

GPS Survey of Holwick Scars Scheduled Monument 1019458

Altogether Archaeology

altogetherarchaeology.org

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Introduction

Altogether Archaeology is an independent community archaeology group based in the North Pennines, who are researching in the area from Swaledale to Tynedale. Prior to late 2015 it was formally a sub-group of the North Pennine AONB. During the period 2009-2015 it completed a considerable volume of community-based archaeology. Those reports are available on the link below.

In early 2017, Altogether Archaeology commissioned a three-part 'Research Strategy'. Now (May 2017), two of the three documents: The Research Agenda and the Research Strategy are available to download at <https://altogetherarchaeology.org/reports.php> The Resource Assessment although nearly complete has not yet been released.

Altogether Archaeology members decided that their next major research agenda should be to look at early medieval sites within the region. Holwick was surveyed by the group when it formed part of the North Pennine AONB in 2011, but the Heritage Lottery Fund grant ran out in 2015 before the site could be excavated.

Holwick is a dispersed settlement along the main access road. Historical records indicate that Holwick township was subdivided into several separate small settlements. The area being investigated shown in red in Figures 2, is indicated in documents from the early 1800s as being called Well Head.

Partly because of the proximity of the Holwick Scars Scheduled Monument 1019458, and to complete the earlier 2011 work, it was thought that this site might include some Early Medieval features.

In May 2017, with permission of the landowner and farmer, the group held a week-long fieldwork session to survey the Well Head settlement site at Holwick using both GPS and traditional methods. This was both to update the 2011 survey and to train new members. In addition, a walk over GPS survey was made of the Holwick Scars Scheduled Monument 1019458 (Monument 1019458), as this had not been looked at in 2011.

Altogether Archaeology has started a program of excavation on the main Well Head settlement site with excavations in 2017 and 2018 with a third dig schedule for May 2019. The 2011 survey and the 2017 interim report are available at <https://altogetherarchaeology.org/reports.php> . Further reports will be made available there as they become available.

GPS Survey

A GPS survey was made as outlined in: Landscape Surveying using Handheld GPS Receivers, Stephen Eastmead, ISBN 978-1-4710-6296-4, lulu.com. The indicated accuracy during the survey was between 3m and 4m. The data was corrected for local WGS84 > OSGB36 conversion errors which were measured at 2m at 200°. Data was processed in GPS Utility software and then used in QGIS. All three figures referred to in the text are in Appendix 1, and all photographs are in Appendix 2.

Copyright

Scheduled Monuments

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The most publicly available up to date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from <http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk>.

Photographs

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Report

The report can be used by any third party if it is credited to: © Altogether Archaeology (altogetherarchaeology.org)

Survey Findings

Introduction

Figure 1 indicates how rich the Holwick area is archaeologically with the high number of scheduled monuments locally. There are also many sites in the area that have not been surveyed. Figure 2 is a Lidar view of the GPS data for both Monument 1019458 and the Holwick Well Head Settlement surveys. Access to Holwick Well Head Settlement is from the road that forms the northern boundary. However, it is not easy to get to Monument 1019458 from Holwick Well Head Settlement, due to the long dry-stone wall that separates the improved pasture from the moorland.

To the south of this wall are all the sites recorded during the Monument 1019458 survey. Features M and L were recorded on the way to Monument 1019458. To the north of the wall are the sites that will be described in the Altogether Archaeology Holwick Survey 2017 report, in which this short report will be an annex.

Monument 1019458 Survey Findings

Monument 1019458 was scheduled in 2000. In the intervening 17 years the landscape features like the tracks up the hillside may well have been relocated by grazing livestock. In 2017, there is a single track (F), extending from where Monument 1019458 meets the Holwick Well Head Settlement, diagonally towards the south-east, until it peters out approximately two thirds of the way up the hill. All the shielings identified are located above this track.

Features and Photographs

Features A and C are the least distinct 'shieling' foundations.

Feature B is a significant line of stone stretching diagonally down the slope of the hill. This feature looks natural at its eastern end, but the western end appears as though it has been enhanced by man into a possible burial cairn [Photograph 1].

Features D and E are lengths of wall.

Feature F is the track.

Feature G is the most intact 'shieling' which has a small annex or yard above [Photographs: 2 & 3].

Feature H 'shieling' is located below G [Photograph 4].

Feature I 'shieling' is located below H [Photograph 5].

Feature J 'shieling' appears to have an annex or small enclosure attached [Photograph 6].

Feature K is the most westerly shieling [Photograph 7].

Photograph 8 is a view of the Holwick Well Head settlement from the 'shielings'.

Photographs 9 is the building (Feature L) at Well Head, divided into two by the Enclosure Act wall.

Photographs 10 & 11 are of Feature M.

Feature L is outside the scheduled area and forms part of a foundation that will be included in the Holwick Well Head Settlement report. The dry-stone boundary wall cuts across the structure. The remains of the foundations consist of much larger stones than seen elsewhere. It is possible that this may be an earlier structure. There is a small enclosure attached to the eastern side. [Photographs 9].

Feature M appears to be a later building, or one that has been reused at a later period. It butts up to the boundary dry-stone wall, but it is not clear if the dry-stone wall was built on its northern foundation or is located a metre or so south. [Photographs 10 and 11].

Discussion

In 2017 as preparation for the first excavation of the Holwick Well Head village site a GPS survey was made (Figure 2 red GPS plot), together with a walk over GPS survey of the Holwick Scars Scheduled monument 1019458 (Figure 2 yellow GPS plot).

The original short report made no comment on the structures surveyed. However, the author had some misgivings about them being shielings, as:

- 1) They were located a significant distance and height above the nearest spring. The centre of the group of small stone huts being 306m from and 50m above the spring marked **Sp** in Figure 2 and called 'Strand Well' on the 1854 Ordinance Survey map published in 1857 (see below).



- 2) The nearest valley from the moorland down to the enclosed pasture, Bedale Gill, is generally dry. It only carries water after periods of significant rain or after a very heavy storm and is dry again after a few dry days.

- 3) The location of the buildings is on a steep hillside offering little in the way of grazing.
- 4) There are no domesticated animal enclosures.
- 5) You cannot see any livestock on the moorland from the buildings which are about 40m in elevation below the moorland.
- 6) There appears to be too many buildings if they were shielings for such a small community.

In 2018 a second excavation took place at the Holwick Well Head site. Martin Green, Altogether Archaeology's Fieldwork Coordinator, found two publications by Angus J L Winchester whilst searching the literature, both describing 'peat scales' or peat drying huts in Eskdale, upstream of Eskdale Green. These peat huts were located between 900 feet and 1000 feet (274m – 305m) whereas the Holwick Scars huts are between 310m – 331m. Like Holwick Scars the Eskdale peat huts were sited on the fellside between the peat harvesting location and each resident's settlement. Whilst the Holwick Scar huts are of similar proportions and some have similar shapes to those in Eskdale, there is insufficient structure remaining to be able to categorise them like Winchester did in Eskdale. Note: on the above map a hut is described as 'Peat House' that is likely to be Feature G shown in photographs 2 and 3. Feature G is the best preserved of the Holwick Scars huts. The Kiln Spring shown on the map was not identified. It probably only runs in wet periods. It is likely that the Holwick huts were ling thatched and well ventilated as well as being sheltered from the rain. Winchester's Map shown below shows houses on the enclosed land in the Eskdale Valley and the peat store huts on the fellside directly below the moorland.

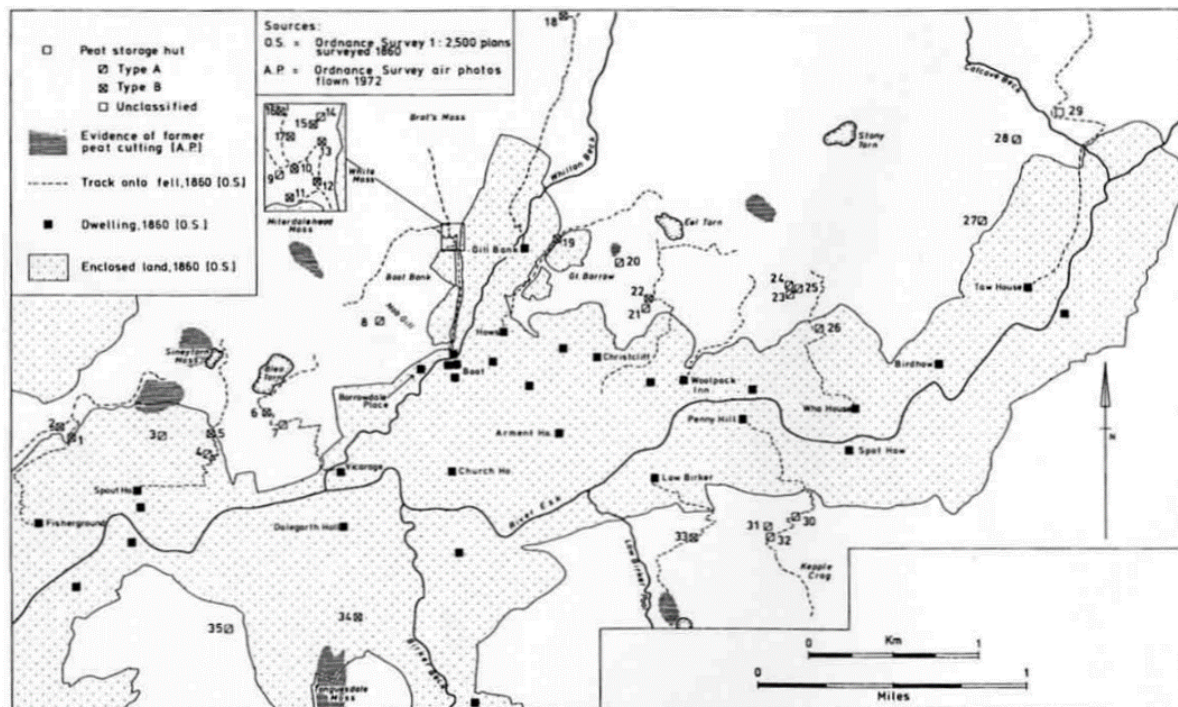


FIG. 1. – Features associated with peat cutting in Eskdale.

This report will be submitted to Historic England asking if they will consider reviewing this monuments description.

References

Angus J. L. Winchester, 'Peat Storage Huts in Eskdale.' Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society Transactions (TCWAAS) (1984) 2:84. (pp. 103-116).

Appendix 1 Maps

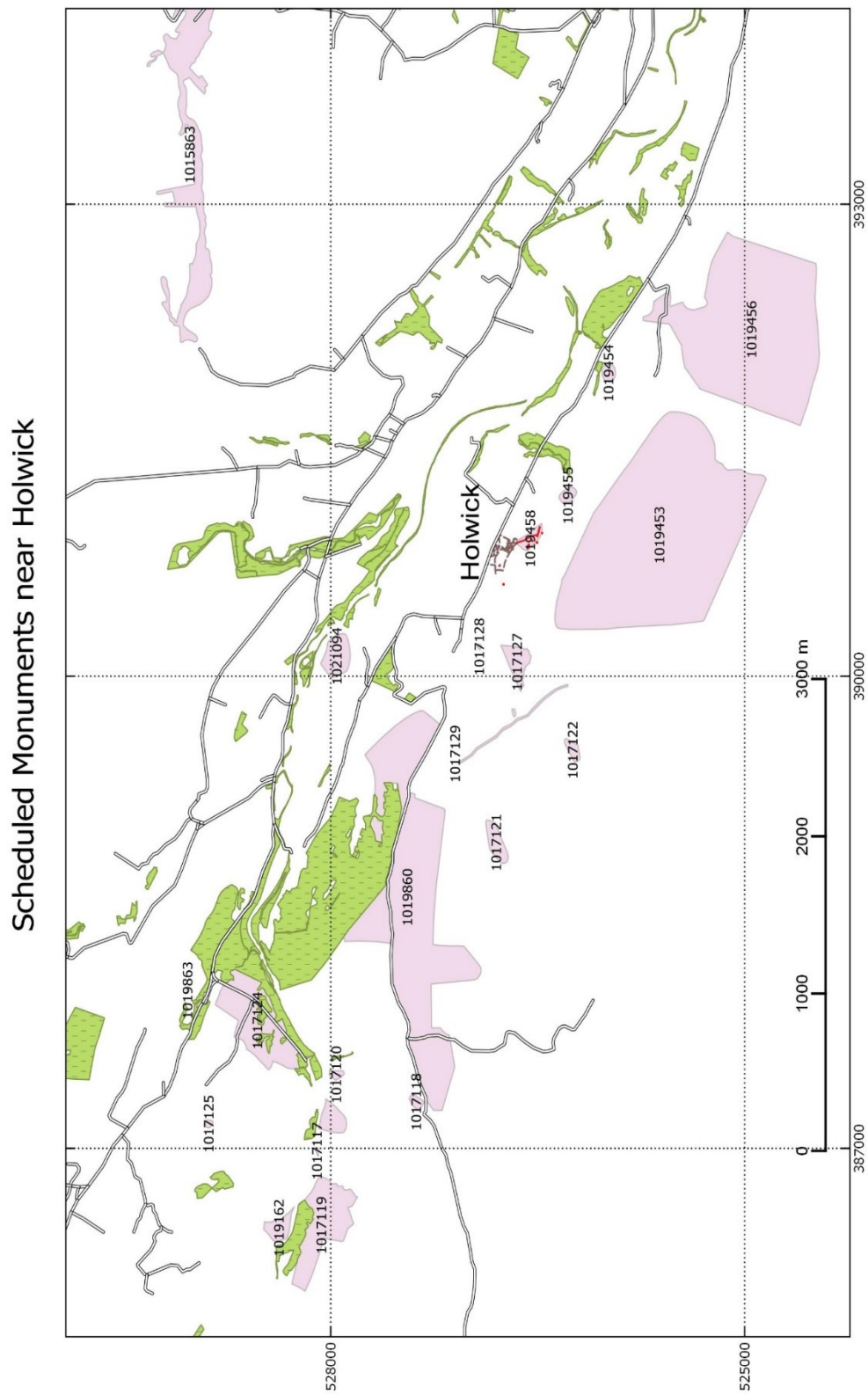


Figure 1 Scheduled Monuments around Holwick

Holwick Scars Scheduled Monument 1019458 (yellow) and Holwick shrunken village (red).

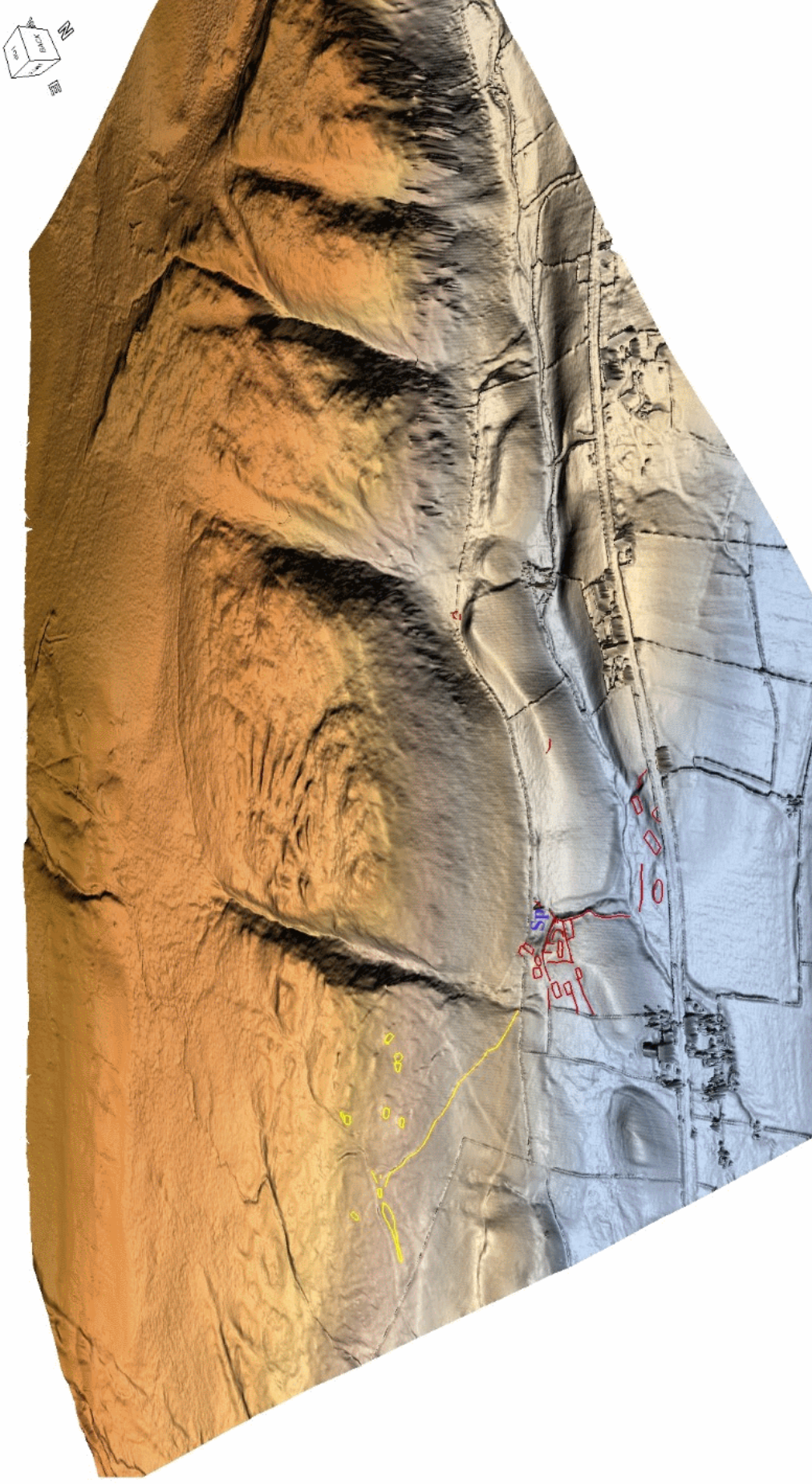


Figure 2 GPS Surveys of Holwick Scars (yellow) and Holwick shrunken village (red) against 1m DSM Lidar 3D image

Holwick Scars Scheduled Monument 1019458 GPS Survey by Altogether Archaeology May 2017

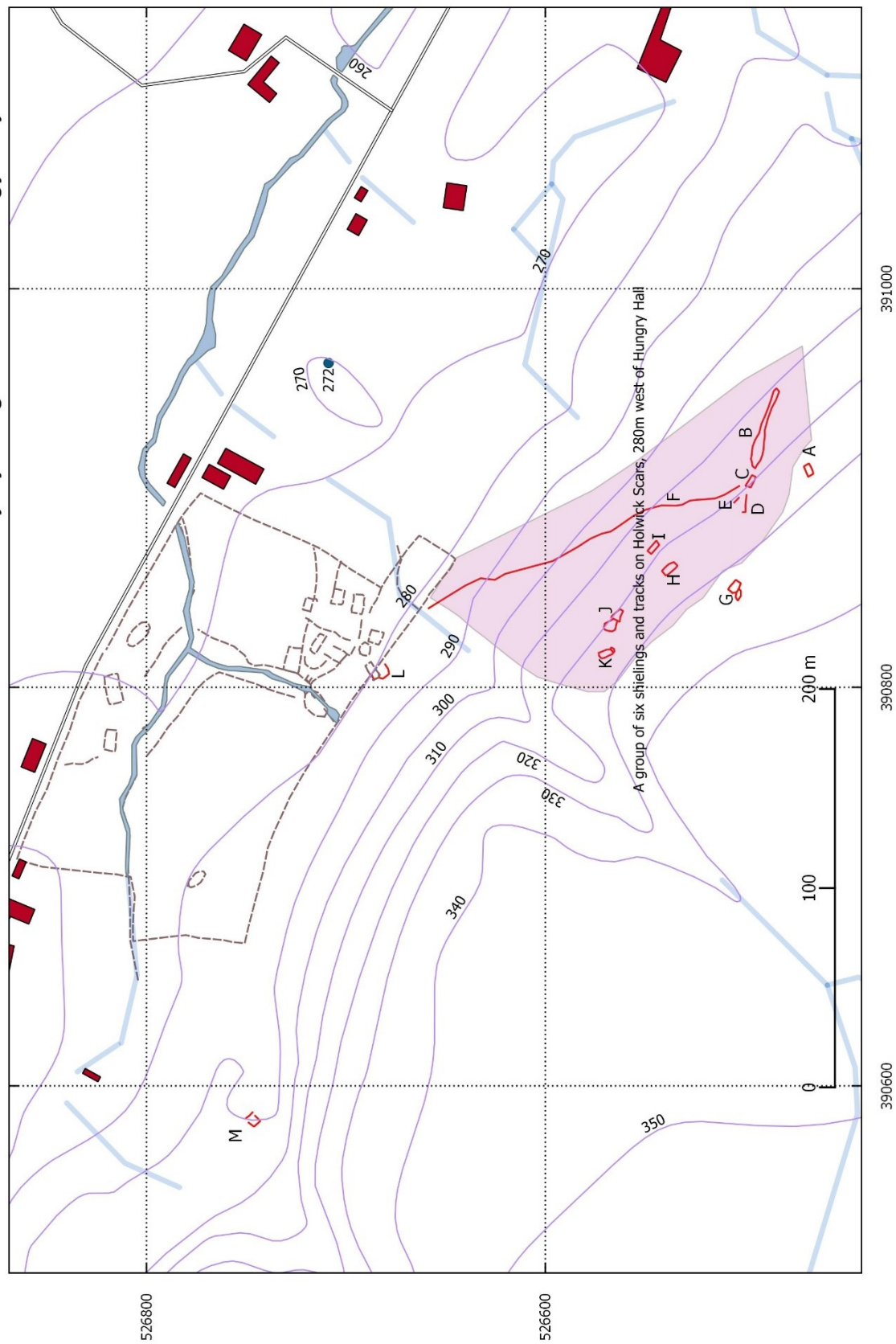


Figure 3 Holwick Scars Scheduled Monument 1019458 GPS Survey

Appendix 2 Photographs



Photograph 1 Feature B



Photograph 2 Feature G with small annex or enclosure in foreground



Photograph 3 Feature G



Photograph 4 Feature H



Photograph 5 Feature I



Photograph 6 Feature J



Photograph 7 Feature K



Photograph 8 Holwick Well Head from Monument 1019458



Photograph 9 Feature L that forms part of a house platform in the HolwickDS site above the dry-stone wall.



Photograph 10 Feature M



Photograph 11 Feature M