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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

KILGRAM BRIDGE

COUNTY BRIDGE NO.323

SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT NO.70

EAST WITTON OUT PARISH

NORTH YORKSHIRE

N.G.R. 41910 48600

COUNTY / PARISH NO. 1090

FOR

NORTH YORKSHIRE CONSULTANCY

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

APRIL 1998

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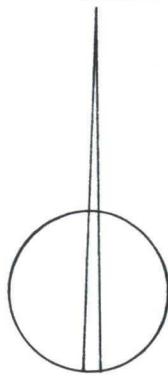
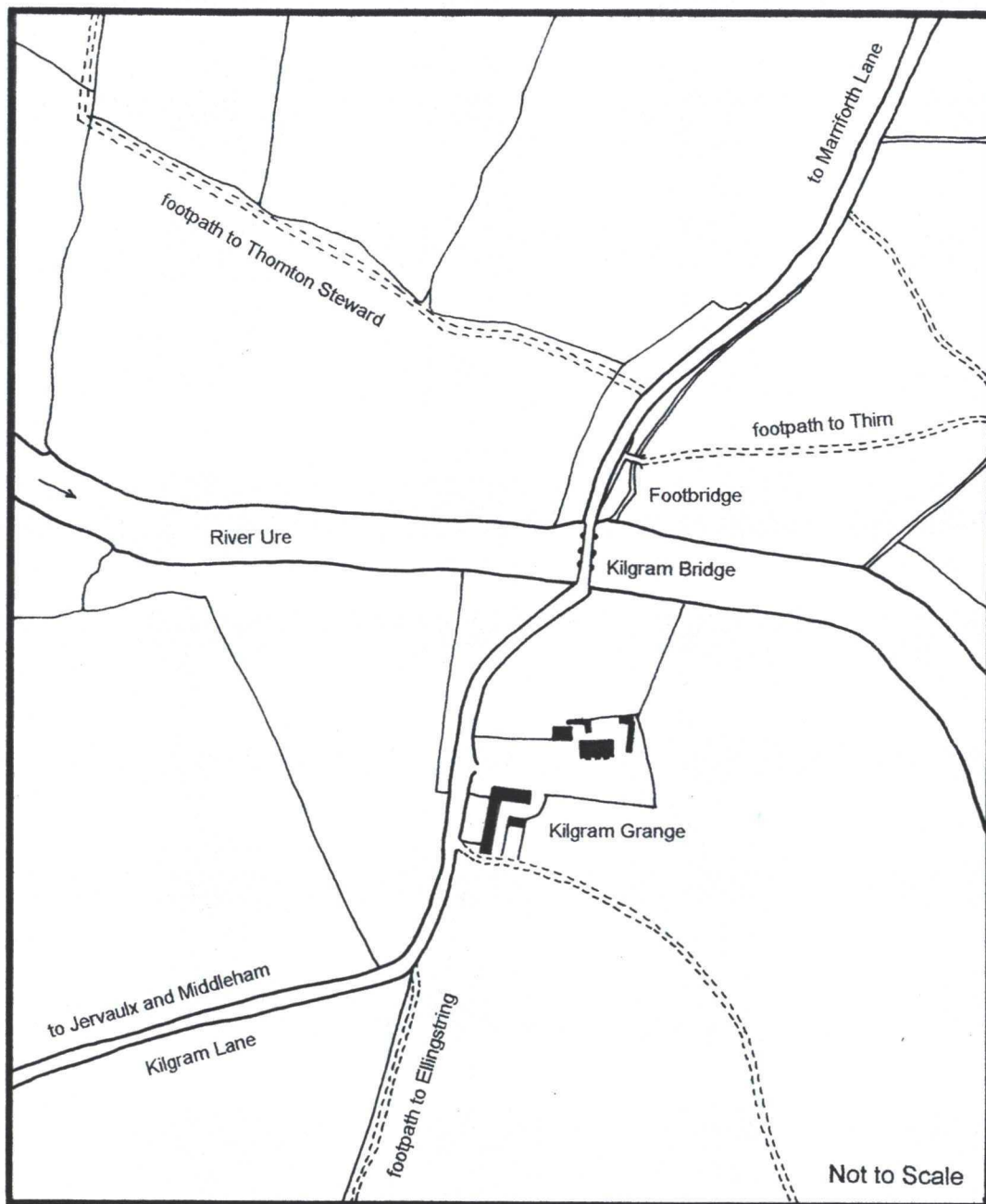
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FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION PLAN



**KILGRAM BRIDGE
EAST WITTON OUT PARISH**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION
APRIL 1998**

INTRODUCTION

An archaeological investigation was undertaken on Kilgram Bridge in advance of the the proposed consolidation works to this structure. This programme of repairs concerns the grouting of the fill of the bridge, this will involve the injection, under pressure, of a liquid grout into the fill.

Prior to the commencement of these works the Department of Culture, Media and Sport have informed North Yorkshire Consultancy that an archaeologist should be appointed to monitor the excavation of a number of trial holes across the bridge in order to make recommendations as to the likely impact that the proposed works will have on the fabric and any archaeological deposits that may survive across the bridge.

LOCATION AND STATUS

Kilgram Bridge crosses the River Ure down stream of Jervaulx Abbey, affording vehicular access between, on the south bank the A6108 - Masham to Leyburn road and, on the north bank, the cross-roads of Marriforth and Longdike Lanes. The structure is a Scheduled Ancient Monument No.70 and is situated at National Grid Reference SE: 41910 48600 within the parish of East Witton Out Parish and the county district of Richmondshire.

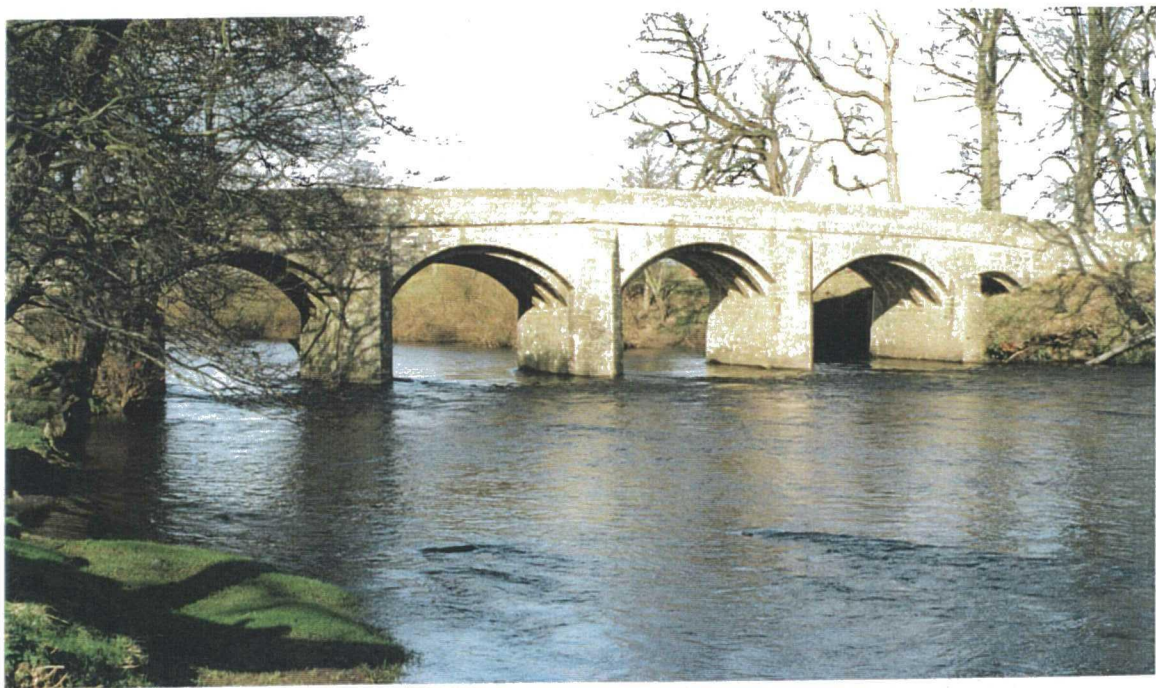
PLANNING HISTORY

An application to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport for Scheduled Monument Consent has been submitted by North Yorkshire County Council. The applicant has been asked to engage the services of an Archaeologist in order to prepare recommendations in advance of the commencement of works and then to monitor, record and report on same.

PLATE 1



Kilgram Bridge, facing north east.



Kilgram Bridge, facing north west.



Kilgram Bridge, facing north.

SITE DESCRIPTION

This monument that is suspected to date to the 12th century is situated in Lower Wensleydale, in what is today, an isolated, rural situation that is approximately 2.2 km by road from the village of Thornton Steward and 5.6 km from the village of East Witton. The bridge is located at an elevation of 93.770 metres AOD.

The bridge is accessed from the south by Kilgram Lane, this sinuous, narrow, road connects the bridge with the main Masham / Leyburn road to the south west. Kilgram Lane departs the bridge on the northern bank as a narrow, straight thoroughfare leading to Marriforth Lane.

The monument is a six span masonry arch structure, constructed in local sandstone. The bridge carries an unclassified 4.5 metre wide carriageway over the River Ure, there is no footway across the bridge. Of the six spans there are four main, the arches of which are segmental and consist of an arch barrel, each with four ribs.

The existing bridge appears to be uniform in construction technique and fabric. However, a recent detailed inspection of the structure by Mr. Smollett, North Yorkshire Consultancy has brought to light at least two anomalies :-

- . The northern cutwater on the eastern elevation of the bridge has been constructed in a stepped form as opposed to the chamfered bow detailing that is used elsewhere. The surrounding masonry and pointing above the northern flood arch would also suggest a variation in the standard building technique.

- . On the northern aspect of the southern abutment there is a shelf that protrudes approximately 300mm beyond the spring of the arch, this differs from that on the opposing bank where the masonry of the abutment is flush with the curvature of the arch.

These slight variations may be indicative of later repairs.

To the north of the bridge and conjoined with the eastern parapet wall there is a well preserved raised footway. The path is carried by three flood relief arches, constructed out of local sandstone. Leading from the northern extent of which, at a right angle, to the east, a single span stone footbridge affords access to the flood plain on the northern bank of the river.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The exact age of Kilgram Bridge is unknown, however, an early 12th century date of construction would seem likely, although this should not rule out the possibility that earlier wooden or stone structures occupied the site.

The place name evidence would suggest Scandinavian (Old Norse) origins.

The construction of the bridge is shrouded in superstition. It is reputed that ^{the} Devil built the bridge following a series of ill fated attempts to construct a bridge by the locals. The bridge would be built indestructible on the condition that the locals sacrifice the first living creature to cross it. An agreement was reached but the Devil was tricked by a Shepherd into having to accept a dog, that went by the name of Grim, as his spoil. It has also been passed down, through local folklore, that the reason the bridge is a stone short is that the Devil cursed the bridge and that should ever it be completed then a dreadful fate would be met by the locals.

From 1145 the bridge would have afforded access across the River Ure for the transport of goods, livestock and personnel to and from Jervaulx Abbey. It's importance as a local crossing point for this religious community is born out by the fact that the Abbey sited one of its Granges approximately 140 metres south of the bridge. This large farm unit was named Kilgram Grange and was one of a number of such agricultural holdings held by the Abbey. The grange is first referred to as Kelgrimhow in 1228. It is clear from surviving documentary evidence that the grange at Kilgram was highly valued by the Abbey, in the Subsidy of 1301 it was assessed for 55s 6d. The holding was a Demense that was specifically managed to provide for the needs of the Hospital and the Abbott's House at Jervaulx. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in the 15th century the site continued to operate as a farm, and remains as such today. The fields surrounding the existing farmhouse have recently been Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (No.1289), the curtilage of which encircles the extensive and well preserved earthworks of the grange. These remains consist of building platforms and field units that formed part of the overall complex, it would appear that these serviced by a network of drains that may have been part of a more extensive water management complex connected to fish ponds.

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It is likely that as the principal and local crossing point of the River Ure the bridge at Kilgram was well maintained by Jervaulx Abbey during the medieval period, however, during the later medieval period and leading up to the dissolution of the Abbey in 1537 it is possible that funds were not directed at it's continued maintenance and upkeep. It would appear that during the later 16th century the bridge was in need of considerable repair, in 1585 a hundred marks were spent on such works.

This was followed by further repairs in 1611 when the Justices agreed to direct County funds into necessary repair work, on the provision that the local residents make a contribution towards the costs. In 1674 a further sum of £50:00 were spent on repairing the Bridge.

The continued importance of the river crossing at Kilgram into the 18th century is evident from the records that confirm that during the Cattle Plague of 1748/9 the County Justices paid £8 10s for the bridge to be policed during the winter months to restrict the movement of livestock.

The existing transport structure and the network of footpaths and bridleways that converge on the bridge also gives some indication of the importance of this crossing point. It is evident that these thoroughfares have radiated out from the bridge, to the west to Jervaulx Abbey / Jervaulx Hall and the village of East Witton, to the south west to the village of Ellingstring and beyond to Coverdale, to the east to the village of Thim, to the north west the village of Thornton Steward.

THE AIMS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

It is accepted that the general shape and form of the existing monument is original, dating from the 12th century, with a number of more recent modifications and repairs. It was hoped that by engaging the services of an archaeologist a more complete understanding of the history and development of the monument could be gained and recommendations made relating to the future consolidation and maintenance of the bridge.

It was therefore recommended that an archaeologist should be appointed to maintain a Watching Brief on the excavation of three no. trial holes.

The aims of the archaeological investigation were as follows:

- a. to record any finds, features or structures of archaeological interest and obtain information on the presence, extent, character, date and depth of these remains;
- b. to liaise with the Client, Heritage Unit North Yorkshire County Council, English Heritage and the Contractor regarding recommendations to the repair the monument to ensure the minimum damage to any significant archaeological remains which have been identified; and
- c. to assess the importance of any remains found and interpret them in terms of their historical context.

FIGURE 2 KILGRAM BRIDGE

