likely to have been created as part of a drainage scheme instigated by the Abbey of St. Mary's during the 15th century in order to improve agriculture in the township.

The derivation of the name 'Germany Beck' is not clear, but it is possible that it comes from a personal name. A *German de Bretgate* was mentioned 1258-70 (DD88/9 - 4019), and *Robert, nephew of German de Bretegate* in 1276 (*ibid.*). Nicholas de Brettgate is described in the Court Rolls for 1483 as "holding a toft and croft in *Fuleford* near the bridge, with a garden, meadow and arable land". This establishes the Brettgate family holding as being at the southern end of the village during the 15th century when the beck was created, and suggests how the watercourse eventually came to be known by its present name.

Further historical documents record in 1767 state to divide and alter the course of springs, streams or currents of water within any part of the said fields, ing or commons. The document later goes on to state one other public carriageway leading from the south end of Fulford aforesaid to Selby and we do order and direct that the last mentioned carriage road shall be raised and made 3 feet higher than the said road now is where the same shall benefit for the safety of travellers for the passage of water in time of flood. And one carriage bridge over the sewer across the road running into the allotment of the aforementioned Francis Barlow.

Also we do order that there should be one drain (goes on to list all the names on the map to Mark Pallisters allotment throught the bridge over the road from fulford to selby into the old drain adjoining the allotments of Thomas `Barlow and Edward Stabler into the

drain adjoining the Ings leading to the river ouse and we do order that the said R.Oates shall cleanse and scour the last mentioned drain running through the said all.

Water Fulford

The 1767 map of Water Fulford shows two rows of tofts on either side of an east-west main street. Only the northern row contained houses and buildings in 1767, the southern row having apparently been abandoned by this date. The manor house, Roos Hall, was situated at the western end of the northern row. A back lane is discernable on the southern side of the southern row, with indications of another on the northern side visible at the north-east corner of the village.

Two possible Open Fields are discernable. The first of these formed a rectangular area immediately to the south of the village, bounded by the York road to the east, Lincroft Lane to the south and the lands of Naburn township to the west. The other Open Field seems to form a roughly triangular area stretching south-westwards from the village, and bounded by the Naburn road to the east, the Ouse to the north and the valuable meadowland of the Ings to the west. Both of these areas were a mixture of arable and pasture in 1767. The location of common pasture within Water Fulford is uncertain.

The Ouse was of significance to the communications and economic life of the village in the post-medieval period, and there is no reason to doubt that this was not also true of the medieval period. At the enclosure of 1759 allotment holders were said to have rights to land goods from the river, reflected in the road called Landing Lane leading from the York road round the northern end of the village to the Ouse.

As far as land-based communications are concerned, reference has already been made to the antiquity of the A19 route, which linked the pre-Domesday settlements of Fulford, Esrick and Ricall. The route of the Roman road from York that formed the eastern boundary of Fulford township was also in used in the medieval period, as it was referred to as a "former droveway" in a document in the Yarburgh MSS archives (BIHR).

Only two features existed with any certainty in 1066, these being the Roman Road and the River Ouse. The road (Roman Road 1, RCHME 1962) is described as approaching York from the south-east, from Poole Bridge to Germany Beck, Its route is represented by the parish boundary. Visible remains have been noted on the golf course at Heslington, whilst aerial photographs have identified field systems which abuts this road.

The road formed an important landscape feature in the post-Roman landscape, as shown by its use as the boundary between Fulford and Heslington parishes. It continued in use as a thoroughfare in the post-medieval period.

The watercourse of the Ouse has been altered over the centuries by both natural processes and the insertion of locks at Naburn in the mid- 18th century.

Intensive Fieldwalking was undertaken over the arable fields. Material of a Prehistoric date appeared to be randomly distributed across the site with no apparent clustering. The finds consisted of flint tools, flint waste and two sherds of late neolithic pottery. The flint tools consisted of a variety of implements which included blades, disc and thumb nail scrapers. The flints sourced to produce these items came from; the poor quality white flint associated with glacial drift, grey flint from the Yorkshire Wolds and the high quality translucent flint of the Flamborough area.

Roman Finds were limited to thirteen sherds of pottery and distributed sparsely across the site.

The medieval finds were mainly pottery sherds dating from the 12th to the 16th century and represented by York glazed Wares, Humber Wares and Splashed Wares. The concentration of medieval pottery was in an area which had originally formed one of the open fields for the village of Fulford .

Post-Medieval activity was represented by pottery, clay pipe and glass fragments and distributed across the site. The pottery consisted of stone wares; Cistercian and Staffordshire slip wares and dated from the late 16th through to the mid 18th century.

Magnetometer Geophysical Survey by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford was undertaken on all available areas and produced evidence of north-south linear features, possible enclosures and revealed a similar pattern to the cropmarks located approx 200m to the south-east of the site. Geophysical survey did not reveal any anomalies suggestive of graves that might have been associated with a battle site.

Based on the evidence from the geophysical survey a further programme of archaeological investigation consisting of the excavation of sixty-six trenches was undertaken in 1996. The trenches to the east of the A19 were devoid of archaeological

features and revealed a natural accumulation of deposits which had been disturbed by the insertion of land drains

The Trenches located immediately to the north of Germany Beck. contained Significant Peat deposits and finds were limited to an occasional sherd of Roman pottery and a piece of flint of Mesolithic date.

Within the western area some twenty-six trenches were excavated. over the highest point on the site at c13.4m AOD; The geophysical survey had only suggested linear features in this area However, excavation revealed a far more complex pattern of features.

Whilst no features of a Neolithic or Bronze age date were revealed an extensive flint assemblage for this date was located, clearly indicating that man was utilising, if not settling the land in this area of Fulford. In Yorkshire, and across eastern and southern England generally, there is a strong coincidence between sites and finds of the Neolithic and Bronze Age and areas of Brown earth soils. The easy working qualities and good drainage of brown earth soils was attractive to the early type of economy involving agricultural and forest exploitation.

Evidence of Neolithic (4000-2000 BC) activity on the Fulford river terrace is indicated by the finding of the two flint sickle blades, leaf-shaped arrowheads and, scrapers.

Early Bronze Age (2000-1100 BC) activity in demonstrated by sherd material and a barbed and tanged arrowhead from Germany Beck.

The earliest structural activity was represented by a circular feature with an internal diameter of some 17m. and cut into the natural clay. There was no evidence for any internal features and further geophysics was unable to detect any other associated features. Dating and function of the feature was difficult to ascertain. Whilst it had obviously been truncated by the later Romano/British field system, no artefact evidence was obtained to be able to date it, other than to the prehistoric period. Initially it was thought that it may represent a Round Barrow. The dimensions of the feature were consistent with this interpretation but the lack of evidence of any grave cut was problematic.

The two elements proposed as the encircling ring ditch of a barrow did not show any of the characteristics of an open ditch that has been infilled by natural silting. Such silting would be the determining consideration for a ditch interpretation – both for a field enclosing a barrow, or a dwelling.

A sub-circular hedged enclosure, with a wide entrance facing north, would be the functional interpretation for the feature and consistent with a pastoral farming activity of broadly late Iron Age-early Romano/British date.

Subsequent open area excavations (to be discussed by Kelly) have made us reexamine our original interpretation and place the feature in the Bronze Age.

The land in the Western area of the site has been systematically divided over a considerable period of time. The poor preservation of organic material in the sandy deposits associated with the archaeological features meant that the environmental evidence was poor. Unlike the organic material from the waterlogged deposits to the immediate north of Germany Beck.

Other areas of significant archaeological deposits centred around the area bordering Germany Beck where large quantities of Roman material was located. In ditch fills no structures were located,

The Roman pottery collection had a number of features, which distinguished it from that of a typical low-level rural site. The most obvious is the widespread appearance of Dressel 20 amphora sherds, of which on a typical rural site a single sherd might be remarked upon. The assemblage contained Grey wares, some probably of local manufacture, Samian, Amphorae, Black Burnish ware copies and Calcite gritted wares which suggest a date of 125 to 200AD.

The relatively large number of Roman hobnails located in one of the trenches was interesting. Casual losses of hobnails is not unusual, but concentrations such as this tend to occur either when shoes are deliberately being placed in inhumations or when the waste from cobbling is being discarded. The latter seems to be the most likely explanation, especially as one of the iron objects is an awl. Such deposits have been more often identified on urban or military sites, rather than on rural ones.

We concluded that there was no archaeological evidence to locate the battle of fulford on the site we had investigated.

In 2001, a member of the Fulford Battlefield stated that the site we had been investigating was indeed the site of the 1066 Battle of Fulford. As new ideas and theories were being presented at this time for the study of Battlefields, further work was requested by the City of York's archaeologist. One of the aims of the further evaluation was to see if any archaeological evidence could be located for the Battle of Fulford.

In October 2003, seven evaluation trenches were excavated in the area of the on line ponds/flood channel. Linear features relating to the build up of silt deposits below the 9m contour was evidence of material from the scouring of the dykes, or flood material. The results of the environmental samples taken from the build-up deposits revealed an entirely natural flora forming in the absence of human interference.

At the same time a further trench was excavated in order to examine and date the peat deposits. Two samples were sent for radio-carbon dating and the results revealed that the peat deposits were formed in the late Iron Age through early to mid Saxon. These deposits were located at between 60cm to 1m below the present land surface.

A Metal Detecting Survey was undertaken in accordance with Guidelines set down by the Battlefields Trust with help from York Metal Detecting Club. A total of 405 objects were recovered providing a comprehensive collection of 18th to 20th century metal artefacts. The assemblage provides an interesting window into the social history of this area to the south of the City of York. It did not, however, provide any evidence for the Battle of Fulford being fought in the area of Germany Beck

Our principle findings stated that there was no evidence to prove that Germany Beck was the site of the battle of Fulford. The subsequent response to these conclusions resulted in an alternative hypothesis by The battle of fulford Society and the Battle field trust who created an entirely false public perception that the battle was an established and accepted fact.

The Norwegian invasion of 1066 is of national significance, both in its own right and in terms of its effects on the ability of the English to repulse the subsequent Norman invasion of William I. Within this context, the battlefields of Stamford Bridge and Fulford

should be regarded as potentially significant historical sites. However, whilst the battlefield of Stamford Bridge is sufficiently well-known enough to have secured statutory protection, there is currently no consensus of opinion as to the exact location of the Fulford battlefield.

All the published accounts of the Battle of Fulford, all postulations of the likely sequence of battlefield events, all studies of likely military tactics, deployments or topographic studies of militarily-suitable locations and all the diverse theories regarding the actual location of the battle are ultimately based on the details of the campaign that are given in the same limited series of inadequate primary historical sources.

These include the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, the *Annals of Florence of Worcester*, Symeon of Durham's *Historia Regum*, and the Icelandic *Saga of Harald*. However, the interpretation of these sources is not straightforward. Some were contemporary or near-contemporary with the events they describe, whilst others were written several hundred years later. Similarly, the purpose for which the accounts were originally written is of paramount importance in terms of determining their historical reliability.

It is a generally-accepted principle that the closer in date a document is to the events that it describes, the more likely it is to be accurate. This is because early documents may make use of eyewitness accounts or be compilations of reports gathered within living memory. In contrast, later accounts tend to be less accurate in that they rely heavily on details cribbed from these earlier documents, embellished by unsubstantiated details and hearsay.

The earliest account of the battle is contained within the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. This is one of the most consistently reliable and comprehensive of medieval sources, and covers the period from the ninth century until 1154. It took the form of a yearly account of significant events that was compiled and maintained at five separate monastic sites. The fact that the chronicle is an annual account means that each yearly entry was compiled soon after the events it describes. The Norwegian victory is recorded in all three versions of the chronicle that were still being compiled at the time (Versions C, D and E):

None of the extant versions name Fulford as the site of the battle:

***Chronicle C* of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (the 'Abingdon Chronicle') is written throughout in scripts of mid-11th century date and can therefore be seen as a contemporary record.**

***Chronicle D* transcribed in the 12th century**

***Chronicle E* -- transcribed in the 12th century**

The annals ascribed to Florence of Worcester were probably written between 1118 and 1140. Again, there is no specific reference to Fulford. Henry of Huntingdon wrote a chronicle, he states that "*The site of the battle is still pointed out on the south side of the city*", but he does not specifically name Fulford as its location.

During the early 12th century an unfinished copy of Florence of Worcester's chronicle was sent to Durham. There, Symeon of Durham incorporated elements of it into his *Historia Regum*, a chronicle of events from the middle of the 11th century down to 1153.

Symeon narrates how: joined battle with the Norwegians at Fulford, near York, on the northern bank of the river Ouse,

This is the first specific reference to the battle having taken place at Fulford, some 60 years after the event

The fullest account of the battle is the Icelandic *Saga of King Harald*, written some 200 years after the event by Snorre Sturlason.

The account in *Harald's Saga* contains a detailed description, however, it does need to be treated with caution in that 13th century Icelandic sagas should not be regarded as statements of historical fact, but rather as works of literature. The sagas themselves were based upon two hundred year old oral tales that were brought by the Icelandic settlers from their Norwegian homeland. They were compiled and embellished by highly-literate Christians who sought to celebrate a heroic warrior culture that no longer existed. In this respect, they are more akin in spirit, if not in content, to the medieval courtly romances based on the myths of King Arthur. This is aptly demonstrated in the assertion that the Norwegians could cross the swamp on the bodies of the dead English without getting their feet wet. Clearly, this is a picturesque literary device intended to enthrall and thrill

an audience, rather than a bald statement of fact. *Harald's Saga*, then, is essentially more concerned with eulogising the deeds of a revered Norwegian king, rather than providing an accurate historical narrative.

Of the primary sources listed above, only one cites Fulford as the location of the battle. However, there are at least three separate settlement foci of that name; the original Anglo-Saxon settlement centred on St. Oswald's church, Gate Fulford and Water Fulford. Since 'Gate' and 'Water' are both post-Conquest prefixes, it is impossible to identify which specific location Symeon of Durham is referring to. In all probability 'Fulford' in the context of Symeon's narrative is used as a general term for the locality, rather than as a specific location.

This would not be unusual; the battle of Hastings took place eight miles away from the town at what is now known as Battle. In this case, the battlefield is only known today because William I erected an abbey on the site to give thanks for his victory. It only became known as the Battle of Hastings as this was the nearest town to the actual battle site. And William I base. With this in mind, the 'battle of Fulford' should only be located to the general area, rather than the immediate vicinity of the present village.

It is therefore abundantly clear that the primary sources are simply not detailed enough to allow the actual battlefield site to be pin-pointed. Because of this, it is possible to propose a number of different sites as possible candidates, none of which can be verified.

Ormsby, commenting on the battle in the 19th century, put the battlefield at Water Fulford, near Bishopthorpe Palace and Fulford Ings (Ormsby 1895,

Professor Kelly DeVries, one of the most eminent scholars of the Norwegian Invasion, closely follows the account given in Harald's saga, with the left flank of the Norwegian army against the river Ouse and the right flank against the dyke bordering the swamp. His plan reconstruction of the order of battle shows the dyke running at right angles to the front and parallel with the Ouse. Both armies are deployed across the line of a road

DeVries' careful reconstruction of the battle is unfortunately unlocated since his siting of the battlefield on the line of a road immediately suggests two equally plausible locations. One is along the line of the Roman road and the other is along the line of the present-

day A19. As the author himself states *“Today Fulford Gate is a densely inhabited suburb of York, and so it is difficult to see what the topography was on which the two sides were fighting. Nor do the original sources assist us here, for they describe little of the terrain*

English Heritage states *“archaeological methods, especially combined with historical research, can increase our understanding of battles by reconstructing the contemporary landscape and by studying the spread of battle-related objects”*. Further, English Heritage *“recommend that only planned field research should be carried out”* (English Heritage, *ibid*). In this respect, English Heritage’s advice regarding the archaeological investigation of battlefield sites echoes its position regarding archaeological investigation in general- *“it is normally only through sample excavation that questions relating to the importance of archaeological remains can be resolved”* (English Heritage 1995b, 9

Of all the possible locations of the battlefield that have been proposed over the years, only one has been subjected to an intensive, prolonged and thorough archaeological investigation of the type recommended by English Heritage. That site is the location of Germany Beck

Thus, whilst battlefield studies of this type can propose more or less-likely locations, they must, by their very nature, remain subjective interpretations that cannot be verified except by archaeological fieldwork. Any claim to have positively identified the actual site of the battlefield that is not supported by hard physical evidence on the ground is therefore bogus.

It is therefore our main view that neither the primary documentary sources nor the accompanying corpus of secondary literature has allowed the exact location of the battlefield to be conclusively located. .

The fundamental fact that the actual battlefield site is unknown is reflected in the omission of Fulford from the English Heritage Battlefield Register.

MAP has demonstrated that the landscape of Fulford has altered dramatically since 1066. The likelihood of identifying the actual battle site by attempting to match the information in the flawed primary sources to the existing landscape is therefore very remote. Indeed Glen Foard, Project Officer for the Battlefield Trust on his selection of the battle of Sedgemoor (1685) states *“But it is a landscape for which there is excellent*

documentary and archaeological data, enabling the clear demonstration of the methodology of historic landscape reconstruction and the placing of documented military events within it.” . This is not reflected at Fulford where there is neither archaeological or reliable historical evidence.

There is no disputing that a battle took place in the vicinity of Fulford in 1066. However, its exact location is still a matter of debate and may never be confirmed. Any evidence that may have existed might be of such an ephemeral nature that it has long since disappeared with the dramatic changes to the landscape since the battle.

The issue under discussion is not the criteria that have led other sites to be included on the register, but rather, the criteria that Fulford fails to meet and that have led to its exclusion. The primary criterion Fulford fails to meet is the fact that evidence has not been forthcoming that would allow the location of the engagement to be securely mapped. In this respect, it is clear the locality does not fully satisfy the high degree of proof- more than tradition or likelihood- that is necessary to justify its inclusion on English Heritage’s Battlefield Register.

Whilst the site of the battle of fulford has not been located it is felt that the popularly held association of that event and the area of Fulford should be maintained. The battle of Stamford Bridge is maintained in the minds of its community by the simple naming of streets and pubs which stimulate a natural curiosity in the event. It is planned in conjunction with the Battlefield Trust, that a similar approach be taken at Fulford including a possible battle interpretation footpath.

The archaeological work carried out at Germany Beck is a salutary example of the difficulty in conclusively identifying the site of an early battlefield. It is also an example of what happens when archaeology is called upon to support a wider political aim. In such circumstances even the most thorough and diligent research is called into question, informed and reasoned debate becomes impossible and the wider archaeological context is ignored. For this reason the Germany Beck project illustrates the need to rely on proven fact rather than supposition. The work undertaken and our conclusions had to stand up to rigorous scrutiny, in this case a Public Inquiry.

It might sound strange in the face of what you have heard but as an archaeologist it would be great to be standing here saying we had located the Battle of Fulford, I will just have to make do with a landscape of at least four thousand years.

Paula Ware
Managing Director, MAP, January 2018