



**Archaeological  
Research  
Services Ltd**

## **Ryder Point, Brassington, Matlock: Watching brief and Photographic Recording**



**ARS Ltd Report 2006/10**  
March 2006

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### ***Executive Summary***

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd for the Peak District National Park Authority at Ryder Point, Brassington, Matlock, Derbyshire (National Grid Reference SK 263546 to SK 254548), from March 20<sup>th</sup> to March 21<sup>st</sup> 2006. This comprised observation of all groundworks, photographic recording of walling and archaeological recording of a brick structure, possibly an engine house and stone paving associated with the early rail workings on the site.*

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The watching brief at Ryder Point, near Brassington was undertaken by Clive Waddington and Gemma Pallant of Archaeological Research Services Ltd for the Peak District National Park Authority during the construction of a new public footpath and cycleway providing safe access to the High Peak Trail from Ryder Point.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Ryder Point is situated approximately 3 miles east of Brassington and 1.5 miles North of Hopton (SK 263546 to SK 254548) (Figs 1-2). The route of the new footpath runs east, parallel to the existing High Peak Trail, and lies no further than 3m from the boundary wall. The path runs from Intake crossing, for approximately 300m, joining the High Peak Trail where access through the southern boundary wall (SMR 28339) between Intake crossing and Hopton tunnel is located.
- 2.2 The path runs past a boiler and engine base (SMR 8360), which remains undisturbed by the works; however it was necessary to remove topsoil from two mounds associated with the remains of the boiler, initially thought to be ash heaps.
- 2.3 In order to connect the new path to the existing High Peak Trail a section of the boundary wall (SMR 28339) was demolished at the eastern end, between Intake crossing and Hopton tunnel, in order to create access.
- 2.4 The site lies in the field directly to the south of the High Peak Trail which runs along the former route of the Cromford and High Peak Railway. The railway was opened in two sections: Cromford to Hurdlow incline, which includes the section at Hopton next to the site, was opened on the 29 May 1830, and the full length was opened on the 6 July the following year (Marshall 1996, 14).
- 2.5 At Hopton, the boiler and workings were put in place to assist the horses and early locomotives ascending the incline. Early railways were laid out in a similar fashion to canals with long level sections and then sections of incline as horses and early locomotives “were unable to haul heavy loads on gradients steeper than about 1 in 300” (Marshall 1996, 13). The incline sections housed engines with immense lengths of chain to haul the locomotives and, at Hopton, chains were used throughout the working life of the railway even though at other inclines they were replaced by hemp ropes (Marshall 1996, 13). The Hopton incline was originally listed as being 457 yds in length with a 98 ft elevation giving a total incline of 1 in 14 (Marshall 1996, 10). The engine was a twin-beam 20hp engine and was installed at Hopton in 1829 (Marshall 1996, 10). The only surviving Butterley engine on the Cromford and High Peak Railway is at Middleton Top incline.

## **3. Aims of the Project**

- 3.1 The project consisted of an archaeological watching brief and photographic recording exercise as stipulated by the local planning authority brief. The aims were as follows:



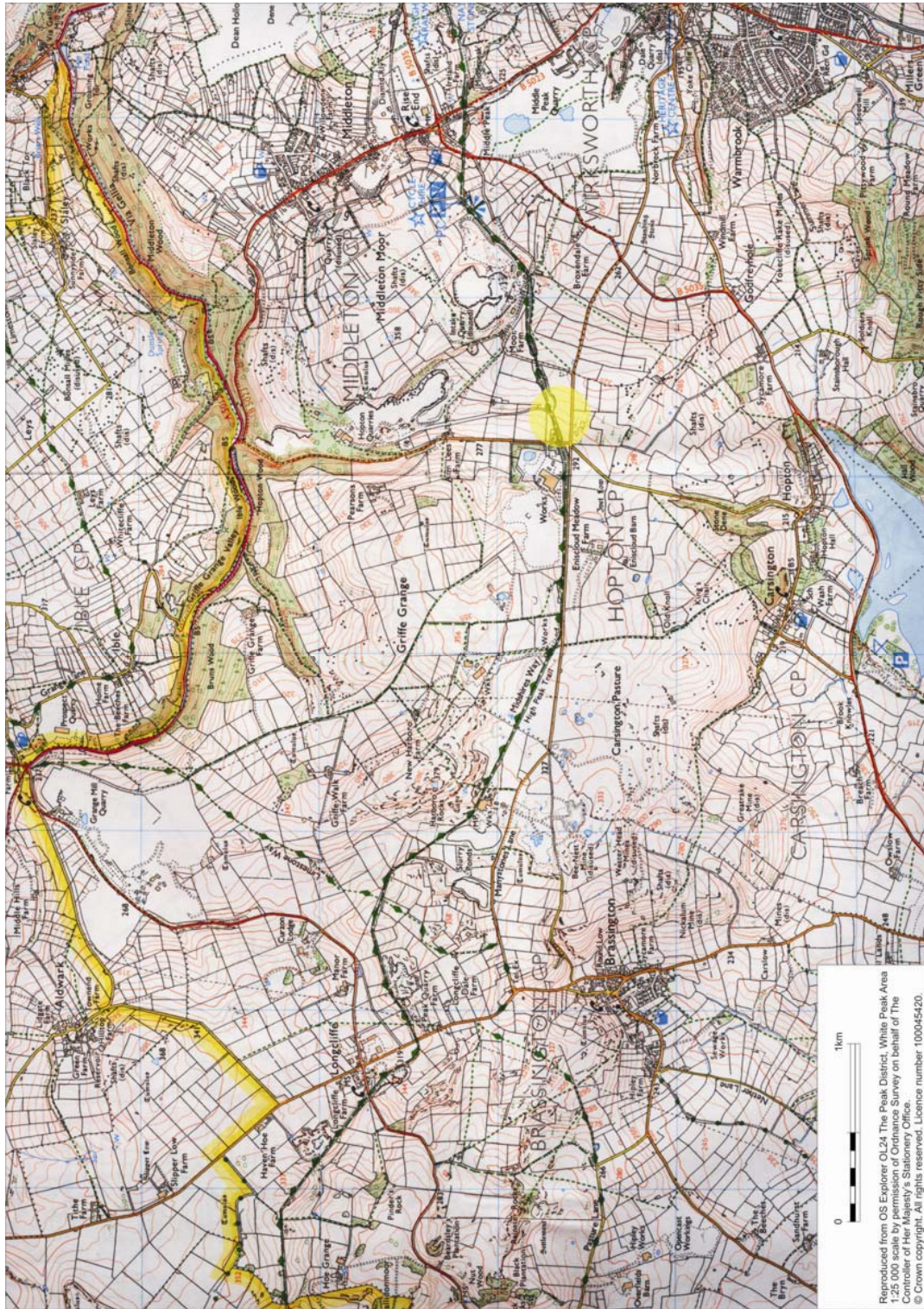


Fig. 1 Location map showing position of site.

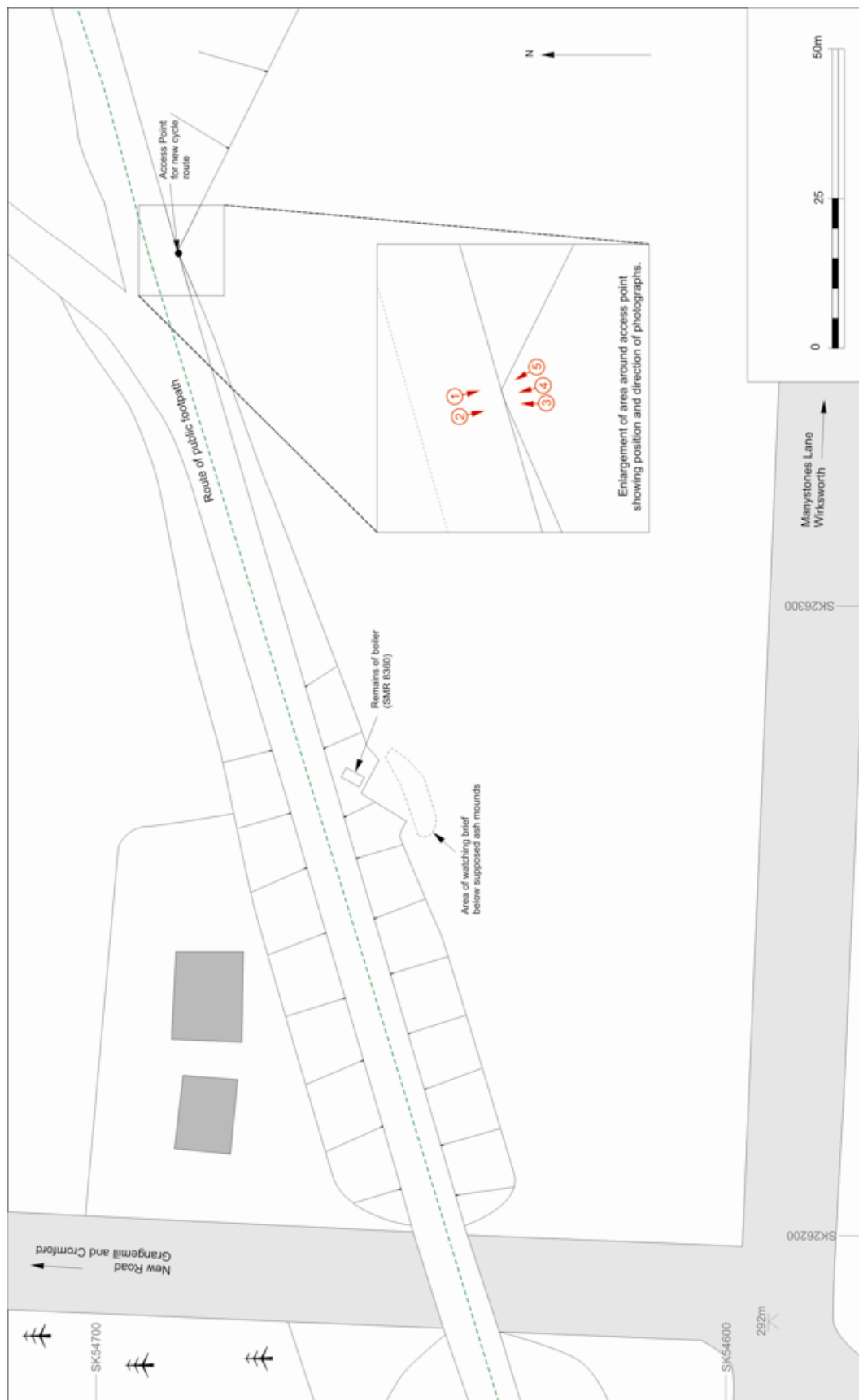


Fig. 2 Site Plan with inset showing position and direction of images in photographic recording



In discussion with the contractor decide where the cutting for the path will cease and where 'build-up' construction should begin so as to preserve *in situ* sub-surface evidence.

- To observe all machining for evidence of sub-surface archaeological features.
- To fully record any archaeological features encountered.
- To undertake a photographic recording of the wall sections at the proposed opening of the boundary wall.

#### 4. Methodology: Watching Brief

- 4.1 All machine excavation on the site was observed by an archaeologist to ensure that no archaeological remains were disturbed. Any features or structures revealed were fully cleaned and recorded in accordance with the standards stipulated by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).

#### 5. Summary of Results: Watching Brief

- 5.1 The overburden was removed in the area close to the remains of the boiler and engine base across raised ground that had been presumed to represent ash and other waste materials associated with the boiler. Although there was evidence of ash piles, the deturfing revealed the remains of low walls and flagged flooring (Figs 3-4).



Fig. 3 Stone walls and flooring with boiler in background (scales=1m and 2m).



Fig. 4 Plan of features exposed during the watching brief.



- 5.2 The remains consist of two patches of flagged flooring which are evidently part of a single original floor surface due to their uniform composition and level. These are associated with the footings of a red-brick wall three courses high and a wall of lighter coloured bricks which is noticeably lower than the rest of the structural remains (the nearest wall running towards the camera in Fig. 3 above).
- 5.3 The features furthest from the camera in Fig. 3 above describe one end of the rectangular structure. It is evident that this was reasonably substantial in construction as the tumbled remains of a number of courses of bricks can be seen on the eastern side (Fig. 4) and on the southern end a large block of cut gritstone is incorporated as some sort of footing or base (Fig. 5). The remains recorded are aligned with the boiler and also with the 'dog leg' described by the boundary wall of the field at this point and it seems reasonable to suggest that they are associated with the workings of the early railway system.



Fig. 5 Tumbled courses of brickwork on the eastern side of the rectangular structure. Facing west north-west (scale=1m).



Fig. 6 Gritstone block incorporated within the fabric of the rectangular structure. Facing north-east (scale=1m).

## 6. Photographic Recording

- 6.1 Before the demolition of the small section of “Boundary wall between Intake crossing and Hopton tunnel” (SMR 28339), a series of digital images of the wall were taken in order to provide context and any detail of phasing or rebuilding.
- 6.2 Each image has been located on a site plan showing image reference, position, direction and a description.
- 6.3 The section of wall between Intake crossing and Hopton tunnel that has partially been demolished to provide access to the High Peak trail from the new footpath and cycleway was of drystone construction, with mortared capping stones and built from Limestone. This section of wall appears to be original; there is an area which has partially collapsed, probably as a result of being frequently used by walkers and cyclists to gain access to the trail. This particular section has little height variation, with an average height of 1.30m and width of 0.34m at the top.
- 6.4 Image 1 (below) is of the area of wall to be demolished in order to create access from the new path to the High Peak Trail. The picture is taken from the High Peak Trail facing southeast, and shows little exposed wall due to the amount of spoil piled against the northern side (scale=1m)



- 6.5 Image 2 (below) is taken a little to the west of 1. The picture is taken from the High Peak Trail facing southeast, and as with Image 1 shows little exposed wall due to the amount of spoil piled against the northern side (scale=0.5m).



- 6.6 Image 3 (below) is taken facing the northwest towards the High Peak Trail from the interior of the field. The wall has an average height of 1.30m and width of 0.34m. This picture illustrates that the wall is of dry stone build with mortared capping stones and made from Limestone (scale=1m).





- 6.7 Image 4 (below), is taken facing northwest from the interior of the field facing the High Peak Trail to the east of Image 3 (scale=1m).



- 6.8 Image 5 (below), is taken facing northwest from the interior of the field facing the High Peak Trail to the east of Image 4 (scale=1m).



## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1 It seems reasonable to assume that the structural remains uncovered are associated with the former Cromford and High Peak Railway and more specifically with the boiler and engine that originally sat at this site to provide power to drag the locomotives and horse-drawn wagons up the Hopton incline. The walls appear to represent the remains of a small building such as an engine house, or the footings for a large engine or portion of an engine.

- 7.2 The section of boundary wall to be demolished appears to be original and presumably dates to the construction of the railway and shows no evidence of phasing or reconstruction in this section.

## **8. Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright**

- 8.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.
- 8.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

## **9. Statement of Indemnity**

- 9.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

## **10. Acknowledgements**

- 10.1 ARS Ltd would like to thank all those involved with the smooth running of the project on the ground. In particular ARS Ltd would like to thank Garrie Tiedeman at the Peak District National Park Authority, Andrew Myers at Derbyshire County Council, and the on-site contractors.

## **12. References**

Marshall, J. 1996. *The Cromford & High Peak Railway*. Pudsey, Martin Bairstow.