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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

THE VILLAGE GREEN

HAMPSTHWAITE

NORTH YORKSHIRE

N.G.R. 425950 458780

COUNTY / PARISH NO.6092

FOR

TRANSCO BG

NOVEMBER 1998

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INTRODUCTION

An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken to monitor and record ground disturbance associated with the machine excavation of a service trench through the village of Hampsthwaite. The nature of the ground disturbance relates to the renewing of the gas mains service within Lower Nidderdale. The works were commissioned by Transco BG.

LOCATION AND STATUS Btw 425804 458848 > 425993 458623

Hampsthwaite is a rural village situated within the Lower Nidderdale parish of Hampsthwaite at N.G.R.425950 458780. This nucleated settlement is situated on the southern side of the River Nidd and slightly elevated above its flood plain at 70 metres AOD. The village is serviced by a number of minor roads that run to the surrounding settlements of Birstwith, Killinghall and Clint and to the A59 Skipton / Harrogate road.

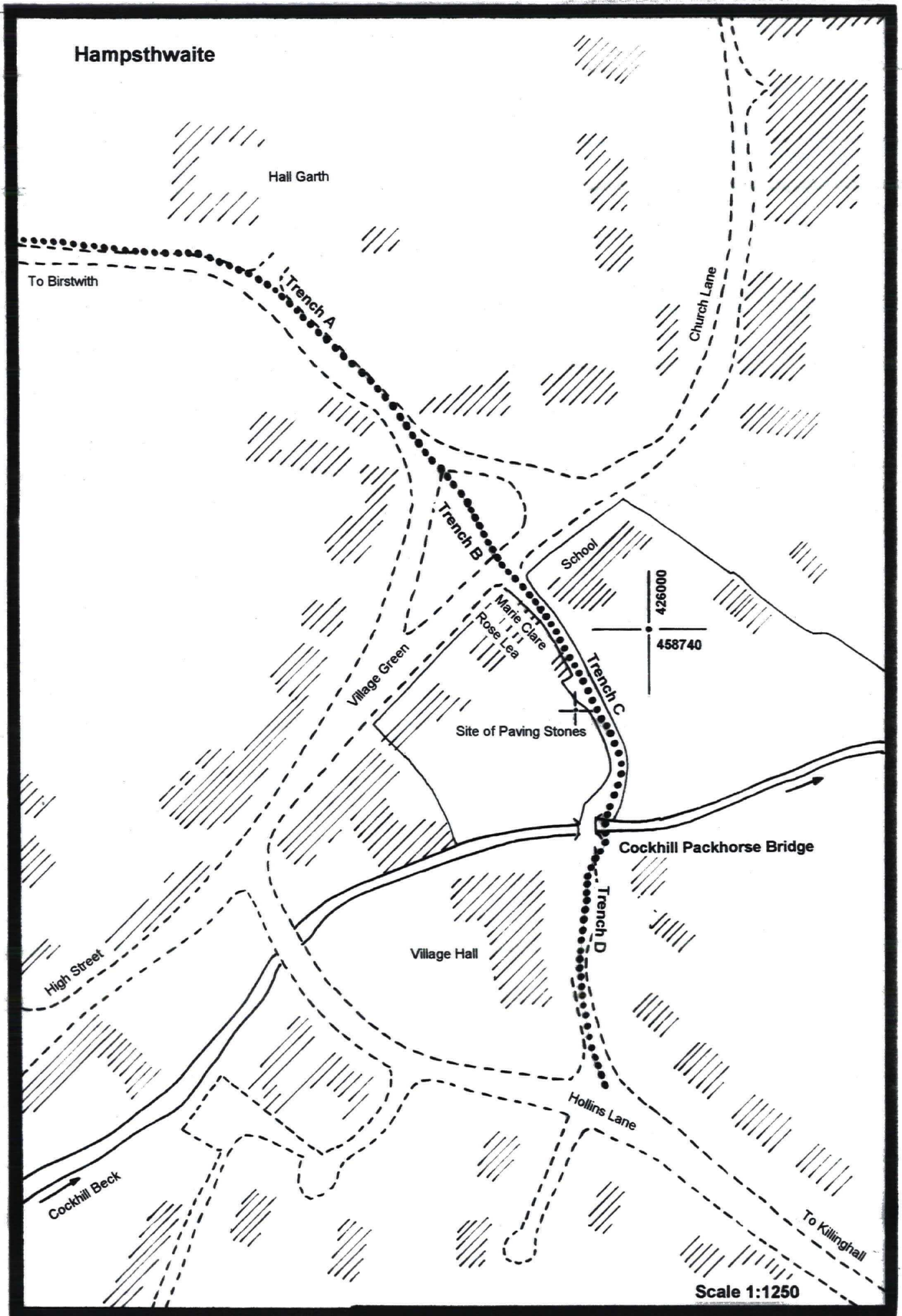
PLANNING HISTORY

Prior to the commencement of groundworks Transco BG were informed by English Heritage and The Heritage Unit, North Yorkshire County Council that due to the potentially sensitive nature of buried archaeological deposits and the close proximity of the works to Cockhill Packhorse Bridge, County Scheduled Ancient Monument 331 it would be necessary for the groundworks within the central area of the village to be subject to an Archaeological Watching Brief.

Initially the archaeological services were to be provided by Mr.E.Von-Kirke but were eventually undertaken, at extremely short notice by Mr.K.J.Cale, Stean.

FIGURE 1

GENERAL SITE LOCATION PLAN



HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric:

Little known archaeological evidence has been forthcoming to confirm the presence of prehistoric activity within the Hampsthwaite area. Approximately 4 km to the east of Hampsthwaite at Gallows Crag near Birstwith the recent identification a carved rock would suggest that the area was populated during the Bronze Age (1,700 BC - 600 BC). Unfortunately it would seem that evidence of settlement sites and associated field systems relating to this period have been destroyed by historic agriculture and development.

Roman:

Evidence of Roman activity, within and around the village of Hampsthwaite is scant. An unprovenanced coin hoard was reportedly found within the vicinity of Hampsthwaite by Mr.Kent in 1845. The nine silver coins dated between AD 70 - 169 (OS Cards, NYCC), no further details are available. The Roman Road between the settlements of Isurium (Aldborough) and Olicana (Ilkley) is thought to pass through Hampsthwaite on or near the line of the existing High Street. Mr.P.Ross (1917) and Mr.E.Waight (1996 pers comm) believe they have identified the sections of the road within the immediate area, traversing the hillside between Kettlesing Head and the fording of the Nidd to the immediate north of Hampsthwaite. This line is supported by medieval documentary evidence, 12th century monastic charters note that the section of Roman Road known as Watling Street east of Kettlesing Head ran along the line of Long (Love) Lane in Felliscliffe to cross the Nidd in the vicinity of Hampsthwaite (Fountains Charters p.204).

Unfortunately little has been found in the way of archaeological evidence to support this line of the road. It is recorded (NYCC Parish File Cors. 02.95) that a paving stone, thought to be of Roman origin, was found during recent groundworks between the village and the River Nidd (N.G.R. 42606 45897). The provenance and nature of this find is not known.

During recent years occasional groundworks within the village have been recorded by Mr.E.Waight who has noted that with the exception of a cobble surface, identified at 18" below the surface in 1927/8 during the installation of a gas main (N.G.R. 42600 45899) no evidence of the Roman road surface has been identified in the village or crossing the flood plain of the River Nidd to the north.

An Archaeological assessment and watching brief was conducted by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA 96/50 & 97/38) on behalf of Yorkshire Pipeline Services during 1996/7.

The pipeline corridor between Harlow Hill and Clapham Green transacted the suspected line of the Roman road to the south west of Hampsthwaite at Swincliffe (N.G.R.4252 4581). Extensive groundworks failed to identify the road.
Anglo Scandinavian

Place name evidence would suggest that the settlement at Hampsthwaite is Norse in origin, the name meaning Hamel's clearing i.e an area deforested and cultivated by an individual by the name of Hamel. No further details are known of the Scandinavian Settlement.

Medieval:

During the medieval period Hampsthwaite was one of the 13 Townships within the Forest of Knaresborough and had a Royal Manor. The tenants of Hampsthwaite were under the tennurship of St.Robert's Priory, Knaresborough.

Hampsthwaite was the centre of a medieval market that was granted in 1304 (Calendar of Close Rolls 35). Dr.Richard Muir believes that it was during the early 14th century that the triangular green was formed within the village for the purpose of holding the market. The village green was referred to as the Cross Green well into the 19th century (Grainge 1871, Nidderdale), this might suggest the site of a market cross.

Throughout the medieval and into the post medieval period Hampsthwaite developed as largely the result of through traffic, the village was well serviced by a network of thoroughfares that converged on one of the principal Lower Dale crossings of the River Nidd. It would appear, from contemporary documents, that the most frequently used transport structure was the causeway. These paved paths were often only a few feet in width and were used for pedestrian and packhorse traffic. The importance of the transport network servicing Hampsthwaite is evident from the historical sources, in 1460 the residents of the village were ordered to clean the road from the north side of the village to the bridge over the River Nidd as it had become waterlogged (PRO Court Rolls D.L30/486/13). It would appear that the Pack Horse traffic continued passing through Hampsthwaite into the mid 19th century as the village had Packhorse Stables in 1866 and a Packhorse Carriers Hostelry that was sited near an unnamed bridge within the village.

Many of the bridges within Lower Nidderdale were constructed to accommodate this non wheeled traffic. Cockhill Packhorse Bridge (S.A.M.No.331) was one such bridge. This small bridge, constructed out of local sandstone has a single span, semi circular arch of 3.6 metres and a width of 1.2 metres, between 0.66 metre wide parapets that support stapled rectangular copings. The date of this structure is uncertain, it is generally attributed to the 16/17th century, although an earlier bridge on this site can not be discounted.

The larger, existing road traffic bridge, that spans the River Nidd and is known as Hampsthwaite Bridge was constructed in 1527 and repaired during the late 16th century with a rebuild in 1640.

THE NATURE OF THE WORKS

In total 245 metres of service trench were monitored during the watching brief, all of which was machine excavated up to 0.40 metre wide and 0.90 metres deep. Two machines were engaged to excavate the trench a JCB 3CX wheeled excavator and a Kukla tracked trench cutting machine.

Prior to the commencement of the trench works a small number of machine excavated trial holes were excavated by Transco to establish the nature and location of existing services. The archaeologist present to monitor the excavation of three such exploratory sondages across the Village Green, each trial hole measuring 1.0 m x 0.30 m x 0.90 m.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The section of trench subject to the watching brief ran from the Birstwith Road as it enters the eastern side of the village at N.G.R. 42590 45984 to Hollins Lane at N.G.R. 42599 45863 on a predominantly south south eastern alignment. This sinuous track was excavated into two principal highways, namely:-

The southern side of the Birstwith Road and the crossing of Church Lane.

The track also crossed the Village Green and ran the full length of tarmac surfaced footway / ginnell that affords access to Cockhill Bridge.

These excavations were carried out within the heart of the medieval village and in an area that is today occupied by properties that post date the Late 17th Century.

AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

It was anticipated that the study area may well be transected by the line of the Roman Road that runs between Isurium (Aldborough) to Olicana (Ilkley). The line of this thoroughfare through Hampsthwaite is unproven and remains conjectural. Furthermore the ground disturbance leading to and from the Cockhill Bridge may well disturb buried road surfaces associated with it's early history.

From previous archaeological works on other sections of this Roman Road, within the Harrogate District, it is known that the surface of this structure may take the form of sandstone sets or a compacted cobble / pebble surface.

It is acknowledged that there may well have been a high level of, recent, ground disturbance within the village associated with the installation of former services. In my opinion, due to the above there was a moderate probability that archaeology survived in situ on the line of the proposed track. Should any archaeology have survived it was anticipated that this would comprise of a stratified sequence of deposits associated with the Roman Road surface and later Medieval thoroughfares.

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 assess the importance of any remains found and interpret them in terms of their historical context.

SUMMARY

The Archaeological Watching Brief concluded on Tuesday 10th November 1998.

It was noted that the ground levels beneath that area of the Village Green traversed by the trench had not been previously disturbed, sub soil was encountered within 0.24 metres of the existing ground level.

Intermittent lengths of the trench had been heavily disturbed during the installation of former services. These areas were largely confined to the ginnel between Church Lane and Cockhill Beck in which no archaeological features or deposits were identified.

The stratigraphy within this section of the trench was once again dominated by sub soils.

Archaeology was identified within the track between N.G.R. 42599 45870 and 42590 45867 i.e on the southern side of Cockhill Packhorse Bridge and at the junction between the ginnel leading to the packhorse bridge and Church Lane at N.G.R. 42597 45877.

The Paved Causeway

A paved causeway leading to Cockhill Packhorse Bridge was identified on the southern approach to this crossing point on a north north east alignment. This thoroughfare had been formed from large block of worked sandstone, the average size of which measured 0.68 x 0.44 x 0.15 metres, the upper surface of each was smooth and dished as a result of repeated wear. The paving blocks were arranged edge to edge in a linear fashion, the joints between the blockwork was tight with no mortar pointing or bedding. The paving stones would have formed a narrow causeway that would have afforded a stable and well defined path across what would have otherwise been waterlogged ground.

The upper surface of this structure was identified at 0.68 metres below ground level and appeared to be relatively level and consistent with the existing ground levels. The level of this structure bears no relation to that of the existing tarmac surface across Cockhill Packhorse Bridge. This would indicate that during the Late Medieval / Post Medieval period the apex of this single span arch would have originally been more acute on it's southern approach, alternatively it is possible that access onto the bridge was stepped. Furthermore it was noted that the alignment of the causeway on it's approach to the bridge matches that of the span and not the parapets, the latter following the existing path configuration. This together with what would appear to be re-used paving stones cut down and used as coping stones would suggest that the parapets are a later addition or repair to an earlier structure.

Discussions with the present occupier of Rose Lea, Church Lane has lead to speculation that on exiting Cockhill Bridge on it's northern side the causeway proceeded on a north north eastern alignment, a linear arrangement of sandstone blockwork of a similar size and form were identified within the south western extent of Rose Lea gardens at N.G.R. 42598 45872 at approximately 0.60 metres below existing garden levels. This evidence is supported further in that no evidence of any earlier surface was identified along the track on the north side of the bridge i.e. below the existing pedestrian ginnel that leads to Church Lane.

The Demolished Building

The coursed sandstone block foundations for a load bearing building were identified at 0.38 metres below the existing tarmac surface of the ginnel (leading to Cockhill Bridge) at it's junction with Church Lane.

The sandstone block components, of this two coursed structure, each measuring up to 1.10 x 0.24 metres were aligned north north east. The stonework was roughly dressed, bedded level and dry jointed. The absence of any further walls within the north eastern extent of the excavation would suggest that it may have functioned as the north eastern gable elevation of a now demolished building. The building may well be Medieval in origin, unfortunately in the absence of any artefactual evidence attributing a date to this building is problematical. However, the occupier of the neighbouring property Rose Lea informed that during the recent renovations to the adjacent property "Marie Clare" Medieval fenestration was exposed within the gable of what otherwise would appear to be an 18th century property.

CONCLUSION

The recent archaeological watching brief conducted by Mr.K.J.Cale on behalf of Transco BG at Hampsthwaite, provided no evidence to confirm the line and form the putative Roman Road. However useful information was obtained concerning the form and nature of the Medieval causeways that serviced Hampsthwaite, together with the identification of a pre 18th century building now demolished.

The discovery of a causeway buried 0.68 m below the existing ground level is the first opportunity the archaeological fraternity have had to inspect and record these transport structures in Nidderdale. The quality of the dressed stonework and large size of these paving slabs tells us that the medieval community were sufficiently well organised and skilled to undertake such large scale civil engineering programmes and that contrary to popular belief medieval transport structures were not always crude earthen paths and un-mettalled tracks. The alignment of this feature is of note as it pre dates the existing footway and road configuration leading into Hampsthwaite from the south. It is possible that it continued to Rowden, this is of note as within the immediate vicinity of Rowden there is known to have been a Domesday Vill, this medieval settlement had disappeared by the 13th century (S.Moorhouse pers.comm). Furthermore by projecting the alignment of this road to the north north east it continues towards the property known as Hall Garth (N.G.R 42589 45889) the area attributed to be the site of the Medieval Manor House (R.Muir pers comm 1996).

It is interesting to note that a paving stone was recovered during recent groundworks to the north east of the village adjacent to the line of an existing public footpath, this may suggest the line of yet another causeway the line of which may lead from Hampsthwaite Church to Killinghall via Myres Green.

The identification of substantially sized stone foundations adjacent to Church Lane is of note as it indicates that the site was developed prior to the construction of the 18th century dwelling that presently occupies part of the site. Unfortunately the general area had been so heavily disturbed during the installation of former services that no further information could be recovered as to the nature of this building.

The watching brief has provided further, useful, details concerning the fabric of Cockhill Packhorse Bridge. It can be confirmed that the copings and possibly the parapets of this structure post date the span of the bridge. The copings being re-used and cut down causeway pavement slabs that were almost certainly added following the disuse of the pavement surface.

A very small assemblage of pottery, cable and miscellaneous metalwork was identified during these works, all of which was modern and as such the finds were not retained. A single, complete paving stone was removed from site and discussions are presently being held regarding it's future curation with Nidderdale Museum, Pateley Bridge.

APPENDIX A

Service Trench Excavations

Trench A

Type: Service: machine cut:
N.G.R: 42589 45884 - 42595 45878

Length: 90 m
Width: 0.40 m
Depth: 0.85 m

Planform: Liner
Aligned: North West

Context No's: 900 - 904
Plate No: -
Fig. No: 1

The service trench was excavated into the highway between Hall Garth and the Village Green. The track was situated adjacent to the kerb. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The tarmac road (context 900) surface was bedded on a substantial subbase of limestone hardcore (context 901). The hardcore Chipping's were overlying a concrete slab (context 902) that appeared to run the entire length of the trench and was identified in opposing sections of the trench, the surface of the concrete was identified at 0.38m below the existing ground level, the surface of which mirrored that of the existing ground levels. It would appear that the concrete had been deposited as a substantial sub base prior to the construction of the existing road surface. The concrete was in turn bedded on a layer of disturbed ground (context 903), this layer of dark grey brown sandy loam (10YR3/2) measured up to 0.22m deep and contained a high quantity of inclusions dominated by crushed and broken brick, sandstone fragments together with water worn gravel's and pebbles. This layer contained a small assemblage of 19th century pottery. The layer had been cut and disturbed during the installation of modern services, the majority of which transected the line of the trench on a north eastern alignment. The disturbed ground was overlying the sub soil (context 904). This layer of light brown (10 YR 4/4) sandy clay was moist and well compacted with a granular and gritty matrix. The layer contained a low to moderate quantity of inclusions, of water worn pebbles, cobbles and sand blotching these were well mixed throughout the layer. The sub soil had been cut and disturbed during the installation of former services. The required excavation depth for the trench was achieved within this layer.

No archaeological features or deposits were identified within this trench.

Trench B

Type: Service: machine excavated
N.G.R: 42595 45884 - 42596 45876

Length: 26 m
Width: 0.40 m
Depth: 0.85 m

Planform: Liner
Aligned: North West

Context No's: 1000 - 1004
Plate No: -
Fig. No: 1

The service trench was excavated into the Village Green. The track traversed the north eastern area of this triangular area of managed lawn from the Birstwith Road to Church Lane, running parallel and to the south west of a existing tarmac footway. The existing ground levels fall on a gradual slope, this same aspect runs into the village to the west. In advance of the excavation of the trench three trial holes were excavated across the green in order to ascertain the nature of the buried ground levels and the existence of any existing services.

The trail holes each measured 1.0m x 0.30m x 0.90m and were machine excavated. The stratigraphy within each was as that later identified within the line of the Trench B.

The turf (context 1000) surface of the green was bedded on a layer of topsoil (context 1001), this dark brown (10 YR 3/2) loam measured up to 0.20 m in depth and had a loose friable matrix with low quantity of inclusion dominated by root. Within the central and south eastern extent of the trench the layer sealed the surface of the sub soil. However within the north western extent of the trench for a distance of 1.80m a buried track or yard surface (context 1002) was identified immediately beneath the topsoil. The surface of this feature was identified very close, 0.12 m, below the existing ground level. The structure was made of a concentration of water worn pebbles measuring up to 0.08 m in size, these were intermixed with a loam matrix that had percolated through any voids within the surface. The overall depth of the feature measured 0.18m. The track was bedded on a layer of buried top soil (context 1003) this dark brown (10 YR 3/2) layer of loam measured up to 0.26m in depth, the layer was moist and soft with a low quantity of inclusions. It would appear that the extent of the layer mirrored that of the overlying trackway, unfortunately no finds were identified within either the matrix of the track or the buried top soil deposits, however the form and nature of these deposits would suggest a 18th / 19th century date, the alignment of the feature could not be established other to confirm that it was not south east. The layer was bedded on the sub soil.

The sub soil (context 1004) dominated the stratigraphy within the trench and was identified within 0.24 m of the existing ground level. This light brown (10 YR 4/4) clayey silty sand was moist and well compacted with a granular and gritty matrix. The layer contained a low to moderate quantity of inclusions, of water worn pebbles, cobbles and sand blotching these were well mixed throughout the layer. The sub soil had the appearance and characteristics of a deposit of alluvial drift. The required excavation depth for the trench was achieved within this layer.

Trench C

Type: Service:machine excavated
N.G.R: 42595 45878 - 42599 45870

Length: 78 m
Width: 0.65 m
Depth: 0.85 m

Planform: Curvilinear
Aligned: South East

Context No's: 2000 - 20004
Plate No: 1
Fig. No: -

The service trench was excavated across Church Lane and down the narrow ginnel between Hampsthwaite School and Cockhill Packhorse Bridge. The track was situated adjacent to the north eastern side of the ginnel. The existing ground levels were relatively level, rising very gently to the south east and surfaced in tarmac.

The tarmac road (context 2000) surface was bedded on a substantial subbase of limestone hardcore (context 2001), measuring 0.18m in depth. The hardcore Chipping's were overlying a layer of disturbed ground (context 2002) this medium brown (10 YR 3/4) loamy sand was moist and loosely compacted with a moderate to high quantity of inclusions. The inclusions were dominated by water worn cobble, grit, sandstone fragments together with water worn gravel's and pebbles. This layer was characteristic of a disturbed sub soil. The layer had been cut and disturbed during the installation of modern services. The disturbed ground was overlying the sub soil, beneath the footway on the south eastern side of Church Lane structural remains were identified, these were butted by context 2002.

The structure (context 2003) consisted of roughly dressed sandstone blockwork, two courses high, dry jointed and aligned north west. This feature was identified within the south east facing section of the trench directly beneath the existing boundary wall of the front yard serving the property known as Marie Clare. The surface of these structural remains was identified at 0.38m below the existing ground level. The sandstone blocks were bedded directly onto a layer of what appeared to be disturbed sub soil (context 2002). The fragments of masonry measured up to 1.10 m x 0.48 m. The feature had the characteristics of a foundation for a load bearing wall. The extent of this former building could not be established, the surrounding area had been heavily disturbed during the installation of former services.

The stratigraphy within the remaining section of the trench i.e. that running down the ginnel to Cockhill Packhorse Bridge was dominated by sub soil, the upper levels of which had been heavily disturbed during the installation of former services. Towards the south eastern extent of the trench at N.G.R. 42599 45870 a layer of disturbed ground (context 2004) was identified that may be of archaeological interest. This deposit of dark brown (10 YR 3/2) sandy loam was identified within the opposing sections for approximately 5 m.

The moist well compacted layer contains a high quantity of inclusions dominated by water worn pebble and cobbles, these were well mixed throughout the layer. The surface of this layer was identified beneath the modern sub base at 0.15m and continued into the base of excavation. Although devoid of finds the layer had the appearance of a Medieval or Post Medieval occupation level, this would seem very likely given it's close proximity to the Packhorse Bridge.

The sub soil (context 2005) consisted of a light brown (10 YR 4/4) sandy silty clay that was moist and well compacted with a granular and gritty matrix. The layer contained a low to moderate quantity of inclusions, of water worn pebbles, cobbles and sand blotching these were well mixed throughout the layer. The upper surface of the sub soil had been cut and disturbed during the installation of former services. The required excavation depth for the trench was achieved within this layer.

Trench D

Type: Service: machine cut
N.G.R: 42599 45870 - 42590 45867

Length: 50 m
Width: 0.40 m
Depth: 0.90 m

Planform: Liner
Aligned: South

Context No's: 3000 - 30005
Plate No: 1
Fig. No: -

The service trench was excavated into the highway between Cockhill Beck and Hollins Lane. The northern extent of the trench was excavated into a small triangular shaped lawn area adjacent to Cockhill Packhorse bridge, this area of the excavation had been heavily disturbed due to large number of former services and as a result was devoid of archaeology. The remainder and majority of the trench was excavated into the tarmac surface of the service road that affords access to the Doctors Surgery and the Village Hall. The southern and central area of the trench had been pre excavated with the Kukla cutting machine, the northern extent was excavated by conventional mechanical means. The existing ground levels rise on a gentle to moderate gradient to the south.

The tarmac road (context 3000) surface was bedded on a substantial subbase of limestone hardcore (context 3001). The hardcore chipping's were overlying a layer of disturbed ground (context 3002). This layer of grey brown (10 YR 3/3) loamy sand was loosely compacted with a high quantity of inclusions that were dominated by water worn pebbles and limestone chipping's that were well mixed throughout the matrix. The surface of the layer was identified at 0.28m below the existing ground level. The layer contained modern finds and had been cut and disturbed by modern services, it is assumed that this layer had been spread across the area as land fill in order to make up ground levels associated with the construction of Hampsthwaite Village Hall and car park. In the northern half of the trench this layer sealed a deposit of alluvial sediment (context 3003) a grey orange brown (10 YR 4/4) clayey silty sand that was moist and well compacted with a low to moderate quantity of inclusions. The surface of this layer was identified at 0.46m below the existing ground levels. The layer had the appearance of naturally accumulated alluvial deposits, possibly associated with the repeated flooding of Cockhill Beck.

Towards the central area of the trench this layer tapers out and the ground levels are made up with a former road or track surface (context 3004). The surface of this structure was identified at 0.33m below the existing ground level and consists of a water worn cobbles and pebbles, the layer measure 0.22m deep. The surface was well compacted and rises on a similar gradient, to the south, as the existing ground levels. The structure was bedded directly on to the natural sub soil. This feature appears to be a former track surface, however, it is unusual that it terminates 16 m short of Cockhill Packhorse Bridge, suggesting that it may have never serviced the bridge directly but rather may have been a service track or yard surface on the southern side of the beck. The date of this structure was not established.

To the north of this feature an earlier transport structure was identified, a 14 m length of paved causeway (context 3005). This thoroughfare had been formed from large blocks of worked sandstone, the average size of which measured 0.68 x 0.44 x 0.15 metres, the upper surface of each was smooth and dished as a result of repeated ware. The sandstone had a moderately coarse matrix with a yellow pink hue. The paving blocks were arranged edge to edge in a linear fashion, the joints between the blockwork was tight with no mortar pointing or bedding. The structure was bedded directly onto the natural sub soil. The greater length of the feature was identified towards the base of the trench at 0.68 m below the existing ground level, and was identified within the opposing sections of the trench.

The surface of which mirrored that of the existing ground level. The greater majority of the feature that was inspected had been cut and removed by the Kukda trenching machine, however towards the northern extent of the trench a small number of complete paving stones were extracted. It was noted that towards the southern extent of the trench the line of the causeway veers off to the south south east. The level of this structure bears no relation to that of the existing tarmac surface across Cockhill Packhorse Bridge.

The natural sub soil (context 3006) was identified within the base of the excavation, this orange brown (7.5YR 4/6) clayey silt was water saturated and anaerobic in places. The layer contained a low quantity of inclusions, with occasional water worn pebbles.