

WESTERDALE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MIEVEAL SETTLEMENT AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

By CAROL WILSON

Introduction

Settlement studies of the mid-20th century placed an emphasis on the central zone of 'village England' where nucleated villages stood amidst their common fields (Homans 1960, 21). Regions outside of this central zone were identified as areas of scattered farmsteads or small hamlets (Homans 1960, 21). More recent work, however, has shown many areas of scattered farmsteads within the 'central zone' and probably an equal number of nucleated-villages-with-their-common-fields amongst areas of dispersed farmsteads (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000). Research, moreover, has tended to focus on the Midlands, East Anglia and the south-west (Lewis *et al.* 2001; Jones and Page 2006; Turner 2006). Areas of the north of England, and in particular North Yorkshire, have received relatively little attention (Butlin 2003, 283; Roberts 2007). By way of contrast the present work considers a moorland settlement and the significance of its landscape today.

Westerdale is the most westerly dale in the valley of the River Esk in North Yorkshire, a river that rises as a series of rivulets known as Esklets high up within the dale. It is a twin-pronged dale and its natural features combine deep-wooded 'gills' or ravines with open moorland as well as areas of relatively level cleared land that at one time made up the common fields and today comprises the pasture for sheep and cattle (Fig. 1).

Westerdale of the 21st century is made up of a single village street of 30 houses with as many outlying farms. Its total population is 129. There are just eight working farms with sheep and/or cattle; there is very little arable land. Most of the present houses of the main street were built in the 18th or early 19th century. The development of the village has largely been along its eastern side with these houses taking in part of the former village green for front gardens (Fig. 2). The parish church, Church Farm and just a handful of cottages lie on the western side. It no longer has a shop or Post Office and its village school and public house closed long ago. Ten miles from the nearest market town, it is surrounded by open moorland and lies within the North York Moors National Park. Its peace and solitude, however, are in sharp contrast to some aspects of its history.

In medieval times the name Westerdale referred to a dale, a forest, a manor and village as well as a parish (VCH, 415). Within the ecclesiastical boundaries of this parish there was a planned, nucleated village with its common fields set around a village green and the

parish church, a number of small hamlets, a Templar preceptory, a Cistercian grange and a small nunnery of the same order as well as a number of individual farmsteads circling the dale (VCH, 415). Many of these sites have survived, albeit much altered, to the present day (see appendix). Westerdale, therefore, provides an ideal location for study as it appears to be a microcosm of much that was characteristic of medieval England.

The following is a record of some of the findings from research for an MA dissertation at the University of York, the purpose of which was to examine the origins and development of Westerdale and the ways in which its landscape was exploited. The research included a programme of field work, a photographic record, the perusal of historical documents and maps as well as the use of geographic information system software (ArcGIS). The work also involved a consideration of place- and field names, took account of local knowledge and both used and informed the North York Moors National Park Authority database. The purpose of this paper is to give an account of the nature of the settlement and its place in the wider world as well as looking at the influences of the Knights Templar and the remarkable preservation of the landscape they created.

Earliest Record

There is no Domesday record of Westerdale. The earliest known historical record is that of the charter of Bernard de Balliol, c. 1180, granting land to Rievaulx Abbey (BL Cotton MS Julius DI). There are details of particular note within this manuscript. The Cistercian monks were given land specifically at Esklets and 'Wulverdalebec below Hogthwaite.' These are three natural features, no doubt given as landmarks to make it clear which was to be their property (Fig. 3). Esklets, still known by that name and at an elevation of 265 m, is an area of springs and rivulets which make their way north to form the River Esk. Wulverdalebec is a deep steep ravine at the base of which is a stream while Hogthwaite is an area of relatively level open land.

At Esklets and Hogthwaite the monks would have built accommodation for themselves and their animals, in accordance with the charter. Hogthwaite is today known locally as Waites Common; part of it is occupied by Waites House and its related outbuildings (NZ 46535 50368). It is possible that this farm house was built at the site of some of the Rievaulx buildings. It is surrounded by a semi-circle of hills, which provide shelter, while at the southern end the valley opens towards Esklets and the source of the river. An approach road now enters

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Figure 1 Part of Westerdale parish showing the two-pronged dale. From OS sheet NZ. Map created by Dr Helen Goodchild, Department of Archaeology, University of York (1:25 000 Scale Colour Raster, © Crown Copyright/database right 2013. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service).



Figure 2 Aerial view of north end of the village street showing terrace of cottages, which have taken in part of the village green for front gardens. Town Farm to right of lower centre. © Leo Zade Images. Used with permission.



Figure 3 Hogthwaite looking south towards Esklets. Wulverdalebec, now Wood Dale, to left of shot, Waites Farm to left of centre.

from the northern end but it is likely that this area was accessed from Wulverdalebec, now Wood Dale, or along the river bank from Esklets.

This land must have been an attractive proposition to the monks as the Cistercians valued remote wilderness areas (Platt 1969, 11; Fergusson & Harrison 1999, 3). They favoured ‘devastated or uninhabited regions’ and usually established their granges in *vills* that had been designated waste in 1086 (Bishop 1938, 202). This suggests that this area had been affected by the ‘Harrying of the North.’ The charter refers to the local inhabitants as *homines* rather than *villani* or *bondi*, significant terminology as it indicates that the peasants here had a degree of freedom rather than being subject to a lord (BL Cotton MS Julius DI; Corèdon & Williams 2007, 44 & 290). This may have been the incentive to encourage them to settle into an area of waste in order to subdue and farm the land once more. At approximately

4.8 km (3 miles) from Westerdale itself, the situation at Esklets was, and remains, very remote. However, as the following shows, there were close links with the nearby community and beyond.

Planned Settlement

The village of Westerdale displays the characteristics of a planned nuclear settlement with a line of tofts and crofts, a central parish church and nearby manor house and mill (Roberts 1987, 6). This is significant as, while planned villages are a feature of North Yorkshire, there is little nucleation on the North York Moors (Taylor 1983, 138; Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, 47). Using the parish tithe map of 1838 alongside the 1977 Ordnance Survey map of the village, in conjunction with what is still visible on the ground, it has been possible to build up a picture of this medieval settlement (NYCRO

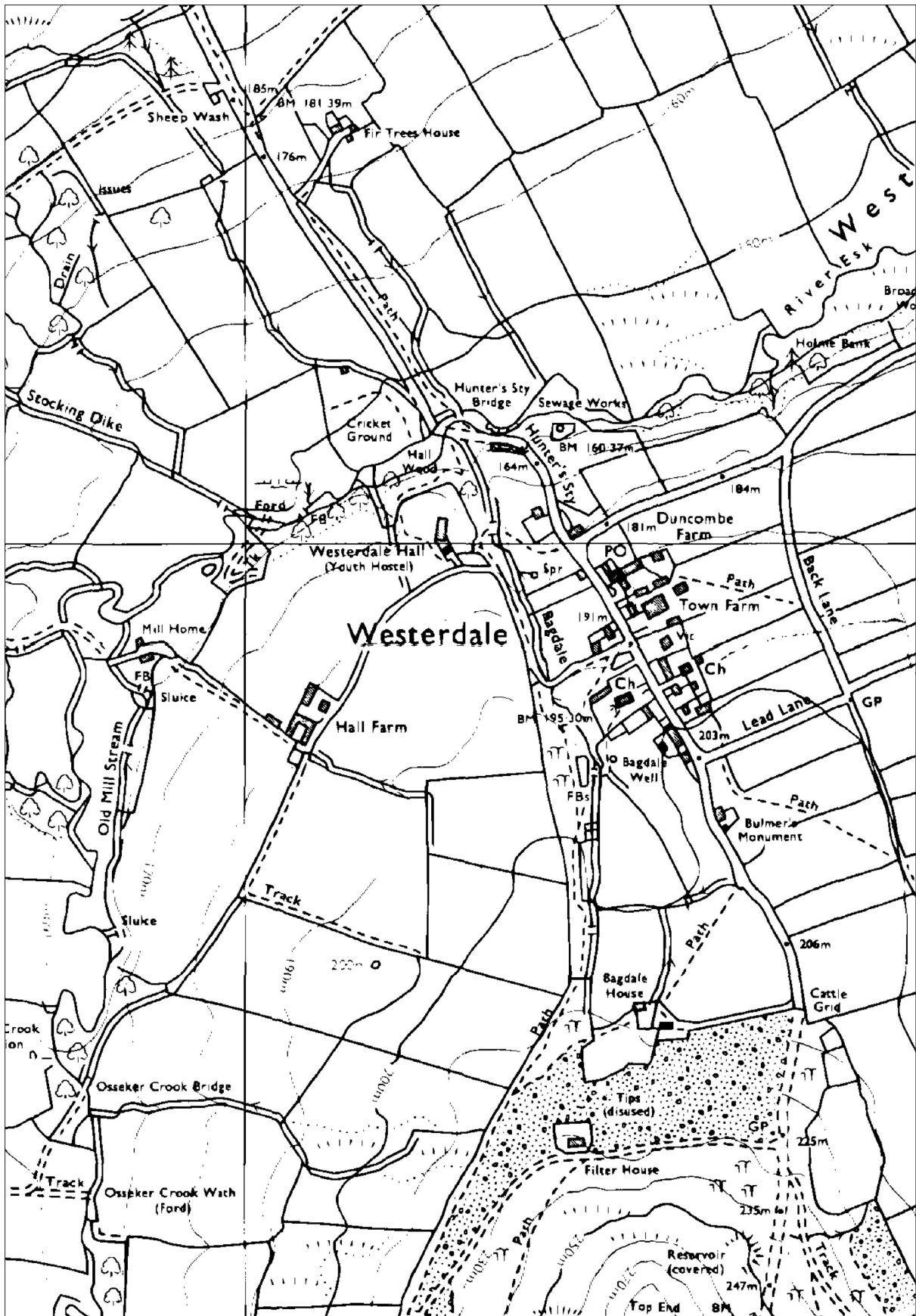


Figure 4 Showing nucleated village, parish church, preceptory site (now Westerdale Hall) and manorial mill (Mill Home). Westerdale Hall was a Youth Hostel 1948–1964, it is now a private house. Map created by Dr Helen Goodchild, Department of Archaeology, University of York. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd. (2013). All rights reserved (1977).

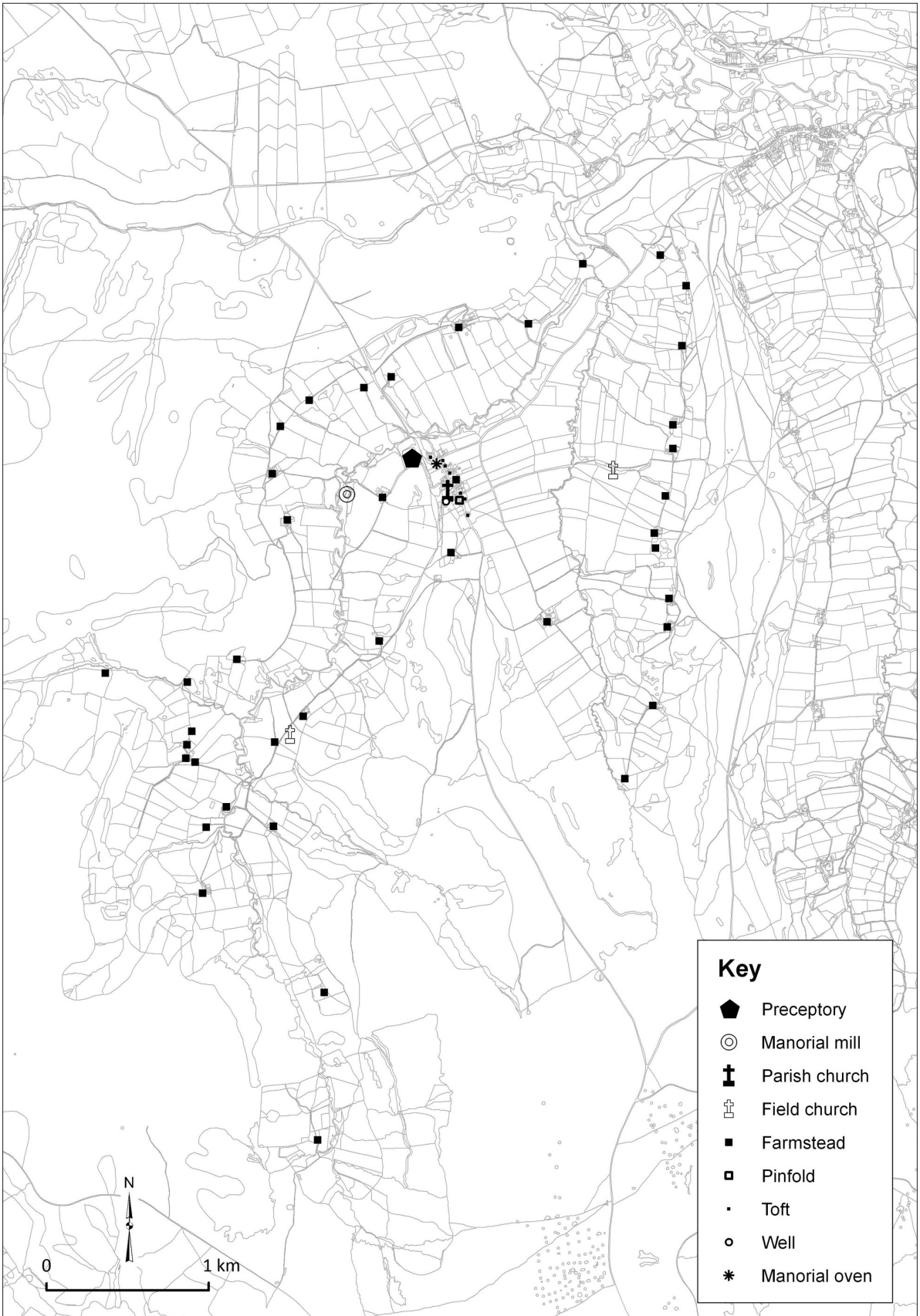


Figure 5 Showing position of the manorial oven and pinfold as well as the Templar preceptory and the mill. It is not certain that there were field churches within the parish, this is surmised from the Kirk names of the title map; western site seems the more likely. Map created by Dr Helen Goodchild, Department of Archaeology, University of York. (Background map: OS Mastermap Topography Layer © Crown Copyright/ database right 2013. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.)

MIC 1802/466–474; Fig. 4). The linear development of houses had the village green to the west with a service lane to the east. The parish church was, and remains, central to the village. The glebe land, which was positioned more or less opposite the church, suggests that the foundation of the church and the setting out of the planned village occurred at the same time (Roberts 1987, 56 & 57). Likewise, the demesne farm, Town Farm, is central to village properties, suggesting that it too was included in the planned settlement. Other facilities such as the communal oven and the pinfold, standing at either end of the common green, were in close proximity to all the properties within the nucleated settlement (Fig. 5). The survival of the church's 12th century tympanum, in conjunction with the evidence above, suggests that the village, with its parish church and demesne farm, were laid down in planned format by c. 1200.

Baysdale Abbey was also founded on the north side of the parish c. 1189 (NZ 46212 50674; Dugdale 1817, 508–9). This indicates a period of intense development in the area towards the end of the 12th century with the establishment of a grange as well as an abbey within the dale, the building of the parish church and the development of the planned village.

Establishing the capital message

In view of his grant of land at Esklets to Rievaulx Abbey c. 1180, Bernard de Balliol is the most likely person to have founded the parish church (BL Cotton MS Julius DI). He is therefore the most likely person to have overseen the development of the planned linear settlement that is Westerdale village. It cannot be certain, however, that there was a manor house at that time. The church's position 'on the green' suggests



Figure 6 Aerial view of Christ Church, Westerdale, a church 'on the green,' positioned on common land in close proximity to the peasant crofts and tofts. With thanks to Ian and Shelagh Darcy for allowing use of their photograph.



Figure 7 Westerdale Hall, site of the Templars' preceptory. The present enclosure, including the surrounding woodland, is approximately 6 acres; the Templar extenta of 1307 records a 6½ acre enclosure. A medieval bloomery has been recorded within the woodland to the right, HER 3532. © Leo Zade Images. Used with permission.

that initially there was not a manor house (Everson and Stocker 2005, 119; Fig. 6). Most villages had no resident lord and the de Balliol seat of power was at Barnard Castle (Astill & Grant 1992, 5; VCH, 415). Westerdale is a very modest establishment compared with Barnard Castle so it is unlikely that de Balliol was resident at the village; in which case there would not have been the need for a capital messuage. Similarly, as soon as de Bovincourt became the under-tenant c. 1190, he seems to have granted land to establish Baysdale Abbey and granted most of the manor to the Templars (Dugdale 1817, 508–9; TNA C53/5). He too, therefore, would not have needed a capital messuage. When the Templars arrived, however, c. 1204, they established a preceptory here; William de le Fenne and Stephen de Radnache are recorded as preceptors of Westerdale (TNA E 142/18; Atkinson 1988, 288). The Templars, therefore, would have needed a power base from which to manage their affairs.

The most likely location of this preceptory is the site now occupied by Westerdale Hall (NZ 46625 50599; Fig. 7). The present property was built as a shooting lodge by Colonel Duncombe in the 19th century. However, an earlier reference to a prominent building, made by Ord in his book on Cleveland, makes it clear that this was the site of the medieval capital messuage. Ord wrote:

Being informed that an 'ancient castle' formerly existed on an elevated site near the village, we examined the spot carefully, and found indubitable traces of a considerable mansion. (1972, 346)

The only site to which this can refer is the site currently occupied by Westerdale Hall. Although this sits within a sheltered situation when approached from the south and west, protecting it from the prevailing wind, its northern aspect is on a knoll overlooking the former Gowthorpe Green. Its elevated situation with its range of sight

across most of the manor makes it an ideal location for a lordly site (Creighton & Barry 2012, 63). It can be seen and be seen from most of the farmsteads surrounding the village (Fig. 5).

From this evidence it has been possible to reconstruct some aspects of the power base of the Knights Templar at Westerdale. The map of Fig. 5 shows the advantages of their lordly site. It provides an impressive sight when approached from the north while being sheltered on its southern side. It sits at the apex of a triangle taking in the manorial mill and the parish church. It lies in close proximity to the nucleated village but distinctly separate from it, commanding a masterly view across the rest of the manor site. This analysis suggests that the Templars brought considerable technological and leadership skills to the area. The percentage of horses on the demesne, 23.8% compared with 13.8% in the rest of the north of England, suggests that they also brought farming innovation (TNA E 358/18; Langdon 1986, 88). They established a power base within the manor, which developed into the central preceptory for the north-east of England (Young 2009).

Alongside this preceptory site, moreover, it is clear from the inventory of 1307/8 that the Templars also had an establishment at *Braithwaite* (TNA E 358/18). A farm inventory of 1771 has revealed the location of this settlement (see appendix). Modern day developments at Leath House, the present farm at this site, have revealed the foundations of a large long building (Meg Thompson pers. comm.). This could be the remains of a church or *aula*. The amount of stone remaining at this site suggests that there were several other buildings here. This Templar establishment at Braithwaite, together with Rievaulx's property at Esklets and Hogthwaite, indicates that Westerdale was a somewhat polyfocal settlement. It also shows that the Templars, as well as the Cistercians, made a significant contribution to its development. This Templar influence on the landscape

and their contribution to settlement development has received scant attention and need further investigation.

The Polyfocal Settlement

Taylor suggests that there are four processes that can result in a polyfocal settlement. Some develop from a central core, some are planned and planted additions to an existing settlement, some are indicative of differences in ownership and some are the result of dispersed farmsteads (Taylor 1977, 192). A part of Westerdale, as already shown, had a planned element but overall it displays dispersed farmsteads with some of those farmsteads forming small clusters of semi-dispersed settlements, Braithwaite appearing to be among those. Alongside Esklets, Hogthwaite and Braithwaite the dale had other discrete sites including five *ends*, a name that denotes separate foci, echoing Wrathmell's emphasis on the variety of settlement forms (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002; Bigmore 1982, 162; Fig. 8).

Getting to the *ends*

One of the oldest of these *ends* is probably Crown End (NZ 4667 5075). This name refers to a hill which rises to 236 m to the north of the nucleated village. There are Bronze Age remains here (HER 3506–3512). Several farmsteads skirt this hill, some in the adjoining parishes of Comondale and Danby. Today's Dale View, formerly Burren House, and the farmstead Akehede, both recorded in 1539, lie on the southern side within Westerdale parish; Carr House, also recorded in 1539, sits on its eastern side (NZ 46655 50682; NZ 46698 50690; NZ 46749 50735; TNA SC 6/HEN VIII/4458; Fig. 9) (see appendix).

The second *end* is that of Trowsdale (NZ 4676 5040). Dale Head Farm was recorded as Trowsdale End Farm in 1771 (NYCRO MIC 1350/119, see appendix). This name is now lost but is first recorded in an indenture of 1580 regarding the sale of property within this arm of the dale (NYCRO ZK 10673 Bundle 1). This document also refers to Burnt Oak Hill, now more prosaically known as Round Hill, the site of an Iron Age hill fort (NZ 46760 50480; HER 2829). Just to the east of this is Castleton Rigg, the site of two Bronze Age barrows (NZ 46810 50220; HER 3961. NZ 46828 50334; HER 3968). This suggests that a retreat from higher ground brought settlement to this *end* of the parish. The date of this retreat is not known but indicates continuity within sight of former settlement and ancestry, in spite of the absence of a record in Domesday Book. The indenture referred to also mentions woodland and common rights (NYCRO ZK 10673 Bundle 1). This area was probably used by the community as woodland pasture; the name Hollins suggests a wooded area (Hooke 2012, 35). The name Lodge Carr, now Cockle Farm, also recorded in the farm inventory of 1771, suggests temporary accommodation (NYCRO MIC 1350/119; Taylor, 1983, 186). Shepherds or cowherds probably brought their animals here to graze in the summer months. The name Broad Gate suggests a drove road into the gill (NZ 46710 50498). This is significant as it reveals the day-to-day and seasonal farming practice within the dale.

The third of these *ends* is Top End, the hill which marks the southern boundary of the township (NZ 4666 5049). There is just one property at the northern base of this hill, Bagdale House (NZ 46652 50540). This is marked on earlier maps as Cole Close House, which suggests a site of charcoal production in earlier times providing evidence of local industry and the diversity of land use within the area (OS map 1857; Gelling 1993, 71). This house is just south of a meadow given to the nuns of Baysdale Abbey, an area of *refholes* or pits where iron was produced (Dugdale 1817, 508; NZ 46641 50562; HER 3530). To the west of Top End is Riddings Farm. This name indicates assarting or cleared land (Field 1989, 182). To the north-east of the present farmstead there are at least two building platforms, suggesting a small group of houses once stood here, evidence of the semi-dispersed settlement recognised by Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, 8; NZ 46610 50489; HER 10704). Without excavation it is not possible to date this dispersed cluster of farms but it may represent the population pressure of the 13th century when more marginal land and woodland was being used.

The fourth *end* is Wood End and is still known by this name (NZ 4651 5038). Today this is a single farm, Wood End Farm, although the name Wood End is now used to include the former Hogthwaite and Braithwaite. A farmstead known as Gill Foot House lay to the south of Wood End Farm; today this remains as a building platform (NZ 46495 50366; HER 12562). To the west of this are the remnants of a medieval grange, now showing only as 'humps and bumps' in the ground (NZ 46497 50364; HER 12562; Fig. 10). It is likely that this is the site of the Templars' grange recorded in 1307/8, just a short distance from their site at Braithwaite (TNA E358/18). It has been shown that the Rievaulx brethren were at Hogthwaite, now Waites House, whereas this site is west of the Esk, the river forming the boundary between the two (NZ 46510 50356; Fig. 11).

The fifth and last of these *ends* is Lingcot End (NZ 4655 5063). Its name suggests a small cottage in the heather (Field 1989, 126). This is not marked on current Ordnance Survey maps but was recorded as Lingcot End Gate until 1960 (NZ 46535 50635 to 46564 50714; OS Sheet NZ 60, HMSO, 1960). This 'gate' is now known as John Breckon Road. This *end* seems to include the properties Hawthorn House, Stocking House and Crown House (NZ 46535 50592; NZ 46541 50620; NZ 46560 50638). Hawthorn House is recorded as Hathorn Hurste in 1539 while Stockynge is recorded as a close in the same document (TNA SC 6/HEN VIII/4458; see appendix). This area was probably one of early assarting, the names Stocking and Hawthorn indicating woodland clearance while Hurste is a wooded hill (Field 1989, 220; Gelling 1993, 197). The Templar *extenta* also records that Nicholas, a freeman, held a third part of ploughed land called Lindcroft, which may refer to Lingcot End, although it may appertain to the Line Lands recorded on the tithe map (TNA E142/18; NYCRO MIC 1802/466–474). From the document of 1539 we can be certain that this area had been cleared by the 16th century but the reference in the Templar *extenta*, if here, indicates that by the early 14th century land here had already been cleared and ploughed. Part of this area, however, may have been cleared even earlier.

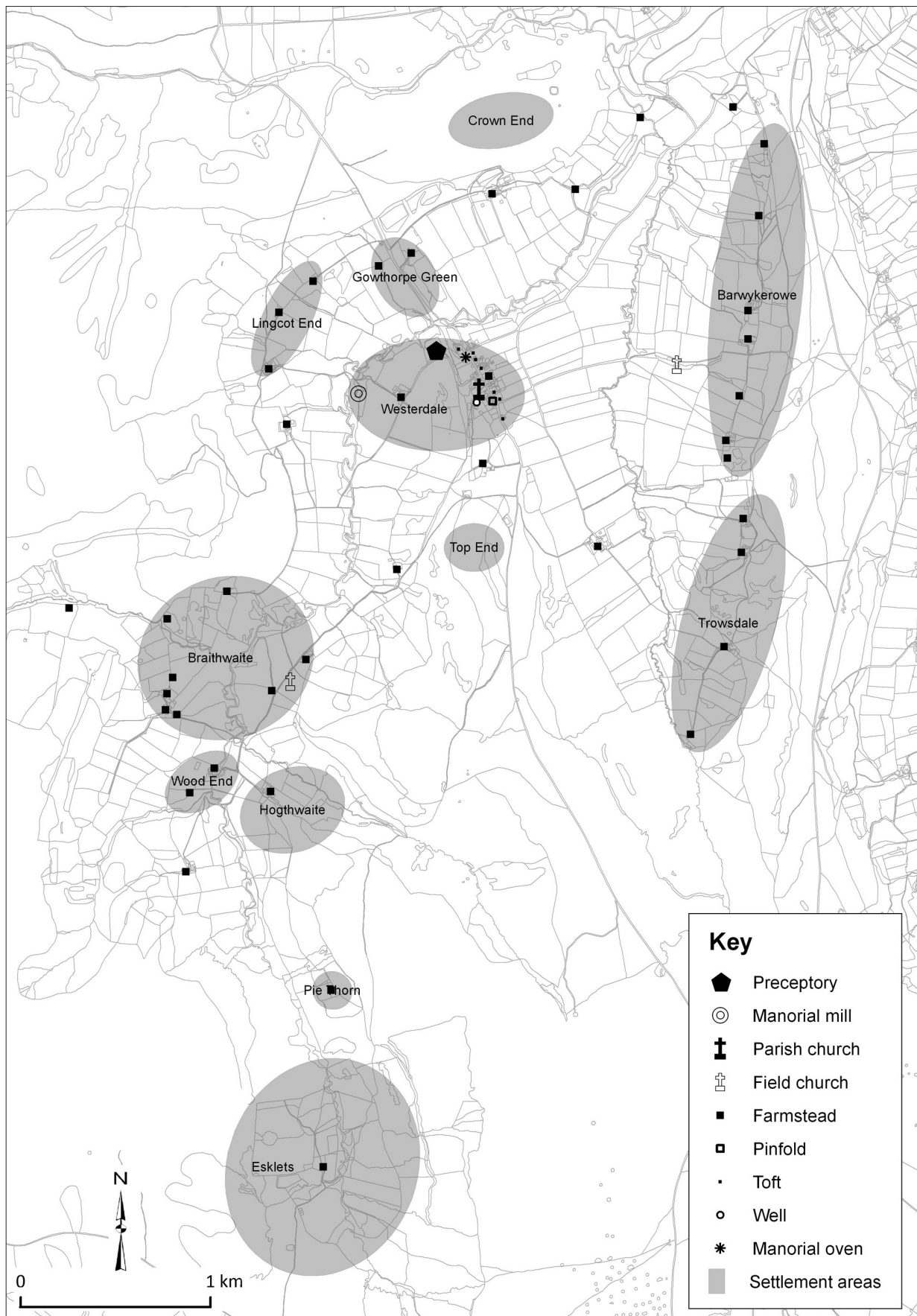


Figure 8 The polyfocal settlement of Westerdale. Map created by Dr Helen Goodchild, Department of Archaeology, University of York. (Background map: OS Mastermap Topography Layer © Crown Copyright/ database right 2013. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.)

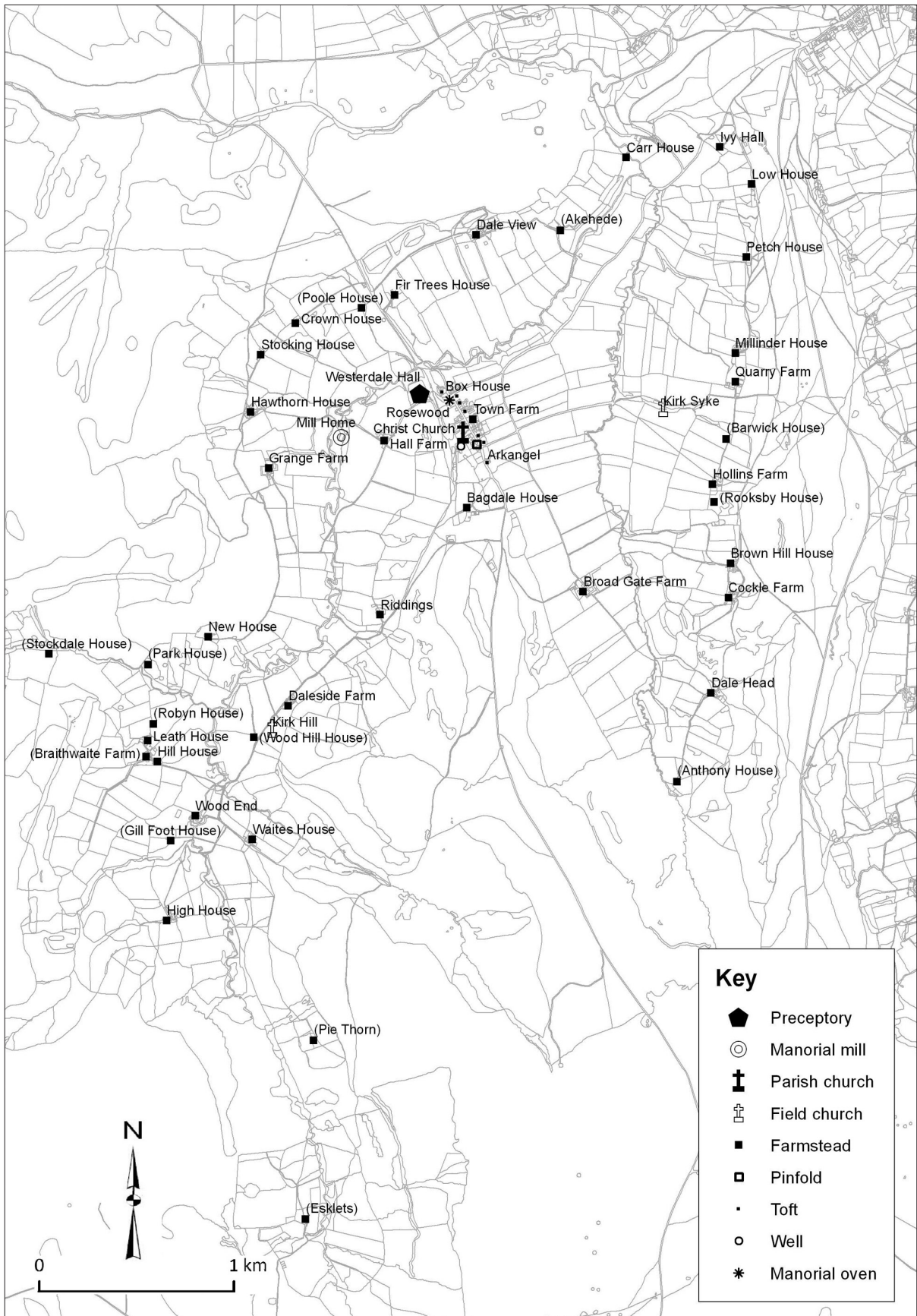


Figure 9 Farmsteads around Westerdale with current names. Names in brackets denote building platforms, ruins or buildings no longer inhabited. Map created by Dr Helen Goodchild, Department of Archaeology, University of York. (Background map: OS Mastermap Topography Layer © Crown Copyright/database right 2013. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.)



Figure 10 'Humps and bumps' of a medieval grange. It is likely that this is the Templar grange recorded in 1307/8, approximately 640 m (0.4 miles) from Braithwaite. NZ 464967 503639; HER 12562.

To the south of Hawthorn House is Grange Farm; this may also have been included in Lingcot End (NZ 46547 50562). Ruff suggests that this was the grange of Baysdale Abbey, which seems likely since Rievaulx's grange, as well as that of the Templars, have been shown to be elsewhere (Ruff 2006, 11). The de Bovincourt charter granting land to the nuns of Baysdale gave them a four acre meadow to the south-west of the village along with tofts and crofts and two bovates formerly belonging to Augustine (Dugdale 1817, 508). The meadow is at NZ 46641 50562, directly to the east of Grange Farm; a ford between the two gives access to the meadow. This grant was made in the early 13th century and it seems likely that there was already settlement here by that time.

Taken together these five *ends* along with the hamlets of Esklets, Hogthwaite, Braithwaite and Barwykerowe provide a picture of several discrete settlement areas and to these can be added the hamlet of Gowthorpe Green (Fig. 8). This area is recorded in the 1539 account when Thomas Edward had 'a close lying next to Gowthorpe Grene' and the location of this hamlet can be deduced from the 1771 conveyance (TNA SC6/HEN VIII/4458; NYCRO MIC 1350/119; NZ 4661 5063; see appendix). Like the *ends* just reviewed, it was probably comprised of very few farmsteads, one of them being Poole House, also recorded in 1539, and possibly Gowthorpe Farm recorded 1771 (HER 10694; NZ 46595 50646; HER 5311; NZ 466147 506554). This area would have been valuable grazing land and, lying immediately to the north of the river, also had access to a watering place.

Discussion

An ArcGIS relief map of the area under study, with these settlement sites superimposed on it, illustrates the symbiosis between man and the land as it was settled and developed. It acknowledges our forebears' sophisticated understanding of the landscape, and their engagement

with it, in order to realise its potential (Fig. 12). The topography of the area clearly dictated the positioning of the settlements but it can be seen that the settlers also exploited the landscape to its best advantage, making it work for them. To the eastern side, the farmsteads lie along the spring line with the lee of the hill for shelter. The land immediately to the west of these properties catches all the afternoon and evening sunshine, good for ripening grain. A similar situation can be seen for the farmsteads to the north and north-west. The positioning of this arc of farmsteads gives them access to spring water, important for livestock as well as people, but leaves the lower-lying and more level ground available for crop growing. Even deep into the gills of Stockdale and Trowsdale there was settlement, no doubt to take advantage of these wooded areas (NZ 4640 5046; NZ 4676 5040). Remnants of a field system on the north side of Stockdale suggest permanent settlement even here (NZ 46410 40475; HER 3948).

When considering the tracks and holloways within this landscape it is possible to see the same symbiosis (Figs 9 & 12). For instance, the track from Carr House via Akehede and Dale View travels south-west to Gowthorpe Green, using the contour (NZ 46748 50734 to 4661 5063). This was probably the route used to take livestock to Gowthorpe Green. It continues from here to Hawthorn House where it branches south-east to the mill (NZ 46535 50592). This mill route maintains the use of level ground for as long as possible, with the last stretch down a relatively gentle gradient to the river crossing. From Hawthorn House the route continues to use the contour, avoiding an ascent but also skirting valuable arable land. It can be seen to continue in the valley to Hogthwaite.

On the eastern side of the settlement area, formerly Barwykerowe and now known as Westerdale, several holloways can still be seen cutting into the hillside (NZ 46786 50577; NZ 46778 50554; NZ 46784 50545).

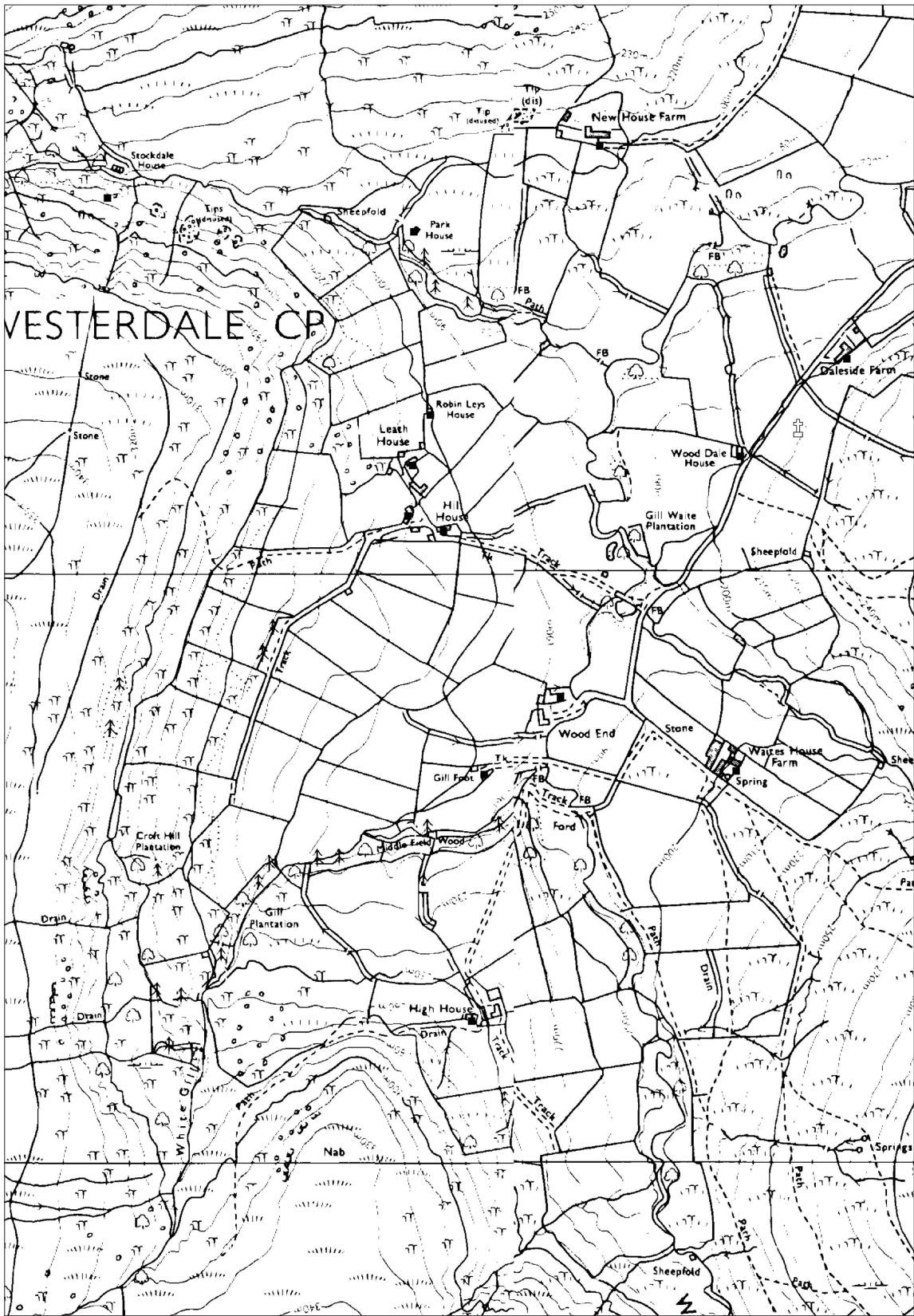


Figure 11 Wood End, Hogthwaite (Waites House) and Braithwaite (Leath House). Gill Foot House is shown south-west of Wood End Farm. The river runs between Waites House (Rievaulx land) and Gill Foot (Templar land). Three tracks can be seen to converge at centre right, north-east of Waites House Farm, south-east of Wood Dale House. A building platform has been found nearby. The Kirkhill field name from the tithe map suggests this may have been a field church. Map created by Dr Helen Goodchild, Department of Archaeology, University of York. © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd. (2013). All rights reserved (1977).

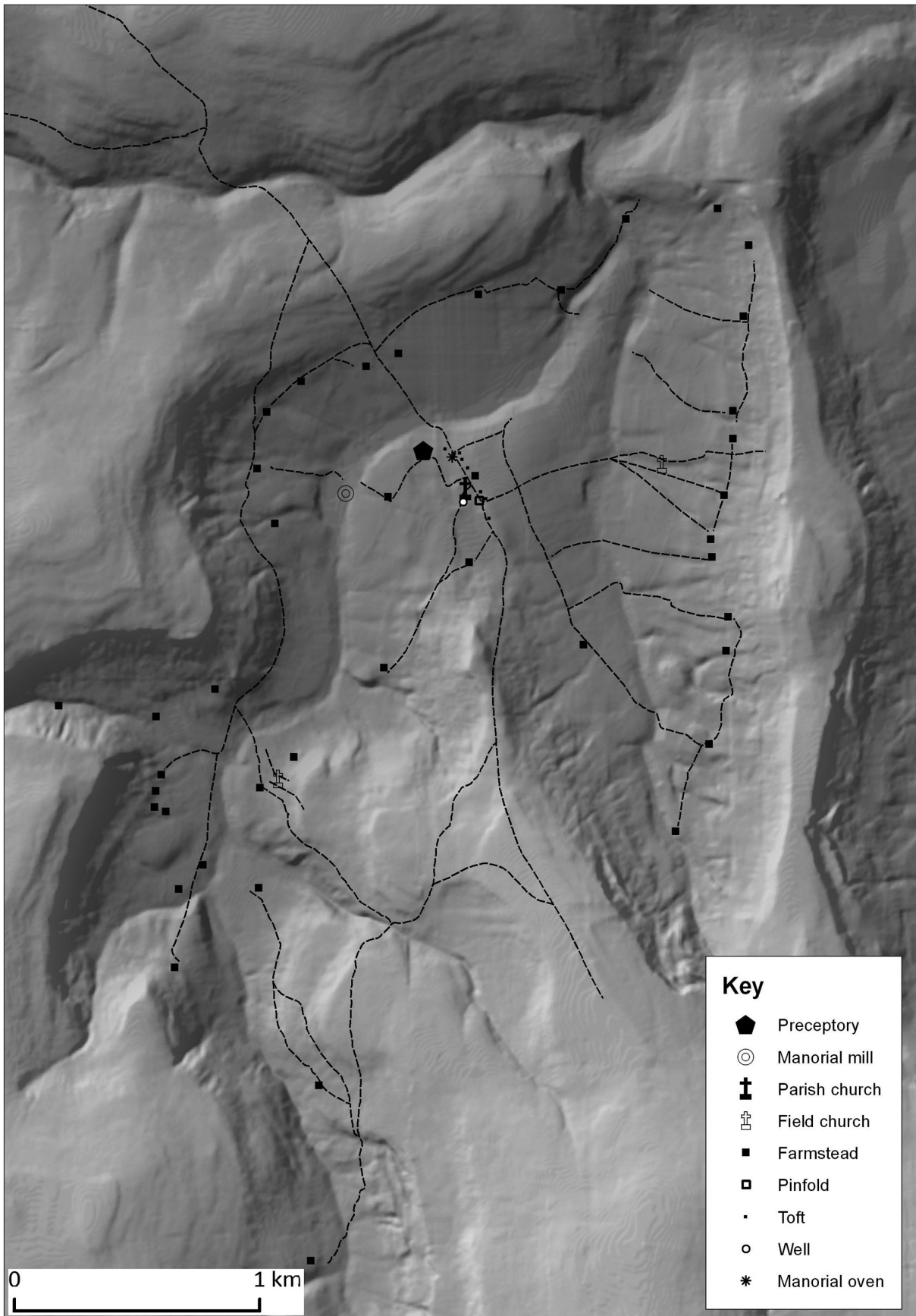


Figure 12 Showing settlements, tracks and holloways overlying relief map. Darker areas denote lower lying land, lighter areas the higher ground. To be used in conjunction with Fig. 9. Map created by Dr Helen Goodchild, Department of Archaeology, University of York. (5m elevation model from Landmap © GeoPerspectives Supplied by Bluesky 2013.)



Figure 13 Looking north, paved trods over Huntersty bridge. This linked the village of Westerdale with the hamlet of Gowthorpe Green. Trods line the east side of the green. The path continues north-west and west to Baysdale, Kildale, Stokesley and Guisborough.

These would also have been used for the mill route and of course for the journey to church. Three can be seen to converge at the ford at Tower Beck (NZ 46728 50597). Nearby may also be the site of a field church although this is not conclusive; the Kirk name, from the tithe map, may merely denote the route to church or the site of a cross (NYCRO MIC 1802 466–474). The convergence of three tracks at Woodhill (Wood Dale) House, however, probably does indicate the site of a field church serving the more distant hamlets. The south-eastern aspect of the hillside here is cut with several holloways that travel down to the lane which now links this area with the village (south from NZ 46569 50452; 46546 50436; 46543 50411; 46538 50411). They travel south to Esklets. These represent an important aspect of the communications network within the area. They may also have been used as the coffin route to the graveyard.

These trackways within the community, serving the settlers for their everyday journeys, largely follow the lower levels. However, to leave the settlement area the tracks take to higher ground, especially the route to the south. This southern route links the community with Pickering and Helmsley and of course Rievaulx Abbey (SE 4797 54838; 4617 4838; 4575 4855). The track to the north crosses the moor to Kildale while a branch to the west follows the beck to Baysdale Abbey (NZ 46070 50935; NZ 46212 50670). From the village this northern route takes the steep bank known as Huntersty to a medieval bridge over the Esk. The date of this bridge is not known but it is likely to have been built by the Templars. While the work of McDonnell and Spratt has shown this north/south route to have been a medieval ‘main road,’ that of Young has shown that Westerdale was served by the surrounding Templar holdings, linked by this route, which was part of a wider network of communication (McDonnell & Spratt 1996, 188; <http://christopheryoung.net/article-1.php>). The bridge and its associated trods (flagstones) are probably evidence of

Templar patronage of the infrastructure here (Harrison 2007, 6; Fig. 13).

Conclusion

This study has concentrated on just part of one parish. Its specific focus and multi-disciplinary approach have produced a number of significant findings. It has shown that Westerdale had twelve discrete settlement foci in the medieval period. These varied from what was probably only a single farmstead at Pie Thorn to the nucleated village with its manorial facilities and parish church. The origins of these settlements remain somewhat uncertain but the research has revealed that by the close of the twelfth century the church had been founded, the planned village set out and the remote area of Esklets was being developed by the lay brethren of Rievaulx Abbey. Soon afterwards Baysdale Abbey and its grange were being created and the Templars arrived to establish their preceptory. There is evidence of a concentrated period of activity, considerable changes in local demographics and the sophisticated use of diverse landscape resources by the turn of the 13th century. The key players in the development of the dale have been shown to have been the Knights Templar, with Rievaulx and Baysdale Abbeys making their contribution. A substantial infrastructure was laid down, largely during the 13th century.

It is evident from this study that a great deal of what can be seen within present day Westerdale was established in the medieval period; much of it was in place by the close of the 13th century. The Templars brought considerable influence to bear although it would have been the hard working peasants who actually carved out the land with their clearing of woodland, building of homesteads, tramping to and from the open fields and making their journeys to the church or the mill, to say nothing of the miles they walked in ploughing the land



Figure 14 Looking south-west from NZ 46796 50732. Aratral curve evident in the lane between Castleton and Westerdale, visible on the wooded slope in the distance.

(Roberts & Wrathmell 2002). That this evidence was not swept away in the intervening centuries of agricultural reform is testimony to the wisdom of their choices. The path they trod in order to cultivate the land and prise a living from it is still visible in the sinuous line of the lane that wends its way east to the neighbouring village of Castleton (Fig. 14). This is the aratral curve, the reversed S set into the landscape by the turning of the eight-ox plough teams as they tilled the land. Eight hundred years later, the hard work of many ordinary people is still remarkably well preserved in the landscape of Westerdale today.

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library
HER	North York Moors National Park Historic Environment Record
MIC	Microfilmed records at NYCRO
NYMNP	North York Moors National Park Authority
NYCRO	North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton
OS	Ordnance Survey
TNA	The National Archives, Kew
VCH	Victoria County History
ZK	NYCRO reference to Kirkleatham Estate papers relating to Westerdale

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Appendix: suggested farmsteads surviving from the medieval period

The following lists map the farm inventory of 1771 against the bailiff's account of 1539 alongside the farms of the present day (YCRO MIC 1350/119; TNA SC 6/HEN VIII/4458). These lists suggest that many of today's farm sites have their roots in the medieval period. Some of this information cannot be conclusive as many of the properties in 1539 are simply listed as 'one message one bovate' but the list of 1771 gives a midway date as a useful point of comparison. This has been entered first as it is the most complete list and was made in order round the dale. Together these lists also show the location of the Templar *Brathwatte*, referred to in the *extenta* of 1307 (TNA E 142/18). The present research has located this site for the first time.

There has had to be a measure of conjecture in the comparison of these lists but the positioning of the messuages and bovates has been done in the light of current knowledge. So, for instance, most are located along Westerdale side as this is the most likely site of the barley wick, Barwykerowe. Huntersty Head has been allocated the four bovates as an extant document refers to this property having four bovates (NYCRO ZK 10686 Bundle1). As there are very few properties within the village included in the list of 1771 this does leave some gaps as the properties comprising the tofts and crofts of the nucleated village would have also had bovates within the open fields in 1539. It is also impossible to know how complete was the sixteenth century list and, similarly, that of 1771 only included rented property, not those that were already in private ownership. Nevertheless this data does give an indication of the longevity of many of the farmsteads of the dale.

1771	1539	Present day
Carr House	Carre House	Carr House
Gill's intake	Close – intake of Gyll	Ivy Hall
Toad Pit House	Tade Pytt House	Low House
Lame Broods Farm	One message and one bovate	Petch House
Farm one	–	Site unknown
Farm two	One message and one bovate	Millinder House
Hinging Stone Farm	One message and 1½ bovates	Quarry Farm
Barwick House Farm	One message and 2 bovates	Ruin at NZ 46786 50577
Hollin Bower Farm	One message and 2 bovates	Hollins Farm
Rooksby House Farm	One message and 2 bovates	Site at end of holloway
Brown Hill House Farm	One message and 2 bovates	Brown Hill Farm
Lodge Carr Farm	One message and 2 bovates	Cockle Farm
Trowsdale End Farm	One message and 2 bovates	Dale Head
Brigg Busk Farm	One message and 2 bovates	Anthony House?
Farm one	One message and 2 bovates	Broadgate Farm
Farm two	Crystyan House	Along Christy Gate?
Windhill Oxgang	–	Arkangel
Cotterill Close	Cotterell Close	Kestrel House
Mitchell House Farm	–	Westlands Cottage
Huntersty Head Farm	One message and 4 bovates	Box House
Bransby House	One message and 3 bovates	Riddings Farm or site above ¹ ?
Woodhill House Farm	One message and one bovate	Wood Dale house ruin
Cloff Neck/House Farm	Gill message	Gill Foot House ruin
Cragg House Farm	–	Suggested house platform at Esklets
Esklith Farm	–	–
Esklets one	–	Site of former grange of Rievaulx
Esklets two	Pytman Holme	Pie Thorn site known
Day House Farm	–	Wood End?
Braithwaite Farm	Brathwatte message	Leath House site
Robin House Farm	Robyn House	Robin House ruin
Bennets House Farm	–	New House ² or Grange Farm?
Hawthorn House Farm	Hathorn Hurste	Hawthorn House
Stoking House Farm	Close called Stockynge	Stocking House
Birkcoat Farm	–	Crown House
Potters Cottage Farm	–	Building platform known
Gowthorpe Farm	Close next to Gowthorpe Grene	Fir Trees House
Borrells House Farm	Burren alias Burell House	Dale View
Ackit/White Oak Farm	Akehede	Building platform known

1 On tithe map this is Benjy's House.

2 Several ruined buildings at this site.