

Barn at Home Farm
Browsholme Hall, Bowland Forest Low,
Lancashire:
Historic Building Recording



July 2009

STEPHEN HAIGH

B u i l d i n g s A r c h a e o l o g i s t

11 Browcliff Silsden Keighley West Yorkshire BD20 9PN

Tel/Fax: 01535 658925 Mobile: 07986 612548

www.stephenhaigh.co.uk enquiries@stephenhaigh.co.uk

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SUMMARY

This report concerns one of the barns at the Home Farm at Browsholme Hall, in the Hodder Valley in Lancashire (NGR: SD 68334513). It is a large structure, eleven bays long, which probably dates from the early 18th century but has been extensively altered. Historic building recording was carried out in June 2009 for Mr Robert Parker before its conversion to non-farming use, to fulfil a condition of planning consent (the barn is listed, grade 2), and this record includes measured drawings, photographs, and a written description supplemented by the results of historical research.

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STEPHEN HAIGH

Buildings Archaeologist

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LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS REPRODUCED IN THIS REPORT

Almost all of the photographs taken during the recording are reproduced at the end of this report; the project archive does contain a full set of photographs however (see Appendix).

Photo Subject

- 1 West part of barn: north elevation
- 2 East part of barn: north elevation (rebuilt 20th century)
- 3 The barn, from the north-east
- 4 West part of barn, from the north-east
- 5 The west part of the barn, from the north-east
- 6 Arched cart entry in north wall of barn
- 7 Detail of chamfered breather in north elevation of barn (west part), ground floor
- 8 Detail of plain breather in north elevation of barn (west part), loft level
- 9 The west part of the barn, from the north-west
- 10 Typical inserted doorway in north side of barn (west part)
- 11 West gable, from the south-west
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- 13 West part of barn: west end, from the south
- 14 Cart entry in south side of barn (former porch)
- 15 Interior: remains of timber lintel of former south cart entry, from the north-east
- 16 Interior view of arched cart entry in north side of barn, from the south
- 17 Interior: west part of barn, ground floor, from the west
- 19 Interior: east end of loft in west part of barn, and arched entry in north elevation
- 20 Interior: west end of loft in west part of barn
- 21 Interior: detail of rough corbels below present trusses, in west part of barn
- 22 Interior: queen strut trusses in west part of barn, from the east
- 23 West part of barn: lean-tos on south side, from the south-east
- 24 Shippon in lean-to on south side of barn, from the west
- 25 Detail of raking truss in lean-to, from the east
- 27 West part of barn: lean-tos on south side, from the south-west
- 28 East gable of the barn
- 29 Blocked doorway in east gable of barn, with chamfered quoins
- 30 East part of the barn, from the south-west
- 31 Interior: east part of barn, ground floor, from the east
- 33 Shed to south of barn, from the north
- 36 Shed to south of barn, from the south
- 37 Yard to north of barn, from the west

BARN AT HOME FARM, BROWSHOLME HALL, BOWLAND FOREST LOW, LANCASHIRE:

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the results of historic building recording at a barn at the Home Farm (also known as Browsholme Farm), at Browsholme Hall in the civil parish of Bowland Forest Low, Lancashire. The work was commissioned by the owner and developer Mr Robert Parker, and carried out in June 2009, to fulfil a condition of planning consent from Ribble Valley Borough Council for the redevelopment of this part of the farmstead.
- 1.2 The barn is listed (grade 2) and is a large structure eleven bays long, which probably dates from the early 18th century or late 17th century, but has been much altered by changes in the height of the building, its roof structure, and the removal of internal fixtures.
- 1.3 The work was carried out in accordance with the standard brief from the Lancashire County Archaeology Service for recording grade 2 listed historic farm and other buildings, and included a photographic record, the production of a measured survey annotated with archaeological information, and a study of historic maps and other sources. This report will be submitted to the client, Ribble Valley Borough Council, the Lancashire County Archaeology Service and the English Heritage National Monuments Record, and published on the internet via the Oasis Project. The project archive will be deposited with the Lancashire Record Office.

2 Location and current use

- 2.1 Browsholme Hall lies in the civil parish of Bowland Forest Low, about 6km north-west of Clitheroe, 2km north of the River Hodder, and at the foot of the upland area whose summit is Waddington Fell. Home Farm stands 100m to the south-west of the Hall, at NGR: SD 68334513, and at an altitude of 185m above sea level (Figure 1). Although now in Lancashire, historically Browsholme lay in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in the township of Forest of Bowland (Lower Division).
- 2.2 Home Farm forms a complex in which stand a number of buildings of various dates, including the farmhouse and adjoining stables (relocated here in 1804 and now converted), on the north side of the yard. A range of barns and other buildings stand on the south side of this yard facing them, effectively forming an inner court; to the west, an irregularly arranged outer yard is formed by the barn recorded during this survey (on the south side), by a boundary wall on the north

side, and by modern buildings to the west. Various other buildings also stand to the south of the barn, some utilising the remnants of a yard or garden wall, although only one of these building is of historic date and was worthy of recording (Figure 2).

- 2.3 At the time of recording the barn had recently ceased to be used for farming, awaiting redevelopment; a large new building is presently under construction to the north-west of the site, to house farming operations.

3 Planning background

- 3.1 The barn is listed (grade 2) as being of special architectural or historic interest:

Barn, probably late C18th. Sandstone rubble with slate roof. The north-west wall, facing the farmyard, has a wide entrance with segmental arched head towards the left. Further right are 4 blocked doorways with plain stone surrounds, now replaced by modern windows. Above is a pitching door with plain stone surround. The ventilation slits have chamfered surrounds. The gables have copings with footstones. The right-hand gable wall has chamfered ventilation slits, a modern wide entrance with plain reveals, and a blocked pitching door above. The barn continues to the left with a lower roof level and has openings with plain stone surrounds and a gable with coping. The main barn has bolted queen post trusses.

- 3.2 Planning consent was granted by Ribble Valley Borough Council on 17 January 2008 for the conversion of the barn and a detached store for functions and tourism use, one aspect of a scheme which also aims to relocate the farming operations at the site (application nos 3/2009/1093 & 1094). Both consents include a condition that a detailed record of the buildings at the site be made before development, which this report and the project archive are intended to provide. Although the condition was imposed by the local planning authority, the Lancashire County Archaeology Service as the authority's advisor requested its imposition, and is to be a principal recipient of the report.

4 Historical background

- 4.1 The present Browsholme Hall was established in the early 16th century (*circa* 1507) by Edmund Parker, whose predecessors had established themselves at the site in the 14th century, and who for many generations held the tenancy of a vaccary (cattle farm) there; previously the Parkers were associated with Alkincoats at Colne, where they were documented in the 13th century. The freehold at Browsholme was bought from the Crown in 1607 by Thomas Parker, and subsequently the family ascended the economic and social scale, acquiring land and other assets throughout the region (mainly in Yorkshire and Lancashire), a process assisted in part by a number of advantageous marriages, such as that of Thomas Parker to Bridget Tempest in the 17th century, and of

Edward Parker to Ellen Barcroft in the early 19th century, and this increasing wealth and influence led to many additions and alterations being made at Browsholme Hall, which express this¹. The Hall and much of the Browsholme estate is still owned by the Parker family, although some of the outbuildings are now held separately.

- 4.2 A large number of the Parker family records are deposited at the Lancashire Record Office (under the reference DDB), but very few of those concerning property relate to Browsholme itself, the majority instead referring to other holdings in the region, while a brief examination of some accounts (DDB 76) does not appear to identify any items which can be linked to the barn. However, an important document is a plan of Browsholme included in a volume of surveys and plans made in 1765 for Edward Parker, which clearly shows the barn, as one of three linear buildings south-west of the Hall, with a porch in the middle of its south elevation, facing onto a field (Figure 3). It is included on a page which shows the "Browsholme Demesne in hand". The first edition Ordnance Survey 6" to the mile (1:10,560) map, surveyed in 1847, shows the barn to have a similar outline, although the lean-to which today stands on its south side appears to have been added to the west of the porch since 1765. This later map also shows that a large walled garden had been built in the intervening years, in the field to the south-east of the barn (Figure 4). The OS 1:2500 map of 1907 seems to show the same general outline of the building but in more detail, and with some subdivisions which do not relate to those surviving today (Figure 5). It has not been possible to obtain other editions of this map locally.
- 4.3 Another useful source is an aerial photograph taken in 1960 (Figure 6). It shows the barn with its present stepped roof line, and with only a small opening in the west gable, where there is now a wide doorway. It also shows the area to the south and west, including the small walled yard or garden, largely as shown on the 1908 map, and before the addition of the various sheds which now occupy much of this area.
- 4.4 Mr Parker, the present owner, and his tenant farmer, recall that there was a fire in the barn in the 1920s, when the present roof was constructed over the west part of the barn. They also recall that the north wall of the east part of the barn was rebuilt at some time in the 20th century, but it is not clear whether this end of the building was reduced in height at that time or previously.
- 4.5 The barn recorded is a substantial structure, and its size is no doubt a function of its role as part of the Browsholme estate, but scale aside, in many aspects it differs little from other barns in the district and appears to have served as a "combination barn", in which livestock could be housed, along with their feed and

¹ Brazendale, D 1994 *Lancashire's Historic Halls*

other crops. Traditional farm buildings such as these, great or small, are of historical interest because they contribute to an understanding of the vernacular architecture and past farming systems of the region. As a group they are under threat due to redundancy and neglect, as well as their potential for conversion, and records of them can help provide an understanding of this diminishing and irreplaceable stock.

5 Recording methodology

- 5.1 The historic building recording was carried out on 15 June 2009 and involved photography, the production of measured drawings, and a written account.
- 5.2 The photographic record was made using a medium format camera with perspective control and other lenses, and black and white film for its archival qualities. External and internal photographs were taken, generally using either a 1m or 2m ranging pole marked with 0.5m graduations as a scale, and the locations of the photographs are shown on a site plan and copies of the floor plans. All the photographs have been printed to a size of 7" x 5" or 10 x 8", and form part of the project archive; a selection are also copied in this report, where they are referred to by numbers in **bold**.
- 5.3 The drawn record comprises ground and first floor plans and a cross-section of the main range, as well as a plan of the small detached outbuilding. These drawings show all significant archaeological detail, and employ conventions based on those specified by English Heritage². The plans are based on a survey by the architects Sunderland Peacock and Associates.

6 Description of the buildings

- 6.1 The barn forms a long, linear range measuring 35.5m long, aligned approximately south-west to north-east but, in the following account, considered to run from west to east. It now comprises two distinct parts: the longer, taller west part, and the lower east part (**1,2**), a division which is only partly a consequence of modern alteration, as the cart entry and threshing bay to east of centre appears always to have formed a passage between the two. Neither end of the barn has its original roof level: the roof over the west end has been raised by approximately 0.5m, while the east end has been lowered by an unknown amount, but probably by some 1.0 to 1.5m. This has a roof covering of blue slate with a tile ridge, while the taller west end has a concrete tile roof, both of the 20th century.

² English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*

West part

- 6.2 The west part of the barn is two storeys high, and on a slight slope with ground level falling away to the west (3-5). Its north side, which can be considered its front, is built from random sandstone rubble with sandstone or gritstone dressings of varied character and date. At the left is the cart entry, which has punch-dressed quoins and voussoirs to a shallow segmental arch (6), which may be original, but whose form is suggestive of the late 18th or 19th century, ie. more recent in character than some other features in the building, although there are no clear breaks in the surrounding masonry to indicate that it is secondary. The adjacent gable, which now rises above the lower east roof, has plain kneelers and has clearly been built up to this level in a secondary phase: originally, it is thought that the roof would have been continuous along the range, at a level intermediate between the two. A faint and uneven horizontal difference in the external stonework in the north elevation, near the eaves, appears to be evidence that building has been heightened by between 0.5m and 1.0m, which accords with more concrete evidence inside the building for such a change (described in detail below).
- 6.3 To the right of the cart entry is a series of breathers set in two rows, at ground and first floor level, many of them now blocked; the rows are not level, but descend slightly, with ground level, down towards the west end. The breathers are not aligned with each other vertically: there are four in the lower row and six in the upper, all regularly spaced, with the latter corresponding with the roof bay divisions. Those in the lower row are distinguished by their chamfered surrounds (7), suggestive of a 17th century date, and contrasting with those in the upper row which are plainer (8). The other openings in this wall are all secondary, ie. they have been inserted, at least in their present forms: they have monolithic jambs with parallel tooling (9,10), and the rubble "packing" around them can be seen in many cases, factors which suggest that these openings were put in in the 18th or 19th century, in a re-organisation of the building's interior, perhaps when it was subdivided to accommodate livestock rather than crops. There are four such doorways on the ground floor, all of them subsequently altered in the 20th century, and there is also a forking hole to the hay loft with similar dressings: the fact that this cuts through the topmost parts of the wall indicates that it was put in after the heightening of the building.
- 6.4 About 1m from the west gable, in both front and rear walls of the barn, there is a suggestion of a vertical masonry break which could be accounted for by a rebuilding of the west gable, but this is a tentative supposition at best. This end of the building is of similar random rubble with small, edge-laid quoins, plainly shaped kneelers, and weathered coping which may have been hollow chamfered originally (11). It has three rows of kneelers: the lower two rows are chamfered while the top row are plain (a pattern which contrasts with those in the north

side). There is also a small opening near the ridge, perhaps an owl hole, and a blocked forking hole which has rebated jambs with external hinges, and is 18th or 19th century. The wide doorway on the ground floor is obviously modern, but the aerial photograph of 1910 shows a small opening here, perhaps a mucking out hole.

- 6.5 In the south side of the barn, the cart entry is not in its original form (**14**), and appears to have been moved here in the 19th or 20th century: it contains a pair of harr-hung doors set into a timber lintel, an arrangement which is clearly modern. Previously the doors were set back from their present position, and there is the stub of a timber lintel visible, about 1.5m below the present tie-beams, to indicate their location (**15**). This entry would then have formed a covered porch (as shown on the map of 1765 – see figure 3), the west side of which has been extended southwards, to form the side of the later adjacent lean-to. A keep-hole in this wall, which would have faced into the porch, has since been knocked through to form a small opening into it.
- 6.6 To the west of here, little can be seen of the barn's principal elevation because of the later accretions of various dates. However, observation inside the building shows at least two breathers on the ground floor and six on the upper floor (mostly blocked) which are now hidden by these lean-tos, clearly indicating that these additional buildings are of later date (**12,13**).
- 6.7 There is little of individual interest to be recorded inside the west part of the barn, as the present arrangement is one of a large cowshed with modern hay loft over, extending from the west gable up to the breeze block wall which separates it from the threshing bay (**15**); both cowshed and threshing bay have concrete floors. The walls in this area are rendered or limewashed, with only a few blocked openings discernible on the ground floor (**16,17**).
- 6.8 At loft level the walls in the west part of the barn are of bare rubble, which enables a better understanding of the building's development. The main point of interest is that the roof has been heightened by around 0.5m, as can be seen by the rough stone corbels, set well below the present trusses (**19-22**). The most likely explanation for this is that the eaves have been raised, as is faintly visible on the exterior faces of the long walls (but not the west gable); a possible alternative is that the earlier roof structure used steeper principals, with curved feet. The present roof structure comprises six bolted, softwood, queen strut trusses, reputed to date from the early 20th century and to have been constructed after a fire.
- 6.9 The pattern of breathers in the long walls, and the apparent absence of any larger original openings to the west of the threshing bay, suggest that these six bays were open to the roof originally, without a loft, implying that they served for

crop or hay storage, rather than animal housing. However, the inserted doorways in the north side seem to indicate that the building was subdivided, possibly to house livestock, in the late 18th or 19th century, a situation also hinted at by the depiction on the 1908 map.

Outshot

- 6.10 The stone-built outshot or lean-to on the south side of the barn is itself attributable to three different phases of construction: the earliest is probably that next to the cart entry (23). Its south-east quoin is of rock-faced stonework of 19th century appearance, but otherwise its walls are of roughly coursed, squared rubble, and the raking truss over it is of pegged oak, which suggests the 18th or early 19th century at latest. The ground floor has its own external doorway and small openings to south and east (the latter the former keep-hole), and it forms a narrow shippon for young stock, with two boskins (stall dividers) in poor condition, mostly of oak (24). A small loft over it has wide boards and is largely inaccessible, but above it can be seen the single raking truss (25,26), effectively half of a king post truss with angled strut. To the west of this part, and clearly butting up to it, is a pair of small stores or loose boxes, of stonework similar to that of the barn itself, while the west side of these is formed by what appears to be an earlier wall (27). These two stores have softwood roof timbers.

East part

- 6.11 This is the smaller part of the barn, comprising four bays as opposed to the six of the west end, but is some 1.9m wider. Proportionally less of its historic fabric survives: it has already been noted that its roof level has been lowered, and that the north side (2) was rebuilt in the 20th century, which accounts for the sawn stone dressings to the three windows there. The remaining part of the east gable is the most significant aspect of the building, as it has three ground floor doorways with chamfered, quoined jambs, of 17th or early 18th century character, although the outer two are now blocked and the central one has an immovable sliding door covering it (28,29). The rest of the wall is mostly of random rubble, with a pair of blocked breathers to either side of a forking hole (also blocked), the latter with timber lintel under a crude drip mould, and evidently inserted. The kneelers and hollow chamfered coping are the same as on the west gable, and clearly were re-used when the gable was lowered. The south elevation is almost entirely obscured by various pens and vegetation (30).
- 6.12 Inside this end of the barn there is very little to observe, as it has been re-roofed with steel trusses, limewash and render coat the walls, and no historic internal fixtures have survived the transformation to a modern shippon (31,32). The wall forming the west end, separating it from the threshing bay, appears to be an insertion as joints are visible at either end of it, and there may not have been a

masonry division here historically. The major clues to the original arrangement within this end of the building are the three doorways in the east gable, which can be interpreted as having led into a timber-framed shippon, with a central feeding passage running from the middle doorway, onto which faced two rows of stalls, with a hay loft overhead. Such an arrangement is relatively common in barns in the Bowland district, in examples which are thought to be of late 17th or 18th century date (eg. High Laithe at Tosside and at High Barn, Dean Slack, near Slaidburn³).

Shed to south of barn

- 6.13 A small shed to the south of the barn was evidently built between 1847 and 1907 (see figures 4 and 5), and was added to the existing, tall west wall, of the large garden there. It has walls of coursed rubble and faces north, where a pedestrian doorway with monolithic jambs is the only entrance (33,34). Three plain openings light the west side (35), and the south side has an incomplete circular window with moulded edge, which appears to have been re-used from another building (36). The roof is of stone slate and a single pitch, carried on two raking softwood trusses. It is not clear for what this structure was intended, but it was most likely built as a shippon, but no fixtures survive inside to indicate.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The barn at Browsholme was built as an unusually large example of its type, which can be attributed to its role in serving the home farm of the estate, a holding of unknown size, but potentially much larger than the majority of farms in the district. Although its exact date is not known, the map of 1765 clearly shows that the barn was extant by then, as the westernmost of a group of three substantial buildings forming the south side of the yard; given the architectural styles used it is thought that it may have been built as early as the late 17th century, but the early 18th century is more likely. It was eleven bays in length, with the wider, shorter east end housing a shippon for a relatively large number of cows, perhaps some 20 in number, with a hay loft overhead, in the manner of the combination barns found throughout the district. To the west of this was the threshing bay and beyond it a further six bays, which appear to have been used simply for storage, and they may have been intended for a relatively large volume of arable crops, given the apparent absence of doorways which livestock would have needed. However, the insertion of doorways in the north side shows that later its use changed, possibly to house cattle, as pastoral farming grew at the expense of arable.

³ Stephen Haigh 2005 *High Barn, Dean Slack, Smalden Lane, Slaidburn, Lancashire: Archaeological Building Recording*; also 2006 *High Laithe, Brockthorn, Tosside, Lancashire: Archaeological Building Recording*

- 7.2 The general appearance of the building has changed considerably and the lowering in height, and re-roofing of the eastern part gives the impression of two largely separate buildings, but originally the barn would almost certainly have had a continuous roof line, albeit lower than the present roof over the taller west part, where the corbels and associated masonry near the modern roof trusses suggest that the building was 0.5m lower than at present, although this is not borne out by the appearance of the west gable, and so to some extent this remains an unresolved question.
- 7.3 As the barn forms part of a complex of farm buildings, including at least one other barn within the farmstead, and no doubt others dispersed around the landholding, the barn should not be considered in isolation, as a better understanding of the building would be provided by a more general study of the history and development of the farm itself.

The author would welcome any relevant additional information or notice of inaccuracy in this report.

Appendix: Contents of the project archive

To be deposited with the Lancashire Record Office

1 file, containing:

- a copy of the report
- full set of black and white photographs and negatives
- site notes (annotated plans etc)
-

Complete list of photographs taken, in film order

Photo	Film	Frame	Subject
3	1	1	The barn, from the north-east
2	1	3	East part of barn: north elevation (rebuilt 20th century)
1	1	4	West part of barn: north elevation
4	1	5	West part of barn, from the north-east
5	1	6	The west part of the barn, from the north-east
6	1	7	Arched cart entry in north wall of barn
9	1	8	The west part of the barn, from the north-west
	1	10	Same as 1/11
11	1	11	West gable, from the south-west
12	1	12	West part of barn, from the south-west
13	1	13	West part of barn: west end, from the south
27	1	15	West part of barn: lean-to on south side, from the south-west
23	1	16	West part of barn: lean-to on south side, from the south-east
14	1	17	Cart entry in south side of barn (former porch)
24	1	18	Shippon in lean-to on south side of barn, from the west
30	2	1	East part of the barn, from the south-west
34	2	3	Shed to south of barn, from the west
33	2	4	Shed to south of barn, from the north
35	2	5	Shed to south of barn, from the south-west
28	2	6	East gable of the barn
7	2	7	Detail of chamfered breather in north elevation of barn (west part), ground floor
10	2	9	Inserted doorway in north side of barn (west part)
8	2	10	Detail of plain breather in north elevation of barn (west part), loft level
18	2	11	Interior: west part of barn, ground floor, from the east
17	2	12	Interior: west part of barn, ground floor, from the west
31	2	13	Interior: east part of barn, ground floor, from the east
32	2	15	Interior: east part of barn, ground floor, from the west
22	2	16	Interior: queen strut trusses in west part of barn, from the east
21	2	17	Interior: detail of rough corbels below present trusses, in west part of barn
20	2	18	Interior: west end of loft in west part of barn
19	3	1	Interior: east end of loft in west part of barn, and arched entry in north elevation
	3	3	Same as 3/1
25	3	4	Detail of raking truss in lean-to, from the east
26	3	5	Detail of raking truss in lean-to, from the east
15	3	6	Interior: remains of timber lintel of former south cart entry, from the north-east
16	3	7	Interior view of arched cart entry in north side of barn, from the south
29	3	9	Blocked doorway in east gable of barn, with chamfered quoins

36	3	10	Shed to south of barn, from the south
38	3	11	Yard to south of barn, from the west
37	3	12	Yard to north of barn, from the west

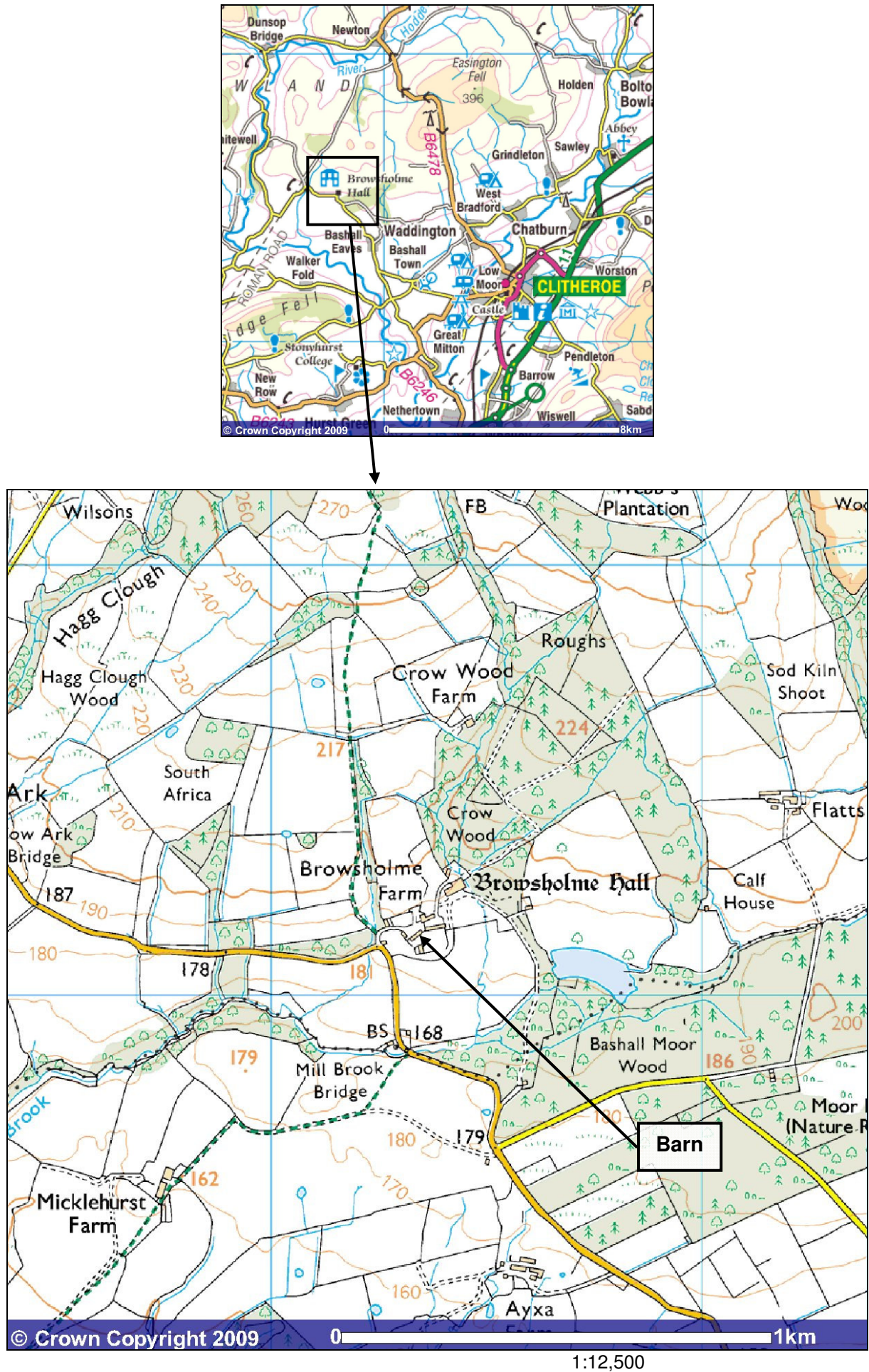


Figure 1: Location maps

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