

NYCC HER	
SNY	15831
ENY	6521
CNY	
Parish	1015
Rec'd	?1995

**A6136, LEEMING LANE**

**CATTERICK**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**FOR**

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY HIGHWAYS**

**RICHMOND DIVISION**

**ALISON CLARKE**

**MAY 1995**

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT CATTERICK LEEMING LANE

## INTRODUCTION

In March 1995 North Yorkshire County Highways Richmond Division undertook drainage improvement works on the A6136 Leeming Lane, north of Catterick village and to the east of Catterick Racecourse ( Fig 1). The road, running north-north-west to south-south-east and linking Catterick village with Brompton-on-Swale and the A1, is a former route of the Great North Road before the Catterick bypass was built in the 1950's.

The area around the works is known to contain extensive archaeological remains, including features thought to be the remains of a Roman marching camp and, to the north-west, the fort and settlement of Cataractonium parts of which are scheduled as an Ancient Monument.

For this reason, an archaeological watching brief was required to observe all the ground disturbance works alongside the highway.

## WORK PROGRAMME

The works involved the excavation by machine of a series of trenches in the footpath and verge on both sides of the A6136 (Fig 2). These trenches were laid with plastic drainage pipe, and linked gullies at the edge of the carriageway to a number of soakaways. The trenches were between 75 and 125 cm. deep, and on average 75 cm. wide. Two road crossings were made, and in all approximately 750 metres of trench were dug. The soakaways, of which there were five, were 3 metres deep, and approximately 100 cm. square. All were on the western side of the road, adjacent to the racecourse.

## THE WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief was carried out between 6 March 1995 and 23 March 1995. The excavation of the trenches, gullies, road crossings and soakaways was observed during this period.

Of excavations on the east side of the carriageway, of which there were two stretches, 1 and 2, nothing of archaeological interest was observed. Much of the line of the trenches was alongside a service pipe and the fill consisted of dolomite chippings which formed the backfill from the previous excavation. The remainder of the fill was a disturbed brown gravel which extended to the bottom of the trench.

Five separate lengths of trench, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, were excavated on the western side of the road, each of which included a soakaway. The two southernmost trenches, 3 and 4, were cut through the very hard tarmac surface, about 90 cm. thick, of a former road line which ran slightly to the west of the current road line (visible in Plate 1). This former road line gradually disappeared beneath the present road. Beyond it were similar disturbed orange and brown gravels, sands and soft clays as on the eastern side of the road. Other service pipes also ran alongside in the verge (see Plate 2).

At the northern end of trench 3, to the west of the tarmac road line, a short stretch of cobbled surface was revealed at a depth of 95 cm. below the surface of the grass verge. It consisted of small, tightly packed

stones set in a solid clay matrix (see Plates 3 & 4). The cobbled layer extended a short way beneath the tarmac former road surface, and continued southwards for 6 metres at a depth of c. 90 cm. Beyond this they were no longer visible, possibly because they dipped down below the level of the bottom of the trench at 90 cm.

At the northern end of trench 3, a soakaway was cut to a depth of 3 metres. This revealed that below the small cobbles were increasingly larger stones which formed a possible further cobbled surface at a depth of 120 cm.

Beneath the cobble layers was a stony orange-brown gravel which contained some large river-worn stones and formed the natural soil. This was visible in all the soakaways, sometimes interleaved at the higher levels with bands of silts and silty clays (see Plate 1).

Several old soakaways were encountered, in trenches 3, 5 and 6. These consisted of large areas of angular stones and coarse gravel extending for several metres along the verge, and reaching depths of up to 1.5 metres. Modern brick, tile and pottery found in them confirmed them as being 20th century and associated with the present road line.

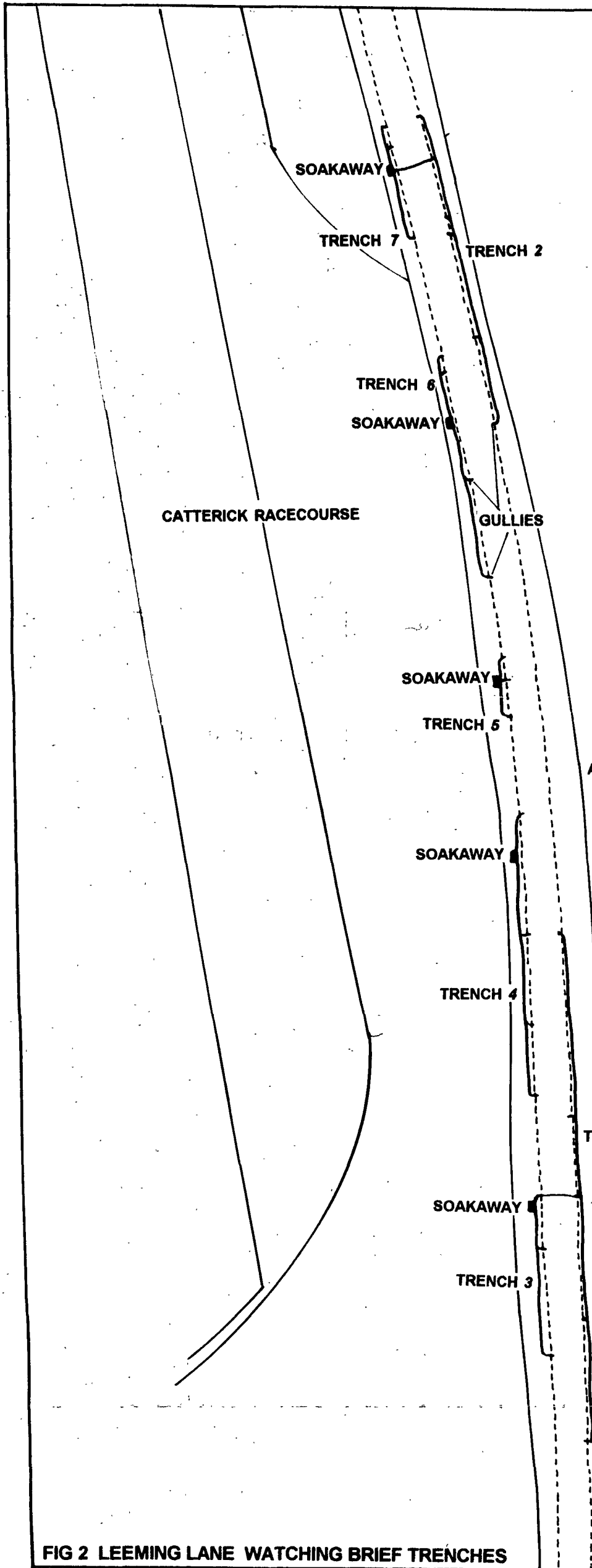
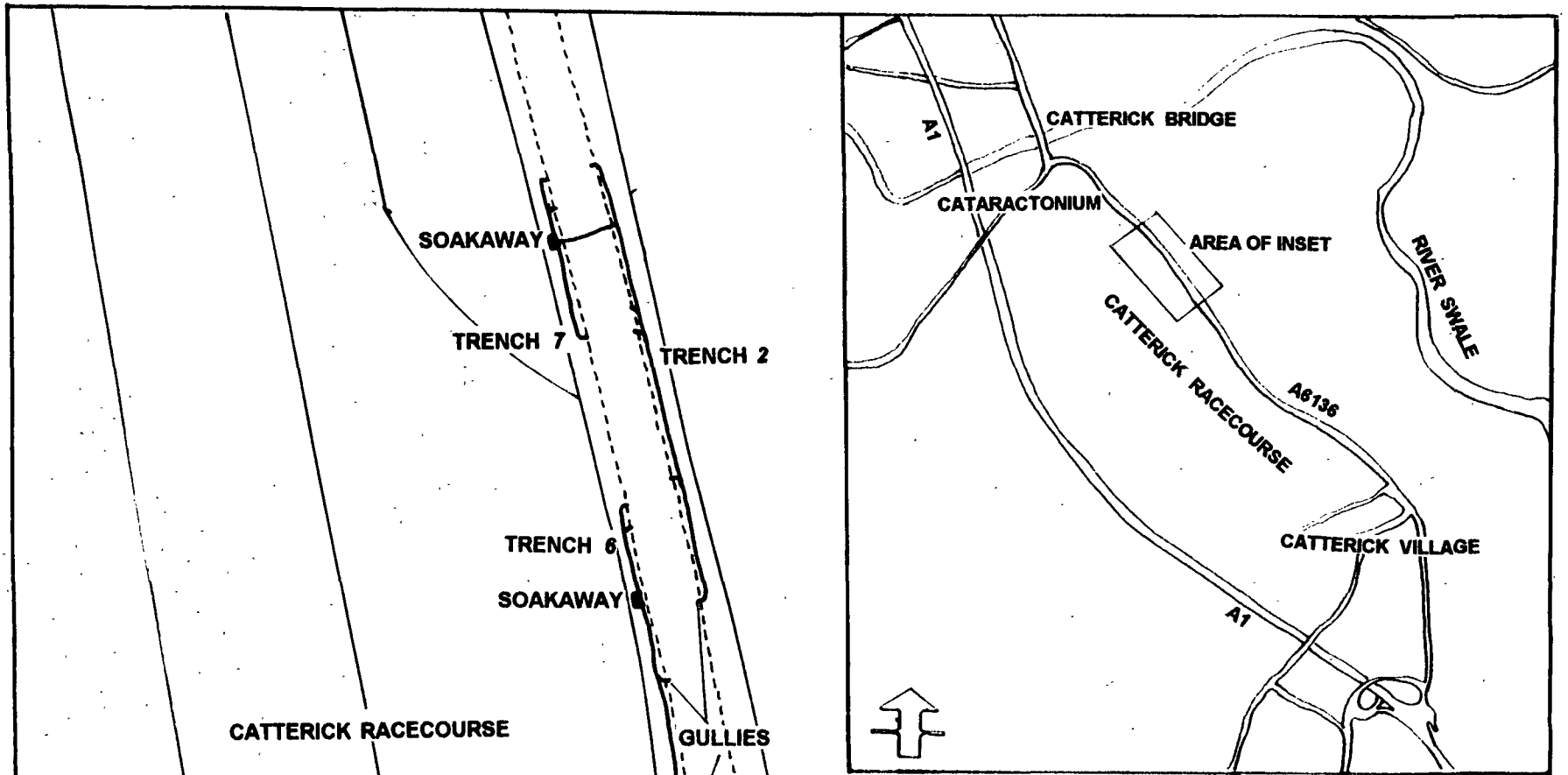
The two road crossings, which took trenches across the road to a depth of 90 cm., revealed the make-up of the road structure. Beneath 30 cm. of tarmac and concrete were large stones set on end in an interlocking pattern and packed tightly to form a solid base (see Plates 5 & 6). The stones were c. 30 cm. wide and 10 - 14 cm. thick, and up to 42 cm. high.

No other features of archaeological interest were observed during the watching brief, and no finds were recovered.

#### **INTERPRETATION**

The watching brief revealed evidence of former road lines of the A6136. The existing boundary of the highway with the racecourse actually follows a similar line to that of the former tarmac road surface recorded in trench 3, and this probably reflects the older road line. The cobbled surfaces could also represent earlier road lines, possibly of medieval date, though no dating evidence was found.

No evidence of Roman features was found, probably because of the degree of disturbance which had already taken place in the areas excavated.







**PLATE 1 SOAKAWAY IN TRENCH 3, SHOWING FORMER ROAD SURFACES AND LAYERS OF GRAVEL AND SILTS**





**PLATE 2 TRENCH 3 WITH SOAKAWAY, SHOWING WATER MAIN IN SIDE OF TRENCH AND FORMER TARMAC ROAD**





**PLATES 3 & 4 COBBLED SURFACE IN TRENCH 3**







**PLATES 5 & 6 ROAD CROSSING SHOWING STONE BASE BELOW CONCRETE AND TARMAC SURFACE**

