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BOROUGHBRIDGE FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME NORTH YORKSHIRE

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REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-TOP STUDY

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FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME

NORTH YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-TOP STUDY

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1 Introduction

In March 1999 an archaeological assessment was undertaken by York Archaeological Trust of land flanking the River Ure at Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire The study was undertaken to provide background historical and archaeological information to allow a flood alleviation scheme to be designed with minimal archaeological disturbance by Halcrow UK Ltd, Consultant Engineers to the Environment Agency The historical and archaeological significance of the study area was assessed using a variety of sources including cartographic evidence, the sites and monuments record, and published archaeological and historical reports The extent of the study area is indicated on Figure 2

2 Methodology

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) in the Heritage Unit based at North Yorkshire County Council's offices in Northallerton was assessed to identify the location of any known archaeological monuments or finds spots The Ordnance Survey record cards and project files for the study area were checked for any references to the land m question, or for sites m the vicinity Historical and archaeological publications held by the SMR and the York City Library were also searched for additional information and cartographic evidence held at the County Record Office m Northallerton was also consulted

Site research notes are currently stored with the York Archaeological Trust

3 Geology and Topography

The study area lies on Bunter Sandstone solid geology (Geological Survey of Great Britam (England and Wales) Sheet 62 1967) on the western side of the vale of York The drift geology consists largely of glacial boulder clay on the higher ground which is overlain by warp, lacustrine clays and alluvial deposits in the river valleys

The centre of the market town of Boroughbridge appears to be relatively flat, lying between the 10 and 20m contour lines, on both north and south banks of the River Ure On the river banks themselves the land rises steeply from the waters edge Apart from the town of Boroughbridge and its associated residential, industrial and leisure areas and amemties, the open land within the study area is at present used for agricultural purposes, mainly arable, with some pasture, estate land and recreational areas

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

A large number of publications, of varying quality, have been written about Boroughbridge and a number of archaeological investigations have been carried out either within the study area, or just outside it The latter studies, of relatively high quality, have been concentrated on the areas just to the west and east of the study areas These include archaeological investigations associated with the Al road wideming scheme and research on the Roman town or civitas known as *Isurium Brigantum* or Aldborough and its associated extramural settlement Sadly, the

medieval town of Boroughbridge has been neglected and only a few minor excavations have been carried out m the town in recent years

4 1 The prehistoric period (to the 1st century AD)

Evidence for human activity withm the area is known from the Mesolithic period onwards and it is probable that the Vale of York was initially cultivated and settled m the Neolithic period (Radley, 1974) Close to the study area are the nationally important 'Devil's Arrows', Scheduled Ancient Monuments (S A M 28221/01, 28221/02, 28221/03, (NGR SE 3907 6659, SE 3910 6653, SE 3915 6643)) The three giant gritstone monoliths (each 5 5m, 6 7m, and 6 9m in height) form a stone row c 170m long 0 2 km to the south of the study area (See section 8 3) According to the 16th century antiquarian John Leland, reporting in c 1540, there were originally four standing stones, the middle stone having a compamon stone 22m to the east. This was broken up in the 17th century and used for the foundations of Peggy Bridge over the River Tutt at St Helena in Boroughbridge (Lawson-Tancred 1948, 19, Burl 1991, 5) These monoliths are believed to date from the Late Neolithic period to the Early Bronze Age (2200 to 2000 BC, a similar date to the final megalithic stage m the construction of Stonehenge) though no datable material has yet been recovered from excavations adjacent to the stones. At that time the Vale of York is believed to have been well settled, the stones standing at the southern edge of a concentration of prehistoric bairows and henge monuments which extended several miles to the north (Burl, 1991, 8) It is also thought possible that the route of the Great North Road followed a prehistoric route-way (Smith pers comm)

Recent archaeological studies in advance of improvements to the A1 motorway indicate that the landscape to the west of the road, both to the north and south of the River Ure, supported complexes of small farmsteads and accompanying field systems that may have been occupied into the Early Iron Age (Cale 1995, NAA 1994, 3) A Neolithic pit alignment, just to the west of the study area, was also revealed which may relate to the Devil's Arrows (Tavemer 1996, 184) Just to the east of the A1 and south of the dismantled railway (close to the Devil's Arrows) geophysical survey and trial trenching revealed further prehistoric pits A programme of fieldwalking has also revealed concentrations of flint scatters to the west and north of Boroughbridge (Dobinson pers comm.)

Withm the study area a scatter of Mesolithic flints was found in the Boroughbridge area (see section 8 13), scatters of Neolithic and Bronze Age flints were found close to the Devil's Arrows, in particular at NGR SE 3920 6650 (see section 8 4), and an early from Age brooch was located at NGR SE 3900 6600 The finds indicate prehistoric activity m the vicinity and it is therefore possible that such evidence may be found withm the study area

4 2 The Roman Period (1st to the 5th centuries AD)

Recent excavations in advance of the A1 road improvement schemes revealed an early Roman Fort at Roecliffe to the south-west of the study area (Cale 1995) This fort covered an area of 8 acres, was square in shape surrounded by a box rampart between double ditches with evidence for extramural settlement nearby It was constructed in the Flavian period, c 7IAD, but was only occupied for a short period of time, going out of use by c 85 AD It is believed that it was

situated adjacent to an early east/west road crossing of the River Ure which was observed to the north of the fort. The early road was seen running west to the river and east beyond the modem A1. The Roecliffe fort was superseded by that at Aldborough, *Isurium Briganium* (NAA 1993) Other Roman occupation was also discovered on the north bank of the River Ure (NAA 1994, 3).

Isurum, a fort of c 55 acres, was situated on the line of the principal Roman road to the north from York, Dere Street, which forded the River Ure to the east of Boroughbridge at Milby It later developed into the civilian administrative centre, or civitas capital, for the territory of the Brigantes which covered much of the north of England Its initial defences comprised an earth rampart and ditch constructed late in the 2nd century but these were strengthened by the late 3rd-century with the addition of a masonry wall, with towers and comer bastions, and a second, outer, ditch These defences were complimented by four gates constructed roughly in the centre of each side of the rampart Previous excavation and survey work has demonstrated excellent preservation of archaeological deposits within the town The status of the few houses known from Aldborough, which include a number of mosaic floors, provides the impression of a well appointed town with a fair number of comfortable houses, but by the end of the 4th century the town seems to have started to decline (Wacher 1995)

Extramural settlement in the Roman period is also known at Aldborough, a ribbon development flanking Dere Street as it by-passed *Isurium* on its way northwards to the north-east of the town The road ran north-west from York to Aldborough and then skirted round the north-eastem side of the walled town, before heading north-west again towards the River Ure and the Milby ford The exact location of the Roman ford is still unknown but it has been predicted by field work carried out by the Aldborough Research Committee A further section of Dere Street has been spotted during work associated with the Al to the north of the River Ure (Smith pers comm) Field walking carried out by the Aldborough Research Committee within and around the study area, covering fields m the Holmes and Aldborough Ings, suggests that concentrations of Roman ford (Dobinson 1993, 3) To the west of this, m the Holmes, Roman manuring material suggested that the area was used for agricultural activity (Dobinson 1993, 3) This suggests that although the precise course of the River Ure in the Roman period is not known, it seems likely that the river was less liable to flood during the Roman period than today

The study area is situated between two areas of early and later Roman occupation, situated at Aldborough and Roecliffe It is therefore probable that the eastern and western fringes of the study area will contain Roman occupation deposits with associated structures and roadways The central area is less likely to contain large scale Roman settlement but six 3rd century Roman coins (see section 8 10) where located here, and although this may have been an isolated hoard, it is possible that there may have been outlying farmsteads

43 The Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian periods (5th to 11th centuries AD)

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Little is known of settlement within the study area m these periods. It is possible that Aldborough continued to be occupied but no archaeological evidence has been found to support this. The place-name evidence suggests that Aldborough was at least a fortified manor in preNorman times, being known as 'Burgh' Settlement is more likely to have shifted towards the river possibly close to the Milby ford or to the site of the present town of Boroughbridge, although Cale (1995) suggests that the latter is unlikely To the north of the River Ure place-names such as Milby, Langthorpe and Kirby Hill may suggest Anglo-Scandmavian occupation

4 4 The Medieval Period (11th to the 16th centuries AD)

At the beginning of the medieval period "Burgh" or old (Ald) borough (a manor mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086) was the principal administrative centre m the vicinity but in the early 12th century it was joined to the Honour (or Lordship) of Knaresborough It is likely that the new town of "Pons Burgi" or "Pons de Burgo", the bridge of the borough, was planted and began to be develop around the time of this re-organisation adjacent to a wooden foot bridge across the River Ure on a more direct route-way north from London Wagoris and horses still had to use Milby ford

The first historical reference to the bridge is in May 1115 when a Precept of Fountains Abbey ordered that the men, horses and goods of the Cistercians of that house should be free of toll passage and pontage at "pontem de Burgo" (Kettlewell 1951, 397) No foundation charter survives for Boroughbridge but by 1169 the burgesses of the town are recorded as paying tax. The town had its own tolls and borough court but never gained control of its fee farm from the crown. It contained three market areas and a centrally located chapel of ease and was ideally placed at the cross-roads of east/west and north/ south land and water route-ways. The river port was at the head of the navigable section of the River Ouse and was well established by the late 12th century, being ideally located to supply the market towns of Ripon and Knaresborough and the large ecclesiastical establishments within the hinterland such as Fountains Abbey. By 1300 the town was thriving and the crown collected revenues from the mills and fishery. Tolls and stallage amounted to £66 per annum. In 1299 Boroughbridge was even asked to send two representatives to the Parliament of 6th March 1300 (Lawson-Tancred 1948, 26-28).

In the turbulent years following the Scottish invasion of 1318 when Boroughbridge was attacked, plundered and bumt the northem Barons became increasingly dissatisfied with the power of the crown This culminated m the rebellion led by Thomas, Earl of Lancaster After his defeat and retreat northwards from the battle of Burton-on-Trent, the Earl and his supporters (with 700 men at arms and other less well equipped followers) were blocked from crossing the River Ure and escaping further north by a force of 4,000 men under the command of the Warden of the Western Marches and Captain of Carlisle Castle, Sir Andrew de Harcla, who was loval to the King The subsequent battle, which was fought over the narrow wooden bridge and at Milby ford on the 16th March 1322, was known as the battle of Boroughbridge (Broadhead 1989, Leadman 1891) The Earl's supporters were routed and the Earl captured It is thought from the accounts of the battle that the bridge was too narrow to cross on horseback and therefore the ford, further down stream, was still used for crossing with horses and carts An inquisition after the rebellion had been cmshed reported that the town granary had been ransacked by Lancaster's followers during their occupation (English Heritage 1995) In 1792, a quantity of human bones, arms and armour, which was thought to have been associated with this battle at the Old Bank, was located below the bridge, NGR SE 3960 6700 (Broadhead 1989, 84, Lamplough 1891, 115), (see section 8 15)

The town soon recovered and in 1379 a Poll Tax return records 104 adults as resident in the town, comprising 61 households of which 35 paid tradesman's or merchant's rates Boroughbridge continued to prosper from its position within the trade networks in the 14th century and it became a major centre for the woollen industry A fulling mill was built on the In 1395-6 the towns of Richmond and Boroughbridge combined employed 95 River Tutt weavers Boroughbridge was also a market, though it did not receive its grant of two fairs until 1503 In the 14th century it had two commills, one on the River Tutt and the second on the south bank of the River Ure A charter of King Edward I confirmed that the Rivers Ure and Ouse as far as the city of York were the property of the Lords of Aldborough and Boroughbridge, who were entitled to extract toll on all river traffic The port exported lead and iron from Nidderdale, Wensleydale and the forest of Knaresborough, and first wool and then linen from Knaresborough and the Pennme region Imports mcluded wmes and spices from the continent and timber from York By the late medieval period it was booming economically and supported a large number of inns, coaching houses, smithies and foundries When Leland visited the town in c 1540, he reported that the wooden bridge had been replaced by a bridge built of stone, however, Cale (1995) has suggested that it was not until 1562 that the old wooden bridge was replaced m sandstone

Topographically the medieval town contamed one long main street known as Micklegate (now High Street), with large numbers of burgage plots situated to either side mnmng back to the River Tutt to the west and to Back Lane to the east Two market squares, one situated at the northem end of Micklegate (Market Square) and one centrally (St James Square) held two of the markets To the north of Market Square, Micklegate extended along the eastern side of the River Tutt to Fishergate Nab, where it was known as Fishergate This medieval stteet contained six burgage plots and a number of Fishermen's cottages, which were demolished when Boroughbridge Hall was built in 1685 Within St James Square was the medieval chapel of ease of St James (NGR SE 3965 6665) part of the Aldborough parish The latter contained Norman masonry and carvings and chantries dedicated to St Agatha, Our Lady and St Saviour (Lawson-Tancred 1948, 23, Kettlewell 1951, 398) It was demohshed m 1851/2 On the western side of Micklegate opposite the chapel there may have been a medieval hospital (NGR SE 3964 6662) which had fallen into decay by 1297 (Kettlewell 1951, 401) Carved stones have been found under the foundations of the present house (Tyler unpub) The medieval street now known as Fishergate led out of the western side of Market Square and extended across the River Tutt to the horse fair before turning north to the bridge over the River Ure The site of the medieval manor of Boroughbridge and its gardens was m the area flanked by Bridge Street, (modern) Fishergate, the River Tutt and the River Ure The Crown Hotel is believed to be situated on the site of the manor and its gatehouse (Kettlewell 1951, 400) To the west of the bridge was the site of one of the medieval commills, which probably belonged to the manor To the south of the bridge there may have been an area of wharf also belonging to the manor, whereas the town wharf may have been situated to the east of the confluence between the Rivers Ure and Tutt, m the area known as Fishergate Nab The ford would surely have prevented larger river boats from reaching the town itself and therefore medieval wharves may also have been located at Milby

Archaeological investigations within the medieval town have not been numerous, the area being particularly neglected prior to the changes m planmng guidance in 1991 and subsequently only seeing small scale development withm the medieval centre Deep well stratified medieval deposits were located in the cellar of 9 Bridge Street in 1978, where up to a metre of stratified

archaeological deposits was excavated and included pits, wall foundations and a cobbled floor (Tyler unpub) A medieval well was uncovered at the Three Grey Hounds and at the Crown Hotel stratified medieval demolition and floor deposits were located m 1998 (Pearson 1998) A medieval carved stone figure was also discovered at NGR SE 3963 6662

4 5 The Post-Medieval and Modern Periods (17th to the 20th centuries)

In the early part of this period Boroughbridge was still prospering from the linen trade and retained its importance as both a land and water route centte The Great North Road was increasingly being used by Scottish cattle drovers who used the town as a rendezvous while driving their herds south to London Up to 2,000 cattle a day would pass through the town in the high season and Langthorpe, on the north side of the river, became especially famous and prosperous from the smithing mdustry associated with the shoeing of cattle (Hatcher 1974, 204) In 1631 the bridge was m great rim and over the next 100 years upwards of £800 was spent on repairing it (Kettlewell 1951, 397) The Crown recogmsed Barnaby Fair m 1671, a three week long festival and market held around the 11th of June, or St Barnabas' Day, which had probably been underway from the medieval period (Lawson-Tancred 1948)

The increasing road traffic crossing the new wider stone bridge may have caused a change in the local topography with the construction of Boroughbridge Hall on the burgage plots and Fisherinen's cottages that abutted (medieval) Fishergate The medieval manor site was occupied until 1596 when the Tancred family moved to Brampton Hall (Lawson-Tancred 1948, 26) The construction of the new manor house or Boroughbridge Hall did not start until almost a century later in 1680 and was finished c 1685 The former Manor House was let to George Loupe in 1672 from which time it probably became an inn The Loupe family were m residence until 1742 when it was known as "The Crown"

In 1728 a rape mill was built on the River Tutt and also in the 18th century a new larger commill was built on the south side of the River Ure, on the site of the medieval mill. It is probable that the great corn weir was also constructed at this time, though this may have had medieval precursors. The mill became one of the largest water driven mills in Yorkshire in the 19th century and was demolished in the early 1970's. The great corn mill weir prevented craft from travelling further up the river and therefore with this and the construction of the new wider bridge, Milby became the main wharf for cargoes to be off loaded and distributed by road.

In 1767 an Act of Parliament was past to canalise the River Ure as far as Ripon This included a short section of canal at Boroughbridge known as Milby Cut which was constructed to circumnavigate the commill weir and opened in 1773 (Hadfield 1972, 111) A new bridge over the River Ure was constructed in 1785 after the canal had been completed The locks and wharf associated with this canal can still be seen on the north side of the river where Bridge Garage stands and in the 19th century this and the area of the present day roundabout was the main dock area for Boroughbridge The dock was used to unload coal, lime, hardware, building materials and heavy goods as well as for the construction of barges and occasionally ocean going vessels. In the late 18th and early 19th century boat building became an important local industry arid as late as 1840 two ocean going schooners were built m Boroughbridge On the south side of the river at Hall Arms Lane heavy goods were unloaded for the Aldborough district

In the 18th century a new toll road was opened changing the route of the Great North Road through the town to mn straight up Horse Fair avoiding the old town centre (Tyler unpub) From 16th October 1789 a stage coach service departed from London and ran up the Great North Road This service quickly developed until there were four mining per day and Boroughbridge, already important m terms of east-west and north-south routes, was m a prime position as a post for the changing of horses and for passengers to stay the night With the industrial revolution, the stage coaches and the expansion of spa towns and holiday resorts m the early 19th century, Boroughbridge's coaching houses, inns and hotels rapidly expanded to 22 by 1850 The largest of these coaching houses was The Crown owned from 1779 by the Duke of Newcastle In 1834 when he finally sold it, it contained stables for over 100 horses (Lawson-Tancred 1948, 26-27)

In 1848 and 1849 the first railway was constructed to Boroughbridge, as a branch line from Pilmoor on the main Darlington to York line, the station being positioned to the east of the Thirsk road In 1866 an Act of Parliament was passed to extend the line to Knaresborough and a single track and a new station between the Thirsk and Ripon roads was opened in 1875 However, Boroughbridge failed to maintain its position in the steam era as it was not on a mam rail route and the 22 imms and coaching houses known m the town m 1850 had declined to 15 by 1854 (Priestly 1954, 609)

By the early 19th century a further commill and a brewery had also been built on the north side of the River Ure m Langthorpe The commill was demolished in 1856 and the brewery expanded to fill the whole site (Hatcher 1974, 206) Some of the malting towers associated with the latter are still standing and at present are being mcorporated into a new housing development

In the 20th century Boroughbridge's position on the Great North Road, or A1, brought some renewed prosperity and the 18th century bridge was rebuilt and widened in 1949 (Priestly 1954, 608) However, the A1 bypass built in the 1970's diverted much of the traffic out of town again leaving it to stmggle to encourage trade and commerce. Its position close to the A1 has meant that it has become increasingly attractive to commuters and residential development is rapidly expanding. It is believed that small scale flood banks along the river were erected in the late 19th century to protect the low lying agricultural land from flooding and that land drains and dttches were inserted to aid drainage. In recent years many of the former hedges have been pulled up to make way for larger scale commercial farming practice and machinery. In 1988 a flood alleviation scheme along the river at Boroughbridge was implemented. No archaeological mitigation strategy appears to have been implemented during its constitution. This was not effective during the floods in 1991 and may have caused considerable disturbance to the archaeological deposits in the vicinity.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

It appears that the study area is likely to contain archaeological deposits of the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods These may include prehistoric and Roman occupation sites, more likely along the western and eastern fringes and less likely in the central area, although prehistoric river side sites may also be present

Archaeological deposits pertaining to the medieval period will be concentrated along the south side of the river bank from the site of the medieval manorial com mill and east of Fishergate

Nab These may include evidence for former wooden and stone bridges and wharf and quay-side structures, all of which may be waterlogged and very well preserved

The medieval town centre is also likely to contain deep well stratified urban archaeological deposits which, close to the Rivers Ure or Tutt, may also be waterlogged

On the north side of the river medieval structures related to the former bridge crossing may also be present as well as deposits associated with the battle of Boroughbridge The canal and the area to the north and south of it are all especially metresting for evidence for the post-medieval period and may contain wharves, docks, quays and evidence for boat building, trade and industrial activity and archaeological deposits associated with these activities

Further downstream, in the area of Milby, evidence from the Roman period may be present as well as wharves, docks and associated structures of the medieval and post-medieval periods. The area around Hall Arms Lane, on the south side of the river (east of Aldborough), may also contain similar deposits of interest. The industrial activity associated with the 19th century commill on the south side of the river and the brewery on the north side of the river are also of archaeological interest.

6 Archaeological Implications

This archaeological desk-top study has produced evidence to suggest that the study area may contain well preserved archaeological features However, the minimal amount of archaeological investigation which has taken place m Boroughbridge m the past means that it is not possible to accurately define where these remains will survive. It is suggested that in order to define an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy, some archaeological field work should be carried out on the site prior to development. This should include geophysical survey in the first instance, followed by a series of archaeological evaluation trenches to target any geophysical anomalies and to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological deposits and features. This would allow the detailed layout of any development to be plarmed with regard to any significant archaeological remains which may be found

7 List of Sources

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8 NATIONAL MONUMENTS RECORDS (NMR)

- 1 Lmear 290, Roman road known as Dere Street, known to run between York, Aldborough and north towards Catterick
- 2 Linear 300, Roman road known as Dere Street, known to run between York, Aldborough and north towards Catterick
- 3 Ordnance Survey Record Cards (OSRC) SE 36 NE 4 The Devil's Arrows A late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age Stone Alignment consisting of 3 standing stones (NGR SE 3907 6659, SE 3910 6653, and SE 3915 6643)
- 4 OSRC SE 36 NE 5 Umdentified flint implements, including an imperfect spearhead found 270m to the east of the central stone of the Devil's Arrows at NGR SE 3920 6650, may represent a possible lithic working site. Some other flints found as chance finds close to the Devils Arrows and in field walking to the west associated with the A1 road widening scheme.
- 5 OSRC SE 36 NE 6 Early Iron Age brooch found m Boroughbridge at SE 3900 6600
- 6 OSRC SE 36 NE 7 The Battle of Boroughbridge, fought at the bridge (NGR 3960 6700) and at Milby ford (NGR exact location unknown) on the 16th March 1322
- 7 OSRC -SE 36 NE 8 Boroughbridge Hall, (NGR SE 3970 6680) 17th century and later in date, which stands on the site of six medieval burgage plots and the former medieval street of Fishergate which lead to Fishergate Nab
- 8 OSRC SE 36 NE 9 a Roman Altar with figure of Mercury (Roman Deity), located at (SE 4060 6643), badly preserved, now located on the north wall of St Andrew's Church, Aldborough, but formerly m the garden of Ladywell House (NGR SE 3981 6661) Origmal findspot is thought to have been the foundation ttenches for the Lady Chapel at St Andrew's Church, Aldborough
- 9 OSRC SE 36 NE 11 NGR SE 3963 6662 a medieval carved stone figure was located here
- 10 OSRC SE 36 NE 12 six 3rd century Roman coins were located at NGR SE 3900 6600
- 11 OSRC SE 36 NE 13 the medieval church of St James (a chapel of ease in the parish of Aldborough) was located at NGR SE 3965 6665 in St James Square This was demolished in 1851/2 and contained Norman masonry and carvings as well as medieval chantries dedicated to St Saviour, St Agatha and Our Lady
- 12 OSRC SE 36 NE 16 Post-medieval malt kiln adjacent to the brewery in Langthorpe located at NGR SE 3922 6725
- 13 OSRC SE 36 NE 19 a scatter of Mesolithic flints was located at NGR SE 3900 6600)

- 14 OSRC SE 36 NE 23 The medieval town of Boroughbridge centred at NGR SE 3960 6662
- 15 OSRC SE 36 NE 31 A quantity of human bones, weapons and armour was recovered whist undertaking embankment works at Old Bank below the bridge, at NGR SE 3960 6700 These were thought to have been best associated with the battle of Boroughbridge m 1322
- 16 500201 Boroughbridge Station, located at NGR SE 3940 6725, was constructed in 1875
- 17 539433 The Three Grey Hounds Hotel, located at NGR SE 3957 6689 was constructed c 1770 -1779
- 18 1108837 The Bridge at Borough Bridge, located at NGR SE 3960 6700, was imitally constructed as a wooden footbridge c 1100, was rebuilt in stone in the mid 16th century, widened and rebuilt m 1785, and widened again and substantially rebuilt in 1949