

The test pit

Today we attempted to find the junction of two features at the dig site, that is where we thought the incoming water channel and the imbricated path should converge. In so doing we put a test pit into this point, which was on the north side of the dig site. Unfortunately the features don't converge there and rather frustratingly, neither feature was in the test pit. This means we will simply have to go back to their last known points and just follow them from there. Thanks, however, to Ian Cooper for sheer dogged persistence.

The Meadowcroft Sough; the Dog Kennel Warm spring; Meadow Croft and the Warmbrook

I am most grateful for the kind efforts of Roger Shelley and Lynn Willies for alerting us to some documentary evidence about the Warmbrook and its surroundings.

The Meadowcroft Sough

Further information about this sough is given in Rieuwerts (2012) who felt the sough tail (outflow) was 230 feet (70 metres) north-west of the Summer Lane - Derby Road junction. This distance is now near the Cock Pit and the location is also not quite where we estimated the stream junction of the Warmbrook and the Yokecliffe stream to have been, though its not far away. Bearing in mind the source of measured distances are probably 300 years old, the sough tail would have most likely drained into one or the other of the streams. This moves the sough tail from where we thought it lay (and recently failed to find it) to further south, but under made ground where we cannot attempt to find it (item 12 of the map below).

The warm spring in the Dog Kennel water shaft

A problem we have had in our research about the Meadows has been where the warm spring was located, which we know was in the grounds of Gate House. Interestingly, Rieuwerts records the number of meers laid out between the Dog Kennel water shaft and Yokecliffe.

These are:

Dog Kennel: Founder Meer;
3rd Meer in the Meadow Croft;
5th Meer in Woolley Lane (now Yokecliffe Lane);
6th Meer in Yokecliffe.

A meer is 29 yards (26.5 metres). These measurements enable us to confirm that the Dog Kennel water shaft was indeed at the west end of Gate House (now below the lounge bay window of Claire Cottage, a location we felt we had previously identified) because the measurements fit these locations and meer spacings.

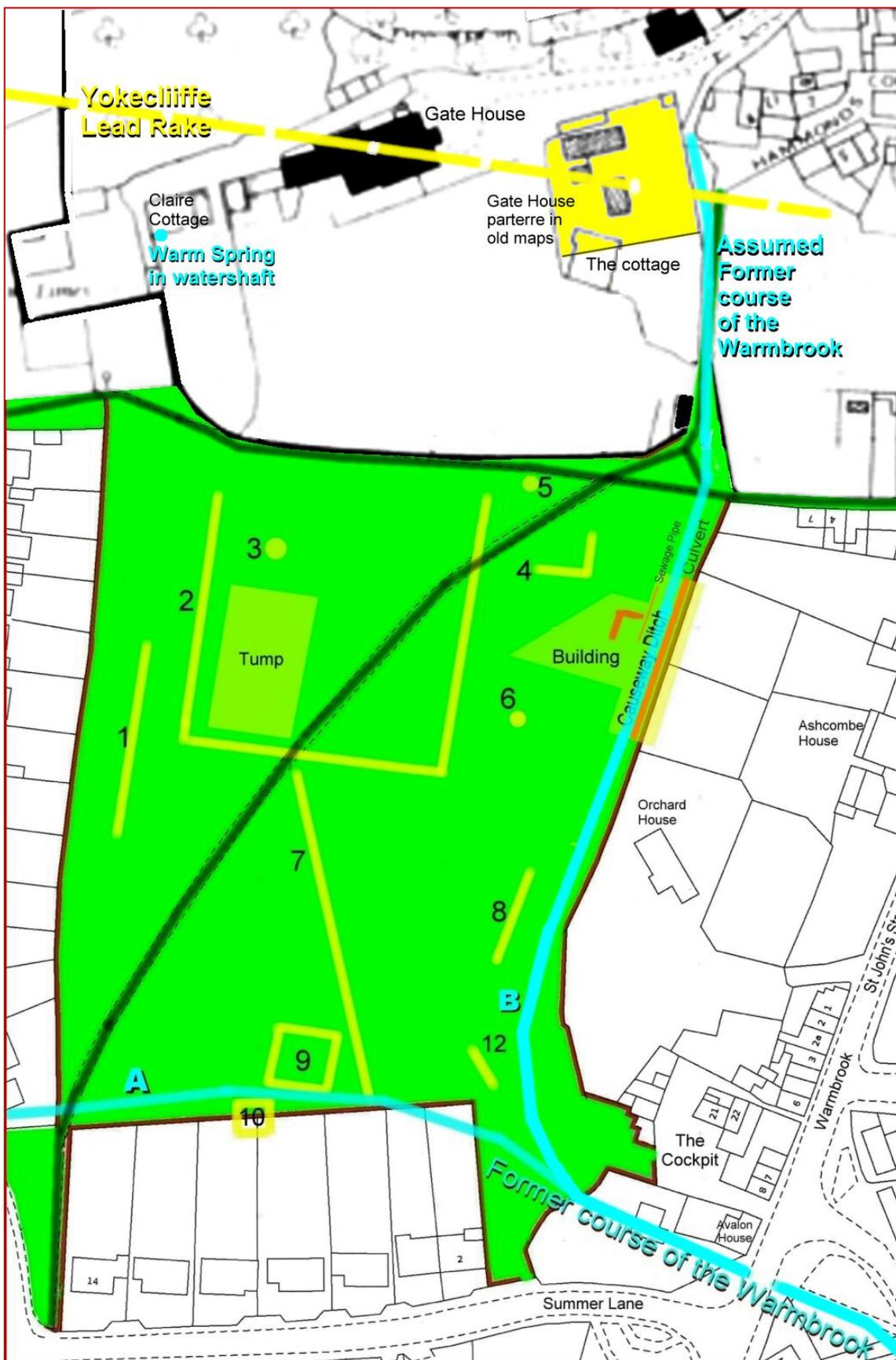
A shaft in a house garden on the Causeway, behind the tall "Blacksmiths House" of Hammonds Court, would therefore appear to be a well (or another unrecorded spring): it does not fit the meer spacings.

The warm spring at the bottom of the Dog Kennel water shaft (the shaft was supposed to be nine fathoms deep, that is to say 16.5 metres) was described by Thomas Short (1734) as being a strong current of warm water from the north-east side which met a lesser current of cold water from the south-west side. To the best of our knowledge this spring no longer flows and the shaft is buried under Claire Cottage.

Course of the Warmbrook

Another unsolved problem on our list has been about the correct course of the Warmbrook. This stream is only partly shown on a 1709 map, where it ran on the south side of Water Lane. However, significantly for our understanding, Rieuwerts also records that lead was being mined "at the Warmbrook" in 1520 and the years

afterwards, that is to say in Tudor times. Given that the Yokecliffe Rake (lead vein) extends under Yokecliffe and via the Gate House (under the dining room) this can only mean that originally the Warmbrook lay towards the east end



Meadow Croft field, the Warmbrook and Gate House surroundings

of Gate House and on the west side of Hammonds Court. In the earliest map we have of Gate House, from 1821, this area is shown as a parterre, a formal garden, suggesting it may have been landscaped after the lead mining was ended.

There is no lead anywhere else on its known course. This course can now only be traced by the lane which runs south from Hammonds Court to the north-east gate of the Meadows and thence along the informal path along the Causeway Ditch to the Cockpit, under the Derby Road and then (obliterated) on the south side of Water Lane to a junction with the Ecclesbourne at Willowbath Mill. This discovery is important not only because it gives us (apparently) the totality of the course of the Warmbrook, at last, but it also makes it clear that the Causeway Ditch, however it was used in Saxon and Medieval times and however covered by structures, tipping and overburden since, was in origin a warm stream whose water source is perhaps associated with the Yokecliffe Rake and thus the warm spring in the Dog Kennel water shaft.

Comparison of work by Thomas Short in the summer of 1733 with known springs which still run, suggests the temperature of the Warmbrook was 17-18 degrees Celsius.

[Name of the Meadow Croft field](#)

Both in 1693 and in 1742 the field between the Gate House and Yokecliffe Lane was known as Meadow Croft, in addition to the field we are working in. By the time of the 1845 Tithe Map, this field had become known as Great Meadow, with only the currently remaining field retaining its name as Meadow Croft, in which our present archaeological dig is taking place.

In which field, if we take the simplest explanation of what our Saxo-Norman building might be, potentially a farm or croft - conceivably, then, the croft of Meadow Croft. However, we have not yet finished, so best not to jump up and down - it could still be something else: its engineering, if we can stretch to that term, is remarkable.

Next dig

Our next dig date is provisionally Sunday the 31st July.

References

Rieuwerts JH, 2012, Lead Mining in Derbyshire: The area south of the Via Gellia, Peak District Mines Historical Society, Vol 4, pp56-57

Short T, 1734, The natural experimental and medicinal history of the mineral waters of Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, London, F Gyles, pp93-94