

6 FIELDSCAPES



Plate 3: High Callerton fields. Photo: S Turner

Key Historic Landscape Characteristics

- Historic landscape types are grouped under the headings: modern fields and pre-1860 fields; there are over 15 separate types
- Evidence of farming from prehistoric times
- Main period of change in the 17th and 18th centuries with the enclosure of open fields
- Total Area = 254,590ha (50.13%); number of polygons = 7646

'Fieldsapes' refer to the lowland farming landscapes which were enclosed by someone at some time for cultivation or the raising of livestock. In Northumberland, fieldsapes account for just over half of the county's land with a distribution across the coastal plain, inland to the sandstone hills and along river valleys to the edges of the uplands. Fields can be categorised according to their **date** and **pattern** and **size** and by using various combinations of these attributes it is possible to suggest the origins of these enclosures. The challenge for HLC has been to characterise the county's fields by describing their origin and development over time.

There is evidence of farming in Northumberland which dates back to prehistoric times. In the uplands of the northern Cheviots, for example, there are Bronze Age hut circle settlements together with extensive areas of clearance cairns which are the result of making stone-free areas in order to cultivate the land. There are also many Iron Age and Roman period farmsteads across the county, as well as fields of cord rig, both in the Cheviots and near Hadrian's Wall. In addition there are numerous undated earthwork banks which may have formed boundaries to fields or farms. Although such examples survive as earthworks in the uplands, they normally only survive as cropmarks in the lowlands, or have been discovered by excavation. After the end of the Roman period there is evidence of farming in only a few places, such as the villages and fields at Old Bewick and Thirlings. More is known about the period after the Norman Conquest with the help of documentary evidence. As the population expanded one of the earliest documented processes of enclosure was that of assarting. Here established communities brought bits of woodland or manorial waste into cultivation and is

documented at Prudhoe in the 12th and 13th centuries (McCord and Thompson 1998, 45). Elsewhere, the Percy family (Earls of Northumberland) permitted farming communities to expand into areas of former waste or areas under forest law in the period 1450-1500 (McCord and Thompson 1998, 120). Evidence of this forest clearance is very apparent in some parts of England even today, but in Northumberland it has proved difficult to isolate such enclosures through the broad-brush approach of HLC, perhaps because of later widespread agricultural reform. In the medieval period much of lowland Northumberland lay in a zone where people lived in villages, rather than in dispersed farmsteads, and the farming system associated with such villages is that of the open fields. Here, strips and furlongs were the units of farming and remains of these are still evident in ridge and furrow earthworks and the pattern and shape of fields. However, the fields did not remain open; from as early as the 16th century some places consolidated individual holdings, for example at Longhoughton, Chatton, Rock, Hartley and Seaton Delaval. Other changes were driven by the expansion of sheep farming in Tudor times and, although Northumberland was probably less affected than some English counties, a number of villages were destroyed, eg Outchester. The main period of change in the county came in the 17th and 18th centuries as the open field system was dismantled and replaced by enclosed fields and new farmsteads; by the end of the 17th century at least 25 enclosures had been made by agreement and by the mid-18th century enclosure of the lowlands was virtually complete (Lunn 2004, 30). The pace of change quickened in the later 18th and 19th centuries as agriculturalists experimented with new crops, animal breeding and farming systems, and the Parliamentary enclosure movement finished off the enclosure of lowlands and uplands.

In order to explore the possible different origins of fields it is necessary to first divide them according to date. It is easy to recognise those which were formed in the late 19th or 20th centuries as they appear for the first time on the second or later editions of the Ordnance Survey; those which have origins before the mid 19th century appear on the first edition of c.1860. The first group, or **modern fields**, can be subdivided and described relatively simply in terms of their origins by comparing the first edition Ordnance Survey map with later editions and recording the changes, but the variations in the latter group, **pre-1860 fields**, are sometimes harder to define.

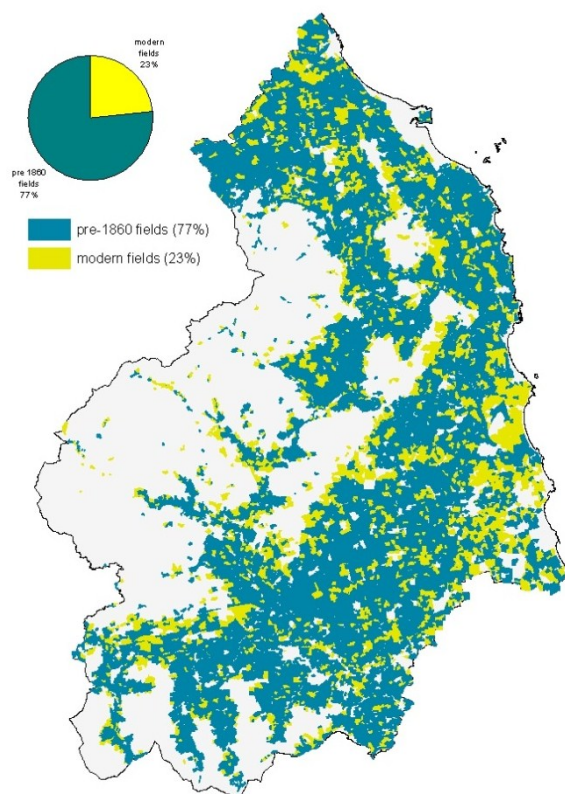


Figure 11: Distribution and proportion of modern and pre-1860 fields.

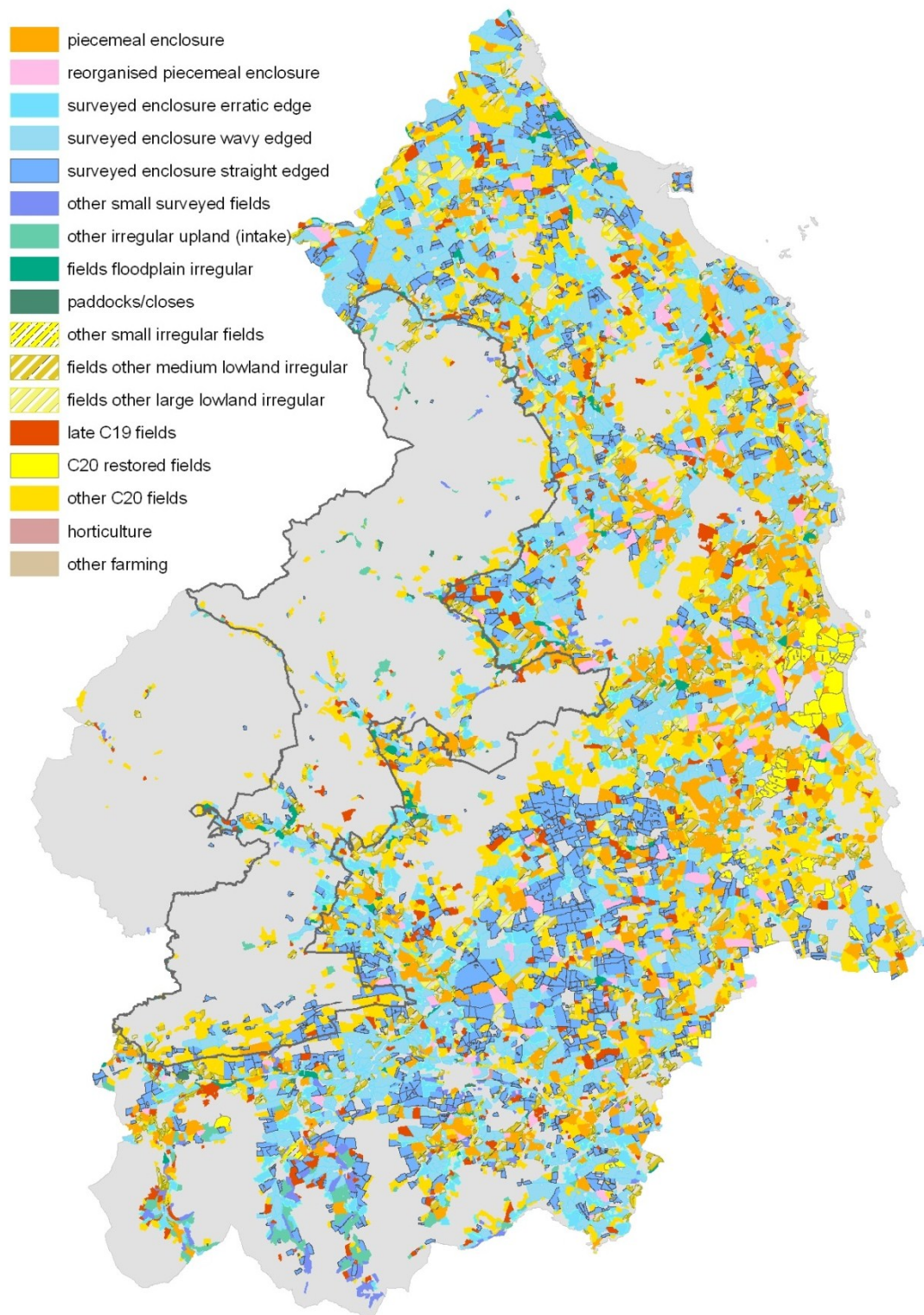


Figure 12: Fieldscape HLC types with National Park boundary.

Suggested chronology

Date	Form	Type
Medieval (1066-1540)	Irregular fields	Possible 'ancient enclosure', irregular enclosures from woodland or moorland?
16th to 18 th century	Irregular fields	Meadows (miscellaneous irregular floodplain fields)
17th to mid-18 th century	Irregular fields	Piecemeal/enclosure by agreement Paddocks/closes (small lowland by settlement) Intake/in-bye (irregular upland) Other irregular fields (small/medium/large)
Mid-18 th to 19 th century	Regular fields	Surveyed enclosure (Parliamentary type) (straight-, wavy-, and erratic-edged) Small (upland/lowland) Reorganised piecemeal enclosure
Late 19 th century	Modern	Reorganised/improved fields
20 th century	Modern	Restored fields Reorganised/improved fields Other farming (poultry etc) Horticulture (glasshouses etc)

Table 3: Suggested chronology of fieldscape types.

6.1 Modern Fields

The term 'modern' has been applied to all fields that have been significantly altered or created since the publication of the first edition Ordnance Survey map in c.1860, as well as areas of modern horticulture and poultry farming. They account for 23% of fields in the county and include areas where small fields have been reorganised or amalgamated to create bigger fields, land restored from opencast coal extraction, and land improved from rough grassland or moorland.

The distribution of modern fields occurs across the county with significant concentrations in the south-east where land has been restored from the mining industry, and along the fringes of the central Sandstone Hills where fields have been improved and the limits of cultivation/good pasture have been pushed into areas once left as rough grassland. The HLC divides this group into: **late 19th century fields, 20th century restored fields, other 20th century fields, horticulture, other farming.**

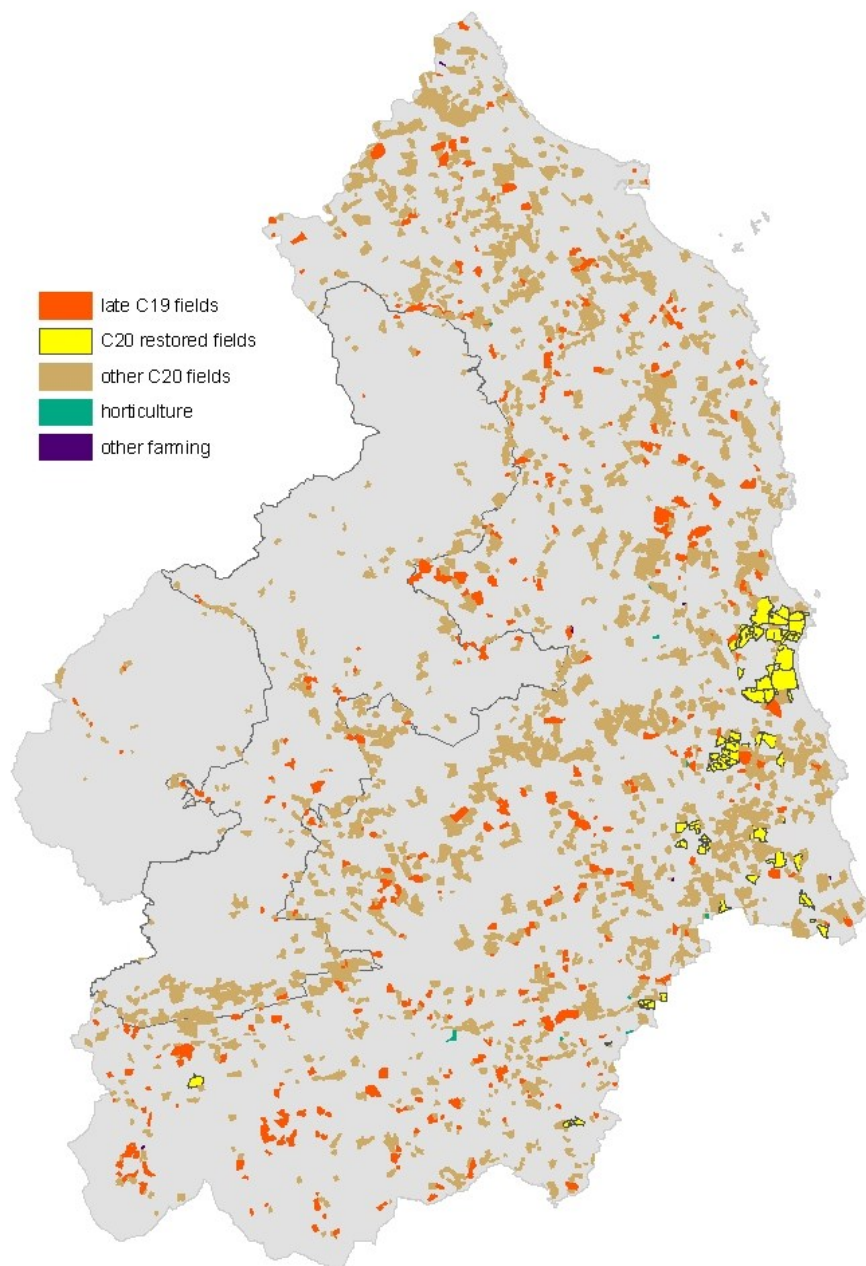
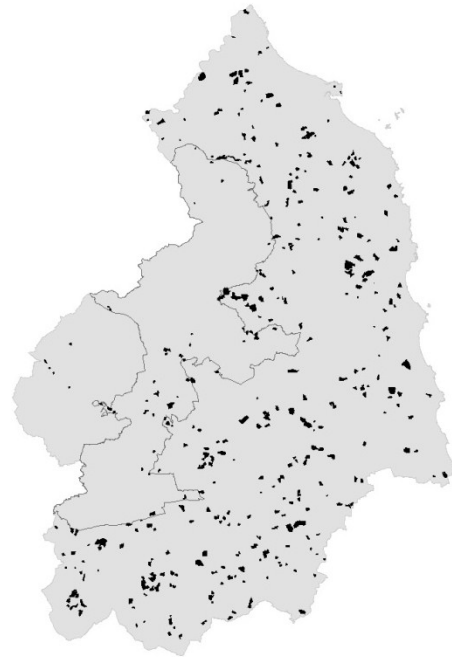
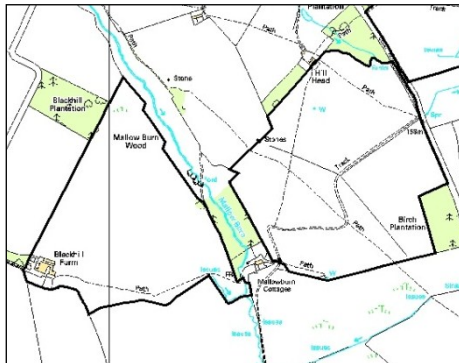


Figure 13: Distribution of modern fieldscape types.

6.1.1 Late 19th century fields

Key Features:

- Boundary loss and/or reorganisation of fields
- Improved from rough land
- Total area = 8519ha
- Percentage of county = 1.69%
- Number of polygons = 428
- Date = late 19th century



Fields that have altered significantly in character and form between the first edition (1860) and second edition (1897) 6-inch Ordnance Survey maps. The changes include loss of boundaries and improvement from rough land and are largely the result of improvements in the second half of the 19th century. The distribution of late 19th century fields is countywide with localised concentrations in Coquetdale, south-west of Alnwick, Ancroft and Allendale where nearly all these fields have been improved from rough land.

The range of sites in the HER that occur in late 19th century fields is dominated by post-medieval entries, in particular those related to industrial activities such as a colliery, quarries, lime kilns, brick and tile works, blacksmiths workshops, as well as a number of farms and related buildings and structures. The prehistoric records are a mix of finds and settlement sites with a number of hillforts and other lesser enclosures present. Nearly half of the medieval records are for deserted villages and the early medieval records are mainly finds and components of Ad Gefrin royal palace site.

Rarity: frequent

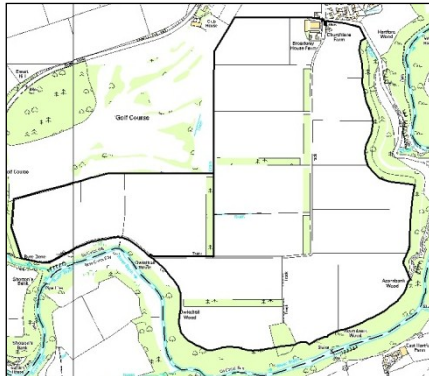
Trajectory of change: stable

Susceptibility: low

6.1.2 20th century restored fields

Key Features:

- Wholesale change from previous field pattern
- Post WWII restoration schemes after coal extraction
- Total area = 4841ha
- Percentage of county = 0.96ha
- Number of polygons = 65
- Date = 20th century



Fields that have undergone complete change and are unrecognisable or significantly altered in character and form from those depicted on the first edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey (1860). These fields are all the result of post-Second World War restoration schemes after mineral extraction and their distribution is largely confined to south-east Northumberland where extensive opencast coal mining operations have been underway since the 1940s. The exceptions to this distribution are Heddon-on-the-Wall, Whittonstall and Plenmeller. Most of these

fields have been restored in a regular grid-like fashion with little regard for previous landform or character, and a few have included amenity areas, for example Druridge Bay country park, with woodland and lakes.

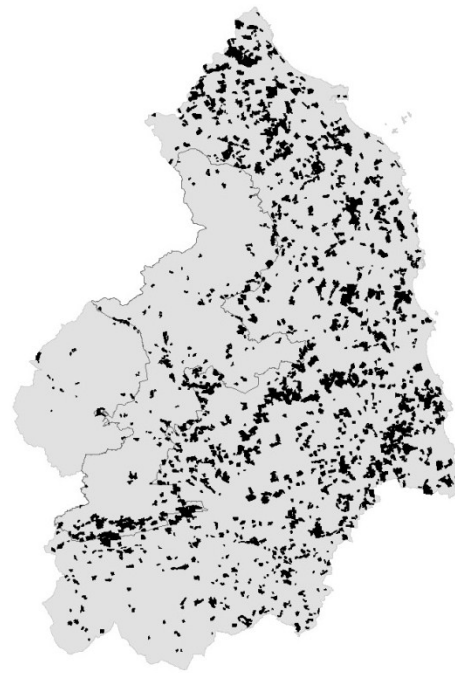
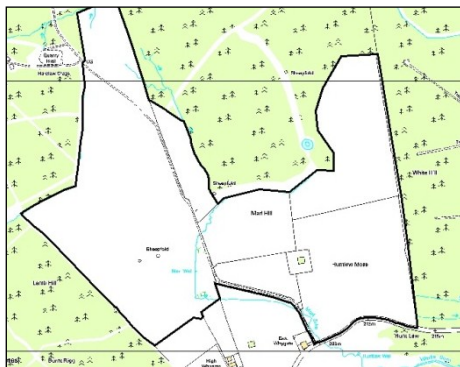
The range of sites recorded in the HER is mainly post-medieval in date and many are only known from cartographic evidence, having been destroyed by mineral working in the 20th century.

Rarity: occasional
Trajectory of change: new
Susceptibility: low

6.1.3 Other 20th century fields

Key Features:

- Significant change from first and second edition OS maps
- Largely the result of post-WWII agricultural improvement
- Total area = 45,672ha
- Percentage of county = 9.10%
- Number of polygons = 1860
- Date = 20th century



Fields that have significantly altered in character and form when compared to the first and second edition Ordnance Survey maps of the later 19th century. The changes are due to boundary loss or reorganisation to create larger fields, or improvement from rough land, and are largely the result of post-Second World War agricultural improvement. However, some fields in this type are the result of road schemes and other modern developments where fields have become isolated or greatly truncated.

The type is distributed across the county with some concentrations along the edge of the sandstone hills in central Northumberland, the western end of the Tyne Gap and Hadrian's Wall corridor, south-east Northumberland and to the south of Berwick.

There are a great number of archaeological sites recorded in the HER for this type, most being post-medieval, prehistoric or unknown in date, but including a significant number of Roman and medieval sites. The post-medieval sites include a wide range of agricultural buildings and structures, from sheepfolds and stack stands to farmhouses, bastles and cow houses. There are also a number of industrial monuments such as lime kilns, bell pits and collieries. The medieval entries are largely settlement related, including deserted settlements, tower houses and shielings. The Roman remains include components of Hadrian's Wall, as well as roads and native farmsteads. Prehistoric sites include a range of stone, flint and metal finds, a number of settlements and burial sites, as well as ritual monuments like cup and ring marked stones, henges and stone circles.

Rarity: common

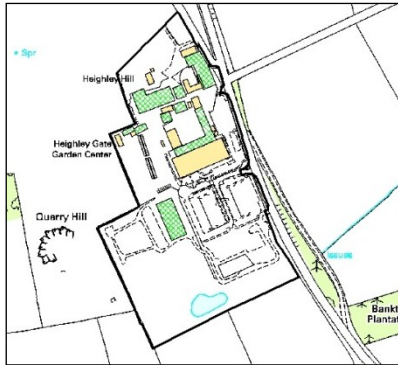
Trajectory of change: new

Susceptibility: low

6.1.4 Horticulture

Key Features:

- Small scale operations often less than one hectare in area
- Market gardening, glasshouses and orchards
- Total area = 65ha
- Percentage of county = 0.01%
- Number of polygons = 9
- Date = 20th century



Horticulture includes areas of market gardening, glasshouses and orchards. They are 20th century developments and by their nature are usually small scale. This type is probably under-represented in the HLC as few examples are over the project's one hectare threshold.

The small amount of this HLC type is reflected in the very small number of archaeological sites associated with it. The HER records include a few built structures (house, inn, well and smithy) all of which are probably post-medieval in date.

Rarity: extremely rare

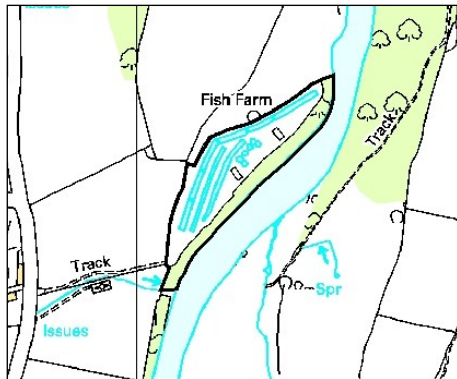
Trajectory of change: declining critically

Susceptibility: high

6.1.5 Other farming

Key Features:

- Small scale developments
- Fish farms and poultry sheds
- Total area = 15ha
- Percentage of county = 0.003%
- Number of polygons = 6
- Occurrence = extremely rare
- Date = 20th century



Other types of farming that do not fall into any other category, for example fish farms and poultry sheds. They are all 20th century developments and only account for a minor proportion of agriculture in Northumberland.

The small amount of this HLC type is reflected in the very small number of archaeological sites associated with it. The HER records only two sites: a brickfield and a mill, both of post-medieval date.

Rarity: extremely rare
Trajectory of change: new
Susceptibility: low

6.2 Pre-1860 Fields

The term 'pre-1860 fields' has been applied to all fields that existed by the time the first edition Ordnance Survey was drawn in the 1860s and which have remained largely unchanged since that date. They account for over three-quarters (77%) of all enclosures in the county today and includes those created by the Parliamentary enclosure movement of the 18th and 19th centuries, fields enclosed piecemeal from the open fields in the 17th and 18th centuries, and others which may have their origins in the medieval period.

One of the more apparent differences between types of enclosure is pattern, with **regular fields** largely indicative of surveyed or planned enclosure, and **irregular fields** held to be a sign of older farming landscapes. However, to better define the origins of enclosure these two categories can be subdivided using other attributes, such as **boundary shape** and **field size**, because certain physical characteristics are associated with particular processes of enclosure. For instance, fields with an irregular pattern and reverse-S shaped or dog-leg boundaries represent enclosure by agreement of the strips and furlongs of medieval open fields; whereas Parliamentary enclosure is represented by regular fields with straight boundaries.

Regular fields

Regular fields account for two-thirds (66%) of pre-1860 enclosures and have a geometric, planned appearance which is the result of being laid out by surveyors. They generally date from the mid 18th to 19th centuries with straight boundaries and a rectilinear shape. However, the group is not uniform and within it a number of variations have been identified based on the external boundary shape, for example, some regular fields lie in blocks with wavy or curved edges whilst others have ruler-straight or erratic edges; these edges may take the form of a road or a parish boundary. The different shapes of external boundaries may suggest separate origins or influences on the field pattern and although the exact origin of all these categories is unclear, those with wavy or curved edges might indicate where the outline of former open fields was retained and new fields were fitted in to an existing framework; other blocks of fields with straight external

boundaries, often associated with straight roads, were laid out with no regard for previous field systems, or on new ground. Another variation retains traces of earlier boundaries amongst the straight lines, in the shape of reverse-S shapes or dog-legs and is probably the result of reorganisation of the earlier enclosure by agreement.

Regular fields are distributed across the lowland scarps, plateaus and valleys of the county and although there is a wide distribution there are concentrations in the north and central parts of the county, with relatively little in the central areas around Alnwick and Morpeth.

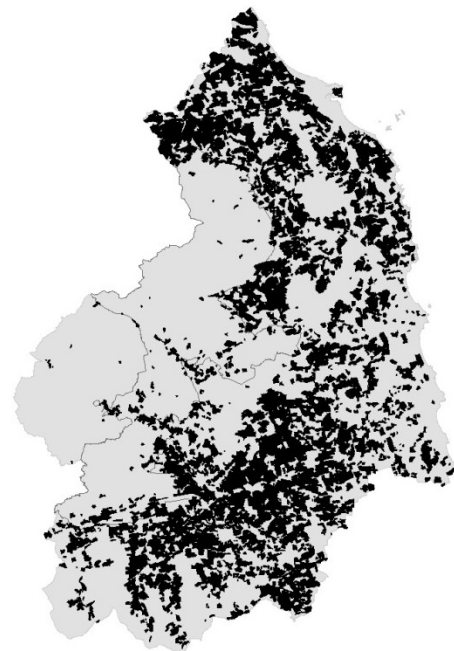


Figure 14: Distribution of regular pre-1860 enclosure.

Using the differences described above, three HLC types of surveyed enclosure have been defined on the basis of **straight, wavy, and erratic** edges and a fourth type based on a **small** field size; the latter has also be subdivided by altitude as a significant number of small enclosures occur in the uplands. A fifth type is defined by the presence of one or two older enclosure boundaries, although the overall pattern remains regular, and is called **reorganised piecemeal enclosure**.

Irregular fields

Irregular fields account for the remaining one-third (34%) of pre-1860 fields and are

indicators of an older landscape than Parliamentary, or surveyed, enclosure. They have an uneven, sometimes haphazard appearance which is the result of being created, for example, from the strips and furlongs of medieval open fields or the *ad hoc* intake of rough ground or woodland as the need arose. These processes have sometimes left traces in the landscape in the form of a particular boundary shape or pattern and by using these and other attributes it is possible to break this group down into separate types and suggest how they might have originated.

Irregular fields are widely distributed across the county and in places clearly mark the fringe of upland areas and the upper reaches of the county's river valleys. Although there are no particular concentrations, the area around Morpeth and Alnwick seems have a slight weighting of this type.

HLC types include: **piecemeal enclosure (enclosure by agreement), paddocks and closes, irregular upland fields (intake/inbye), miscellaneous floodplain**

fields (meadows), other irregular fields, and possible ancient enclosure.

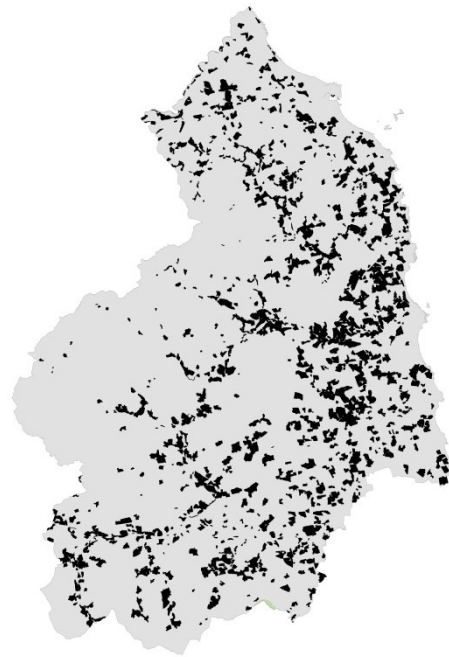


Figure 15: Distribution of irregular pre-1860 fields.

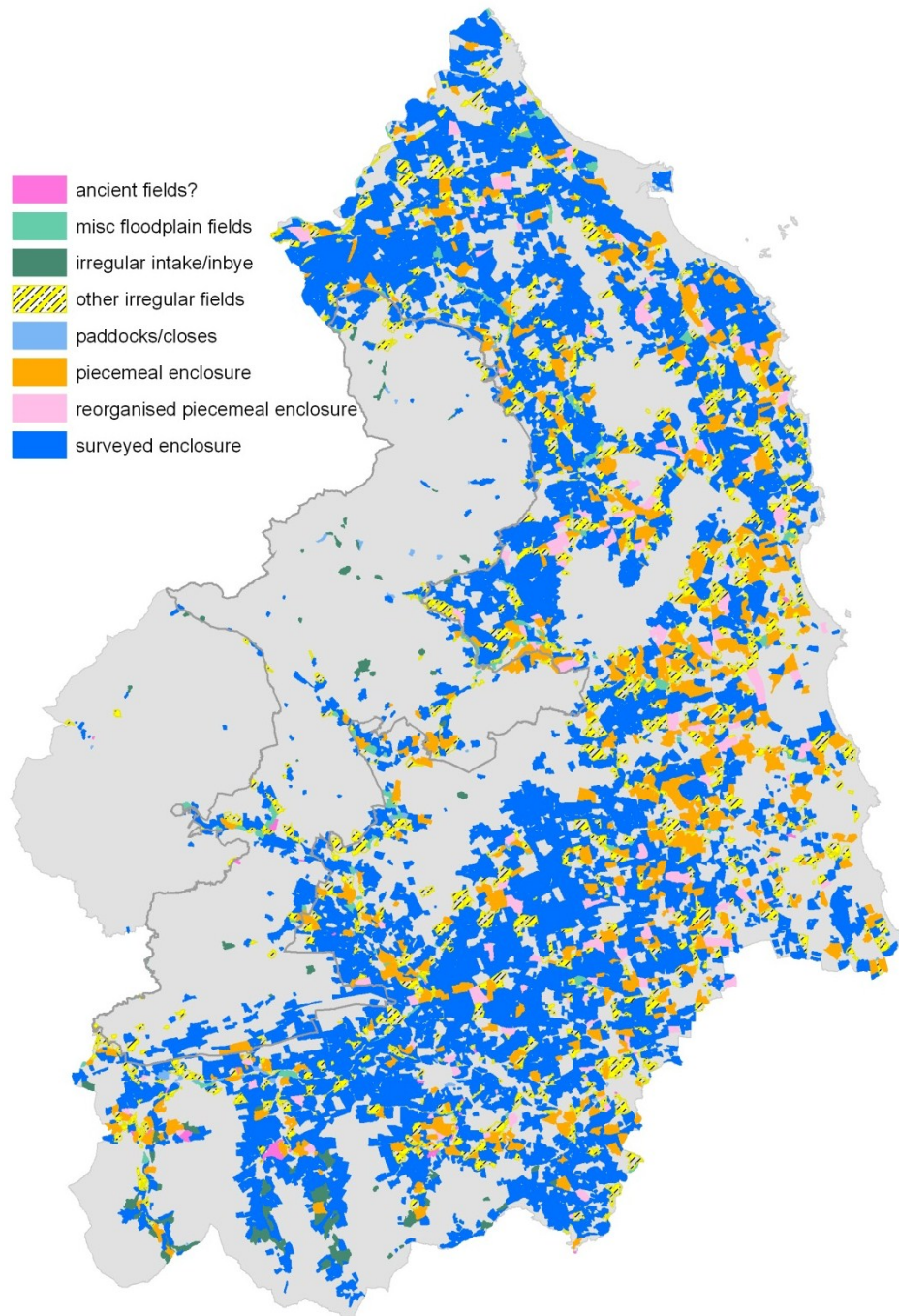
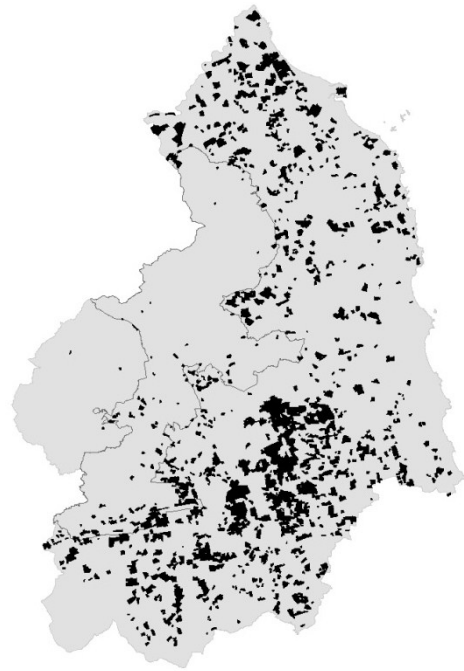
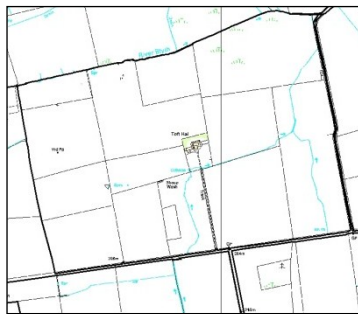


Figure 16: All pre-1860 fieldscape types.

6.2.1 Surveyed enclosure straight-edged

Key Features:

- Regular pattern with straight-sided field boundaries
- Mostly created by the Parliamentary enclosure movement
- Associated with straight roads
- Total area = 45,298ha
- Percentage of county = 9.02%
- Number of polygons = 1322
- Date = mid 18th to 19th century



Surveyed enclosure with straight external boundaries accounts for 18% of all fields and 35% of surveyed fields. There are two main concentrations: in the north of the county, especially near Scremerston and Cheswick, and the central area west of Morpeth particularly around the estates of Wallington, Capheaton and Matfen; this reflects the general distribution of 'surveyed enclosure' and can be partly explained by the former presence of large estates in these areas, eg the Blacketts at Wallington. The fields have a regular pattern with straight field boundaries often bounded by straight roads, and few farmsteads. They represent an entirely new layout from the

previous open fields as well as enclosure of former lowland commons and waste.

The range of archaeological sites which occur are of all periods, but post-medieval sites are the most numerous. They include industrial sites, farm buildings and associated structures. Although there are proportionately far fewer medieval sites they include deserted and shrunken settlements, farms and field systems. Roman sites also include native farmsteads and military sites as well as, finds and burial grounds. The prehistoric sites include burial monuments and settlements, ritual sites (cup and ring marked stones) and find spots.

Rarity: common

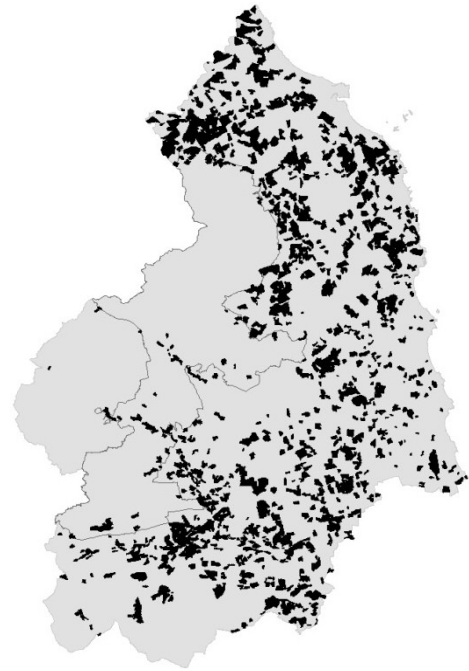
Trajectory of change: decreasing slowly

Susceptibility: medium

6.2.2 Surveyed enclosure wavy-edged

Key Features:

- Regular field pattern with straight internal boundaries
- External wavy boundary suggestive of open fields
- Total area = 64,399ha
- Percentage of county = 12.83%
- Number of polygons = 1346
- Date = mid-18th to 19th century



Surveyed enclosure with wavy edges is the largest category of field types, accounting for a quarter of all fields in the county and half of all surveyed enclosure. They are found across lowland Northumberland with particular concentrations in the north around Glendale (Branxton) and the coastal plain, in the vale of Whittingham, and in the south around Haydon Bridge. Although the fields have straight surveyed boundaries and a regular pattern, the external boundaries of these blocks of fields are wavy, curving or sinuous and it is thought this may represent enclosure within the edges of the medieval open fields.

The range of archaeological sites in this type is very wide. The majority are post-medieval in date and include a variety of

industrial sites (mills, limekiln, quarries, collieries), as well as a range of farming and domestic buildings and structures (farms, sheepfolds, bastles). The medieval period is also well represented with a number of deserted and shrunken villages, shielings, tower houses, battlefields, and chapels. Although only a small proportion of sites are early medieval in date they include the excavated settlement at New Bewick and a number of finds. Sites of the Roman period include parts of Hadrian's Wall and its associated components, as well as Roman roads, temporary camps and native farmsteads and settlements. The prehistoric period includes sites and finds from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age and range from multivallate hillforts and burial cairns to microliths.

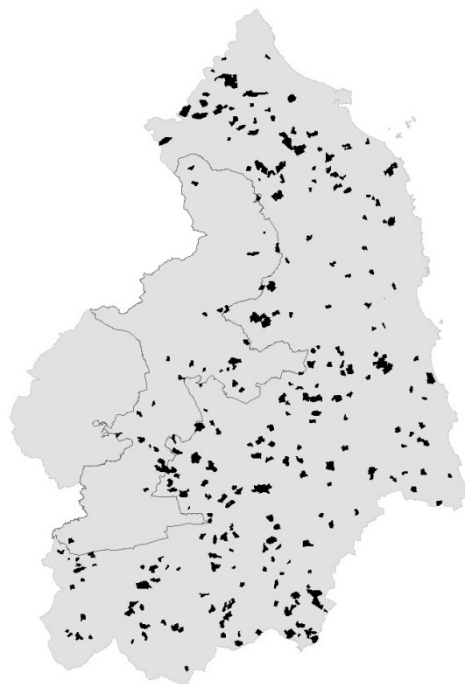
Rarity: common

Trajectory of change: decreasing slowly

Susceptibility: medium

Key Features:

- [illegible]



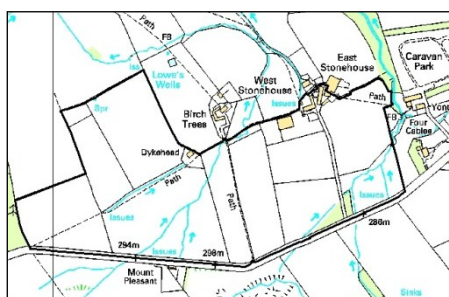
There is a wide range of archaeological sites in this type. The majority are post-medieval in date and include industrial sites (mills, limekiln, quarries, collieries), as well as farming and domestic buildings and

structures (farms, sheepfolds, bastles). The medieval period is also well represented with a number of deserted and shrunken villages, shielings, tower houses, fishponds and chapels. Only a very small number of sites belong to the early medieval period and include some finds, a burial ground and a battlefield. Sites of the Roman period include parts of Hadrian's Wall and some of its associated components, as well as Roman roads, native farmsteads and settlements. The prehistoric period includes sites and finds from the Neolithic to the Iron Age and range from multivallate hillforts and henges to cup and ring marked stones.

Trajectory of change: decreasing slowly
Susceptibility: medium

Key Features:

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and their relationship with other irregular fields at lower levels shows a sequence of enclosure through this period. As the numbers involved in the lead mining industry and demand for smallholdings increased to its peak in the mid 19th century these small, regular fields show the maximum limit of farming. In the Cheviots these fields are the in-bye land around farmsteads, used for producing hay or silage for feeding livestock through the winter and for holding livestock brought down from the surrounding rough grazing or moorland for dipping, shearing, lambing and sorting for sale.

The range of archaeological sites is dominated by post-medieval records in the uplands and lowlands. There are numerous chapels, quarries, farmhouses and bastles in both zones with a slightly wider range of structures in the lowlands. Remains of other periods are limited with a handful of prehistoric settlements sites and finds, Roman military remains associated with Hadrian's Wall, no early medieval remains, and a few medieval villages and other earthwork features.

Rarity: occasional
Trajectory of change: decreasing slowly
Susceptibility: medium

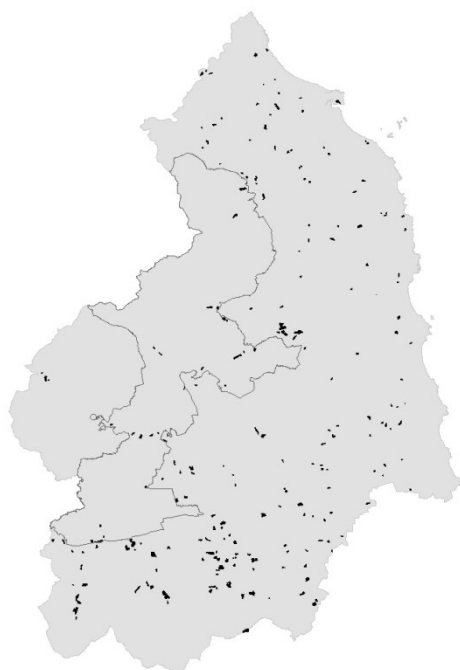


Figure 17: Lowland small surveyed fields.

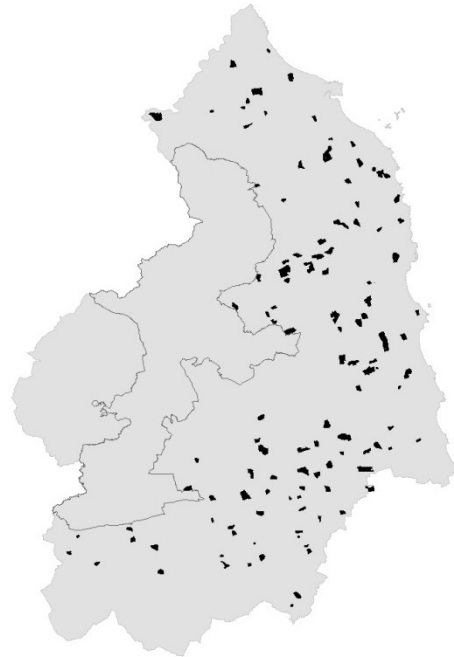
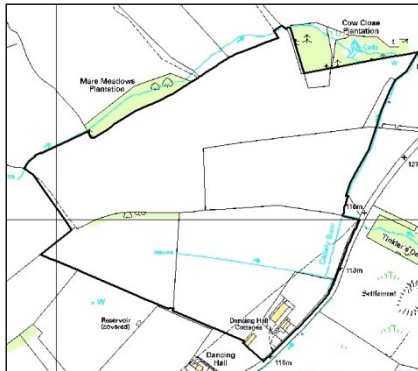


Figure 18: Upland small surveyed fields.

6.2.5 Reorganised piecemeal enclosure

Key Features:

- Regular planned appearance
- Traces of former open fields in field boundaries
- Total area = 7859ha
- Percentage of county = 1.54%
- Occurrence = frequent
- Date = mid-18th to 19th century



Reorganised piecemeal enclosure includes fields which, although enclosed in the 17th or 18th centuries by agreement, have had their boundaries redrawn in the later 18th or 19th centuries in line with the Parliamentary enclosure movement. Yet despite the overall regular pattern and straight boundaries one or two boundaries will bear traces of the earlier phase of enclosure by means of a reverse-S curve or dog-leg – features that signal the strips and furlongs of medieval open fields.

The range of archaeological sites includes a large proportion of post-medieval sites.

These consist of buildings, railway and roadside components (mileposts, stations) as well as some industrial remains (lime kilns, lead workings, colliery). The medieval remains are largely settlements and field systems (ridge and furrow) and there are no early medieval remains in this HLC type. The Roman sites include parts of Hadrian's Wall and its components as well as native settlements. The prehistoric sites range from Neolithic to Iron Age and include a number of finds as well as settlements and ritual sites (cup and ring marked stones, burials, standing stone and a henge).

Rarity: frequent

Trajectory of change: increasing rapidly

Susceptibility: medium

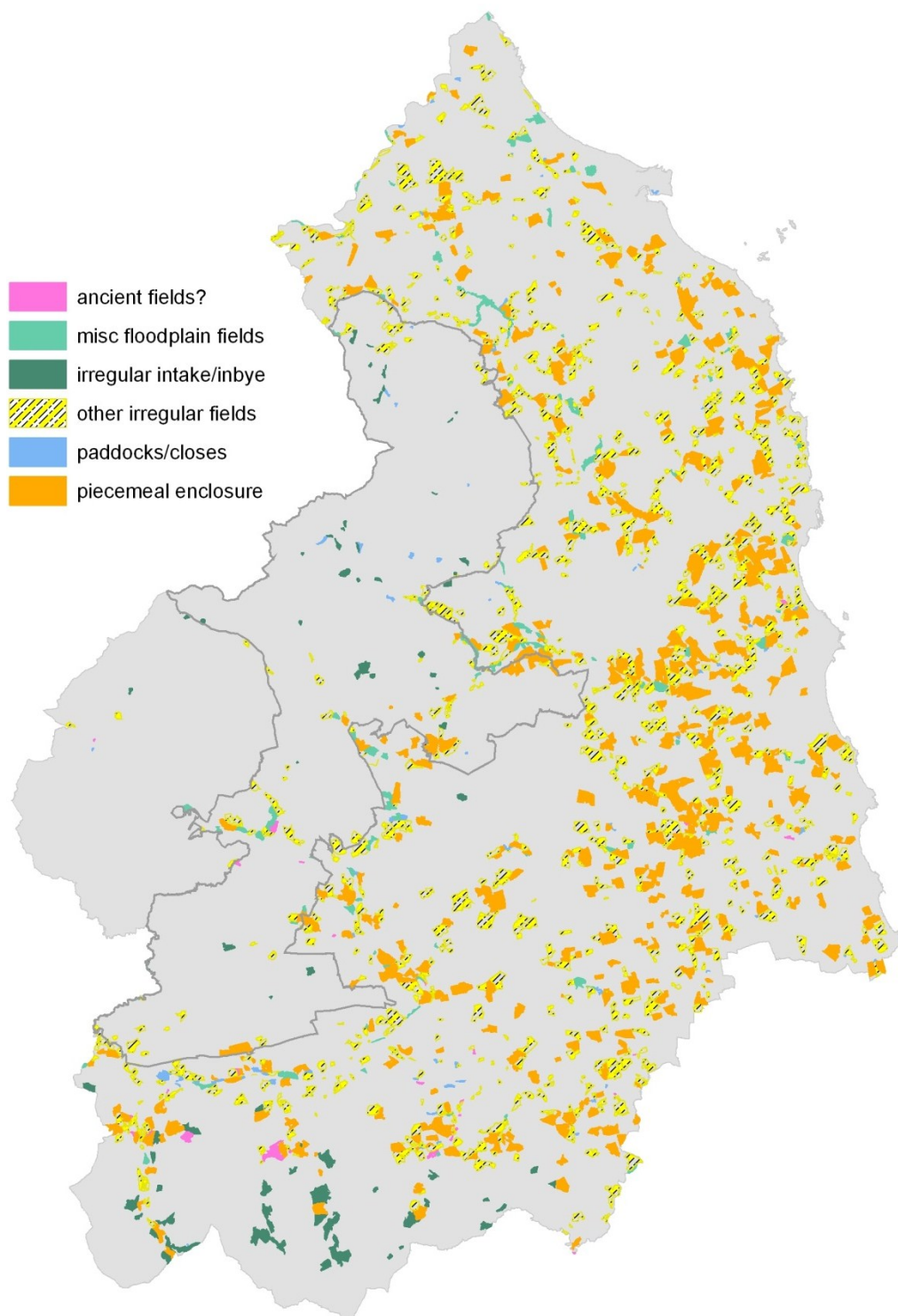
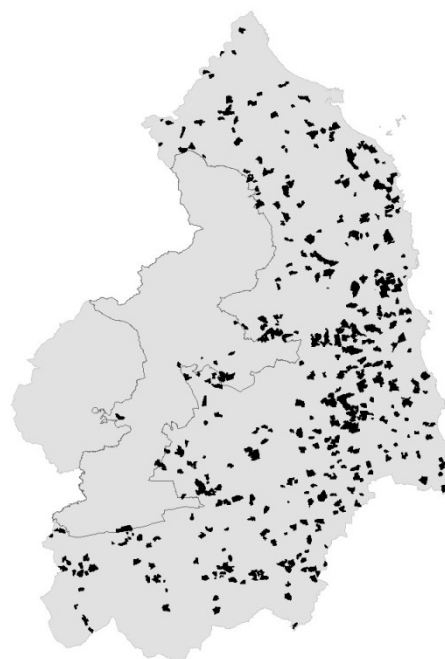


Figure 19: Irregular pre-1860 fieldscape types with National Park boundary.

Key Features:

- [illegible]



In Northumberland, enclosure by agreement generally took place from the 17th to mid 18th century and although documentary evidence records enclosure and improvements in some areas as early as the 16th century at Rock and Chatton, the main period of dismantling the open field system seems to have been after 1660 and the civil wars of the 1640s and 1650s (Lomas 1996, 86). The practice was widespread in the coastal plain and by the mid-18th century much of Northumberland had been enclosed in this way: at least 25 private agreements were

The landscape of enclosure by agreement is distributed across the lowlands of Northumberland and accounts for 13% of all fields in the county. There is a strong correlation in the distribution of this field type with the coastal plain and fell sandstone scarp lands, especially in and around the Alnwick and Morpeth areas, which are those most favourable to arable farming and hence had the greatest density of common fields (Butlin 1973, 111).

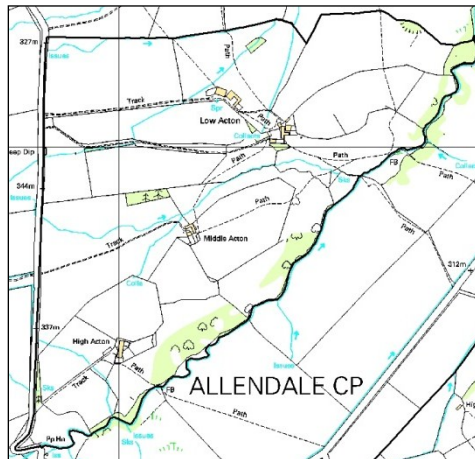
The range of archaeological sites found in the piecemeal enclosure type includes a variety of post-medieval, medieval and prehistoric remains. Most numerous are post-medieval features including industrial, communication, farming and settlement sites. Medieval remains are mainly settlement and farming-related, with deserted villages, manors and moated sites together with ridge and furrow, hospitals and chapels. Prehistoric remains range from Mesolithic finds to Iron Age settlements, with a variety of settlement, funerary and ritual sites of the Neolithic and Bronze Age. A number of Roman sites also fall in this type and include sites associated with the frontier defence of Hadrian's Wall as well as native settlements from the period.

Susceptibility: high

6.2.7 Irregular upland fields (intake and inbye)

Key Features:

- Total area = 2437ha
- Percentage of county = 0.48%
- Number of polygons = 103
- Date = ?17th to 19th century



In the uplands of Northumberland, above the 250m contour, there is a small group of fields of irregular shape, pattern and size (although few are large), which represent the limit of improved and cultivated land by the mid 19th century. Most fields of this type occur in the North Pennines, although a distinct but less extensive group also lies in the Cheviots. They include intake from commons and in-byre land.

In the North Pennines these fields are scattered with small farmsteads whose inhabitants were the lead miners of the 17th to 19th centuries. They were permitted to enclose smallholdings on the edge of commons to supplement their income. Whilst lying above the 250m contour, these fields generally lie below the more regular surveyed enclosure described above and this relationship may represent a sequence of enclosure during the active years of the lead mining industry. In the Cheviots the

fields are in-byre land immediately surrounding small isolated farmsteads, used for producing hay or silage for feeding livestock through the winter and for holding livestock brought down from the surrounding rough grazing or moorland for dipping, shearing, lambing and sorting for sale.

Most archaeological sites known in irregular intake and in byre land are post-medieval in date. They include numerous bastles, farmhouses and other houses, which were the focus for these small fields in both the Cheviots and North Pennines, as well as other agricultural and industrial remains like lime kilns and sheep folds. Remains of earlier periods are scarce, with only a few deserted medieval settlements, no early medieval remains, and a few Roman military and native settlements and forts. Prehistoric remains are limited to a few burial monuments and finds of the Bronze Age or later prehistoric period.

Rarity: occasional

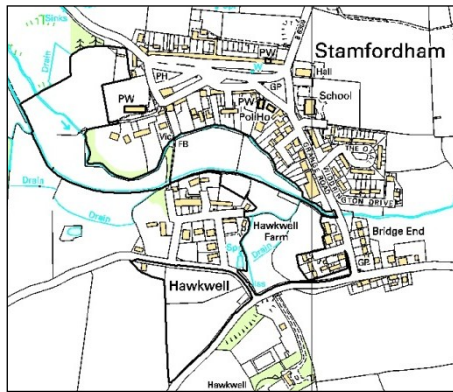
Trajectory of change: stable

Susceptibility: medium

6.2.8 Small irregular fields by settlement (paddocks/closes)

Key Features:

- Total area = 494ha
- Percentage of county = 0.09%
- Number of polygons = 85
- Date = ?17th to mid-18th century



Small irregular fields that lie on the edge of settlements and which probably represent small meadows and paddocks of varying dates and in-bye land, especially along Coquetdale. The distribution is sparse and this type accounts for less than 1% of fields, but was probably more extensive before settlement expansion in the 20th century; isolated examples are likely to have been grouped into other categories. The main concentration lies along the South Tyne Valley near Haltwhistle.

Few archaeological sites fall into this HLC type, and of those most are post-medieval in date. They include built structures and small scale industrial remains, such as mills, bastles, farmhouses, mill races, and wells. The few medieval remains are also mainly settlement and farming related with examples of ridge and furrow and a number of deserted settlements. Earlier remains are very scarce with only a few prehistoric, Roman and early medieval features known.

Rarity: rare

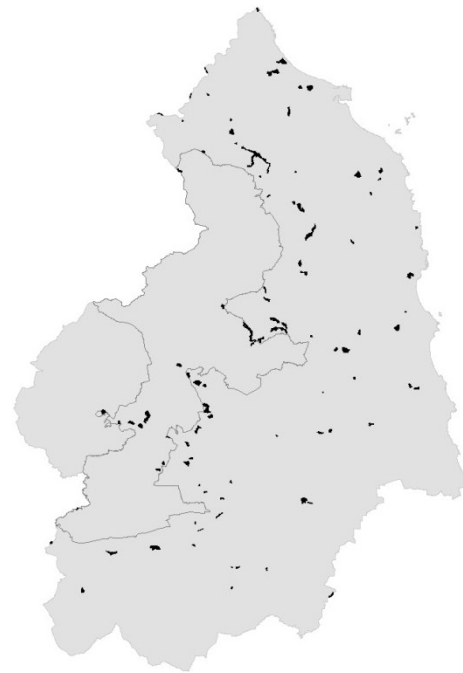
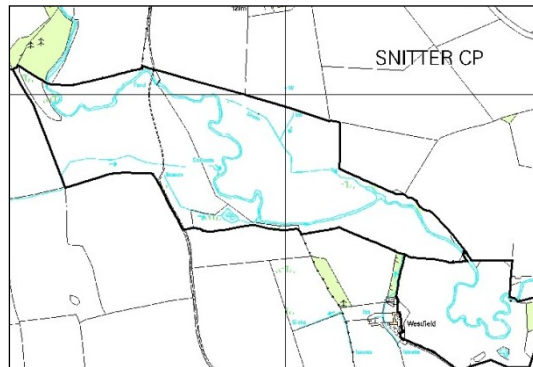
Trajectory of change: stable

Susceptibility: medium

6.2.9 Miscellaneous floodplain fields (meadows?)

Key Features:

- Total area = 1881ha
- Percentage of county = 0.37%
- Number of polygons = 97
- Date = 16th to 18th century



Irregular-shaped fields that lie on river floodplains, or are adjacent to watercourses, were often used as common meadows to provide fodder for livestock. The distribution of this type in Northumberland is largely a westerly one, with particular patterns following the valleys of the Rede, North Tyne, Coquet and Aln.

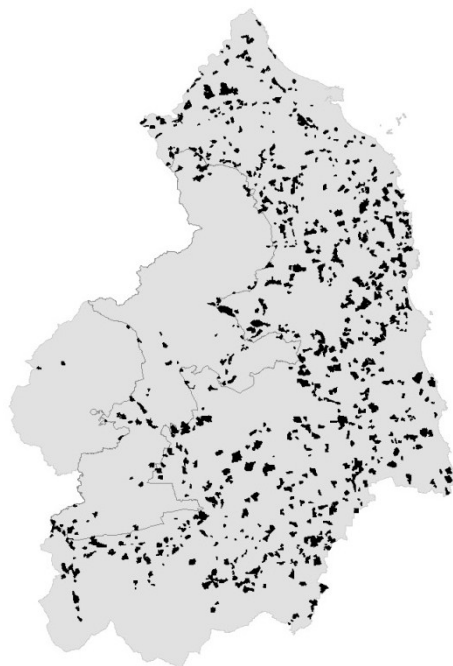
A small number of archaeological sites fall into this HLC type. Most are post-medieval

in date and include a range of domestic, agricultural and industrial structures, such as sheep folds, corn mills, and farmhouses. Medieval remains include settlement and farming remains. The Roman remains are largely connected with Hadrian's Wall near Chesters. Prehistoric remains range from a Neolithic cup and ring marked stone to a Bronze Age burial cairn and an Iron Age hillfort.

Rarity: occasional

Trajectory of change: increasing slowly

Susceptibility: medium



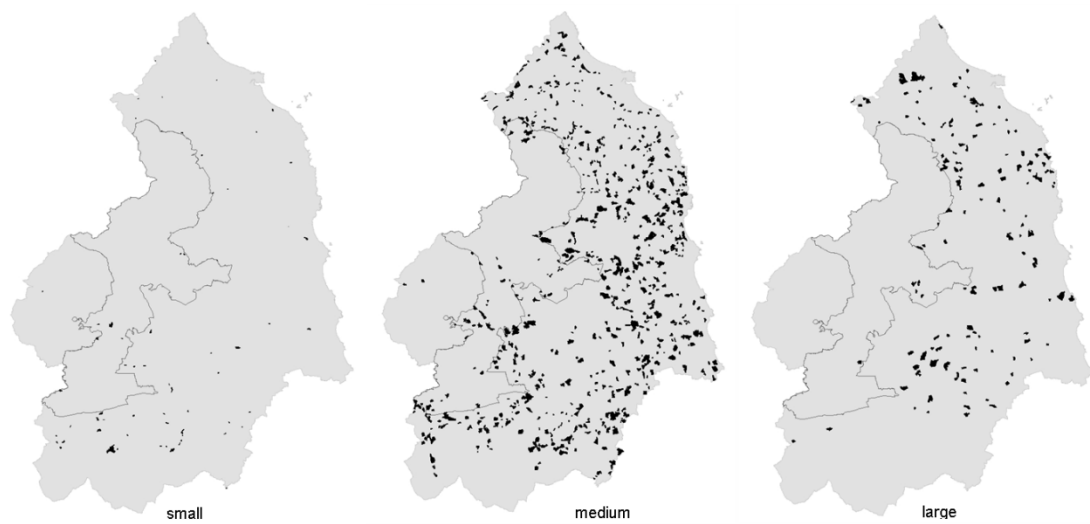
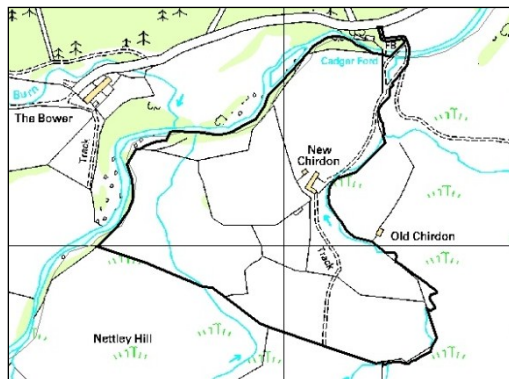


Figure 20: Distribution of other irregular fields by size.

6.2.11 Possible ancient enclosure

Key Features:

- Medieval enclosure from woodland or waste
- Total area = 3935ha
- Percentage of county = 0.78%
- Number of polygons = 163
- Date = medieval?



Ancient enclosure is fields that were created in the medieval period by clearing woodland or waste. They pre-date the enclosure of the open fields which took place from the 16th/17th centuries onward and are generally not typical of open field landscapes. Ancient fields are usually small and irregular in shape and pattern and the process by which they were created is sometimes called assarting, although this more rightly refers to a specific process of woodland clearance, and was at its most active in the 13th century (Muir 2004, 6). Although a considerable amount of assarting is documented in Northumberland (Butlin 1973, 143), with enclosure from woodland and waste probably of equal importance, little work has been done to identify any such surviving fields in today's landscape. However, the type of landscapes where extensive medieval assarting (of waste) could have been carried out include the varied scarps, plateaux and vales, especially of the Fell Sandstones (Butlin 1973, 95).

A series of assumptions has been made in order that fields may be suggested of ancient origin. Firstly, as ancient enclosure is typically characterised by small irregular fields it has been selected from the 'other

small irregular lowland fields' described above as they do not readily fall into any other category. Secondly, any fields with evidence of ridge and furrow have been removed as this indicates cultivation of the open fields, which would have swept aside such ancient enclosures. Thirdly, the remaining fields have been searched for any evidence of place name elements that relate to former woodland or moorland, on the assumption that they indicate clearance of such areas for agriculture.

This type has a markedly south-western distribution and seems to be found in isolated patches along the Tyne valley and its tributaries.

There is a limited range of archaeological sites in Ancient Enclosure type, the majority being medieval and post-medieval in date. Earlier remains are very scarce a possible early medieval settlement and a prehistoric axe. The post-medieval remains include a range of farm-related buildings, two industrial sites (coal and iron smelting), and a park pale. The medieval remains are also mainly settlement-related.

Rarity: very rare

Trajectory of change: stable

Susceptibility: high