

Thruscross Parish East Heritage Project

Claro Community Archaeology Group

Final Report May 2008



Thruscross Parish Heritage Project

Now you see it now you don't



Plate 1 Derelict building

The photograph to the left shows a dilapidated but still standing building on the edge of Thruscross Green.



Plate 2 Building destroyed

The photograph to the left shows what greeted us when we went to carry out a building survey.

These pictures emphasise the importance of the detailed landscape study the Claro Community Archaeology Group and other community archaeological groups are doing. They are recording and making available information about the history and past of our countryside before it disappears in this case almost overnight. The pressures on landscape and the built environment are such that change can be very rapid and destructive. By our work not only is the information recorded, preserved and made available to as many people as possible, but it is then a resource not just for the present generation but for those to come.

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PREFACE/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is the final report on the work of the Claro Community Archaeology Group in the eastern section of the Civil Parish of Thruscross in North Yorkshire. This includes the work at the hamlet of Thruscross Green for which a previous grant from the Lottery Heritage Initiative was given in 2005 (Ref LH-05-01814). The subsequent area of Thruscross Parish East was covered by a second Lottery Heritage Initiative grant the work for which was undertaken between April 2006 and May 2008. The survey was carried out by volunteers working part time under the occasional supervision of Kevin Cale, a professional Community Archaeologist and with some limited specialist advice.

The report incorporates our previous interim report as the group has now had the opportunity to extend the area and depth of previous work.

Projects of this nature bring to light a great deal that is hitherto obscure and unknown about the history and the heritage of an area and help to clarify information already known. Without the work of groups of enthusiastic volunteers this would never take place.

The project would not have been possible without the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and Harrogate Borough Council Museums and Arts who allowed part use of premises at Knaresborough for desktop work and the storage of records.

Our work has also been helped by working partnerships we have formed with bodies such as Yorkshire Water, North Yorkshire County Council Records Office, North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit, SHINE and Time Travellers (Student Projects), Yorkshire Archaeological and York Archaeological Society, twenty other community archaeology groups and last but not least local landowners and tenants.

STUDY AREA

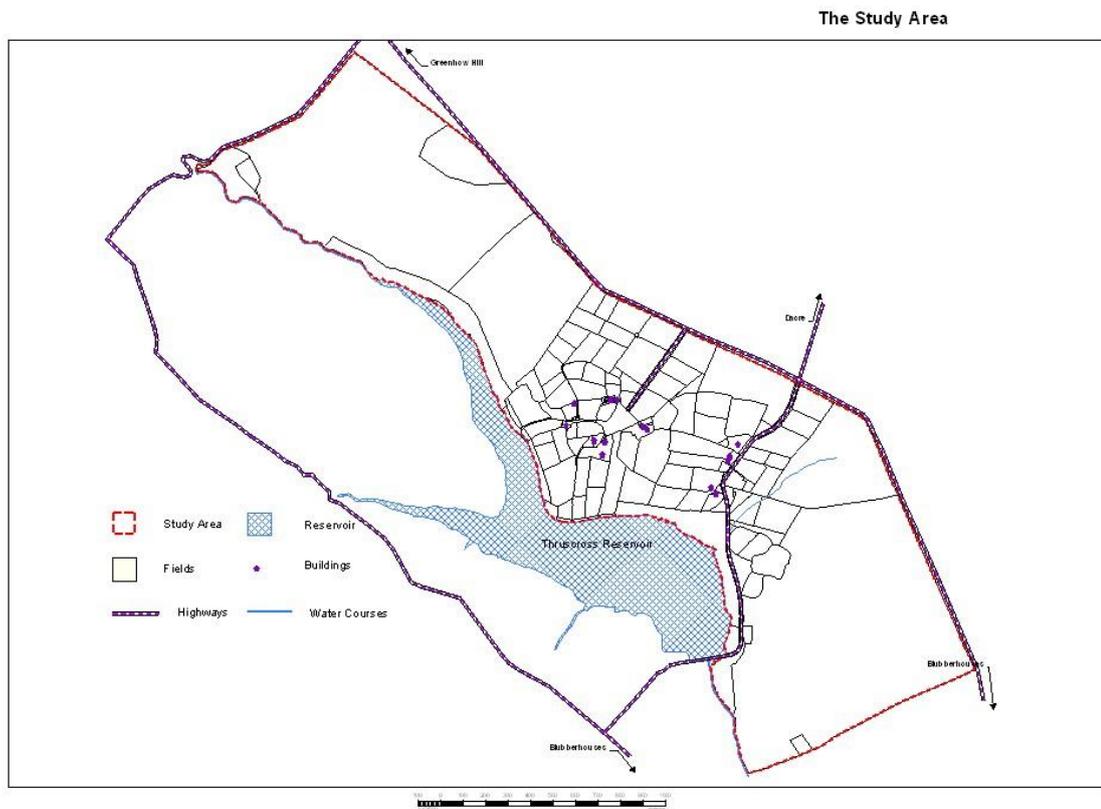
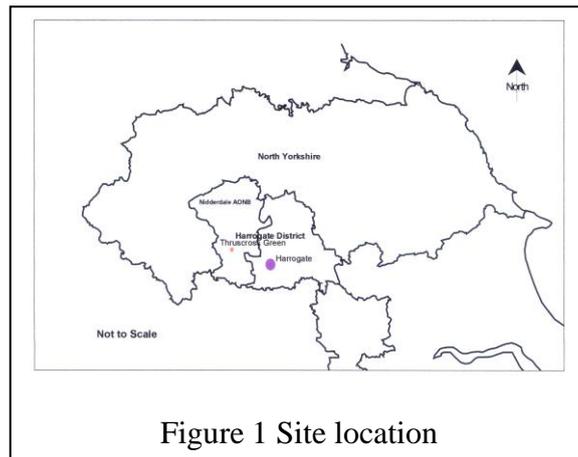
We originally concentrated our investigations on the area of Thruscross Green subsequently extended to include the eastern watershed of the parish. This is a small isolated rural settlement in the civil parish of Thruscross now in North Yorkshire, formerly the West Riding of Yorkshire The parish lies in the Washburn Valley in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and lies in a Pennine setting. The total area of our study is bordered by the 1960's Thruscross reservoir and is shown on the plan below.

The hamlet of Thruscross Green was chosen as an area of study because it appeared self-contained and possessed landscape features that suggests early settlement and a history typical of the Upper Washburn Valley. It was an exemplar that reflected the heritage of the locality from prehistoric times to the present day. The comparatively small area as originally chosen made it a manageable project within the time and resources available. It was also reasonably accessible to the project team. It was clear

from our first survey that there was much of interest in the surrounding area and this is where our subsequent work was directed

Local residents knew of our recent work in the adjacent parish of Fewston and were keen for us to study their own locality.

All the land is in private ownership with some limited access from roads and public rights of way. Permission to survey the area was granted by the freeholder, Yorkshire Water, and endorsed by the tenants and subtenants who took great interest in our work.



THE GROUP

The Claro Community Archaeology Group has been working in the Harrogate District since 1988. Under the auspices of Harrogate Borough Council the group has undertaken landscape studies of the civil parishes of Ellingstring, and Fewston. A desktop study of the known prehistoric archaeology in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Beauty was also completed. Subsequent projects were funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The work was undertaken by a team of approximately eighteen volunteers of all ages with the support and guidance of Community Archaeologist, Kevin Cale. Some people have specialist skills in, for instance, computing but others have started, as do we all, as beginners and learnt as we went along. We meet weekly in the undercroft of Knaresborough Castle Court House



Plate 3 Claro Community Archaeology Group

FUNDING

For the years 2004/5 and 2006/2008 we received two grants YHO 1337 and LH – 05-01814 from the Local Heritage Initiative. We had originally intended a two year programme of work. As we were awarded a grant for one year, we submitted an interim report after that year's work. As explained, our work at Thruscross Green necessitated a further application for a grant for our present extension of the area examined and this report covers the work of both projects.

We also received small grants from the Yorkshire Architectural and York Archaeological Society towards the cost of a specialist report.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Our principal objective is the study of the man-made landscape as a means of revealing the history and heritage that lies within it. This promotes care and conservation for residents and visitors alike.

We have increased awareness of the history and archaeology of our area and brought an enhanced appreciation of the past environment to the wider community by giving talks and setting up exhibitions.

To this end we have investigated, recorded and publicised information on the landscape, archaeology and related social history of the Thruscross area. This has created a permanent resource for the local community, visitors, students, academic institutions and local authorities.

METHOD OF WORKING

The study area has never been investigated or surveyed in this way. The adjoining parish of Fewston in the lower Washburn valley, which has been the subject of a previous community heritage study, has proved rich in archaeological features ranging from the prehistoric to the 20th century. Our investigations so far have shown both Thruscross areas to be equally fruitful and our continuing work will be able to clarify and extend information even further.

We have investigated the landscape by field survey using a structured and standard framework of recording procedure. Any previously recorded history of these features and the landscape in which they are situated have been established from the study of old maps and archive sources. We have studied the historical maps available from the 18th century to the latest OS map.

These show us how the landscape has changed over time, where buildings have come and gone and emphasises the impact of the reservoir construction on the field and track and road network and therefore on the settlement.

We have looked at the available aerial photographs dating from 1945 to the present which provide a snapshot of the area at a point in time and from them and our own photographs have built up a digital photographic record

The available archives have been studied including the Enclosure Award, Pre - Enclosure Survey and the Census returns that show details of the population. Yorkshire Water has kindly allowed us to make copies of their Deeds, which give the history of land ownership and in some cases of tenants in occupation. From the Harrogate Library we have culled information from secondary sources that have already been published.

Where appropriate we have commissioned specialist surveys covering geology, a geo-physical survey and building recording including, in the latter case, tuition in how to

do it for ourselves. Expertise that has been acquired has been shared with other community archaeology groups by hosting workshops to pass on information. All of the information acquired is entered on our computer database accompanied by a GIS mapping system. These together provide an unrivalled source of information on the physical and social history of our area.

CURRENT LAND USE, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

When transposed the British Geological Survey of 1879 shows that Thruscross parish lies mostly on sandstone, which allows water to penetrate. To the north-west and south-east are beds of shale which impede drainage. This creates a spring line where the sandstone lies on top of the shale. The sandstone is fossil bearing, which means it leaches out lime. This provides a nutritious soil for both pasture and arable farming. Some of the surrounding area is on shellbed deposit.

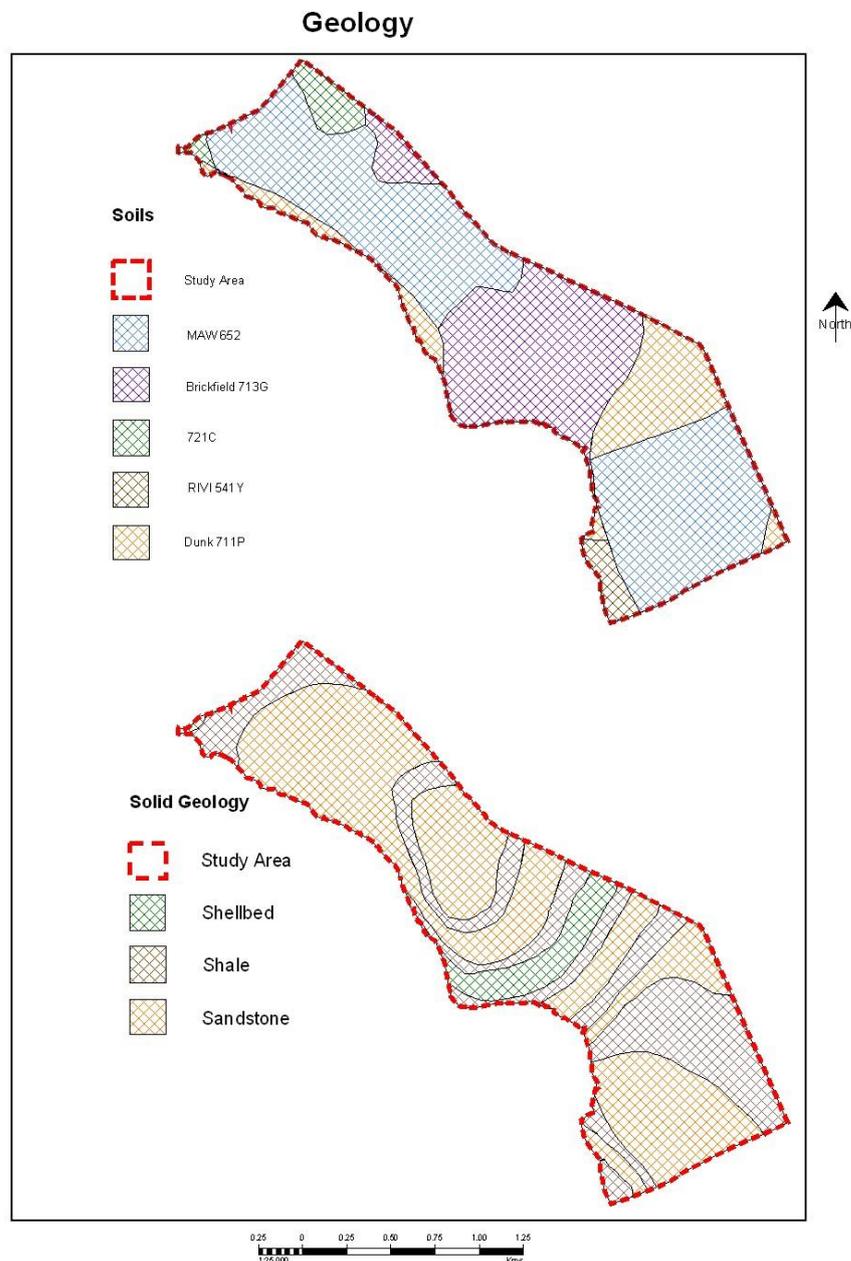


Figure 3 Geology

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Thruscross is a historic township within the Royal Forest of Knaresborough, the Honour of Knaresborough and the Wapentake of Lower Claro. It is in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Fewston.

It is now an upland area of pasture with two tracts of moorland. The settlement of Thruscross Green is at its approximate centre.

Prehistoric

Although until now the south-west facing slopes of the Washburn Valley were not recognised as having evidence of prehistoric activity, our work has now identified many possible prehistoric features. These include carved rocks, numerous and varied enclosures and field systems. There are also features which might be long barrows, ring ditches, ring cairns, chambered tombs, or hut circles but more work needs to be done to verify these. Many of the features survive as shallow earthworks and as such do not lend themselves to photography

These features stretch from Hoodstorth Lane in the north of the parish, to Hanging Moor in the south. The main area of evidence is the open moorland known as Roundell's Allotment intensifying around the Nell Stones in the vicinity of a drained tarn.

There appear to be features including the field system concentrated to the south continuing into the enclosed fields of Thruscross Green. Within the enclosed fields and on top of the watershed, running down to Thornthwaite, there are a number of circular features. One of these was recently excavated but the evidence was inconclusive. Further prehistoric features are evident to the south of Reservoir Road, alongside the Slade Dike and the remains of circular features and mounds can be observed in the landscape.

In spite of extensive 19th century quarrying and temporary roads and tips associated with the construction of reservoir in the 1960's, Hanging Moor has features dating back to prehistoric times in the form of lines of upright stones, mounds, trackways and carved rocks.

Many of the circular features are associated with dry ground, spring lines and streams. The dry area is probably the result of glacial moraines depositing sand, broken sandstone and gritstone boulders over the Nell Stones area, Far and Near Comb Hills and Libishaw Hill. Another factor in favour of early settlement may have been the south-westerly aspect and limited tree cover affording pasture for grazing animals. One of the most interesting features can be observed on Libishaw Hill in the form of a large enclosure, 250 metres x 150 metres, with an entrance on the south-eastern side containing circular features which could suggest a later prehistoric development. Within this enclosure is an earlier feature on the highest part of the hill, comprising a ditch, 3-4 metres wide, circular in plan and 110 metres in diameter. There are three or four more circular features on the summit.

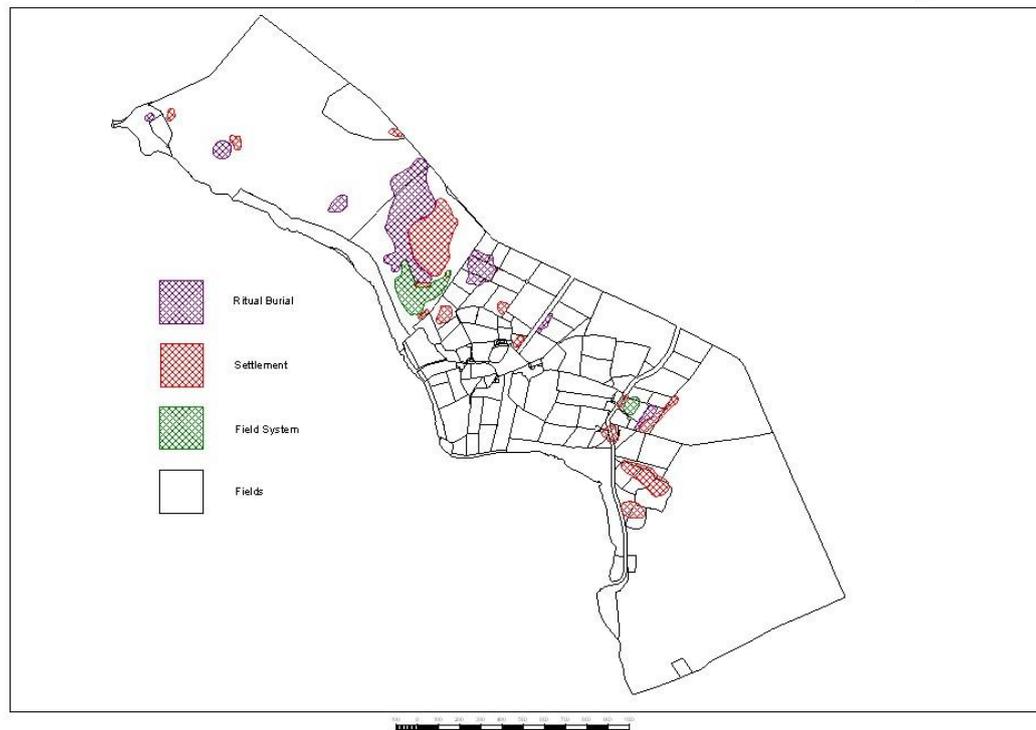


Figure 4 Prehistoric findings

Further upstream, at Hoodstorth, an elliptical mound is cut by a modern track. Dating evidence is limited for these features, which comprise mainly cup and ring marked rocks suggesting a possible Neolithic or early Bronze Age period, together with the remains of a few damaged chert blades found on the surface due to animal activity.

The mounds or possible ritual features are of several types including the remains of possible dolmens; these are upright rocks forming rectangular or subcircular features in close proximity to each other. The possible capstones have long disappeared.

The circular features are between 10 metres and 15 metres in diameter with the possibility of a burial in the middle. On the open moor some ditch boulder markers still survive, accompanied by slight mounds. A number of these circular features contain massive stone slabs, which may indicate the remains of chambered tombs. A number of these features occur in the enclosed fields of Thruscross Green, especially on the ridge running down to Greenhow Hill Road.

There appears to be evidence of possible settlements grouped together and separate from potential burial areas with different sized circular features in close proximity to one another. This is quite noticeable around the Nell Stones, part of Roundell's Allotment and the possible drained tarn.

Some of these features are 5-6 metres in diameter, with entrances facing south. A few have been noted up to 12 metres in diameter alongside the better grazing adjacent to Greenhow Hill Road. A possible field system maybe associated with prehistoric settlement, is located in the southern portion of Roundell's Allotment lying next to the enclosed fields. It would appear to have been divided up into small fields separated by ditches. Observed lines of reeds reflect the ditch locations.

It appears that prehistoric activity was abandoned, probably towards the end of the Bronze Age, possibly due to climate change and reduced grazing opportunities. There is slight evidence of later occupation. The circular features are larger and some other features may have been reused as evidenced by creating a new entrance enclosed by five square ditches.

Roman

The Romans were known to have been active in the area, lead mining on the upland limestone fells. The A 59, "Watling Street", is well known as a Roman road. The name "Street Lane" for a roadway that once ran to the west of the study area may indicate a Roman origin.

Medieval

The derivation of the name from the Anglo-Scandinavian personal names of Thorgild or Thorkell suggests the origin of Thruscross to be from this period. It has been suggested that the spelling of Thruscross with a single "s" ending indicates a Norse/Irish origin. The first medieval settlers were therefore probably Irish/Norse moving to the area in the early 10th century after their expulsion from their Norse settlement in Ireland.

Its absence from Domesday is not surprising; as marginal land it was unlikely to raise revenue.

There appears to be a line of building platforms below the 17th century house called Row. This name may have its origins in the earlier settlement. The fields above would probably have been arable but the sloping land towards the reservoir is likely to have been used as meadows. This linear form of settlement is typical of upland development where steep sided valleys prevail.

The first mention of Thruscross is in a Fountains Abbey charter of 1142. In many of the subsequent references there is a difficulty in differentiating between the settlement and the township. Even external settlements such as Padside and Thornthwaite have, at times, been termed "in Thruscross".

Between 1173-1185 Thruscross is mentioned in a land grant:

"Grant by Robert the Forester (of Knaresborough) to the canons of Bridlington of Slubberhouses, namely from Stainford Gill Beck down to Washburn, up that stream to Redshaw Beck and on the west of Washburn between Redshaw Beck and Stainford Gill Beck up to the bounds of Beamsley, Middleton and Denton, with common of pasture of Thruscross and Timble, for the service of a 24th part of a knight to the Lord of Knaresborough"

During the medieval period it likely that land use at Thruscross was predominantly pastoral with small areas of arable on the lower, more sheltered south-west facing slopes.

Thruscross could have been badly affected by the Black Death of 1347. By 1349 it has been estimated that approximately 45% of the tenanted acreage was waste and remained so until the parliamentary enclosures. Possibly 143 out of the 313 Forest acres in Thruscross and Padside were considered waste. Indeed John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster in 1374, instructed the steward of the Forest to relieve the tenants of some rent due to their 'poverty and reduced circumstances'

"John etc. (of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster) to our well beloved William of Nesfield, our Steward of Knaresborough, greetings. Because we have come to here that our tenants in all Aldborough, Timble and Thruscross are of such reduced circumstances and so poverty stricken that they can not pay their taxes, especially the one called the Royal Tax, we have arranged an abatement of four pounds sterling for the current year.

We authorise both you and our well beloved, our auditor Sir Thomas of Mapleton to exercise your judgement and discretion in determining an equitable distribution according to our tenants needs before you publicise the aforesaid four pounds.

This abatement of the said taxes applies strictly to the current year only.

The above given under my hand in Savoy this 18th day of November 1374."

There is some evidence of a revival of development in the late medieval period in the form of residual signs of strip farming on the south facing slopes below The Green.

Post Medieval

By the mid 16th century population levels had returned to those of the mid 14th century and land was at a premium in the Forest and it is likely that our area was being fully farmed again. Dated pottery scatters collected by local residents at the margin of the study area support a mid 16th century extension of settlement.

During the 17th century repeated attempts were made to enclose the Forest but it was not until the 1770's that this took place. In 1688 Thruscross inhabitants were charged by West Riding Quarter Sessions to repair Beckfoot Bridge over the Washburn;

*"The inhabitants of Thruscross humbly Certify your Worships
That whereas Beckfoot Bridge within this said hamlet was presented to be
out of repairs.*

It is now repaired according to order therefore they desire to be discharged.

*Marmaduke Roundell, William Shipard, Thomas Agill, Robert
Simson”*

It was not only the bridge that was improved during this period; houses were being rebuilt in stone. Within our study area local members of the Yorkshire Vernacular Studies Group have identified evidence to support these 17th century developments.

In 1767 the Duchy Survey of the Forest of Knaresborough notes that eight inhabitants of Thruscross Green were charged for unauthorised assarting of the Forest Waste.

The area now occupied by the Green was in 1775 on the Pre-Enclosure Survey Map depicted as a funnel shaped boundary that is suggestive of a livestock collecting area opening out onto the common pasture.

The form of the Green dates from 1775 when eleven acres were recognised as a public sheep pen and recreational area. The Enclosure map of this date indicates that a dispersed settlement fringed the Green and extended down the lower south-west facing slopes.

The impact of the industrialisation of the Upper Washburn valley during the 18th and early 19th centuries almost certainly resulted in an increase in population and the development of further housing.



Plate 4 1945 Pre Reservoir Construction



Plate 5 1968 Post Reservoir Construction

During the mid to late 19th century the Green was home to up to five farmers and a diminishing number of industrial workers, some names having had a long association with the township. The absence of new dwellings during this period indicates the decline of the mills and the onset of the agricultural depression. It was during this period that a crisis in public health in the West Riding towns had a profound impact on the Upper Washburn Valley through plans to construct three major reservoirs in the area. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Leeds Corporation, using compulsory purchase powers, commenced purchasing farms on the Green and surrounding areas and letting them on short leases with a view to constructing Thruscross reservoir. From the resultant Conveyances, which were accompanied by beautifully detailed maps, it was clear that most of the freehold land had been owned by absentee landlords often from the West Riding. The exceptions were the local families of Wigglesworth and Shand. There were also conveyances from the King of some of the Forest and the Vicar of Glebe land. The reservoir was not, however, constructed until the 1960's when the hamlet, on the valley floor, was submerged.

This produced a substantial change in the nature and character of the township. Whilst occupancy on the upper slopes remained reasonably constant with the recent influx of commuting families, visitors have been attracted and encouraged for recreational purposes.

Since the 1980's the principal landowner is Yorkshire Water, who has over the last twenty years sold buildings around the Green for private dwellings.

Presently there is one working farm at the Green which has diversified and sublet the land for grazing and another farm out of the area farming land within it.

SUMMARY OF OUR PRINCIPAL FINDINGS TO DATE

The following findings are the product of three years research. The process has embraced a wide programme of study including data collection, analysis and presentation in various ways to a wide audience. The thematic presentation of information reflects our methodology and assists in focusing the attention and aids understanding and interpretation. The thematic information is drawn from a comprehensive database. It provides the necessary building blocks for future research.

Water

As previously indicated above the availability of water is dictated by the underlying geology. Its presence on the surface largely determines the pattern of settlement and the nature of the agriculture. However, water has been managed to facilitate this.

There are the drained remains of a fresh water tarn with surrounding prehistoric activity.

Within the study area the spring line has been identified on the 270 metre contour, swinging in arc to the north west of the Green and can be attributed to the interface between the underlying sandstone and the shale.



Plate 6 A spring

The principal water collection area is the site of a pond situated to the immediate west of the Green and now survives in the form of a waterlogged depression. The pond has been managed in the past by enlargement and revetment and is partly served by a culvert that extends some considerable distance to the north. It is our understanding that the pond was constructed to serve an area of early settlement.

A second collection area has been created on the Green itself. Although the surface evidence of this rectangular structure is slight, it would seem likely that its primary use was for livestock. It benefited from its situation within the livestock collection area, as indicated on the Pre-Enclosure Survey Map of 1775. A secondary domestic use for this water supply cannot be ruled out, particularly for the properties that fringe the southern side of the Green.

Other springs have been captured in stone carved troughs for purposes of agriculture. There are some on the south west margin of the study area which give evidence of past revetment and culverting, although this is much decayed. The water management is probably of early date and has long since been disused.

There is little evidence of open drainage. However, due to the sloping nature of the site, significant artificial drainage may not have been necessary. Any which may exist was most likely done at the time of the Parliamentary enclosure.

AGRICULTURE



Plate 7 Pastures to south of Thruscross Green

It has been established that following the retreat of the ice, probably between 10,000-12,000 years ago the surface of the landscape would have been littered with glacial debris. Any concerted attempts to farm this area would have necessitated the regeneration of the vegetation and then the clearance of a scatter of gritstone boulders. Studies on adjacent unimproved land would indicate this commenced sometime during the late prehistoric period.

It is likely that these clearances coincided with the deforestation of the landscape.

Whilst there is evidence of early settlement and its reliance on agriculture would have been fundamental, no surface evidence survives. This is not very surprising given that the evidence would have been slight and confined to small stock enclosures adjacent to farmsteads that would have been consumed by subsequent agrarian improvements.

It would appear that the first systematic and extensive enclosure was undertaken in the late medieval period in the form of strip divisions, approximately 15 metres wide, separated by bank and double ditch boundaries and situated in the area south of Thruscross Green. This locality has a sheltered south facing aspect. The soil type, Brickfield, has a lighter quality and is more conducive to arable farming. It is interesting to note that the strips have been subsequently consolidated into the present configuration of fields where the walls coincide with some of the strip boundaries. The walls date from the 18th century enclosure with later subdivisions. There also appear to be some areas of stunted pastures, enclosed meadows and small areas of arable. A complex of land subdivisions have been identified on the south-west slopes, below the Green, these survive in the form of low profile, rectilinear banks, some of which pass beneath the later dry stone enclosure walls. These features probably represent an intermediate stage between the strip farming and the present field pattern.



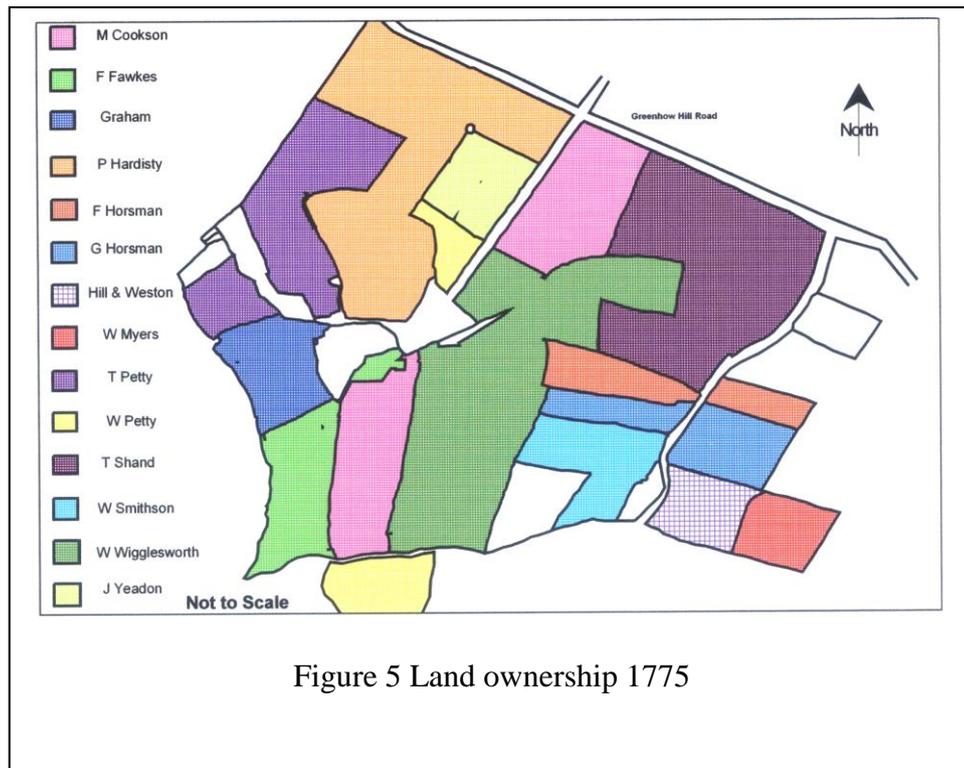
Plate 8 Dry stone walling

The present Green formed part of a Pre-Enclosure “outgang” (a funnel shaped area for marshalling livestock) leading to the common grazing on the rising land beyond. This may well have a medieval origin.

The pattern of fields to the north-west of the Green shows evidence of its origin as two small ancient enclosures, which may date to the period noted above. A crescent of unauthorised assarts border these two ancient enclosures and these likely date to the early 18th century.

The southern segment of the area was part of a huge ancient enclosure, which had already been divided into blocks of land before 1775. William Wigglesworth owned

the largest section of more than four acres in the south-east. The northern edge of the ancient enclosure may coincide with northern boundaries of this block of fields.



In summary, it would appear that most of the fields in Thruscross Green predate the 1775 Enclosure Award with some later subdivisions. The fields in the north-east had their origin in 1775. However, the agricultural history of the study area reflects the gradual substitution of pastoral for arable farming during the 16th and 17th centuries and is typical of subsequent developments. It is acknowledged that the majority of the buildings within the study area had their origins in agriculture.

Field Barns

Field barns have been identified in the enclosed land of the study area. A number of former barns have been recently converted into dwellings. Vertical remains of smaller barns have been located as part of existing field walls. One surviving field barn known as Boulder Barn has been the subject of an investigation supported by a vernacular building specialist.

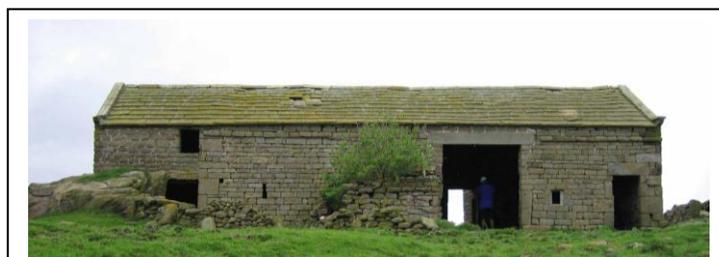


Plate 9 Boulder Barn

It is a sandstone structure with a stone slate roof which has numerous openings. The quality of the masonry work across the building varies considerably from the roughly made to the highly finished. The interior structure of the roof indicates a late 18th century date with later modifications. Unfortunately, the floor was obscured by years of accumulated manure deposits.

The work suggests that building has a protracted and complicated history embracing changing agricultural usage and human occupation. Although the present structure may originate in the late 18th century, its site may have been utilised much earlier. The additions and modifications made over the years reveal, as in the case of many agricultural buildings within the Dales, that it is by no means a simple structure that can be easily categorised.

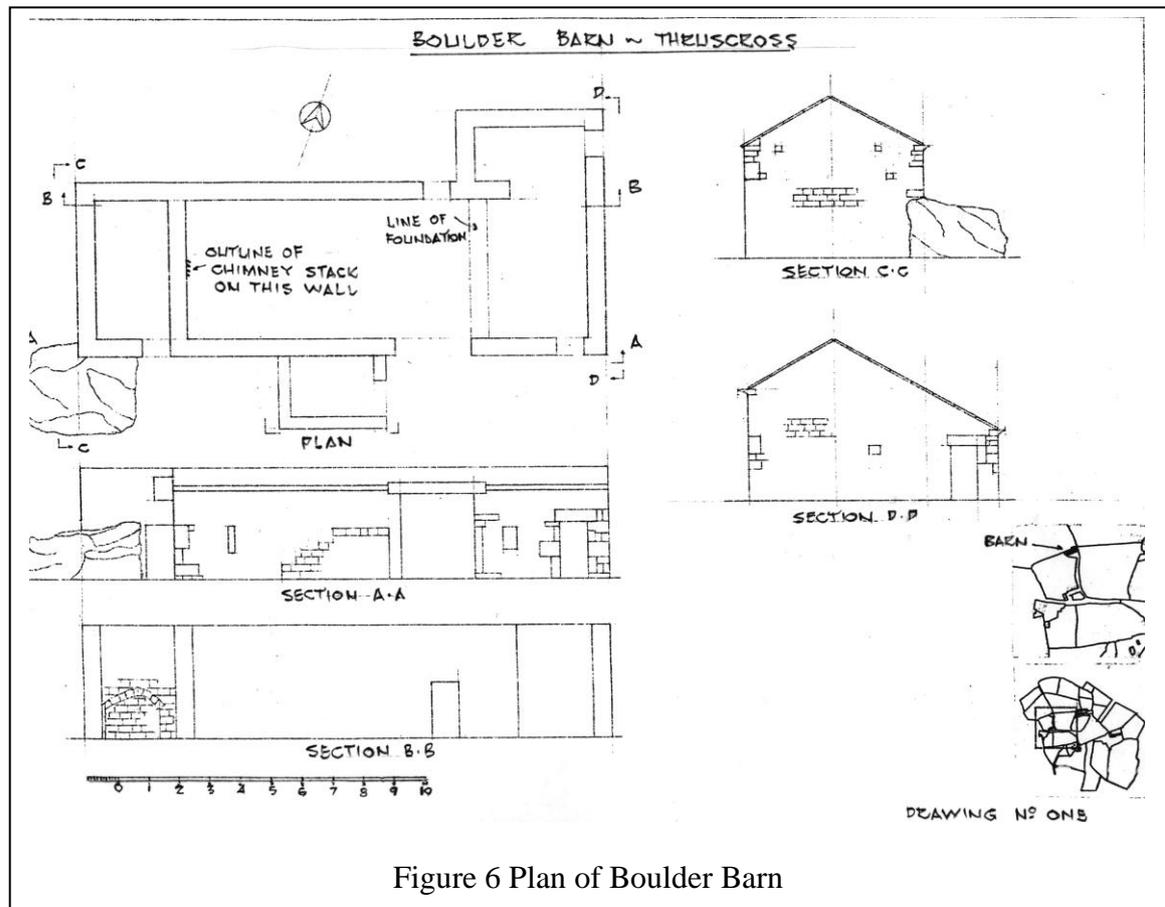


Figure 6 Plan of Boulder Barn

Settlement

As indicated, there is evidence of prehistoric settlement in several locations within the study area. The moorland to the north-west of the Green seems to have been occupied in the Bronze Age and there are other traces closer to the Green and adjacent to Reservoir Road.

Lines of building platforms to the south-west of the Green, above the steep slopes down to the reservoir are very likely the site of the early medieval. A later one grew up around the Green itself in the late 16th and early 17th centuries,

Within the same locality there is strong evidence of building platforms of several former structures straddling and respecting a trackway and served by the extensive water supply system described earlier. Some of these appear to be sheep houses which might indicate sheep rearing. The rest could be residential/agricultural. Their disappearance gives some indication of how the settlement has shrunk.

The water source, noted above, together with the configuration of the outgang appears to have influenced the historic pattern of settlement. This seems to have assumed a shape of an arc around the area of the present Green.

At the enclosure of 1775 most of the awards at the Green were relatively small scale and copyhold.

However there was one freeholder with more than 4 acres, William Wigglesworth of Padside Hall. Copyholders held their land from the Lord of the Honour of Knaresborough and were subject to manorial restrictions. These did not apply to freeholders who had a greater freedom of action.

Apart from the Green another small settlement grew up, probably beginning in the late 17th or early 18th centuries around the site of the old Gate Inn in the south-eastern sector of the area. Some remains of houses still exist and in particular the shell of the old smithy.

At the north-west corner of the study area situated adjacent to Hoodstorth Lane are the remains of a small settlement site recorded on the 1854 OS map as a farm and associated buildings. The site was inhabited up to about 1871 but was abandoned by the time of the 1881 Census.

The original occupation began much earlier in at least the 18th century or possibly the 17th centuries. Some stonework and a complex of building platforms remain. Associated with the settlement is a twin stone lined culvert of early date, which conveys a beck beneath the main access track. There is also a fine clapper bridge composed of three large heavily eroded stone slabs. Nearby an elaborate bank and ditch, lying at the foot of a steep bank and running parallel to the contour, was clearly constructed at some time in the past to take run off water down to the Washburn and prevent flooding of the fields below.

By 1976 when a vernacular buildings survey of the extant buildings was carried out by Mary Barley and Hazel Voakes only two houses were occupied, North Corner Farm with a lintel stone of 1703 and the early 18th century Bank House Farm. The remaining houses, Towler Farm, the home of Peter Nelson (now known as Windleside), the Row and two cottages by the lane side were all in an extremely derelict state.

Many of the dilapidated buildings were demolished when the then Leeds Corporation compulsorily purchased the land in the late 19th century for the reservoir, which was eventually built in the 1960's. Yorkshire Water took over the reservoir in 1989. Some of the stone from the demolished buildings has been used to refurbish those remaining, which have been sold to private owners, principally commuters to nearby towns.

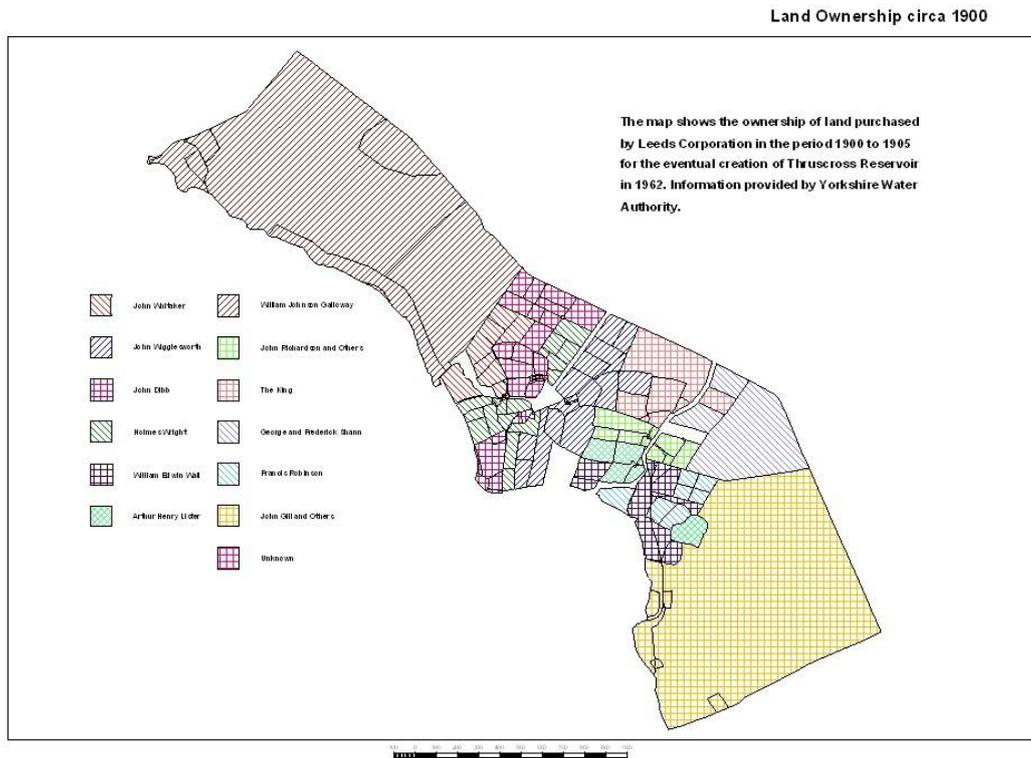


Figure 7 Land ownership circa 1900

Our frontispiece vividly illustrates the process and is a reminder of how history can disappear overnight.

CENSUS RETURNS

An analysis of these returns from 1841 to 1901 shows the changing patterns of settlement and the fluctuation in population in Thruscross as a whole over that period. In general families were large and houses were often crowded. Although many worked within the area, some did not. Goods and services, though often provided locally through people's gardens and village shops, otherwise they would be obtained from nearby villages or Pateley Bridge. There were always more males than females which reflected the lack of employment opportunities for women.

In 1801 the population was 467, in 1811 610, in 1821 and 1831 600 in 1836 650-700 and in 1837 611.

1841

There were 576 inhabitants, 304 male and 272 female. Most were very local or from Yorkshire and a third worked in agriculture sometimes combining this with another occupation. About half worked in industry. There was a schoolmaster for the children.

1851

By now the population had dropped to 339 of whom 179 were male and 163 female. The economy now depended predominantly on agriculture, which was still often combined with another source of income. There were two shopkeepers and a beer seller.

1861

The population had dropped again to 132 males and 125 females. Twenty seven houses were unoccupied. However there was still a number employed in industry.

1871

At last the population rose to 301, 156 males and 146 females. There were fifty children in the school. Only 16 people worked in the flax industry.

1881

Again the population increased to 313 in 62 households 157 males and 156 females with 64 scholars. About 200 adults were of working age. Once again nearly all of the inhabitants were from Yorkshire.

1891

There was now no one working in industry and the population had dropped to 219 being 71 males and 69 female. There were 30 unoccupied houses.

1901

Of the 181 inhabitants most were still of local origin, 97 male and 84 female with 34 children, 30 at school.

The figures for population do not always add up but this is how they were recorded in the Census.

Some general points can be deduced from the census statistics.

Agriculture

The numbers engaged in agriculture peaked in 1861 and then fell. This was partially due to the general decline in British farming. The average holding was 30 acres and was mostly used for livestock or for local human or animal consumption.

Industry

Eventually this ceased altogether. Such as there was, was based on flax processing with some lead miners.

Transport

This was on foot or horse along the tracks detailed below. The railway came nearby in the middle nineteenth century.

Poverty

In the early years there were paupers receiving outdoor relief. The number of these could have been hidden in 1841 as occupations given were of the heads of household only. Throughout the period some families sheltered indigent members but latterly a few people ended up in Pateley Bridge Workhouse .

Education

The school was built in 1857 but the children were already being taught. Some worked in the mills, some on farms and some as servants. Thruscross seems to be in advance in educating children even when they were working.

Housing

As the population dwindled houses fell into disuse although their sites are often still recorded

TRANSPORT

Nearby is a network of Roman roads including the present A59. There seems a strong likelihood that some of the footpaths and tracks through the area are the remaining evidence of a Roman road running from Kex Gill to Heyshaw Banks which is the site of the discovery of a Roman pig of lead. It is therefore possible that this could have provided a route to the known Roman lead mines at Greenhow.

Some of the other tracks and footpaths could have been part of the monastic network serving the agricultural and industrial interests of the nearby Yorkshire monastic houses.

One of these is most probably represented by the remains of a causeway or banked track in the fields adjacent to Reservoir Road which passes the site of the Maukin Cross (marked on the 1851 OS map)

The Boulder Barn field evidence indicates a principal trackway running upslope towards North Corner Farm with subsidiary trackways leading off to clusters of building platforms. All this reinforces the suggestion that this could be an early medieval settlement. There is indication of droving routes with an outgang to bring animals off the moor.

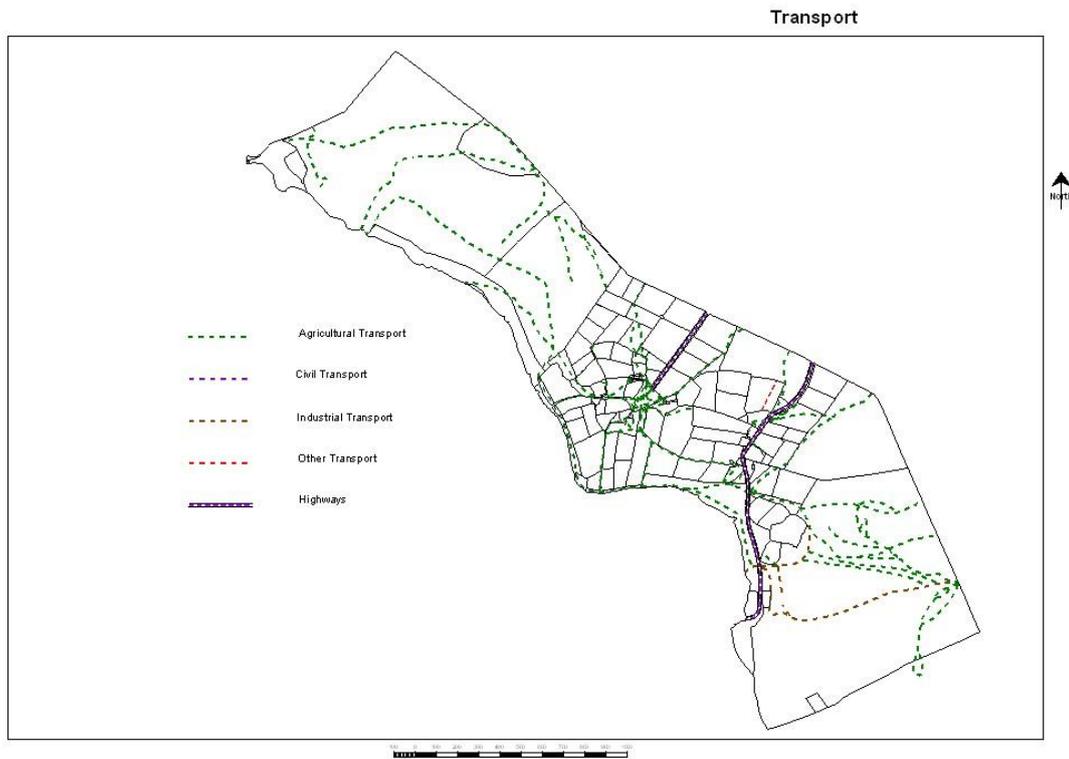


Figure 8 Transport

From 1771 the principal track shown on map is the main highway from Geenhow Hill Road into and through the village of Thruscross. Since then there have been eleven paths on the village green alone with many others in the surrounding area. These would have been used for local routes to work, school and chapel. However there are now only four paths on the Green, which feed the various surrounding properties. To the north of the village the paths or roads would lead out over Greenhow Hill Road to Padside, Thornthwaite and onwards to Glasshouse and Pateley Bridge. To the east of the village they led over Greenhow Hill Road to Menwith with Darley, Kettlesing Bottom, Hampsthwaite, Harrogate and Knaresborough. To the south they led, (before the reservoir was built), to Blubberhouses, Timble Fewston and the main Skipton to Harrogate road, the A 59, which went on to Otley, Leeds and Bradford. To the west they gave access to Bramley Head and the moors.

At all times the village and its surrounding areas were well supplied with paths and roads giving access to the transport of goods, people and services as required. The only obstacle would have been the steepness of the terrain and bad weather in winter.

Of special interest is the track over Hanging Moor. Part of this area is very wet ground and a length of this track is a paved causeway probably for packhorses.

INDUSTRY

Unfortunately all the evidence for the textile and sawmills now lies beneath the reservoir but that for extractive industries is plentiful.

There is considerable evidence in the field of worked quarries, which were used to build the houses, barns and walls which are such a feature of the landscape. The quarries on the northern fringe of the site are medieval in origin as is evidenced by the sandstone crumbling into sand giving a very soft profile. This could only have taken place over several hundred years. These quarries therefore predate the Ancient Enclosure and probably relate to medieval extraction. Quarrying took place in the north-east corner of the area and there is even evidence for more recent quarrying actually on the Green.

In the south eastern sector of the area there remain extensive post medieval and more recent quarry workings from one of which came the stone to build the Stonehouse Inn. The remains of two quarrymen's stone huts can be found complete with stone benches.

With the compulsory purchase of land for the reservoir and the subsequent arrival of the reservoir the whole economy of the area changed.

PRESENT DAY

The loss of land to the reservoir increased the trend away from hill farming which became even more uneconomic. Thus we have the present settlement of scattered commuter houses and one farm working part-time. These are all that remain of the former upland farming community.

CONCLUSION

Our work first at Thruscross Green and then in the surrounding area has demonstrated what a wealth of information a project such as we have undertaken can reveal.

By a close examination of the available records and extensive fieldwork the variety of information relating to a small part of the rural uplands of North Yorkshire is made available for the public to study and enjoy.

As shown in the opening of this report, even as we worked buildings and features were disappearing, so that by careful recording of our findings, history is disseminated to the public and preserved for future generations.

We began our project with a study of what at first sight seemed a remote and featureless stretch of pasture fields and moorland. But as is often the case study of historical records and fieldwork has revealed a multi-layered landscape of great interest and implication for the public to appreciate.

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Plate 11 Thruscross Green 2008