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Whatever happened to Inglewood Forest? Landscape and settlement evolution in Inglewood Forest since Medieval times

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This paper has been adapted from a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Diploma in Lake District Landscape and Environment at the Centre for North-West Regional Studies, Lancaster University. It attempts to chart the progress of the conversion of Inglewood Forest from the medieval common 'waste' to cultivated agricultural land and to assess the effect, in landscape terms, of the eighteenth and nineteenth century parliamentary enclosures, concentrating on the Skelton Enclosure Award area and the Broad Field area of the Inglewood Enclosure Award. The enclosure of Inglewood Forest had a profound effect on the landscape of this part of Cumberland but its economic and social impact is less obvious. This paper may pose more questions than it answers but it is hoped that it will encourage further study of an area on the fringes of the Lake District National Park.

THE name 'Inglewood Forest' survives on modern Ordnance Survey maps.[1] However, there are few reminders to the casual observer of the former extensive 'forest' that covered the area between Penrith and Carlisle (see Figure 1).[2] Although a scattering of settlements existed on its fringes, large parts of Inglewood Forest remained unenclosed until the late eighteenth century when large enclosures took place at Skelton (5,000 acres), Sebergham (2,896 acres), Castle Sowerby (5,000 acres) and Dalston (2,500 acres), the largest of all being the enclosure of Inglewood as a block from 1819 (28,000 acres).[3] These parliamentary enclosures fundamentally changed the character of the area: the open common land with its unfenced drove roads and woodland/scrub was replaced by a network of long straight enclosure roads, formal rectangular fields, hedgerows with trees, new woods and isolated farms and cottages.

This article is based on research that attempts to chart the progress of the conversion of Inglewood Forest from the medieval common 'waste' to cultivated agricultural land and to assess the effect, in landscape terms, of the eighteenth and nineteenth century parliamentary enclosures, concentrating on the Skelton Enclosure Award area and the Broad Field area of the Inglewood Enclosure Award.[4] It utilises estate records, historical maps and tithe maps. The manorial records in Cumbria County Council's Record Office (CRO) relating to the duke of Devonshire's Cumberland estates in Inglewood and those of the Vane estate (Lord Inglewood) have been researched in some depth.[5]

I The extent of the 'waste' in the late sixteenth early eighteenth centuries

In various papers presented to the Society, Parker[6] and Graham[7] discuss in some detail the history of Inglewood as a royal forest.[8] From the end of the sixteenth century onwards, the common 'waste' was effectively divided into two distinct areas by the settlements and associated cultivated land along the Petteril valley (see Fig. 2). To

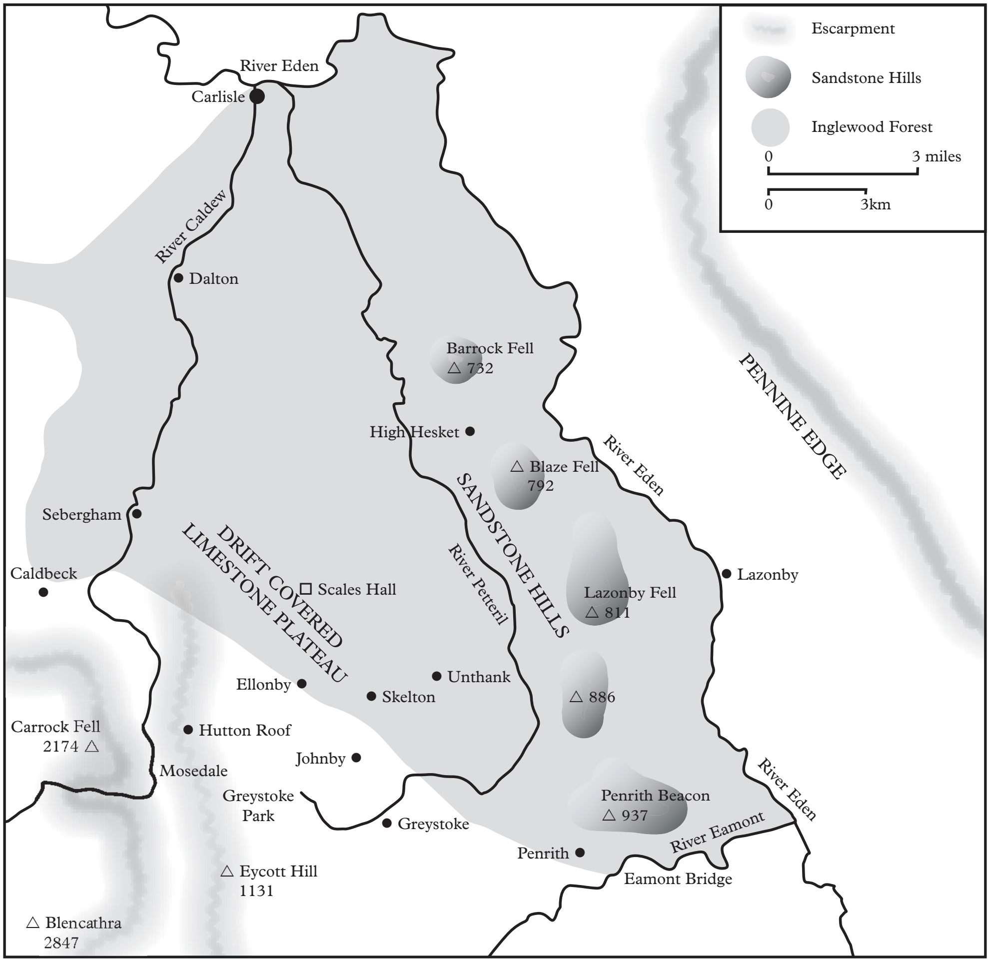

FIG. 1. Boundary of Inglewood Forest, *c.*1300 (Millward & Robinson, 1972).

the east, common land encompassed the sandstone hills stretching northwards from Penrith Beacon to Barrock Fell, with only one major incursion at High Hesket where cultivated land extended eastwards to Aiketgate and Nunclose. The eastern boundary of this area followed the limits of cultivated land along the Eden Valley. In a number of places, settlement along the eastern edge of the 'waste' is indicated by ribbons of cottages and houses that have replaced the original, probably timber, houses, as at Salkeld Dykes (North Dykes and South Dykes) and Edenhall.

Plumpton Park, a royal deer park dating from the time of William Rufus in the closing years of the eleventh century, occupied an area on the western side of the Roman road extending from Plumpton Head (Plumpton Wall Head on Donald's map) to Plumptonfoot. The name 'Plumpton Wall' on Donald's map suggests that a wall ran along the whole or part of the western side of the Roman road between these two points, a distance of some five kilometres. Sandstones walls are characteristic of this

FIG. 2. View across Broad Field enclosure landscape from Castle Sowerby common.

area but there is no trace of any ancient wall alongside the modern A6, all traces having been lost probably through road improvements over the centuries. The exact boundaries of Plumpton Park are uncertain but according to Nicholson and Burn (1777), when it was disparked in Henry VIII's reign, it was granted on a lease of 100 years to 'one Jack Musgrave, Captain of Bewcastle', who planted his five sons at, respectively, Boggle Hall, Plumpton Hall, Brackenburgh, Fairbank and Thornbarrow.[9] Based on this information and fieldwork, it is suggested that Plumpton Park extended westwards as far as the lands belonging to the manor of Hutton-in-the-Forest.

The string of present day and former farms (originally some 20 farm houses) along the Roman road between Plumpton Head and Plumptonfoot, together with their attached walled fields leading down to the Petteril, indicate how this part of the former deer park was converted to agricultural land from the late sixteenth century onwards. According to Tate (1943), Plumpton Park was largely enclosed by the time of James I (1603-1625).[10] It passed into the hands of the earls of Lonsdale in 1653.

West of the Petteril valley, Inglewood Forest stretched as far as Chalk Beck and from Hutton-in-the-Forest and Skelton in the south to Brisco Hill on the outskirts of Carlisle in the north. Encroachment along the valleys of the River Caldew and the River Roe and its tributaries, the Roe Beck and River Ive, divided the 'waste' into three areas: Broad Field and Sceugh north of the River Ive; Castle Sowerby, Skelton and Hutton Commons south of the River Ive; and Dalston and Sebergham commons west of the River Caldew.

Around the margins of the Broad Field/Sceugh area, various place-names indicate the extent of the settled area; Burthwaite and Burnthwaite to the north; Birkthwaite, Southwaite and Calthwaite in the Petteril valley; and Stockdalewath, Middlesceugh, Swathwaite and Braithwaite in the valleys of the River Roe and River Ive. On its periphery, lay a group of royal demesne farms (Barrock Park, Ellerton Grange,

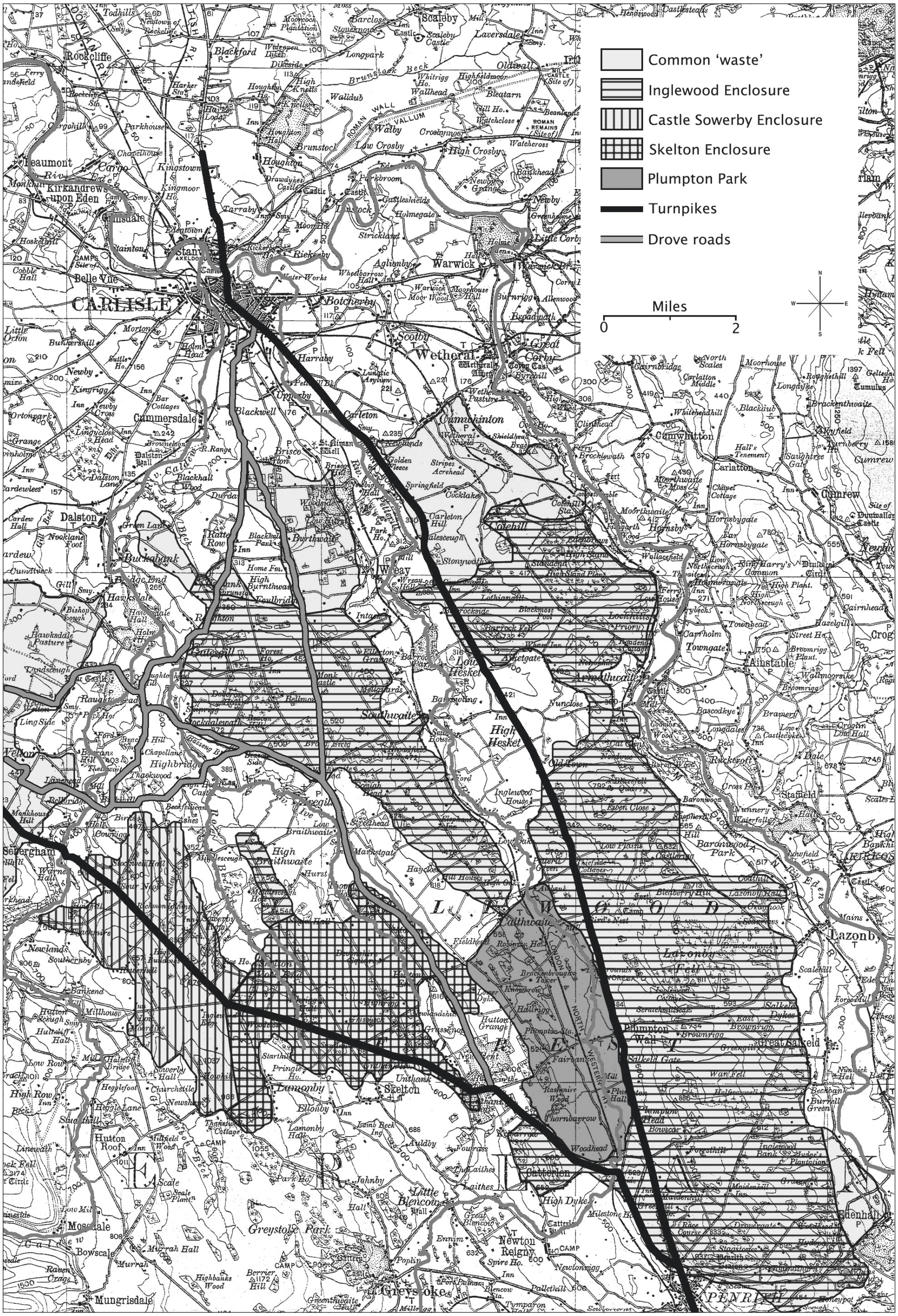

FIG. 3. Inglewood Forest in the early eighteenth century and extent of Enclosures (Based on half-inch to 1 mile OS Road Map, Sheet No. 2: Carlisle, 1913).

Wooloaks, Itonfield, Colt Close and Hay Close) which formed an area of leased land. Place names such as 'Unthank' near Raughton and 'Scales', south-east of Ivegill, indicate areas of illegal encroachments.

Encroachment on the northern edge of Castle Sowerby common was concentrated at Sowerby Row, a ribbon of houses and farms located on the edge of the common south of Roe Beck, each with a narrow land-holding extending from the edge of the common to the beck. At Skelton, the hamlet of Lamonby grew along the western edge of the common and a ribbon of houses formed the township of Unthank to the east of Skelton. At Hutton-in-the-Forest, the township extended northwards into the 'waste' as far as Hutton Row and Hutton End. Place names such as New Rent, Low Dyke, Redlane End and Fieldhead provide some indication of the limit of the incursions into the common north of Hutton-in-the-Forest. The settlement of Catterlen, with its Low Dyke and High Dyke, marked the southern extremity of an isolated area of common south of Plumpton Park.

II The effect of the parliamentary enclosures

The extent of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century enclosures is shown on a total of 13 award maps.[11] The extent of the Inglewood and Skelton enclosures is shown on Fig. 3. As a result of enclosure of the common, it was customary for the lord of the manor to be allotted a proportion of land as compensation for the loss of surface rights. This was translated into a number of allotments taking account of differences in the value of land in various parts of the common. The proportion amounted to 1/14th of the enclosed area in Inglewood[12] and 1/16th in Skelton.[13] The allotment in lieu of tithes amounted to 1/13th of the area, enclosed in one plot.

In the Inglewood Enclosure Award area, in order to allow reasonable time for hedges to become established, sheep and goats were not permitted in allotments for seven years unless hedges were fenced on both sides. A ten-year rule applied within the Skelton Enclosure Award area. These restrictions, which had cost implications for the owners of allotments, influenced the landscape in the short term. The limitations on the stocking of sheep to allow hedge establishment and the shortage of buildings suitable for cattle ensured the conversion of common pasture to arable land. However, various observers noted the deterioration in arable yields and the difficulty in applying the new arable rotations.[14] Hutchinson, writing in 1794, described the enclosure of land at Skelton: 'The late enclosed common lands appear in general to have been kept too long in tillage without renewing by laying down [leaving fallow], which has rendered it in many parts poor and barren.'[15] Consequently, there was a gradual drift back to grassland in the nineteenth century.

Twenty-four new stretches of road were prescribed at Skelton, with special provision for quarries to provide the materials. A span of 30 feet was generally a minimum width, with 40 feet the standard. One road at Skelton exceeds 60 feet. In the Inglewood award, 94 different lengths of road were described. The new enclosure road layout was perhaps the greatest influence on the future pattern of the landscape.

FIG. 4. Enclosure road north of Hardrigg Hall, Skelton Enclosure.

The area between the Petteril Valley and the Eden Valley and the Broad Field/Sceugh area were the last areas to be enclosed. Both areas exhibit the characteristic enclosure landscape of rectangular fields and hedgerows with trees, and isolated farms and cottages. However, in the Broad Field area, the rectilinear pattern of long straight roads is much more pronounced, perhaps reflecting the more gentle topography of this area. By comparing Hutchinson's map with the enclosure award map, the effect of the enclosure on the route of the former drove road across Broad Field from Foulbridge in the north to Itonfield in the south can be clearly seen. Whereas the drove road crossed Broad Field directly from north to south, it was replaced by a network of rectilinear roads on a north-west to south-east and north-east to south-west axis (see Figs. 5 and 6).

Furthermore, the large area involved allowed the creation of 12 substantial new farms such as Burble Farm, which coincides with allotment no. 1389 to I. W. and I. Taylor measuring 74 acres; Stonefaulds, which coincides with Isaac Parker's allotment of 112 acres; Monk Castle, which coincides with the allotment to John Bond of 246 acres, and Bellmont, which coincides with the allotment to Thomas Bell of 183 acres (see Fig. 7).[16] Together with the size and shape of the individual allotments, the influence of the enclosure movement is still apparent in the field pattern of the Broad Field area, north of Ivegill Road.

Skelton Common extended to the north and west of Skelton. The minute book of the Skelton Pasture Inclosure Commissioners, who held a number of meetings between August 1767 and January 1768, provides a register of the various landowners' claims of rights on the common in respect of which their allotments were made.[17] It also

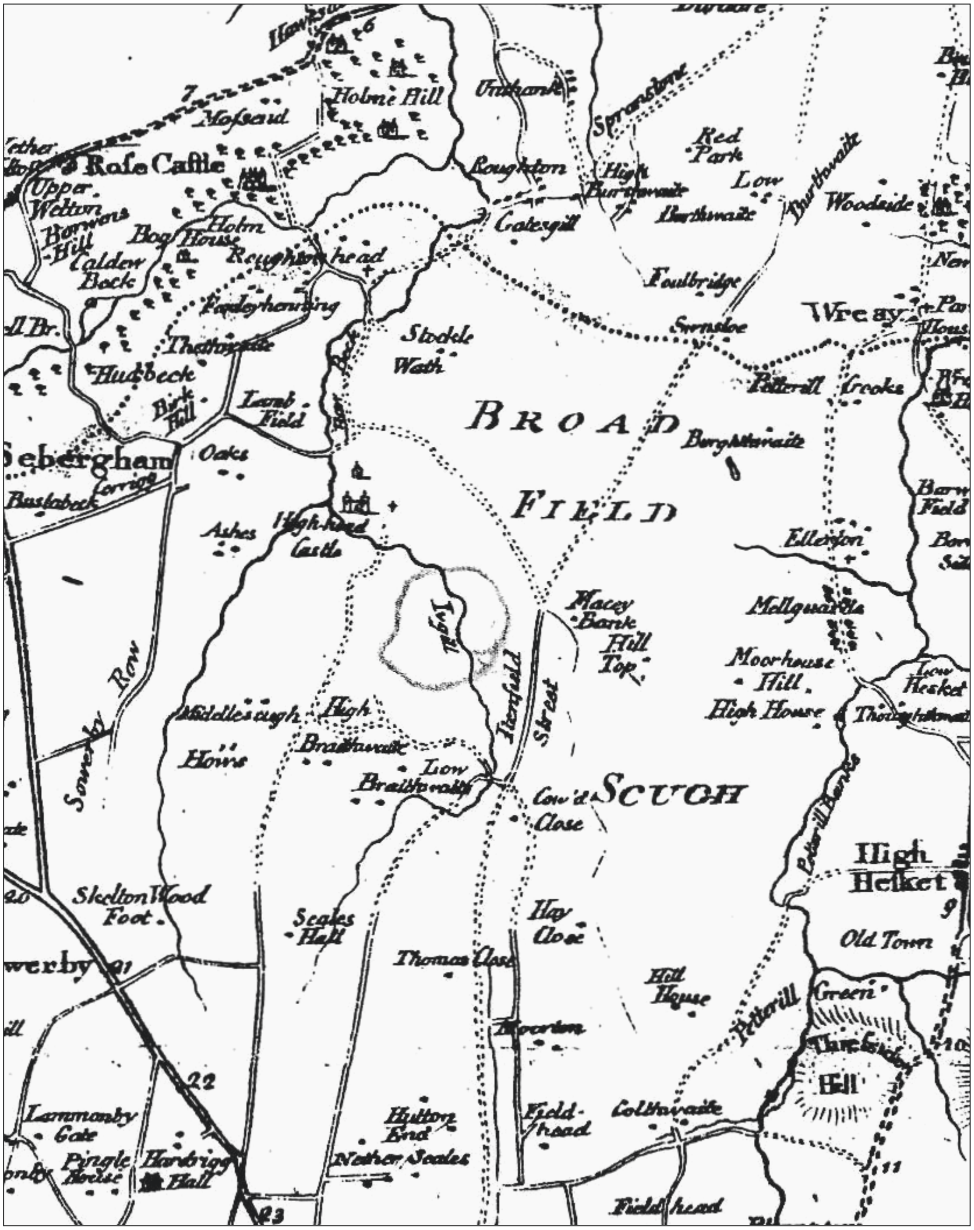

FIG. 5. Extract from Hutchinson's map, 1794.

provides an insight into the disputes that took place between the commoners of Skelton, Hutton and Castle Sowerby over the boundary of Skelton common and into the perambulations and meetings that took place to resolve the various objections. The minutes also record the evidence provided by some of the manor's residents, such as that of John Olivant, of Low Dike, Hutton (aged 89 years, born, bred and lifelong resident of Hutton) who was described as illiterate and very infirm.

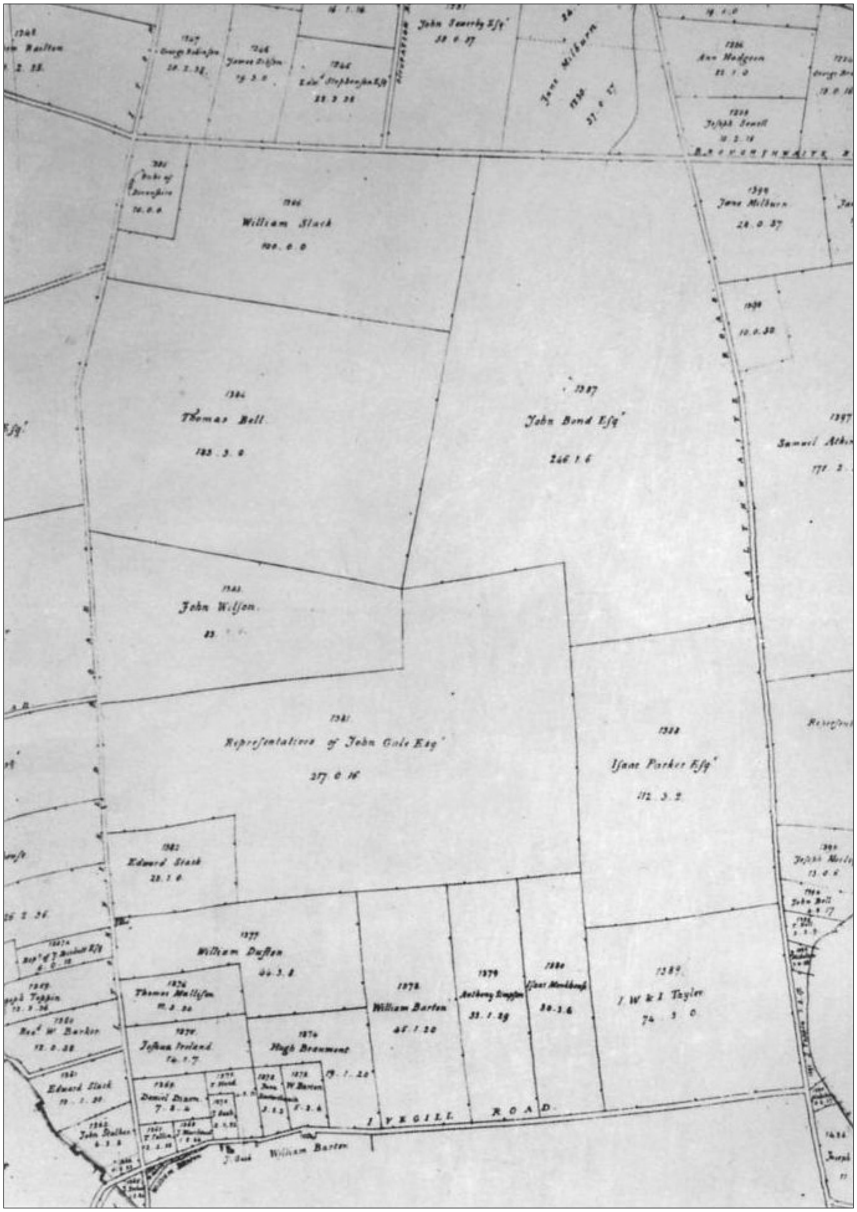

FIG. 6. Extract from Inglewood (Broad Field) Enclosure Award map, 1819 (CRO, QRE/1/135).

The 1769 Skelton Enclosure Award enclosed around 5,000 acres of common waste. The 1789 Award was an exchange award consolidating that of 1769 and included open field arable of approximately 412 acres.[18] The 1769 Award area has several distinct features. The allotments located close to Skelton, Ellonby and Lamonby are generally smaller than those situated at a greater distance from these settlements. This would seem to indicate that an attempt was made to attach land to holdings in

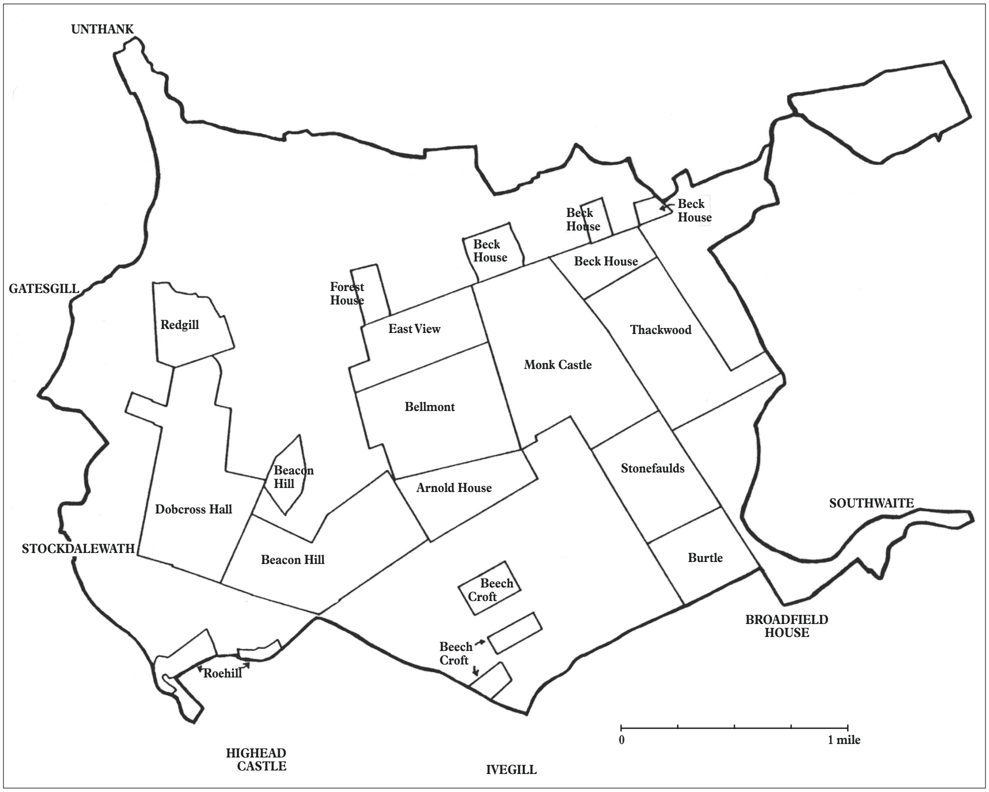

FIG. 7. New farms in Inglewood (Broad Field) Enclosure Award area (Humphries, 1993).

existing settlements where possible and to create new larger allotments further away, where they were well placed in relation to the new enclosure roads, such as those made in respect of tithes and the rights of the lord of the manor (see holdings identified as 'Rector of Skelton's Share' and 'Duke of Devonshire's Share' on enclosure award map) (see Fig. 8).

The farm at Devonshire Square is coincident with the allotment of the Duke of Devonshire (see Fig. 10). The present day field pattern is little changed from the original layout. The farm layout is characteristic of the enclosure landscape, with rectangular fields bordered by hedges and a centrally located farmstead arranged around a courtyard with a stack yard and garden. The farmhouse is substantial, with a date stone of 1777 on the barn.

III Skelton Parish: an example of the contrasting landscapes of Inglewood Forest

Although changes in agricultural practices during the twentieth century have resulted in considerable landscape change, the essential characteristics of the pre-enclosure

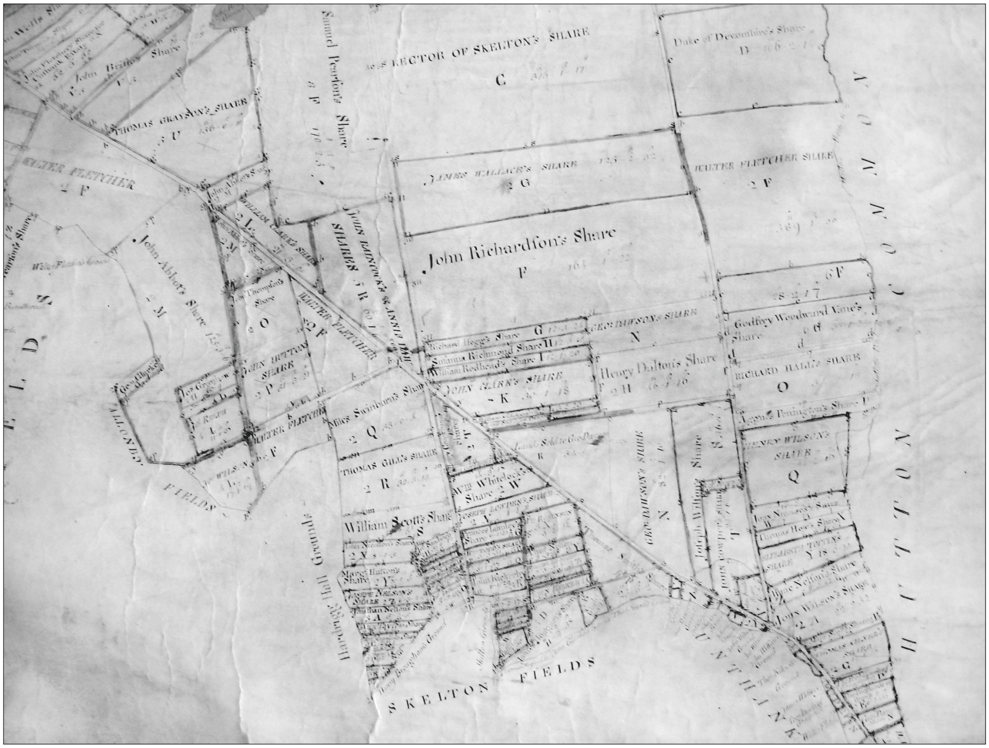

FIG. 8. Extract from Skelton Enclosure Award map, 1769 (CRO, QRE/1/71).

FIG. 9. The geometric allotments of the 1769 Skelton Enclosure award at Unthank, with the reverse-S enclosures of the Skelton open-field arable beyond.

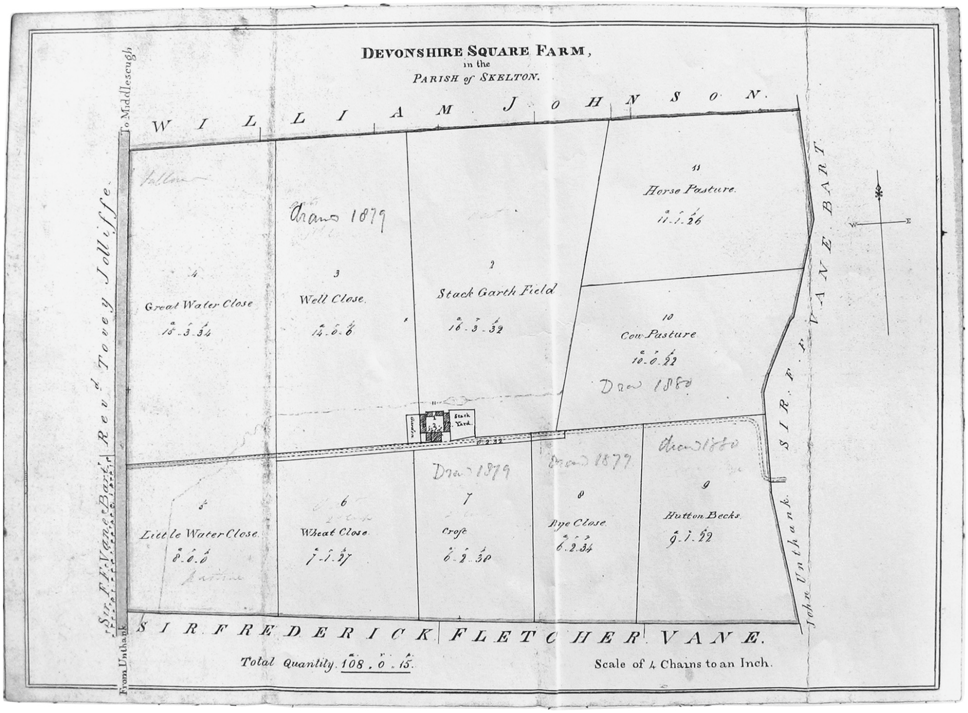

FIG. 10. Details of Devonshire Square Farm (CRO, D/MBS/4/140).

landscape around the fringes of Inglewood Forest and the enclosure landscape of the more central part of the forest remain. This contrast between the ‘ancient’ and ‘planned’ countryside, as described by Rackham, is a distinctive character of the Cumbrian landscape.[19] It is no better illustrated than at Skelton, where reminders of its long, narrow medieval strip fields, some preserving the gentle reverse-S shaped curves of the original open arable strips, sharply contrast with the landscape of parliamentary allotments to the north, with its regular fields, long straight roads and scattered farms and cottages.[20]

According to John Denton, Skelton (or ‘Skale-towne’) evolved in a location where people had anciently kept swine, sheep and milch beasts agisted in the forest and possessed shields, scales or cottages to rest in whilst gathering the summer profits from their goods.[21] Individual holdings consisted of irregular parcels of land called ‘furlongs’,[22] divided into strips or ‘riggs’, are distributed across the arable land and un-related to one another.

The enclosure of open-field arable, as at Skelton, preserved this layout in the pattern of curving strip-like fields. The 1789 award rationalised approximately 412 acres of open-field arable land and ancient enclosures within the existing parish. The award highlights the inconveniences of the existing scattered holdings and refers to the advantages arising from the exchanges. Of the 130 individual parcels of land included in the award, 65 are listed as customary, averaging 2.05 acres and 65 as freehold, averaging 4.31 acres. There were 46 new holdings, each averaging 8.42 acres.

An attempt has been made to map the extent of the former open-fields to the south and east of Skelton (see Fig. 11). Within the village, farms and cottages stretched northwards from Townhead to Townend Farm and along the ridge westwards towards Ellonby Hall. A track leads down past the church to a multiplicity of lanes, now much overgrown, that provided access to the former open-field arable strips and the enclosed meadowland. One lane, between banked high hedges, continues to the hamlet of Unthank, where it is possible to identify the extent of the former encroachments into the common, indicated by the pattern of small rectangular fields which were subsequently included in the enclosure area.

The areas deduced as open-field arable are distributed throughout the parish and can be distinguished from the enclosed fields used as meadow, which are more irregular in shape. The areas of former open-field arable are located on sloping ground, as at Kirk Rigg where the strips are aligned down the slope, never across it, presumably to aid drainage. Similar examples can be found either side of the road, which follows the ridge between Ellonby and Lamonby. It is also the case that the majority of the former strips are aligned in a south-west to north-east direction. This may be related to slope and aspect or may simply be coincidence.

The boundary between the pre-enclosure landscape and the enclosure allotments can be identified between Unthank in the east and Lamonby in the west by the obvious change in field pattern. A particularly good example occurs at Unthank where, beyond the geometric allotments of the 1769 enclosure award, the reverse-S shaped enclosures indicate the open-field arable area covered by the 1789 award. Around the northern side of Skelton, as well as a distinct change in field pattern, the boundary between the pre-enclosure and enclosure landscape is further emphasised where the new enclosure roads lead out of Skelton, Ellonby (at Hardrigg Hall) and Lamonby (at Starth Hill). The enclosure road north of Hardrigg Hall, at 60 feet wide, is a typical example with regular spaced hardwoods, predominantly oak and ash, in hedgerows.

IV Conclusions and further thoughts

In the area known as Inglewood Forest, climate and geology combined to create a wooded area unattractive to settlement and agriculture. Its management as a royal 'forest' preserved the wildness of this area well into the fourteenth century. However, from that time onwards, the days of Inglewood as primarily a hunting ground were over and, although permanent settlement in the 'forest' continued to be discouraged, the inhabitants of neighbouring communities were encouraged to use the area for grazing. Whilst, the substantial population increase of the second half of the sixteenth century led to a considerable number of encroachments, including houses, the majority were small, an acre or less. The result was a nibbling away of the edges of the manorial common or 'waste', while large areas of open common or 'waste' remained unenclosed, criss-crossed by unfenced drove roads.

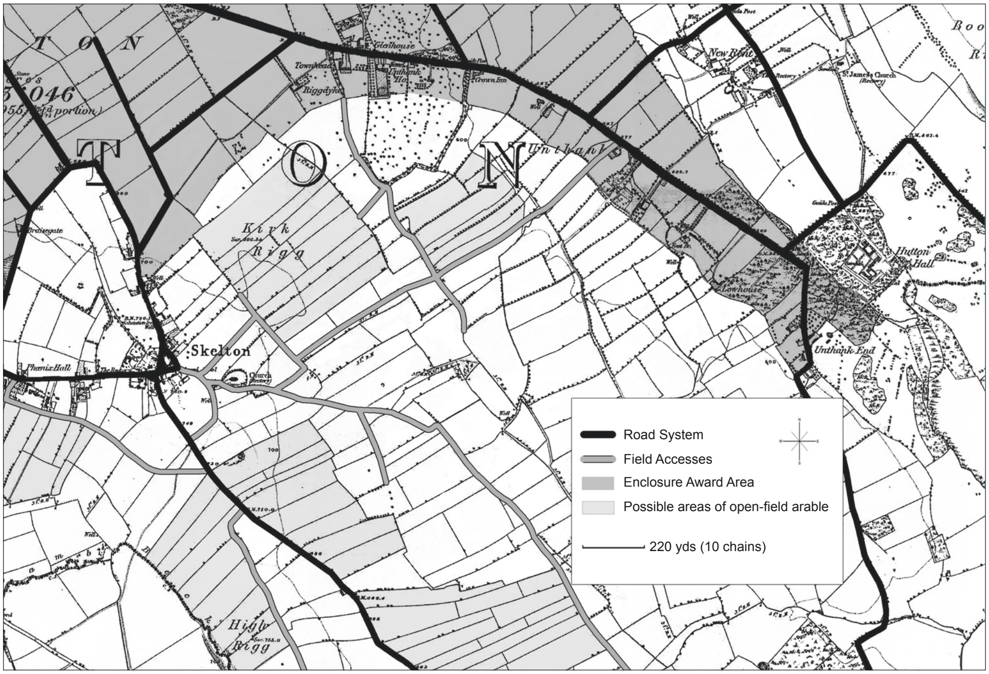

FIG. 11. Skelton Parish showing possible areas of open-field arable (based on first edition OS 6 inches to 1 mile map, no. XXXIX).

By the early eighteenth century, overstocking by tenants and an increasing number of cattle being driven through the area were putting pressure on the various commons within Inglewood. By that time, Inglewood Forest, which comprised mainly woodland scrub and grassland, existed in name only. The parliamentary enclosures of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries replaced the woodland scrub and grassland with rectangular fields, long straight roads, hedgerows with trees, and farm steadings. The impact of this process is no more apparent than at Broad Field, where the previously open grazing area, with a multiplicity of informal tracks, was replaced by a planned network of rectilinear roads and rectangular fields. Consequently, an area which retained its natural character the longest, now exhibits a landscape which is the most modern. The contrast between the evolutionary landscape of the medieval period and the parliamentary landscape of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is well illustrated at Skelton, where the field pattern of the former medieval open arable fields to the south and east of the village can still be detected and is in sharp contrast to the parliamentary allotments stretching north of the village.

As pointed out by Whyte,[23] although awards survive for all but a handful of enclosures, relatively few associated documents have survived and minute books detailing the work of the enclosure commissioners are even rarer. Some published figures for the costs of enclosure suggest that early Cumbrian enclosures, such as Skelton, cost considerably less per acre than those in open field areas of lowland England.[24] They also show that enclosure costs rose in the early nineteenth century, though with a great deal of

FIG. 12. Medieval enclosure below Skelton Church.

variability. Whyte, in his assessment of the public and private costs of parliamentary enclosure in Cumbria, highlights the complexity of the variables involved in estimating enclosure costs.[25]

The impact of enclosure costs on a peasantry consisting mainly of small proprietors is not clear. William Blamire described the dangers for small proprietors in East Cumberland of investing in enclosure and how, in the 15 years after Waterloo, many small proprietors who had borrowed heavily to finance enclosure were forced to sell up by a combination of falling prices, high interest payments on loans and a declining income from marginal land cultivated too intensively during the years of high prices.[26] The gradual drift back to grassland of the enclosed common land in Inglewood and Skelton and the subsequent amalgamation of land holdings is, perhaps, also an illustration of the effect of over-investment in the conversion of this barren 'waste' to arable land.

The enclosure of Inglewood Forest had a profound effect on the landscape of this part of Cumberland but its economic and social impact is less obvious. Further detailed research could provide a better understanding of the enclosure process in this area: how enclosure was undertaken, the costs and benefits of enclosure for the various parties involved, and the economic and social implications of enclosure. This article may pose more questions than it answers but it is hoped that it will encourage further study of an area of Cumbria on the fringes of the Lake District National Park.

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21 *John Denton's History of Cumberland,* edited by Angus J. L. Winchester, The Surtees Society and CWAAS, Vol. 213, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 131
22 The name 'furlong' derives from the Old English words *furh* (furrow) and *lang* (long). Dating back at least to the ninth century, it originally referred to the length of the furrow in one acre of a ploughed open-field (a medieval communal field which was divided into strips). The system of long furrows arose because turning a team of oxen pulling a heavy plough was difficult. This offset the drainage advantages of short furrows and meant furrows were made as long as possible. An acre is an area that is one furlong (220 yards) long and one chain (22 yards) wide. In modern usage an acre can, of course, be any shape
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