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'Lowland Place and Highland Retreat': Charles Francis Forster, an Eighteenth Century Northumbrian Agricultural Improver

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SUMMARY

Charles Francis Forster (1732–1807), of Low Buston and Campville (Holystone) in Northumberland, was a magistrate, landowner and agricultural improver, and also a notable collector of Roman antiquities. An earlier paper examined Forster's antiquarian activities, using recently discovered letters and other sources, and this article considers his enthusiastic commitment to agricultural improvement and his sporting interests, both at his 'lowland place' or estate at Low Buston and at his 'highland retreat' at Holystone. The landscape legacy of his improvements is also traced.

INTRODUCTION

Charles Francis Forster (1732–1807) of Low Buston and Campville (Holystone) in Northumberland was a landowner, magistrate, agricultural improver, avid country sportsman and a collector of Roman antiquities. An earlier article has given an account of his life and his antiquarian activities,¹ and this paper focuses on his agricultural and sporting enthusiasms, again using his letters to Humphrey Senhouse of Netherhall in Cumberland. The ebullience, confidence, energy, and even eccentricity that his antiquarian correspondence reveals are equally reflected in his correspondence on agriculture and country sports. Forster was not the leading pioneer in any single aspect of his farming and landowning activities, but he did undertake significant changes in both his 'lowland-place' at Low Buston and his 'highland retreat' at Campville (as he described them in letters of

1793 and 1790 respectively). This paper examines these improvements, using Forster's enthusiastic reports of his activities and relating these practices to those advocated by leading agriculturists in the county. It then discusses the legacy left in the landscape around both Low Buston and Campville by Forster's improvements.

Details of Forster's life and character are provided in the earlier paper, and only the relevant details need to be rehearsed here. Charles Francis Forster was born the eldest of three sons and two daughters to Francis Forster of Low Buston. Low Buston township lies just to the north of the river Coquet, on the road between Warkworth and Shilbottle. Francis Forster died in 1777, and his son then inherited the Low Buston estate. Up to his father's death, Charles Francis had lived at Felton. At some date before 1787, and probably during the early 1780s, he bought a property in Upper Coquetdale. This was the small farm of Lanternside, to the south-west of Holystone village. This provided his 'highland retreat' and 'shooting place', but was also to be the focus of major landscape improvements. It was through this purchase that Forster also acquired an interest in the Roman fort of High Rochester in Redesdale, an interest that became the focus of his antiquarian collection, examined in the earlier paper.

By 1787 Forster thus had two very contrasting Northumberland estates: the lowland arable farmland of Low Buston and the marginal, moorland estate of Lanternside, or Campville as he renamed it. This allowed him to pursue varied farming and sporting activities, but Charles Francis had an additional reason for running two estates: the Buston

estate was entailed to his legitimate offspring and then to his youngest brother's family. Forster was (and remained) unmarried, but had two illegitimate children to whom he was very attached. The purchase of the Lanternside estate, and its improvement, also provided a legacy he could give to them.

Northumberland at this time was an arena of considerable agricultural change and improvement. In their *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Northumberland*, Bailey and Culley claimed:

There are probably few parts of the Kingdom where estates have made such rapid improvements as in this county; there being several instances of the value being more than trebled within the last 40 years.²

On both his estates Forster enthusiastically pursued this fashion for agricultural improvement, and his activities can be compared with the practices advocated by Bailey and Culley.³ The two very different estates can be examined in turn.

‘LOWLAND-PLACE’

Low Buston township lies in east Northumberland, between Warkworth and Shilbottle. The land drains west and south into the Tylee and Grange burns, on the north banks of the Coquet (into which the Grange burn runs). The land is generally good quality, if rather heavy in parts; in 1899 it was described as ‘mostly of fertile barley and turnip soil, with ancient pasture fields, rich in depth and quality of soil’.⁴ The township comprised some 896 acres. In medieval times, it had supported a substantial population, and in the 1538 Muster Roll it is listed with 31 able-bodied men (though 30 of them were ‘wanting horse and harness’). This compares with 12 men from neighbouring High Buston and 24 from Shilbottle. The medieval village lay on a flat-topped spur of land on the north side of the Grange Burn.

By the mid-eighteenth century Low Buston had become almost entirely divided into severalty farms, a process of engrossing that can be traced back at least as far as an enclosure deed

of 1641. A Francis Forster was one of the parties to that deed, and by 1750 the Forsters had acquired the major part of Low Buston, an estate of 500 acres in the southern, village part of the township. Two other holdings (Bell's 287 acres in the north of Low Buston, and Wilkinson's 92 acres to the west of the village) made up the remainder, together with a small parcel of common grazing.⁵ Although the land was now farmed in these holdings, the old village site remained, and lay immediately to the east of the Forster's farmhouse, with the street running eastwards through the village towards Warkworth.

Forster seems initially to have let out much of the land, and attempted to spend much of the week at Campville, for in October 1788 he wrote from Buston to his friend Humphrey Senhouse of Cumberland, ‘I was paying my weekly visit on the Saturday night from my shooting place at Campville’.⁶ Three years later he wrote of his Buston steward's accounts, ‘[I] had his account brought to me every Sunday at my highland retreat, when I did not visit my lowland-place in person’.⁷ However, in that same letter he explained why he had acquired no Roman antiquities that year:

For, would you believe it, I have upwards of twelve hundred acres in my own hands. Of these, are 500 acres (or the whole of my paternal estate in this parish) of the richest lands in the kingdom, keeping off the vicinity of great towns.

I did not mean to have been myself the cultivator of these rich lands beyond a certain extent; but I cou'd not let the remainder to my satisfaction last spring. Had I succeeded in this matter, you wou'd each spring have assuredly seen me in your part of the world; yes, on your side the Apennines. However the farming prevented me.⁸

He continued his rather self-congratulatory account:

Under my present situation, I render the various solitudes of rural life as easy as most of men. I have hitherto conducted my immense farm with prodigious success; far beyond my own expectations or that of any of my neighbours: for, when they had finished sowing their oats, I had not then put a plough into the

ground upon 130 acres of spring-corn, and 100 acres of turnips and to have fallow. Nay, I had not a plow for the purpose.

Then judge of my exertions when I did begin: I immediately order'd eight plows, 2 brakes, 2 pair of harrows: At first I had but the solitary pair of cart horses: I then order'd four short and four longer carts. I presently made my number of cart horses thirteen; and added three of my hunters for the harrows: My next bold stroke was the purchase of forty six work oxen for the plough and carts (not waines): An Augean herd!

In the mean time the whole country pour'd in their assistance to forward the young Hercules in his arduous toils.

These efforts were apparently rewarded:

To be short, my crops of oats and barley have been excellent, and tho' late sown, have been one and all of them well got in, some very easily.

Add to this, my turnip-crop is glorious; and as good as the earliest of my neighbours; And I have twenty four fattening oxen now upon them, together with some small wedder and for my own table. I had 155 acres hay. I sold 150£ of . . . [missing].. for my own use. My pastures for my fattening cattle for my [missing] cattle, for my cows and cavalry were glorious. I have been lately very busy, filling up stables for my work-horses and building hembles [hemmels] for my work-oxen; the former are finished; the latter approaching fast towards a finish. My fold yard and hembles for work-oxen will create Augean stores of manure; but no River shall step in to remove my stores of manure. Hercules was a blockhead: he knew nothing of turnip husbandry. Instead of playing this Herculean game of folly, I am collecting dunghills from my neighbouring town, and have been very successful; as also from the sea.

In July 1793 he was able to claim three years of success for his farming methods:

I have also in the course of three years' cultivation restored my late neglected estates in this parish to its pristine splendour. And my crops of hay and corn and my pastures, and my rising generation and fine breed of cattle bespeak my industry, and announce a pleasing change.⁹

and his *post scriptum* gave further details:

My hay harvest upon 106 acres of the rich lands of Buston is over today, and in pike and nile (large cocks) except some odd corners of bog-hay for oxen: and will all be in stack in a few days or a week, wind and weather permitting: all nobly won and at less expense than I ever remember. 'Tis well that my crops of hay are ample; for there is a promise of but a moderate quantity of straw for the foddering of my large herds of cattle. But we are likely to have a gifty [?] crop of corn: although my barley is beginning to whiten too soon for my purpose of being well fill'd, having been taken hold of by the drought, though this is in some spots only.

We cannot yet tell what our turnip crop will turn out: of which I have 34 acres in drill, on land naturally rich, through the addition of plenty of lime, muck, and good tillage. If we get rains, the crops must be immense. If they are immense, I have twenty four oxen and three cows to put off and fatten on them, which will yield me upwards of 400£.

The quality of my large quantities of wheat last year, notwithstanding all the rains, was glorious: I never saw finer, fairer bread at any table than it has invariably produced.

These, my friend, are rational pleasures. And I have added about twenty acres to my husbandry, by underdraining, cleaning and levelling th[em], that no plough had ever visited before; and which are now very productive, and will be annually more so for many years to come.

Forster's agricultural practices, as reported in this correspondence, can be compared with Bailey and Culley's *General View*. His enthusiasm for manuring with dung, and its value for turnip husbandry, echoes the comments of Bailey and Culley. They note the widespread practice of specifying the application of cart-loads of dung in Northumbrian farm leases,¹⁰ and that 'Sea Wrack, Sea Ware, or Marine Plants driven ashore by the tide, are used with great effect wherever they can be had'.¹¹ On manure in turnip husbandry, they note:

In some parts of this county, where the turnip culture is carried to such extent, every exertion of ingenuity is practised to raise a large portion of *farm-yard dung*; for without this valuable

article, it is well known that good turnip crops are not to be expected; and the farmers of strong soils are sufficiently sensible of the advantage of dung to their crops, not to use every endeavour to increase its quantity.¹² [*italics in original.*]

Forster's '34 acres in drill' for turnips, rather than broadcasting the seed, would also have won their approbation. His policy of fattening oxen, as well as cattle, for the market follows Bailey and Culley's observation that:

Oxen – are mostly grazed in the eastern part of the county, and a few in the vicinity of Whittingham; they are bought in May or June, and sold as they become ready to supply the large fleets of colliers and other trading vessels belonging to Newcastle, Shields, Sunderland, Hartley and Blythe.¹³

However, his 46 work-oxen for the ploughs and carts – Forster's Augean herd – did not follow Bailey and Culley's recommendations. They note:

We have before observed, that since the price of horses had been so very high, several oxen had been used for the draught, but whether with propriety or advantage will appear from

A Comparative Statement between Horse and Oxen, for the purpose of the Draught.¹⁴

The 'Comparative Statement' is then six pages of calculations, designed to demonstrate that teams of six oxen require 13 acres more land to feed on than the comparable two-horse team, and consequently that, for Northumberland as a whole, £150,000 of production would be foregone if oxen replaced horses. The assessment may have been accurate, but it should be noted that Culley himself was said in 1801 to be using 150 oxen for draught, 'more than any other man in England'.¹⁵

Forster also practised another form of 'improvement' that was characteristic of many parts of Northumberland: the depopulation and clearance of old medieval settlements as part of the creation of new farmsteads and parklands.¹⁶ The old hamlet of Low Buston had long been in decay, but Forster remodelled the landscape, diverting the east-west road further north so that his mansion could look out

eastwards across a ha-ha onto cattle grazing open pasture, and also creating space north of the house for a drive with trees.

Why the clearance of the old hamlet took place at this time, rather than earlier when the major holdings had been established, is unclear, but the reason may lie in a small, anomalous smallholding there. The entail set up by Francis Forster (Charles Francis' father) in 1762 meant that the inherited estate passed on Charles Francis' death in 1807 to his youngest brother's family. However, Charles Francis' own will bequeathed a small parcel of land, evidently a house-site facing the village street with a former toft sloping down to the Grange burn.¹⁷ This was not part of the inherited (and entailed) estate, and may have been purchased by Charles Francis after 1778, so giving him ownership of the entire village and enabling clearance.¹⁸

What Forster did not do was to remove the foundations and banks of the former house and tofts. The land was put to pasture and has remained so for the last 200 years. The result has been a deserted village site well-preserved under the turf.¹⁹ His activities were sufficiently notable to be used by McCord and Thompson as a type-example in their general history of the Northern Counties:

Villages might disappear or move for various reasons. In the sixteenth century, the Northumberland village of Low Buston had been reckoned able to find 31 able-bodied men for border defence. Decline culminated in abandonment after 1778, when the village stood in the way of Charles Francis Forster's plan for extension of his mansion and the park around it.²⁰

Forster also seems to have remodelled parts of the old mansion, certainly adding the entrance hall with its fine Chinese-style timber staircase, which survives to this day. Along the drive which he formed, Forster planted a number of fine horse-chestnuts, some of which also survive.²¹

Charles Francis' farming interests at Low Buston did not mean he neglected his country sports. At both Low Buston and Campville,

Forster pursued his hunting and shooting interests. In 1790 he reported to Humphrey Senhouse 'My hounds (at Buston) are excellent. This is the road to health!',²² and on Boxing Day 1791 'I have not yet taken the field with my merry harriers. However, this envious frost has firstly been the cause'.²³ In 1793 he extols:

I do not neglect the chase: my hounds and pointers are capital; and my cavalry are glorious.

But I never turn out either on hunting or shooting or farming till noon: because I never can quit the field till night; never dining at any time till night. I therefore always pass the morning till 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 o'clock in the evening in study in various languages; and in an unrivalled state of happiness, and an unparalleled style of youth and health.²⁴

But it was at his highland retreat of Campville that Forster had most scope for both his sporting interests and for forms of improvement unavailable in lowland, well-farmed Buston.

'HIGHLAND RETREAT'

Forster purchased the small estate of Lanternside at some date before 1787, and probably in the early 1780s, after he had come into his inheritance, though it could have been somewhat earlier. The estate lay to the south-west of Holystone village in Upper Coquetdale, and comprised some 41 acres of farmland together with extensive moorland. The farmhouse lay just to the north of a deep and picturesque ravine, with the few enclosed fields to the north and west of it, and beyond them the slopes of Turnberry hill and the moorland leading to Harbottle Common.

Here he had his 'highland retreat' for the antiquarian expeditions into Redesdale and his collections described in the earlier paper. But equally it was where he could pursue his devotion to country sports. Forster also had some lands in Arkengarthdale in North Yorkshire, inherited from his mother (though his second brother Joseph was the main inheritor of these), and regularly sent parcels of grouse to his friends (including his correspondent

Humphrey Senhouse) from the Yorkshire estates. But his Campville estate provided other excitements, and in a letter written from there in September 1791, he extols:

I have not so many grouse here in my Northumberland chasse; but I have a fine country, and a greater variety of game. Here also I can ride over all my mountains, not on ponies or shelties, but on my noblest cavalry; which, for this purpose, I educate here in the shooting season; that I may hereafter (or heretofore) hunt either fox or hare all the year around uninterruptedly. . . . In short, one day's animated hunting (but unmixed with intemperance!) gives a quantum sufficient of health for a month's business or study.²⁵

But Forster was also very active in improvements around Campville, though they are not a topic in his extant letters to Humphrey Senhouse. When he acquired Campville, it had only the small cultivated estate of about 41 acres, but it also included extensive moorland to the north and west on the slopes and summit of Turnberry hill. His December 1790 letter had claimed he had over 1200 acres in his own hands, and some 700 of these had to have been around Campville. We do not have any letters or account-books for Forster's improvements here, but they are evidenced from two sources: first, the unusual occasion of his activities being celebrated (or lampooned) in verse, and secondly in the landscape history (and present landscape) of the locality. The verse, dated 1787, is ostensibly 'From the Swains of Felton to the Shepherds of Lanternside' and concerns Forster's move from Felton Peth (his old residence) to Lanternside or Campville. The poem is one of four from Felton collected by John Bell and published in his *Rhymes of Northern Bards* in 1812,²⁶ and the versifier was presumably an acquaintance of Forster in the county, well-informed about his enthusiasms and foibles. The poem runs:

From the Swains of Felton to the Shepherds of Lanternside, Northumberland, 1787.

Tune: General F____r____'s March

He's gone! he's gone!

The conquering hero's gone!
 To barren lands in Lantherside,
 To sow Lucerne upon.
 Rejoice ye sons of Lantherside, and Io paean
 sing,
 Since land-improving F_____r vouchsafes to
 be your king!

Lucern! Lucern!
 That best of grass Lucern!
 Oh! happy swains of Lantherside,
 Be far from your concern;
 For now your sterile rocky soil, where stocks
 are never seen,
 Will quickly be converted all, to fields of fruit-
 ful green.

He'll plant, he'll plant,
 A Colony he'll plant,
 With plants and beasts of various kinds,
 Which Lantherside may want.
 With here a hardy plant of Oak, and there a
 plant of Fir,
 And here an English pointer staunch, and there
 a shepherd's cur.

He'll sail, he'll sail,
 Without a mast or sail,
 And gently glide by Lantherside,
 Before a gentle gale.
 Your streamlet he will navigate, and bring the
 flowing tide,
 From Warkworth's hoary hermitage, to dreary
 Lantherside.

He'll reign, he'll reign,
 Without despotic sway;
 Therefore ye lads of Lantherside,
 His dictates all obey.
 Come all ye wanton wenches, with speed unto
 him haste,
 For, tho' as lewd as Lais, he'll teach you to be
 chaste.

Your game, your game,
 He will preserve your game!
 For well in that particular,
 Abroad is spread his fame!
 But Biddlestone²⁷ will curse the day, to Lan-
 therside he came,
 For sure as bird e'er fell by gun, he will destroy
 his game.

Rejoice! rejoice!
 Let Felton Park²⁸ rejoice!

For now its lord is free to roam,
 As chance directs his choice.
 For F_____r like a Briton bold, had cir-
 cumscrib'd his bounds,
 And left him but one single mile, to range in his
 own grounds.

He's gone! he's gone!
 Alas! our hero's gone!
 And left us quite disconsolate,
 In Felton town to moan!
 Rejoice ye Lanthersiders, and Io paean sing,
 Since mirth-exciting F_____r vouchsafes to
 be your king.

Forster's colonisation of the moorland margins
 around Holystone, conquering the 'barren
 lands in Lantherside' where 'sterile rocky soil'
 will 'quickly be converted all, to fields of fruitful
 green', was very much the sort of agricultural
 progress advocated by Bailey and Culley. Writ-
 ing of plantations they note:

Plantations, on an extensive scale, are rising in
 every part of the county; and are almost in
 every instance doing well, and promise not
 only to repay the spirited exertions of the
 proprietors, but will add greatly to the orna-
 ment and improvement of the country.²⁹

And:

Planting – might be applied with considerable
 profit to innumerable places in this county,
 which are ineligible for cultivation, or could
 not possibly be improved by the plough, from
 their rocky surface, steepness of their banks,
 or unfavourable climate. The proprietors of
 such situations would not only have the satis-
 faction of their patriotic exertions, but would
 also enjoy the pleasure of adding to the shelter
 and ornament of the country.³⁰

They reiterate the point in connection with the
 use of 'wastes':

Drainage would be highly useful to many parts
 of these districts; there are also many excellent
 situations for planting; and of all other pur-
 poses to which such lands are convertible, this
 species of improvement seems to us the most
 promising to make the greatest returns.³¹

Bailey and Culley's reference above to 'patri-
 otic exertions' was, of course, to the navy's need

for timber during the wars with France (Bailey and Culley's 3rd edition appeared in the same year as Nelson's victory at Trafalgar). Mature oak was at a premium, as they note: 'of old oak timber, from eighty to one hundred and forty years growth, the probable value may be about 60,000L [£]'. Younger oak also gave good returns, and they claimed that 'under this [oak] management, and at these prices, an acre in thirty years will produce, on an average, 60L [£] clear of expenses'.³² Oak was not the only species of tree they advocated. Quicker-growing species such as firs and pines were also popular, and larch was notable:

Amongst the great variety of trees we have observed in those plantations, the larch rises proudly pre-eminent above the rest, and in almost every situation far out-strips the various species of firs and pines, wherever we have noticed them planted promiscuously together.³³

Forster's plantings of oak and fir are noted in the verses, and, although on the evidence of the 1787 verses he began his plantings well before the French wars, 'patriotic exertions' would certainly appeal to him, for his natural son Augustus was a young officer in the navy in the early years of the war.

Charles Francis' actual improvements can be traced in the Holystone landscape, and the late John Philipson has done so.³⁴ A number of enclosures on Lanternside and Turnberry can still be traced in walls and banks, and these appear to date from Forster's activities.³⁵ To the west of Campville (now renamed Lanternside) there is a field boundary marked by a very fine line of large, mature beech trees, which probably marks a beech hedge planted by Forster as he expanded the fields. On the eastern flanks of Turnberry, Holystone North Wood is made up of stands of oak. Most of the oaks are mature and of an age, suggesting a planting about two hundred years ago, though on the fringes they are stunted and festooned with epiphytes. Philipson suggests that much of Turnberry was cleared and planted with oaks and firs by Forster, probably as a shelter belt, but only the eastern slopes were protected enough for the oaks to survive and flourish in

North Wood. As early as 1805 Bailey and Culley were noting problems with fir plantings in north Northumberland:

In many plantations in the northern parts of the county, the *spruce firs*, between 20 and 30 years old, have *died off*, and this in so many very different soils and situations, that they are now in a great measure discarded from the plantations that have been made of late years; the cause of this failure has not been yet satisfactorily accounted for.³⁶ [italics in original.]

By the early twentieth century the exposed woodland had all died off and most of the hill was open and bare, with the exception of Holystone North Wood. The whole area has been afforested by the Forestry Commission since 1950, but North Wood remains. Across the summit of Turnberry to the north, there is an east-west low earth wall with a revetted stone face and a ditch on the outer side. This suggests it was constructed to keep out animals grazing on the adjacent Harbottle Common, and it runs for over a mile, and marks the limits of the 'Campville encroachment' onto the Common. It was probably constructed to protect Forster's plantings. When Harbottle Common was enclosed by Act in 1817, this encroachment was legitimised and awarded to Augustus Forster.³⁷ All of these features, and others such as derelict stone gateposts of considerable size, can still be viewed from paths through Holystone Woods.

CONCLUSIONS

Charles Francis Forster was a man with several sides to a complicated character, as his letters on both antiquarian and agricultural matters reveal. One suspects he was excellent company, but that his ebullience could start to wear after a time. To describe him as 'a character' is to put him down unfairly, for he was an able, highly energetic man who made his contributions to Northumberland society and to both agriculture and the collection of antiquities. He undoubtedly enjoyed life and was determined to live it to the full, and he had the resources to do just that.

Forster's legacies are worthy of recognition, and the earlier paper attempted to chronicle his antiquarian contribution. But he also left a second legacy, that from his agricultural and improving activities, and this can be seen today in the landscape at both Low Buston and Holystone. At Low Buston, the old village site that Forster cleared lies in pasture as a classic 'deserted village', with the lane, the cottages and their tofts visible in the grass. In the Hall, the elaborate staircase that he had made in Chippendale Chinese-style is still there, as are the extensions to the house he had made. Some of his horse-chestnuts and other trees in the grounds also survive. At Holystone, the holding of Campville has reverted to its older name of Lanternside, and around it the Forestry Commission have created Holystone Forest. But north of the house, amongst the woodland paths, one can still trace the boundaries of Forster's moorland fields, see Forster's beech trees, his gateposts and his long wall marking the 'Campville encroachment'. Most notable of all is Holystone North Wood, where Forster's oak planting survives, and one can walk amongst the oaks that this eighteenth-century antiquary, improver and character planted.

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NOTES

Abbreviation: CRO Cumberland Record Office, Senhouse Papers.

¹ L. W. Hepple, 'Charles Francis Forster, Northumbrian antiquary, and the Campville collection of Roman antiquities', *AA*⁵, 29 (2001), 19–30.

² J. Bailey and G. Culley, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Northumberland*, London (3rd edition, 1805), 23.

³ There is also a substantial recent literature on the agricultural history of Northumberland at this time.

The period before 1750 is examined in P. W. Brassley, *The Agricultural Economy of Northumberland and Durham in the period 1640–1750*, New York and London (1985). The subsequent period and the role of the Culleys are discussed in: D. J. Rowe, 'The Culleys, Northumberland farmers, 1767–1813', *Agricultural History Review*, 19 (1971), 156–74; J. A. Hellen, 'Agricultural innovation and detectable landscape margins: the case of wheelhouses in Northumberland', *Agricultural History Review*, 20 (1972), 140–54; S. Macdonald, *The Development of Agriculture and the Diffusion of Agricultural Innovation in Northumberland, 1750–1850* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1974); S. Macdonald, 'The role of George Culley of Fenton in the development of Northumberland agriculture', *AA*⁵, 3 (1975), 131–41; S. Macdonald, 'The progress of the early threshing machine', *Agricultural History Review*, 23 (1975), 63–77; and S. Macdonald, 'The diffusion of knowledge among Northumberland farmers, 1780–1815', *Agricultural History Review*, 27 (1979), 30–9.

⁴ *NCH*, 5, 219.

⁵ The history of landholdings in Low Buston is traced in J. C. Hodgson, 'Low Buston', *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, 11 (1887–1889), 507–25, and in *NCH*, 5, 219–37.

⁶ CRO: DSen 5/5/1/8/36, Forster to Senhouse, 22 October 1788.

⁷ CRO: DSen 5/5/1/8/9, Forster to Senhouse, 26 December 1791.

⁸ CRO: DSen 5/5/1/8/9, Forster to Senhouse, December 26 1791, from Buston.

⁹ CRO: DSen 5/5/1/8/36, Forster to Senhouse, July 29 1793, from Buston.

¹⁰ Bailey and Culley, *General View*, 33.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 134.

¹² *Ibid.* 130.

¹³ *Ibid.* 119.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 155.

¹⁵ S. Macdonald, 'The role of George Culley of Fenton in the development of Northumberland agriculture', *AA*⁵, 3 (1975), 131–41, quoting the *Farmer's Magazine* for 1808.

¹⁶ See S. Wrathmell, *The Deserted Medieval Villages of South Northumberland* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1975), and P. J. Dixon, *The Deserted Medieval Villages of North Northumberland: A Settlement History from the Twelfth to the Nineteenth Century* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1984).

¹⁷ This was located by J. C. Hodgson, using a 1779 plan of Low Buston available to him when writing his 1887 paper: J. C. Hodgson, 'Low Buston', 523.

¹⁸ The parcel remained legally separate from the main Low Buston estate until purchased in 1867 from Forster's great-nephew.

¹⁹ P. J. Dixon, *Deserted Medieval Villages*, vol. 2, 120–1a; M. J. Alexander and B. K. Roberts, 'The deserted village of Low Buston, Northumberland: a study in soil phosphate analysis', *AA*⁵, 6 (1978), 107–16.

²⁰ N. McCord and R. Thompson, *The Northern Counties from AD 1000 (A Regional History of England)*, London (1998), 187.

²¹ NCH 5, 230, and J. Grundy, G. McCombie, P. Ryder, H. Welfare and N. Pevsner, *Northumberland (Buildings of England)*, London (1992), 2nd ed., 384.

²² CRO: DSen 5/5/1/8/9, Forster to Senhouse, 17 September 1790.

²³ CRO: DSen 5/5/1/8/9, Forster to Senhouse, 26 December 1791.

²⁴ CRO: DSen 5/5/1/8/36, Forster to Senhouse, 29 July 1793.

²⁵ CRO: DSen 5/5/18/9, Forster to Senhouse, December 26 1791, from Buston.

²⁶ J. Bell, (ed) *Rhymes of Northern Bards* [Facsimile with an Introduction by David Harker], Newcastle Upon Tyne (1971), 195–6.

²⁷ Bell footnotes this 'Mr. S[elby] of Biddlestone'.

²⁸ Bell footnotes this 'Mr. R[iddell] of Felton'.

²⁹ Bailey and Culley, *General View*, 125.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 188.

³¹ *Ibid.* 127.

³² *Ibid.* 124.

³³ *Ibid.* 125.

³⁴ J. Philipson, 'The bard, the butt and the Holy-stone North Wood', *Roebuck* (Northumberland Naturalists' Trust, Newcastle) 10 (1975) 12–14.

³⁵ Philipson provides a map of these, *ibid.* 13.

³⁶ Bailey and Culley, *General View*, 125.

³⁷ NRO: QRA 32. See also J. Philipson, 'Inscribed stones on the Harbottle Hills, Northumberland', *AA*⁵, 6 (1978), 151–7.

