Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

Wanderer

No.57, August 2025

Contents

Bruce Bennison takes a break

Society News

Our Next Talk

Our talk on 18 September will be 'Clouties and Mud – Long Meg Stone Circle and Birdoswald Roman Fort' with Bruce Bennison. Separated in time by over 3,000 years, the impressive stone circle Long Meg and Her Daughters and the Roman Fort at Birdoswald are two of the best-known archaeological sites in Cumbria. The archaeologist and local historian Bruce Bennison will talk about his personal experiences of these sites, recounting some of the stories behind the important discoveries being made from recent excavations and surveys. He will share with us the excitement of archaeological excavation which he describes as long periods of tedium interspersed by short bursts of high drama.

Issue 2 of DALS is now available

Following the study week in March at Cockermouth Castle, our Digital Archive of Leconfield Sources (DALS) has been updated to include the new images, and those taken for the Estate by George Platt. DALS Issue2 now contains some 32,000 images of the archive and is available to borrow on a flash drive by contacting Derek Denman.

A copy has now been deposited with the Cumbria Archive Service for public use, and we are pleased to say that the new DLEC catalogue will be available in full on CASCAT, as the finding aid.
derekdenman@btinternet.com

Our future programme 2025

18 Sep 2025	'Clouties and Mud – Long Meg Stone Circle and Birdoswald Roman fort'.	Bruce Bennison
13 Nov 2025	'The great enchantress: Ann Radcliffe's 1794 tour of The Lakes'.	Dr Penny Bradshaw
9 October	Visit to historical Whitehaven	Contact Andrew Chamberlain

Talks are at 7.30 pm in the Yew Tree Hall, are included in membership and are open to visitors at £4 cash at the door, with refreshments. Talks are also streamed live to members using Zoom but are not recorded. Other activities may be added.

Officers and Committee 2025/6

President: Professor Angus Winchester Financial Examiner: Dr Ian Shaw

Andrew Chamberlain *Chairman*	07815 422092 *ldflhschair@gmail.com*	Charles Lambrick *Vice-chair,*	*charleslambrick@btinternet.com*
Lena Stanley-Clamp *Secretary, talks*	01900 336542 *ldflhs.secretary@gmail.com*	Dr Derek Denman *Wanderer, archives*	01900 829097 *derekdenman@btinternet.com*
Mary Baker Treasurer, Membership	*ldflhs.subs@gmail.com*	Fiona Lambrick Gloria Edwards Tim Stanley-Clamp Jan Evans Sheena Denwood	

Diary dates

11 August, at the Kirkgate Centre, 'Heritage Talk: Percy House, Market Place', by Aaron Bazler, 6 pm, tickets £4.

8 September, at the Kirkgate Centre, 'Heritage Talk: Cockermouth in the Middle Ages' by Angus Winchester, 6 pm, tickets £4.

28 September, Higham Hall, Sunday Lecture 'Common Ground: the History of Common Land', by Prof Angus J L Winchester, 14:00 to 16:00, tickets £10 including refreshments.

4 October , Cumbria Local History Federation, Annual Convention and AGM 2025 Theme is 'Medieval Cumbria', 09.00 – 16.00Newbiggin Village Hall, nr Stainton, Penrith CA11 0HT £30 to include lunch, tea/coffee etc.

The **next issue** of the *Wanderer* will be published on 1 November 2025. Please send any items to the Editor, Derek Denman, by 1 October.

The *Wanderer* is published by the Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society, 19 Low Road Close, Cockermouth CA13 0GU.
http://derwentfells.com *https://facebook.com/Lortonlocalhistorysociety*
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Message from the chair

Dear members,

Welcome to our latest bumper edition of The Wanderer, which includes two talk reports and three fascinating articles from this month's contributors:

Roger Asquith on Papcastle's mediaeval chapel dedicated to St. Osyth; Gloria Edwards on John Thornthwaite's memories of Ruddings Farm in Setmurthy; Derek Denman's piece on the legacy of Armaside, Lorton, from 1578, which benefits from the Society's researches at the Leconfield Archive, amongst other sources.

I'd like to offer my thanks to both of our speakers for their excellent talks: Ian Hall on Countess Ossalinsky and the Thirlmere Dam, on 15 May, for which Charles Lambrick has provided the talk report;

Our president, Professor Angus Winchester, for his presentation on Names in the Landscape, of 12 June, summarised here by Sandra Shaw. I might add, that Angus' talk which followed the AGM, was so well attended we almost ran out of chairs, and as a result of which we signed up sixteen new members.

I am very happy to report that our membership now stands at over 180 and our committee now has ten members, so it's safe to say that the future looks very bright for our society thanks to you all. If anyone would be interested in joining our merry band, please let me know and I would be very happy to talk about what this might involve.

Finally, I have arranged with The Beacon Museum in Whitehaven for a Society walk on 9 October, starting at 1:30, for up to 20 of our members. Entitled Pits, Presidents and Pirates the walk will provide a fascinating tour of Whitehaven harbour and town, sharing history and trivia on the varied, dangerous and sometimes starry history of Whitehaven. Taking approximately one and a half hours, the walk centres on the harbour and various town centre buildings, including St. Nicholas church grounds, where Mildred Gale, grandmother of George Washington, is buried, as you may remember from Dr. Christopher Donaldson's talk in March of this year.

This will hopefully be followed by refreshments at the Howling Wolf Café at The Beacon, although that remains to be confirmed, and participation will be on a first come, first served basis, so if you are interested, please email me on ldflhschair@gmail.com and I will publish more details as they emerge.

Talking of pirates, when I visited the museum on Tuesday to discuss arrangements, I was surprised to see a full-scale replica of a 17th century Spanish galleon in the harbour. It turned out to be the Galeón Andalucia, on a scheduled visit to the town. I do hope that some of you had the opportunity to visit her while she was in harbour?

I hope and trust you're enjoying the summer and that the gardeners amongst you are expecting the same bumper fruit harvest that we're anticipating in Lorton and I look forward to seeing you at our next talk, Clouties and Mud – Long Meg Stone Circle and Birdoswald Roman Fort, by Bruce Bennison in September.
Andrew

Meeting Reports

Talk: 'Countess Ossalinsky and the Thirlmere dam', 15 May 2025

Ian Hall delivered a well-illustrated Talk on a beautiful early summer evening in the middle of May. He spoke about the extraordinary life of the daughter of Edward and Mary Jackson who, as a very rich heiress, married Count Vladimir Boris Ossalinsky in 1839.

As in his book *Countess Ossalinsky and the Thirlmere Dam* [Orchard House Books, 2022], Ian split his Talk into two parts: Mary Jackson's family background and the circumstances of her marriage; and Mary's role in the saga of the building of Thirlmere reservoir to supply water to Manchester. He made the point that her role in mounting vigorous opposition to the building of the dam to flood the valley can only really be understood and appreciated with knowledge of her family background.

Mary was born in 1820 and baptised in Wythburn Church later that year. She was brought up at a mansion in the Thirlmere valley, Armboth House. Ian explained that the artist who painted the charming scene depicting the mansion, set in a spacious bucolic landscape, had used artistic licence since there were in reality several farms in close proximity to the house. A late 19th century photograph of the front of the house shows a pleasing building five bays wide.

Her father was Edward Washington Jackson (1792-1825). He and his elder brother John, who died unmarried in 1832, were both well-off, practising as attorneys in Keswick. They died, however, before both their father Wilson Jackson (1755-1844) and their unmarried uncle, John, who died in 1834. Within a year of Mary's birth her mother died in childbirth, and only four years later her father died. When she was twelve, Mary's uncle John died, and two years later her great uncle died aged 93.

After Mary had become an orphan in 1825, she was brought up by her elderly paternal grandparents, Wilson and Sarah Jackson. As a result of the sequence of family deaths and lack of male heirs Mary found herself the heir apparent of the Jackson family fortune. Under the terms of her father's will, however, she wouldn't inherit his fortune outright until she turned 26.

Ian next turned to the aristocratic-sounding Count Vladimir Boris Ossalinsky. He claimed to be of a noble Polish family and appears to have arrived on the scene in Keswick in about 1832, taking up residence in a house formerly occupied by Percy Bysshe Shelley on Chestnut Hill. He was clearly a charismatic character, as he charmed the cream of Keswick society such as Thomas Story Spedding of Mirehouse. Ian explained that the correspondence between the latter and the Count provides a significant primary source of information about Ossalinsky at the time he was in Keswick and neighbouring Thirlmere.

Count Ossalinsky's charm, social connections, and apparent status were sufficient for him to win the hand of the nineteen-year-old Mary Jackson, 'the richest heiress in the north of England'. They married in May 1839, so Mary became Countess Ossalinsky, a name she revelled in and used for the rest of her life. The Ossalinskys' first child, a son who was to become an army officer, was born in the spring of the following year.

The true colours of Count Ossalinsky began to emerge when his spendthrift approach to life, utilising not insignificant sums from his wife's trust money, a tendency to leave debts unpaid, and even indulging in the bribing of his wife's grandfather Wilson Jackson all became apparent. The Count began to spend increasing periods abroad from the early 1840s onwards where he passed himself off under the pseudonym Arthur Montague. In 1847 he was declared bankrupt and recognised as the charlatan

Armboth House – Harrison Family Archives

that he was. It later emerged that far from being a Polish count, he was a deserter from the Russian army in which he had a role as a trumpeter. He died in 1859 in the south of France where he had been living for much of the time since his disgrace.

Ian remarked that he had been greatly assisted in understanding the intricacies of the management of the landholdings of the Jackson family trusts and of Mary, Countess Ossalinsky by having access to the letter books of two land agents who acted for them: William Dickinson and his son John Norman Dickinson. Both had been meticulous in recording much of their work over a period of some 50 years.

Ian explained that under the terms of her grandfather's will it was not until 1865 that the Countess came into her full inheritance. It was at that point when, after the conclusion of the period during which the Chancery Court had been responsible for administering her grandfather's will trust, Mary inherited all the Wythburn farms, estates, and houses, adding to her existing landholdings in the Thirlmere valley. And she had much other property spread over a wide area of central Cumberland. The key fact for her future life was that, in broad terms, she had control of a very significant portion of the valley in which Thirlmere reservoir is now located.

Having skilfully summarised what is a complex, but astonishing, story of about eight years during the first part of Mary's life, Ian turned to another eight years or so in the second, and also dramatic, part of her life.

In the mid-1870s Manchester Corporation was searching for a suitable abundant source of water to supply its metropolis. The Thirlmere valley was identified as meeting the necessary requirements including both its elevation to allow water to run from it by gravity over 100 miles and the quantity available coming off the surrounding fells. Clearly, the scheme to

create a large reservoir by damming the valley at its northern end would have a profound effect on Countess Oassalinsky's landholding interests there, including the farm and mansion at Armboth.

Initially, Mary was very firmly opposed to selling her landholdings. Although two lords of the manor respectively at Wythburn and at Dale Head at either end of the valley were persuaded to sell their interests to Manchester Corporation, many other persons formed the Thirlmere Defence Association in 1877. Ian made the point that, today, it can be regarded as the first nationally organised conservation movement, and among its early subscribers were Canon Rawnsley a founder of the National Trust.

A private bill was placed before Parliament by Manchester Corporation in late 1877 to obtain the necessary powers to proceed with what was a large civil engineering scheme, the water catchment area for which was 11,000 acres. The parliamentary select committee that was formed allowed, for the first time, not only those persons whose economic interests would potentially be affected to submit evidence, but also all other interested parties, including the Thirlmere Defence Association.

Countess Ossalinsky spent a very considerable sum in instructing lawyers to represent her interests in opposing the bill. However, because during the proceedings the scope of the bill had been enlarged beyond its original scope, for technical procedural reasons it failed to be passed into law.

A second bill was presented to Parliament, all opposition apart from the countess having been bought off by Manchester Corporation, including the chairman of the Thirlmere Defence Association which left it leaderless and ineffective. Mary held out, deciding that her interests would be best served if she required a clause to be introduced that required Manchester Corporation to purchase from her not only her land within the scheme's original limits but all her land below the watersheds.

Ian explained that eventually the bill, including the clause required by Countess Ossalinsky, received the royal assent in May 1879. The next stage in what had become a riveting national story was the process by which a purchase price for Mary's land was determined. Her agent appointed seven independent valuers, and the average of the valuations at which they each arrived was just under £85,500 – equivalent to about £8.8m today. Manchester Corporation's valuation was at £24,000.

To bridge the gap the matter went to arbitration. In October 1882 the arbitrator made his Award for the countess's land, sheep, and timber in the sum of £72,000. Manchester Corporation were livid and attempted unsuccessfully to challenge it. The parties agreed a final figure of £65,000, but to begin with the corporation failed to pay what was owed, only paying interest. Eventually the sum was paid, the countess having by this time moved to live in London, albeit remaining a substantial landowner in Cumberland.

The dam and its associated aqueduct taking the Thirlmere water to Manchester were built over five years during the 1890s, and Ian showed some interesting photographs taken at various stages of its construction.

Mary, Countess Ossalinsky, died at the age of 81 in 1902.

Ian had very skilfully provided a summary of much that is set out in his book, and at the Talk's conclusion Members showed their warm appreciation for what had been a fascinating Talk.

Afternote: William Dickinson and his son John were successive owners of the Armaside Estate in Lorton parish for close on a century. When the tenant of Armboth Farm, William Mackereth, had to give up his tenancy after the sale by the Countess to Manchester Corporation, it seems very probable that it was John Norman Dickinson who arranged for him to take on the tenancy of Armaside Farm.
Charles Lambrick

Talk: 'Names in the Landscape', 12 June 2025

Professor Angus Winchester, our president since the Society's founding over 30 years ago, delivered his talk to a packed hall, with more watching on-line at home. The scale of attendance was all the more welcome as the talk had been preceded by the Society's AGM.

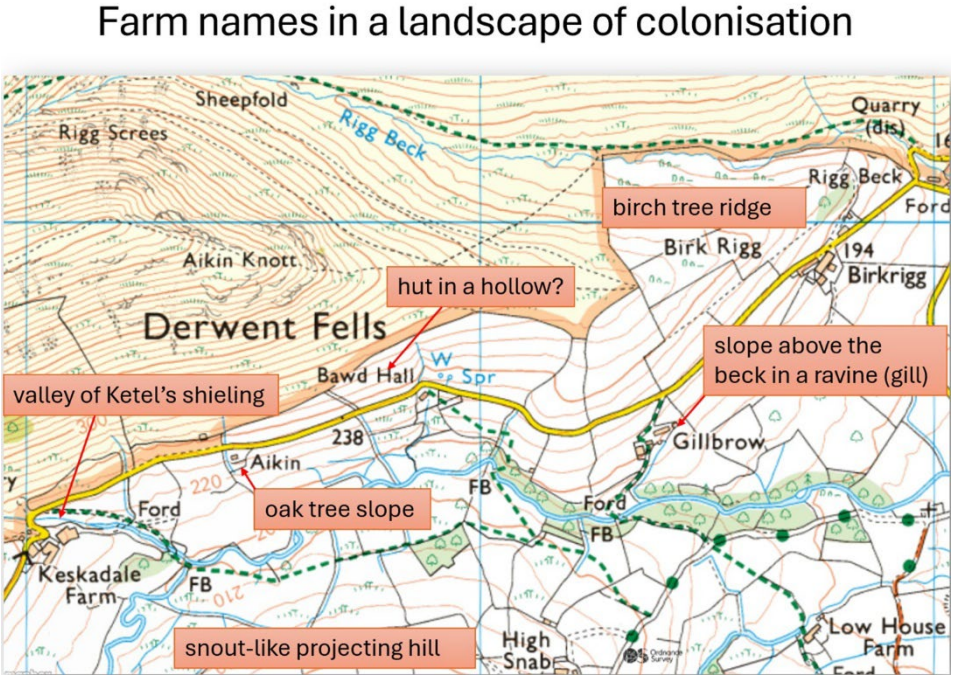
In thinking about names in the landscape, it is important to consider when these were formed, by whom and what they signify. They get passed down and then become part of the cultural landscape. They also get misheard, mis-transcribed and misunderstood and their meanings can change over time. Those recorded on maps created for public use since the 1860s have survived, while many others have been lost to time. Use of social media is fuelling a revival in naming, with new meanings.

Angus began with examples where names transmit description and memory. Brantrake, the descriptive name of a farm in Eskdale, comprises two dialect parts, brant = steep and rake = track, meaning a steep track onto the fell. He followed with an example closer to home which transmits memory from the past. In Elva Hill and Elva Plain, the first word contains the two elements elf and howe, meaning elf hill and presumably refers to the nearby stone circle.

Moving on to the core of his talk, Angus divided this into three parts, addressing names of settlements and farms, elements from the valley floor including fields, and finally mountains and fells.

Settlements and farms

Many of these names reflect the chronology of settlement from Anglo-Saxon through Viking to the eve of the Black Death (c800 to 1300). The -ton ending as found in Lorton and Embleton signifies Anglo-Saxon settlement, while the equivalent -by as in Ireby also means settlement from the Viking age. Locally, our three settlement areas of Lorton, Loweswater and Buttermere are all



situated on flat, well-drained arable land. In between are -thwaite names signifying later colonisation in clearings made from circa 900 by Scandinavian settlers. Similarly, the -erg ending, as in Mosser, being a Gaelic summer pasture or shieling, later becoming a permanent settlement.

Turning to farm names, many tell a story – Newlands was literally newly created, drained lands, and the image of Newlands shows the names of three farms among other features. The farms are Keskadale meaning the valley (dale) of Ketel's sheiling (the erg having become a simple 'a'), Birk Rigg meaning a birch covered ridge and Little Town meaning a small village. The map of Derwent Fells shows further farms with an explanation of their names, including High Snab a snout-like hill, Gillbrow a slope above the beck in a ravine (gill) and Aikin an oak covered slope. Many names reference wildlife – brandling in Brandling Gill being a salmon parr and paddock in Paddock Wray being a toad. Hudson Place, Iredale Place and Jenkinson Place preserve the history of 'yeoman' dynasties.

Fields

Until the OS identified fields by numbers, every field had a name, most now lost. These reflect an intimacy with the landscape, often containing reference to a specific feature in the field – a crabtree, a willow (with or withy), a kiln, a holly (hollin), or its position in the landscape Underwood, How (hill) Head, Near Inge (meadow), Above House. Some refer to the shape – shirt sleeve, or tram being long narrow fields, or wallet being a field of two parts. Others refer to the vegetation to be found – seaves (rushes), burtree (elder), or other wildlife - pyet (magpie), crane (often stork or heron), laverock (skylark), glead (bird of prey), todd (fox), brock (badger), hagworm (adder) or to the crops grown – havver (oats), bigg (barley), lin (flax), fogg (coarse grass), ing or fit as in Fitz Park (meadow). Two names relating to the Lord's control of resources are Bull Copy

Newlands valley

and Tup Tether. Both were located close to the demesne farm where the services of the bull and ram could be regulated, and the tenants charged. The word copy is thought to derive from coppice, so a lightly wooded area. Other names refer to past ownership as in Doctor Close and Christy Wife Meadow near Gatesgarth.

Mountains, Fells and other features

Angus stated that while river names are very ancient, the Cocker and the Derwent both being Celtic, names for mountains and fells are more recent, often given since the rise in mountaineering from the 1880s. Exceptions are Melbreak meaning hill of many colours, which is Gaelic, likely brought by Scandinavians following their onward migration from West Scotland or Ireland; Blencathra is of Celtic origin meaning a summit shaped like a seat or chair; Helvelyn possibly named for the two parts hal (moorland) and velyn (yellow); and Mell Fell again Celtic, meaning a bare hill. There are few Scandinavian names, Whinlatter being one, meaning a hill slope covered with gorse. More recent names including Red Pike, Great Gable, Grasmoor and Haystacks, are all recognisably descriptive.

Some mountain features relate back to land ownership in the valley floor as in two places in Eskdale where Dawsonground Crags and Peelplace Noddle, both up on the fellside are related to Dawson Ground and Peel Place in the valley.

Land use is again reflected in names in the fells – Candleseaves Bog at Back 'o Skiddaw refers to the use of seaves for making rushlights, while Beckstones Gill near Barf refers to the flat stones that could be found there to be used as bakestones. Other references are to peat cutting or the collection of bracken. Wildlife again lends its name to features, some of which have been mentioned above. Others include Earn and Eagle or Heron or Aaran often reflecting not the Golden Eagle or heron, but the then more widespread White-tailed eagle. Cat Bells refers to the wild cat and Mart to the polecat or pine marten.

The popularity of mountaineering gave rise to names of climbing routes which often used 'in jokes' such as Barndoor Climb and Oxford and Cambridge route in Birkness Combe, as identified in the map of Richard W Hall's 'memory map' of climbs in the Buttermere Valley from 1920. It was Richard (Dick) Hall who gave the name to Innominate Tarn on Haystacks. He made the suggestion to Bartholomew's Maps in 1933 as something of a joke, as the tarn had no name.

Returning to the image of Newlands valley, other names not already covered, include Parrock a small enclosure, the word being related to 'park', Rudding meaning a clearing, Scope End which derives its name from the nearby Goldscope mines, the name thought to be a corruption of the German Gottes Gab meaning God's Gift, due to the riches of the lead and copper found there.

Conclusion

Names in the Lake District landscape give us clues to its evolution, history and culture, and delight us all when we have a little understanding of the meanings behind them.

Sandra Shaw

A correction

Unfortunately I have to correct an embarrassing error, a howler indeed, on page 21 of the May Wanderer. In my article on Whinfell, in a senior moment, I explained 'Todholes' as badger's holes, and did not spot the error when editing.

I do know my tods from my brocks, my whin from my ling, and my aiks from my ellers, but am not immune from silly mistakes.

Apologies to readers.

Derek Denman

Articles

Papcastle's medieval chapel: when local highways, byways and bridges depended on charity and hermits

by Roger Asquith

What is known about the late medieval Chapel of St. Osyth in Papcastle township? There is little in the way of written record. The aim of this note is to present the available facts and consider whether the knowledge gaps with respect to the chapel's purpose and its place in local history can be addressed with insight gained from studies of that period. Three of these, relating specifically to chapels, bridges and hermits, are particularly relevant. The evidence points to the chapel being part of a charitable endowment intended to benefit the local inhabitants by improving their bridges and byways. The concept of basic infrastructure depending on individual charity seems strange now but was very much a part of life in religious late medieval England.

Background: the parish of Bridekirk.

Bridekirk Parish in the late medieval period included the townships of Bridekirk, Papcastle, Broughton, Ribton and Tallentire.[1] While dependent chapelries ('chapels of ease') were consecrated in the neighbouring Brigham parish (including those at Cockermouth and Lorton) the parishioners of Bridekirk were served only by their parish church, six miles or more there and back with several beck crossings, for Broughton residents. Regarding chapels consecrated prior to 1541 (i.e. the time of the Reformation) none are identified as being attached to, or dependent upon, Bridekirk parish church.[2] 'Others not attached to parishes were also consecrated during this period, including seven in the Holm Cultram area, three at Cockermouth, three at Wigton, and one each at Waverton, Papcastle and Braithwaite'.[3] The three 'unattached' Cockermouth chapels were St. Leonards, St. Helen's and the private chapel in the castle[4].

St. Osyth's chapel in historical records.

There are a number of instances where the chapel is mentioned in Papcastle Manor Court records, mainly as a reference point in the landscape.

'Robert Lamplugh for enclosing 2 acres of demesne land between the chapel of St Osyth and the common' (1475).[5]

*'William Wilson son of John (*fined*) for reaping the herbage in the meadow below the chapel of St Osyth'* and *'Robert Lamplieuch for driving astray the neighbours cattle at divers times and for one improvement above and below the chapel of St Osyth'*, (in other words, making unauthorised use of the land) (1503). [6]

'Robert Lamplieuch occupies a parcel of the Lords meadow of the quantity of 1 acre on the western side of the chapel of St Sithie'.[7] *(1504)*

Robert Lamplugh was lord of the neighbouring manor of Dovenby.[8] 'Sithie' is a diminutive or familiar form of 'Osyth'.

A later (1521) entry conveys a surprising amount of information, though without specifically mentioning the chapel [9]:

'…. they order that William Eglisfield shall not keep any woman across the wood or

[1] Angus J L Winchester, *Cumbria: An Historical Gazetteer*, Lancaster University, 2016.
[2] C M L Bouch, *Prelates and People of the Lake Counties,* pp 157-64, Titus Wilson, 1948.
[3] Henry Widdup, *The Story of Christianity in Cumbria*, pp 62-8, Titus Wilson, 1981.
[4] J Bernard Bradbury, *A History of Cockermouth*, Philimore 1981, pp.49-52,150
[5] Leconfield Archive (DLEC), 5. DLEC/Box 299T, f.311, p.51.
[6] DLEC/Box 299T, f.129, p.22.
[7] DLEC/Box 299T, f.192, p.35.
[8] Rev. S. Taylor, 'The Lamplugh Family of Cumberland, Part II', *TC&WAAS Vol.39 (1939*) pp.71-72.
[9] DLEC/Box 299T, f.270, p.36.

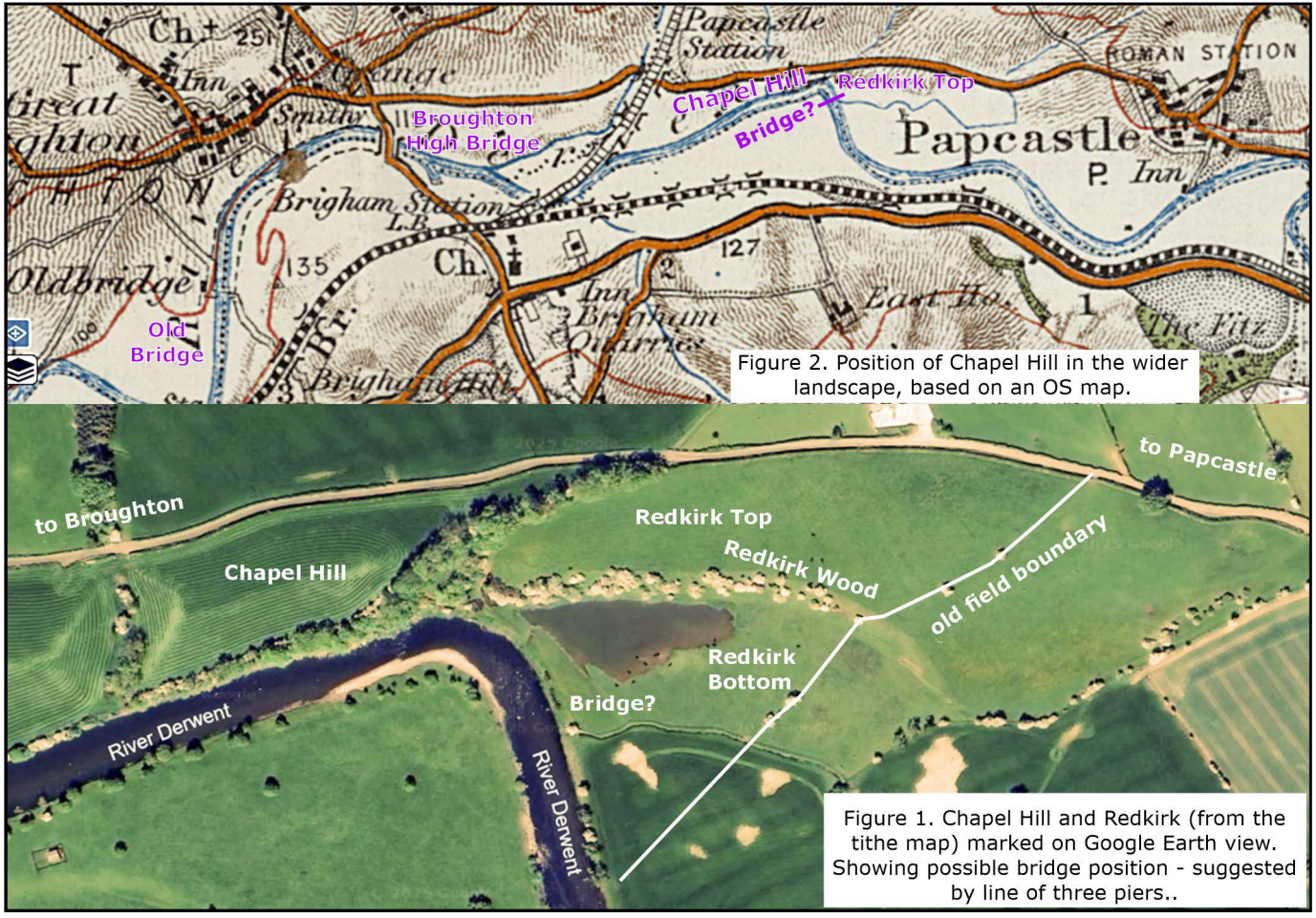


Figure 2. Position of Chapel Hill in the wider landscape, based on an OS map.

Figure 1. Chapel Hill and Redkirk (from the tithe map) marked on Google Earth view. Showing possible bridge position - suggested by line of three piers..

over the fence of the hermits of Reydcar under the penalty of 40d.'

Court held 25th November 24th year of the reign of Henry VII (ca. 1509)

'…Robert Whiteside for wood in Redcarbank contrary to orders' (fined 6d).[10]

The field-names 'Chapel Hill' and 'Redkirk' (Redkirk Top and Redkirk Bottom, divided by a wooded bank, Redkirk Wood) are shown on the 1838/9 tithe map and on an early twentieth century sale deed.[11] This places the chapel and hermitage of St. Osyth on the north bank of the Derwent between Papcastle and Little/Great Broughton (figs. 1&2). 'Redkirk' replaced the earlier form of the name 'Redcar' or 'Reydcar', this either referred to the place, 'marshy area where reeds grow, or possibly to an abbot of Holm Cultram, William Rydekar/Reddekar, c. 1434.[12] Geophysics surveys carried out as part of an archaeological survey of Papcastle in 2010, the first stage of the Roman heritage 'Discovering Derventio' project, revealed anomalies of potential interest in Chapel Hill and Redkirk Top, though not the anticipated chapel 'footprint'.[13]

Chapels in pre-reformation, Catholic Britain.

The Parish & the Chapel, published in 2018, is the outcome of an in-depth study of the subject, categorising medieval chapels according to function and relationship, if any, with the parish church.[14] 'Dependent chapels' served parishioners within the distant or less accessible parts of a parish, while 'private chapels' served the family/household of a castle or manor house, which could include monastic granges (hence seven chapels in the Holm Cultram area). The third category, 'Locational Chapels', is four-way sub-divided into those on travel routes - often at bridges, liminal chapels (at the threshold of the hazardous stage of a journey such as a harbour), commemorative places such as the scene of battles, and assembly sites. Locational chapels lay outside parochial structures - they would normally have been licensed by the bishop as part of the effort to maintain control of the diocese and ensure that neither dependent nor the other lower status chapels undermined the rights (regarding baptisms, marriages and burials) or financial position of the parish church. The final category 'Cult Chapels' also lacked parochial pastoral responsibilities, their sole purpose being the veneration of one saint. They tended to be unlicensed and to be disdained by the church establishment.

Where does St. Osyth's fit into this hierarchy of chapels?

The 'category' to which St Osyth's chapel should be assigned can be narrowed down. It was not a dependent chapel (i.e. not 'attached' to Bridekirk parish) and, in the absence of a house/castle of high status, nor was it a private chapel. St. Osyth had a cult following across the more southerly parts of England. Besides the village of St. Osyth in Essex there was a shrine in St. Paul's Cathedral; also Norwich Cathedral and St. Albans Abbey had dedicated chapels. Her burial place at Aylesbury became a popular pilgrimage focus.[15] 'Patron Saints of the diocese of Carlisle' mentions just two St. Osyth dedications, at Carlisle and at Beetham, near Milnthorpe.[16] John Kimblow, rector of

[10] DLEC/Box 299T, f.194, p.31.
[11] Cumbria Archive Service, Carlisle (CAS(C)), DRC/8/149, Papcastle Tithe Map and Award, 1838-9; Mark Graham, *Unlocking Hidden Heritage Project.* Community Geophysical Survey at Papcastle and Cockermouth, Cumbria, March 2011, Grampus Heritage & Training Ltd.
[12] F Grainger & W G Collingwood, Eds, *Register and Records of Holm Cultram,* Kendal 1929, p.149
[13] Mark Graham, *Unlocking Hidden Heritage Project;* Communication with Mark Graham, 29 Apr 2025.
[14] Sarah E Thomas, *The Parish & the Chapel in Medieval Britain and Norway*, Boydell Press, 2018.
[15] *Wikipedia.org/wiki/osgyth.*
[16] T.H.B.Graham and W.G. Collingwood, 'Patron Saints of the Diocese of Carlisle', *TC&WAAS Vol.25* (1925) pp.15,18&19.

Lamplugh and archdeacon of Richmond, in his will of 1469, directed that 'he should be buried in the parochial church of St. Mary of Carlisle (the nave of the cathedral) near the altar of St. Sithe'.[17] Edward Brown 'jueller of the citie of Lincoln', died 1506, left a bequest to 'St. Sithes in Bethom'.[18] Other than the above manor court records these, it seems, are the only references in the county's historical literature to medieval chapels, shrines, or altars linked to St. Osyth, although she is depicted in a Victorian stained glass window in the twelfth-century St. Michael's church in Beetham. In the medieval period the deceased were carried for burial at Beetham over Arnside marsh or across the Kent estuary from Witherslack.[19] St. Osyth would be the go-to saint for such perilous perambulations (see later, legends of St. Osyth) so a shrine in Beetham would have fulfilled this need.

With these very limited references to St. Osyth in Cumbria, a cult chapel in a remote, rural situation three quarters of a mile from Papcastle seems implausible. Given the proximity to the river Derwent, the lack of notable battles and not being on a pilgrimage route, the possibility of it being a bridge chapel promoting, or improving, local communication links has to be considered.

Bridges and highways in the medieval period.

Three publications, *The Parish and the Chapel* as above, *The Bridges of Medieval England*, and *The Hermits and Anchorites of England,* each discuss bridge and highway construction and upkeep, and the role of bridge chapels, presenting a common picture from three perspectives.[20]

'Contributing towards the building and maintenance of bridges was part of leading a Christian life; donations were acts of charity and piety, and a means of doing penance and obtaining indulgences that granted benefactors remittance from penance for sin'.[21] A chapel on or next to a river crossing encouraged travellers to make donations, to pray for the souls of the benefactors and for their own safe crossing or arrival.

The repair of bridges was financed and organized in seemingly random ways. 'Some look decidedly eccentric. Here the king gave oaks; there a lord provided timber and his men the labour. The men of a village were responsible for the pier of one bridge, a bishop granted an indulgence to those contributing to another. For the fabric of other bridges, tolls were collected; a widow bequeathed a few bushels of corn in her will; a hermit sought alms from passers-by'.[22] Close to home, an indulgence was granted by the bishop for the repair of the bridge 'over the Derwent near Cockermouth in 1366'.[23] Clearly the building and maintenance of medieval bridges was a higher priority than the linking roads which, as P. Hindle puts it, 'made and maintained themselves simply by the passage of horses and carts'.[24] Only where the terrain was particularly demanding did roads necessitate intervention. At Wragmire on what is now the A6, six miles south of Carlisle, hermit John of Corbridge was maintaining the road through the difficult (Wragmire Moss) country of Inglewood Forest in 1354.[25] Additionally, forty days of remitted penances were promised to

[17] T.H.B. Graham, 'The Medieval Diocese of Carlisle', *TC&WAAS Vol. 25 (1925)* p.101.
[18] John F. Curwen, 'Heversham Church', *TC&WAAS Vol.25 (1925*) p.74.
[19] Alan Cleaver & Lesley Park, *The Corpse Roads of Cumbria*, Chitty Mouse Press, 2018, pp.196-202.
[20] David Harrison, *The Bridges of Medieval England: Transport and Society 400 – 1800,* Oxford University Press, 2004; Rotha Mary Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England*, Methuen &Co. Ltd., 1914. *https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hs2v3chg*
[21] *The Parish & the Chapel,* p.124.
[22] *The Bridges of Medieval England,* p.184.
[23] *Prelates and People of the Lake Counties,* p.92.
[24] Paul Hindle, *Roads and Tracks of the Lake District*, Cicerone Press, 1998, p.47.
[25] *The Hermits nd Anchorites of England,* p.60

others working on this same stretch of road by Bishop Welton.[26]

'Chapels were seen as an essential feature of major bridges, just as they were of hospitals, alms-houses or schools and other important charitable institutions'. Another characteristic presence at bridges in late medieval England was the hermits.[27] According to R M Clay (writing in 1914) they began to appear early in the fourteenth century, dwelling beside the highways, bridges and fords. The hermit undertook many social duties. 'He taught and preached, collected alms, celebrated divine offices in his chapel for the benefit of wayfarers; he helped to clear and cultivate the waste places of the land and to clear the forest; he made roads and bridges and kept them in repair; he erected sea-marks and lighthouses for the benefit of mariners'.[28] Hermits in choosing that life were under vows and subject to the authority of the ecclesiastical system. A monk needed the approval of his abbot to become a hermit, a layman applied to the bishop for his habit. The office for the benediction of hermits according to the rule of St. Paul, includes the following: 'idleness is an enemy of the soul and to prevent the devil's discovering him without an occupation the hermit is to provide himself with manual work to fill the time when he is not at prayer. This may involve the production of food or the maintenance and repair of roads and bridges'.[29]

The making and mending of roads continued to be regarded as a work of charitable private enterprise. As an illustration one Simon Coates 'founded on his own property (in Dorset) the hermitage of St. Anthony, and he set to work to improve the means of communication in that neighbourhood'. At his death in 1527, he bequeathed the house, chapel and garden to the Earl of Arundel 'to the intent that a professed hermit might dwell there, to pray for the souls of his own ancestors and those of his lord, and to maintain the bridges and highways which he had made'.[30] Hermit house, chapel and garden appears to have been the standard arrangement, noting that a hermit is likely to have built his own house, possibly the chapel and the bridge as well. The chapel, unless associated with a major stone arched bridge may well have been a wooden structure which accounts for the difficulty in locating the site of many such buildings. The hermit applied himself to growing his own food and keeping the odd cow to provide the necessities for survival. Although regarded as solitary the hermit's existence could be shared by similarly committed individuals.

The hermit's life of prayers and hard physical work, with no future prospect of change or enhancement did not suit all who took the vows. Some misused the alms and endowment. The chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Lordship of Wigton, and the hermit's house, were 'ruinous and fallen into decay' in 1507, through the default of Edward Tuffen, the hermit.[31] The same issue was raised again by the jury of Uldale in 1523 (so presumably the chapel in question lay in Uldale township). Keeping a woman 'across the wood or over the fence' by St. Osyth's chapel, in 1521 suggests the hermit's wife may have moved in. Without this transgression of the hermit's vows these key clues regarding the chapel would not have appeared in the historical record.

The need for a bridge, and hence a bridge chapel, in Papcastle.

Aside from the need for 'all-weather' tracks and beck crossings, the question

[26] *Roads and Tracks of the Lake District*, p.47.
[27] *The Bridges of Medieval England,* p.201.
[28] Rotha Mary Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England*, Methuen, 1914, p.xvii,57-65, *https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hs2v3chg*
[29] *The Hermits and Anchorites of England*; p.199; Frank Bottomley, 'Office for the Benediction of Hermits' (16th C), , *http://www.hermitary.com/articles/benediction.html*, (This is a translation of the Latin version given in Appendix B of ref.28.)
[30] *The Hermits and Anchorites of England,* p.63.
[31] *Prelates and People of the Lake Counties, pp 159 -160.*

arises regarding the need for a Derwent crossing at this point. There is no bridge here in 2025. Nor is there evidence of one on historical maps. However the Google Earth view in fig.1 gives clear indications that there has been a bridge, possibly just a footbridge in modern times. The 1521 manor court instruction indicates that the chapel and the hermit's residence were separated by a wooded area and fence which is compatible with Fig.1. The chapel would need to have been close to the indicated bridge site with Chapel Hill or Redkirk Top being the site of the hermits house/garden. The name 'Chapel Hill' could indicate nothing more than the hill near, or overlooking the chapel. Perhaps more likely it was part of the endowment which supported the hermit and the chapel, hence also the local ways and bridges.

Paul Hindle described paths and tracks developing in the medieval period between neighbouring settlements and to parish churches/chapels.[32] A bridge here over the Derwent would have linked Papcastle and Brigham, also Broughton and Cockermouth. Stepping stones, maybe footbridges, and fords would have been established in many locations such as this, a rising river level rendering them hazardous or even life-threatening. While stone arched bridges were being built at river crossings on major routes from the eleventh century, employing the same methods and skilled stone masons as created the arches in grand medieval churches, rural bridges were either of wood or wood and stone. Wooden piles or stone piers/pillars spaced across a river supported wooden beams and planking to make the roadway.[33] Such constructions would have been within the capabilities of a hermit and not left remnants of the major abutments associated with a stone bridge.

Crossing points on the Cockermouth - Workington stretch of the Derwent were still an issue centuries later, as illustrated by a petition to the Earl of Egremont sometime shortly after 1763.[34] The petitioner, Jonathan Serjeant of Great Broughton, argued his case for a licence to erect a bridge for the benefit of people on foot or with horses and carriages, proposing to take a small toll from each user. 'The Towns of Great Broughton and Little Broughton, held of the Earl of Egremont, lie on the north side of the River Derwent and at several miles distance from any bridge across the said river by which means the inhabitants of towns and the country adjoining and also the inhabitants of the towns on the opposite side of the river are in the time of floods which are very frequent are under necessity of travelling several miles to use bridges in order to cross the same which is attended with great inconvenience of the inhabitants of the several towns on both sides of this river of Derwent'. The petitioner owned the land on each side of the river but needed permission and to pay for the privilege of building the supports in the lord's river bed. The inference from the above wording is that in normal weather a simple crossing, perhaps a ford, would be used. The present Broughton High Bridge was built in 1835; Jonathan Serjeant's toll bridge would have been the 'Old Bridge' marked on Fig.2 (aka 'Penny Bridge'). The circumstances driving the case for a Broughton bridge in the eighteenth century would have applied equally well to an improved Papcastle crossing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Apart from the benefits of a safer Derwent river crossing, less susceptible in times of flood, the wider improvement in communications would have eased the lives of the inhabitants, in particular regarding the long, frequent walk to St. Bridget's church. The life span of St.

[32] *Roads and Tracks of the Lake District,* pp.41-2.

[33] *The Bridges of Medieval England; Roads and Tracks of the Lake District, p.126.*

[34] DLEC/Box 265/152 Petitions to the Lord, Jonathan Serjeant.

Osyth's chapel, upwards of 50 years, possibly 150 years, would suggest the hermits in their labours would have ranged across Broughton and Papcastle, if not much of Bridekirk Parish. The hermits, anonymous though they may be, would be glad to know that evidence of their labours remains, in the names of Priest's Bridge, Friars Walk and Sibby (Sithie) Brows. Whether the benefactors reaped the expected rewards of their charitable acts in the hereafter we can only speculate.

St. Osyth: a suitable dedication for a bridge chapel.

Having discounted the cult chapel possibility, what could be the reason for dedicating the chapel to this somewhat obscure saint? One of the legends relating to St. Osyth may give the answer.[35] Osyth was of noble Saxon birth in the seventh century. As a nun she established a convent near Colchester and became its first abbess. This much may be historically sound as evidenced by the Essex village of St. Osyth, the location of her convent.

One day in her childhood, her aunt, St. Edith sent the young Osyth to deliver a book to St. Modwenna of Northumbria at her nunnery. To get there, Osyth had to cross a stream by a bridge. The stream was swollen, the wind high, she fell into the water and drowned. Her absence was not noted for two days. Edith and Modwenna found Osyth lying near the banks of the stream. They prayed for her restoration and commanded her to arise from the water. Miraculously she did, still holding the book. The second legend concerned her fate as an abbess at the hands of raiding pirates. Resisting being carried off, she was beheaded. Whereupon she picked up her head and walked a third of a mile to the convent, hammered on the door for admission. Once inside she fell to the floor and died. (No happy ending this time - that may have stretched credibility too far!)

It could be argued, on the basis of the first legend, that St. Osyth would be an apt dedication for a bridge chapel. One such example was at Bridgnorth where a gatehouse and a chapel were built on the stone, multi-arched twelfth-century bridge over the Severn.[36] It seems a reasonable assumption that the dedication of Papcastle's chapel was an informed and educated choice, rather than an arbitrary selection by a typical medieval farmer/landowner.

The Eaglesfields of Ellenborough Hall, pious and educated benefactors.

This brings us to William Eaglesfield, who 'was not to keep any woman across the wood or over the fence of the hermits of Reydcar'.[37] What was his role in the story of St. Osyth's chapel? He was a free tenant of the Earl of Northumberland late fifteenth/early sixteenth centuries, with land in the Broughton area, Whinfell, Eaglesfield and Ellenborough, attending manor courts as a juror and occasionally being presented for minor transgressions.[38] At times he appeared

[35] *Wikipedia.org/wiki/osgyth.*
[36] *The Bridges of Medieval England*, p.199
[37] DLEC/Box 299T, f.270, p.36
[38] DLEC/Box 314. Records of Free Tenants of the Earl of Northumberland 1523; DLEC/Box 299T, f.238, p.28.

alongside John Eaglesfield, also a free tenant. After his death in 1523 the latter was described as 'late of Alneburgh', holding the manor of Eaglesfield, 'as well as divers lands and tenements lately purchased by his father Gawin Eaglesfield whose heir he is'.[39] The family lived in Ellenborough Hall, which later became Netherhall, home of the Senhouses. Gawin was High Sheriff of Cumberland in 1518.[40] William Eaglesfield's earliest Manor Court appearance, that available records cover, was in 1472-3, his latest 1534-5.[41] Whether this represents one or, more likely, a number of generations is not known. Robert Eaglesfield (1295-1349) was the most eminent member of this ancient family, founding what is now The Queen's College Oxford.[42] It was for scholars 'distinguished in character, poor in means, and apt for the study of theology'. 'A preference was to be given – on account of the waste, desolate and illiterate condition of those provinces - to natives of Cumberland and Westmorland'. The earliest mention found to-date of St. Osyth's Chapel is 1475, though its foundation may have been significantly earlier.[43] A concern of bridge chapel founders, and benefactors generally, was that legacies and endowments would be used as intended after their death, such that they were remembered and hermits or chaplains continued to pray for their souls. William is likely to have been the guardian of the endowment of a pious and charitable ancestor – perhaps even the above Robert Eaglesfield.

Conclusion

Papcastle's medieval chapel, dedicated to St. Osyth, stood on or close to the banks of the river Derwent, three quarters of a mile west of the village, in the years before Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries. Its purposes would be both religious and practical, enabling a hermit to collect alms to support himself and to carry out construction and maintenance on local paths and river/beck crossings. The hermit would have said prayers on a daily basis for the souls of the founders and benefactors. Occasionally a chaplain would have said mass. In the late medieval period religion was a big part of people's lives. The regular obligatory trek to St. Bridget's church at Bridekirk should have been easier and less hazardous for the parishioners as a result of the charitable endowment of the chapel, probably by the Eaglesfield family, and the labours of the hermits.

The understanding reached here fits with the very limited historical written records, the local geography and studies of medieval life, specifically relating to chapels, the role of hermits and the dependence of bridges and roads on charitable endowments and donations. The legend regarding St. Osyth surviving an accident while crossing a bridge over a swollen stream accounts for the dedication of a bridge chapel here to this unlikely, rather obscure saint. The archaeological survey work previously carried out would not necessarily have found traces of a timber chapel and hermits house in frequently ploughed terrain. An absence of encouraging signs in the geophysics data for Chapel Hill and Redkirk Top does not prove that the chapel and hermits house were not there. However if the bridge chapel was associated with the Derwent crossing suggested (Fig.1) this would point to a location in the unsurveyed Redkirk Bottom. Wherever it was, pinpointing the site within the Chapel Hill and Redkirk fields would be challenging!

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[39] DLEC/Box 299T, f.302, p.12.

[40] Nicholson & Burn, *The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmorland and Cumberland, Vol.2*. pp. 158-9, Parish of Cross Canonby, p. 568, Parish of Brough.

[41] DLEC/Box 299T, f. 260, p.1; DLEC/Box 299T, f. 231, p.36.

[42] 'Fresh Light on the Family of Robert de Eglesfeld, Founder of Queen's College, Oxford', *TC&WAAS Vol 16* (1916): Hugh Thomson, 'Robert Eaglesfield and the foundation of the Hall of the Queen's Scholars', L&DFLHS, *Wanderer 39*, Feb.2020.

[43] DLEC/Box 299T, f.311, p.51.

Farming Memories of Yesteryear: the Ruddings farm, Setmurthy

by Gloria Edwards

A friend of mine, John Thornthwaite, was born at the Ruddings Farm in Setmurthy in 1935. He passed on his memories of life there when he was a boy, which also included getting to know the artist Edward H Thompson, who lived at Ivy Cottage next to the farm.

John's father, Stanley, had signed a lease to the Ruddings Farm, part of the Higham estate owned by the Fisher family, in February 1931. The deeds to the farm show four cottages, as well as the farm, and E H Thompson rented one of those cottages.

John wrote down his memories of the farming year, which were enlightening to me, having grown up in a city and with little knowledge farming life.

John's father farmed around 80 acres at The Ruddings with one horse:

Farm Stock

COWS – about 30, made up of milkers, heifers and fat stock for the market. The milk was cooled and put in churns which were collected daily by the Milk Marketing Board at the end of the lane. Some of the milk was kept by the farm and churned into butter for home use.

SHEEP – about 100 made up of Herdwicks, Black-faced Leicesters, and breeding ewes.

ONE FARM-HORSE – called Jess

PIGS – one sow for breeding. The piglets were sent to market and one kept back for the farm to be fattened up, and then a butcher from Embleton would come to slaughter the pig on the farm. The meat would be used for ham, bacon, sausages, black puddings, and the pig's trotters for pies.

TWO DOGS – collie sheepdogs, Ben and Jack

HENS - about two dozen and one cockerel: Rhode Island Reds, White Leghorns and Bantams, all running free and with hen-coops for nights. They provided eggs and food for the farm.

DUCKS – about one dozen Khaki Campbells, geese and guinea fowls.

Crops

HAY – the main crop

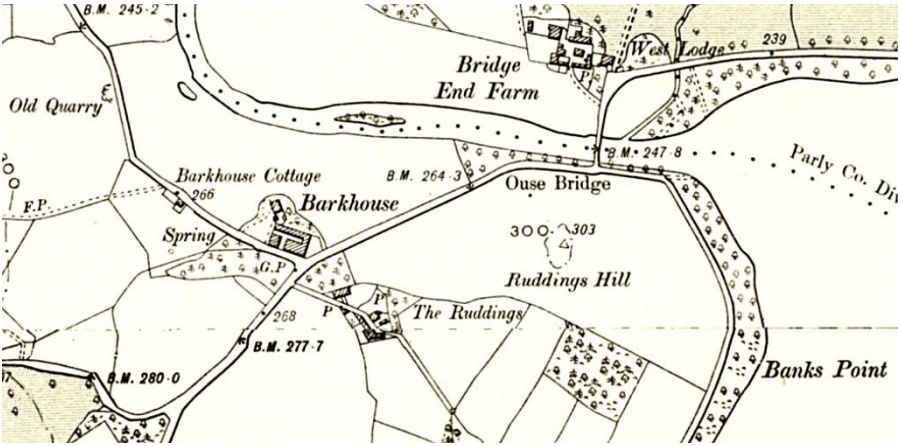
CORN – harvested for cattle feed

TURNIPS – for sheep and kitchen

POTATOES – for kitchen

KALE – for sheep and cattle

The Ruddings farm, Setmurthy,- Ordnance Survey 1898



MANGOLDS – for sheep and cattle

FIELD CARROTS – for sheep and cattle

THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

Produced potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, onions and leeks, also fruit trees (apples and pears) for use in the house.

Annual cycle on the farm

1. Muck-spreading at the end of winter/spring, with muck from the farm middens spread in heaps on the fields. It was then spread evenly over the land with hand gripes (a form of large fork).

2. Ploughing – done by one man and a horse-drawn, single-furrow plough, a long slow job. If a hay crop was to be grown, the ploughing was omitted and the grass was allowed to grow naturally after muck-spreading.

3. Harrowing – carried out with a spiked mesh of steel, pulled over the land by a horse and one man.

4. Sowing – Corn seed was sown by a man using a fiddle drill (a device for spreading seed evenly, by a man vibrating a seed tray) shaped rather like a violin with a bow.

5. Rolling - A heavy roller was drawn over the land by a horse and one man, to push the seed into the soil.

6. Other crops – Concurrently with the corn and hay preparation. The pattern would be about one field corn, three fields hay, one field of turnips, kale, mangolds and carrots.

7. The 'lull' when crops were growing: this period would be used to generally tidy up, trim hedges, dyking to clear field gutters and drains, attending to lambing and calving, and later getting stock to Cockermouth Auction Mart.

8. Hay Harvest - was cut with a horse-drawn mower, rather like a large, modern hedge-trimmer. The cutting would start on a sunny day at about five to six o'clock in the morning, and left in swathes until about noon, when it was turned over to dry the under-side. Next day the hay was shaken up with a gripe to dry and later gathered into hay cocks. The cocks were collected in a horse-cart and taken to the barn where it was 'mewed', that is compressed by men and boys trampling it down.

9 Corn harvest - was binder-cut by a hired tractor, which cut and bound the corn into sheaves. The sheaves were then gathered up and made into stooks of about twelve sheaves, arranged so that the corn heads were in the air. They would be left for two or three days and then turned bottom to top to dry the corn stalks. The stooks were then collected and made into ridged stacks, and the top thatched.

10. Threshing – In Autumn the stooks were removed from the stack and fed through a hired threshing machine, driven by a steam engine supplied by Mr McGuffie from Ireby. There would be one man on the stack, passing to one man feeding the thresher, and one man bagging the corn from the output of the machine. The corn was then stored for winter cattle feed, and the straw for winter bedding for the cattle.

11. Stack-bottom burning – After all but the bottom layer of stooks had been taken from the stack, the base of the stack would be set on fire and burnt out to clear the accumulated rubbish and vermin, and generally tidy up the stack yard.

12. Autumn pig-butchering – After the pig had been slaughtered, it would be butchered into pieces for winter use. The hams and bacon parts were placed in salt petre on slate table sconces in a cold house and, when they were judged to be properly cured, they were put in white flour bags and hung from beams in the kitchen.

13. Winter – The winter days were mostly concerned with the feeding and welfare of the stock, and milking, etc. When the weather permitted, there were always the tidying and repair jobs to be done.

Services

An old, black-leaded range provided all the heat for cooking, baking and water-heating in a large kettle. The farm had piped water but no electricity, so inside lighting was provided by 'Aladdin' paraffin lamps, and outside lighting by storm lamps. When John was ten years old his father died. His mother kept the farm going for about six months, but it was hard work and the farm was eventually re-let to a Mr John Bell. John and his family moved to a cottage at Ouse Bridge.

Edward Thompson

During the 1920s to 1940s an artist named Edward Thompson lived in a cottage next to the Ruddings farmhouse, and John told me about Edward's prolific output of paintings, including many of the Bassenthwaite area, several of which were given as gifts to the Thornthwaite family. His work showed great talent, and he would make a batch of paintings, selling them to tourists at hotels in the area, including the Pheasant Hotel. Sadly, John remembers that the artist developed a heavy drinking habit, meaning that much of his earnings from his work were frittered away.

Above, Edward Thompson the artist

Below, a painting by Edward Thompson

Edward Thompson

Memories

John remembers some very cold winters in 1941 and 1947, with Bassenthwaite Lake frozen over and deep snow blocking the roads. In one blizzard a double-decker bus had to be dug out on the road by the lake, and his older relatives had told him of times when the lake was so frozen that farm and builders' carts had taken short cuts across the lake.

John Thornthwaite

In later years John moved into Cockermouth, starting work as an apprentice at what was the Royal Garage in Crown Street, then owned by R Wilde & Son (opposite what is now the Terrace Bar of the Trout Hotel).

Wlide's Garage on Crown Street

Names in the landscape: the legacy of Armaside, Lorton, from 1578

by Derek Denman

The talk in June by Professor Angus Winchester, on the origin and persistence of local place-names, and the availability of records from the Leconfield archive, have combined to stimulate this article. Armaside is an ancient woody settlement on the northern outskirts of Lorton parish, below Harrot fell, as shown in Figure 1. Many will know it just as a place where Casshow and Armaside How, aka Butterbowl How, create blind bends in the road to Cockermouth. The smallest hill, Wonsal How, may only be known to the inhabitants of Low Armaside. Few will now notice or even know of the tarn beside the road, still frequented by grey herons.

In his PhD thesis of 1978, Angus Winchester partially reconstructed Lorton and Armaside in 1578.[1] Based on that, a short exposition on medieval Armaside, together with a reconstructed boundary, was given in *Landscape and Society.*[2] More recently, *Lake District field-names,* included a 1578 reconstruction of a Tudor single-farm plan at Lorton Scales.[3] It is only the persistence and records of field-names into the nineteenth-century in our area which makes it possible to reconstruct and analyse Tudor and medieval farmscapes. This article will approach the whole of the hamlet of Armaside in similar ways, addressing its origins and its development through the names of places and people.

Surveys which include Armaside

In 1578 a detailed survey was made of the property of the Earl of Northumberland, including his manor of Derwentfells, which then contained Armaside's four farms.[4] Most of Lorton was held by freeholders and was not surveyed. The names, sizes, and uses of fields or closes were listed, but with no map or plan. That survey provides an opportunity to attempt a reconstruction of the farm plans in 1578, but that also requires a more modern plan with field-names as a starting point. A further survey was made by a surveyor called Brown in 1758.[5] Field-names and ownerships were recorded, but again he made no plan.

The first detailed survey and plan of the fields or closes of Lorton was made to record and value the ownerships in 1826, after the Act for the enclosure of the commons was passed.[6] That plan survives for Lorton, but the names of fields were not needed and were not collected. The 1826 plan was re-used for the commutation of tithes of Lorton in 1840, and in this case the law required the names of fields to be collected and recorded, together with the use for arable, meadow, pasture, or wood.[7]

Armaside in 1826 and 1578.

From the above surveys, a factual and measured plan of Armaside can be created for 1826 with ownerships and field

[1] Winchester, Angus J. L. (1978) 'Territorial Structure and Agrarian Organisation in Mediaeval and Sixteenth Century Copeland, Cumberland', Doctoral thesis, Durham University, Vol.1, pp.364-6 & 369, *https://etheses.dur.ac.uk/1886/*

[2] Angus J L Winchester, *Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria*, John Donald, 1987, pp.147-8

[3] Angus J L Winchester, *Lake District Field-names: a guide for local historians*, Lancaster University RHC, 2017, pp.36-7

[4] Leconfield Archive, DLEC/2/1/3, Percy Survey 1578, Derwentfells, Lorton

[5] DLEC/2/1/4, Brown's Survey 1758, Derwentfells

[6] Cumbria Archive Service (Whitehaven), DBEN/Box 282

[7] The National Archives, TNA/IR7/107 & IR30/7/107, Tithe apportionments and plan for Lorton township, 1840.

boundaries at that time, together with field-names from 1840. This is given in Figure 2.

Figure 3 is a reconstruction of the same area in 1578, starting with Figure 2 and using the listing of Armaside customary tenants and their closes in the Percy Great Survey. This listing is given in condensed form in Table 1 for those interested, but the original text is also available for those who wish to check it, or to do reconstructions of other farms or hamlets.[8]

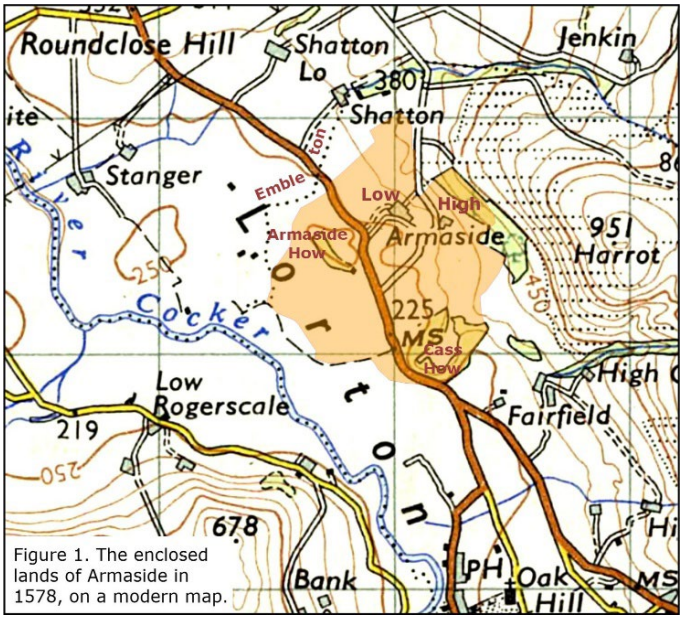


Figure 1. The enclosed lands of Armaside in 1578, on a modern map.

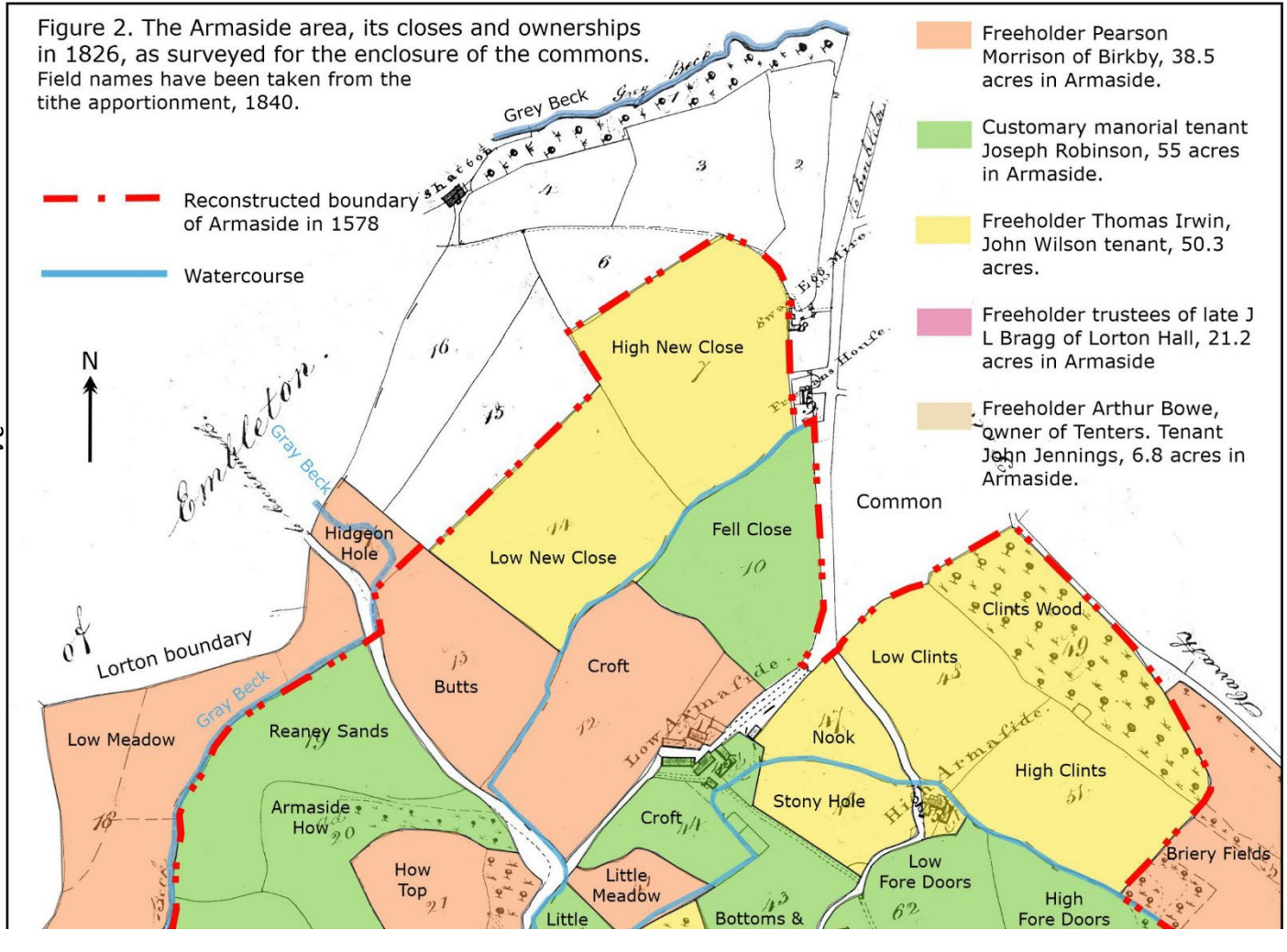
The two dates, 1578 and 1826, represent turning points in the development of local farming practice. 1578 was just a decade after the final Percy rebellion of 1569, and effectively the end of the feudal relationship between lord and tenants, when feudal estates provided the power of an armed tenantry, in addition to the economic resources from feudal agriculture. After the failed rebellion in 1569, the change to capitalistic means of production continued apace; towards an economic transactional relationship between lord and tenant, in which tenants provided wealth and status, rather than power through potential force of arms.

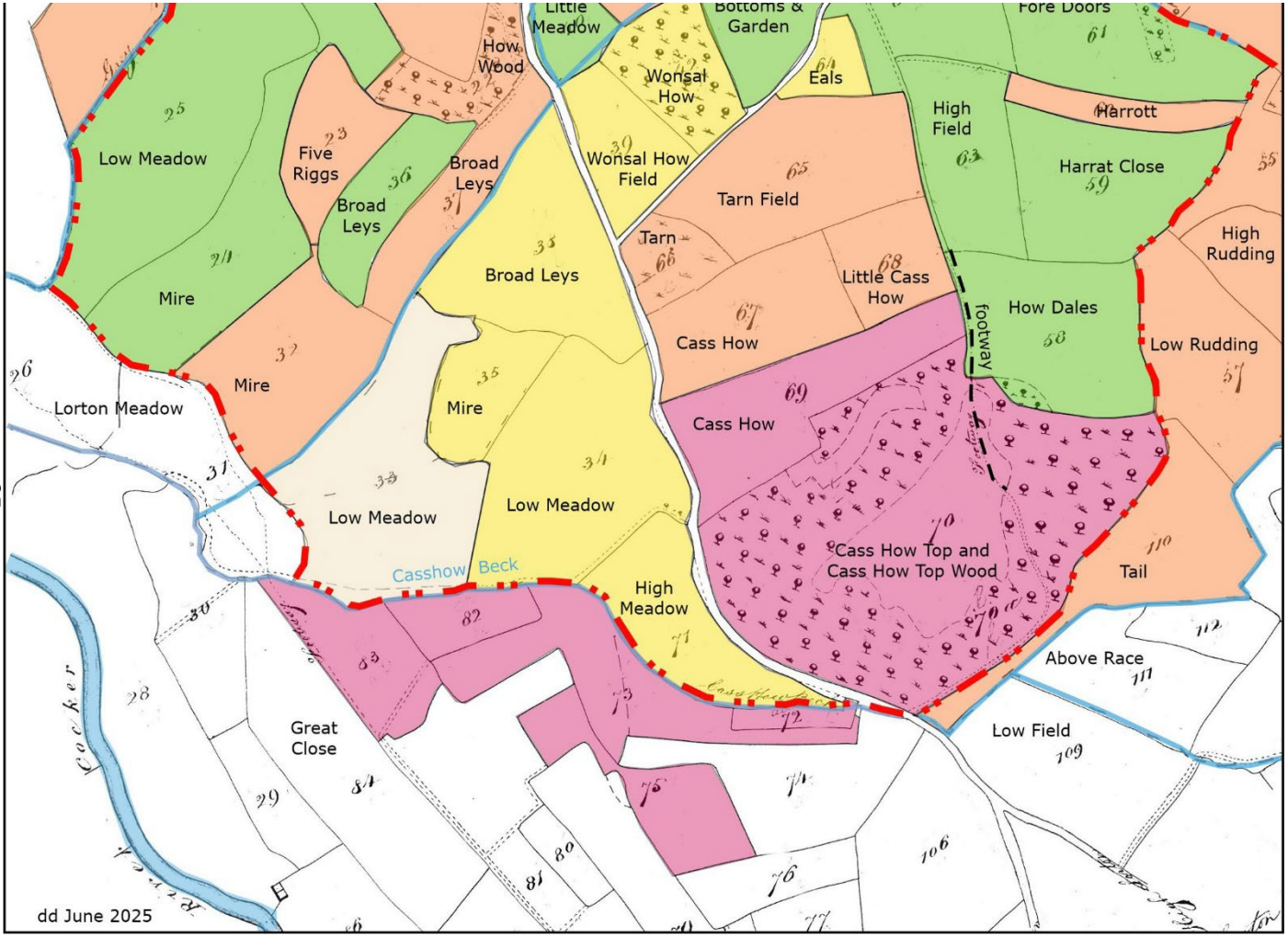
In the Armaside of 1578 many closes were shared, reflecting the end of the medieval farming system in which the enclosed land had been ring-fenced and the arable and meadow land within that enclosure was unfenced and mostly shared. In 1578 the four customary tenants still lived and worked at Armaside, in close co-operation. By 1758, when Brown made his survey, there were no shared closes and five customary tenants, with only three of those living at farmsteads in Armaside. A reconstructed plan of 1758 is not included in this article. By 1826 there remained just one yeoman farmer, owning and working his own land. The other two farmsteads were let to tenant farmers.

In 1578 the commons were shared and were regulated by the Derwentfells manor courts. Soon after 1826 the commons would be enclosed and divided, as the first major change. By mid-century these self-sufficient mixed farms would start to become pastoral, losing most of the arable and its workforce, as imported wheat replaced oats for feeding people. Between 1578 and 1826 there was little change to farming at Armaside, and the field-names that supported the arable production remained relevant and useful.

[8] DLEC/2/1/3, pp.148R,148V,149R

Figure 2. The Armaside area, its closes and ownerships in 1826, as surveyed for the enclosure of the commons.
Field names have been taken from the tithe apportionment, 1840.




Little Meadow
How Wood
Bottoms & Garden
Fore Doors
Wonsal How
Eals
High Field
Harrott
Low Meadow
Five Riggs
Broad Leys
Broad Leys
Wonsal How Field
Tarn Field
Harrat Close
Tarn
High Rudding
Broad Leys
Little Cass How
How Dales
Mire
footway
Cass How
Low Rudding
Lorton Meadow
Mire
Mire
Cass How
Low Meadow
Low Meadow
Cass How Top and Cass How Top Wood
Tail
Casshow Beck
High Meadow
Above Race
Great Close
Low Field
dd June 2025

25

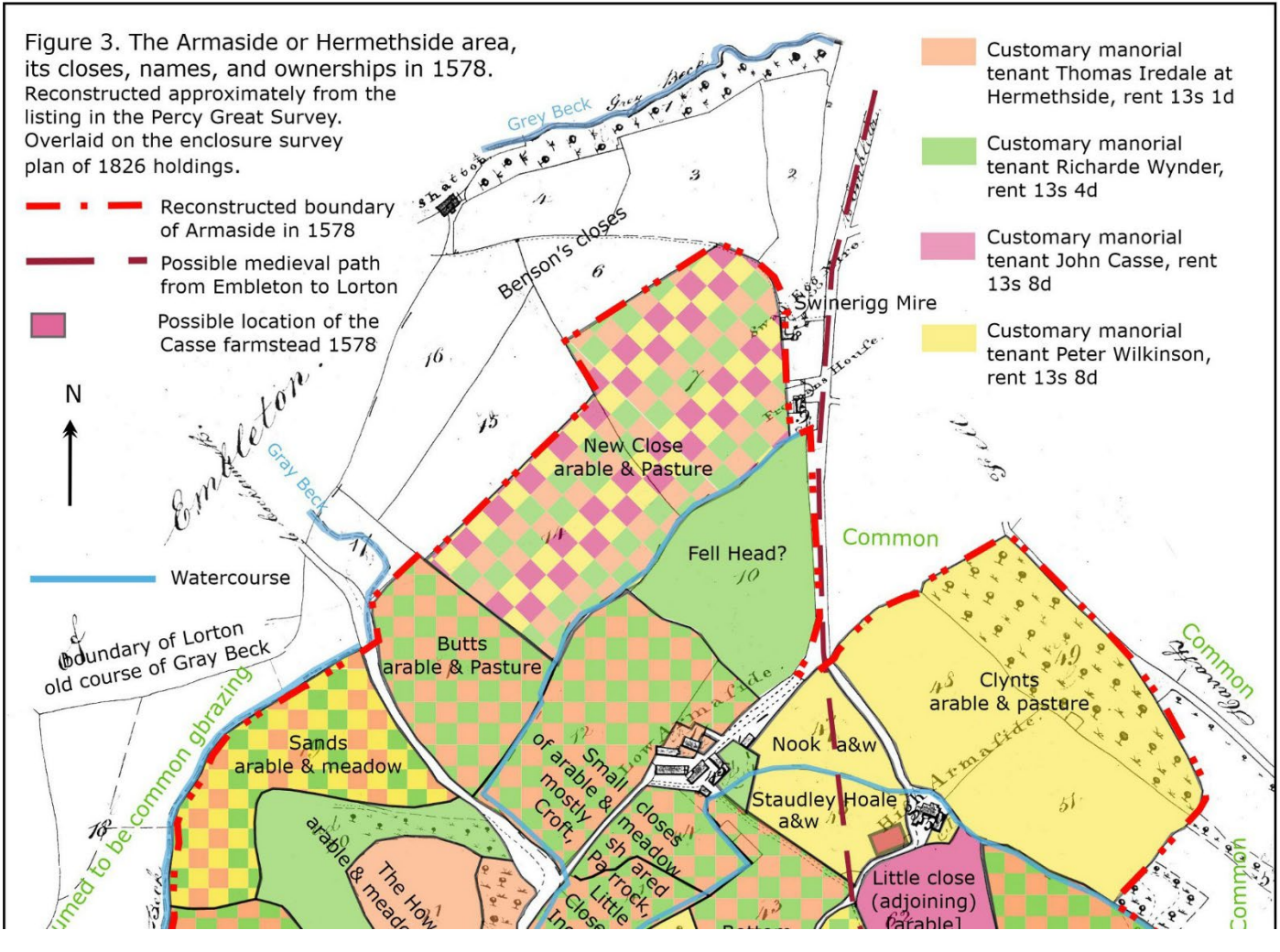


Figure 3. The Armaside or Hermethside area, its closes, names, and ownerships in 1578.
Reconstructed approximately from the listing in the Percy Great Survey.
Overlaid on the enclosure survey plan of 1826 holdings.
Reconstructed boundary of Armaside in 1578
Possible medieval path from Embleton to Lorton
Possible location of the Casse farmstead 1578
N
Watercourse
Customary manorial tenant Thomas Iredale at Hermethside, rent 13s 1d
Customary manorial tenant Richarde Wynder, rent 13s 4d
Customary manorial tenant John Casse, rent 13s 8d
Customary manorial tenant Peter Wilkinson, rent 13s 8d
Grey Beck
Gray Beck
Benson's closes
Swinerigg Mire
New Close arable & Pasture
Fell Head?
Common
Butts arable & Pasture
Clynts arable & pasture
Sands arable & meadow
Small closes of arable & mostly meadow
Croft, shared
Nook a&w
Staudley Hoale a&w
Little close (adjoining) [arable]
Boundary of Lorton
old course of Gray Beck
Embleton
Armaside

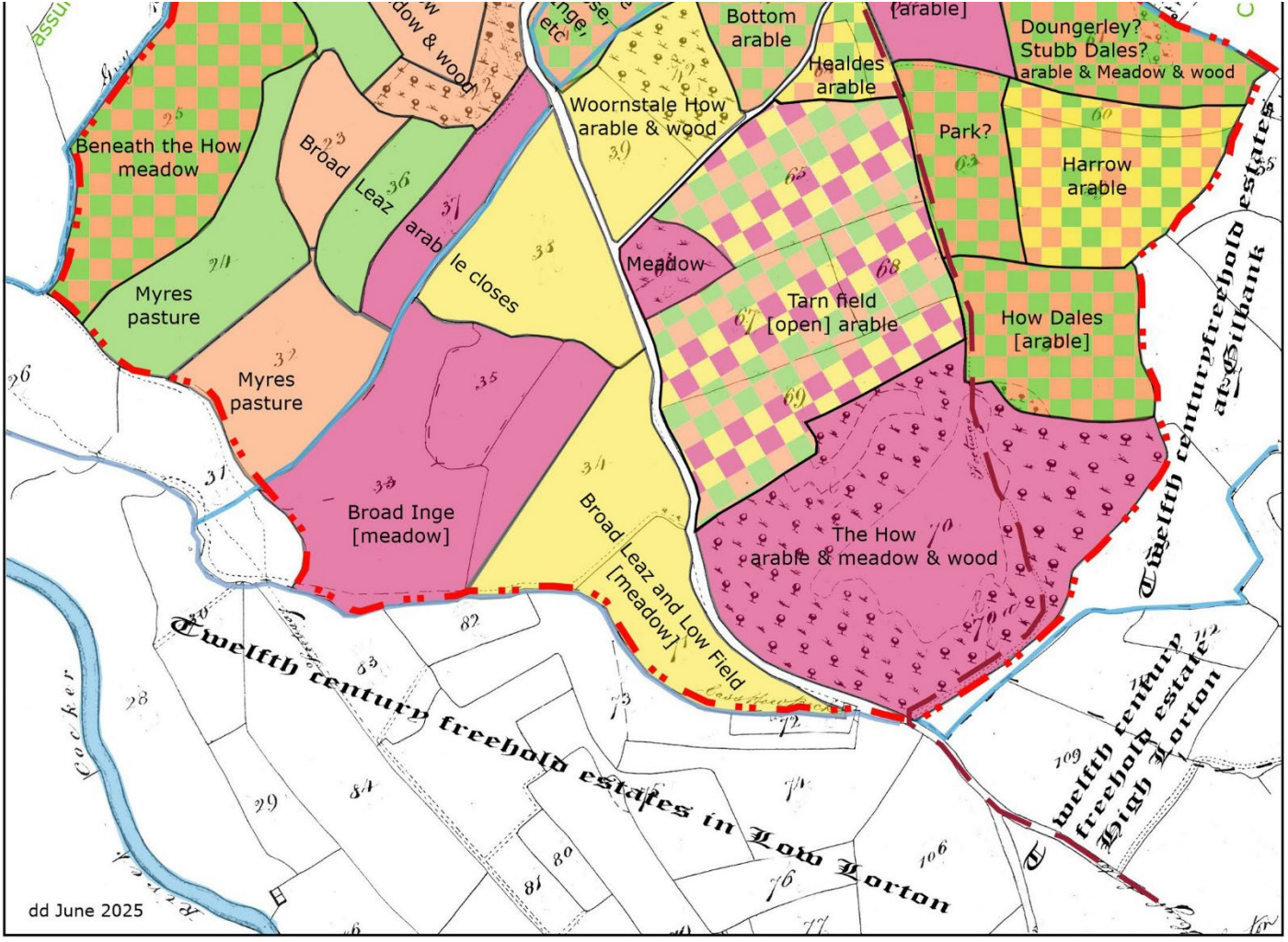

Beneath the How meadow
Broad Leaz
Myres pasture
Myres pasture
Broad Inge [meadow]
Broad Leaz and Low Field [meadow]
Woornstale How arable & wood
Bottom arable
Healdes arable
Doungerley? Stubb Dales? arable & Meadow & wood
Park?
Harrow arable
Meadow
Tarn field [open] arable
How Dales [arable]
The How arable & meadow & wood
Twelfth century freehold estates in Low Lorton
Twelfth century freehold estates in High Lorton
dd June 2025

Table 1:Enclosed lands of Armaside, or Hermethside, tenements surveyed in 1578								
Customary manorial tenant			Thomas Iredale	Richard Winder	John Cass	Peter Wilkin-son	Total	Total
Source DLEC/Box301								
Field Name	Type	Use	Custy roods	Custy roods	Custy roods	Custy roods	Custy roods	stat acres
Farmstead			.5	.5	.5		1.5	0.6
Half close adjoining	Close		?	1			1	0.4
little close adjoining	Close				6		6	2.4
Clynts & farmstead	Close	a,p				24	24	9.6
Croft	ukn	a	2				2	.8
half Park	close	a,p	4	4			8	3.2
half a little close	close	a,p	4.5	4.5			9	3.6
half Butts	close	a,p	4	4			8	3.2
in Harrowe	close	a	1.5	1.5		3.5	6.5	2.6
in Stubb dales	Shared	a	2	2			4	1.6
in Sands	Shared	a,m	3	1		6	10	4
Healdes & Old Call garth	2 closes	a	.5	.5		2	3	1.2
in field at Hermeth side called Tarn dales	Arable field	a	6	8	3	6	26	10.4
Parcel of meadow adjoin	Parcel [tarn]				2.5		2.5	1
Broad Leaz	closes	a,p	11	5	A 6	5	27	10.8
Broad Leaz and Low field	One Close					24	24	9.6
Broad inge	3 Closes	m			24		24	9.6
The How [Armaside]	close	a,m,w	8	8			16	6.4
The How [Cass How]	closes	a,p,w			48		48	19.2
Half How dales	close		5	5			10	4
The Parrock	close		1	.5			1.5	0.6
Doungerley	close	a,m,w		4.5			4.5	1.8
The Myres	close	p	7	6			13	5.2
Short Ellers	close		1				1	0.4
Beneath the How	close	m	8	11			19	7.6
New inge	close	m	2	2			4	1.6
Close inge	close	m	2	2			4	1.6
Little close inge	close	m	.5	.5			1	0.4
New close	close		7	7	7	7	28	11.2
Half Bottom	close	a	2	2			4	1.6
Half Crooke of the How	Parcel		.5	.5			1	0.4
Kell Head	close	m		.5			.5	0.2
Nook & Staudley Hoale	Close in 2 parte	a,w				8	8	3.2
Woornstale How	Close	a,w				15	15	6
Total customary acres (4 roods)			20.8	19.9	25.5	25.1	91.25 acres	
Statute acres (custy x 1.6)			33.2	31.8	40.8	40.2		146 acres
Manorial rent			13s 1d	13s 4d	13s 8d	13s 8d		53s 9d

Armaside and its medieval development

The first known name for Armaside was collected in a charter of 1269.[9] Alice de Lucy decreed that all the men of Cockermouth would 'not have estovers of greenwood within Hermondsheved between the path from Embleton and Lorton and marsh of St[anger] mire unless all the others who have common there have taken their estovers, and this by view of the foresters'. That name, meaning Hermondr's or Heremund's head or high place, is probably not an early name for Harrot. That hill name appeared in the shared close of Harrow or Harow in 1578, when Hermondsheved had changed to Hermeth side in the survey. In the court rolls the name was Armetsyd in 1474, but Ermeth in abbreviation in 1477, presumably as heard by the scribe.[10]

It seems likely that the eastern boundary specified by Alice in 1269 would not be the present road to Cockermouth, but a path represented by the pre-enclosure road from Embleton on the common above Armaside, which in 1826 continued as a public footway above and around the How. It joined the Cockermouth road at the boundary of the twelfth-century Lorton freeholds. A possible route for the path from Embleton to Lorton is suggested in Figure 3.

So the bounds of Armaside were set and known in 1269, for the purposes of preserving the wood, though maybe not enclosed by fences against gnawing and rooting animals. Angus Winchester notes that 'by 1368 the lords of Cockermouth had tenants at will at Armaside', meaning that some land was enclosed there, in the manor of Derwentfells.[11] 'Peter Casse Snr' was of Armetsyd in 1474, and in 1477 Peter Cass was said to have impounded an ox from Borrowdale at Ermeth, since 1461.[12] Peter Cass sought 12s for sixteen years' keep of the geriatric beast, from the executor of the deceased owner. Cass received 7s.

The bounds of Armaside in 1578

In 1517 John Cuthbertson of Papcastre was fined the sum of 40d for '1 small oak in the bounds of Armotsid contrary to the penalties', which confirms the protection of its greenwood.[13] By 1503 there were farmsteads at both High and Low Armaside and much, if not all, of Armaside was enclosed from the common.

Armaside's boundaries in 1578 are suggested in Figure 3; some definite and some tentative. To the South, Casshow Beck provided the boundary of the Low Lorton freeholds and the Dean and Chapter's High Lorton, though we have no name for the beck in 1578. Above the Cockermouth road, Armaside and High Lorton were separated by the aptly named close called Tail, which was part of freehold Gillbanke, now Gillbrow, and provided access to it.[14] Between Tail and Casshow there was the public footway to the farmsteads, as mentioned above.

The Clints intake from the common in Figure 3, meaning flinty rock, was a part of High Armaside in 1578 and probably also in 1547, because the rent did not increase between those dates.[15] To the North of Low Armaside the intaking of the common between Embleton and Lorton is hard to fix in time, but the shared New Close, where 'new' is a relative term, had been taken in well before 1578, judging from the rentals unchanged from 1547

[9] DLEC/2/3/3, Lucy Cartulary, no.61
[10] DLEC/1/13/36, fos.311, p.11 & fos. 269, p.1&2
[11] TNA/C135/201/5 quoted in Winchester, *Landscape and Society,* p.147
[12] DLEC/1/13/36, fos.311, fos. 269, p.1&2
[13] DLEC/1/13/36, fos.357, p.50
[14] Cumbria Archive Service (Carlisle), DCHA/8/8/8, survey of manor of Lorton 1649, bounder p.44
[15] DLEC/1/2/1, draft court book, 1547

and 1525.[16] The Fell Close, however, may be an intake which caused the increase in rent of Low Armaside North, from 13s 1d in 1547 to 13s 4d in 1578.

The boundary between Lorton and Embleton was Gray Beck, but it was the earlier course. Watercourses are moved or created by humans for various purposes: water-supply, irrigation, drainage, boundaries. In 1522 Thomas Person and William Westray of Schaton were presented at court for 'drawing the water called Gray Bek out of its due course on his farm whereby the said made an unlawful course across the lord's soil whereby the highway and the lord's tenants of Armotside are greatly damaged and suffer loss'.[17] Below the highway, Gray Beck appears to have been moved at an earlier date, presumably to form the boundary of the enclosed Armaside lands at that time and to improve drainage of Stangermire. The new course of Gray Beck has been taken as the boundary of Armaside in 1578, but mainly due to a shortfall of statute acres in the 1578 listing, 146 acres in Table 1, compared with 172 acres in 1826.

Armaside Tarn and its field

Armaside Tarn still exists, at least in wet weather, and it is to the credit of the owner that it remains a wild and natural place in a corner of meadow land. The small tarn was not labelled on any map, other than as a name on the tithe map of 1840. In 1578 Tarn Field was the only field in Armaside, rather than a close. In that a close was enclosed by a stock-proof fence, while a field remembered a high-medieval plot of land, usually shared, from a time when arable and meadow land within the ring fence of the settlement required no fences. Stock was kept on the common during the growing season and grazed the open fields in the winter.

While there were many shared closes in Armaside in 1578, there was only one shared 'field at Hermeth side called Tarn Dales'.[18] This can be interpreted as the former principal open-arable field, shared fairly equally by tenants of High and Low Armaside, though it was small at around ten statute acres, plus the tarn.

There were other closes shared between four farmsteads. The New close, a more recent commons intake of arable and pasture, has been mentioned above. Broad Leys and Broad Ing formed a large older area on the west of the road, in two distinct parts of arable, ten acres, and meadow, eighteen acres, but divided into closes by 1578. All four farms had arable closes. One further smaller arable close of about six acres was also shared between High and Low Armaside. Called Harow or Harrowe, it was closest to Harrot Hill.

Casshow and Casshow Beck.

Peter Cass senior was impounding stray and foreign animals in Armaside in 1461, as above, and in 1578 the Cass tenement included the wooded hill which is now Casshow. It is clear that the how was named after the family who held it until 1646, the name being Casshow in Brown's survey of 1758.[19] Casshow Beck was named on the enclosure plan of 1826.[20] Immortality was conferred on the Cass family by the Ordnance survey, who collected and published the name on the first edition map in 1861.

Returning to the 1578 survey, it is clear that John Cass held a mixed farm which included Casshow, but not Armaside How. A customary tenancy did not include ownership of the extensive growing wood,

[16] DLEC/1/2/1, draft court book, 1547; DLEC/1/13/36, fos.426, p.47-9
[17] DLEC/1/13/36, fos.238, p.41
[18] DLEC/2/1/3, p.149R, Peter Wilkinson
[19] DLEC/2/1/4, Brown's Survey 1758, Derwentfells
[20] Cumbria Archive Service (Whitehaven), DBEN/Box 282

which belonged to the lord, but permitted use of the land as a wood-pasture, or as arable, consistent with the management and protection of the wood. The How was divided into several closes, which implies the presence of animals, and John Cass would erect fences to protect his arable and the lord's new wood while it was being regenerated after cutting by springing. Casshow is today's remaining part of Lorton's native forest.

In 1578 John Cass's annual rent was 13s 8d, as it had been in 1547 and in 1525, when the manor court accepted that James Cass had the tenant's right to the holding of John Cass, deceased.[21] There is no documentary evidence which places the farmstead at either High or Low Armaside. Peter Wilkinson's farmstead in 1578 was at High Armaside and still remains. That has been proved by tracing the subsequent ownerships through Bells, Winders, and Fearons. Richard Winder helpfully dated a beam in 1662.[22] This tenement was also rented at 13s 8d. Angus Winchester notes that 'the rent regularity is suggestive of subdivision'. [23] The 1578 survey fits well with both Wilkinson and Cass farmsteads being subdivisions of High Armaside, the Cass farmstead being decayed after 1646.

It may be that the Cass family farmstead, was the first to be established as well as the first to be lost, and it would have sat well in Stony Hole, with good access to work at the How and in Tarn Field. That would also fit with the listing order in the Percy Survey, if in a row north to south.

The loss of the Cass family holding

By 1633 the Cass family had been customary tenants at Armaside for at least 172 years. Christopher Cass held the tenancy, and he and his brother Myles had young families there.[24] In 1633 a general fine became payable following the death of Henry Percy, the ninth earl of Northumberland, for all tenants to be admitted under the tenth earl. In the time of Henry VIII the fine had been 26s 8d for the Cass holding, or about two years' ancient rent, but as inflation took hold and the fixed rents became of little value, the arbitrary fines were increased dramatically, to make up the lords' real income.[25] The mutual feudal relationship was well in the past.

In 1633 Christopher Cass's entry fine was £14 10s, or 21 times the annual rent.[26] All four customary tenants in Armaside manage to pay, but Christopher Cass paid in instalments up to 1635 and clearly had to borrow to do so.[27] In 1641 he surrendered the tenancy of the How to Cuthbert Peile of Kirkgate End, and owed £90 to Peter Peirson against the remainder. Christopher Cass lost his tenement in 1646, and it was broken up.[28] Many yeomen must have been reduced to farmers or labourers by fines.

Low Armaside and the Winder family.

The Winder or Wynder family were the principal resident family of Lorton before 1700, holding a third of Low Lorton as freeholders from about 1400. They created Lorton Hall, though that name came after they left. In 1503 William Winder, aged over thirty, became the owner of the Lorton freehold estate, after the death of William his father.[29] By 1505

[21] DLEC/1/13/36, fos.426, p.47-9
[22] Information from Fiona Lambrick
[23] Winchester, *Landscape and Society*, pp.147-8
[24] See the parish registers for St Cuthbert's, Lorton
[25] DLEC/1/2/1, draft court book, 1547, Lorton
[26] DLEC/1/3/25, general fine assessment, Lorton, 1633
[27] DLEC/1/3/18, account book of general fine 1633, p.19
[28] DLEC/1/2/6, surrender book 1633-59, surrender of Christopher Casse, 1641
[29] DLEC/1/13/36, fos.192, p.10

William had also died and his son Richard, aged eleven, inherited.[30]

Other Winders held property as yeoman farmers, at Whinfell and Armaside. Yet the Winder name departed Lorton with them by 1700. The names of Winder Hall, and the imaginary Winder Vault at St Cuthberts, are twentieth century remembrances.

In 1503 a William Wynder was of Armottside and in 1517 William Wynder of Armotside was fined for one farrowing sow.[31] In the 1578 survey, the south farmstead at Low Armaside, now Armaside Farm, was held by Richard Wynder at 13s 4d rent, increased from 13s 1d in 1569 and 1547.[32] The adjoining north farmstead, now Armaside House, was held in 1578 by Thomas Iredale at a rent of 13s 1d, which had not changed since before 1525.[33]

The rents of Low Armaside are suggestive of an earlier subdivision and the allocation of land between the two in 1578 suggests a recent division. Seven closes were equally shared in the listing in Table 1, and in closes shared with High Armaside the two Low Armaside tenements held equal parts. But the division must predate 1525.

The likely explanation appears to be that both Low Armaside tenements had been in the hands of the Winder family before 1525, when 'the tenement late in the tenure of James Wynder is in the hands of the lord of the farm 13s-1d to demise and James Iredale by right of his wife daughter of the said James has the tenant's right thereof'.[34] So the north half of Low Armaside passed from the Winders to the Iredales in 1525 because James Winder had no sons. James Iredale was still tenant in 1547, when Richard Winder held the other half, the two names of Winder and Iredale then continued through the mid-1600s.[35]

Armaside and Wonsul Hows

In 1578, the present Casshow was held by High Armaside, and the present Armaside How by Low Armaside, There was no need at that time for those hows to have different field-names – *The How* would do. Only the Wilkinson's Woornstale How close was named in 1578.

In the mid-nineteenth century the surveyors for the Ordnance Survey collected the local names of features to include on their maps, and they recorded Cass How, Armaside How, Butter Bowl, and Clints Wood.[36] Butter Bowl, they were told, was 'a remarkable concavity on the summit of Armaside How', but it had never appeared in field-names. Worsal How, as recorded in 1840, was beneath the notice of the Ordnance Survey name collectors, but curiously made its first and brief appearance as Wonsal How on the third edition of the 25 inch map in 1925, remembering Woornstale How of 1578.

Conclusion

Names which remain in the landscape can have very long histories, but their survival is often a result of fortune rather than necessity. The Ordnance immortalised a few names, but replaced most field-names with numbers. Those-field names, from the tithe commutation, provide a valuable resource for reconstructing Tudor farms.

It is interesting to know that Armaside is derived from an unknown Heremund, who had become a place-name by 1269. It seems very fitting to remember the yeoman Cass family, who worked Casshow for at least 185 years to 1646.

[30] DLEC/1/13/36, fos.247, p.15
[31] DLEC/1/13/36, fos.192, p.25; fos.357, p.50
[32] TNA/E164/37, Homberston's survey 1569; DLEC/1/2/1, draft court book, 1547
[33] DLEC/1/13/36, fos.426, p.47-9
[34] DLEC/1/13/36, fos.426, p.47-9
[35] DLEC/1/2/1, draft court book, 1547, Lorton
[36] TNA/OS34/20, name book for Brigham, 1