

The Premonstratensian House of Canons at Preston Patrick

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The Premonstratensian house of canons at Preston Patrick was established around 1191 by canons from Cockersand. The reasons for the foundation of the house at Preston Patrick are explored in the article, and from available documents, mainly found in the Dodsworth manuscript of the Shap cartulary, an attempt is made to establish as precisely as possible the extent of the holdings of the canons at Preston Patrick and in the surrounding area. Within a decade of the foundation at Preston Patrick the canons moved to Shap, where they had been granted more extensive lands for the foundation of a new abbey whilst retaining the lands they had been granted in Preston Patrick. The reasons for this move are investigated.

SHAP Abbey is justly famous for its impressive ruins and its location in the beautiful Lowther valley, only a mile and a half west of the village of Shap and yet totally hidden from it by the ridge that forms the east bank of the Lowther. But the community of canons was not originally founded at Shap; it was for the first ten years or so of its existence at Preston Patrick in South Cumbria – though not on top of the hill where St Patrick's church now stands as a well known landmark to all who use the South Cumbrian section of the M6 motorway.¹ (See Figure 1 for location of places mentioned.)

The foundation charter for the house at Preston Patrick is still extant, and there are four other charters referring to grants to the community. All are in the Dodsworth transcript of the Shap cartulary now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.² The foundation charter presents problems since several of the places mentioned in defining the boundaries of the allocation of land can no longer be traced, and it also contains a particularly corrupt passage which makes little sense. Links with the Premonstratensian house at Cockersand are perhaps also suggested in the charter, and charters from Cockersand itself show that the Cockersand canons had a presence in the area. In this paper an attempt will be made to investigate the links with Cockersand, to identify the boundaries of the land allocation in the foundation charter, to reconstruct the corrupt passage in the charter, and to identify the other properties that were granted to the community. The reasons for the move to Shap *c.*1201 will also be considered.

The Premonstratensian order to which the canons of Preston Patrick belonged had been founded in 1120 at Prémontré in north-east France by St Norbert (hence the order's alternative name of Norbertine). Members of the order were canons regular and thus not in the strict sense monks. They were priests who lived a communal life, and though, like monks, they did spend time in prayer and contemplation, they were also required to spend some of their time ministering in their capacity as priests in the parishes around their house. The Premonstratensians wore a white habit and followed the rule of St Augustine, though with some additional austerities introduced by Norbert. The order had its own rite, which emphasised ritual solemnity, and the

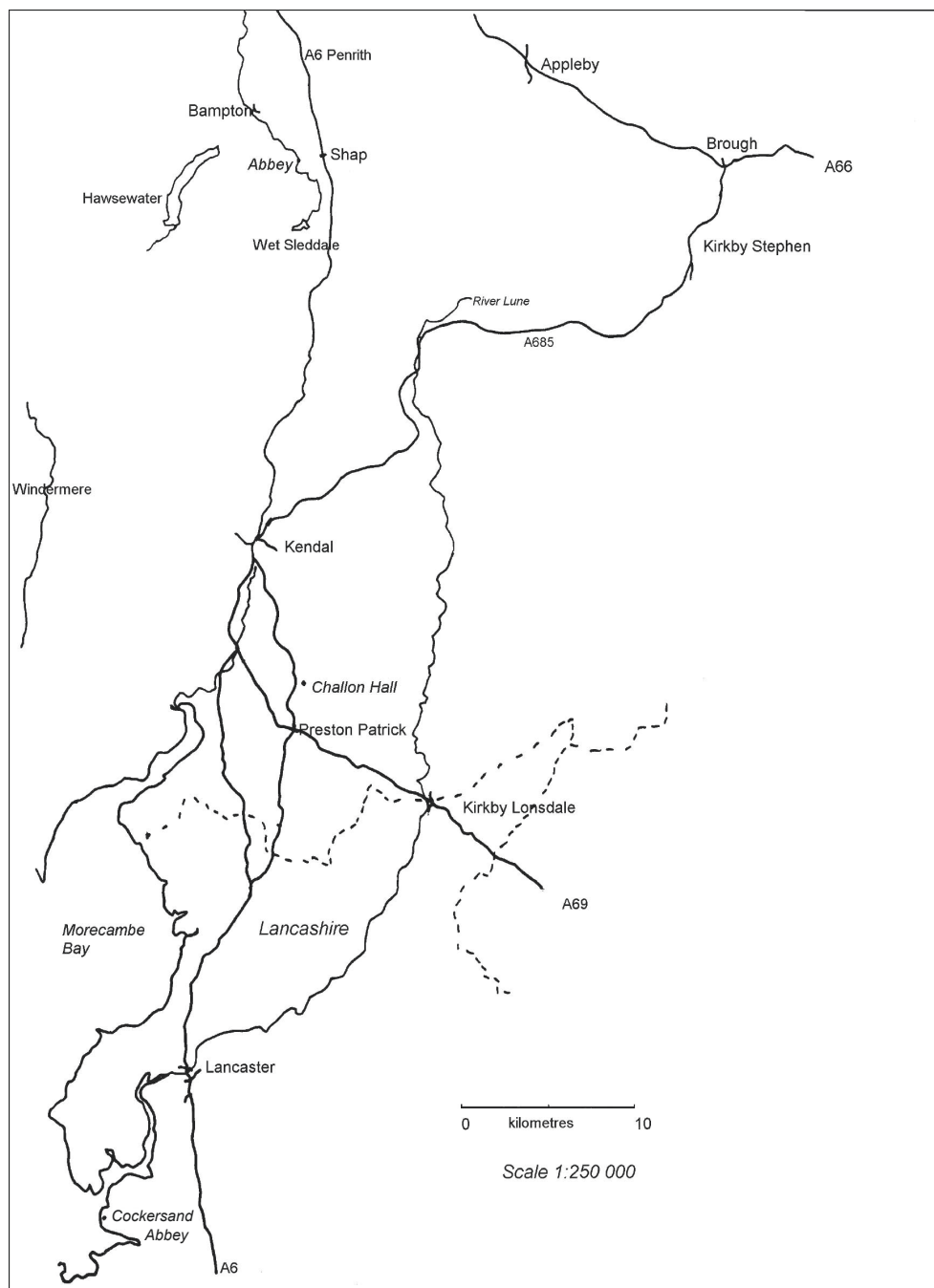


FIG. 1. Shap Abbey, Preston Patrick and Cocksand Abbey.

canons celebrated high mass daily and also a daily votive mass in honour of the Virgin Mary. Norbert envisaged his order as having a missionary role within the area of their houses, but by the end of the twelfth century, at least in England, the order had apparently largely abandoned this role in favour of a more monastic life on the Cistercian model.³ The canons in their white habit would have been a common sight in the neighbourhood of their houses; though they lived in common in the abbey, their role was partly out in the world around them, ministering in whatever ways were required in their particular location.

The Cockersand connection

By the time the house was founded at Preston Patrick there were already over 20 Premonstratensian houses in England, one of which was at Cockersand on the coast near Lancaster.⁴ Cockersand was just 20 miles away from Preston Patrick, on the coastal marshes some seven miles south of Lancaster, and the foundation of the house of canons at Preston Patrick was in various ways connected with the Premonstratensian house at Cockersand. The full details of the connection are not entirely clear, since the existing records do not reveal the thinking behind some of the decisions, but there can be little doubt that there were some links in the development of the two establishments.

Cockersand was founded as a small hospital of Premonstratensian canons by a grant, perhaps not long before his death in 1184, of William de Lancaster, second baron of Kendal and Lord of Wyresdale,⁵ to the hermit Hugh Garth, who is said to have collected alms for the establishment of the hospital; the grant consisted of the marshlands to the west of the village of Cockerham, together with some fishery rights.⁶ The hospital was administered initially by a prior (who may have been Hugh himself) and two canons, who had come from Croxton Abbey in Leicestershire.⁷ Exactly what the hospital was is nowhere specified. The term had a range of connotations in the medieval world, but the likelihood is that it was a very simple refuge for the old and infirm of the area.⁸ In 1186, soon after William's death, the hospital was granted some rather better land in Thurnham, a mile to the north of Cockerham, by William de Furness, Lord of Thurnham.⁹ Before 1190 there were other grants of land, including a grant by Ughred son of Osulf of a portion of his land at Preston Richard, between Stainton Beck on the west side and Peasey Beck on the east side and probably from near Viver in the north to the conjunction of the two becks to form the river Bela near Whasset in the south – a substantial amount of land; and a grant by Thomas son of Gospatrick of land in Preston Patrick, which included common of pasture in the vill for one plough-team of oxen (eight oxen), ten cows with calves and four horses.¹⁰ It is possible that the 'chapel of the sick' mentioned in the foundation charter dates from the time of these gifts.

By 1189 or 1190 a problem had emerged with the hospital's original grant from William de Lancaster. At some time between 1153 and 1156, William's father, William de Lancaster the first baron of Kendal, had granted the whole of the manor of Cockerham, which included the Cockerham marshes, to the Augustinian Abbey of Leicester. His son William, before he granted the Cockerham marshes to establish the

hospital at Cockersand, had revoked this gift – or so his widow, Héloïse (Helewise), now married to Hugh de Morville, believed.¹¹ In fact she had a special interest in the land because the foundation charter made it clear that the land being given to the canons was already designated as part of her one-third dower in the event of her husband's death. But it seems that Leicester Abbey had either not been informed that they no longer held the manor of Cockerham, or had belatedly decided to challenge the revocation of the grant to them. The case rambled on for five years, but in 1194, in the court of John, then Count of Mortain and lord of the honour of Lancaster, Leicester Abbey won their case. The result was of course that the Cockersand hospital no longer owned the land on which it stood. In fact Leicester Abbey, doubtless realising that they had no obvious use for the Cockersand marshes and therefore no easily justifiable reason to oust the Premonstratensian canons from their little hospital, decided to take no immediate action. It was not until 1204-05 that they eventually did transfer the marshes to what was by then the abbey of Cockersand.¹²

From 1189 therefore until after 1200 the canons of Cockersand lived with the constant possibility of being turned out of their property. The founding of the house of canons at Preston Patrick by Thomas son of Gospatrick around 1191 may well have been instigated by this difficult situation.¹³ If the canons had to leave Cockersand, then they could find a home in Preston Patrick if they so wished.

Grants to the House of Canons at Preston Patrick

The Foundation Charter

The date of the foundation of the house at Preston Patrick was most probably 1191. The house was established by Thomas son of Gospatrick, who had received lands in Kendale from Gilbert Fitz-Reinfrid. These lands had been granted to Gilbert in 1189 by Richard I,¹⁴ and the foundation cannot therefore have been before this date.

The foundation charter of the abbey has survived in Dodsworth MS 45 in the Bodleian Library, which contains copies of parts (unfortunately not all) of the cartulary of Shap. Since the evidence for the grants to the canons of Preston Patrick is now based entirely on Dodsworth's manuscript, Dodsworth's role in preserving these records is worth noting.

Roger Dodsworth (1585-1654) was born near Helmsley in North Yorkshire, and spent much of his life gathering and copying documents on church history, mainly in Yorkshire but also elsewhere. The fact that his father, Matthew Dodsworth, was registrar of York Minster doubtless gave rise to his enthusiasm for his subject and also gave him access to the Minster's massive archive. After Dodsworth's death, Sir William Dugdale used Dodsworth's manuscripts in compiling his *Monasticon Anglicanum* (published in two volumes in 1655 and 1661). Dodsworth left his collection of manuscripts (160 volumes of them) to Thomas Fairfax (1612-71), another Yorkshireman from near Otley who is best known as commander of the parliament forces in the Civil War. Fairfax bequeathed the collection to the Bodleian Library on his death.¹⁵

The opening words of the MS (at folio 17v) are as follows:

In cartulario de Hepp in custodia domini Willelmi Howard domini de Naworth
22 Jan 1638. (In the cartulary of Shap [Hepp in the Latin] in the custody of
Lord William Howard, Lord of Naworth, 22 January 1638.)

It seems therefore that the full cartulary of Shap did exist in 1638, in Naworth Castle. Dodsworth records elsewhere in his transcription (after charter 57, in English) that 'The original books of Hepp was [sic] delivered by order of the court to the Register of the Star Chamber in the year 1622 by Sir James Bellingham.¹⁶ It is now in the lord William Howard's hands at Naworth, 29 January 1638 & there perused by me, Roger Dodsworth'. The date here is a week later than in the opening words of the transcription quoted above, but it would doubtless have taken Dodsworth several days to do his work. All this sounds clear enough, even though no reason is given for the transfer of the Shap documents to the Star Chamber Register or for their later transfer to Naworth. But Dodsworth also records, likewise in notes after charter 57, this time in Latin, **In transcripto de Hepp et privatarum cartarum Jacobi Bellingham militis 6 Marti 1628**, followed by **In transcript de Hepp alias Shapp in comitatu Westmerland penes Jacobum Bellingham de Levenes militis**. ('In the transcript of Hepp and of the private papers of James Bellingham, knight, March 1628'; and 'In the transcript of Hepp, otherwise known as Shap, in the county of Westmorland in the possession of James Bellingham of Levens, knight'). From these rather confusing notes it would appear that in March 1628 Dodsworth saw copies at Levens of some documents from Shap, which were apparently not part of the original cartulary which had already been removed in 1622. These included charter 51A, the longer version of the foundation charter of Preston Patrick. Later, in 1638, he visited Naworth and copied some documents from the cartulary. He clearly did not copy the whole cartulary, since there are properties recorded in the Dissolution documents of 1540 that do not occur in Dodsworth's transcription of the cartulary. How he made his selection he does not make clear.¹⁷

However, in 1777 Nicolson and Burn recorded that the Register of Shap Abbey which was 'heretofore in the possession of the lord William Howard of Naworth . . . now seems to be lost'.¹⁸ If by some chance it was still somewhere in the castle but untraceable in 1777, then it would fairly certainly have been destroyed in the fire that ravaged the castle in 1844.¹⁹

Dodsworth's manuscript in fact contains two versions of the foundation charter of the house of canons at Preston Patrick. The first, much shorter of the two versions (No. 51 in the manuscript), transcribed from the cartulary at Naworth, omits most of the specification of the lands that are being granted, and there are a few minor variations from the longer version transcribed at Levens.

The second, longer version of the foundation charter (51A in Dodsworth's manuscript), is translated here:

To all the sons of Holy Mother Church both present and future who shall see or hear these letters
Thomas son of Gospatrick greeting. You should know that I have given and granted and by this
my present charter confirmed to God and to St Mary Magdalen and to the canons at Preston who

are of the Premonstratensian Order in free, pure and perpetual alms for the salvation of my soul and those of my wife and of all my ancestors one part of my land in Preston in Kendale for making a house of canons, namely all my demesne park below Lackslost [the text may read Lacksloft here, later in the same line (9), and in l.14] and in Lackslost as far as the road which comes from Prestonuthreed, and then following the road as far as the road which comes from Holme, and so following the road from Holme as far as the stream which comes from Hasalmdire, and by the same stream as far as the water which is the boundary between the two Prestons, and so going up as far as the afore-named road from Lackslost. Moreover I have given them all the land below the road from Wathsudden as far as Stainbrigge, and all the land from Stainbrigge as far as Brackenthwait as it separates the woodland and the open country, and so as far as the land of Richard son of Sigith, and so to the road which comes from Stainbrigg as far as the boundary of Farleton, that is, the whole of the land which belonged to Michael son of Helen, and so following the boundary of Farleton as far as the boundary between the two Prestons, and so going up as far as the aforesaid road from Wathsudden, except for half the meadow at Miresbrigge, and ten acres at Siggethwait for their welfare [reading **salute**, though the purpose of this phrase in this context is not clear], and all the land above Wathsudden, that is, where there was a chapel of the sick. They shall also have from my woodland as much as they wish to take and now have without the permission of my foresters, and the bark of the trees which they have cut shall be theirs. I also grant them free common within the boundaries of Preston, in woodland and in open country, in the roads and the paths, and in waters and mills, and pasture for their pigs or pannage, and the tithe of my pannage. And they shall grind at my mill without paying multure whenever they come and the hopper [reading **canistra** for the unintelligible **tam mazca** of the text] is empty; and when they have their own milling at my mill, (other) men will cease in favour of the aforesaid [reading **et quum propriam habuerint molendinariam ad meum molendinum cessabunt homines prenominitis**]. I wish that the aforesaid canons should have and hold this [land] in peace and in full and honourably, in free, pure and perpetual alms, free of all secular service, custom and exaction. And I and my heirs will guarantee this gift to them against all men forever. These being witnesses, etc. [unfortunately witnesses are not included in the text].

[From an old copy in the possession of James Bellingam, *Eques Auratus*]²⁰

The content of the deed is obviously intended to specify the land and rights that are being granted to the canons. The deed presents problems, not least because several of the names in it can no longer be identified. But there is certainly one other matter worthy of comment. In the charter there are the words ‘. . . to the canons of Preston who are of the Premonstratensian order’. This phrase appears to imply that the canons were already at Preston Patrick at the time the charter granting them land to found their house there was being drafted. And in referring to ‘land above Wathsudden’ there are the words ‘where there was a chapel of the sick’. This may be no more than a mention of a local landmark that would identify the area being specified. The verb is in the perfect tense, apparently indicating that the chapel was no longer there. However, copies of original deeds, as this copy was on the assumption that it came from the Shap cartulary, do not always preserve the original tenses of the actual deed. This argument could of course also be used to suggest that the words ‘. . . to the canons of Preston who are of the Premonstratensian order’ was a phrasing used after the deed was implemented, when the canons were indeed at Preston Patrick. But the fact that the canons at Cockersand were at the time running a ‘hospital’ might nevertheless suggest that the wording used in this charter might be referring to the establishment of an outpost of their work in Preston Patrick, and that the charter was acknowledging that canons from Cockersand were already working in the area.

The area designated in the charter has not been easy to reconstruct, since several of the names are no longer identifiable.²¹ (see Fig. 2 for the boundaries proposed here.)

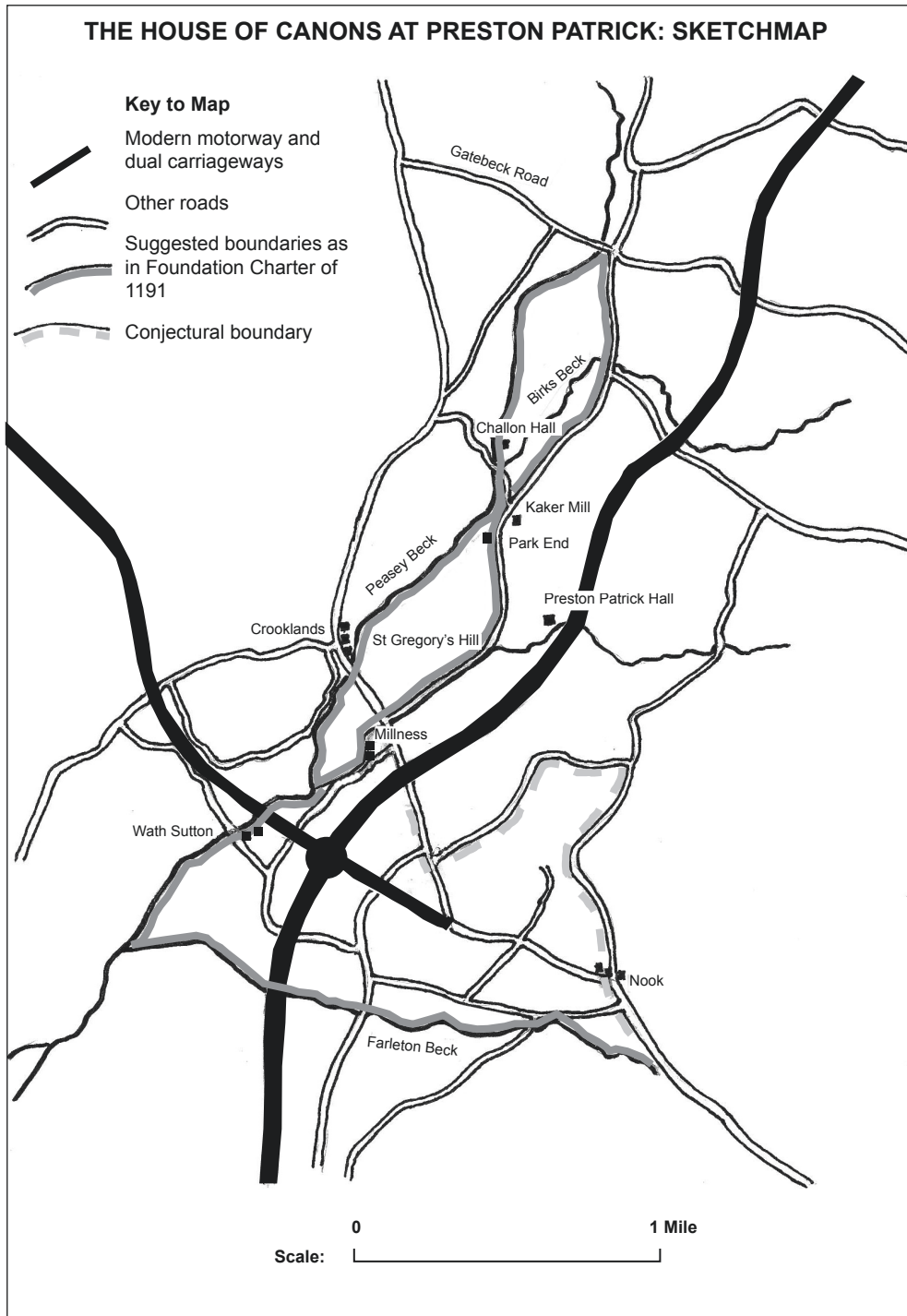


FIG. 2. The House of Canons at Preston Patrick: Sketchmap.

But the reference to ‘all my demesne park’ suggests that the allocation was not small, and the local roads and streams present a pattern which can have changed little in the intervening years. Lackslost (or Lacksloft) cannot be identified, but it appears to be at the northern limit of the allocation where there is also a road from Prestonuthreed (on the west side of Peasey Beck). This may be what is now called Gatebeck Road, which crosses Peasey Beck just to the north of Gatebeck Farm. This road then joins the road which goes north to Old Hutton (where it joins what is now the B6254, the shortest route from Kendal to Kirkby Lonsdale) and south to Holme and Burton (‘the road which comes from Holme’). This road then formed the boundary, passing Challon Hall, a name probably derived from ‘Canons’ Hall’.²² It is possibly here that the house of the canons was established. If that was so, then the mill referred to in the charter was most probably Kaker Mill and not the mill at Millness, since Kaker Mill is only about 300m from Challon Hall. The boundary goes along the road ‘as far as the stream which comes from Hasaldmire’ (perhaps the low-lying land around Preston Patrick Hall), which may be what is now known as Skip Burn. And then ‘by the same stream as far as the water which is the boundary between the two Prestons’ – and Skip Burn does indeed follow the road on the south-east side of St Gregory’s Hill (it may have been channelled alongside the road in fairly recent times, but this probably does not much affect its general south-westerly course) and then joins Peasey Beck near Millness, after passing under the A65 and the Lancaster Canal. The charter then says ‘and so going up as far as the afore-named road from Lackslost’, by which is meant that the boundary now follows Peasey Beck upstream back to the starting point of the description.²³

It is possible, however, that ‘the stream which comes from Hasaldmire’ was not Skip Burn but the more northerly Birks Beck, which would restrict this part of the allocation to the hill between the present Gatebeck farm and Challon Hall, excluding St Gregory’s Hill and the plain to the north and west of Millness. Supporting this exclusion is the fact that St Gregory’s Hill was certainly part of the manor of Preston Patrick in the eighteenth century and there is no record of its having been transferred from Shap Abbey to the manor, or indeed of its having been purchased by the manor after the Dissolution. It may therefore have been a part of the manor in the medieval period.²⁴ On the other hand, the name ‘Hasaldmire’ suggests that the stream in question passed through a low-lying area before it became the boundary of the land allocated to the canons, and this fits well with Skip Burn but not with Birks Beck. On balance it seems more likely that the original allocation did include St Gregory’s Hill, and that this was at some later date transferred from the lands owned by the abbey and eventually purchased by the Lowther family to the estates of Preston Patrick manor.

There is then a southern section of the allocation that includes Wath Sutton and appears to be bounded by Peasey Beck on the west side, Farleton Beck on the south and the hills on the east, perhaps as far as Hollins and Nook. The details are rather more difficult to follow than for the northern allocation, but the general outline is fairly clear.

If this reconstruction of the territory granted to the canons is approximately correct, then the total area of the grant is in the order of 550 acres, not an insubstantial amount (though around 400 acres if St Gregory’s Hill was not included in the allocation).

However, the land is not prime arable land, since the northern section is mainly hill pasture and the southern section, though good land on the flood plain, is liable to flooding and probably was even more so in the twelfth century.

The foundation charter makes no mention of Cockersand, though presumably the canons who settled at Preston Patrick did come from there. It is possible that some may also have come from Blanchland in Northumberland, on the Co. Durham border.

Other charters

There are four other charters in Dodsworth's transcription of the Shap cartulary that specifically refer to grants to the canons of Preston Patrick. The numbering of the charters is as in Dodsworth. The first refers to a grant by Orm son of Ugtred of land in Levens.

- (33) Concerning a certain parcel of land in the vill of Levenes [granted] by Orme son of Ugtred of the same place.

Men both present and future should know that I, Orme son of Ugtred de Levens have given and granted and by my present charter have confirmed to God and St Mary Magdalen of Preston in Kendale and to the canons serving God and St Mary Magdalen there in pure and perpetual alms for the salvation of my soul and of those of my ancestors and descendants, a certain part of my land in Levens, namely that land which Swain son of ... held with a house and its appurtenances and easements pertaining to that land within these boundaries, namely from the land of my brother Ketell below the road and along the road as far as the dike which is on the south side of the same house and so stretching [reading **extendendo**] as ... as far as the source of the stream in the marsh, and so by the stream as far as the aforesaid land of Ketell. These being witnesses, etc.

The extent of the land is not specified in terms which can now be traced, and the value is not given. The land is one holding, and is not likely therefore to be very large. A typical villein's holding was around 30 acres (a virgate), and we should probably not be far off the mark in assuming that this holding was of that order.

The second is equally indeterminate. It is a gift by Thomas, son of Thomas son of Gospatrick, and thus the son of the donor of the foundation charter.

- (52) Men present and future should know that I, Thomas son of Thomas son of Gospatrick have given, granted and by this my present charter confirmed to God and the blessed Mary Magdalen and to the canons of Preston in Kendall who are of the Premonstratensian Order one part of my land in Lundrigg within these boundaries, etc.

Unfortunately Lundrigg cannot be identified. It might be Lambrigg Fell, six miles east of Kendal (marked now by the windfarm overlooking the M6). Wherever it was, the name suggests that it was mainly hill pasture.

The third charter is rather more specific, even if not precise in locating the property. It is a gift by Ralph de Beetham of land in Farleton for the support of a chantry dedicated to St Michael (Ralph's home church at Beetham, originally built probably in the twelfth century not too long before this charter, is dedicated to St Michael and All Angels).

- (54) All men both present and future should know that I, Ralph de Bethome, have given and granted and by this my present charter confirmed to God and to the Church of St Mary Magdalen and to the canons of Preston Thomas [sic] in Kendal and to the blessed Michael and the brothers of the Premonstratensian Order there serving God 20 acres of my land in Farlton, etc. without any secular service in order to serve the altar of the blessed Michael the Archangel in the aforesaid church for the salvation of my soul and of that of my wife Ingrid.

Preston Patrick is called here 'Preston Thomas', since it was of course previously owned by Thomas son of Gospatrick. As noted above, the west side of Peasey Beck was designated 'Preston Uthreed'. The 20 acres in Farleton may well have been adjacent to the southern end of the property granted to the canons by Thomas, and was quite probably good land on the plain near Farleton Beck.

The fourth charter is brief and the gift is modest. Anselm son of Michael de Furness grants four acres in Stainton.

- (57) Anselm son of Michael de Furness has given to St Mary Magdalen and to the canons of Preston four acres of land in Stainton for the souls of his wife Agnes, his father Michael, and his mother Christiana, and his uncle Bernard.

The land may again have been quite close to the property granted by Thomas; it is only a mile from the Gatebeck Road boundary to the boundary of Stainton civil parish.

Other possible grants

In the *Ministers Accounts* there is also a list of eight properties in 'Hutton, Yate and Farleton', with a total value of 41s. 2½d.²⁵ The Hutton here must be Hutton Roof, and the name Yate is still preserved in Black Yeats, half a mile to the east of Preston Patrick church. The three names thus cover a cluster of farmsteads around Farleton Fell, though the list also includes a tenement in Stainton. The properties are all fairly modest, the largest valued at 20 shillings and the smallest at only 2½d. It is quite probable from their location, though of course not certain, that these properties were granted to the canons of Preston Patrick before the move to Shap. Some of the properties in the list may well be among those mentioned above; one is specifically mentioned as being in Farleton (others may also be in Farleton), and one in Stainton, and these may be the whole or part of the grants in charters 54 and 57 above. It is probably a fair estimate to say that this list may include properties to the value of £1 or even less that are not recorded elsewhere.

From the evidence presented above the house of canons at Preston Patrick was not

well endowed, at least not by the standards of many religious houses. The analysis of grants would suggest that the total area granted by various donors was around 600-650 acres or perhaps rather less, and a considerable amount of that was hill pasture. It is therefore no surprise that the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* for Shap Abbey in 1535 lists the Preston in Kendal properties as worth only £9. 19s. 6½d., which is an average rent of around 4d per acre if the total property was 600 acres. This is probably of the right order for the kind of mixed grades of land that the community possessed.²⁶ But it is far from a generous endowment.

The move to Shap

The move to Shap must have occurred (or at least the Shap foundation charter must have been drafted) by 1201, since that is when Thomas son of Gospatrick died, and it was he who granted the canons the land in Shap. But the buildings and the church would not have been completed until some years later. Walter, the first abbot of Shap, was described as ‘abbate de Prestun’ when he witnessed a letter in the *Lanercost Cartulary* dated 17 July 1202.²⁷ The phrase does present a problem of interpretation, since it seems Preston Patrick was never designated as an abbey. Fortunately the letter is precisely dated to July 1202, by which time Thomas had granted his charter of foundation for Shap. Perhaps the best interpretation is that in 1202 Walter was the abbot designate of Shap, and could therefore style himself abbot, but was still residing at Preston Patrick. Gasquet, in his edition of the *Premonstratensian Register*,²⁸ but who is regarded as somewhat unreliable in his editing,²⁹ gives a date of 1200 for the foundation of Shap. He adds that it was created from Blanchland (founded in 1165 as a daughter house of Croxton in Leicestershire) but that the Lancashire abbey of Cockersand was the mother house: ‘Abbas de Cockersand est pater abbas’.³⁰ The date is of course reasonable, and the link with Cockersand as the ‘mother house’ may be correct in that the canons of Preston Patrick had presumably come from Cockersand, but the statement that Shap was ‘created from Blanchland’ looks dubious, especially since there is no mention of Preston Patrick. It is possible, as mentioned earlier, that some of the canons who settled at Preston Patrick had come from Blanchland, and this may be the origin of this statement.

Why the move to Shap took place is nowhere mentioned in the charters. But several reasons can be posited as contributing to the move. The situation at Cockersand was almost certainly relevant. Cockersand referred to its head as an abbot before 1199, but it seems its status as an abbey was not recognised by Leicester Abbey, since at the time when the dispute over the Cockersand lands was finally settled with Leicester Abbey, Abbot Paul of Leicester granted to the canons of Cockersand ‘locum in quo domus hospitalis de Kokersand sita est’, (the place in which the hospital house of Cockersand is sited) with permission to build an abbey and have an abbot.³¹ It seems that by 1201 it was apparent that Cockersand had already achieved, or was in the process of achieving full abbey status, and by this time it may already have been known within the Premonstratensian brotherhood that Leicester was preparing to settle the dispute over the land on which Cockersand stood. So Cockersand was secure for the future, and the role of Preston Patrick as a safety net in case Cockersand found itself deprived of its home territory now became unnecessary.

It has been suggested that Thomas son of Gospatrick may have been very conscious of the fact that he held the lands in Preston Patrick from William de Lancaster, whereas he held Shap 'in chief' and therefore a move to Shap would offer the canons greater security.³² But this hardly seems to be a valid reason for the move. Thomas is likely to have granted the Preston Patrick site to the canons with the permission of William (if indeed William was the landowner 'in chief', which is doubtful),³³ but even if he did not do so, once the grant had been made it would have been difficult if not impossible to take the property from the canons. Thomas's role in the move is more likely to have been that he considered the more extensive site at Shap a more fitting location for an abbey to which his name as founder would forever be attached.

A further suggestion has been that the canons found the proximity of a growing town at Kendal, and the consequent increased use of the roads leading to it, a threat to their isolation.³⁴ If the canons of Preston Patrick did indeed reside on the site of what is now Challon Hall, they were within 300 metres of Kaker Mill, which must have been quite a busy mill serving much of the valley of Peasey Beck. But this does put into question the concept of what Premonstratensian canons considered was their role as a community of priests. Norbert their founder had certainly envisaged that the canons would continue to play a role in the religious life of the area in which they established their houses, but there is no doubt that one can detect a tendency within the Premonstratensian order to seek greater isolation, rather in the manner of the Cistercians. Eggleston Abbey in Teesdale (founded late twelfth century, probably at about the same time as Cockersand and Preston Patrick) as well as Cockersand itself, of course, show the same tendency towards contemplative isolation. Also about the same time as the move to Shap the canons of Swainby Abbey in North Yorkshire, founded in or before 1187, moved from the agricultural landscape of the Plain of York to the much more isolated site at Coverham in Wensleydale between 1196 and 1202.³⁵ To be fair to the canons, these more isolated abbeys, including Shap, were within an hour or two, on foot or by donkey, of several small settlements which they could serve as priests as Norbert had envisaged.

But it was of course Thomas son of Gospatrick who actually granted the land in Shap to the canons, and there is no doubt that the site at Shap offered a great deal more space as well as more seclusion. There seems in fact to have been some collaboration between Thomas and other local landowners, some of them related to him by marriage, in providing a more extensive site for the canons of Preston Patrick. Thomas had family connections with the de Morvilles and the Veteriponts, two very prominent families of the area. Hugh de Morville (d.1162) had been Lord of Westmorland and Constable of Scotland and had founded Dryburgh Abbey, another Premonstratensian House, in 1150.³⁶ His eldest son Hugh was one of Becket's murderers in 1170.³⁷ When he died is not certain (there are various traditions about the following careers and deaths of all four murderers), but it might have been as late as 1202. He certainly died without an heir, and his sister Maud (Matilda), who had married William de Veteripont (Vieuxpont, later also written Vipont or Vipond), inherited some of his lands, perhaps in fact all his lands in Westmorland.³⁸ Maud and William had at least two sons, Robert and Ivo, and a daughter Joan. Joan was married to Thomas, the son of Thomas son of Gospatrick. Maud, Robert and Ivo all gave substantial properties

to the newly created Shap Abbey. It is therefore probable that the decision to grant lands for an abbey at Shap was the result of negotiations between Thomas and the Veteriponts.

All these considerations, as well as perhaps a few others of which we are not aware, may well have been in the minds of the canons and the local lords as the canons made the decision to move 20 miles north to Shap. They did not of course relinquish the grants they had been given in Preston Patrick, and these remained part of the abbey's estates until the Dissolution in 1540.

The canons of Preston Patrick, and after them the canons at Shap who continued to own the lands in Preston Patrick, maintained a presence, at least as landlords, in the area for well over 300 years. The Preston Patrick properties seem to have been administered as a grange of Shap Abbey. An incident in 1379 suggests that the control of the abbey was not as tight as it might have been, when a certain John de Preston was called to account for his time as the abbey's receiver in Preston Patrick, and he seems to have gone further than simply failing to send in moneys as he 'with force and arms carried away the goods, and chattles of the said abbot at Preston Petryk'.³⁹ The continuation of the name of Challon Hall (Canons' Hall) may indicate that this was in some way the abbey's base on the grange, perhaps the house of the abbey's receiver – though by the dissolution the hall was occupied as a farm. The impact of the canons on the area is difficult to assess, though there is at least no evidence of any friction between the canons and the local community. The local community were doubtless not too concerned that they now paid their rents to the canons instead of to Thomas.

But we can also discern something of the context of Thomas's grant, in particular the reasons why the canons were established in that place and at that time, and we can also determine, with a fair degree of certainty, the extent of their holdings that Thomas and others gave to the canons. Their holdings were indeed modest, but apparently enough for their immediate needs. But the mood of the times was for most religious communities to seek more isolation and to build impressive abbeys. Income from the estates of the canons of Preston Patrick was certainly not enough for that.

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References

- ¹ The name used at the time was Preston in Kendale, or in one charter (Dodsworth 54) Preston Thomas. It is also called Preston Thomas in the Lay Subsidy for 1336 – Robin Glasscock, (ed), *The Lay Subsidy of 1334*, (Oxford, 1975). The name Patrick comes from Patrick, younger son and ultimately heir of Thomas son of Gospatrick. The modern name will be used in this article
- ² Bodleian, MSS Dodsworth 45, ff. 17^v-20^v and 159, f. 189
- ³ H. M. Colvin, *The White Canons in England*, (Clarendon Press 1951), 272-78
- ⁴ Colvin, *White Canons*, Table 1, which shows eight houses founded in and after 1190 of the total of 34 on the table
- ⁵ William Farrer and John F. Curwen, *Records relating to the Barony of Kendale*: vol. 1, (1923) Introduction, 16-17, argue that there was no barony of Kendale before 1189-90, though William de Lancaster certainly did possess lands in south Westmorland
- ⁶ *The Chartulary of Cockersand Abbey of the Premonstratensian Order*, transcribed and edited by William

- Farrer, Chetham Society in six volumes; vol. 56, New Series 1905, Vol III Part I, 758-9. See also Victoria County History, *A History of the County of Lancaster*, J. Brownbill and William Farrer, (eds) 1906, vol. 2, 154. Tom Licence, *Hermits and Recluses in English Society* (Oxford, 2011) has shown the great popularity of hermits and recluses in the chronicles and charters of the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, especially if they could be associated with the religious houses in question; see especially Chapter 8: 'How anchorites became saints' (173-196)
7. F. A. Gasquet, *Collectanea Anglo-Premonstratensia*, (Royal Historical Society, Camden Third Series, vol. xii 1906), i, 224. There is a full text of the *Collectanea Anglo-Premonstratensia* available on-line. The connection with Leicestershire doubtless came through William de Lancaster I's marriage (after 1153) to Gundreda, widow of Roger, Earl of Warwick, and cousin of Robert, Earl of Leicester, the founder of Leicester abbey in 1153. See the Peerage.com under William de Lancaster and Gundred de Warenne. Gundred died in 1166. (VCH *Lancaster*, vol. 2, 152, incorrectly states that Gundreda was daughter of Roger, earl of Warwick)
 8. From the isolation of the site (if the hospital was on the same site as the later abbey) it might have been a leper hospital, though it is perhaps more likely that it had a more general function. Rotha Mary Clay, 1909, *The Medieval Hospitals of England*, London, 1, explains that the early meaning of hospital was 'a wayside shelter for all comers'. Colvin, *White Canons*, 143 says Cockersand Abbey retained some features of a hospital for a 'poor men's infirmary' until the Dissolution. For a general survey of medieval hospitals (of which there were over 700 in total) and their functions see Courtney Dainton, 'Medieval Hospitals of England', *History Today*, 26, (1976), issue 8, 532-38. Roberta Gilchrist, *Contemplation and Action - The Other Monasticism* (London, 1995) has a detailed discussion of the functions and practices of hospitals in chapter 2, 'Houses of mercy: the archaeology of medieval hospitals'
 9. Cockersand Chartulary, 757
 10. Cockersand Chartulary, 1003-04, and 1001 and 1000
 11. Whether this was Hugh de Morville of Burgh-by-Sands or Hugh de Morville, one of the murderers of Thomas Becket, is not clear. See later section 'The move to Shap'
 12. An account of the dispute is given in VCH, *Lancaster*, vol. 2, 154-55. See also William Farrer, *The Lancashire Pipe Rolls of 31 Henry I., A.D. 1130, and of the reigns of Henry II., A.D. 1155-1189; Richard I., A.D. 1189-1199; and King John, A.D. 1199-1216* (Liverpool, 1902), 391, 395. Disputes about monastic holdings were far from uncommon, often because later generations sought reasons to question gifts by their predecessors. See for example Emilia Jamrozak, *Rievaulx Abbey and its Social Context, 1132-1300: Memory, Locality and Networks*, Medieval Church Studies 8 (Turnhout, Brepols, 2005), especially Chapter 3: 'Bad Neighbours: Disputes and Conflict Resolution' (111-30)
 13. A certain Theobald Walter, at some time probably soon after 1194, granted the canons of Cockersand land in Pilling 'to build an abbey' (The Chartulary of Cockersand Abbey, Chetham Society 1898, 375-76; the charter is also in Dugdale Monasticon, vi. II, 906, charter 1). There is no evidence that any abbey was ever actually erected in Pilling, though the canons of Cockersand may have moved to Pilling temporarily for a few years as Brian Marshall, *Cockersand Abbey, Lancashire*, (Landy, 2001), 11-14 argues. Whether or not the canons actually moved to Pilling, it seems that this grant by Theobald Walter was made as a precaution against the canons of Cockersand losing their property on the marshes. It is worth noting that this charter, together with confirmations by John and Henry III, was in 1898 in the private collection of W. H. Dalton of Thurnham Hall, just two miles from Cockersand (*loc. cit.* 376), and was probably Theobald's copy; there is strangely no copy of this charter or of the confirmation charters in the Cockersand Cartulary.
 14. See e.g. Farrer and Curwen, *Records of Kendale*: vol. 2, 297. A copy of the charter of Richard I granting the lands in Kendale to Gilbert Fitz-Reinfrid (in fact it is a copy of the confirmation of the grant drafted in 1198-99) is contained in the Dodsworth MS of the Shap Cartulary, document 31 (the transcription used here was done by Dr Henry Summerson, and then copied by Dr John Todd in February, 1998). Presumably a copy was given to the abbey by Thomas son of Gospatrick as evidence of the history of the ownership of the lands listed, together with a copy of the charter of Gilbert granting the Kendale properties to Thomas himself, of which a sixteenth-century copy survives, see F. W. Ragg, 'Shap and Rosgill and Some Early Owners', CW2, xiv, 'Charter A', 55-66. In fact the grant to the abbey was only a very small part of the grant to Gilbert (and then to Thomas), since the original grant consisted of a total of 14 carucates (some 1600 acres), in Levens, Farleton, Beetham, Holme, Burton, Hincaster, Lupton, and Preston. Gilbert Fitz-Reinfrid was married to Helewise, daughter of William de Lancaster II
 15. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography says in the entry for Roger Dodsworth, 'According to Francis Drake, the author of *Eboracum* (1736), St Mary's tower in York contained 'all the records taken

out of the religious houses, at their dissolutions, on the north side Trent', and when the tower was blown up in the siege of the city in 1644, most of the manuscripts were destroyed, but 'our painful countryman Mr Dodsworth had but just finished his transcripts of these valuable remains' (Drake, 575).¹⁶ Drake was overstating the case in saying all the records from the religious houses of the north were taken to York after the dissolution, and it is hardly likely that the Shap cartulary had found its way from Naworth to York by 1644. Colvin, 382, footnote 2, says that other cartularies examined at Naworth by Dodsworth at the same time as Shap survive, though he does not say which ones; the Lanercost Cartulary certainly survived

16. The James Bellingham referred to was father of Henry Bellingham, whose wife Dorothy died in childbirth in 1626 and was buried at Heversham, where in St Peter's church there is still a fine memorial to her. See Dugdale, *Monasticon*, vi. II, 869 footnote, referring to Thomas Tanner's notes on records of Shap Abbey, where he dates Dodsworth's transcription of the charter 'in the possession of James Bellingham' to 1622, though that may be because he was aware that the Shap cartulary had been removed from Levens that year. Unfortunately there is no sign of this charter in the list of the manuscripts of Captain Josceline F. Bagot of Levens Hall in the Historical Manuscripts Commission 10th Report, appendix, part IV: Manuscripts of the Earl Of Westmorland, etc. (London, HMSO, 1885), 318-47, though there is one charter recording a gift to Shap Abbey (p.324) and several recording gifts to Byland and Whitby abbeys. James Bellingham's father, Alan, was very active in acquiring property in and around Kirkby Kendal and this could explain why the Shap grants were at Levens. See Farrer and Curwen, *Records of Kendale I*, 87-99
17. There is an interesting comment by Sir John Lowther (d.1637), who, writing of Lord William Howard in his autobiography, refers to a 'costly sewet in the Starre Chamber for tearing out of a lefe of the Coucher booke of the Abbey of Shappe which concerned his lands of Thornethwayte which he purchased of Sir H Curwen, which booke cowld noewayes belong to him'. See C. B. Phillips (ed), *Lowther Family Estate Books 1617-1675*, The Surtees Society 191, 219. This event presumably occurred between 1622, when the cartulary was delivered by James Bellingham to the Star Chamber, and 1638, when Dodsworth saw it in Naworth Castle
18. Nicolson and Burn, *The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmorland and Cumberland*, (London 1777), i.472 in a note at the foot of the page
19. The cartulary of Lanercost Priory was also kept at Naworth Castle, and it survived only because it had been used in a court case in 1826 and had been retained by one of the lawyers involved in the case. See John M. Todd, *The Lanercost Cartulary*, Surtees Society vol. CCIII and Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society Record Series vol. XI, 1997, 44-46. For the Shap cartulary there is (at least so far) no such happy ending
20. The text is also printed in Sir William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vol. VI Part II, 1846, p.869
21. The tithe map for Preston Patrick (1847) in the Kendal Record Office offers no help in the identification of names in the area no longer in use, and other local maps have also been consulted to no avail. Residents in Preston Patrick to whom I have spoken could also not recognise the names
22. A. H. Smith, *The Place-Names of Westmorland*, (CUP, 1967), i.62
23. It might be argued that the starting point of the description of the allocation is not Gatebeck Road but the road that goes from Endmoor over Peasey Beck to Kaker Mill. The house called Park End, near Kaker Mill and just to the south of Challon Hall, might appear to support this argument. However, there is no evidence that the name goes back to the parkland as it was in 1191; it seems rather to come from the park later associated with Preston Patrick Hall, since the 1st edn OS 6 inch to the mile prints 'St Gregory's Park' overlaid on St Gregory's Hill, with 'Park End Mill' at its northern end next to Peasey Beck. Indeed this more southerly boundary would exclude Challon Hall (Probably Canons' Hall, as Nicolson and Burn, i.242 suggest). Furthermore, if the allocation was bounded on the north by this road, then in effect this section of the allocation would be little more than St Gregory's Hill, which is such a landmark that one might have expected it to have been specifically named
24. After the surrender of Shap Abbey in 1540, the abbey's lands in Preston Patrick were granted, together with the majority of the abbey's other lands, to Thomas, Lord Wharton in 1544 (*Letters and Papers Domestic and Foreign, Hen VIII*. ixx pt 2 800 5). In 1729, the then Duke of Wharton was attainted for treason and his estates confiscated and placed in a Trust (Lawrence B. Smith, 'Wharton, Philip James, duke of Wharton and Jacobite duke of Northumberland, 1698-1731', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition Jan 2008.). He died on 30 May 1731 and in 1732-33, the estates were sold to Robert Lowther of Maulds Meaburn and subsequently passed into the Lowther estate when Sir James Lowther inherited Robert's lands (the Lonsdale Papers include some

manorial records for the Wharton Estate in Westmorland from 1560; CAS, Carlisle. *D/LONS/L6/2/24*). The rest of Preston Patrick was held, as the manor of Preston Patrick, first by the Talebois family and their descendants the Curwens, and then, from the mid-fourteenth century until the early eighteenth century, by the Preston family, who appear to have taken their name from the manor. By the eighteenth century St Gregory's Hill was certainly a part of the manor, as the *Map of the Customary and Freehold Tenants of Sir James Lowther in the Manor of Preston Patrick 1789* clearly shows (CAS, *D/LONS/L5/3/2/PP3*; the original seems to have disappeared from the archives as at June 2011, but fortunately Harry Hawkins, co-author of this article, has retained a copy), and as Nicolson and Burn (241) confirm. No records have yet been discovered of any transfer of lands from the abbey estates, either before or after the dissolution, to the Preston Patrick estate, but it may be significant that the map of 1789 referred to above shows small but definite variations from the foundation charter allocations in the area from Gatebeck to Kaker Mill. It certainly seems feasible that St Gregory's Hill was transferred at some stage, perhaps at some time before the dissolution when Shap Abbey thought fit to sell some of its more remote property.

25. As in previous note

26. For land values, see e.g. John Thorley, *CW IV* (2004), The Estates of Calder Abbey, note 46 on p.161

27. Todd, *The Lanercost Cartulary*, 300. Walter was certainly abbot of Shap on 22 February 1209 (Knowles and Brooke, *Heads of Religious Houses*, under Shap)

28. F. A. Gasquet, *Collectanea Anglo-Premonstratensia*, iii. 105-06

29. Colvin, *White Canons*, in Appendix VIII, gives a list of corrections to the text of the *Collectanea*. See also Gribbin, *The Premonstratensian Order*, xvii

30. The entry is in Bishop Redman's register recording his visitations of the Premonstratensian houses in England towards the end of the fifteenth century. Unfortunately the only house he did not visit was his own abbey of Shap of which he remained abbot despite becoming a bishop. For a biography of Bishop Richard Redman see Colvin, *White Canons*, 363-64, and Gribbin, *The Premonstratensian Order*, Chapter 6

31. VCH, *Lancaster*, vol. 2, 154-55. See also Cockersand Cartulary 332 and 375-76

32. Colvin, *White Canons*, 169

33. Gifts to religious houses were almost always given in 'frankalmoin', i.e. without any feudal obligations (the phrase used in charters is usually 'in liberam puram et perpetuam elemosynam', 'in free, pure and perpetual alms', as in Thomas's foundation charter for Preston Patrick). This meant that all feudal service, all the way up the feudal pyramid, including the very profitable escheats and reliefs, was relinquished. It certainly must have occurred that gifts were granted to religious houses without chief lords being consulted, since the Statute of Mortmain in 1279, under Edward I, which incorporated some earlier legislation, was designed in part to stop this happening, and it also required the permission of the crown for any such transfer of property to religious bodies.

34. G. F. Weston and W. H. St John Hope, 'The Premonstratensian Abbey of St Mary Magdalene at Shap, Westmorland', *CWI*, x, 286-314

35. Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses* (Longman, 2nd edn. 1972), 187. Colvin, *White Canons*, 126-9

36. Richard Fawcett and Richard Oram, *Dryburgh Abbey*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2005), 13

37. Whether or not this Hugh de Morville was the same person who became the husband of Heloise, the widow of William de Lancaster (see section above 'The Cockersand Connection') is disputed. Heloise's husband may have been Hugh de Morville of Burgh-by-Sands, son of Simon de Morville; but Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket*, University of California Press, 1990, 258, thinks that Heloise's husband 'may well have been' Hugh the murderer of Becket

38. 15 of the 59 deeds in the Dodsworth MS of the Shap Cartulary are lands in Westmorland given, directly or indirectly, by the Veteriponts. The fact that none of the de Morville family actually gave lands to Shap may suggest that Maud and her family did receive all the de Morville lands in Westmorland. The relationships between benefactors and a Premonstratensian house are discussed, for Coverham, by Guy Halsall, 'Coverham: Its Context in the Landscape of late Medieval Yorkshire' in Roberta Gilchrist and Harold Mytum, *The Archaeology of Rural Monasteries*, BAR Series 203 1989, 113-40, and for Torre, by John Jenkins 'Torre Abbey: Locality, Community, and Society in Medieval Devon' (DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2010)

39. Farrer and Curwen, *Records of Kendale: vol. 1*, 206, 302