H.B.M.C.
Mill Yard,
Fountains Abbey,
Ripon,
N. Yorks.

Report on a watching brief conducted by H.B.M.C.E. on behalf of Yorkshire Water in the vicinity of Fountains Park, near Ripon, N. Yorks.

Project name:Harlow Hill Treated Water Main Extension to Ripon.
Contractor: Yorkshire Contracting Pipelines Ltd.
Agent:Yorkshire Water.

The watching brief conducted by H.B.M.C. covered a period which began on the 2nd August, 1990 ,and continued until 12th, November, 1990. The course of the TW main crossed the area of Fountains Park (an area to the south-west of Fountains Abbey) and extended as far south as Watergate Farm on Watergate Road. In effect, archaeological recording by H.B.M.C. began at the point where the TW main left National Trust property to the north of Rookery Wood, crossing Fountains Road and entering the western Skell valley.

The course of the TW main was to bring it in close proximity to one Scheduled Monument- that of Park House Fish Ponds, a group of several well preserved fish ponds with some evidence of related smoke-house structures (Area 9 on the accompanying diagram).

One piece of Medieval pottery was recovered - a jug handle from Area 9 - but apart from this one piece of pottery no other objects of archaeological importance were observed. Deposits of possible significance to the archaeologist were recorded at Park House and will be referred to below (see pages 3 and 4 ).

In view of the general absence of archaeological deposits, the bulk of this report consists of topographic and geological information derived from observations of the open pipe trench. I have divided the course of the TW main into sixteen areas, numbered from north to south, which appeared to be distinct zones at the time of the watching brief.

AREA 1. Fountains Road.
Excavated by JCB. No sign of the Medieval road below the modern surface. An earlier, modern surface was observed 150mm below the present surface. At the west side of the road a large stone-lined drain was observed. This comprised unconsolidated sandstone blocks and some limestone all of which appeared to be re-used monastic masonry. It is impossible to give a specific date to this feature but it is likely to be post-medieval. On examination the drain was found to be in good condition, although with torch light it was possible to discern some blockages of mixed detritus. Of two side walls four courses deep, with floor and roof of sandstone slabs, the drain has an aperture width of 450mm. and a total width of approximately 1000mm. The aperture height is 600mm. and total height, 850mm. The drain is 500mm.

below the present road surface, but part of it is visible some 20 metres to the north where the verge has been excavated and the drain partially re-built.

AREA 2. South of Fountains Road to crest of Skell Valley. North side.
1) Top-soil,turf. 0 - 200mm.
2) Friable, mid-brown clay loam. 200 - 1400mm.
3) Large sandstone boulders in loose cobble and shale. 1400 - 2800mm.
4) Moist, mid-brown/grey sandy clay 2800 - 3000mm.

At the crest of the north side of the Skell Valley, the TW water main was taken through the crest of the hill, below an outcrop of sandstone. At this point the total depth of excavation was 4050mm..

AREA 3. Crest of valley side to valley floor.
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 500mm.
2) Friable, mid brown clay loam with frequent pebble and sandstone cobble. 500 - 1100mm..
3) Plastic , mid grey brown clay, with occasional pebble and cobble. 1100 - 2000mm..

AREA 4. Valley floor, north side of River Skell.
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 700mm.
2) Friable, mid-brown sandy clay. 700 - 1600mm.
3) Friable, mid-brown silty clay. 1600 - 2400mm.
4) Plastic, blue grey clay. 2400 - 2950mm.

AREA 5. Valley floor, south side of River Skell.
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 450mm.
2) Friable, grey brown silty clay. 450 - 2200mm.
3) Plastic, mid-dark grey clay, occasional pebble inclusions. 2200 - 3500mm.

As one proceeds further south to the valley side, layer 2 disappears and layer 3 becomes blue grey in colour, thus
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 300mm.
2) Plastic, blue grey clay. 300 - 2000mm.
Land drains evident in this layer 2.

AREA 6. Valley side to Sawley Road.
1) Top-soil, turf with frequent pebble and cobble. 0 - 500mm.
2) Plastic, blue grey clay. 500 - 1500mm.
3) Mixed deposit of blue grey clay and shale. 1500 - 1800mm.
The clay deposits in layer 2 comprise several narrow bands of clay upto 300mm. thick, divided by black/ dark brown humic material. These humic deposits are very thin, approximately 1mm. forming a "skin" on the underside of the clay layers and probably illustrate several phases of peri-glacial activity.
Half-way up the valley side is a break of slope, caused by a horizontal sandstone shelf, upto 1000mm. deep.

AREA 7. Sawley Road.
No evidence of Medieval road surface. Modern surface is 220mm. deep. A large connection pit was dug on the south side of this road which provided a useful geological section.
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 160mm.
2) Friable, mid brown clay loam. 160 - 750mm.
3) Friable, mid brown clay loam with frequent cobble and pebble inclusions. 750 - 1200mm.
4) Loose light brown grey gritty sand with 10% pebble inclusions. 1200 - 1600mm.
5) Loose gravel, pea grit. 1600 - 1650mm.
6) Same as 4. 1650 - 1950mm.
7) Loose gravel. 1950 - 2050mm.
8) Loose light brown grey lightly gritty to fine sand. 2050 - 2550mm.
This "banding" effect is a further survival of peri-glacial activity.

AREA 8. Sawley Road to Park House Fish Ponds.
Although the gate posts on either side of the drive are listed structures, the Monk Wall at either side of this entrance is a thoroughly modern re-build, incorporating a variety of stone. The TW main was passed beneath the western part of the wall, and follows the line of the track to the fish ponds, but on the west side of this track.
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 400mm.
2) Friable, light brown sandy clay with occasional pebble. 400 - 1100mm.
3) Friable, mid brown sandy clay with occasional cobble. 1100 - 1700mm.
The western edge of this field is marked by a raised hedge on a stoney bank. To the west of this hedge the neighbouring field is at a much lower level, believed to have been caused by Medieval quarrying.
Ridge and furrow survives in the field to the east of the track way referred to above.

AREA 9. Park House Fish Ponds.
Negotiations with Yorkshire Water established that the line of the TW main should lie adjacent to the existing hedge line , to the east of the area designated as a Scheduled Monument. The contractors were advised that they would only be permitted to excavate a trench of one bucket's width, that is a maximum of 1800mm.. To reduce the damage caused by vehicular movement during the removal of soil, the contractors were instructed to place the spoil to the side of the trench.
Top-soiling began at the north end of Park House, adjacent to the modern field gate. It was immediately apparent that a large area of cobble lay below the top-soil at a depth of 600mm..
An area of cobble, pebble and sandstone frags. upto 250 x 120 x 110mm. extended north-south along the trench from the gate way. The surface was in a friable, grey mid-brown clay loam, which bore traces of disturbance through root action. The stone surface comprised 70% of an area 19.70 metres long ; beyond 19.70 metres

the cobble surface comprised 50% of the area exposed, until it gradually petered out at 22 metres from the gate. The heaviest cobbling was in evidence adjacent to the modern gate which may indicate recent re-surfacing.
After brief excavation and cleaning it became apparent that the cobble surface comprised upto three layers at the north end, becoming progressively thinner towards the south. The southern edge of the surface crossed the trench diagonally from north - east to south - west suggesting that the cobble surface enters Park House from the north-east.
Twenty two metres to the south of this surface a second cobble and pebble feature was observed which crossed the trench at right angles. This feature measured 1650mm. east - west, but was broader on the west side of the trench, becoming progressively thinner as it crossed the trench whilst containing more pebble and less cobble.
Nineteen metres to the south of this feature, a third pebble and cobble feature was observed which also crossed the trench at right angles. This feature was a linear deposit of cobble in two rows, with smaller pebble in the centre. The feature was 1000mm. wide. Both of linear cobble features referred to above were laid on the surface of the sub-soil.
To the east of the excavated area, adjacent to the hedge it was possible to detect continuations of the two cobble features latterly described above. Several cobbles can still be observed protruding through the top-soil / turf continuing a line which passes underneath the hedge. Discrete probing through the thin top-soil established that the cobble features continued into the field to the west of the excavated area.
These two alignments of cobble clearly pre-date the existing hedge. Their relationship to any presumed medieval surface is less clear. The fact that both alignments rest on the sub-soil, and in places protrude through the turf may suggest (but not confirm) that these are early modern features.
Both features were of unconsolidated, uneven material with no evidence of mortar or other building materials, or evidence of post and stake holes. It must be concluded that these features are unlikely to have any structural significance. It is possible that these two features indicate hedge lines or divisions which have now been superceded; or rudimentary field drains which drain the slopes to the east of the hedge line.
In general the stratigraphy of Area 9 was as follows:
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 400mm.
2) Friable light brown sandy clay with occasional pebble. 400 - 1100mm.
3) Friable , mid brown sandy clay with occasional cobble. 1100 - 1700mm.
The single piece of medieval pottery retrieved from Park House has been identified as a jug handle of Northern Reduced Ware, of a probable fifteenth century date.

AREA 10. Field to south of Fish Ponds,and east of Medieval Bank and Ditch.
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 50mm.
2) Friable, light brown sandy clay with occasional pebble. 50 -

1100mm.
3) Friable, mid brown sandy clay with occasional cobble. 1100 - 1700mm.
4) Frequent loose cobble. 1700 - 2000mm.
At the junction of areas 9 and 10 it is possible to discern the existence of a track way which leads to the bank and ditch to the south of the fish ponds. This track enters the south side of Park House from the east. To the east of the excavated area, at the junction of areas 9 and 10 this track is visible as a sunken way, a bank of which survives at this junction below the existing hedge. To preserve this landscape feature the contractors were instructed to tunnel underneath it below sub-soil level. If the large cobble surface observed in area 9 is a track-way , it would appear that Park House could be approached along two track-ways leading to the north and south ends of the site respectively.

AREA 11. Hillside to Broad Oak Wood.
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 200mm.
2) Friable, dark brown grey clay loam, with frequent cobble and root action. 200 - 700mm.
3) Friable, mid brown orange clay loam, with frequent pebble and cobble. Land drains evident. 700 - 1100mm.
4) Friable, mid - dark brown clay loam with frequent pebble. 1100 - 1600mm.
5) Plastic, mid grey clay. 1600 - 2300mm.

AREA 12. Hill top adjacent to Dean Wood and Foal Cote Farm.
New TW main runs alongside original main in heavily disturbed ground. Stratigraphy similar to area 11.

AREA 13. South facing hill-side to Monk Wall, adjacent to Forget-Me-Not-Wood.
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 500mm.
2) Friable, light brown sandy clay loam, with frequent pebble. 500 - 1000mm.
3) Very waterlogged blue grey clay to 2000mm.
New main runs alongside original main in disturbed ground.

AREA 14. Monk Wall.
Area of Monk Wall to be dismantled for TW main has been dismantled and rebuilt several times, most recently when the original main was put in place. The wall is of rough dry-stone construction, six to seven courses high. Further to the west of the disturbed area, Monk Wall survives in a state similar to that of the Abbey Precinct Wall.

AREA 15. Monk Wall to hill bottom, Watergate Farm.
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 500mm.
2) Friable, light- mid brown sandy clay loam, with frequent pebble. 500 - 2000mm.
3) Plastic grey clay. 2000 - 3000mm.

AREA 16. Hill slope, Watergate Farm to Watergate Road.
1) Top-soil, turf. 0 - 400mm.
2) Friable, light- mid brown sandy clay loam, with frequent

pebble. 400 - 1700mm.

Conclusion

The scarcity of archaeological remains over the area supervised is initially surprising. The evidence from Park House suggests that a re-metalled track way approaches the site from the north-east. This track is likely to be of Medieval origin. The nature of the linear features must remain in doubt, except to conclude that they are unlikely to be of Medieval origin. However, the scarcity of material from Park House illustrates the fact that the negotiations to move and restrict the course of the TW main had positive , non-destructive results. Generally, the scarcity of remains suggests that the area of Fountains Park has always been farm land, and may in fact demonstrate that the Medieval grange landscape is still intact in this area.

The survival of peri-glacial features in areas 6 and 7 indicates the likely survival of areas in the Skell valley suitable for pollen analysis and core sampling.

All finds and the photographic record are currently held at the H.B.M.C. Site office, Fountains Abbey.

Keith Emerick

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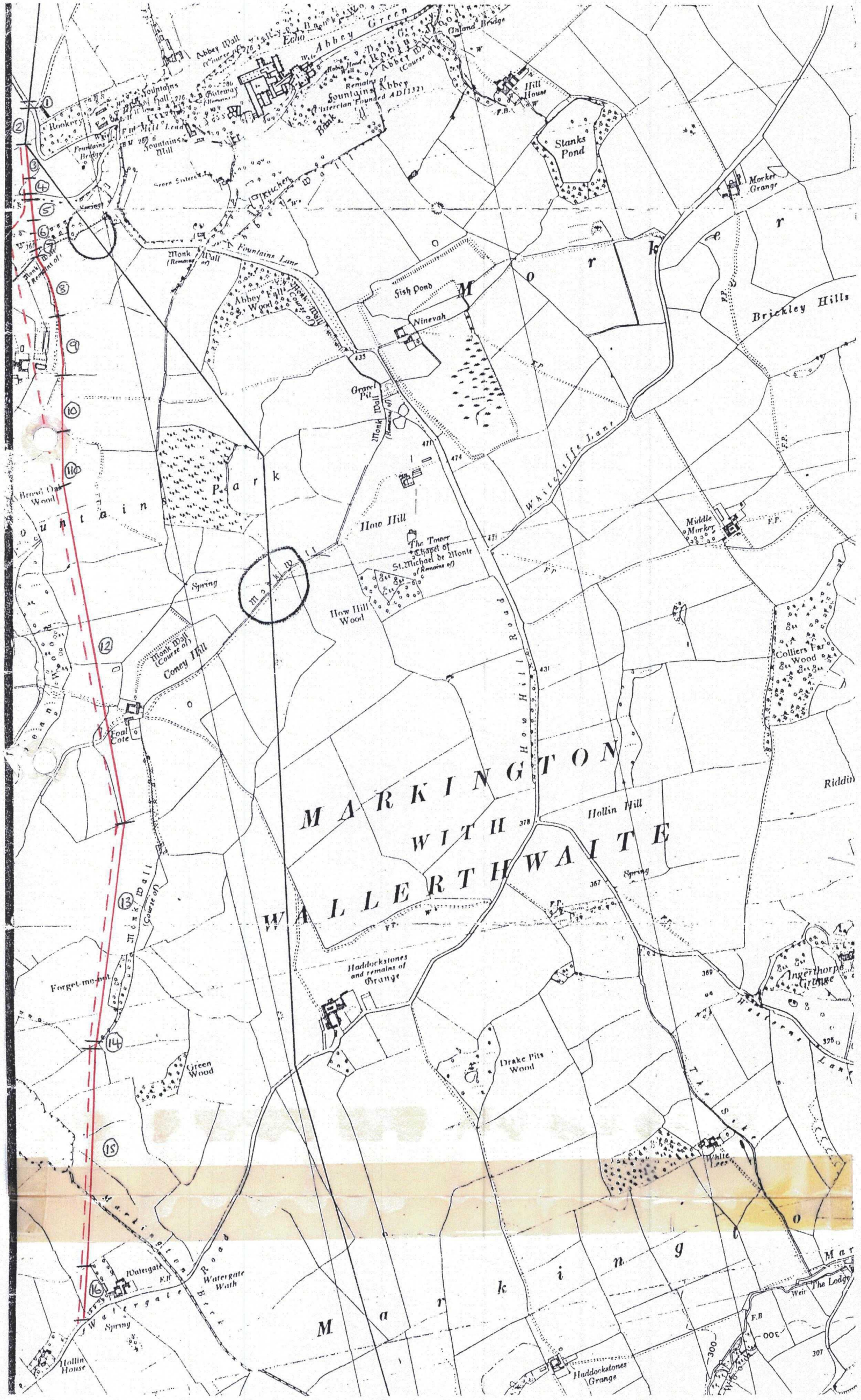
Abbey Green
Abbey Wall
Echo
Clifford Bridge
Remains of Fountains Abbey Cistercian Founded AD1132
Hill House
Stanks Pond
Morker Grange
Brickley Hills
Rookery
Fountains Hall
Fountains Mill
Fountains Bridge
Mill Leat
Gateway
Kitchen
Fountains Lane
Monk Wall (Remains of)
Abbey Park Wood
Monk Wall (Course of)
Fish Pond
Ninevah
Gravel Pit
Whitcliffe Lane
Broad Oak Wood
Howe Hill
The Tower + Chapel of St. Michael de Monte (Remains of)
Spring
How Hill Wood
How Hill Road
Middle Morker
F.P.
Colliers Far Wood
Coney Hill
Coal Cote
MARKINGTON WITH WALLERTHWAITE
Hollin Hill
Riddin
Forget-me-not
Haddockstones and remains of Grange
Drake Pits Wood
Green Wood
Ingerthorpe Grange
Watergate
Watergate Beck
Watergate Wath
Hollin House
White Lees
The Lodge
Haddockstones Grange
ACTUAL COURSE OF TW MAIN
COURSE OF ORIGINAL MAIN