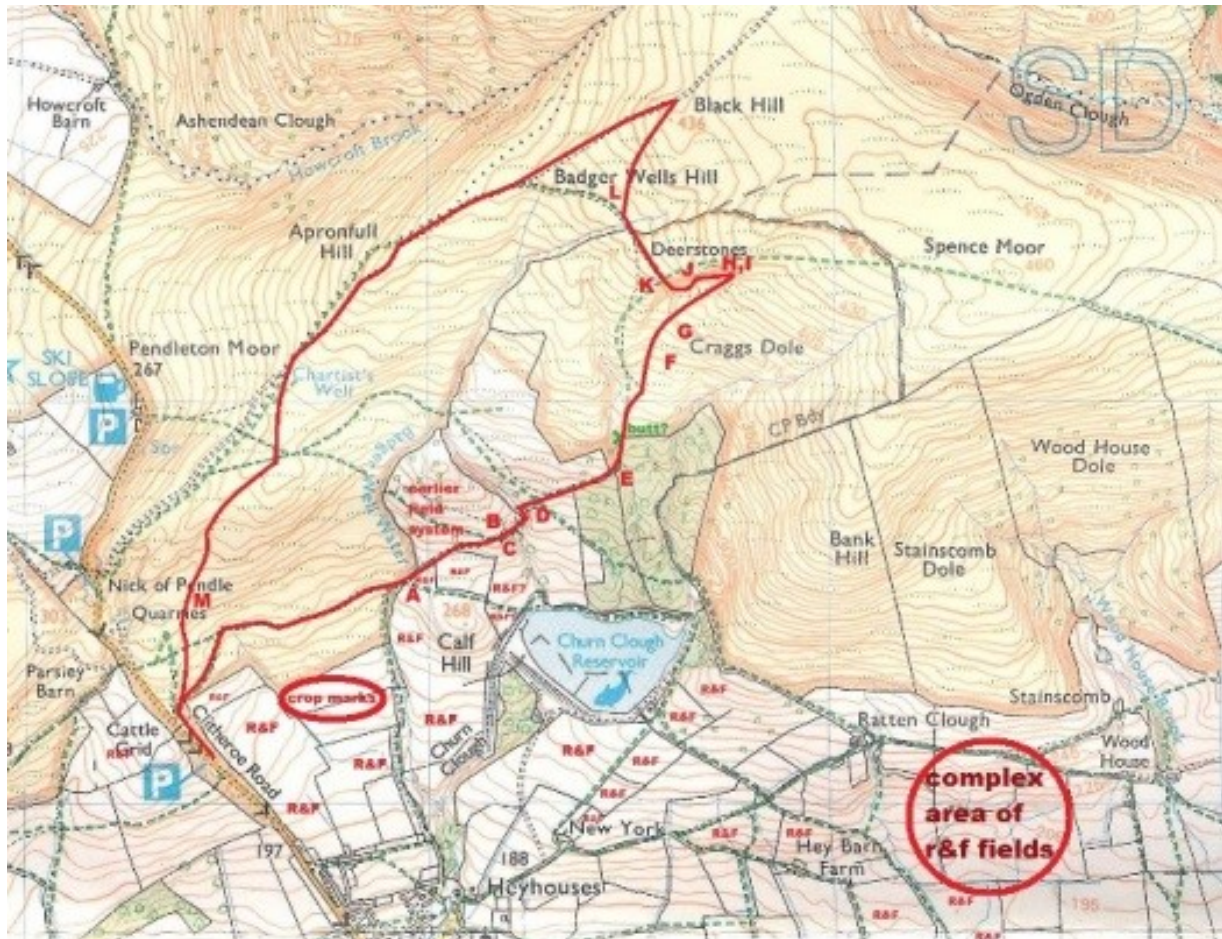


PENDLE'S HIDDEN VALLEY PROJECT

Pendle Heritage Field Walk 26th April 2014

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After parking just north of Sabden on the Nick road we walked along the late nineteenth century road to the flanks of Calf Hill. The road probably dates to the 1880s and the building of Churn Clough Reservoir (opened 1892). **Photo A** shows Calf Hill, ridge and furrow, and the start of a rather impressive arrangement of ditches and banks that follows a slightly serpentine route from SD7796 3854 to SD7814 3850. These require further investigation but are probably medieval or later. It has been said that the area was used as a warren due to its rocky nature. It is possible, though hard to see how due to the line they take, that the ditches and banks relate to this. There is a pre 1840s road that follows, but extends past, these earthworks. The banks on either side of the central ditch make it unlikely that the original purpose was as a road.

We continued on toward Craggs. From here the road predates the 1840s. The hamlet is now ruinous but at least one building, the grandest in the settlement, was still roofed during WWII. On entering

the hamlet we noticed an arrangement for water management. **Photo B** depicts an aqueduct with a slab reinforced bank running into a stone trough. From here the water ran between two blocks below the trough and down a gully, still evident, to a second deeper trough **photo C**. The downhill lip of this has been lowered in the centre, and has a similar block arrangement (the walking stick is against the right hand block) to allow flow to a third location, probably on the other side of the wall. The current stonework is unlikely to predate the eighteenth century but the arrangement may be considerably older. Though there is a lot of semi standing masonry in the hamlet, all post medieval. The main house has some very fine pieces of moulded (**photo D**) stone amongst its ruins. We have yet to determine if this originally belonged to the house.

Although the settlement as seen now is outside our main study period for the project, there is evidence suggesting usage going back significantly earlier. This includes numerous platforms and earlier field systems adjacent to the hamlet. The area deserves further research and possibly survey.

We continued past the Craggs eastward along the road until we came to what appears to have been a sheep washing complex (**photo E**). This is earlier than the reservoir as upstream from the dipping pond (C in the photo) has been diverted into pipes to supply the res. However, a two sluice system has been built at the diversion. When water was required for washing, boards were placed in slots to raise the water level & allow the stream to fill the pond. The revetment for the road (A in the photo) is not Water Board (unlike other features on the road) and may well be early nineteenth century. The fold itself (B in the photo) is of this date or earlier.

Across the stream the track becomes very steep & loose. So much so that it is impossible to envisage a laden beast, let alone a wheeled vehicle, being able to surmount the incline. At the top of this short climb is a strange semi-circular wall. At first glance it appears to be a grouse butt. Further investigation shows it is rebuilt on the footprint of an older, seemingly more substantial, structure.

Shortly after this we struck out across Craggs Dole toward the looming cliffs and scree of the Deerstones. We were soon in a strange landscape strongly reminiscent of limestone hushings. Features such as those in **photo F**, which appears to be part of a water management system, strengthen this impression. We also found something akin to a ruined lime kiln (**photo G**), though, apart from some sweetening of the grass, there was no evidence that lime had been burnt in it. It also seemed to be the only one. It is set into a bank on the edge of channel that runs up to the western edge of the Deerstones. The 'hushed' area contains large natural boulders of more or less unweathered grit. We will return these shortly.

The Deerstones themselves have been subject to a fairly low tech form of quarrying. **Photo H** depicts two slots (circled) cut with a thin chisel. These are the start of slots that would have wooden wedges hammered into them. These would have water poured on them in the hope they would expand and split the stone along a bedding plane. In use from ancient times, this technique dies out in commercial quarrying after the advent of industrialisation. It does, to a much lesser extent, continue to be used in small scale local quarrying. The presence of remains of a small well made shelter & very old dry stone walls suggest the activity may well be medieval at least.

This returns us to the 'hushings'. Evidence of at least three bloomeries, probably dating to the twelfth or thirteenth century, in the valley below pose an interesting question, 'Where did the iron ore come from?' We may have found the answer. If you look at **photo I** you will see three very large

dark red/brown stones circled. These are iron rich sandstone. Our excavation at Sabden Fold provided evidence of sandstone being used as the source for the iron. There is a strong likelihood that what was being hushed beneath the Deerstones is this iron rich stone. If this is the case then it seems probable that the knowledge of how to 'hush' limestone came from the search for iron ore. If this is the case then we may have stumbled upon a potentially nationally significant discovery. Further study and exploration of the Deerstones and roots in and out of it are required. Even if it turns out that the area was for hushing limestone then it is still locally important.

Whilst at the Deerstones we took the opportunity to look at the Devil's Footprint (**photo J**). This feature was originally natural and caused by nodules of iron rich stone eroding out the harder gritstone bedrock. The legend, very briefly, is that the footprint was left by the Devil as he gathered stones in his apron to hurl at a nearby church/castle. He then clumsily dropped them at Apronfull Hill. The site has been visited and 'tagged' by the curious since at least the eighteenth century. A dry path/causeway was even constructed to allow access to the demonic attraction.

After leaving the Deerstones we went up hill. Above the quarry we paused to appreciate the view. Looking south west (**photo K**) it was possible to see the geographic starting point of the Hidden Valley Project. We then headed toward Badger Wells Hill (by will of the masses). En route we stopped to look at the widening panorama. Looking south over Sabden (**photo L**) we could see where we had walked previously and where we hope to walk next. The ridge south of Sabden forms a distinct border, even when viewed from high up on the flank of Badger Wells Hill. By way of comparison, the photo was taken from an elevation of about 375 metres above sea level and Black Hill is 265 metres.

From Badger Wells Hill we followed the well trodden and populous track south east along the ridge, looking out for evidence of prehistoric activity. We walked down to and past Apronfull Hill (mentioned earlier) possible site of a late Neolithic to early Bronze Age cairn. Jeppe Knave Grave, of a similar date, on the far side of the Rough (see **photo K**) and this likely site suggest strongly that there may have once been a series of such monuments along the ridge up to Pendle. Prehistoric worked stone, dating back to the Mesolithic, is known to have been discovered in the area too.

About half a mile shy of the Nick Of Pendle we left the main path and angled across extensive remnants of industrialised quarrying in order to close the circle. The whole flank of the hill, from Clitheroe Road back to Badger Wells Hill, is cut by myriad banks and ditches, probably part of Sabden's collecting water for the fabric print works. The management of water in the village is known to have been contentious.

Below the ridge of quarry waste we fell in with a sunken lane (**photo M**) that predates the quarries. This may be the original road over the Nick. It peters out at SD7738 3856, where later quarrying activity covers its line, and appears to resume to the north at SD7737 3877. In the 1840s this probable northern continuation was being used as quarry access. It should be noted that the vast majority of industrial period quarry access routes are not winding which suggests that the pragmatic quarrymen were using an existing route. The lane lead marked the end of our evaluation walk.

As discussed earlier, there is much that warrants further examination as a result of the days sojourn.



A



B



C



D

A - road
B - fold/pen
C - pond



E

