

STAVELEY HALL / MILL

Site Survey by A. A. Lord, March 2006

This paper enlarges on the information in Occasional Paper No.3¹ and should be read in conjunction with it.

Much of the undergrowth within the wood has now been cleared so it has been possible to survey the site and contour it at a one metre vertical interval. The boundary walls to the north and west were not included due to difficult access and the probability that they were of little relevance to the issues in the report.

The site survey is independent of the National Grid. The Grid values shown have been superimposed from smaller scale mapping solely for the purpose of identification on other maps. Similarly the contouring is based on an arbitrary datum which approximates to OS Datum.

The Mill [A]

It is difficult to identify all the buildings recorded in 1992. The plan shows the mill in such detail as it is possible to determine. The stonework is moss covered and little of it extends above the ground surface. What is probably the wheel pit at the north end of the mill is well defined being 1.3m wide by 4m long. The wall of the pit is about 1.5m high. The pit ends at a rock face 4m high above the base of the pit and the water would have been delivered at this level. The pit therefore could accommodate a wheel of up to 10ft diameter by 3ft wide though the size of the mill suggests that something much smaller would have sufficed.

To the south of the mill are small well defined portions of walling which are moss covered and do not extend above the ground surface. Their purpose is not clear and could possibly be steps down to the mill.

A narrow watercourse **aaa** is shown on the 1/2500 OS map of 1859² running from Hall Beck to the mill and could have been the mill race. This is not shown on subsequent editions and is currently dry for much of its length. A similar dry gully **bb** joins it from further east and is said to be the more usual course taken by the water if Hall Beck overflows in flood conditions. The lower end of the mill race currently flows through deep fissures

in the rock and drains back into Hall Beck a few metres to the north of the mill. A launder would have been required to carry the water onto the wheel. There may possibly have been a small mill pool above the mill, but it is unlikely.

Hall Wood



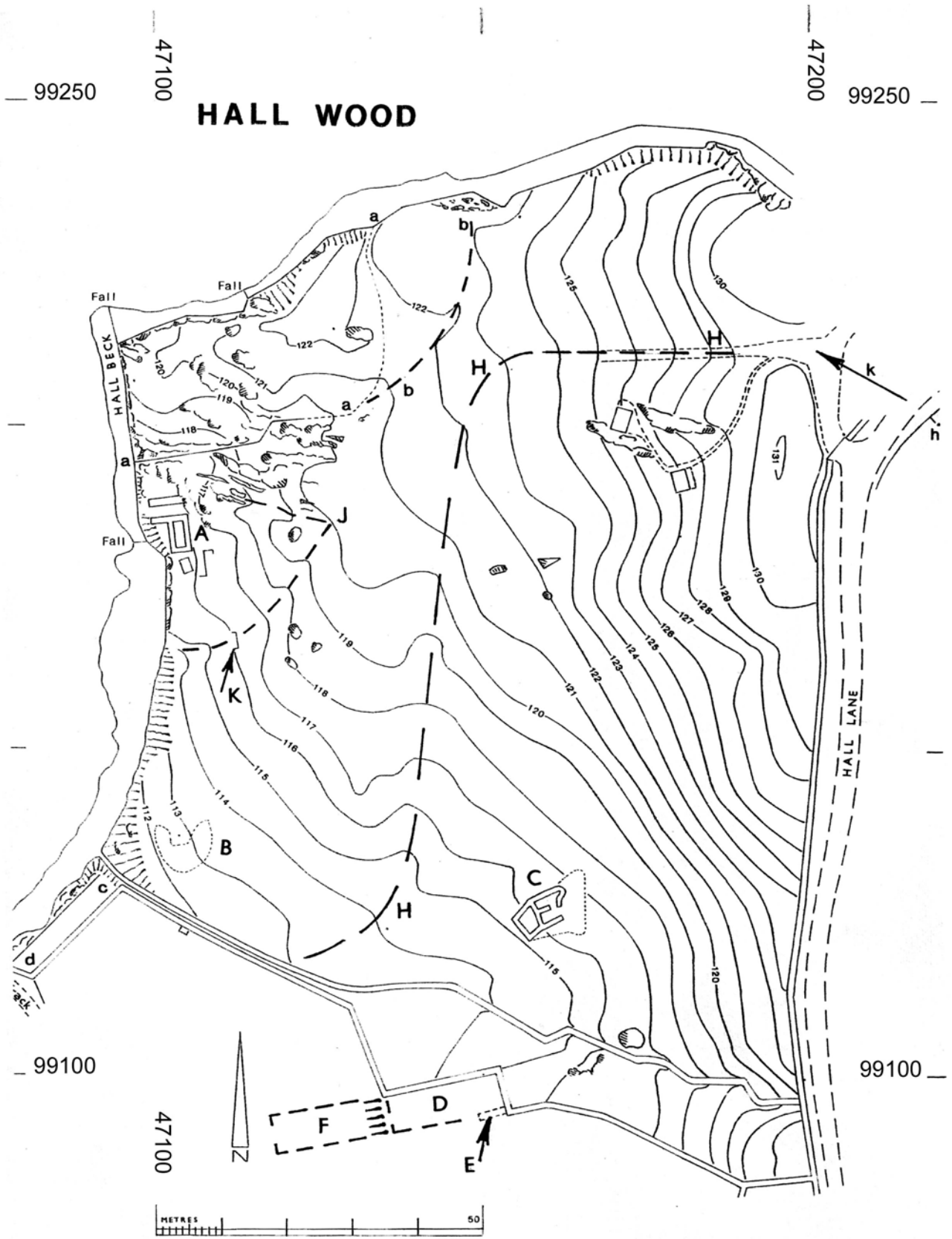
Extract from 1859 OS 1:2500 map

Stone Heap [B]

This area of loose stones is roughly crescent shaped. Without more detailed inspection it is not possible to say whether it was once a circular structure or a clearance heap.

To the west of this area is a narrow strip of land **c** alongside Hall Beck, and at a much higher level, which appears to have been an access route into the wood. Prior to c1980 this access had a gate **d** onto Scroggs Farm road which is now walled up.

Occasional Paper No.3 states that St Margaret's Church is clearly visible from the stone heap at B. This is not so. The line of sight goes to the east of Barley Bridge with a clearance of three metres viewed from B and about four metres from the



Surveyed at 1/500 scale. National Grid superimposed from smaller scale mapping. Heights in metres above an arbitrary datum, approximately the same as OS datum

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Hall site at D. Sighting of St Margaret's tower would not have been possible in 1992 due to the trees along the river side downstream of Barley Bridge and the view is unlikely to have been much different when Thos. Machell was writing in the 1690s. It is the spire of St James's Church that is prominent on the skyline further to the east.

Foundations [C]

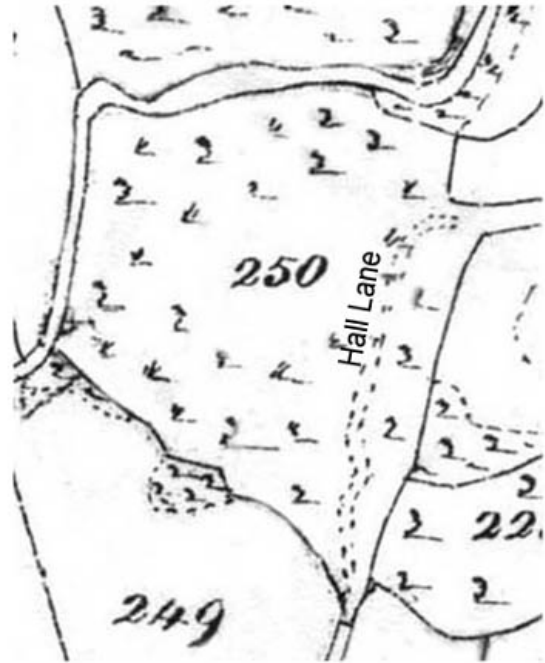
Now that the undergrowth has been cleared, the stonework referred to at C in the earlier report is readily accessible. The west end of the foundation is about one metre above the general level of the ground which is rising to the east. The eastern end is therefore close to ground level. Whilst the greater part of the foundation is clearly that of a building, the eastern end is more irregular and there is an extensive area of moss covered loose stones which appear to have been part of the original structure.

The original purpose of this building is uncertain. It may well have been connected with the Hall, but could have been of much later date and associated with the coppice work in the woodland.

The Hall [D]

The southerly boundary wall of the wood has two right-angled bends in its length that would not normally occur in a field wall. At E a well-constructed foundation, level with the ground surface and one metre wide, extends for four metres and continues as a definite bank to

complete a level rectangular shape 17m by 6m. It is almost certain that a substantial building occupied this site. Adjoining it to the west and slightly lower is another level terraced area F of similar size.



Extract from 1836 Corn Rent Map

Principal Access [H]

The portion of Hall Lane to the north of the wood did not exist at the time of the 1836 Kendal Corn Rent Map³. The course of the old road, now a



Probable site of Old Hall

footpath, joins Hall Lane from the east. The old road **h** curves northwards as it approaches this junction thereby causing a sharp right-angled turn south into Hall Lane, difficult to negotiate with horse and cart, which could have been avoided. This is illogical and it seems more likely that the old road continued across into the wood on the same alignment **k**. If so, there is the possibility that Hall Lane did not exist at all at the time and was constructed subsequent to the building of Barley Bridge.

The contouring indicates a hollow way curving down through the wood, towards the Hall, of similar width to the old road and running counter to the underlying rock strata. It is more than likely that this was the access route from the Hall to the north.

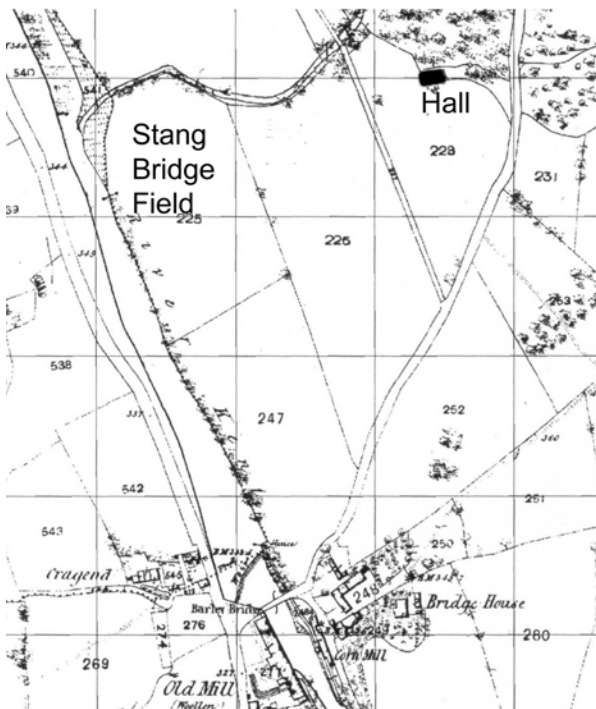
Access to the south is more problematic. The field to the west of the Hall by the confluence of Hall Beck and River Kent is named Stang Bridge Field on the 1836 Kendal Corn Rent map. "Stang" is variously described as a post or a pole, which suggests at best a rudimentary footbridge across either Hall Beck or the River Kent. It is more likely that the Kent crossing was by a ford north of the present weir.

Other access

Within the wood there are several dry gullies notably at **J** where water, possibly flood water, appears to have divided either side of underlying rock. At **K** the gully is about two metres wide and about half a metre deep. It has been walled across with a low stone wall the top of which is level with the land on both sides. One possible explanation for this feature is that it was a retaining wall of a track, possibly a small ford, on route to the mill from the access strip referred to at **B**. Grain crops would be grown on the more fertile land in the valley and access to the mill would be required from this area.

Notes

1. SDHS Occasional Paper No. 3 – Staveley Hall/Mill; Report by the Field Walking Group 1992.
2. Ordnance Survey first edition 25 inch to the mile map; surveyed in 1858 and published in 1859.
3. Over Staveley Corn Rent map, 1836, Kendal Record Office, WQR/C/16.



Extract from 1859 OS 1:2500 map