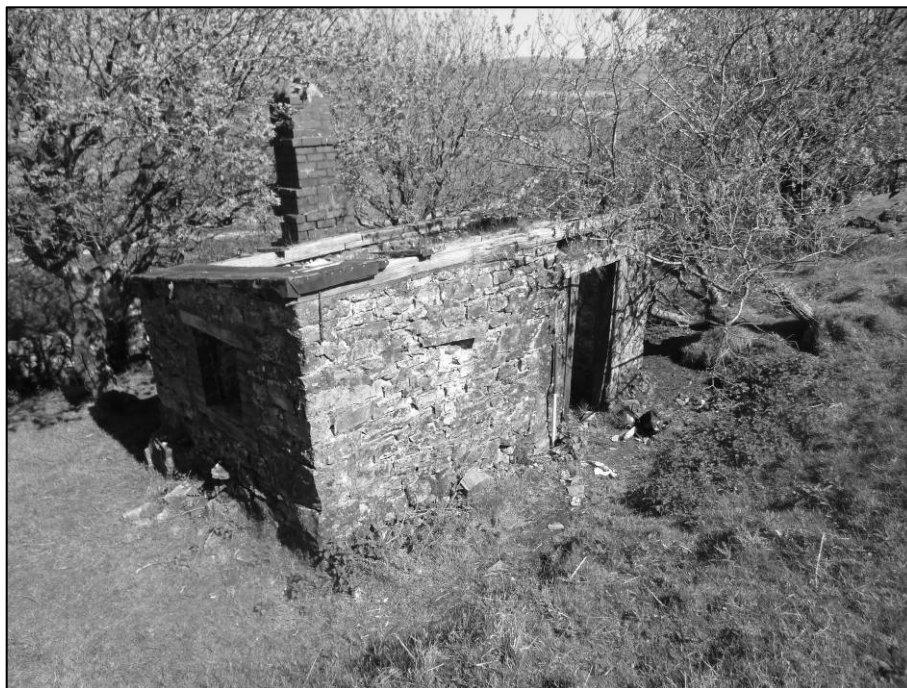


PLATELAYERS' HUT, NORTH OF RIBBLEHEAD VIADUCT,
RIBBLEHEAD, NORTH YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY



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1 INTRODUCTION

Reasons and Circumstances of the Project

- 1.1 In December 2012, Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd (EDAS) were asked by Mr Robert White, Senior Conservation Archaeologist of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) to undertake an archaeological survey of the remains of a railway platelayers' hut near the Ribblehead viaduct on the Settle to Carlisle Railway, North Yorkshire (NGR SD 75820 79739 centred).
- 1.2 The archaeological survey was required to inform possible consolidation works to the structure, and thereby allow greater public access and possible interpretation. It was also envisaged that the EDAS survey would be added to other records relating to historic railway structures currently being gathered by the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line volunteers.

Site Location and Description

- 1.3 The ruined platelayers' hut lies on the west side of the Settle to Carlisle railway line, adjacent to milepost 248 c.100m to the north of the Ribblehead (Batty Moss) Viaduct, and c.450m east of Gunnerfleet Farm (see figure 1). The structure is not listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, but it is recorded on the YDNPA Historic Environment Record (site MYD55594). The site also lies within the 78 mile long Settle-Carlisle Railway Conservation Area, designed in 1991.
- 1.4 The hut is located in a relatively isolated and elevated position on the 'Up' side of the Settle to Carlisle Railway. There is currently no official public access, the hut lying inside the drystone wall which marks the boundary of Network Rail's land. However, a heavily-used public footpath runs immediately adjacent to the wall, and the hut is clearly visible from it. This has unfortunately led to the hut being used as an unofficial toilet, and at the time of the EDAS survey, there was excrement, used toilet paper and also quantities of plastic bottles and other refuse scattered around the interior. The hut itself was roofless but in reasonable condition. It was surrounded by short grass, with a tree to the south obscuring much of the south gable.

2 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The extent of the project was defined by discussions between Mr Robert White of the YDNPA and EDAS. The structure was visited on 4th June and 13th July 2013.
- 2.2 A ground floor plan was made at a scale of 1:20, together with three external elevations (north, east and west) and one internal wall (east), again at 1:20 scale. All measurements were taken using traditional hand-held recording equipment. The resulting drawings show all significant architectural detail such as openings (blocked or unblocked), inserted doorways, fittings, joist sockets etc, as well as construction details, modifications and differences in fabric, and the stones ("quoins") or dressings around openings and at corners; stone-by-stone drawings were not produced. The elevations were marked with a nominal datum, but this was not given a reduced height AOD. All drawings were produced according to the guidelines established by English Heritage (2006, 8-10 & 19-21). Sufficient notes were also taken in the field to prepare a detailed written description.
- 2.3 The drawn record was supplemented by a number of colour digital photographs with 10 megapixel resolution. English Heritage photographic guidelines were

followed (English Heritage 2006, 10-12) and each photograph was provided with a scale where required. All photographs have been clearly numbered and labelled with the subject, orientation, date taken and photographer's name, and have been cross-referenced to digital files etc.

- 2.4 The results of the site survey work have been used to produce this EDAS archive archaeological survey report; this is illustrated by reduced versions of the survey drawings and a selection of photographic plates. A properly ordered and indexed project archive (paper, magnetic and plastic media) was deposited with the YDNPA at the end of the project.

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 No documentary research was required as part of the survey, but some work has already been undertaken by the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line as part of their project to record the special structures within the railway's Conservation Area (The SCRCA Historic Structure Recording Project) (Evans 2012, 9) (<http://www.foscl.org.uk/scrca-project>). These structures include bridges, stations, housing, lineside huts, oil stores, water towers etc, which are marked on the 1911 Midland Railway land plans. This includes the platelayers' hut which forms the subject of this report, which is shown in 1911 as a rectangular structure marked 'P.Hut', located on a small terrace on the viaduct embankment (Mitchell & Fox 1990, 24-25).
- 3.2 For the purposes of the SCRCA Historic Structure Recording Project, platelayers' huts are defined as follows:
"PH - Platelayers' Huts: These were constructed at regular intervals (typically at intervals of 2 to 3 miles) along most railway lines to store the tools and equipment used by permanent-way workers and to provide those workers with somewhere to shelter during meal breaks and periods of bad weather. For the purposes of the SCRCA survey, all line-side huts displaying evidence of windows and chimneys or flues are being categorised as platelayers' huts until or unless it is proved that they had a different primary purpose. The design of these structures varies significantly and the construction materials used include stone, brick, concrete and timber for the walls and either concrete or timber for the roofs - the latter usually overlain with slate or stone roofing tiles or felt" (<http://www.foscl.org.uk/content/scrca/structure-type-definitions>).
- 3.3 As the definition notes, the huts come in a variety of designs, and there does not appear to be one overarching or Midland Railway sanctioned form. Those who had worked on the railway remembered that some huts were built of stone and others of sleeper-wood, the roofed huts being covered with thick felt tarred to deflect the rain. The insides of the hut were usually lime-washed. There might be a small desk under the window and home-made benches set around the sides, as well as storage space for tools. The huts were provided with a stove, often of the square Midland Railway type, which was used to provide warmth and to heat up food. The permanent-way workers were organised into gangs, usually comprising a ganger and four men, and the ganger took the best seat next to the stove (http://www.cravenherald.co.uk/nostalgia/nostalgia_history/9814450.Accounts_of_life_on_the_Settle_Carlisle_Railway_Line/).

4 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Introduction

- 4.1 A detailed description of the Ribblehead platelayers' hut is given below, based on the records made in the field. The hut is described in a logical sequence. The setting, plan form, structure and architectural detailing are described first, followed by the external elevations and a circulation description of the interior. Reference should also be made to the survey drawings (figure 2), and the photographic record which appears as Appendix 1; photographs are referenced in the following text in italic type and square brackets, the numbers before the stroke representing the film number and the number after indicating the frame e.g. [2/32].
- 4.2 The hut is actually placed on a slight north-west/south-east alignment but, for ease of description, the long axis is considered to be aligned north-south. Where possible, specific architectural terms used in the text are as defined by Curl (1977). Finally, in the following text, 'modern' is used to denote features or phasing dating to after c.1945.

Setting

- 4.3 As already noted above, the hut is positioned on the 'Up' side of the Settle to Carlisle Railway line, to the immediate east of the southern end of the Ribblehead viaduct's north embankment. A slight terrace has been created near the bottom of the embankment's eastern slope [1/760, 1/761], so that the hut stands on a level platform [1/729, 1/730] (see plates 1 and 2). There is a scarp to the east, sloping down towards the adjacent drystone wall, and a smaller scarp around the north-west corner of the hut, sloping towards the building. The ground level falls away steeply to the south of the hut, following the natural topography, and it appears that the hut was originally approached from the north-west, inside the line of the existing drystone wall, along a flattened strip of ground resembling a trackway.

Plan Form, Structure and Architectural Detailing

- 4.4 The hut has a slightly sub-rectangular plan, with maximum external dimensions of 4.24m north-south by 2.68m east-west; the external walls vary in width between 0.40m to 0.46m. It is of a single storey, with a former maximum internal floor to ceiling height of c.2.05m (see plate 2).
- 4.5 The majority of the walls are built of roughly coursed and squared limestone rubble, laid to a slightly watershot profile with a small number of projecting throughstones to each elevation, all set with a lime mortar. There are substantial quoins to the north-west, north-east and south-east corners, but those to the south-west are generally shallower and smaller. The lowest quoins to the north-west, north-east and south-east corners project from the wall face to form a footing, and the lowest courses to the north and east elevations also step outwards, but less markedly so. In addition to stone, the hut also makes some use of brickwork in its structure, principally to the window in the north gable and the external chimney stack to the east elevation. Many of the bricks used externally around the window are incomplete, being red, machine-made (average dimensions ? by 110mm by 70mm) and set with a cement mortar. Internally, they are better preserved, being pinkish-red and handmade (average dimensions 225mm by 110mm by 70mm). The lower part of the chimney stack, to c.1.50m above ground level, is built of brownish-red handmade bricks (average dimensions 220mm by 110mm by 70mm) laid in stretcher bond and set with a lime mortar. To the upper part, the purplish-

red bricks (average dimensions 225mm by 110mm by 75mm) are more neatly moulded and resemble an engineering brick, although there are some over-fired or vitrified examples, suggesting that wasters were being used.

- 4.6 The hut was originally provided with a single-pitch roof, sloping gently down from west to east. The roof structure was simple but interesting, in that the wall-plates running along the top of the east and west walls each comprise a pair of softwood railway sleepers, laid end to end. The sleepers measure 0.25m by 0.12m in section, and are joined at the centre using a simple side-halved scarf with vertical butts [1/750] (see plate 3). Softwood boards, up to 0.24m wide, were positioned across and between the wall-plates, and secured to them using square-section handmade nails [1/757, 1/758, 1/759] (see plate 4). It would appear that a canvas-like material was then laid over the boards, and then the whole covered with felt; the only scraps of such material to survive are at the north-west corner and along the north gable [1/743, 1/744] (see plate 5). The felt had been fixed into place using round-headed galvanised nails.

External Elevations

- 4.7 The north gable [1/727, 1/728] is pierced by a central flat-headed window opening, with brick jambs and a softwood lintel and sill, again perhaps cut down railway sleepers (see plate 6). The opening was once fitted with a frame [1/751], but this had been removed by the time of the survey. The window is either wholly inserted or an enlargement of an earlier feature, as evidenced by the cement mortar used around it both externally and internally.
- 4.8 The east elevation [1/732, 1/734, 1/735] is dominated by the external chimney stack (see plate 7). This stack is free-standing, but is linked to the hut by a horizontal flue, c.1.30m in height. Both the flue and the stack are of brick, but rise from a limestone footing, just visible at the base [1/733]. The stack rises to a total height of 3.60m and is initially 0.70m square, but it steps inwards in several stages before reaching the cement capping which presumably once secured a chimney pot [1/731]; small areas of the corner brickwork have collapsed. At either end of the elevation, the wall-plate is secured to the stonework below using round-section wrought-iron clamps [1/745, 1/746] (see plate 4).
- 4.9 The south gable is largely obscured by a tree [1/736, 1/737] but appears featureless. The west elevation [1/738, 1/739, 1/740] has a doorway opening at the south end, forming the only access to the interior of the hut (see plate 2). The jambs and lintel of the door frame are made from cut-down railway sleepers, lined with boards [1/741, 1/742] (see plate 8). The door itself has gone, but it was originally mounted externally on a pair of pintles to the north jamb, with a latch to the south jamb. There is some localised collapse over the doorway. As on the east elevation, the two ends of the wall-plate are secured to the stonework below using round-section wrought-iron clamps (see plate 5).

Circulation

- 4.10 As has already been noted, the only access to the interior of the hut was through the doorway in the west elevation. At the time of the survey, the interior of the hut was filled with soil, vegetation, excrement and refuse, and so it was not possible to observe the original floor covering or indeed to see if it survived.
- 4.11 The north wall [1/749], with the exception of the aforementioned window, is blank. The east wall [1/752, 1/753] has a low stone step or pier at the very north end, and

to the centre, the remains of either a fireplace or stove position (see plate 9). This had been largely destroyed at the time of the survey, and the lower part was buried in the soil fill of the interior, but it appeared to comprise two low brick piers flanking the flue, with an area of blocking/alteration above rising to a thin iron plate set into the wall. The south wall [1/747, 1/748] is blank. The west wall [1/754, 1/755] appears to have two sockets or recesses to the upper part, one positioned at the north end and the other adjacent to the doorway at the south end. Between the two, a round-headed nail projects from the wall, set above an unusually long stone [1/756]. The internal walls preserve some fragmentary traces of lime-wash plaster.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 In its original form, the hut was a single storey, sub-rectangular building, with relatively thick walls. Its position close to the bottom of the viaduct embankment must have been chosen to provide some shelter from the weather in this isolated location, and it is noticeable that the only entrance, the doorway at the south end of the west elevation, faces the embankment rather than out onto the surrounding landscape. The strength of local wind and weather is perhaps also testified by the use of the external iron clamps to hold the wall-plates in position. The window in the north gable is either a later insertion or an enlargement of an earlier opening. Internally, a fireplace or stove was positioned against the east wall, and the low pier at the north-east corner may have supported one end of a bench running north from the stove. All other internal fixtures and fittings are assumed to have been portable, and therefore subsequently removed.
- 5.2 Documentary evidence indicates that the hut was present by 1911, and it could easily date to 1875-76 when this section of the Settle to Carlisle line was opened. The use of railway materials in the hut's construction, although apparently commonplace, is still significant and might lead to further research; for example, were the bricks used in the construction of the chimney stack (including the wasters) made in the Batty Green brickworks which used to exist to the immediate east of the viaduct during the construction period?
- 5.3 Although there is considerable variety in the form and construction of these lineside huts, it would also be interesting to see whether groups of huts display the same characteristics of construction within definable sections of the railway, i.e. the original four contracts (Mitchell 1989); in terms of the size, structure and the placement of the external chimney stack, the platelayers' hut forming the subject of this report most closely resembles the nearby platelayers' hut on the 'Down' side of the railway, adjacent to the viaduct's south embankment, and also a 'Masons' Hut' adjacent to the south portal of the Blea Moor Tunnel (information from www.foscl.org.uk). It is likely that the continuing survey work currently being undertaken by the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line will allow some of these considerations to be dealt with more fully.

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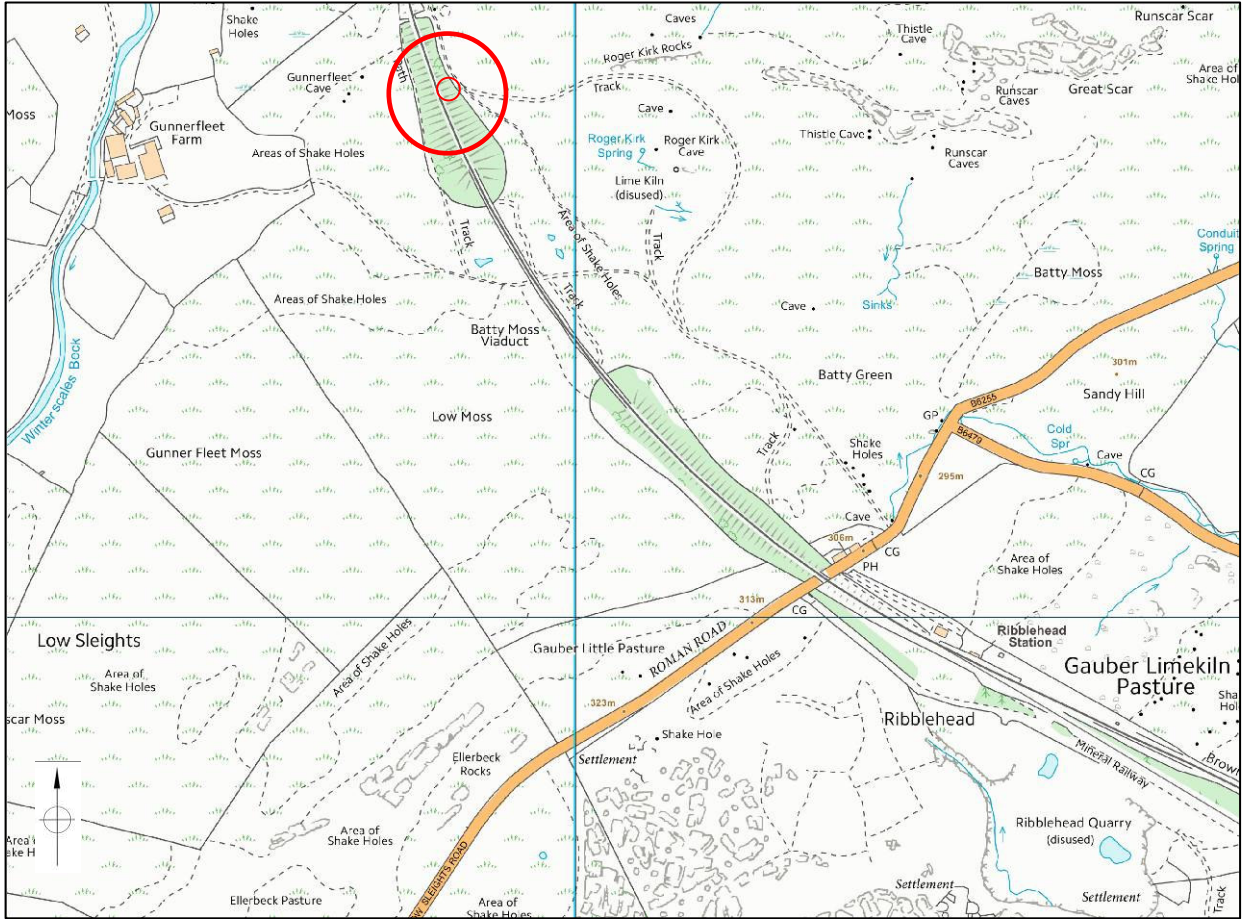
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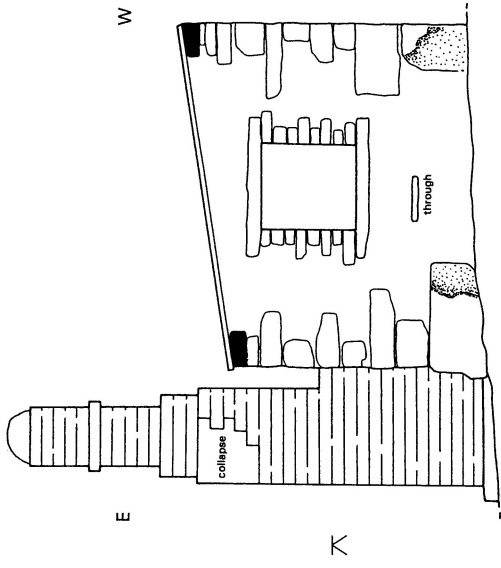
7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7.1 The archaeological survey was requested by Mr Robert White, Senior Conservation Archaeologist of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA), and EDAS would like to thank him for arranging access to the site. The work was funded by EDAS. The on-site survey was undertaken by Shaun Richardson, who also produced the fieldwork records. Ed Dennison produced the final report, and the responsibility for any errors or inconsistencies remains with him.

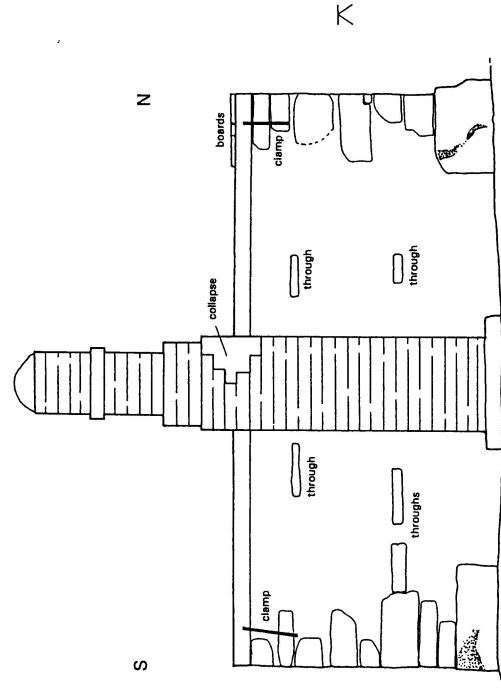


Ordnance Survey map base provided by YDNPA.

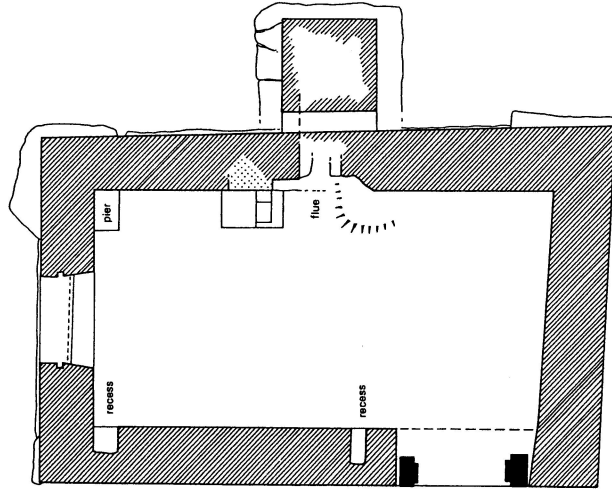
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SCALE	NTS	DATE	AUG 2013
EDAS		FIGURE	1



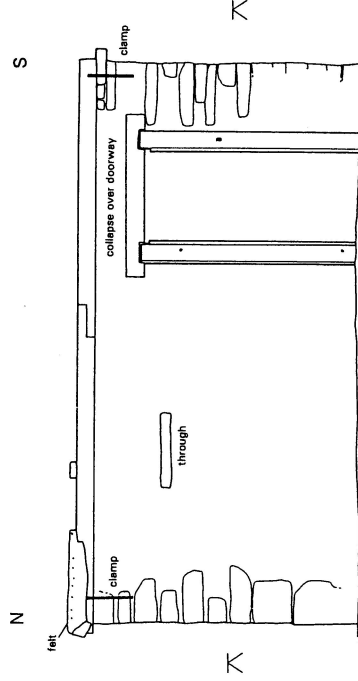
North external elevation



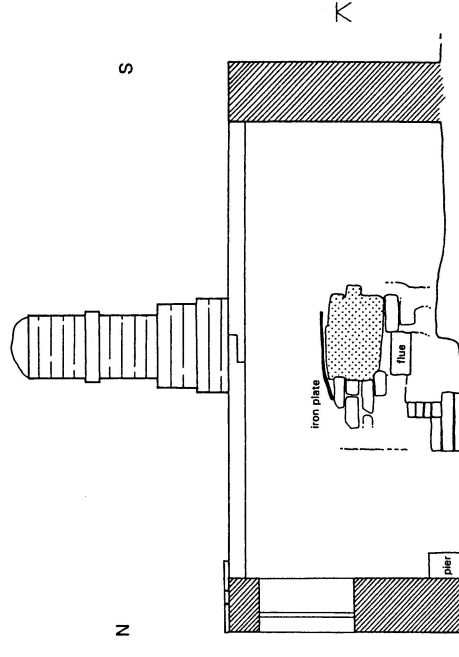
East external elevation



Plan



West external elevation



East internal elevation



PROJECT PLATELAYERS' HUT, RIBBLEHEAD	
TITLE PLAN AND ELEVATIONS	
SCALE AS SHOWN	DATE AUG 2013
EDAS	FIGURE 2



Plate 1: General view of Platelayer's hut, looking S (photo 1/761).



Plate 2: Platelayer's hut, looking SE (photo 1/738).



Plate 3: Scarf joint to east wall-plate, looking E (photo 1/750).



Plate 4: Roofing boards and clamp in north-east corner, looking NW (photo 1/746).



Plate 5: Roof structure in north-west corner, looking E (photo 1/743).



Plate 6: North gable, looking S (photo 1/727).



Plate 7: East elevation, looking W (photo 1/735).



Plate 8: Detail to head of doorway in west elevation, looking E (photo 1/742).



Plate 9: Internal east wall, looking SE (photo 1/753).

APPENDIX 1

RIBBLEHEAD PLATELAYER'S HUT: PHOTOGRAPHIC CATALOGUE

Film 1: Colour digital photographs taken 4th June 2013

<i>Film</i>	<i>Frame</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Scale</i>
1	727	N gable, looking S	1m
1	728	N gable, looking S	1m
1	729	General view, looking SE	1m
1	730	General view, looking SE	1m
1	731	Chimney, E elevation, N face, looking S	1m
1	732	E elevation, looking SW	1m
1	733	E elevation, looking W	1m
1	734	E elevation, looking NE	1m
1	735	E elevation, looking W	1m
1	736	S gable, looking NW	1m
1	737	S gable, looking N	1m
1	738	W elevation, looking SE	1m
1	739	W elevation, looking SE	1m
1	740	W elevation, looking E	1m
1	741	W elevation, doorway, looking SE	1m
1	742	W elevation, detail to head of doorway, looking E	-
1	743	W elevation, detail of felt and clamp at N end, looking NE	-
1	744	W elevation, detail of felt and clamp at N end, looking S	-
1	745	E elevation, detail of boards and clamp at N end, looking SE	-
1	746	E elevation, detail of boards and clamp at N end, looking NW	-
1	747	S wall internal, looking S	1m
1	748	S wall internal, looking S	1m
1	749	N wall internal, looking N	1m
1	750	Scarf joint to E wall plate, looking E	-
1	751	N wall internal, window detail, looking NE	-
1	752	E wall internal, looking NE	1m
1	753	E wall internal, looking SE	1m
1	754	W wall internal, looking SW	1m
1	755	W wall internal, looking NW	1m
1	756	W all internal, long stone, looking NW	1m
1	757	E wall plate, looking S	-
1	758	E wall plate and roofing boards, looking N	-
1	759	E wall plate and roofing boards, looking N	-
1	760	General view, looking S	-
1	761	General view, looking S	-



1-751.JPG



1-752.JPG



1-753.JPG



1-754.JPG



1-755.JPG



1-756.JPG



1-757.JPG



1-758.JPG



1-759.JPG



1-760.JPG



1-761.JPG