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Robin Hood's Stoop

ARS Ltd Report 2008/47
June 2008

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An Archaeological Watching Brief at Robin Hood's Stoop, Hathersage, Derbyshire.

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Contents

List of Figures.....	1
Executive Summary.....	2
1. Introduction.....	3
1.1. Location and Scope of Work.....	3
1.2. Geology and preservation.....	4
2. Methodology.....	4
3. Results.....	5
4. Conclusion.....	6
5. Publicity, confidentiality and copyright.....	8
6. Statement of indemnity.....	8
7. Acknowledgements.....	8
8. References.....	9
Appendix I: Context Register.....	10
Appendix II: Harris Matrix.....	11

List of Figures

1.	Site location.....	3
2.	Site plan.....	3
3.	Position of the Cross before re-alignment.....	4
4.	Excavation around the base to enable lifting.....	5
5.	Context (002) overlying (003)	6
6.	Section of (002)	6
7.	1m ² pit levelled into the hillside.....	6
8.	Cross shaft and base repositioned.....	7
9.	Perimeter fence around the cross.....	7
10.	Robin Hood's Stoop after re-turfing.....	8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2008 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by John Wain under a Natural England Higher Level Scheme to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Robin Hood's Stoop, Callow Bank, Hathersage, Derbyshire. The monitoring was carried out during ground works undertaken in the realignment of the wayside cross known as Robin Hood's Stoop, which due to ground erosion was tilting downslope. The cross is interpreted to be of 17th century or earlier date and is registered on the Derbyshire Sites and Monuments Record (D11101).

The cross and its base were carefully lifted away from the area using slings, enabling access to the ground below. An archaeologist from Archaeological Research Services Ltd excavated an area of 1m², then levelled the ground and laid a base before the repositioning of the cross and its base. A 1m high fence was erected to form a perimeter around the cross of 2m square. The area surrounding the cross was then re-turfed.

No features of archaeological significance or buried land surfaces were revealed.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Location and scope of work

1.1.1. In June 2008 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by John Wain under a Natural England Higher Level Scheme to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Robin Hood's Stoop, Callow Bank, Hathersage, Derbyshire (Figs. 1 and 2). The work was carried out during groundworks which were required to stabilise the foundations of a wayside cross (Derbyshire SMR (D11101)).

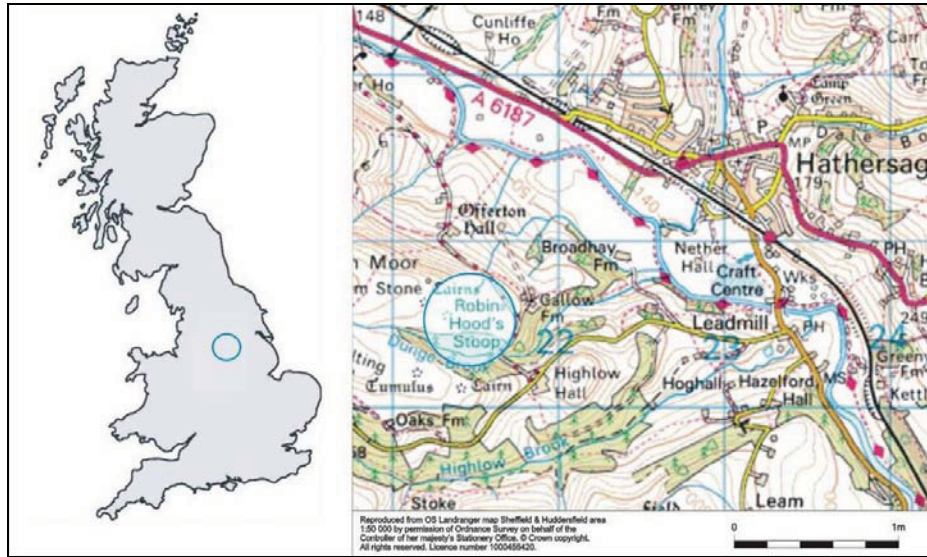


Fig. 1 Site Location

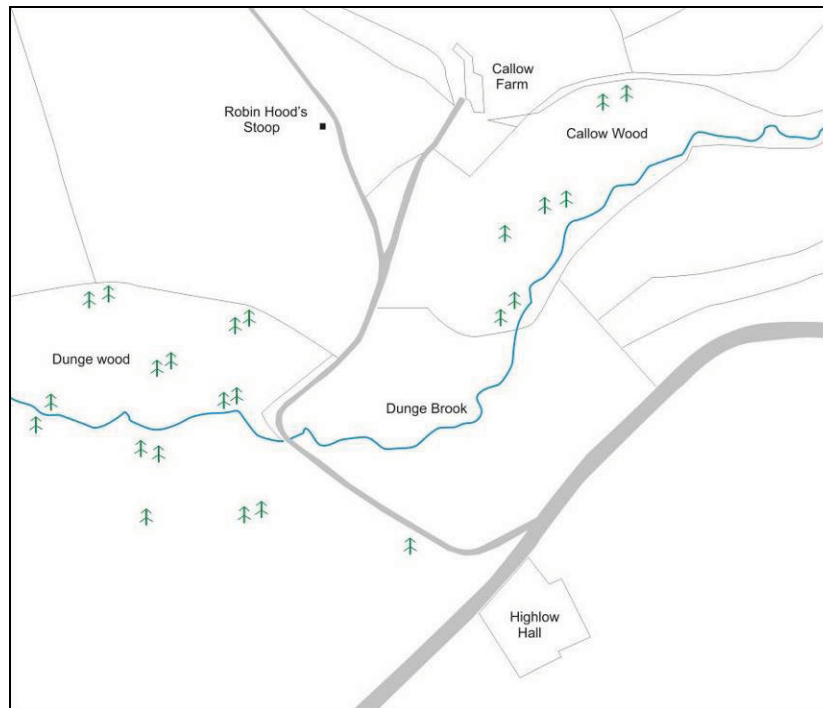


Fig. 2 Site plan

1.1.2. The site is centred at SK 21710 80626, 2km south west of Hathersage on the lower slopes of Offernton Moor above a narrow lane that passes to the north-east. It is thought Robin Hood's stoop may have served as a wayside cross and is interpreted to be of 17th century or earlier date (according to information held by HER).

1.2. Geology and preservation

The solid geology of the area consists of the Namurian Millstone grit series overlain by shales of the Kinderscout grit group laid down in the Carboniferous period 320 million years ago. Offernton moor peaks at a height of 390m and is positioned south of the river Derwent which runs north-west to south-east in the valley below. The cross is situated in rough pasture at a height of approximately 270m.

2. METHODOLOGY

The specification required that a watching brief be carried out to ensure no damage to the monument and that any archaeological features identified during the works were recorded. This involved monitoring removal of the cross and the recording of any archaeological features identified within the underlying ground.

2.1 A back acting JCB with webbing straps was used during lifting of the cross to and from its location. This enabled the underlying ground to be excavated manually. After the cross was repositioned, the area surrounding the cross base was filled with soil constructing a gentle slope, then re-turfed by hand.



Fig. 3: Position of the cross before re-alignment. Facing south

3. RESULTS

- 3.1 The cross base measured approximately 0.7m square and therefore, an area of 1m² was measured out for excavation. Turf was removed from around the base which revealed coarse sandy topsoil context (001) which had accumulated around the base over time. Topsoil was initially removed by hand from around the monument to enable the positioning of lifting straps below the base to support its removal (Fig. 4). At the western edge topsoil was removed to a depth of 0.07m exposing a sandy clay (002) located beneath the base.



Fig. 4: Excavation around the base to enable lifting. Facing east.

- 3.2 The sandy clay (002) overlay a subsoil horizon (003) (Fig. 5). Context (002) was interpreted as a bedding/levelling layer for the base of the cross and had a depth of 40mm. Examination of (002) displayed the slope which had developed over time and was found to have an angle of 12 ° (Fig. 6).



Fig. 5: Context (002) overlying (003).
Facing west.



Fig. 6: Section of (002). Facing west

- 3.2 The stoney subsoil (003) was excavated by hand and the natural substrata (004) of sandstone and clay was revealed 0.1m below the eastern edge. The natural substrata was levelled to 0.2m below the eastern edge and 0.55m below the western edge (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7: 1m² pit levelled into the hillside

- 3.3 Following excavation of the pit a level sub-base layer was created within the pit using blue gritstone chippings to a depth of approximately 0.2m and compacted by the bucket of the JCB. The cross shaft and base were lifted back into position

(Fig. 8) and a 2m square perimeter fence erected around the cross (Fig. 9). The area surrounding the cross base was re-turfed at a later date to protect and stabilise the cross (Fig. 10).



Fig. 8: Cross shaft and base repositioned. Facing west

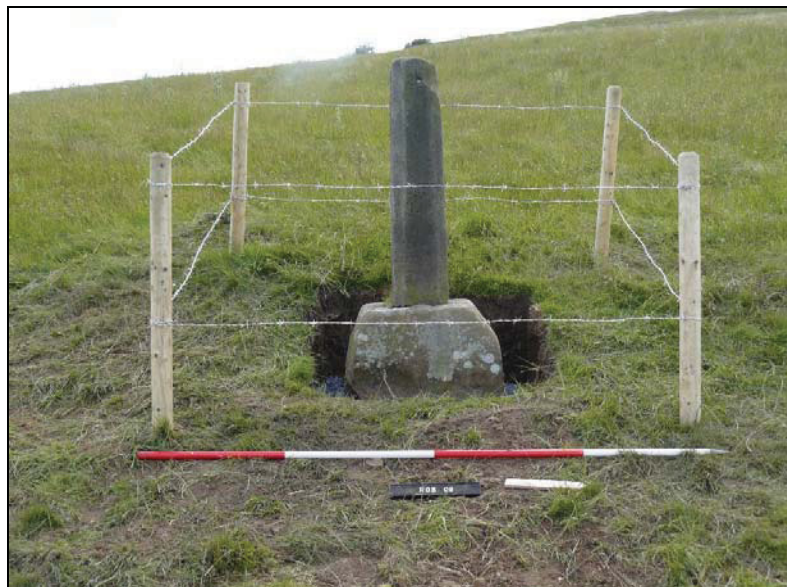


Fig. 9: Perimeter fence around the cross. Facing west.



Fig. 10 Robin Hood's Stoop after re-turfing. Facing north-west

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. No significant archaeological features, deposits, buried land surfaces or small finds were located within the pit but evidence of the use of clay to provide a level surface for the cross was identified. However, it is not known at what date this was done. .

5. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

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

6. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

- 6.1 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.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1. Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved in this project, in particular Sarah Whiteley, Senior Conservation Archaeologist at the Peak District National Park Authority, Natural England and the landowner John Wain.

8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey. 1993. *Chapel-en-le-Frith. England and Wales Sheet 99. Drift Edition.*

APPENDIX I:

CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Type	Description
001	Deposit	Very dark brown (7.5YR 2.5/3) coarse sandy topsoil supporting turf. Built up around the base of the cross in the 1m square.
002	Deposit	Dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/6) sandy clay, imported to act as a levelling layer beneath the base.
003	Deposit	Dark reddish brown (5YR 3/3) coarse subsoil, it is not generally heavily compacted due to the inclusions of gritstone gravel and cobbles.
004	Deposit	Dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) natural horizon of medium sandy clay with inclusions of gritstone slabs breaking away from the natural bedrock.

**APPENDIX II:
HARRIS MATRIX**

