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## **Summary**

In close proximity to the proposed development, there is evidence for Mesolithic and later prehistoric occupation in the form of spreads of flint artefacts and debitage.

Roman influence appears to be negligible although a coin hoard presumes limited Roman settlement.

During the Medieval period, Copeland Forest was assarted and from the 13<sup>th</sup> century farming ensued. The land appears to have possessed a low rental value maintaining a small, remote population.



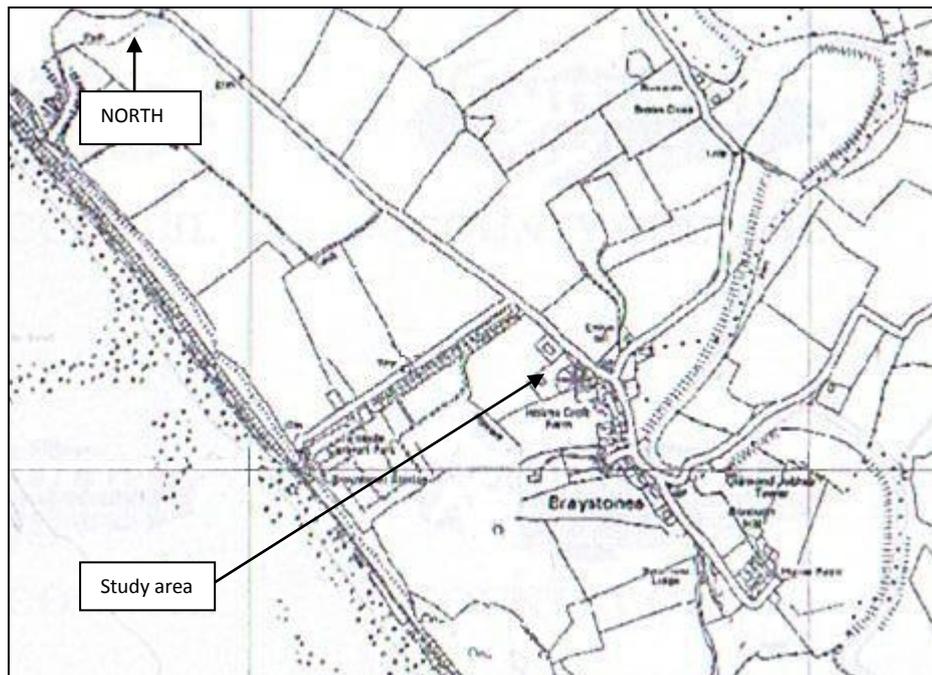


Figure 2. Location of study area at Tarn Bank, Braystones

### 1.3 Desk-based assessment

The desk-based assessment investigated primary and secondary historical sources, maps and other literature in order to set the survey results into their past cultural, historical and topographic context.

The physical study area centred on NY 0050 0620 and consisted of a 1,000m radius from the development.

The desk-based assessment required a search of three archival repositories:

- Carlisle Library provided sources for published works including newspaper articles, archaeological and antiquarian reports and trade journals.
- Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle provided the earliest tithe map for the parish, details of landowners and occupiers and cartographic evidence.
- The Historic Environment Record, Kendal provided the Sites and Monuments Record describing previous archaeological observations of the study area.

### 1.4 Archive

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994 and 2007).

The archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository and a copy of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as requested by the curatorial authority.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location, topography and geology**

The study areas is located on a flat raised beach approximately 16m OD. This ridge emanates from the headland at St Bees providing a corridor between the sea and the upland of the Lake District further divided by the broadly north-south sinuous course of the River Ehen.

Acid brown soil (Dilley 1972, 6) overlies outwash from glacial activity that rests above Triassic sandstone representing solid geology (Winchester 1978, 308).

The study area formerly belonged to the parish of St Bees within the township of Lowside Quarter as it was located on the western side of the River Ehen. It lies in close proximity to the village of Beckermeth which was itself divided into two parishes, St Johns and St Bridgets. Beckermeth was probably the primary economic and cultural influence on Braystones, acknowledged in 2011 when the two parishes of Beckermeth and the township of Lowside Quarter were unified into one parish.

The area in antiquity had been afforested but now comprises mainly pastoral farmland.

## **3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Historical background**

#### **Mesolithic**

Our understanding of the Mesolithic period is heavily influenced by the exposure of diagnostic material in particular lithic assemblages although palaeo-environmental evidence indicates repeated woodland reduction episodes. Towards the later Mesolithic period there is considerable evidence for occupation on raised beaches. This activity tends to conform to the seasonal model of hunter-gatherers exploiting natural resources but with elements of a managed landscape emerging.

In western Cumbria, late Mesolithic flint scatters have been recovered from the raised beaches of the maximum marine transgression and along cliff tops north of St Bees. It has been suggested that there is little discernible technological difference between the later Mesolithic and early Neolithic assemblage perhaps indicating considerable longevity and a distinctive west Cumbrian tradition.

Habitation sites at St Bees recovered through field-walking on ploughed fields (Cherry & Cherry 1973, 47) recovered 755 cores, 72 microliths, 7 awls, 25 knife-forms, 32 blades and an arrow head (Ibid 51). Volcanic tuff found in parallel with flint suggests a Mesolithic tradition of working both materials for tool manufacture (Ibid 62).

At Monks Moor, ten miles south near Ravenglass, fieldwork recovered over 32,000 lithic pieces and a variety of occupation remains although the assertion of year-round occupation has recently been renounced (Brennard 2006, 25).

## **Neolithic**

The early Neolithic period represents the transition from hunter-gatherer societies to sedentary agricultural communities. As societies became established, specific cultural traits emerged; the appearance of ceremonial and funerary landscape monuments and the development of distinctive ceramic styles and lithic forms

In the Late Neolithic, social hierarchies emerge through the intensification and increasing sophistication of settlement, land use and artefact production.

Evidence for settlement in Cumbria is primarily inferred by the distribution of polished stone axes from the Langdale axe factory.

Long distance trade and contact is suggested by the frequent appearance of these axes throughout the British Isles and by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium BC, the production of these axes was part of a trans-European trading network.

Within the immediate environs of the study area there is significant evidence for Neolithic habitation.

## **Bronze Age**

The Bronze Age in the north-west is noted by an increase in land clearance and the beginning of cereal cultivation from approximately 2000 BC. Despite much continuity from the Late Neolithic, the Bronze Age introduces bronze metalwork, changes in pottery styles and burial practice. However, archaeological visibility within Cumbria is poor and very few Bronze Age sites have been discovered in Cumbria, although in coastal, south-west Cumbria the earlier lithic tradition appears to continue into at least the early Bronze Age.

Cist burials appear from the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium BC and it is believed that they represent former monuments within a Bronze Age agricultural landscape. Aerial photography on the North Cumbrian Plain, suggests a number of crop-marks may represent barrows within a network of linear ditches. However, there is no current evidence to suggest that this practice may have dispersed southwards.

## **Iron Age**

The Iron Age is noted for the introduction of iron tools and weapons, increasing sophistication in pottery production, long-distance trade and the development of social hierarchies from kinships societies to tribal territories based on regional centres.

In Cumbria, the early and mid Iron Age is poorly represented suggesting a low population threshold (Brennand 2006, 51). In the late Iron Age, there is considerable forest clearance suggesting population stress probably associated with proto-regional tensions between Iron Age tribes.

A bog body was recovered from Seascale Moss provisionally dated to the Iron Age suggesting occupation did exist in this area albeit limited (Ibid 56).

### **Roman**

The area to the north was probably a rich agricultural area during the Roman period growing wheat and barley for the nearby military centres and the coastal garrisons. This produced a landscape of rectilinear field systems bounded by ditches, tracks and hedges with intermittent farmsteads.

The typical farmstead was set inside a ditched and embanked enclosure, which varied in plan. Within the enclosure were rectangular and circular plan buildings (suggestive of both native and Roman influence), cobbled yards and some degree of drainage. These farmsteads do not appear to be materially ostentatious reflecting functional use rather than any suggestion of upward social mobility or development.

The study area may have been part of a militarised zone defined as a continuation of the Cumbrian coast Roman defences a further 45 km southwards beyond Maryport to link with the earlier fortlet under the late Hadrianic fort at Ravenglass (Potter 1979, 18). A presumed fort at Beckermert equidistant between Maryport and Ravenglass forts has yet to be identified (Symonds 2009, 57-58).

### **Early Medieval**

Following Roman withdrawal, it is believed that west Cumbria reverted to native autonomy before the Angles began to enter eastern Cumbria during the 7<sup>th</sup> Century AD followed by Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and Scottish incursions up to the 11<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Although little tangible evidence remains in the form of settlement, place-name evidence perpetuates these successive influences.

### **Medieval**

The Medieval period presents detailed legal and historical sources thereby in some cases assigning a specific document to a spatial entity. However, there are a number of impediments that must be understood when drawing forth detailed interpretations and especially when assigning such interpretations to a specific place at a specific moment in time. These include:

- A partial surviving documentary data set
- Palaeography; the interpretation of the characters and meaning of the written word
- Nomenclature and the difficulty in identifying specific historical individuals
- Uneven traceability through family trees
- The lack of a secular calendar and the preferred use of a religious and sovereign calendar used in primary sources
- Difficulty in formulating a time-line from secondary and antiquarian accounts
- The close internal relationships between individuals and institutions that would have been implicit to the chronicler
- The almost total lack of mapping or spatial survey until the 16<sup>th</sup> century e.g. production of a drawing

The study area was probably during the High Medieval period was part of Copeland Forest but never a royal forest (Liddell 1966, 109). The earliest suggestion of a private forest in south-west Cumbria occurs in a grant from William son of Ranulph to St Bees Priory circa 1120-1135 which includes the tithe of his venison; reservation of deer to the Lord of the Manor thereby implying a forest (Ibid 110).

Between 1200-1213, Richard de Lucy granted to Reginald son of Adam and his heirs the “common right of Braithestaines” and “that they may freely assart and build within their right divisions, saving to me and my heirs hare and hind, wild boar and sow and hawk when all shall be there”. This grant is a licence to break up the waste and it locates Braystones in Copeland Forest at least during the time of Richard de Lucy and that the Forest extended south, beyond the River Ehen (Ibid 111-112).

The grant demonstrates land hunger during the 13<sup>th</sup> century when there was a population rise and considerable expansion of farmland that became “ancient inclosures” (Winchester 1978, 310).

By 1578, the Percy Survey confirms that the study area was outside of the Forest (Liddell 1966, 114-115).

Feudal jurisdiction placed Braystones within the Barony of Egremont (Winchester 1978, 318). Braystones was listed as *loci* with freehold tenure granted to T de Weston in 1299 and W de Pennyngton in 1334 paying the low sum of 16 pence cornage (Ibid 358), an ancient tenure of land, which obliged the tenant to give notice of an invasion by blowing a horn.

Braystones resided in the parish of St Bees within the township of Lowside Quarter. This practice was common in large northern parishes of up to 12,000 acres in order to ease administration and services in particular execution of Poor Relief (Kain & Prince 2000, 86). The settlement appears to conform to the model of a hamlet formed from five to thirty tenants around which common arable fields were often little more than 50-100 acres in size and seldom over 300 acres (Gray 1959, 231).

Obeying this trait was Ehenside about one mile to the north. The Percy Survey of 1578 lists six tenants farming 258 acres paying rents of between 6s 2d and 10s 8d (Winchester 1978, 395).

The common arable fields of Braystones are mentioned in 1640 (Dilley 1991, 560) at the Manorial Court held at Egremont (CRO/D/Lec/247).

### **Post-Medieval and modern**

Tithe maps accurately demonstrate settlement at the end of the agrarian era prior to the impact of railways and modern urban development (Kain & Prince 2000, 90).

The area appears to have been largely unaffected since the Medieval period.

The Braystones road to St Bees was recorded as being “ancient” (Jackson 1876, 14) whilst a turnpike road from Egremont to Ravenglass passed by Act of Parliament in 1750 was never built (Hindle 1993, 110).

The Parish Register (extant since 1694) of Beckermets St Bridget, the nearest church, provides no mention of a citizen of Braystones until 1811 with the death of John Hartley a tailor aged 47. Births, marriages and deaths were clearly conducted through the church of St Bees, but interaction must have occurred with the parishes of Beckermets especially concerning marriages, therefore the absence of entries must infer a low population threshold.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the onset of the railway, Braystones became a minor resort with bungalows built along the coastline. In a tower built to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee (1897) of Queen Victoria, a small museum displayed local "Stone Age" finds and their copies (Bulmer 1911).

### 3.2 Cartographic research

The earliest map depicting this area was the 1576 Saxton map that shows no landmarks west of the River Ehen (figure 3) an observation confirmed on the subsequent Janssen map of 1644 (figure 4).

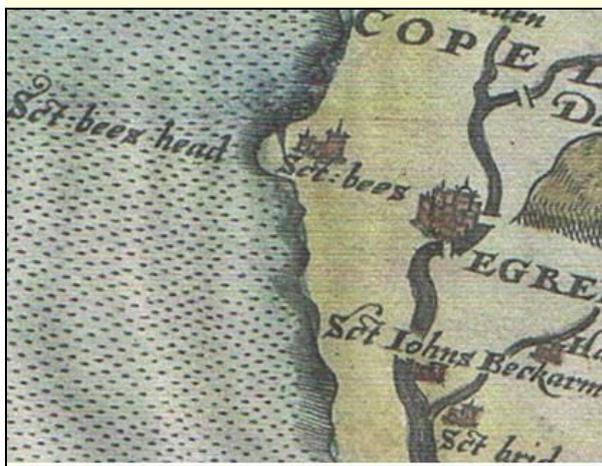


Figure 3. 1576 Saxton map



Figure 4. 1644 Janssen map

The 1695 Morden map (figure 5) also confirms the earlier suggestion that no settlement of any size is present.



Figure 5. 1695 Morden map



Figure 6. 1774 Donald map

The 1774 Donald map (figure 6) has a number of advantages over previous Cumbrian cartography as the map:

- illustrates relief identifying the reason why settlement clustered in particular areas
- principal dwellings appear to be identified
- it shows principal roads and the distance between major centres as well as industrial features; mills, tile kilns and salt pans
- scale and proportion possess greater accuracy than earlier maps

The Donald map illustrates that the current road lay-out was extant in 1774. At least four houses form the community of Bray Stones whilst Braystone Tarn is depicted.

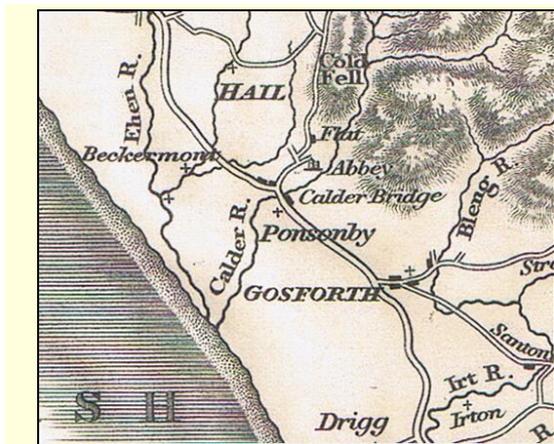


Figure 7. 1818 Otley map



Figure 8. 1839 Ford map

The larger scale Otley (figure 7) and Ford maps (figure 8) of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century do not mention Braystones, thereby affirming a very small community.



Figure 9. Tithe map of 1838 DRC/8/122

The tithe map shows the study area as vacant, numbered Field 11. There are no buildings until the hamlet of Braystones is encountered.

Regarding the study area, the 1860 First Edition Ordnance Survey map displays no change from the tithe map, renamed as Field 517. Fields 8 and 9 on the tithe map became amalgamated as Field 524 on the Ordnance Survey map. The railway was established by 1850 with a station serving Braystones.



*Figure 10. First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1860*

### **3.3 Previous archaeological reconnaissance**

A significant piece of fieldwork was undertaken during the period 1967-1984 by John and Peter Cherry.

The project involved fieldwalking ploughed fields and erosion scars along a coastal strip between St Bees and Seascale, a distance of approximately twelve kilometres. The second report issued in 1984 covered the study area.

The coast road from St Bees to Braystone follows the line of a natural depression which runs parallel to the coast-line in a south-easterly direction. The artefacts were largely collected at the seaward edge of the fields on the higher ground above the Maryport to Barrow railway line.

Seven find sites were recorded in the Braystones area listed below (Cherry & Cherry 1984 2-6):

1. Silver Tarn. Beside a kettle-hole was a quantity of lightly patinated flints, the only tool being a large scraper. A polished axe was also reported from this location.

2. Harnsey Moss. From some mole-hills on the north bank of Harnsey Moss four blades were recovered, two used in antiquity. Several “pebble flints” including a blade and two fire-damaged fragments were found in a field on the edge of Silver Tarn.
3. Ehenside. A Neolithic settlement was discovered when Gibb Tarn was drained in 1869 (Jackson 1876, 15) but the flint assemblage was ignored from the finds catalogue. This site was subsequently monitored although the land remained largely unploughed. On the high ground to the south-west, a scatter of lightly patinated Bronze Age flints included flake cores, scrapers and a fire-damaged core.
4. Braystones. A small scatter of lightly patinated flints included a Bronze Age core and long blade-like flake.
5. Braystones Station. Two hundred metres north-northeast of the railway station, a small concentration of flints included a core and knife. Along the road near Braystones a scraper was found at the bottom of the hedge bank, two flakes and a scraper found in the field above.
6. Lantern Moss Tarn. A small concentration of flints included a four crudely struck cores, three of which seem to have been produced by utilising a natural hollow in the surface of the pebble flint, a technique typical of a West Cumbrian Bronze Age tradition.
7. Warboro Nook. Twenty-five flints included three cores, long blades and possible a borer and an arrowhead. A stone axe was reported to have been found on Warboro Nook.

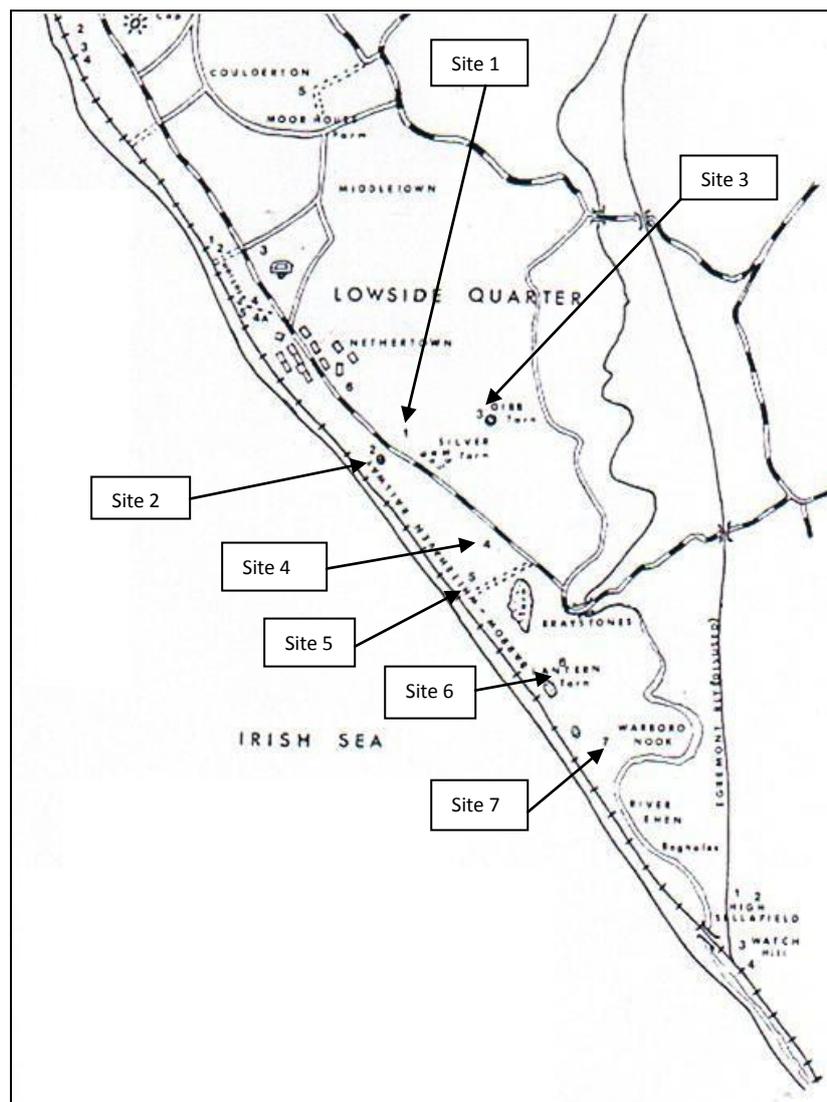


Figure 11. Distribution of flint sites in the Braystone area (after Cherry 1984)

The combined assemblage for Braystones amounted to 123 flints of which only nine were patinated (Ibid 16). It conformed to a series of Mesolithic sites emanating from St Bees, a tradition that continued into the Neolithic period. However, from the Neolithic period settlement by migrant herdsman from east of the Pennines may have occurred bringing with them chalk flint tools identified as originating in eastern Yorkshire (Ibid 15).

The presence of Bronze Age type flint tools indicates considerable settlement longevity.

In 2004, six trial trenches and six test pits were excavated on sloping ground at land adjacent to Tarn Bank (NY 0057 0615). The report (4/04/1270 CRO B ) noted a total of thirteen flints were recovered that included cores and debitage dated to the late Mesolithic (Mackintosh 2005, 259).

A roman coin hoard was found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Braystones (NY 007 059) including a coin belonging to Commodus (Fair 1948, 218-219). Shotter records a hoard at Starling Castle, Braystones (Shotter 1980, 163).

### **3.4 Historic Environment Record**

The majority of Historic Environment Record entries relate to past archaeological fieldwork discussed above.

The following list catalogues the past cultural assets within a 1,000 metre radius:

- HER 1260 Stone implement, Lowside Quarter, unknown date
- HER 1261 Braystones coin hoard, Roman
- HER 1298 Scatter of flint finds, prehistoric
- HER 5644 Jubilee Tower, Braystones motte, Medieval
- HER 6437 Flint finds, Lowside Quarter, Bronze Age
- HER 6438 Polished stone axe, Boughder, prehistoric
- HER 6439 Flint tool find, prehistoric
- HER 6440 Flint finds and scatter, Tarn Bank, prehistoric
- HER 6442 Flint scraper, Braystones, prehistoric
- HER 6443 Flint end scraper, Braystone, prehistoric
- HER 6504 Flint finds, Lantern Moss Tarn, prehistoric
- HER 18987 Stone hammer, Borwickstead, prehistoric
- HER 19889 Trackway, Lantern Moss Trackway, Medieval earthwork
- HER 19890 Wall, Lantern Moss Trackway, Medieval wall
- HER 40815 Flint finds, Lowside Quarter, Mesolithic

### **3.5 Discussion**

The purpose of the desk-based assessment is to identify past cultural features that may require targeting during a phase of future archaeological evaluation in order to manage heritage assets.

Based on albeit small flint yields, remote prehistoric activity appears to occur in relatively close proximity, although this presumption should be tempered as apparent Mesolithic activity may only be occurring where modern people are looking (Clack & Gosling 1976, 16).

Due to the portability of flint tools and following deposition, a process subject to displacement by human and natural agency, providing a methodology that isolates meaningful occupation is difficult

to achieve. Concentrations of flint clearly indicate occupation areas either during manufacture as work stations or in their use where resources such as animal carcasses are processed.

The likely locations to enable such tasks to be performed have focused on shelter and close proximity to resources, for example near trees beside lakes or marshes. This locality with its high incidence of post-glacial features such as kettle-holes and tarns could have provided potential habitation sites.

Tangible known archaeological assets following Bronze Age activity appear to be low.

Roman coin hoards indicate Roman occupation but the lack of explicit landmarks may suggest that the area was not densely populated perhaps because the area was afforested or possibly coastal erosion has removed military assets.

Following reclamation from Copeland Forest in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the area was served by small farms and hamlets a tradition that continued until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when with the advent of the railway the local economy was exposed to external forces that led to a relative decline in farming from 1870 onwards.

#### **4 ARCHIVE**

The archive for this project will be deposited with the appropriate archaeological curator, Tullie House Museum, Carlisle. This archive has been assembled in accordance within the protocols of Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2).

#### **5 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank the staff of Carlisle Library with my research into the local history of the area and David Bowcock and his staff at Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle with the map regression and documentary material.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Tithe maps, a brief introduction**

#### **Units**

- In the schedule tables, areas are listed in Acres, Roods and Perches.
  - An acre is 4,840 square yards.
  - A rood is a rectangular area with edges of one furlong and one rod. There are 4 roods to an acre, ie 40 perches. (A furlong is 40 rods.)
  - A perch is equal to a square rod. There are 40 perches to a rood, and 160 perches to an acre.
- The amount due is listed in the schedule in Pounds, Shillings and Pence (£sd).

#### **What is a tithe?**

Tithes were an ancient levy on the fruits of the earth. Parishioners gave one tenth of their stock and produce to maintain their parish clergy.

Great tithes – corn, hay, wood – were paid to the rector. Sometimes lay impropriators gained the right to great tithes. For example, in Bampton, the Earl of Lonsdale and the Trustees of Bampton School received them. Small tithes – wool, calves, lambs, foals, eggs – were paid to the vicar.

Tithes were originally paid in kind and collecting them was troublesome. Tithe owners searched for produce they suspected farmers of hiding and farmers found many ways of avoiding payment.

To end the conflict, the Tithe Commutation Act was passed in 1836. Based on land values, tithes were converted to an annual money tax known as ‘corn rents’ or ‘tithe rent charges’.

#### **What is a tithe map?**

Tithe maps were made by Tithe Commissioners appointed under the 1836 Tithe Commutation Act, the Commissioners’ seal guaranting its accuracy. Each field or plot of land was numbered so that it can be identified in the tithe apportionment schedule.

The Chairman of the Commissioners of whom there were three was William Blamire a Cumberland farmer well-versed in rural affairs and a Whig MP from 1831-1836.

Two forms of map were utilised.

First class maps were new surveys and were accurate enough to be used as legal evidence.

Second class were often existing maps and drawings amended for the tithe or new survey that did not pass muster when presented to the Commissioners.

The tithe apportionment schedule is the key to the tithe map. The map and schedule together make an invaluable guide. The schedule is divided into seven columns

1. Landowners listed alphabetically
2. Occupiers – if the landowner, this is shown as ‘himself’, otherwise the tenant’s name is given

3. Identifying number of the property
4. Name of the field, feature or premises
5. State of cultivation eg arable, meadow or pasture
6. The size – in acres, roods and perches
7. The tithe in money replacing tithes in kind

### **What the tithe map can tell us**

Tithe maps give the most comprehensive survey of parishes since the Domesday Book of 1086. Since Cumbria was not included in the Domesday Survey, the tithe map is often the first systematic parish record.

Tithe maps were drawn to a very large scale – 25 inches to the mile or three chains to an inch. They showed farmland in great detail including fields, tracks, streams and buildings. Uncultivated land such as fell, moor and common was not shown.

Geographic orientation was not important. Marking the boundaries of even the tiniest strip of land was essential since land determined how much tithe had to be paid.