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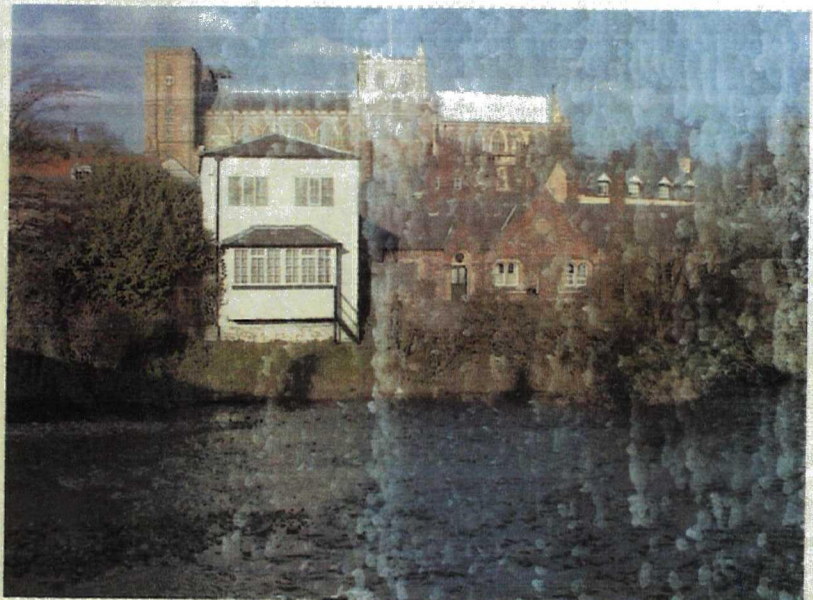


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**RIPON FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME,  
NORTH YORKSHIRE**



**REPORT ON AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
DESK TOP STUDY**

2002 FIELD REPORT  
NUMBER 60

**IN FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME  
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
DESK TOP STUDY**

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## ABSTRACT

*This archaeological desk top study carried out by York Archaeological Trust in November 2002 identified the potential for significant archaeological deposits surviving as earthworks or concealed close to the modern ground surface which could be disturbed by aspects of the proposed scheme for flood defences around Ripon. It recognised the potential importance of these deposits which may date from the prehistoric to the post-medieval period and has made recommendations for a further stage of archaeological advice when a more specific scheme of works has been devised and suggested that evaluation excavation and very close archaeological monitoring is likely to be required where deposits are to be disturbed.*

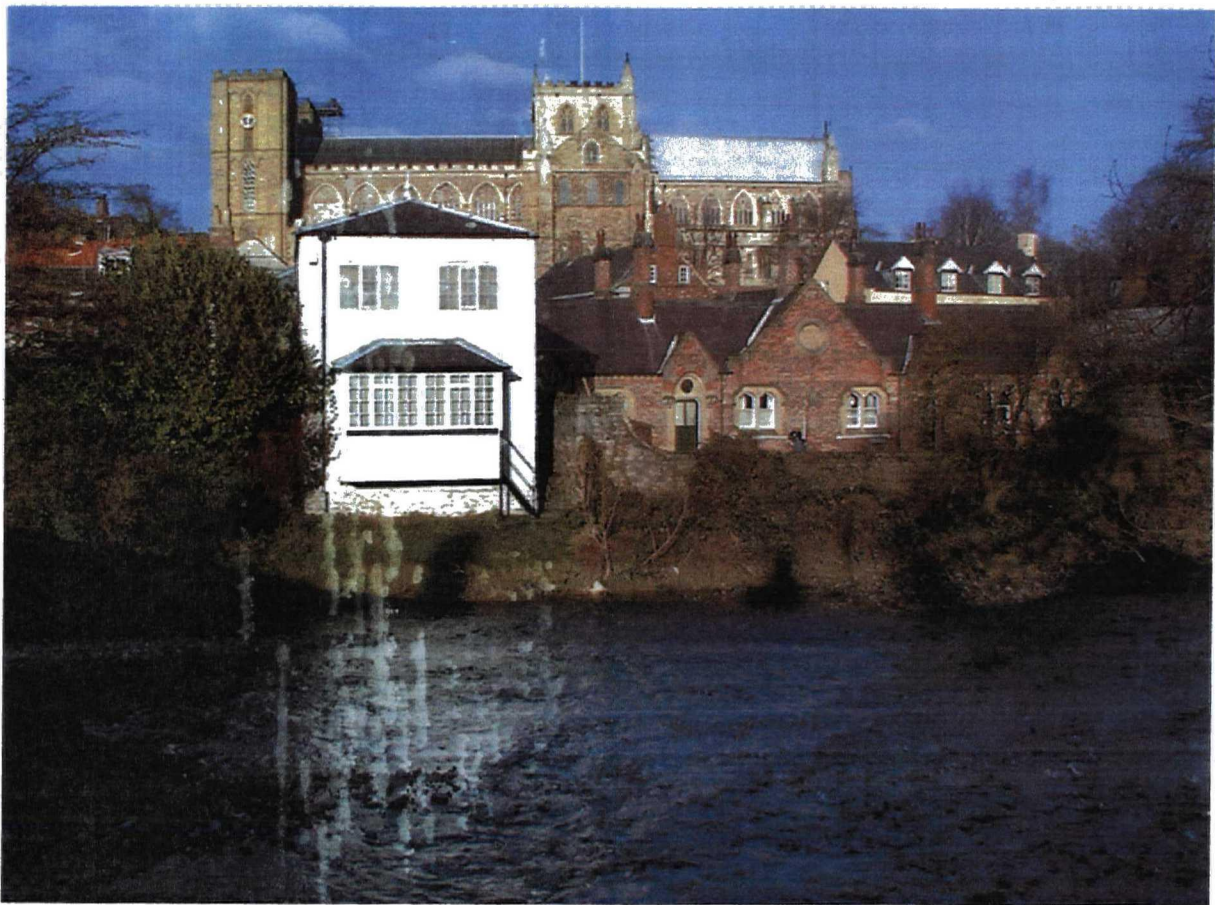


Plate 1. Site of early medieval-medieval bridge and ford crossing of the Skell downstream from New Bridge, looking north towards the Minster

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In November 2002, York Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological assessment of an area of land covered by a feasibility study for a proposed scheme for flood alleviation around Ripon, North Yorkshire (Figure 1). The study was undertaken for the Halcrow Group Limited on behalf of the Environment Agency to provide background historical and archaeological information to inform the design for a flood alleviation scheme with the aim of minimising disturbance to historical and archaeological features.

A variety of sources were used to assess the significance of the study area, these included cartographic and documentary evidence, aerial photographs, published and unpublished archaeological reports and books, the North Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Records, the National Monuments Record and the Listed Building Records.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This assessment considers all the relevant archaeological information within the study area and makes reference to important sites close to the study area. The historical and archaeological background to the area was studied via a variety of media. The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) of North Yorkshire County Council was consulted to identify the location of any known archaeological monuments and finds spots (archaeological records, aerial photographs, the Listed Buildings Record and maps). The National Monuments Record (NMR) at Swindon was also consulted for archaeological records. The North Yorkshire County Record Office was consulted for cartographic data (18<sup>th</sup> century to 20<sup>th</sup> century). Published and unpublished archaeological reports and works of historical and archaeological synthesis were also consulted.

A superficial "walk-over" of the study area where public access is not restricted has been carried out. However it should be noted that some significant areas fell outside this brief examination, these included army property and training areas where access is denied and land where specific permission to gain access would have to be sought from landowners.

Research notes are currently stored by York Archaeological Trust under the York Archaeological Trust accession code YORAT:2002.11.

Information relating to the known archaeological sites and those with potential for surviving archaeological remains in the study area is presented in gazetteer form in Appendices 1-3 along with accompanying plans, Figs 7-11.

## **3. LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

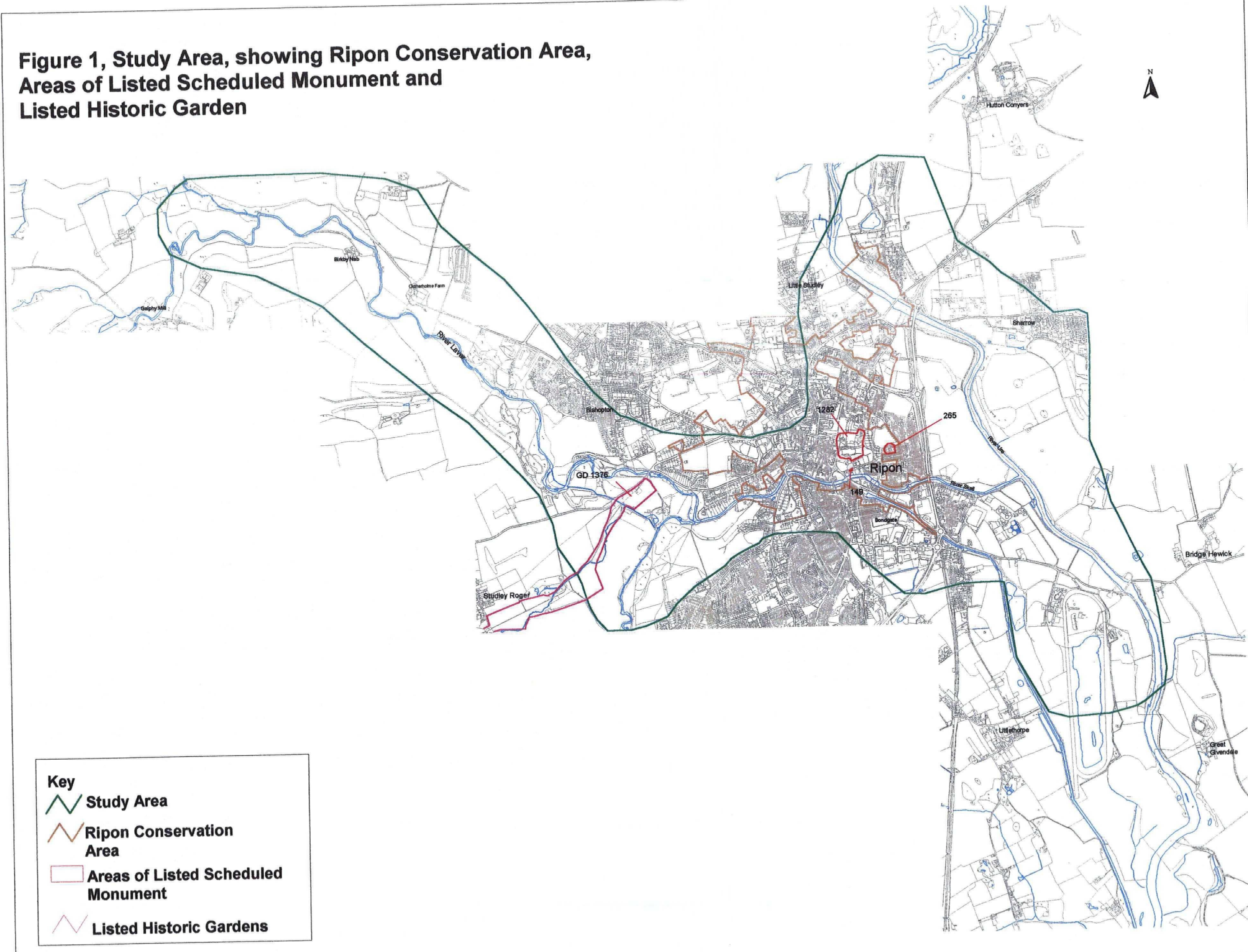
The study area is c. 9.15km square, and extends for c. 4km along the Ure valley, c. 2.5km along the Skell valley and c. 4km along the Laver valley, centering on the city of Ripon. The north western extent of the area lies at SE 2715 7297 on the Kex Beck which runs south into the River Laver, extending along the valley of the River Laver to its confluence with the River Skell at SE 4304 7070. The area followed up the valley the River Skell in a southerly direction to SE 2997 7000 and included the tributary water running into the Skell from a point close to the Rose Bridge, north-east of the village of Studley Röger. The study area followed the course of the

River Skell through the city of Ripon, to its confluence with the River Ure at SE 3256 7095 at the eastern side of Ripon and extended to the north up the Ure valley to SE 3176 7304 and south, down the Ure valley to SE 3338 6945. The Skell with the Laver are tributaries to the Ure and are a sub-catchment within the Swale-Ure-Ouse system. The flood plain of the Ure incorporates defunct courses which are shown very clearly on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map.

The land ranges between the 50 and 60m contour lines each side of the Laver valley and the 40m contour on each side of the Ure valley. The solid geology underlying the area is an outcrop of Magnesian Limestone and Permian mudstone which extends in a north-south direction between the Pennines and the Vale of York. To the east of the Ure the magnesian limestone is overlain by Keuper Sandstone (Geological Survey 1979). To each side of the Ure there are also areas of gypsum which at times has caused unpredictable collapses in the ground. Overlying this solid geology are periglacial deposits of clay, sand and gravels. These deposits are not uniform, varying in depth and composition. For example, within the area of the Market Place and close by at The Arcade these periglacial deposits appeared as predominantly sand with bands of gravels (Finlayson 2000c). There are wide strips of gravel for example, running from near to Ox Close lock northwards along the west bank of the canal. Along the river valleys there are also overlying alluvial deposits, again of varying extent and depth.

Central to the study area is the core of the historic city of Ripon, extending east to an area of residential housing, light industrial, new retail development and the canal, west to the residential housing of Bishopton, the Deverell and Claro army barracks, and on the south side of the Laver an area of military training. Further west, south and north the area is more rural, pastoral and arable agricultural land incorporating individual farms but no villages. Whitcliffe Sand and Gravel Quarries to the south of the Skell and Doublestone Sand and Gravel Quarries close to the river Laver were included in the study area and there are numerous quarry holes of varying size where the sand and gravels have historically been utilised. Impinging on the south west of the study area is Studley Royal Gardens which is a part of the World Heritage site of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal.

**Figure 1, Study Area, showing Ripon Conservation Area, Areas of Listed Scheduled Monument and Listed Historic Garden**



**Key**

-  Study Area
-  Ripon Conservation Area
-  Areas of Listed Scheduled Monument
-  Listed Historic Gardens

3 Kilometers

#### 4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The study included an assessment of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) of North Yorkshire County Council (records, maps and aerial photographs), the National Monuments Record (NMR), cartographic data (18<sup>th</sup> century to 20<sup>th</sup> century), published and unpublished archaeological reports and works of historical and archaeological synthesis which related to the study area. Full details of the excavations which fall within the area are not covered by this report but findings from these archaeological investigations and an examination of the documentary and cartographic evidence for the study area is discussed below period by period. A full list of archaeological monuments is provided in Appendix 1, a full list of all of the archaeological events (investigations) is provided in Appendix 2, and of Listed Buildings in Appendix 3.

##### 4.1 Prehistoric period (to 1<sup>st</sup> century AD)

There is extensive recorded evidence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of Ripon. The area between the Swale and the Ure is clearly of significance in terms of major funerary and ritual monuments in this period. Immediately to the north and east of the study area three henge monuments, at Hutton Moor (SE 353735), Cana (SE 351718) and Nunwick (SE 323747) and numerous barrows have been identified. A "beaker" burial was discovered c. 1m below the surface in a gravel quarry at West Tanfield (SE 260779) in 1973 (Mayes, Atherden *et al*, 1986 1-4). While this site is c. 5km to the north of the study area, the material in which the well preserved buried bones were discovered; sands and gravels derived from Pleistocene outwash; is very commonly found within the study area.

Within the study area no monuments of prehistoric date have been identified to date but numerous prehistoric finds spots have been recorded here. These, often found in antiquity, have an area location rather than a pinpointed find spot. The four figure grid reference for the majority of the Neolithic and Bronze Age finds within the study area is NGR SE 31 71 and may reflect the fact that all that is known is that they were found at "Ripon". The finds included stone and bronze axes, hammers, a spearhead and a hoard of implements. A more specific location is known for an Iron Age sword which is reported to have been found in the River Laver near Clothholme ford (SE 2851 7205) (plate 2), (see Appendix 1 for full list of prehistoric finds).



Plate 2. Ford crossing of River Laver near Clothholme Farm



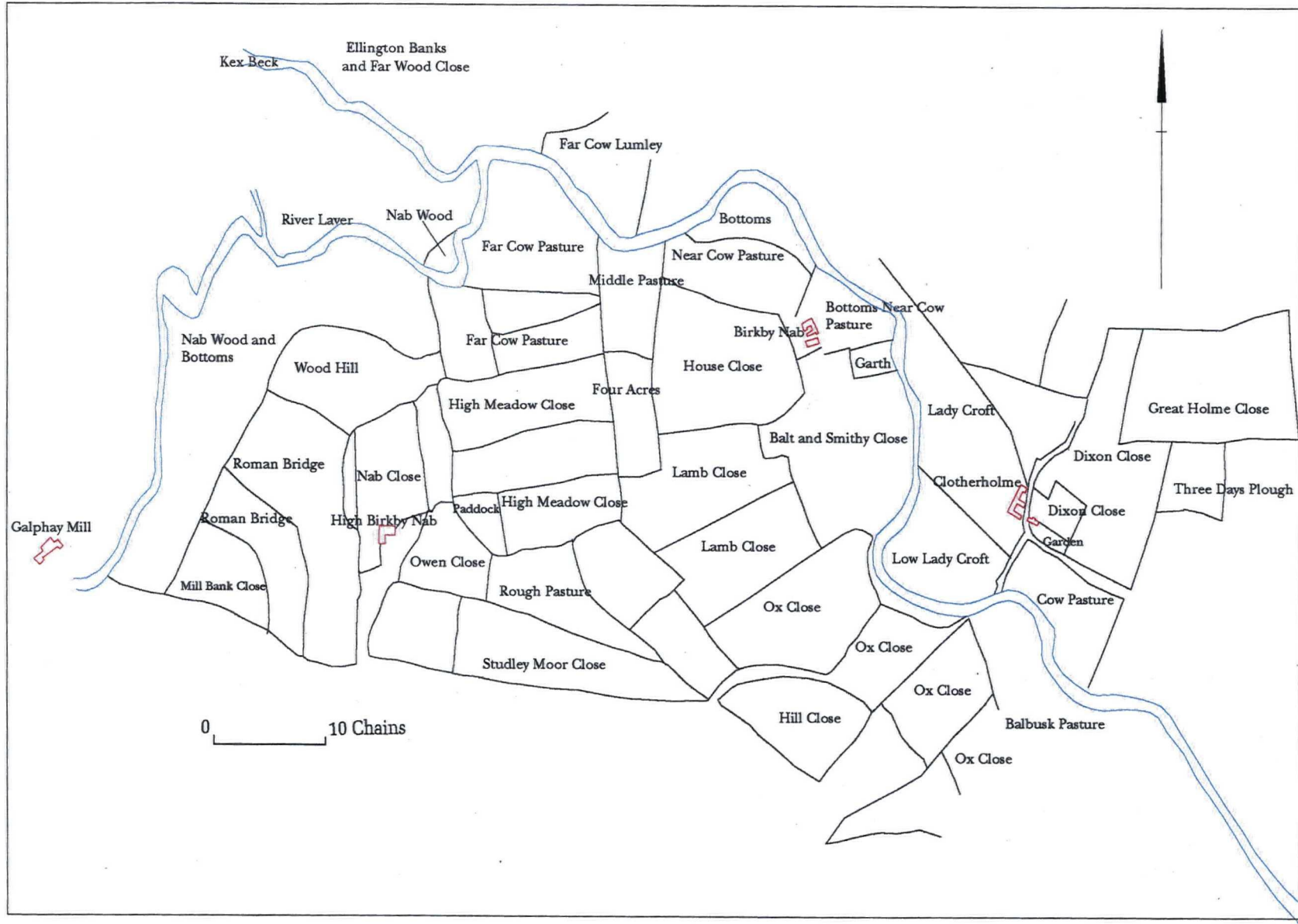


Figure 2, A copied extract from a map of the Clotherholme estate by Robert Telford, dated 1861

While specific monuments of prehistoric date have not been identified within the study area, the finds indicate the likelihood that there was early settlement here particularly when the surrounding context is considered. Prehistoric settlement is known to the north and west of Ripon, and to the south at Boroughbridge, placing the eastern extents of the study area within a possible "corridor" of movement and settlement. Immediately to the east of the study area at Copt Hewick a circular camp and a tumulus are clearly marked on the 1856 OS map. Immediately to the west of the study area on the north bank of the Laver there is an easily defended elevated plateau above Ellington Banks an area where the topography is suggestive of a defensive settlement. There is a likelihood that there may be other sites of very early settlement or temporary camps along the Laver, Skell and Ure valleys, particularly where gravel beds are found. More settled occupation may have been located on the river terraces and plains where the river valleys open out. At this type of location the evidence of early settlement by man could be obscured and preserved by an accumulation of overlying alluvial deposits. Examining the evidence overall there would seem to be a strong likelihood for the survival of the remains of prehistoric settlement within the study area although the known evidence is relatively sparse.

#### 4.2 Roman period (1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)

While there is significant archaeological evidence of Roman activity in the vicinity of Ripon, to date, little evidence from this period has been discovered within the city, other than some sherds of residual Roman pottery from excavations in the Deanery Gardens in 1977-78 (Whyman 1997, 129) and more recently, a residual Roman coin of the house of Constantine I (AD 330-47) was recovered from the excavations to the rear of Wakeman House (Finlayson 2001a, 21) and a small quantity of residual brick and part of a hypocaust flue tile from the sites of the New School at Priest Lane (McComish 2001, 46). Some antiquarian finds of this date have also been found. A stone coffin was found in 1897 near Sharrow Cross (NMR UI 53733, NYM 19811), a Roman coin (NMR UI 53746, NYM 19760) was found 3 feet deep on Skellbank in 1827, a gold brooch (NYM 19915) was found somewhere at Castle Studley and in 1844 a Roman cinerary urn (NMR UI 53795) was found somewhere on the west side of North Street although the precise location cannot be established. While these finds could indicate as yet undiscovered Roman activity in Ripon they may be later importations and do not point to any specific location for such a settlement.

Reused Roman stone work has been found within the Cathedral (NYM 19777), large pieces of Roman masonry were found within excavated parts of the remains of St Wilfrid's monastic church (Cathedral Crossing excavation, YAT, 1997). It has been suggested that the mosaic at St Mary Magdalen chapel is possibly Roman, although this is probably more likely to be of medieval date.

#### River Crossings

There is some evidence of river crossings in this period. There is a tradition of a Roman ford 50 yards downstream of North Bridge on the Ure. No direct evidence for this has been recovered, and if it was located here it may well have crossed an earlier course than that followed by the modern river (see 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map for defunct course of the River Ure).

A map of the Clotherholme estate dating from 1861 (Fig 2) marks all the field names, and while most fields have very descriptive pastoral names immediately on the south western boundary of the study area a field adjacent to High Birkby farm, running towards the river Laver is called "Roman Bridge", and the adjacent field is "Mill Bank Close". This may suggest that there was an ancient crossing of the Laver here, possibly dating from the Roman period. The adjacent field name refers to Galphy mill, immediately upstream from this point, where there is currently a bridge.

#### 4.3 Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian periods (5<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries)

Both the rivers Skell and Laver have names with possible Scandinavian derivations, Kell meaning spring and Laver, babbling brook and the River Ure is from the celtic river name Isura (Taylor 1998, 4), suggesting that these names date from this period.

The first documentary evidence for an Anglo-Saxon monastic site at Ripon dates from the 8<sup>th</sup> century when Stephen of Ripon recorded the Life of Wilfrid in c. AD 709/10 and Bede also wrote of the monastery in c. AD 730. This evidence records the foundation of a monastery by Eata and its subsequent reallocation to Wilfrid. Although there is no evidence of its layout, or an accurate location for the site, post medieval tradition suggests that Eata's monastery lay on land to the north of Residence Lane, nearby to where the Minster now stands (Hall and Whyman 1996, 140) (NMR UI 53755 and NYM 19773). The site of Wilfrid's church (NYM 19776, 19779) is that of the present Minster where the crypt is generally believed to have been built by Wilfrid because of its similarity with the crypt at Hexham which is known to be Wilfrid's. After the Norman Conquest the monastery became a part of the diocese of York and remained a significant ecclesiastical centre throughout the medieval period.

The first definitive evidence for settlement at Ripon dates to the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeological evidence of this date has been found and relates to the monastic site. Some of the archaeological evidence which has been recovered includes that from an excavation in 1955 by A. Paget-Baggs in the grounds of the former Deanery Garden Hotel. This work uncovered the foundations of a two cell church and associated cemetery believed to be the Ladykirk (NMR UI 53730, NYM 19765-69) noted by the 16<sup>th</sup> century antiquarian John Leland. The findings of the 1955 excavation suggest that there was a church and cemetery on the site by the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, and that both may have been present from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Hall and Whyman 1996, 130) (NYM 19763). What are likely to have been further remains of this cemetery were recorded on the other side of Marygate by P.Mayes in 1974. This excavation revealed eight burials aligned east-west but unfortunately no datable material was recovered. However, given their proximity to the Ladykirk excavations, it is reasonable to suggest that they are likely to form part of that cemetery associated with the small church. Evidence to support this assertion comes from a 19<sup>th</sup> century observation of skeleton under the roadway of St Marygate (Hall and Whyman 1996, 140). Further evidence of the likely continuation of this cemetery was found recently when pavement repairs in Marygate to a depth of 0.30m below ground disturbed the remains of 11 individuals including adults of both sexes, children and a newborn baby. When the soil was later sifted decorated fragments of a bone comb case, a composite bone comb and a decorated knife handle of 9<sup>th</sup> – early 11<sup>th</sup> century date were recovered and may date the bodies. When the area was cleaned and observed archaeologically a single possibly articulated burial was seen in section and this was seen to lie below the foundation of Abbott Huby's Wall (NMR UI 1057164) which dates from the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century. The furthest extents of this cemetery have not yet been established (Johnson 2001b, 7, 33).

Individual burials have been found within the curtilage of The Old Deanery and in what is now Mason's Yard. These included burials found in the course of work carried out to install bay windows on the south face of The Old Deanery in 1859. No date was attributed to these burials but Ryder suggests that they may have related to part of a medieval cemetery (Ryder 1990, 6). Recent evaluation work at the Old Deanery uncovered two inhumations. Both graves were orientated east to west and continued under the west wall of the Old Deanery. The graves predate the construction of the Old Deanery in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and the excavators have tentatively dated them as medieval on the basis of two residual sherds of medieval pottery found in the fill of a pit which cut through one of the graves (MAP 2001, 3, 9). However, since the recent excavation at the same site has revealed six more closely spaced burials which included those of children (G. Falkingham *pers comm.*) a cemetery has clearly been encountered here with, hopefully, evidence to allow it to be more closely dated.

In 1977 the area immediately to the south of Paget-Baggs site was excavated by D. Greenhaugh. A few contexts in the north-west corner of the site were identified as possibly pre-Conquest in origin and the "Ripon Jewel" dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> century was recovered here. An early medieval secular settlement in Ripon is likely to have pre-dated and grown up in association with the important ecclesiastical centre and its presence was demonstrated by excavations at Ailcy Hill (1986-87, YAT) which show that a non-monastic cemetery on the site dated from the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century. This was replaced by an all male cemetery, interpreted as a monastic burial site of 9<sup>th</sup> century date. This site, located on a mound of natural morainic material has been allocated Scheduled Monument status (no. 265) (NMR UI 53770, NYM 21611 and 19780). A coin hoard dating to this period was also located here (NMR UI 53742, NYM 19771-2). More recent excavations at the site of the new school adjacent to Ailcy Hill noted that the area had been disturbed by medieval and post medieval quarrying but pottery which dated from the 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century was recovered and some undated features are thought to have been of pre-Norman date and relate to the monastery of St Wilfrid or his successors (Johnson 1998, 31). Further excavations at this site found that some of the rubbish pits and post holes recorded may have been dated to the pre-Conquest period and a quantity of pottery from this period was found residually in later features (McComish 2001, 46).

There are documentary references to early medieval remains but no excavation evidence has been found to substantiate either the existence of burials which are mentioned by Walbran as located on Allhallows Hill or a parish church there, mentioned by Leyland, writing in the 1530's or 1540's.

Recent excavations elsewhere in Ripon imply the presence of 11<sup>th</sup> century occupation close to the Market Place. Excavation at The Arcade has demonstrated the survival of a sequence of deposits indicating occupation in the area from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Finlayson 2000b) and excavation to the rear of the Wakeman's House recorded a quarry pit reused as a rubbish pit dating from the 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century (Finlayson 2001a, 11).



Plate 3. Site of early medieval-medieval ford and bridge downstream from New Bridge, looking south

The precise pre-conquest boundaries of ecclesiastic and secular settlement and their development are not known with certainty but the findings from excavations, together with antiquarian observations and an examination of the cartographic and topographical evidence have allowed it to be suggested that the area enclosed by Allhallowgate to the north and Marygate to east, encompassing the Minster, is at the core of Wilfrid's monastery (Hall and Whyman 1996, 136-44). Similarly, the form and layout of early medieval secular settlement in Ripon is not known, but it is believed to have centered around the Allhallowgate and Stonebridgegate junction on the eastern side of the Minster. Settlement of this date has been speculated to have extended to the "area between the Cathedral and the River Skell ... and St Agnesgate may have the ancient route between the river Ure and the Skell" (Younge 1995, 9). The location of a ford (NYM 19784), used to cross the river Skell leading from High St Agnesgate in the early medieval and medieval periods, immediately downstream of the New Bridge (see Plates 1 and 3) substantiates this view. Some timbers which formed a part of this ford were disturbed during gravel shoal removal in the Skell by the Environment Agency in June/July 2001 (Darlington and Stockton Times 22/06/01). The ford was sufficiently wide to allow carts to cross the river here.

Outside the city, the remains of a base with the broken shaft of a 8<sup>th</sup> century sanctuary cross survive at Sharrow (NMR UI 53739). Although the base and shaft have been moved a few yards from their original site they provide an indication that remains of this period may not necessarily be restricted to the core of the historic city of Ripon.



Plate 4. Remains of 8<sup>th</sup> century sanctuary cross and base at Sharrow

The form or layout of early medieval Ripon is not known with certainty but settlement in this period appears to have a focus around the ridge on which the Minster stands and the mound at Ailcy Hill but it seems likely that it may have extended southwards towards a river crossing of the Skell. Almost certainly important remains from this period survive within the study area and excavation evidence has demonstrated that these remains can lie very close (in some instances within 0.30m) to the modern ground surface.

#### 4.2 Medieval period (11<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries)

There is clear evidence of ecclesiastical development from the later 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Some time before the Conquest the monastery became a Minster church with a college of canons and in the later 12<sup>th</sup> century the rebuilding of the Minster church was begun and the city may also have undergone a period of expansion at this time. The Minster today comprises fabric dating from between the early 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century, it has Grade I listed status and is a part of the Minster Close, a Scheduled Monument (number 1282) (NMR UI 53767, NMR UI 1057182, NYM 21927). The Minster sits within a walled churchyard, of which there may be some medieval remains with two gates. To the north of the Cathedral stood the Archbishops's Palace, of pre 13<sup>th</sup> century date, which was described by Leyland as a "*fair palace*". A 15<sup>th</sup> century timber framed building identified during restoration work behind the Victorian frontage at no. 27 Kirkgate (NMR UI 515650) has been identified as the probable outer gateway to this palace. The 18<sup>th</sup> century Old Court House (NMR UI 53811) is probably on the site of a medieval building forming part of the palace complex, which was the administrative centre for Ripon at this time. Adjacent to the courthouse are the footings of a possible medieval wall which may have been part of a chapel. A charter of 1228, which defines the privileges of the church, states that the church lands were bounded by Ailcy Hill, Allhallows Hill and "Prestlay", almost certainly Priest Lane. An area to the north of the palace is known as "The Archbishop's Ditch" in the medieval period and this may indicate the boundary to the palace. The western boundary may have been

identified during excavations at St Agnesgate in 1974 and a large ditch features was also identified during the Arcade excavations in 2000 which may also have been part of a boundary defining the curtilage of the palace (Finlayson 2000b, 53).

Bedern Bank is thought to have been the site of the Bedern (NMR UI 1057172, NYM 19792), domestic accommodation for the College of Vicars. The College was founded in 1414 and dissolved in 1552.

The hospital chapels, placed close to river crossings, of St Mary Magdalen (NMR UI 53758, NYM 19774-5) and St John (NMR UI 53724, NYM 19762) date from this period of expansion and the Maison Dieu and St Ann's chapel (NMR UI 53773, NYM 21573) may also have been founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. On the Bondgate approach to the Skell crossing, from the south, nothing survives above ground of St John's chapel, founded between 1109-1114; where the former Archer bridge crossed the Skell only the chancel of St Ann's hospital remains and has Scheduled Monument status (no. 149) and Grade II\* listed building status.



Plate 5. St Ann's Chapel

St Mary Magdalen's chapel on the bank of the Ure, was founded sometime between 1114-40 and the surviving south doorway dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century but the chapel building is substantially 15<sup>th</sup> century in date. After the Dissolution all three chapels became almshouses, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century St Mary's and St John's were replaced. In the 1980's St Mary Magdalen chapel was restored.



Plate 6. Mary Magdalen Hospital Chapel

Documentary evidence of 1311 suggests that there was a Hospital of St Nicholas in Bondgate (NMR UI 1346386). There is also documentary evidence for a chapel (NMR UI 53764, NYM 19823) in 1399 near to Bishopton Bridge.

At the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, in 1194, Ripon is first referred to as a borough (NMR UI 918630, NYM 19759) and MacKay argues that the royal charters for a fair and market are granted in this period indicating flourishing secular activity (MacKay 1982, 73). In 1316 Ripon is documented as a borough belonging to the Archbishop of York and in 1341 185.5 burgages (linear plots of land which survive in the modern pattern of land division within the historic city) were recorded. Excavated evidence demonstrates the survival of the remains of medieval settlement in a variety of locations in Ripon. An assessment of excavations on Low St Agnesgate by P. Mayes in 1974 and in the Deanery Gardens by D. Greenhaugh in 1977-8 revealed significant evidence of occupation and activity in this part of Ripon dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Whyman 1997, 121). In the Deanery Gardens, two timber built structures were found. The easternmost was represented by a wall slot and an internal cobbled surface. It was thought to be probably two storied, or at least have had a loft space, and could be characterised as a stable block with a likely 13<sup>th</sup> century date (*ibid*, 153). A smaller building to the east was also recorded, and although there



was less evidence on which to permit interpretation, construction techniques and ceramic dating evidence indicate it could have dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century (*ibid*). Documentary evidence from 1228 of a court case between the Ripon Chapter and the Archbishop of York makes it clear that the land in this area formed the core of the ecclesiastical holdings in Ripon and it seems probable that the structures recorded in the Deanery Gardens represent outbuildings within a precinct owned or controlled by either Ripon Chapter or the Archbishopric. These buildings, the use of which can be dated to the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century, appear to lie across Marygate, suggesting that this street was established some time after this date (*ibid*, 156).

A substantial ditch which ran parallel to Low St Agnesgate was recorded by the excavations in 1974. The ditch was subsequently deliberately infilled and a building constructed across it. The building is later demolished and its footings were found to have been sealed by a cobbled yard which incorporated a stone-lined drain. This sequence ran from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century but the surviving site archive did not allow artefact assemblages to be linked with specific recorded strata (*ibid*). Whyman's interpretation of the excavation evidence from the site at Low St Agnesgate and The Deanery Gardens suggests that the ditch may have formed the boundary of the pre 13<sup>th</sup> century ecclesiastical precinct, that the construction of a building was likely to have been contemporary with the establishment of a thoroughfare along the line of St Marygate and Low St Agnesgate. He suggests that evidence hints at a major reorganization of settlement and street plan in the 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century and also implies modifications to the layout of ecclesiastical property holdings to the north of the Minster. A stratified sequence of medieval features over the greater part of the excavated area with the date range late 11<sup>th</sup> to the late 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century was uncovered immediately beneath a modern garage construction at 4 Stonebridgegate. The excavators here postulate that the site was levelled during the late 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century fitting the pattern of development proposed by Whyman in 1997 (OSA 2000, 21-22). Excavations at The Arcade revealed a number of structural features and rubbish pits typical of burgrave plots and dating from the 12<sup>th</sup>- 14<sup>th</sup> century (Finlayson 2000b, 50). Further evidence of medieval occupation has been demonstrated by excavations to the rear of Wakeman's House where the sequence of stratified deposits dated from the 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century (Finlayson 2001a, 28). Recent investigations within the Market Place have uncovered a cobble surface, structural features and layers of accumulation above the surface dating to the medieval period (Finlayson 2000c, 18). These strata were confirmed and more extensively examined by later large scale excavation of the area when additionally a boundary ditch aligned north-south which predated the medieval cobbled surface was found along the eastern side of the present Market Place. This ditch was then subsequently replaced by a smaller gully (Carne 2001, 1).

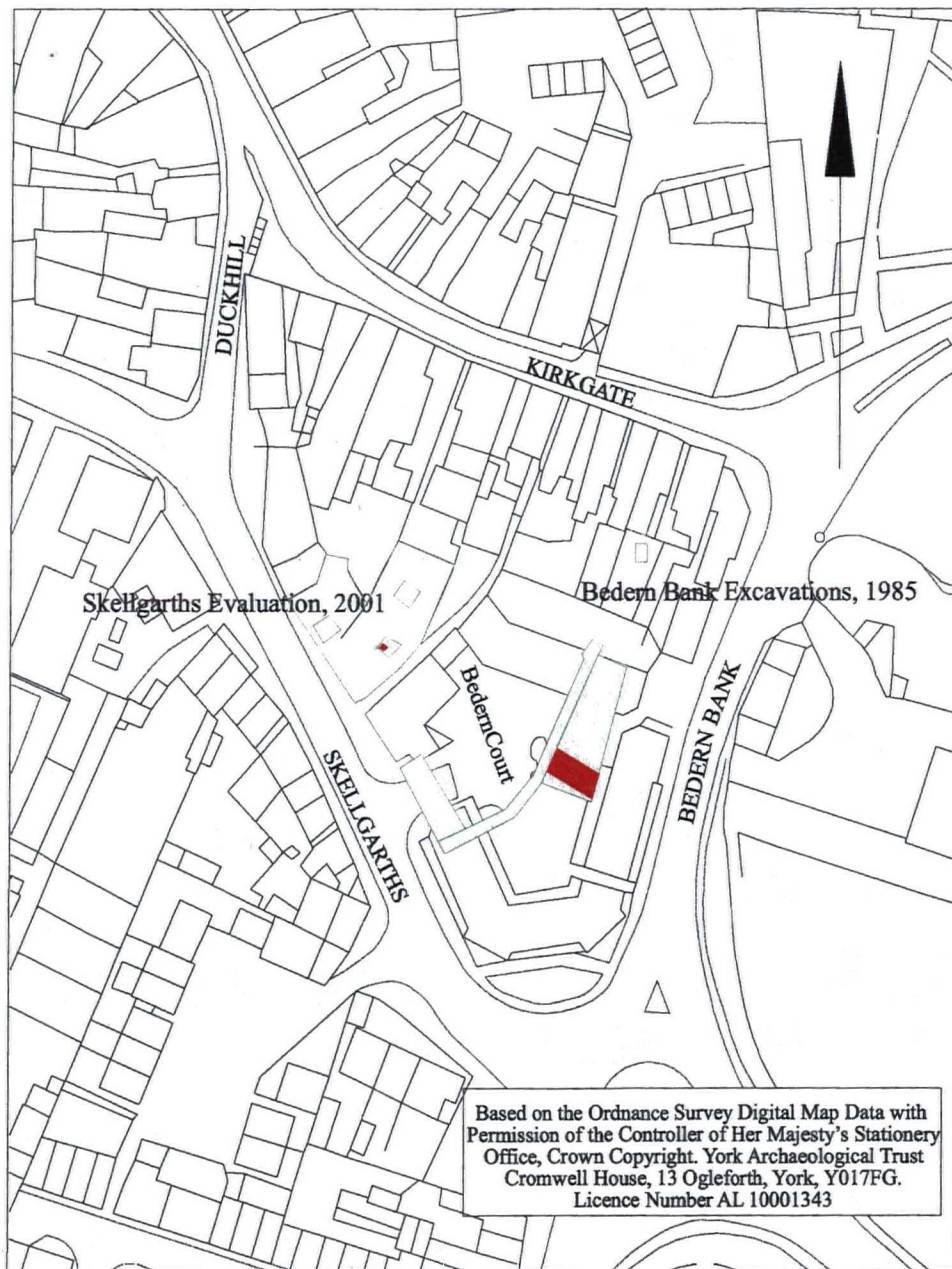
The majority of the features excavated in the main excavation area on the site of the New School, Priest Lane were medieval in date and consisted of a number of property boundaries, build ups of horticultural soil and rubbish pits. The overall pattern of land use on this site appears to have been of open ground up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century when the area was divided into smaller plots or fields (McComish 2001, 46).

Excavations at Bedern Bank in 1985 indicated that this area of Ripon was also occupied in the medieval period. They show that "*in the early medieval period the Bedern Bank site was mainly occupied by a broad meander of the River Skell (see Fig 3). Evidence was found to show that in the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century the river banks had been revetted by timber stakes and a terrace wall had been built. Two stone lined hearths were found set in an open area between the bank and the wall. On the upper terrace 3-4m above the stream and opposite the western front of the Minster no occupation levels survived. During the 13<sup>th</sup> century water was drained from the*

lower terrace, probably by the construction of a mill stream which in the post medieval period ran alongside Skellgarths. Reclamation dumps extending across the stream beds were rich in well preserved organic materials (including several shoes and a wooden bowl) and had been deposited in order to raise the ground level so that the area could be used as a garden or orchard. By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the site had been divided into a number of separate properties with houses built against Bedern Bank and tan yards against the mill stream. The tanning industry was represented by liming pits, waste horn cores and clay floored buildings with stone footings, the earliest of which may have dated from the 14<sup>th</sup> century" (Perring, 1985). This excavation along with the more recent excavation on Skellgarths (Finlayson, 2001) show the interconnections between the river and the development of the city and activities associated with the river and demonstrate the richness of archaeological deposits located adjacent to the river bank. They also show that our knowledge of the development of the Skell and its associated mill races is not yet fully understood.

Documentary evidence in the form of deeds survive from c.1250 for burgage tenures in Allhallowgate. The first reference to "Le Merkrstede", or market place, appears in 1281, and the first reference to a burgage in this area dates from 1305. Burgages in Westgate are recorded two years later and in 1315 there is reference to a property in Blossomgate. By 1318 there is documentary evidence that Ripon also seemed to have extended beyond Skellgate to Barefoot Street across the river. Other streets which have a clear pattern of burgage property on later maps include Kirkgate. Indeed by 1320 Ripon may already have taken its form which was to survive until the expansion in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century (MacKay 1982, 73-80). The poll tax returns for 1379 divide Ripon into four wards, Market Stead, Skelgate, Stonebridge Gate and West Gate indicating the main areas in which the city had developed during the medieval period.

There is a very high potential for important remains of medieval settlement to survive within the study area although even within the historic core of the city survival of deposits can be variable and sometimes truncations can be expected and predicted but elsewhere are unexpected. For example recently, in the course of a watching brief, where a maximum depth of c. 0.30m below ground was reached, to monitor tree planting in Minster Close only one deposit was observed which was likely to have represented *in situ* archaeological deposits. This was possibly a demolition or dump layer within hole 2, closest to Marygate (Johnson 2001a, 2, 5). This may either have been because sufficient depth was not achieved to arrive at significant archaeological deposits, or that in places they have been truncated.



0m 100m

Key



-  Excavated alluvial silts, likely to lie within the early course of the River Skell
-  Excavated areas

Figure 3, Excavated alluvial silts and river bank demonstrating a likely broad meander of the river Skell in the medieval period  
Excavation sites of Bedern Bank in 1985 and Skellgarth in 2001

## Mills

The rivers, particularly the Skell, have been important in that they have provided the power via mills for the development of trades which allowed the city to grow. The city's economy has depended heavily on agriculture and its allied trades. The 1379 poll tax returns included 38 cloth workers and 25 leather workers amongst the 583 taxpayers of Ripon, Bondgate and Aismunderby. In the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries Ripon along with Boroughbridge was a leading city for cloth manufacture in Yorkshire, exporting the finished product by way of Hull. Prosperity was to diminish when the trade shifted to West Yorkshire. A sign of this is clear when, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Leyland noted that there were a number of tenters for woollen cloth on the further bank of the Skell but that they were idle and cloth making was "almost decayed" (Taylor 1998, 12-13).

The natural water course, possibly an earlier course of the Skell, located by the excavation at Bedern Bank (1985) and another section of its course at a recent excavation on Skellgarths (Finlayson 2001b, 3) may have been used as a source of water power before the course of the Skell was more formally manipulated into the mill race. A mill is referred to in Domesday as standing on the archbishop's demesne, and is recorded as the Archbishop's Mill called Bymylne in 1228 (Fowler 1881, 60). There is an 18<sup>th</sup> century reference to a watermill at the bottom of Duck Hill called Byemill (Mackay 1982, 77). There is a documentary reference to Skellgarths being called "Walkmill Bank" in the 1340's (Fowler 1881, 140-143) which indicates the mill here may have been a fulling mill in the medieval period. (Fulling mills were also known as walkmills and the processes for finishing cloth took place here). From the 14<sup>th</sup> century the process had become mechanised, newly-woven cloth was cleaned by soaking it in clean water and it was then beaten with water-driven mechanical paddles and scrubbed with "fuller's earth" (aluminium oxide) to thicken and improve the texture of the cloth. This process also initiated bleaching, which was completed by stretched the cloth out to dry over a wooden frame called a "tenter".

In the post medieval period the mill on Duck Hill is known to have been used for corn, cotton and animal feed. In 1776 an engine was installed at the mill to pump water to stand pipes providing the city's first piped water supply. The supply was irregular and quality uncertain and from the 1860's water was pumped from the Ure to Lark Hill Tower. In 1893 part of Bye Mill, Duck Hill was sold due to road widening and the remainder became a house in 1988 (Taylor 1998, 15).

Post medieval maps show a mill race, which draws its water from the River Laver, running along Water Skellgarth (so called because it was part of the mill race) and Skellgarths before joining the main course of the River Skell near Bondgate Green Bridge. The 1744 Enclosure Map for Ripon shows that the course of the River Skell has been manipulated to form a mill race at Bondgate Green and Jeffrey's map of Ripon, 1772 (Fig. 4) shows the course of the mill race with the bridges which cross it most clearly together with a path which runs along the line of Skellgarths. This map marks a mill at the bottom of Duck Hill, on Skellgarths and there appears to have been a mill on this site, if replaced by different structures, from the 11<sup>th</sup> century (NYM 19806 Medieval-modern mill, Skellgarths). In 1880 the mill stream along Water Skellgate was covered over and the road macadamised (Historic Ripon 1890, 130).

Recently part of the construction of the mill race was observed in the gardens to the rear of St Agnes Lodge (Younge 1999), and its line can be followed from 18<sup>th</sup> century maps. A brick

vaulted arch was seen to top stone walls, of which two courses were visible in a trench which broke through the culvert beneath a modern service trench.

There are two other mills which dated from the medieval period on the Skell, one on the north side of the Skell (NYM 19805) and one near to Borrage Bridge (NYM 19843).

There is known to have been a mill at Bishopton from the medieval period onwards. A mill is shown on the 1775 Jeffery's map and the mill race, taking water from the river Laver from High Dam (SE 2950 7105) to the mill at Bishopton is very clearly shown on the 1858 enclosure map. The post medieval course of the mill race appears to closely follow that shown on the modern map and this may reflect the original medieval course.

### **River Crossings**

There was a ford and a bridge (NMR UI 53779, NGR SE 3145 7096) across the Skell in the medieval period. The remains of this ford are visible as a partially paved surface c. 4m wide set into the bed of the River Skell. The 1774 (Beckworth) map shows this ford connected with a road across Bondgate Green, then an open space towards Boroughbridge. Parallel with the ford, on the east side a footbridge is shown (named chain bridge on the 1800 map by Humphries). There are no visible remains of this bridge and it and the ford were replaced by the New Bridge. The ford and the bridge are separately recorded as NYM 19784 and NYM 19783 respectively.

The North Bridge across the Ure is thought to date from the medieval period and is first mentioned in 1309.

There was a medieval predecessor to the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century bridge at Bishopton.