

Ryedale Vernacular Building Materials Research Group
Report of Field Meeting held at Hovingham held on Saturday 19 February 2005
(New Report Format)

Main Aims.

- To undertake a preliminary inspection of Hovingham Hall.
- To identify the building stones used in its construction.
- To identify the source quarries.
- To identify the building stone(s) used in the construction of Hovingham Church.
- To identify source quarries.

Hovingham Hall.

- The group met with Giles Worsley who gave a brief history of the Hall.
- The main entrance was through the Stables with large blocks of unfossiliferous reddish-brown sandstone.
- There was no reaction with dilute HCL, i.e. there was no Calcium Carbonate present.
- The remaining front facade was made of smaller ashlar of Birdsall Calcareous Grit.
- In the rear yard area of the Hall the buildings were constructed of Malton Oolite with one frontage cement rendered with artificial courses.
- At the rear of the Hall Birdsall Calcareous Grit was again identified together with the reddish-brown sandstone.
- Within the sandstone a number of 'vugs' were examined and one in particular had been named 'The Fairy Cups' by generations of Worsley's.
- These appear to be some form of reaction or reduction hollows, perhaps around fossil tree debris (an example of fossil tree bark was found in a nearby block)

Hovingham Church (All Saints)

- The Church can be best described as a 'Dogs Dinner'!!
- There are many examples of building stone, many of which were reused from other buildings.
- The history of the Church can be found in Pevsner (2000).
- Some of the Building Stones recorded are :-

Hildenley Limestone
Malton Oolite
Moor Grit
Channel Sandstones
Birdsall Calcareous Grit
Siliceous Sandstone
Red Desert Sandstone
Unidentified Stone(s)

- Many of the Building Stones showed evidence of quarried use and reuse (category 5 of Windsor)
- There were examples that may not have been quarried?
- The low level Mausoleum at the rear of the Church was made of Birdsall Calcareous Grit with Lakeland Slate roof.

Source Quarries

- Giles Worsley indicated a number of potential source quarries on the Estate.
- The main Quarry historically linked to the Hall was Potticar Bank Quarry.

Potticar Bank Quarry. NGR. 659742.

- An overgrown quarry still exposing at least 10 metres of reddish-brown sandstones and harder siliceous sandstones.
- Giles Worsley has historical reference: Thomas Worsley. March 1770 – "for uncovering 709yds of earth at Potticar Bank Quarry and for uncovering 95 yds of flint"
- Wilson (1933) described the section as :

Bed 5. Hard Grey gritty Chert (seen to 3metres) Top of Quarry

Bed 4. Soft ferruginous marl sand (0.6 metres) *Identified by animal burrows.*

Bed 3. Hard Cherts (2.5 metres) *Seen in fabric of Church*

Bed 2. Soft Marl Sandstones with clayey sands (1 metre)

Bed 1. Thickly bedded ferruginous sandstones (seen to 2 metres) *probably main rock source for Hall.*

(Italics are our observations)

- The sandstone(s) did not react with acid.
- A number of vugs were identified, but no fossils were found.
- The Geological Survey mapped these rocks as Lower Calcareous Grit overlying Oxford Clay; however John Wright only records The Birdsall Calcareous Grit in this area.
- Examples of joint widening due to Block Sliding and Cambering as the underlying Oxford Clay bulges outward along the marked spring line.
- Such movements along the River Rye and Sutton Bank escarpment are thought to be responsible for the development of the Ryedale Windypits.
- The Group has observed at Acklam how such cambering can destroy buildings, in that case Acklam Church at the junction of the Birdsall Calcareous Grit and Oxford Clay.
- In one corner of the quarry an opened joint exhibited similar development to known Windypits, e.g. Antofts.

Further Research and Action.

- Yet again more questions than answers!
- A fuller Building Stone survey of the Hall and Church.
- A full survey of the Estate to identify and survey the following quarries supplied by Giles Worsley :

Hovingham Village. NGR. 669753. Corallian Oolite

Bromley Bank. NGR. 658756. Corallian Oolite

Calf Close. NGR. 653756. Lower Calcareous Grit

Under Temple. NGR 658754. Corallian Oolite/Lower Calcareous Grit

Cawton House. NGR.638767 or 648765. Corallian Oolite

Horse Coppice. NGR. 653749. Corallian Oolite/Lower Calcareous Grit

Wool Knoll. NGR. 652746. Lower Calcareous Grit

(Please note the NGR's are approximate from 1:25000 OS map and rock types are from Sheet 53 1: 50,000 Geological Map - Pickering).

- The group to assist Giles Worsley in his historical research of the Hall.
- To open up discussions on the future preservation of Quarries as RIGS.
- To explore the opened rift as a potential Windypit.
- Further work on the quarried stone and possible sources for reused stone

Conclusions.

- The main buildings stones of Hovingham Hall and to some degree All Saints Church have been identified.
- There is some evidence for reuse, especially in the fabric of the Church.
- The main source quarry for the large sandstone blocks is identified as either Lower Calcareous Grit or a horizon within the Birdsall Calcareous Grit.
- Specimens collected for Ryedale District Council Building Stone Collection.

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