Extending the Monsal Trail
Bakewell to Rowsley via Haddon Hall Tunnel

APPENDIX 3: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY
A Note on the Railway History and Industrial Archaeology along the section from Rowsley (Church Lane) to Bakewell (Coombs Lane)

1. Background History

The development of the railway in this area endured a fairly prolonged gestation. George Stephenson originally surveyed a proposed route from Rowsley to Bakewell through the Estates of the Duke of Rutland. This route was approved by Parliament on 16th July 1845. The railway was built starting from Ambergate as far as Rowsley and opened on 4th June 1849.

At this stage two rival railway companies LNWR and MR (the Midland Railway) were engaged in a prolonged battle over the former, frustrating a MR direct route to Manchester. Eventually, after pursuing options via the Chatsworth Estate the Rowsley to Buxton line via Bakewell was authorised on 25th May 1860 and the line was opened with great ceremony on 30th May 1863.

2. Background material

The standard work on this railway is Bill Hudson’s “Through Limestone Hills”, published by OPC in 1989. Disappointingly this book contains only scant reference to the section from Rowsley to Coombs Road, reproduced here, together with four photographs, two of trains climbing the 1:184 gradient towards Haddon Hall Tunnel at Park Lane, one of the South Portal of the Tunnel and one north of the Tunnel which shows the siding for 33 wagons referred to in the text. The Haddon Estate Office contains records of certain of the early transactions which may be of interest for research.

Extract from “Through Limestone Hills”:

“From Rowsley station the line continued its sharp curve to the west, on a low embankment, crossing Bakewell Road, the River Derwent for the last time, the bridle path to Calton Lees and the main street of Great Rowsley, all in under 400 yards. It then followed natural ground level for a short distance as it ran due west into the Wye Valley, assumed embankment once more, passed over Park Lane and then entered a long curve to the north towards Haddon Tunnel. It has already been noted that the Duke of Rutland laid down stringent conditions in granting permission for the railway to cross his land, the chief one being that the line should not be visible from Haddon Hall. Although part of the line was in true tunnel towards the centre, this was extended at either end by the ‘cut and cover‘ principle. Despite the tragic collapse of the works during construction, on 2nd July 1861, when four men were instantaneously killed, with a fifth passing away on the following morning, the whole 1,050 yards were completed in 16 months.

Emerging from the tunnel the line curved northwards and passed Haddon signal box, which was opened on 15th December 1869, together with a down lie-by for 33 wagons, to break up the long section between Rowsley station and Bakewell station block posts. North of this point the route crossed Greaves bridge and passed through a shallow cutting before turning westwards on an embankment to cross Combs Lane Viaduct. This bridge, known locally as the ‘Arches’, carried the railway over the original road from Rowsley to Bakewell, which prior to the opening of what is now the A6, just after the Napoleonic wars, had passed north from Great Rowsley and through the valley below Manners Wood.”

Cast iron cable hooks in tunnel wall
3. The state of the line today

This section of the Midland Railway saw its last trains in July 1st 1968. The tracks were lifted shortly afterwards and the land eventually acquired by the Haddon Estates, and the Peak District National Park (from Coombs Road Viaduct).

Today (2012) much of the section under discussion is used by farm traffic, timber extraction vehicles, overwintering of livestock and deposit of materials. Greaves Bridge, Park Lane Bridge and Church Lane Bridges are all demolished, leaving only Coombs Road Viaduct, the Haddon Hall Tunnel and the delightful masonry bridge over the path to Carlton Lees as significant railway structures. The substantial 4-arch River Derwent Viaduct is just beyond this application.

The whole route of the railway is listed as significant in Derbyshire County Council’s records of industrial artefacts in the County.

4. Description along the route starting from Coombs Road Viaduct

In Midland Railway days the distance along the line was measured in miles from St. Pancras station, and the bridges numbered sequentially from Ambergate. The plan in this note starts the measurement from the current end of the Monsal Trail at Coombs Lane and measures through to Rowsley 3600m away.
This 3 arch viaduct crosses the old main road from Bakewell to Rowsley. It is owned by PDNPA and its details were covered in the consultant’s report prepared for the PDNPA as part of their 2010/2011 work on extending the Monsal Trail through the Wye Valley. The viaduct is Grade 2 listed.

Originally the viaduct had iron handrails drilled into the parapet copings. These have all gone. It is not intended to replace them as the detailed proposals show the ballast and ash levels dug out over the viaduct in order to obtain the necessary path levels with the result that the existing parapet walls will stand proud either side of the path. As elsewhere along the recently reopened Monsal Trail, the trail levels will be asphalted full width to waterproof the structure. All the runoff will be to the south on the direction of the fall of the path.

**Coombs Road Viaduct: @40m (Bridge 50, 151m 76c)**

- Remove all material from viaduct to levels shown. Compact sub base and lay dense bitmac to a longitudinal fall and finish with 60mm of asphalt to waterproof the deck.

**Elliotholme Wood Cutting**

300m long is the only significant earthwork along the line to Rowsley. Its east face shows signs of erosion and a rough estate road runs along its floor. The path follows the line of the Elliotholme deviation along the top of the cutting and the boundary of the railway land.

Note that the earthworks along the remainder of the way are very modest as the line follows the contour on sidelong ground either side of the Haddon Hall Tunnel.

From Elliotholme Lodge to near the tunnel entrance the track bed is used as an estate road. Bridge number 49, Greaves Bridge was demolished by explosives, and no sign is left of it except a fragment of masonry wing wall, although its foundations may be buried deep under the track. From just south of this the track bed is used as a forest haul road with a turning circle situated on the line.

**Approaching Haddon Hall Tunnel North Portal: @ 1150m**

Although the shallow cutting has been filled along its east side with spoil, the only retaining walls on the line are visible here. It is proposed to clear off the floor of the cutting and make a small feature of the west side walls, along with their remaining cable racking posts. There are some lengths of iron racking also visible on the tunnel walls (photo on page 1).

**Approaching Haddon Hall Tunnel North Portal: @ 1150m**

- View of Estate road on the line of the former railway
- Haddon Signed Box and Down Siding: @ 1100m

No sign of this has been found and the only evidence of the lie by siding put in place about 1890, is the additional width of shallow cutting all now a jumble of felled trees and old tipping and a buffer stop of old sleepers. It is possible that something will be found as the project progresses.

**Coombs Road Viaduct**

- View of Estate road on the line of the former railway
- Reproduction of photograph showing down lie-by
- Two views of low retaining wall

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Details of the tunnels, and their condition, together with the tunnel engineer’s assessments and recommendations are contained in the planning application.

The bored section of tunnel is 350 yards in length, with the adjacent sections of covered way totalling 708 yards. Throughout it rises on a gradient of 1 in 102 towards Bakewell. The northern curve has a radius of 40 chains. The stratum is shale throughout overlaying limestone, with a varying thickness of clay at the surface. Difficulties were encountered during work on the cut-and-cover sections due to this clay slipping.

Work on the tunnelled section started in September 1860 by sinking a shaft close to its midpoint (presumably the second shaft from the north end) and then driving a heading outwards. Excavation to the full size got under way in April 1861 at two points in the heading, creating four working faces. The downward pressure of the material was so great that, in places, 18-inch thick timber crown bars - part of the support structure - were snapped in two. The lining was built in 12 feet lengths: the side walls are in sandstone sourced from local quarries and are 2 feet 3 inches thick on average, with rubble work behind them in sandstone or limestone. The semicircular roof arch consists of 5 or 6 rings of brick, determined by ground conditions. The bricks were fired on site using clay found adjoining the works.

The covered way sections are again formed of sandstone side walls. Where the ground is low or loose and not therefore sufficient to counteract the thrust of the arch, their thickness is increased and buttressing provided. The stone arch is 2 feet thick throughout. The low arch has a rise of 6 feet from the springing line. A section of semicircular arch is employed where the cutting is deepest.

Records suggest that work on the tunnel was completed in January 1862.

An accident on 2nd July 1861 killed five workers (four immediately; another succumbed the following day) and a horse, and injured several other men. It was in a section with a masonry arch, rather than brick, and is described in the Annual Register of 1861 as being “about 200 yards below the ancient Hall of Haddon”. The location of this collapse is shown on the plan and is now uneventful open parkland. The death toll could have been worse as 17 men were apparently working thereabouts when it happened.

The remaining items of railway ‘furniture’ found in the tunnel included several fishplates and associated bolts, a wooden sleeper with chairs still attached, numerous wooden keys, a p-way jack, original timber catch pit covers and hundreds of in-situ cable hangers on the Down-side wall.

Haddon Hall Tunnel is noteworthy because most of its length served no other function than that of hiding passing trains from view from Haddon Hall: see map on next page.

There are four vent shafts, three of which are shallow, and one large central opening which technically divides the whole 960m into two tunnels. This was opened out in 1900 for reasons we have not discovered.

The works will repair or replace the wrought iron railings around each vent shaft in the Park. Over the deep shaft we will seal its top with a plexiglass dome in order to prevent this shaft acting as a chimney venting warm air with the result the downhill section of the tunnel from this shaft has experienced more frost damage than might otherwise have been expected.

This has been exacerbated by a broken field drain which will be re-laid to take run off away from the tunnel.

The ends of the tunnel are currently blocked off and these breeze clock walls will be demolished. At the end of its working the railway was single track-and this can be seen in the tunnel with higher railway ballast on this side which is where the path will be laid.

From a technical view point the evidence of numerous “buttresses” supporting the tunnel from the eastern end is of great interest. Clearly there was not sufficient side ground here and it seems that some of these buttresses may extend 10-20m from the tunnel walls. These may even have been constructed as “flying” arches buried underground, as shown on page 9.

The Eastern Portal has considerable tree growth on the masonry and here, and on all masonry, trees should be felled and their stumps poisoned to prevent regrowth, lest they damage the structure. In general all trees within 5m of the tunnel structure should be felled to prevent damage.
Church Lane Bridge

This bridge was demolished but its abutments remain as retaining walls to Church Lane complete with springers for the original low arch.

The proposed “Warren Truss” bridge cannot reproduce the masonry arch, but this design is an authentic railway age truss.

Dukes Private Road Bridge

(path to Calton Lees)

This masonry bridge with fine ashlar wing walls is completely covered by ivy which should be removed. The structure is really an extension of the adjacent viaduct and on its north side the parapet runs straight through both. The project proposes the keep the path to this side as shown in the main report in order to minimise overlooking of the village. The parapet will be renewed throughout with three rails rather than the current two.
**APPENDIX 3 • EXTENDING THE Monsal Trail: Bakewell to Rowsley via Haddon Hall Tunnel • March 2012 • Peak Cycle Links**

Plan of Haddon Hall Tunnels showing location of different types of section

Photograph of collapse during construction, 1861

Low masonry arch - 200m

High brick arch - 380m

Low masonry arch - 240m

Low masonry arch - 45m

High masonry arch - 80m

Ground 1.4m over high arch

Ground 1.8m over high arch

Water ingress

Ground 1.4m over high arch

Approximate scale 100m = 35.5mm

0 metres 100 200

0.8m 1.0m 2.0m

4.46m

5.1m

6.4m

3.9m

3.65m

5.0m radius

4.45m

9.0m

3.65m

4.0m radius

2.14yds

155yds

350yds

430yds

263yds

224yds

110yds

Uncertain location

Detail showing tunnel dimensions at central shaft
View of trees in masonry of eastern portal. This picture also shows the tops of two of the supporting buttresses.

Over the shallow cut and cover sections, the land above is mostly park land grass. These should be maintained free of trees and bushes whose roots might damage the tunnel structure just under the ground, and all hawthorn and young trees removed to prevent future damage.

The drainage through the tunnel is intact, and operating, although all the central concrete manhole chambers are uncovered and need slabbing over as was done at Headstone and the other tunnels on the existing Monsal Trail. The tunnel falls at 1:102 towards Rowsley.

Within the tunnel there are the usual recesses to give protection to workers from passing trains. There are also a number of unusual rectangular recesses whose function is not immediately clear. Unfortunately so much time has passed since the existence of railway workers who might have made use of them that it is unlikely that we will find their purpose from this source. These rectangular recesses are the ones proposed for reuse as bat roosts.

Lengthsmen’s Huts

One remains on the line just to the east of the east tunnel portal and may have been a store for tunnel maintenance equipment. It has badly settled and it is proposed to demolish it but to leave its iron door with rail stanchions in place as a feature.

A little further on is a more recent brick hut of no distinction. It may be possible to utilise this as a shelter.

Park Lane Bridge@3050m
(Bridge 47, 150m 4c)

This bridge was demolished with explosives and no sign of abutments remain. The path will cut into the embankment on the east side to achieve a 1:15 gradient down to Park Lane. The excavated materials will be used to construct a ramp back up to formation level in fill on the west side. Although these are modest earth works in path terms, they are absolutely minimal in the context of the work to make the railway.

The remainder of the line to the allotments

There the route is first in low embankment and then a shallow cutting. No railway artefacts have been found. A great deal of spoil, stone and other waste material has been dumped on the line and this will be levelled to carry the path above the level of the parallel farm track. The railway boundary fences will be renewed throughout, but with the odd exception, there is little evidence of early railway fencing and much of the existing is modern post and wire.

View of slooper fencing at Haddon Hall Tunnel North

**Historical Interpretation**

Although there is so little of the railway left of any significance, it is planned to make up information boards, placed at either end of Haddon Hall Tunnel, giving details of the Tunnel, its history, lighting and at the same time a synopsis of the history of this section of the Peak Railway.

John Grimshaw
February 2012

View of arches workers’ recesses and rectangular recesses of unknown function.
FALL OF A RAILWAY ARCH NEAR HADDON HALL.

Introductory note:

Yesterday a dreadful accident occurred on a new line of railway which is being formed between the Rowsley terminus of the Manchester, Bakston, Matlock, and Midland Junction Railway, and the fashionable watering place of five men and several persons received serious injuries. An open cutting was being bridged over 200 yards beyond the ancient town of Bakewell, in Derbyshire, and the work was carried on Tuesday morning. On Tuesday afternoon the centring and the whole structure gave way, and buried under its several parts. A good number of men being at work on the line, immediate and active steps were taken to extricate the poor fellows who were under the debris. This work was accomplished by six o'clock the same evening, but we regret to state that four of the men were dead when taken out, and the fifth lingered until one o'clock on Wednesday morning, when death closed his sufferings, both his legs having been dreadfully mangled and broken, and his head fearfully bruised.

In answer to Mr. Taylor the witness said:—In my contract I undertook the sides and arch at such a price. Mr. Thompson's foreman gave me the order. The disruption was erected by my labourers. I have been at work for 30 years, but principally in the erection of arches. I have had no experience in judging of the strength of the work. By a Jury—Go from experience before. The work did not have four lengths before, and I thought it would be strong enough. Strong enough! I did not feel much danger because we had passed them four times before. The weight of stone per yard would be about a ton, perhaps a little more. We always examined the timbers, but they are erected to see that they are safe, and we did so in this case.

By Mr. Taylor—The vaulting support is put on stones, and I examined it. I examined it carefully, but there was no vaulting there, as they had if they should have had some warning. I am not prepared to undertake building work. I did not go there by contract.

George Twyford, engineer, was then examined, and said:—I have been working under Rowland in the tunnel work ever since last November. In four different lengths. The same wood-work has been used in all in all. I believe it would not take very powerful supports to hold it up as we took the same timber before, and in my opinion it was strong enough. It was at work on Tuesday on the outside the top. The work was done, and sufficient for the purposes under which they run the materials, and most of us stepped off the wooden centre in a minute after the whole mass fell, and we all went down with it. I think the length fell about 30 feet. It was single. The work would not have gone altogether. Another half minute and we should have all gone.

Edward Sykes, a carpenter, was the next witness, and he said:—It is my duty to attend to the work of the tunnelling and I attended to the work of the Haddon Hall tunnel was put up for the fifth time. It was, I considered, fit and the work was strong enough. It was quite sound and was of sufficient strength. The centres were put in and the work was strong enough. We examined it by a fire. That is the kind of wood usually employed in such work. When it went I saw that there was a proper foundation with blockings of 3 feet 6 inches square. There were eight centres in the 36 feet length, and three props under the same for the purpose it would be considered sufficient. If there was a rack or place at one end of the line of tunnelling and two at the other, the latter being at the Rowsley end. I have been told by my brother that the one at the end of the tunnel which fell was strong enough. The derrick was used for raising the stone, and the horse driven by Flank was engaged in pulling a chain attached to the top. We were at work, and being on the top of the centres, the centre gave way by some "Discontinuity in text: next column does not follow on"
THE FATAL ACCIDENT NEAR HADDON HALL

The accident in the above case was noticed at the Royal Oak, Bakewell, at 11 o'clock on Monday, and in the course of the inquiry, Mr. Taylor, solicitor, was present on behalf of the relative of the deceased, and Mr. Cuts, of Chesterfield, for the proprietors of the premises. Mr. Thompson, the contractor, Mr. F. Barker, Mr. Barlow, and others were also present. The examination was taken at the time the body was being carried to having been read by the Coroner, F. G. Bennett, Esq., further evidence was taken.

The evidence was on the day—George Bawpaw, Green Cowden House, William Hilsbere, Bakewell, and Richard Eyres, Bakewell, and others, were present.

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PASSING EVENTS AT BAKEWELL
AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

(From our own Correspondent.)

DEADLY CATASTROPHE AT HADDON TUNNEL.

An accident of a fearful character took place about half-past four o'clock on Tuesday afternoon when four men and a boy were instantly killed, and several others badly injured. About twelve men—men at and labours—were working at the Buxwell end of Haddon tunnel putting in the keystones of a length of arching at the entrance of the tunnel, when, without any warning whatever, about ten yards fell in with a terrible crash. Immediately a body of men set to to remove the stones, dirt, broken central, &c. in order to extricate the poor fellows. In one place two men lay side by side fearfully crushed and quite dead; near the entrance lay a boy and a horse both dead; a few yards in the tunnel lay two men—one dead, and the other with both legs severed from his body. Messengers were sent to Bakewell for medical assistance, and the Knox, Esq., surgeon, was immediately at the scene of the accident. The news created great excitement in Bakewell. About seven o'clock the five bodies were brought in a cart and laid in the coach-house at the Royal Oak inn, to await the coroner's inquest. The following is a list of those killed and injured:—John Millington, of Stanton, near Bakewell, killed, leaving a wife and one child; James Birds of Youlgreave, killed, wife and five children; James Clark, of Worcs., killed; Samuel Plunket, a boy, from Rowsley, killed; Frances Evans, of Youlgreave, leg and arm brake, and crushed about the head; George Twyford, of Youlgreave, hurt about the legs; a lawyer, whose name we cannot at present ascertain, both legs cut off and fearfully crushed about the head, with no hope of his recovery.

Had the accident occurred a few minutes sooner the loss of life would have been fearful, as six men, just before the arch fell in, took a wagon from under it, and were engaged pushing it a little further in the tunnel, and had only got a few yards from it when it fell. The length which has fallen in is about ten yards, and about eight yards more. The place where the accident took place was visited by hundreds of persons from the surrounding district, and the affair has cast a gloom over Bakewell and neighbourhood. An inquest was held on the bodies on Thursday, at the Royal Oak, before F. G. Bennet, Esq., coroner for the district. The jury, after viewing the bodies, proceeded to Haddon to witness the scene where the accident occurred. After examining very minutely the timber and other materials connected with the tunnel, they returned to Bakewell. Mr. Taylor, solicitor, Bakewell, attended to take the case for the friends of the deceased. A great many witnesses were examined as to the strength of the timber of which the arches were made also as to whether the ground was solid, &c. The inquest lasted until six o'clock, when it was adjourned to Wednesday next, at eleven o'clock.

Article from Derbyshire Times 6th July 1861