

ART. XV – *The case of the Stainton, Newbiggin and Blencow Enclosure Award*

By ROBERT S. DILLEY M.A., M.LITT., PH.D

The deciphering of enclosure awards may be tedious and, where damage has occurred, frustrating. Only rarely is it genuinely puzzling.

The writer first met the Stainton, Newbiggin and Blencow Award (Q/RE/1/38) over thirty years ago as part of an undergraduate project. It was quickly abandoned as too complicated to be understood. While age does not necessarily involve greater wisdom, it usually confers more patience and – with some trepidation – the Award was recently approached again. This time, three days' hard labour yielded success. It may be that the time taken to unravel the mystery of this 200-year-old document reflects the fact that the writer's deductive powers owe less to Sherlock Holmes and more to Dr Watson. Nonetheless, publishing the results of this battle may help some future researcher.

Cumberland enclosure awards normally consist of three parts. There is a written preamble referring to the Act of Parliament or Private Agreement initiating that enclosure, naming the Enclosure Commissioner(s) and detailing the procedures followed in making the award. Then there is a list of individual allotments, generally written as continuous text until the early 19th century and thereafter more usually taking the form of a table, with the name of the owner, the area of the allotment and variable other details such as descriptions of adjoining plots. Finally, there is a map outlining the area to be enclosed (with more or less – usually less – detail of the surrounding area) and specifying the exact location of each person's allotment.

A few awards – especially more recent copies – lack maps and are therefore hard to locate on the ground. Some have suffered from fading, rubbing or other damage and are in places difficult to read. The Award for Stainton, Newbiggin and Blencow is complete (it has both a narrative description of allotments and separate tables); it has good maps and has suffered little damage. Yet on closer inspection it defies rational interpretation. Nothing seems to fit. It is as if the Enclosure Commissioners ('Thomas James of Penrith in the County of Cumberland Gentleman Isaac Hobson of Grassgarth in the Parish of Sebergham in the said County Gentleman and Joseph Hodgson of Penrith aforesaid Ironmonger') deliberately set about creating a puzzle for future generations.

The Common Waste

The text lists allotments in four sections: (1) those on the waste common to all three townships; and then those in the common arable fields for (2) Stainton, (3) Newbiggin and (4) Great Blencow. At first sight Section 1, enclosure of the common waste, is straightforward. Each parcel is described and located (there is no tabular listing for this Section). For example, one William Weightman was allocated

All that Part or Parcell of the said Common and Waste as the same is marked out thereon

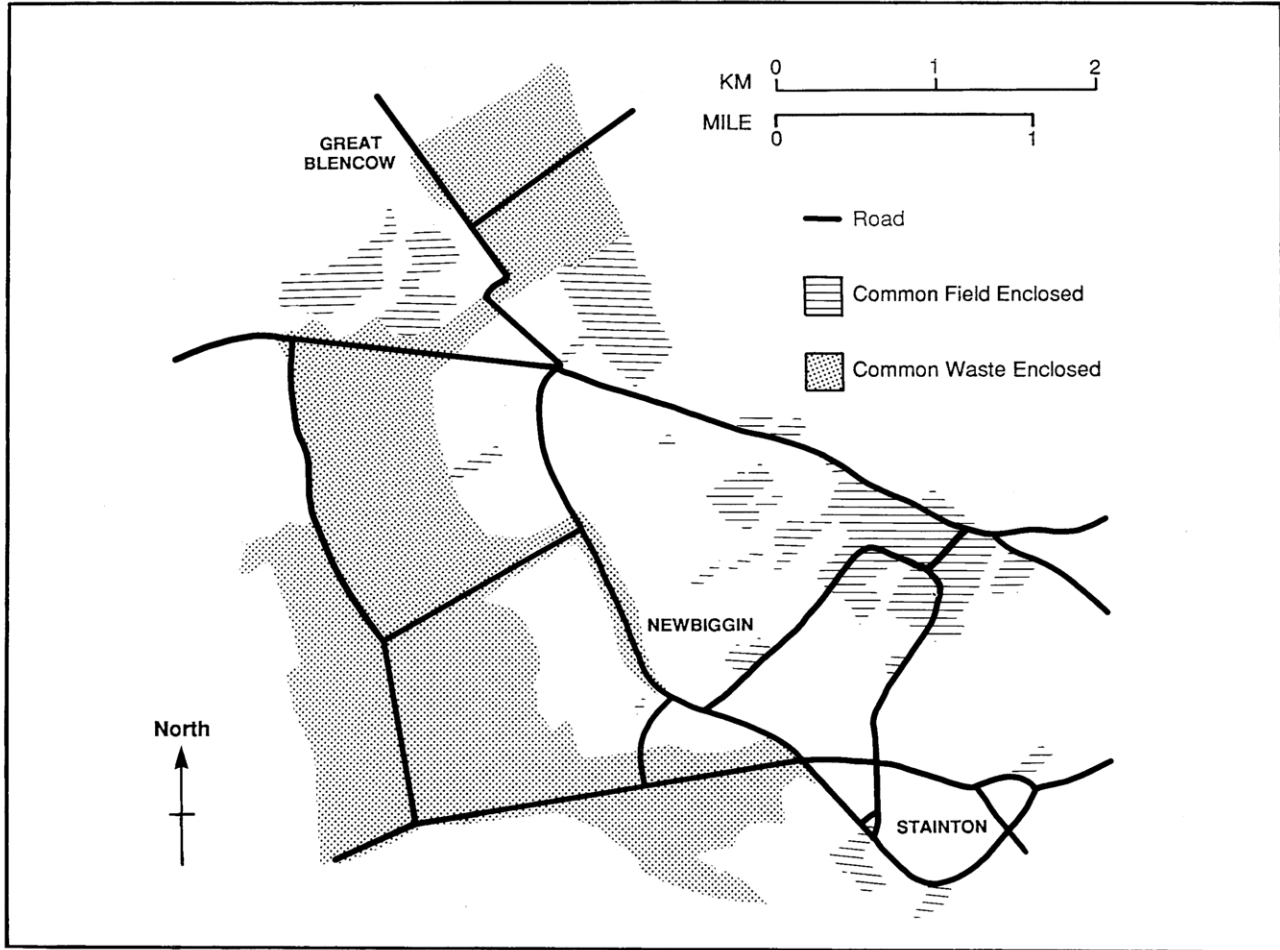


FIG. 1. The Stanton, Newbiggin and Blencow enclosure award.

and distinguished in the said Plan marked (I) with the number and letter (4N) Containing One Acre Three Roods and Twelve Perches and bounded on the East by the Quarry Ground hereinbefore set out near Stainton on the South East and South West by a part of the share hereinbefore set out to the said William Scott and on the North West by the said last mentioned Turnpike Road. . . .

The plan or map (originally labelled H but with an attempt made to erase the right upright and the crossbar) shows each allotment with the owner's name, the number/letter identification and the area.

In fact, things are not quite so simple. When an individual was allocated two or more parcels, all were given the same number and the area stated is that for all that individual's parcels. The area was entered on the map in only one of those parcels. This can result in one plot on the map being next to a visibly smaller one credited with a larger area. Still more confusing is the fact that in some cases allotments in the common arable fields were included with those on the common waste; only one number was given and only one total area.

Stainton and Newbiggin Common Fields

Section 2, Stainton common field, refers to Map A. As with Section 1, each parcel has a code number in the text – but these do not match those on the map. Moreover, while the table at the end of the Award ('A Schedule of the old improved Lands in the Townships of Great and Little Stainton in the Barony of Graystock in the County of Cumberland') gives each parcel a number that does appear on Map A, neither the parcels nor the numbers seem to relate to those in the text. There is no indication in the table which of these parcels (noted as reorganised and consolidated by voluntary exchange) was subject to enclosure at this time. The map uses two different colours for parcel boundaries, but these do not seem to have anything to do with ownership or state of enclosure.

Closer investigation of the map reveals that some parcels have a second number written on them, and this refers to the number in the text for parcels enclosed and allocated in this Award. There is still the problem that one landowner may be allocated more than one parcel in the common arable fields, and that all will be given the same identification number and a single area, sometimes combined with shares of the waste. It is therefore necessary to check each parcel on the map carefully to see if it has a second number and is thus part of the enclosure. Some tiny parcels noted in the text cannot be found on the map, and were presumably considered too small to show. Section 3, Newbiggin common field, refers to Plan E and follows the same format.

Great Blencow Common Field

In Section 4 the compilers of the Award, obviously feeling that they had not been sufficiently devious, tried something different. The text refers to plan D (actually another plan I – this one intended as an I from the beginning). However, in this case

the identification number from the text does not appear on the map – only the number from the table of parcels in the field which, as in the other sections, includes many not part of the Award. If the landowner is allotted only one parcel then it can be traced by finding a parcel in the table of exactly that size. However, most were allotted more than one parcel – but only the total area for all that person's parcels is given. For example, George Troutbeck was allotted five parcels in Great Blencow field totalling 44 acres 2 roods and 26 perches. In the table he has thirty parcels totalling 113 acres 2 roods 15 perches. Neither the table nor the map indicates which is which.

Some clue can be obtained from the listing in the text of the parcels adjacent to each allotment, though as there were only five landowners involved and the use of directions is rather approximate this does not always permit identification. The task was completed by entering every parcel in the Blencow field on a computer spreadsheet and converting all roods and perches to decimal fractions of an acre. Likely parcels identified from the text directions were then combined until the correct number of parcels totalled exactly the total area allotted to that individual. Text numbers and map and table numbers are equated in Table 1.

TABLE 1 <i>Parcels in Great Blencow Common Field</i>					
			area		
Owner	Text No.	Map Numbers	a	r	p
John Scott	10R	5e	5	0	13
George Troutbeck	10S	c 1c 22c 25c 27c	44	2	26
John & Mary Raincock	10T	34g 37g 41g	19	0	21
John Bell	10U	3d	1	3	32
Thomas Cowper	10V	a 4a 5a	12	3	33

Conclusion

There were some other minor problems. A few numbers were illegible, and there were some discrepancies in names and numbers between the text and the map. None of this is serious, as it is always possible to get areas approximately right from the map. Once it was established just which parcels were dealt with in this Award, the outer boundaries were transferred to outline 1:25000 Ordnance Survey maps. This involved careful measurement in places where original field boundaries have disappeared. The result is shown in Figure 1. The accompanying table lists all holdings as taken from the text, rearranged to separate holdings in the common arable fields from those on the common waste.

Schedule of Allotments

The following numbers (in acres, roods and perches) are taken from the Award. In the text of the Award, allotments are mostly in order of map number. Allotments in this version have been resorted to eliminate irregularities. Missing numbers (e.g. 7A) are not used in the original (except for 5A to 5L and 10W, which indicate public quarries and public watering places and for which no areas are given).

Any one allotment may include several parcels. However, where allotments include areas both on the common waste and in the common fields, these components have been separated and listed under the appropriate heading. An asterisk (*) in the common waste listing indicates an allotment with land also in Stainton Common Field.

The text shows that several parcels were consolidated, exchanged, sold or bequeathed before formal allotment. The names given below are those of the people who were actually allotted the land in the final award.

For lands in the common fields, the names of the specific fields or furlongs being enclosed are given.

Allotments on the Common Waste

(Map H: title modified to, and referred to in text as, I)

Map Ref	Name	area		
		a	r	p
L	George Troutbeck	63	1	16
M	John Bell	3	3	39
N*	Agnes Dawson, John & Mary Raincock	81	3	29
O	Blencow School	1	1	34
P	John Martin	62	2	27
Q	Elizabeth Simpson & James Wallace ¹	13	1	2
R	John Sowerby, John Turner & Thos Bowman	0	1	38
S	Thomas & John Redhead	5	0	0
T	John Scott	0	0	6
U ²	Isaac Todd	2	2	22
V	John Wilkinson Sr & Jr & Joseph Varey	0	2	26
W	Thomas Nicholson & David Cannon	2	3	29
X	Thomas Wilson	4	3	36
Y	Thomas Bushby	3	1	26
Z	David Harrison	3	1	26
1V ³	Joseph Varey	1	0	1
2A	Thomas Bushby ⁴	14	1	36
2B	Adam Thompson	7	2	15
2C	William & John Dawson	5	0	20
2D	Sarah Nicholson	6	0	27
2E	Joseph Todhunter	7	3	13
2F	John Thompson of Gill	16	1	6
2G	John Bristo Sr	29	0	15

2H	John Jr & Elizabeth Bristo	10	0	15
2I* ⁵	William Wattson	16	1	36
2K	John & Agnes Slee	12	0	12
2L*	William Garnet	23	0	9
2M	John Gale	4	3	0
2N*	John Nicholson Sr	2	0	16
2O	William Todd of Fold	3	1	0
2P	Edward Nicholson	10	2	7
2Q	John Green	3	0	25
2R	John Dawson of Newbiggin	1	2	21
2T	Peter Buckbarrow	0	3	33
2U	Isaac Todd	0	1	6
2V	John Todd	3	2	25
2V ⁶	John Wilkinson Sr & Jr & Joseph Varey	4	0	13
2W	William Armstrong	5	1	23
2X	Bridget Clarke & Jane Harrison	10	1	3
2Y	Anthony Allison Sr	4	0	12
2Z	William Thompson of Newbiggin	7	2	4
3A	Thomas Mattinson	14	2	9
3B	Richard Johnson	7	1	7
3C	George Jon	8	0	32
3D	Thomas Thompson	10	3	6
3E	Thomas Armat	8	2	25
3F	Lancelot Allinson	8	1	25
3G	Thomas Allinson	1	1	10
3H	William Garnet	4	0	23
3I	John Harrison	2	3	7
3K	David Willson	11	3	4
3L	Stephen Wray	15	3	5
3M	John Wilkinson of Hill	12	0	17
3N	Richard & Margaret Henderson	0	2	0
3O	John Swinburn	1	1	0
3P	William & Mary Hodgson	0	1	36
3Q	Abraham Monkhouse	0	1	11
3R	William Todhunter	0	1	16
3S	Christopher Armat	0	1	11
3T	John Nicholson	4	2	0
3U	Andrew Whelpdale	12	3	39
3V*	William Thompson	13	1	10
3W	John & William Wilson	10	1	31
3X	Joseph Allinson	9	2	18
3Y	George Winder, Thomas & Mary Robinson	1	1	22
3Z*	Matthew & Elizabeth Harrison	0	0	35
4A*	John Pearson	0	1	0
4B*	William Pearson	0	1	0
4C	Mary Wilson	0	0	35
4D	John & Ann Harrison	0	2	9

4E	Thomas Hodgson	0	0	25
4F	Charles Howard	449	2	35
4G	Edward Hasall	50	0	0
4H	Edward Hasall	191	0	10
4I	William Scott	17	2	30
4J ⁷	John Richardson	64	2	4
4K ⁸	Christopher Idle	13	3	32
4L	William Allinson	0	2	0
4M	John Gibson	7	1	13
4N	William Weightman	1	3	12
4O	Robert Dawson	5	0	0
4P	John Tyson	0	0	21
4Q	Anthony Allinson Jr	4	0	12
4R	Henry Wilson	0	2	31
4S	Lancelot Hodgson	2	3	22
4T	Joseph Mattinson	3	2	0
4U	Elizabeth Mattinson	0	2	12
4V	John Mattinson	0	2	21
4W	William Mattinson	0	2	21

Allotments in Stainton Common Field
(Map A)

Map Ref	Name	area		
		a	r	p
		[field name(s)]		
N	Agnes Dawson, John & Mary Raincock	1	1	23
				[Hempgarth]
2I	William Watson	0	2	19
				[Longbeck]
2L	William Garnet	1	1	27
				[Hags]
2N	John Nicholson Sr	1	2	14
				[Croft]
3V	William Thompson	1	1	26
				[Lord Croft]
3Z	Matthew & Elizabeth Harrison ⁹	0	3	13
				[Croft]
4A	John Pearson	0	0	12 ¹⁰
				[Cottage and garden]
4B	William Pearson	0	0	13 ¹⁰
				[Cottage and garden]
4I	William Scott	1	0	23
				[Lorshouses]
6A	William Thompson of Stainton	19	3	3
				[Crakethorn, High Herderens, Longendless]

6B	William Garnet	8	0	29 ¹¹	[Cow Close, Highhouse, Scawflatt]
7B	Isaac Allinson	2	0	38	[Crakethorn]
7C	John Nicholson Sr	3	0	16	[Scawflatt]
7H	John Thompson Sr	5	2	36	[Herderens]
7I	John Thompson Jr	1	1	30	[Herderens]
7K	John & Agnes Slee	11	1	8 ¹²	[Carl Rigg, Herderens]
7L	Christopher Idle	13	0	35	[Brownhow, Newclose or Herderens]
7M	William Weightman	10	1	0 ¹³	[Carl Rigg, Longendless]
7N	William & John Wilson	9	1	13 ¹⁴	[Branderstones, Standing Stones]
7O	William Scott	10	3	36	[Pillar Field]
7P	Edward Nicholson	8	1	5 ¹⁵	[Cowley Ash, Moorhows]
7Q	Robert Dawson	11	2	39	[Brownhow, Herbeck, Startup Close]
7R	John & Ann Harrison	2	0	4 ¹⁶	[Brownhow]
7S	William Dawson	0	1	12	[New Inclosure]
7T	John Nicholson Jr	0	3	36	[New Leas Head]
7V	John Bristo Sr	12	3	32	[Carl Rigg, Herbeck, Standing Stones]
7W	John Jr & Elizabeth Bristo ¹⁷	0	3	0	[Standing Stones]
7X	William Allinson	1	0	6 ¹⁸	[Branderstone or Halfendless]
7Y	Thomas Thompson	1	0	21	[Branderstone]
7Z	Thomas Nicholson	3	0	12	[New Leas]
8A	John Sisson	5	2	6	[Slapestones]
8B	Anthony Allinson Jr	7	1	17	[Houses and croft]

Allotments in Newbiggin Common Field
(Map E)

Map Ref	Name	area		
		a	r	p
9B	John Todd	8	1	21 ¹⁹
	[Gowbaras, Kildbank Close, Prydoles Close, Skirsgill] ²⁰			
9C	William Armstrong	11	2	22 ²¹
	[Forerigg and Prydoles, Ings Close, Old Ruft Close]			
9D	Joseph Varey	18	3	9
	[Ings, Old Leas, Old Ruft in Longlands, Outergills, Outgang, Paddock, Scawflatt]			
9E	William Garnet	3	1	0
	[Gowbarrow Close]			
9F	Isaac Gaskin	3	2	22
	[Keldbank Close]			
9G	John Wilkinson	1	3	1
	[Low Sidelands, Palls Prydoles Close]			
9H	John Wilkinson Jr	11	2	32 ²²
	[Old Longlands Close]			
9I	Thomas Nicholson & David Cannon	6	0	8 ²³
	[Longlands Close]			
9K	John Shepherd ²⁴	2	0	22 ²⁵
	[Longlands Close]			
9L	John Sowerby, John Turner & Thos Bowman	2	3	11
	[Longlands Close]			
9M	Jonathan Moorhouse	1	2	5
	[Longlands Close]			
9N	John Redhead	5	3	0
	[Longlands Close]			
9O	Charles Howard	7	0	23 ²⁶
	[Old Ruft Close]			
9P	Lancelot Allinson	6	0	23
	[Longlands Close]			
9Q	Lancelot Hodgson	5	3	1
	[Little Foreriggs, Old Ruft Close]			
9R	Joseph Mattinson	5	0	20 ²⁷
	[Winbarrow Close]			
9S	Mary Mattinson	3	1	23
	[Brakenhill Close]			
9T	Jane Mattinson	8	1	3
	[Newcroft Close, Windbarrow Close]			
9U	Richard Johnson	6	1	28
	[Old Lees, Old Ruft Close]			
9V	Thomas Armat	9	3	33
	[Howkeld, Ings, Old Ruft, Sidelands]			

9W	David Wilson	6	3	5 ²⁸
		[Ings Close, Longlands Close]		
9X	William Green	4	2	23
		[Longlands, Mossthorns]		
9Y	John & Hannah Harrison ²⁹	0	1	12
		[Mossthorns Outside]		
9Z	Joseph Allinson	0	2	30 ³⁰
		[Mossthorns]		
10A	John Wilkinson of Hill	7	3	37 ³¹
		[Foreriggs, Prydoles]		
10B	Stephen Wray	15	1	36
		[Back of Riggs and Crook, Forerigg]		
10C	William Thompson	5	1	18
		[High and Low Outergills, Sandy Knows]		
10D	George Mounsey	4	0	10
		[Crooks]		
10E	Henry Wilson	3	0	5
		[Ings, Windythrorns]		
10F	John Gaskin	7	1	12 ³²
		[Howheld Old Inclosure, Longendless]		
10G	John Green	6	0	19 ³³
		[Ings, Longendless]		
10H	William Todd	6	0	34
		[Crooks Close]		
10I	John Martin	1	3	33
		[Crooks or Longendless]		
10K	John & Mary Bainbridge ³⁴	3	2	12
		[Skawflatt Close]		
10L	John Gibson	0	2	15
		[Ings Close]		
10M	John & Mary Raincock	3	3	12
		[Ings]		
10N	Thomas Mattinson	1	2	30 ³⁵
		[High Cannon Close]		
10O	Thomas Hodgson	0	1	17
		[Roadside]		
10P	George Jon	2	1	1
		[Low Flatt]		
10Q	Elizabeth Mattinson	0	0	29
		[Skirskeld Head] ³⁶		

Allotments in Great Blencow Field
(Map I, referred to in the text as D)

Map Ref	Name	area		
		a	r	p
10R	John Scott	5	0	13
				[Moorhills]
10S	George Troutbeck	44	2	26
	[Baredoles, High Longlands, Firdales, Thornbarrow, Todhole and Moorhills]			
10T	John & Mary Raincock ³⁷	19	0	21
	[Corners near Hoghouse, Pottroods, Sandwick's Pottroods]			
10U	John Bell	1	3	32
				[Cattbutts]
10V	Thomas Cowper	12	3	33
				[Croft Houses, Thornbarrow]

Acknowledgments

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Notes and References

- ¹ Thomas Cowper on Map.
- ² 2V in Text.
- ³ This is the only allotment with the prefix 1. It and the lot 2V allotted to the same Joseph Varey and the Wilkinsons are entered in the Text between lots V and W.
- ⁴ William Graham on Map.
- ⁵ 2P on Map.
- ⁶ There are two lots labelled 2V. That for the Wilkinsons and Varey has no area given in the Text. The area is stated on the Map. See also note 3.
- ⁷ This is a very rare example of the use of both I and J as identifying letters in awards of this period.
- ⁸ Said in the Text to be on both Map A and Map I, but in fact entirely on the waste. For Idle's share of Stainton Field see 7L.
- ⁹ Matthew only in Table.
- ¹⁰ Estimated, as no area is given for the common field allotment in Text, Table or Map.
- ¹¹ 8-0-18 in Table.
- ¹² 11-0-18 in Table.
- ¹³ 10-0-39 in Table.
- ¹⁴ 10-1-25 in Table.
- ¹⁵ 8-1-15 in Table.
- ¹⁶ Area matches plot 17cc in Table, allotted to Anthony Allison Sr. Lot shown on the Map as 7R is 18cc which has a different area.
- ¹⁷ Elizabeth only in Table.
- ¹⁸ Allotment is not in Table.
- ¹⁹ 8-1-14 in Table.
- ²⁰ In the Table, Prydoles is usually abbreviated to Pry.

- 21 12-2-35 in Table.
- 22 11-2-11 in Table.
- 23 5-3-0 in Table.
- 24 George Smith in Table.
- 25 3-0-22 in Table.
- 26 8-1-14 in Table.
- 27 5-0-3 in Table.
- 28 6-3-5 in Table.
- 29 John only in Table.
- 30 0-2-26 in Table.
- 31 7-0-37 in Table.
- 32 Table total agrees with that of Text, but the lots listed in the Table add up to 4-1-12.
- 33 6-0-27 in Table.
- 34 Mary only in Table.
- 35 2-1-11 in Table.
- 36 Skirsgill Head in Table. Name of owner not legible in Text.
- 37 Agnes Dawson and John and Mary Raincock in Table.