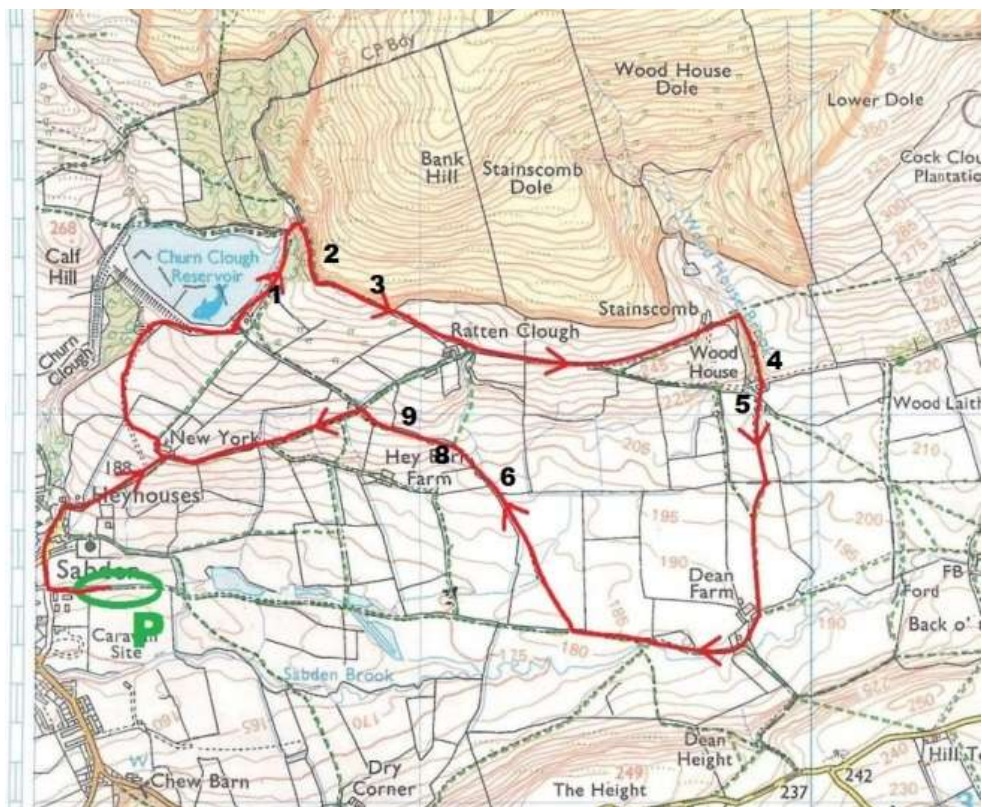


HIDDEN VALLEY PROJECT

Field Walk 8 August 2014

Alex Whitlock



Map1

Our walk of 8 August 2014 started in Sabden and followed a winding route north, past Cockshotts, New York, Churn Clough, to Churn Clough Reservoir. We paused to appreciate how the building of the reservoir has altered the landscape and took note of how the settlement of Craggs & the Deerstones fitted into their surroundings (*pic 1*). From the reservoir we walked up to the rough land on the flank of Bank Hill. From here we got a fine view of the lower western end of the valley and the country beyond (*pic 2*).

We followed the boundary wall, which divides the moor from farmland, easterly (*pic 3*). This rough ground was quite likely to have been dole land during the medieval & early post medieval periods. There is quite substantial ditch on the uphill side of the wall & this appears quite old, possibly medieval. It continues on toward Ratten Clough Farm but becomes more eroded out where it goes under the wall & into improved pasture. We chose to have our picnic lunch in the sun in the lee of this wall. Soon we were joined by some equine locals who were determined to make Richard M & the returning Mike H share their lunch with them. It made quite an amusing lunchtime cabaret.

After we had eaten we proceeded easterly past Ratten Clough Farm & toward Stainscomb. There was quite a bit of discussion & speculation on where the coach road was in this part of the valley. By the end of the day we had decided that it probably followed a line roughly between Wood House and

New York. This route would have been quite dry & firm without the over steep inclines associated with going via Stainscomb or Ratten Clough Farm. Evidence on the ground is sparse but not absent.

From Stainscomb we dropped down to Wood House & had a good look the exterior north (**pic 4**) and south (**pic 5**). There is still extant sixteenth century masonry in places and evidence of multiple phases of building and rebuilding. From here we followed a path across open fields to Dean Farm, along the modern track back toward Sabden before heading north west over pasture land again.

We cut across land that had been managed to supply water for the mills before heading up the ravine of Ratten Clough. Roughly parallel with Hey Barn Farm we saw a number of platforms associated with a concentration of hollies in the hedges (**pic 6**). This last is usually a good indicator of medieval or earlier occupation. Richard M & Brian J mentioned that land in the area had been purchased by the owner of a fabric printing works in order to provide the holly used in making the printing blocks. This area will have to be looked at more intensively at a later date.

Continuing up the clough we noticed that there was the remains of a substantial stone bank or wall on its western edge. This could well be an old estate boundary. Toward the top the clough has been artificially deepened at some stage. The area enclosed by the holly platform, the clough, and Hey Barn Farm (**maps 2& 3**) is full of earthworks (**pic 7**). A particularly tantalising one consists of three ditches and two banks (**pic 8**) running downhill at approximately 90 degrees to the assumed boundary. We have a few unfounded theories on its purpose, including drove way. This whole area, in conjunction with the holly platform, needs further research. We have already looked at the area during the vaccary research, and Brian & Richard have already looked at it in regards to early industrialization in the area, so we need to be going further back.

Pic 9 shows the clough/ditch at the point where it turns west and levels off. This has been artificially deepened and in some places there are remnants of revetment. The ruined wall on the downhill side follows this feature around to where it peters out above Hey Barn Farm and just shy of the road down from Ratten Clough Farm to Heyhouses. This is also the point at which the weather decided it wanted us gone. Waterproofs were scrambled & we headed for cars and home.

The areas we have covered in the last few weeks have been heavily altered by industrial activity, primarily quarrying and water management, largely related to milling & printworks in and around modern Sabden. The challenge that faces us in interpreting the visible archaeology in this area is sorting out what predates industrial intervention. A number of things that may look ancient could well be post medieval & others that we assume to be of that period may be adapted from more ancient features.

Many thanks to Mike H, Richard H, Richard M, & Brian J for all the knowledge, ideas, & fun they contributed on the walk. A special welcome back to Mike, making a triumphant return after a coach related injury.



Pic 1



Pic 2



Pic 3



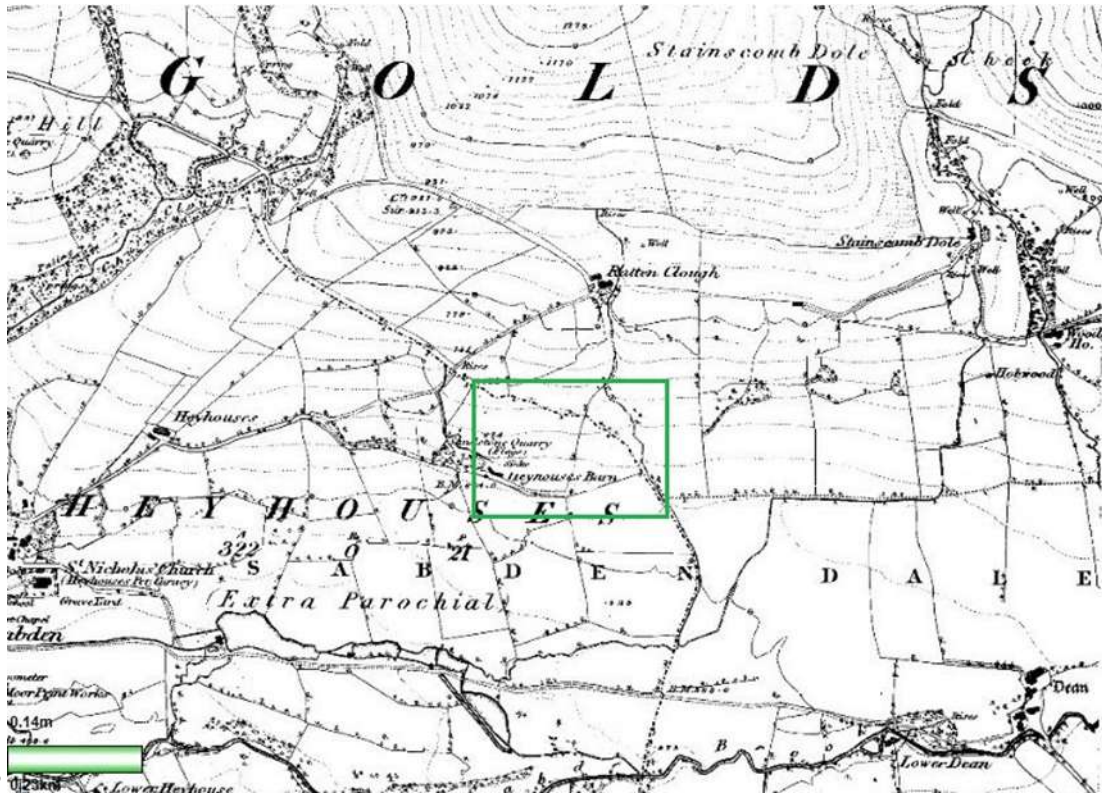
Pic 4



Pic 5



Pic 6



Map 2



Map 3



Pic 7



Pic 8



Pic 9