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Reconstructing a Medieval Charter Boundary: Sturton Grange, Northumberland

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SUMMARY

The Cartulary of the Cistercian monastery of Newminster contains a detailed boundary charter for the Northumberland township of Sturton Grange, near Warkworth. This is one of very few medieval boundary charters for a complete township in Northumberland. The paper sets the charter in its historical context, and then attempts a detailed reconstruction of the boundary perambulation. It is shown that much of the boundary can still be located, and some sections seen in the landscape. A field name surviving virtually unchanged since the twelfth century is identified, as is a tongue of land called a 'lynga' in the charter, together with the rediscovery of a spring named in a thirteenth century charter. The changing medieval landscape, with pressures on the remaining woodland and open pasture, can also be traced through subsequent medieval charters and agreements.

Northumberland has none of the very detailed Anglo-Saxon boundary charters that exist for parts of midland and southern England, and even into the medieval period there is little detailed topographical evidence about boundaries of settlements and estates. The most promising source lies in the cartularies of the medieval religious houses and monasteries, with their copies of grants of lands given to them. Even here, most grants are either small-scale parcels of lands or substantial upland areas described in very general terms. The main exceptions with more detail are themselves upland areas, notably the grant of Kidland in Upper Coquetdale to the monks of

Newminster,¹ and the small Cheviot township of Trowhope, granted to Melrose Abbey.²

The case of a larger, lowland township is even more exceptional. That is the focus here: Sturton Grange, situated to the west of Warkworth and north of the river Coquet. A twelfth-century grant gave this estate to the monks of Newminster. The boundaries are described, and later charters and other medieval documents describe them further and modify them. It is surprising that the boundary charter has not attracted more attention from historians, for there has been little attempt to trace out the boundary details on the ground. That is the aim of the present paper.

The paper argues that the medieval charter boundaries largely correspond to the township division of Sturton Grange, which survived into the nineteenth century, together with the adjacent township of Walkmill, which was a post-medieval excision from Sturton Grange. Moreover, tracing the boundaries allows us to recover something of the 'lost landscape' of medieval Sturton in terms of the pattern of field, forest, moor and land exploitation. Subsequent medieval documents also enable us to trace some early modifications of the original boundary. Part of the fascination of the reconstruction is that very few of the place-names in the boundary charter can immediately be identified today. Out of seventeen names in the original charter only four survive on the present map: Sturton itself, Brotherwick, Shilbottle and the river Coquet. In contrast to some other local examples, such as the Gilden burn below Warkworth (mentioned in a twelfth-century grant to Newminster), none of the local stream names has survived. The Sturton charter lists



Fig. 1 The pre-1859 township and parish boundaries of Warkworth and Shilbottle.

Alriburne, Milneburne, Colepetheburne and Harethorneburn, all of which have changed their names today.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The township of Sturton lies on the north side of the river Coquet, west of Warkworth. From the earliest medieval records it was part of Warkworth parish and was undoubtedly part of a larger pre-Conquest land unit of 'Warkworth-shire' (fig. 1).³ Ceolwulf's grant to St. Cuthbert *c.* 737 defined an estate that stretched from the river Lyne in the south to mid-way between the Coquet and Aln in the north and to Brinkburn in the west, and another grant referred to 'Werceworde cum suis appendiciis'.⁴ By the Conquest period the estate had been reduced, possibly to that of the medieval parish. During the early twelfth century Henry I established firm Norman control of Northumberland through the creation of a number of baronies spread across the landscape,⁵ and this settlement either instituted or confirmed a division of the remaining Warkworth-shire amongst several baronies. Warkworth, with Acklington, Birling and High Buston townships became a small barony. Sturton and Low Buston became two outlying and detached members of the barony of Wark, on the Tweed, granted to Walter Espec (died 1153).

By the twelfth century, the Anglian shire structure, with its multiple estates linked to central hub, had been almost entirely replaced in functional, economic terms by agriculture organised in local vills and townships.⁶ When this actually took place in eastern Northumberland is uncertain, possibly in the late Anglo-Saxon period (as in midland England) but some writers have argued for a replanning in the decades after the Conquest.⁷ Whatever the actual timing and linkage between political and economic change, by *c.* 1150 the landscape of Warkworth-shire was one of mainly nucleated settlement in the different townships, with communal working of open-fields together with significant blocks of common pasture, woodland and some enclosed fields in severalty.

Details for any one township are limited and fragmentary, but there is no reason to question the locality's conformity to broader patterns.⁸ For Sturton itself we have no direct information, but later evidence (and the modern farms names of Eastfield and South Side) suggests the same pattern of organisation, with similar structures in neighbouring Low Buston, Warkworth, Guyzance (a Norman name, added to the old Brainshaugh) and Shilbottle.

The twelfth century was the great era of monastic development. In 1098 the monastery of Cîteaux, fourteen miles south of Dijon, was established and thus began the Cistercian Order, a monastic order which sought out remote sites for its monasteries. The monks became known as 'the White Monks' from their clothing.⁹ In 1128 the first Cistercian monastery was established in the British Isles and the Order spread rapidly, aided by substantial grants of land from leading nobles. Walter Espec, who came from Bedfordshire and also held a barony in Yorkshire centred on Helmsley and Kirkham, was a major donor. He was a founder of the Augustinian abbey at Kirkham in 1122, and the Cistercian Abbey at Rievaulx near Helmsley in 1132, as well as Warden in Bedfordshire in 1136.¹⁰

Walter Espec was eventually succeeded in his Wark barony by his great-nephew Everard de Ros. Given his family background, it is no surprise that Everard granted lands to the Northumbrian Cistercian monastery of Newminster. Newminster had been established as a daughter abbey of Fountains in Yorkshire. It was founded in 1138 by Ranulf de Merlay, baron of Morpeth, and located close to his main castle there. The site lies about a mile out of Morpeth, just south of the Mitford road, where a few remains can be seen.¹¹ The monastery gained substantial estates in Northumberland, including lands in upper Coquetdale extending up to the Scottish border in Kidland, but by comparison with other Cistercian monasteries it was never rich.

Newminster was dissolved in 1537, as part of the general dissolution of monastic establishments, and the lands passed into various hands.

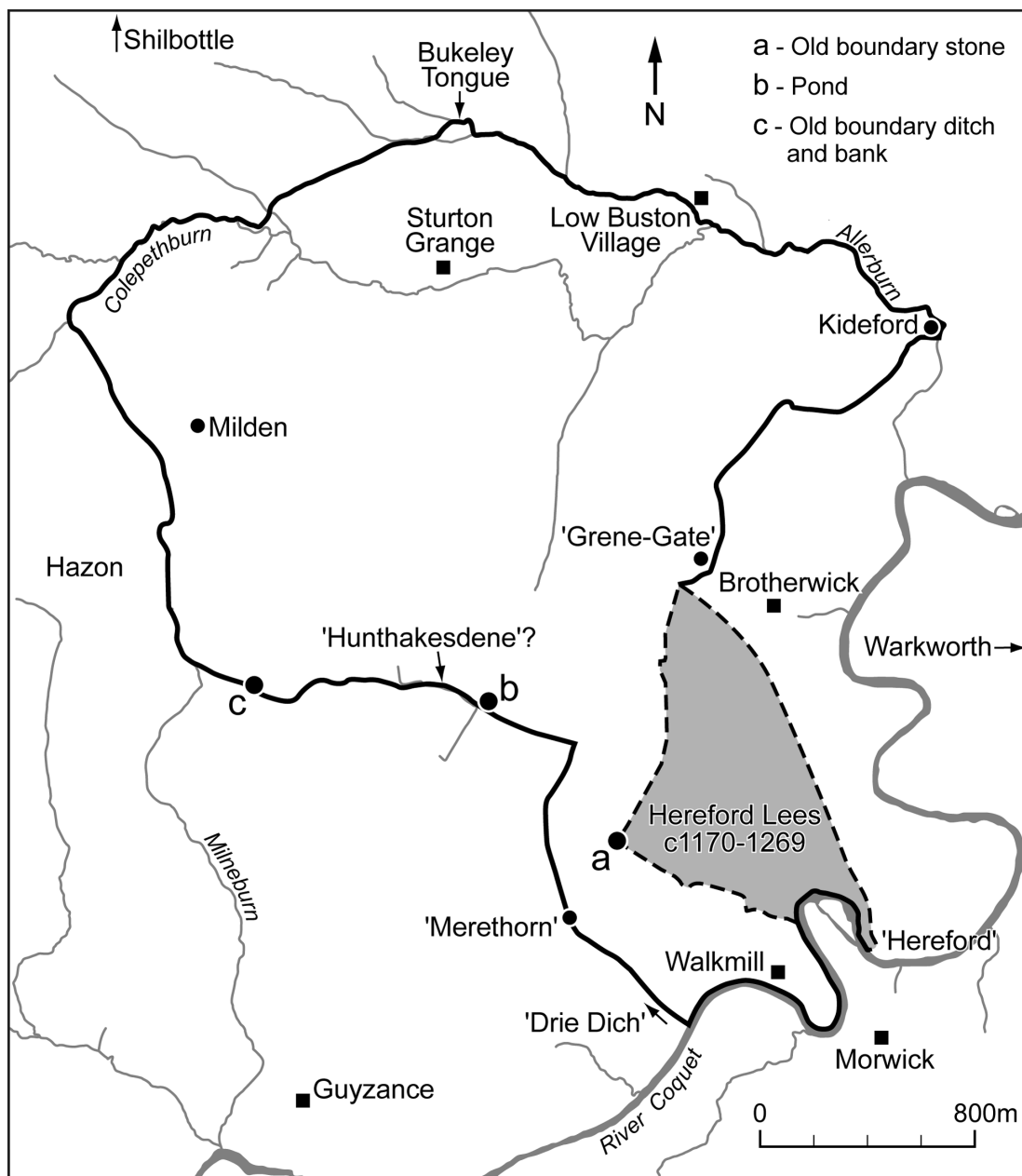


Fig. 2 The reconstructed boundary of the Sturton Grange charter.

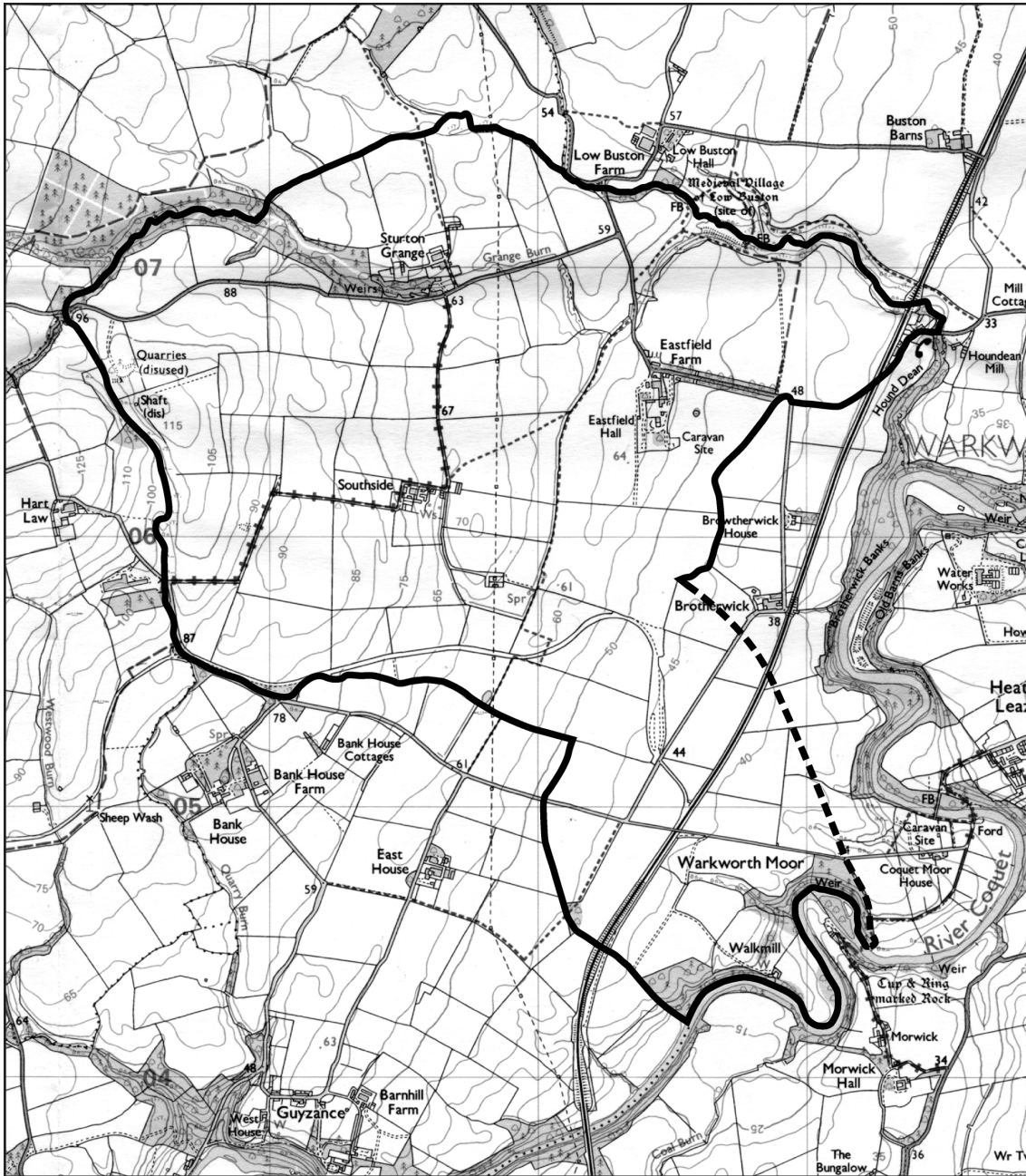


Fig. 3 The reconstructed boundary superimposed on the modern OS map. Based on Ordnance Survey, with permission.

The only documentary survival was the monastery's cartulary – the copied set of the grants establishing the monastery and its subsequent acquisitions and transactions. These were edited and published in 1876.¹² Amongst these is the grant by Everard de Ros of Sturton Grange to Newminster. This dates from c. 1170, and was confirmed by his son Robert de Ros, and the names of both Everard and Robert were included in the list of *obiits* or remembered donors of Newminster.¹³

The Cistercian monasteries and their granges (or outlying farms and estates) have been extensively studied, and the Cistercian economies have received attention in recent years.¹⁴ Newminster has been excavated,¹⁵ but there is little material about the working of the monastery or its granges. Apart from the charters with boundary details discussed below, there are few documents in the cartulary about the life of Sturton Grange. In addition to working the land itself (which was clearly part arable, part pasture and part woodland) the Grange had the corn-mill on the Allerburn and later the fulling mill on the Coquet. A grant from Nicholas de Acton gave the monks permission to take sea-coal from his wood of Midilwode in Acton 'to the forge of the Grange at Sturton',¹⁶ and another from John Fitz Walden gave Newminster the right to take peatmoss from the south side of 'Blakemere', the Black Lough above Corby's Crags in Edlingham, with a right to carry the peat away through Glantlees, the peat probably being taken to Sturton and used there (the grant is listed under Sturton Grange).¹⁷ Staff from Sturton were also probably responsible for the saltpans of the monastery, located on the low ground by the Gilden Burn below Gloster Hill, just to the west of the present road from Amble to Warkworth.¹⁸

One of the most interesting features of the grant of Sturton to the Newminster Cistercians is that it was not the grant of a remote or largely uncultivated estate with the classic Cistercian opportunities for colonisation and new cultivation. It was a functioning lowland vill in a well-cultivated part of Northumberland, surrounded by other agricultural villis. The boundary description can therefore be expected to

run up against neighbouring fields, where clear and continuous demarcation divisions were necessary, as well as over pasture lands and through common woods where lines might be less continuous on the ground, but where definition was still important and sometimes disputed.

EARLIER STUDIES AND AVAILABLE SOURCES

Although some extracts from the Newminster charters have been published earlier in collections of monastic documents, the Sturton Grange charters only became properly available for study after Fowler's edition in 1876. John Crawford Hodgson, who was to become one of Northumberland's leading local historians and genealogists, was then resident at Low Buston Hall, where he spent the years from 1875 to 1891 living with his great-aunts.¹⁹ Low Buston abuts Sturton Grange and Hodgson's first paper was on its history.²⁰ In this article, and others on neighbouring townships,²¹ Hodgson discussed the boundary charter and made key identifications, but never attempted to set out the full map. His emphasis on genealogy and manorial history reflected the tastes of the times, but his work gives a strong springboard to a landscape historian today. Hodgson later edited (and substantially wrote) four volumes of the *Northumberland County History*, including that on Warkworth, Shilbottle and Brainshaugh covering the area relevant to the present study. Since Hodgson's time no real attention has been focused on the Sturton Grange boundary charter, and the present paper is an attempt to pick up his work and take it into the field.

The reconstruction depends centrally on interpretation of the original charter and other documents in the Newminster Cartulary. This interpretation uses Fowler's published transcription of the Cartulary. The Cartulary itself was mainly composed of later copies of original documents, with the errors in transcription that result, and the question of the accuracy of some of Fowler's place-name transcriptions has been

raised by Philipson in his consideration of the boundaries of Kidland: ‘The value of the text of these charters as topographical evidence might be increased if Fowler’s readings of place-names were checked by an experienced palaeographer’.²² The point is well taken, and caution in place-name interpretation should always be the order of the day. In the case of Sturton Grange, many of the place-names only exist in the Cartulary and no later forms are available. However, no portion of the boundary reconstruction made in the paper depends on critical place-name interpretation where doubts might reasonably arise.

The reconstruction also draws on thirteenth-century assize rolls and later evidence in medieval and post-medieval documents. At the end of the day, however, historical boundary reconstructions attempt to link the distant past with the detail of the current landscape and map. Often the nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps and Tithe maps are the first detailed mapping available to help in this enormous historical leap. In the case of Sturton Grange one is in a more fortunate position. There are no earlier maps of Sturton itself, but several adjacent townships (and hence several important boundary sections) do have earlier maps and detailed boundary descriptions. Most notable are the Elizabethan and Jacobean surveys of the Percy estates: that of Clarkson in 1566/67,²³ Stockdale in 1586²⁴ and Mayson in 1612–1620.²⁵ Mayson’s survey was complemented by the magnificent estate maps of Robert Norton *c.* 1622, and the relevant portions of these have been reproduced in volume 5 of the *Northumberland County History*.²⁶ In the eighteenth century Thomas Wilkins’ map of the Percy estates of Brotherwick and Warkworth is another valuable source.²⁷

THE BOUNDARY CHARTER

The grant by Everard de Ros²⁸ specifies:

... per has divisas, scilicet, sicut Alriburne juxta Stretonam currit ad Kideford, et de Kideford sicut divisa Stretonae et Brotherwyk vadit ad Herefordesles, et exinde

sicut divisa Stretonae per transversum Herefordesles vadit usque ad Hereford, et inde per Koket usque ad fossatum de Wyteley, et inde sicut divisa Stretonae vadit ad Merethorne, et inde usque Hundhakeston et de Milneden et de Milneburn usque ad Colepetheburne, et inde usque ad Harethorneburne, et de Harethorneburne per semitam quae vadit north [*sic*] usque ad viam quae ducit juxta truncum magnum ad Harethorneley, et inde usque ad alterum Harethorneley, et inde in transversum per Lemetheley versus northest, usque ad praedictum Alreburn, et totum Stretonae ultra praedictas divisas usque ad campos de Sipplebottle in commune inter Strettune et Sipplebottle.

Translated it runs:

... by these boundaries, viz. as Alriburne by Stretona runs to Kideford, and from Kideford as the boundary of Stretona and Brotherwyk goes to Herefordesles, and thence as the boundary of Stretona across Herefordesles goes to Hereford, and thence by Koket to the ditch of Wyteley, and thence as the boundary of Stretona goes to Merethorne, and then to Hundhakeston, and from Milneden and from Milneburn to Colepetheburne, and thence to Harethorneburne, and from Harethorneburne by a path which goes northwards as far as the road that runs by the great tree-trunk to Harethorneley, and thence to the other Harethorneley, and thence across by Lemetheley towards the north-east to the aforesaid Alreburn, and all Stretonae beyond the aforesaid boundaries to the fields of Sipplebottle in common between Strettune and Sipplebottle.

The charter was confirmed by Everard’s son Robert in almost identical terms, with a substitution of ‘usque ad Milnedene, et inde usque ad Colepetheburn’ for ‘et de Milneden et de Milneburn ad Colepetheburne’.²⁹

Later charters relate to particular boundary sections, as the monks negotiated boundary detail and exchanges with neighbouring estates. Such charters and agreements exist for Brotherwick, ‘Herefordles’ and the western and northern section against the lands of Shilbottle and related estates. The details will

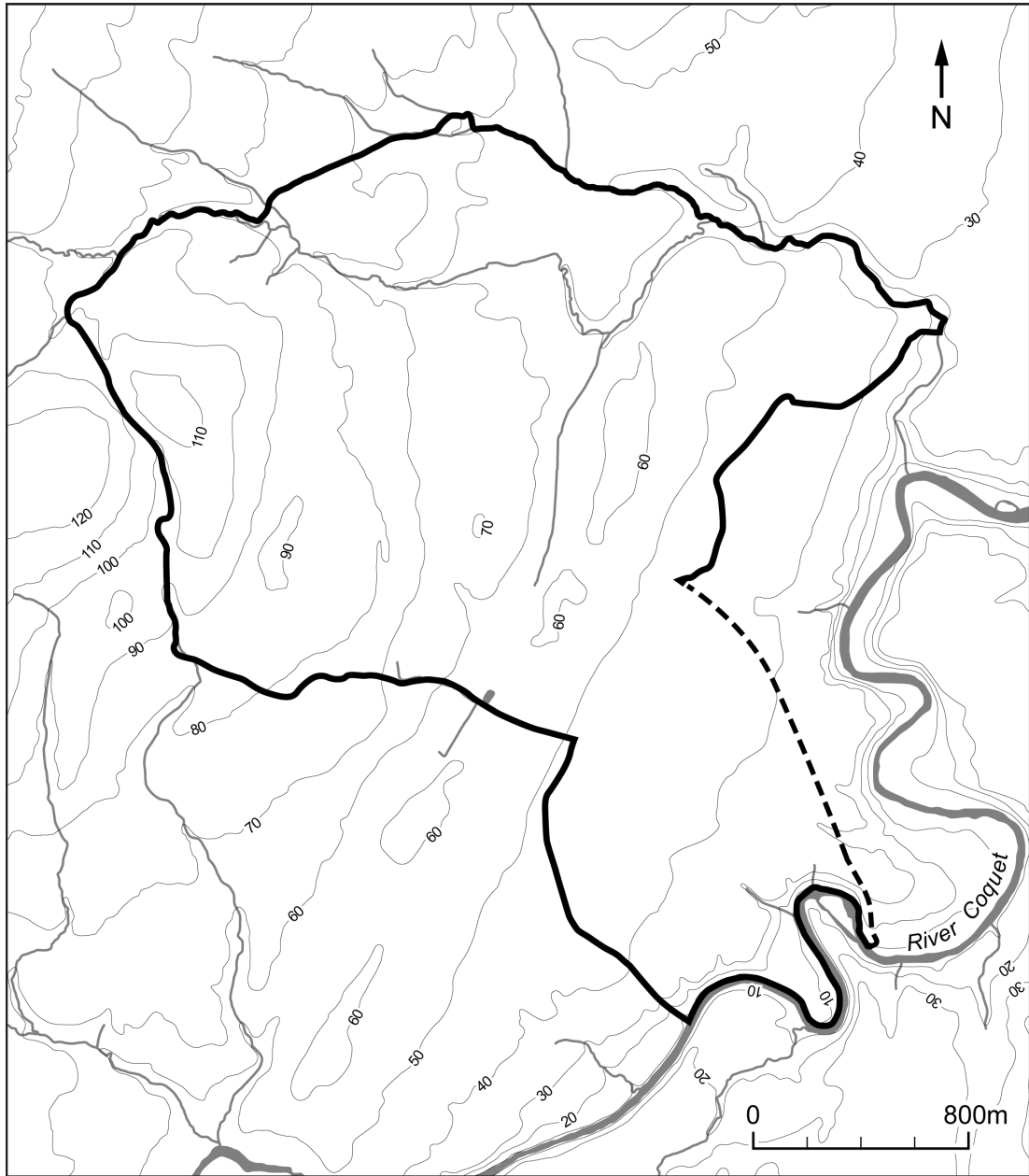


Fig. 4 The reconstructed boundary superimposed on the contours.

be examined in the specific discussion of boundary sections, after the general outline of the boundaries has been set out.

It will be argued in the detail below that the medieval charter boundaries correspond to the township of Sturton Grange with Walkmill. This follows a general Northumberland pattern in which the nineteenth-century township and parish boundaries were often ancient survivals. Dixon has claimed

About seventy five per cent of the townships identifiable in thirteenth century north Northumberland may be equated with the civil parishes recorded and mapped by the Ordnance Survey in the nineteenth century. There is at least a *prima facie* case for the boundaries of these townships, as surveyed in the mid-nineteenth century, being much the same as in the thirteenth century.³⁰

Dixon contrasts this with Cumbria, and the Copeland district, where Winchester has shown that most boundaries do not predate a reorganisation in Charles II's reign.³¹ He also notes that division of inter-commoned waste, and estate boundary rationalisations, may have altered some township boundaries in Northumberland, and that proves to be the case for Sturton Grange. However, it is possible to identify these changes and to reconstruct the boundaries of the medieval township of Sturton as granted in the *c.* 1170 charter.

THE BOUNDARY OUTLINE

It may be helpful to proceed with a broad identification of major features and sections and then to examine the detail of specific sections, remembering that some of the evidence is set out in those later sections. Fig. 2 provides an overall map of the reconstructed charter boundary, marking the principal locations discussed in the text and fig. 3 superimposes this outline on the current Ordnance Survey map. Fig. 4 locates this outline on the contours of the physical landscape. The landscape of Sturton has its highest level, at 115 metres, close to its western boundary, and the general trend is a gradual decline in height

south and eastwards towards the Coquet. In the main the land is very gently shelving, with some of the central area almost flat, but the river Coquet is quite deeply incised, producing some dramatic banks and incised meanders; several of the tributary streams also cut quite deeply through the landscape.

The charter boundary begins in the north east, with the section adjacent to Everard de Ros's other local estate of Low Buston, and, as is usual, describes the boundary in a clockwise direction. The 'Alriburne' or 'Allerburn' is now the part of the Grange Burn forming the boundary between Sturton Grange and Low Buston. A number of charters for Low Buston in the Newminster Cartulary make this identification clear. The boundary then runs to 'Kideforde', a ford close to the present bridge at Houndean. Again there is good evidence for this location. The boundary then runs south-west and south, abutting Brotherwick township, running across 'Herefordlees' to the river Coquet. It then proceeds up the river Coquet, including the land of Walkmill, before leaving the river and abutting the east side of Guyzance. The western section then follows boundaries between Sturton township and (in turn) Guyzance, Hazon and Shilbottle before returning to the 'Allerburn' at Low Buston. The various sections of the boundary circuit can now be examined in more detail.

THE LOW BUSTON SECTION

The boundary charter begins the perambulation 'as Alriburne by Strectuna runs to Kideford' (fig. 5). The Alriburne or Allerburn is now the lower section of the present Grange or Buston Burn, defining the boundary between Everard de Ros's two estates of Low Buston and Sturton. The identification of the Allerburn is confirmed in Low Buston charters, such as the grant to Newminster by William of 'Bultiliston' of two acres located 'from the northern side of the Allerburn'.³²

Historically this part of the boundary would have been a hive of activity. The medieval village of Low Buston lay on the immediate

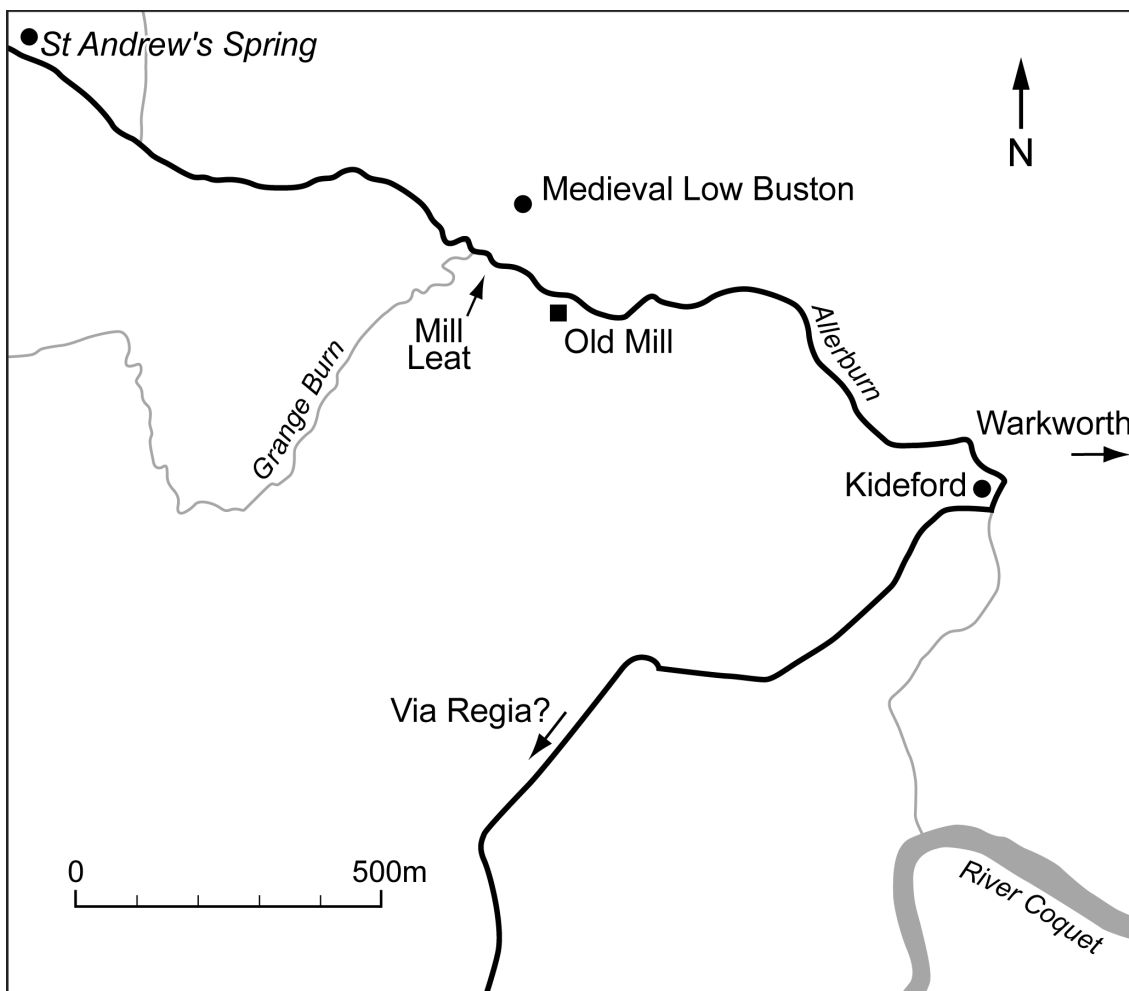


Fig. 5 The boundary between Sturton and Low Buston.

northern bank, and its remains can still be seen in the field there.³³ The corn-grinding watermill of Sturton lay on the south bank, and a mill continued on the site until the 1880s.³⁴ The line of the leats from the Grange Burn can still be seen (NU 226 072), and a number of public footpaths still lead to the site from both the south and north. The mill, together with an obligation on the tenants of Low Buston to grind their corn there, predated the grant of Sturton to Newminster Abbey. This led to a later dispute when Hugh of Buston challenged

this duty, and this and other corn-grinding disputes are recorded in the Newminster cartulary.³⁵

The Low Buston boundary section started at the stream junction at NU 222 074, and it ended at 'Kideford'. This is also noted in a grant by Galfridus de Hanvill of land in Brotherwick: 'a via regia Kydeford', 'from the royal road at Kydeford'.³⁶ This was the ford over the Allerburn at Houndean, close to the location of the present bridge (NU 235 068). Here the Sturton charter boundary left the

Allerburn, and formed a boundary with the northern and western sides of Brotherwick.

THE BROTHERWICK SECTION

‘and from Kideford as the boundary of Strectuna and Brotherwyk goes to Herefordeles’ runs the original boundary charter. Little additional detail is available on the first part of this section, but it is likely it accorded with the later boundary and followed the present road line from Kideford to the northern end of Brotherwick. This places Warkworth railway station and associated houses within the Sturton bounds. At the northern extreme of Brotherwick the present road has a northward twist in it (NU 229 066), and the same twist is apparent on the early seventeenth-century map. A licence by William de Hanvill (*c.* 1250–1270) gave the Newminster monks the right to make a ditch ‘a siketo ex occidentali parte de Brotherwyk usque ad le Grenegate’, ‘from a syke on the western side of Brotherwick as far as the Grenegate’.³⁷ This ditch or dyke demarcated Sturton from the North Field and closes of Brotherwick, but the main western side of Brotherwick was ‘moor’ or open pasture, and the ‘Grenegate’ would have been the entrance to this open land at the western end of Brotherwick village. Today, although the modern boundary conforms to the Percy estate-map, there is little to see, and few signs of an old routeway. The Norton map of *c.* 1622 and Wilkins’ 1772 map both show a track starting here and running down the western edge of Brotherwick Toft Field to the ‘Grenegate’, but now there is only a tree-lined field boundary. This line runs to NU 226 063, then turns south, following the field boundary to NU 226 058. The ‘Grenegate’ was about here, and marked the start of the pasture area of Herefordlees.

THE HEREFORDELES SECTION

The boundary then ‘goes to Herefordeles, and thence as the boundary of Strectuna across

Herefordeles goes to Hereford’. This is a somewhat complicated section. Herefordeles or Herefordlees can be identified with what later became called Warkworth Moor and Coquet Moor (fig. 6). Here the soils are much sandier than the rest of the neighbourhood, and it was one of the last areas in lowland Northumberland to be enclosed, by Act of Parliament in 1850. The boundaries in this locality lie between Sturton Grange, Brotherwick and Warkworth.

In 1269 Newminster Abbey granted Herefordlees to Robert (son of Roger) of Warkworth, reserving a right of common pasture for ten oxen and four cows with their calves.³⁸ This granting away of lands the monks had only acquired some ninety years before seems odd, until it is related to other transactions taking place at the same time. Fowler’s edition of the Newminster cartulary suggests a date of *c.* 1250 for this grant,³⁹ but it is in fact a copy of the agreement reached at Henry III’s assizes in Newcastle in 1269. What has not been previously recognised is that the immediately preceding item in the Assize list is a grant by Robert of Warkworth (and Rothbury) to Newminster Abbey of substantial common pasture at Hesleyhurst, south of Rothbury and useful for Newminster.⁴⁰ In other words, here was a useful exchange of pasture land between the two parties.

The exchange does, however, complicate our ability to recover the original charter boundaries for Sturton Grange, for the original territory of Herefordlees was only part of Sturton for about ninety years and we do not know what lands, if any, Robert of Warkworth held on the north side of the Coquet (i.e. on Warkworth Moor) before 1269. However, using later surveys and maps, both the pre-1269 boundary of Sturton and the post-1269 boundary can be reconstructed with some confidence.

Helpful starting points are found in the Percy estates surveys of 1586 (Stockdale) and 1612–1620 (Mayson), with Norton’s plan accompanying the latter. The map shows a substantial Warkworth Moor (belonging to Warkworth) extending to the south and west of a Brotherwick, which had its own narrow strip

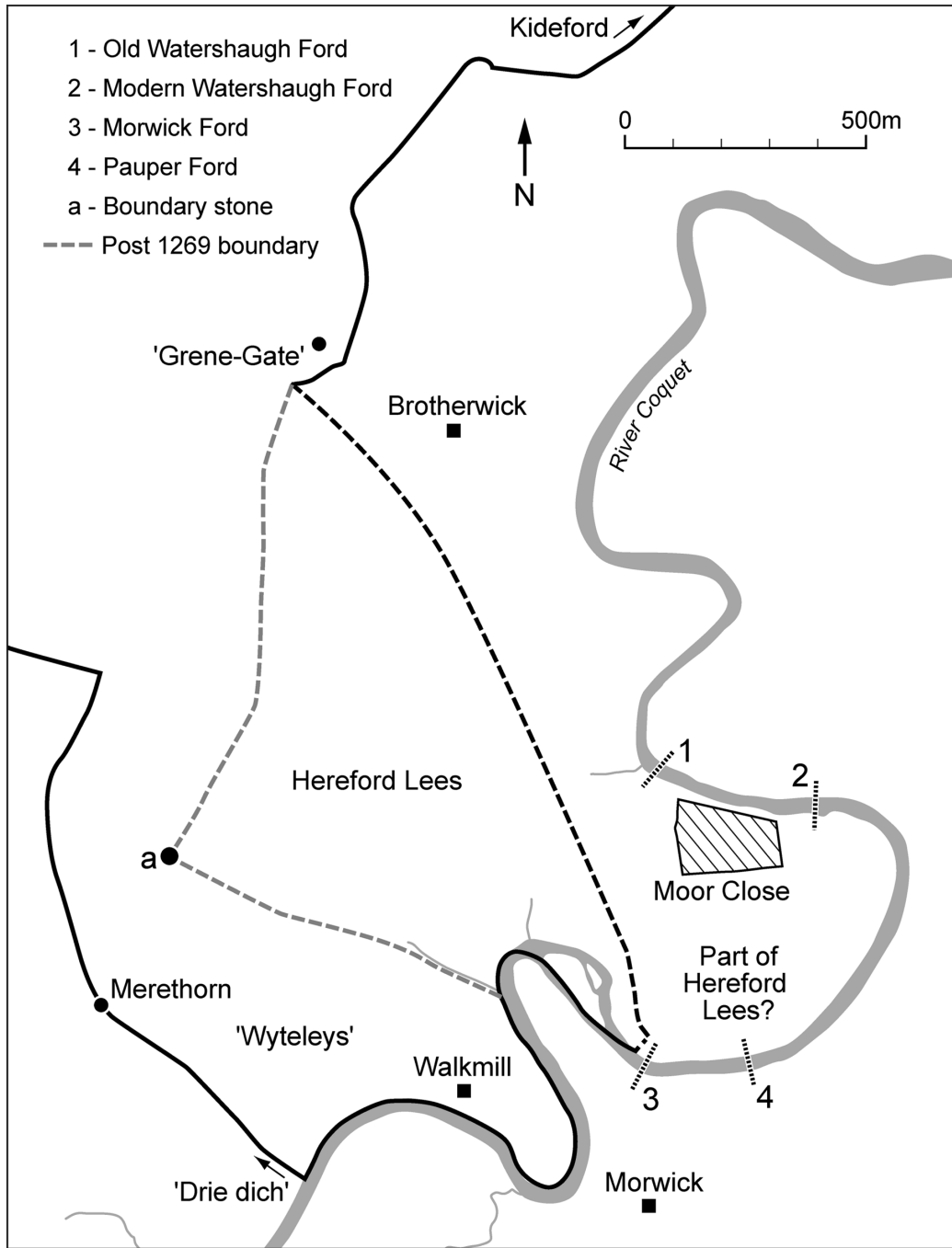


Fig. 6 The Herefordlees section of the boundary.

of moor abutting Warkworth Moor. To understand the boundaries given in the 1586 Survey, it is necessary to note that at that date Watershaugh Ford lay downriver from its present ford and footbridge, the former ford aligning with the north bank boundary of Brotherwick Banks, as shown on the 1622 Norton map. It is worth quoting the 1586 boundaries at length:⁴¹

The burgesses and inhabitants of Warkworth have one common pasture called Whyrlshawes, lying on the west side of Cocket water and on the north side of Morwicke, by the gift of Heugh de Morwick, then lord of Morwick, the limits and bounders whereof is as foloweth, viz., begining at the Waterheugh-forde and so going up the north side of Cocket to the Heireford, where, over against the said ford, in the banck beneath the highe street, is a great graie stone with a crosse hewen in yt, and from the stone westward to Warkworth banckes, then go up the water side to the Walk-milne hewgh dike, and from thence go north up the burne called the Walke-milne deane (which is march betwene the said common and Waulk-miln grounde) to the head of the said dene, where ther is march stones, and then go from one stone to another as the same ledeth, till you come to a foote trodde [footpath] lying east and west to a march stone in the same marked with a cros, and from thence along that rode to a graie stone with a cross at the Grang-dyke nooke, and then along that dyke to another march stone at Gaweboat-yate, from thence go south-east by the mention of an old dyke called Brotherwick dyke to a march stone there, and from thence southward to a stone at Brotherwicke letche, and from that stone eastward downe the letch by the foote of Brotherwick hill to Waters-haughe-forde where we begonne, within which boulder ther is supposed ther is a parcell of grounde called Heyn-hewghe belonging to Braines-haughe by the gift of the said Sr Hugh Morwick, yt hath bene arable and enclosed and now as of long time without memorie of man lieth open and common.

As John Crawford Hodgson notes, in his role as author of the *Northumberland County History* volume, there is no earlier evidence for the Hugh Morwick story, the inscription on the

knight's effigy in Warkworth church being a seventeenth-century fantasy.⁴² The last part of the above description may, however, capture some of the truth: part of the common possibly came from a Morwick grant, with the rest from the 1269 Sturton grant. 'Heyne-hewghe' seems to have been the close north of the present Coquet Moor House, and part of the present caravan park, and this south-eastern part of Warkworth Moor may have a connection with Morwick rather than Sturton. Miller thought it likely that 'the barons of Warkworth wishing to get hold of some of the common lands near the castle a bargain was made with Sir Hugh de Morwick to hand over his lands on the north side of the river to which later were added the Newminster lands on Herefordlees'.⁴³

The Heire-ford can be identified with one of the fords over the Coquet at Morwick. Historically two fords crossed the river at Morwick – an upper ford, marked by the present Morwick ford (NU 232 044) and an abandoned (and largely forgotten) ford to the east of the cup-and-ring inscribed rocks (circa NU 235 044). This ford, later known as Pauper or 'Pomfret's' ford, was thought by Hodgson to be the Heireford, though Miller considered Morwick ford more likely. River regulation by weirs and the water-board make it difficult to know quite what the stretch of river was like in earlier times, for today Morwick ford is rarely passable except in the very driest years, and the lower location (just below the weir) is now shallower. Whichever of the two fords corresponds to the Heire-ford, this leaves the south-eastern part of Warkworth Moor outside of the former Sturton lands, and so leaves space for an earlier connection with Morwick.

This area of Herefordlees or Warkworth Moor remained largely unenclosed until the construction of the Newcastle-Edinburgh railway line cut through it and an Enclosure Act of 1850 and Award of 1856 subdivided it. The map of c. 1622 shows its extent, together with the small strip of Brotherwick Moor. By the time of Wilkins' map of Warkworth and Brotherwick in 1772 the Brotherwick portions were mainly enclosed, but a track is shown running from the northern tip of Brotherwick,

skirting its western boundary and then crossing Warkworth Moor.⁴⁴ This track was undoubtedly the successor to the 'via Regia' to Herefordlees, though Wilkins' map curves the southern end round to the present Watershaugh ford rather than straight to one of the Morwick fords. In 1887 Hodgson noted that

'the ancient road [from Kideford to Herefordlees] . . . may still be traced in part. It skirted Brotherwick township, and crossed Warkworth Moor in a narrow, deep-cut track, to the disused Pauper Ford below Morwick'.⁴⁵

Today, the track is harder to discern. It can be detected in undisturbed pasture in the field directly south of Brotherwick farm-buildings, and also as a curving path crossing the dry upper portions of Brotherwick lech in the field north of the Coquet Moor House road. But the fields in between have been ploughed and reseeded and there are no visible signs.

The eastern boundary of pre-1269 Sturton almost certainly followed the western boundary of Brotherwick as detailed in the 1585 survey above and on the c. 1622 map, extending 'southward to a stone at Brotherwicke letche' before cutting directly to Heireford from that point at the head of Brotherwick lech. The c. 1622 map shows a 'boulder' but there is no indication on later maps or today.

If this reconstructs the 'lost' pre-1269 boundary to the Heire-ford, then the 1586 survey and later maps also allow the post-1269 medieval boundary to be traced, for this is a boundary that survived through to modern maps. It should be noted that Walkmill was part of Sturton township until post-reformation times, and so part of the original Sturton grant and thus within our boundaries. Using the 1586 survey this eastern boundary of Sturton can be described. It began on the Coquet at 'the Walkmilne hewgh dike, and from thence go north up the burne called the Walke-milne deane (which is march betwene the said common and Waulkmiln ground) to the head of the said dene'. This dene runs north-west from NU 229 045 to NU 225 048. From the head of the dene, the boundary was marked 'where ther is march stones, and then go from one stone to another

as the same ledeth, till you come to a foote trodde [footpath] lying east and west to a march stone in the same marked with a cros'. The Norton map of c. 1622 and later maps show a ninety-degree turn close to this location, and Norton's map for Acklington, which includes a portion of Warkworth Moor on it, shows a 'boulder' at just this point (fig. 7), though the Warkworth map itself does not. The 1856 Enclosure Award marks a 'style' at this point, whilst the 1866 6' OS map has a 'bumping stone' (NU 223 048). This is not a term in OS glossaries,⁴⁶ but the term was certainly in local use in the Victorian period as another 'bumping stone' is marked near the track to Morwick ford on the 1856 Award. The name probably derives from the practice of 'beating the bounds', during which youths and girls were sometimes 'bumped' at key boundary points.⁴⁷ In his investigation of Byland (N. Yorks) in *History on the Ground*, M. W. Beresford recalled finding a boundary stone marked on one of Saxton's maps:

My eye was caught by a gleam of grey in the grass at this point. When the grass was pulled away it revealed a 'boulder-stone', at the site of Saxton's 'first boulder-stone'. It stood out 18 inches from the soil and was deeply embedded. . . . The lichen stone was a bridge across three hundred and fifty-six years.⁴⁸

Investigation of the hedge on Warkworth Moor produced similar feelings, revealing a substantial stone just where the 1866 OS map locates the bumping stone. Here is the boulder marked on the Norton map, still in place (fig. 8).⁴⁹

From this point the 1586 boundary ran 'along that rode to a graie stone with a cross at the Grang-dyke nooke, and then along that dyke to another march stone at Gaweboat-yate' This joins the Warkworth Moor road at NU 224 049 at its junction with the present road north to Brotherwick, and the boundary follows the road north for a few hundred yards, until the point where the Whittle Colliery mineral line crossed (NU 225 052), still very obvious on the west side of the road. The boundary then follows field boundaries west of the road until 'Gaweboat-yate' is reached west

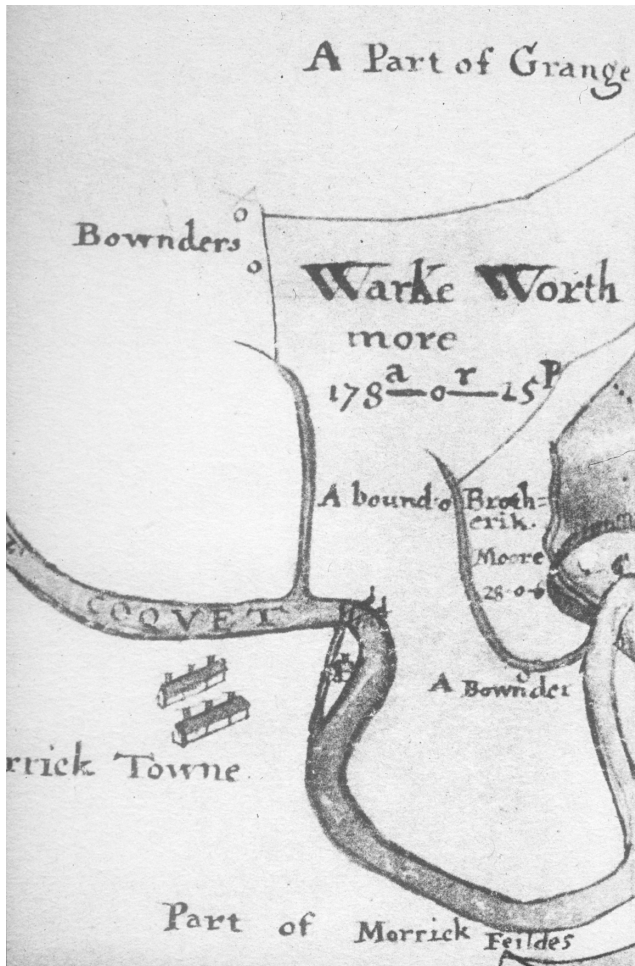


Fig. 7 Part of Norton's c.1622 map of Acklington, showing the boundary stones on Warkworth Moor.

of the present Brotherwick farmhouse. At the time of the *Northumberland County History* (1899), Hodgson was able to note that 'Gawbutts' was still the name of a field on Sturton Eastfield farm abutting on Warkworth Moor, and that one of the march stones 'marked with a cros' was to be seen 'lying on the dike of one of the Brotherwick fields'.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, no such stone can be found today.

Before taking leave of 'Herefordles' and the 'Hereford', it may be worth questioning the name itself. If it has the same etymology as the town of Hereford, interpreted as *here-ford* or 'ford suitable for passage of an army',⁵¹ then

'via regia', 'royal road' or highway makes more sense: the route through the Hereford and across Herefordles may have been an established crossing of the Coquet for troops.⁵²

Having traced the different boundaries pre- and post-1269 in the Herefordles locality, the discussion can return to the original charter bounds, following the boundary up the Coquet from the Here-ford.

THE COQUET SECTION

The charter boundary runs from the Hereford 'by the Koket to the ditch of Wyteley'. The



Fig. 8 The 'boulder' or 'bumping stone' in the hedgerow, defining the boundary between Herefordles (Warkworth Moor) and Sturton Grange.

medieval township of Sturton included Walkmill, which gained a separate township identity in the decades after the reformation and the dissolution of Newminster in the 1530s.⁵³ After Sturton lost Herefordles in 1269, Walkmill was only linked to the rest of Sturton by a narrow neck of land consisting of a one field's width in the modern landscape, so its later detachment had a logic to it. In the medieval period, however, Walkmill was an important part of the Cistercian estate and amongst the Newminster charters are two relating to Walkmill.⁵⁴ The first is a licence granted by Hugh de Morwick soon after 1200 to the monks of Newminster to construct a mill dam across the Coquet, to run from the 'campo de Stratton

subtus Wyteleys' [plain of Stratton below Wyteleys] across to his land on the south side of the river. His son, also Hugh, confirmed the licence. Here the monks built their fulling-mill (or Walk-mill) for cloth making.

The boundary thus runs up the river past the site of Walkmill, which lies 'below Wyteleys' to where Walkmill township abutted Guyzance. Walkmill, with the farmhouse now in ruins, lies on low ground within a meander of the Coquet (NU 229 044), but the ground rises quite steeply up to the level of Warkworth Moor, so that 'below Wyteleys' is an apt description. The boundary charter line leaves the Coquet 'ad fossatum de Wyteley', and a steep ditch or lech rises from the river at the point which still divides Walkmill from Guyzance (NU 225 043 to NU 223 045).

THE WESTERN SECTION

The long western section is more difficult to trace in detail, and some of the names elude identification of their exact location (fig. 9). From the Coquet to the final return to Allerburn, none of the names apparently correspond to present-day names. Some assistance is however provided by a series of agreements, dated to 1240 between Alexander de Hilton and the Abbot of Newminster.⁵⁵

Hilton held lands in Shilbottle and Guyzance, and the agreements were to clarify the boundaries between his estates and Sturton Grange and to make some exchanges of land to 'tidy up' the boundary line. The first boundary section set out is apparently that between Sturton and Shilbottle, and starts at 'Milnedene'. Subsequently the entire section from the Coquet to the Allerburn is specified. This identification of 'Milnedene' with the start of the Sturton-Shilbottle boundary is confirmed subsequently, and it allows the long western and northern section to be split at this point. The immediate examination thus looks at the charter boundary from the Coquet to 'Milnedene'.

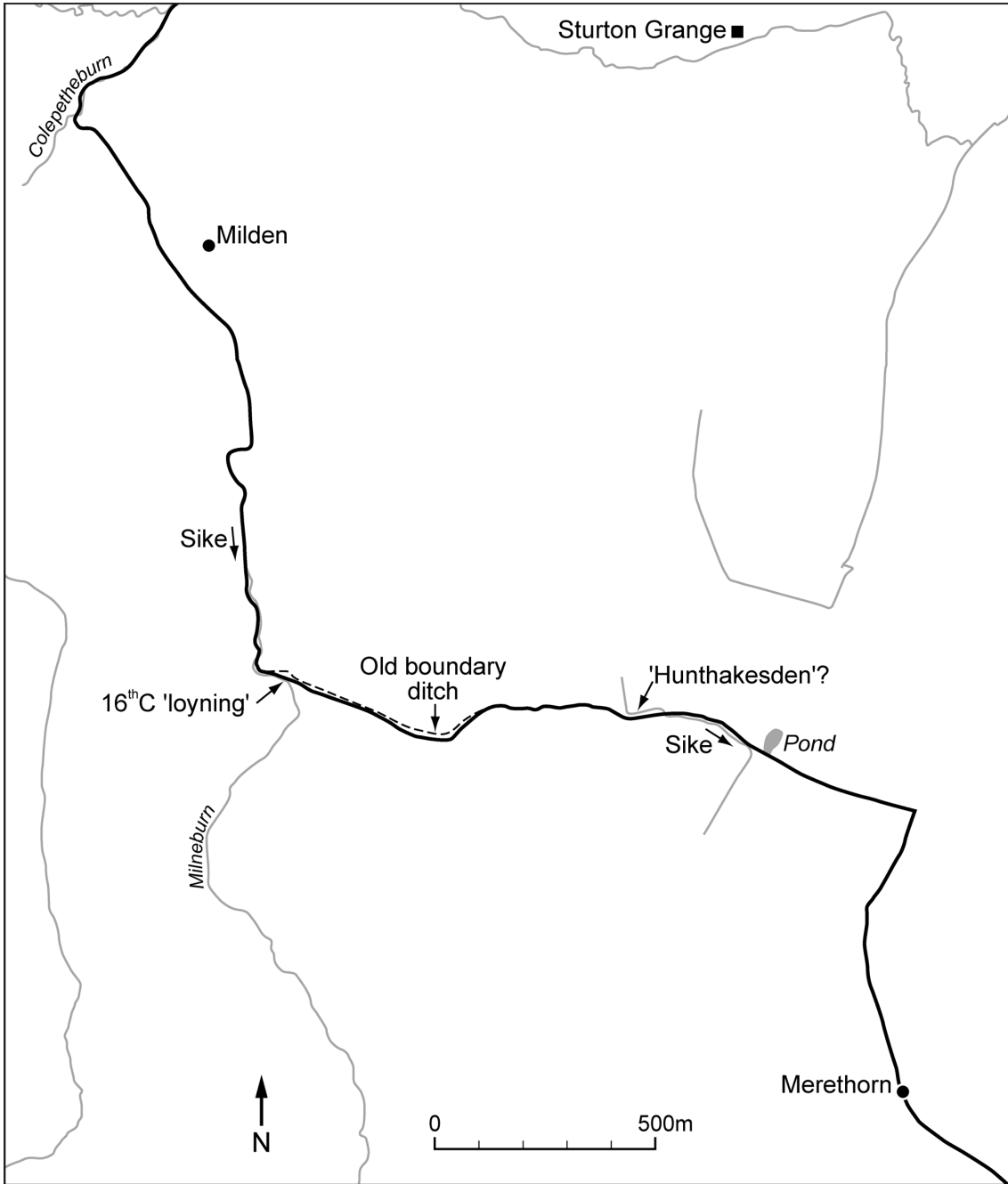


Fig. 9 The western (Guyzance and Hazon) section of the boundary.

The original charter boundary runs '[from the ditch of Wyteley] and thence as the boundary of Strectuna goes to Merethorne, and then to Hundhakeston, and from [var. to] Milneden'. The 1240 agreement gives more detail here:

... sicut fossatum quod vocatur Drie dich ex occidentali parte de Wyteleys ascendit de Koket versus aquilonem usque in quandam viridem divisam, et per illam divisam sicut solet esse et sicut lapides ex utraque parte ponuntur usque ad Merethorne, et de Merethorne versus aquilonem per transversum prati per cumilos lapidum, et sic per quoddam siketum usque in Hunthakesdene, et de Hunthakesdene per cumilos lapidum usque ad siketum quod descendit de Milnedene, et sic usque in Milnedene

Translated:

... as the ditch which is called 'Drie dich' on the west side of Wyteleys ascends from Koket towards the north to a certain field-balk [*viridem divisam* or green boundary], and thence by that balk as it is accustomed to be, and thence as stones are placed on either side to Merethorn, and from Merethorn towards the north across the meadow by heaps of stones and so by a certain sike to Hunthakesden, and from Hunthakesden by heaps of stones to the sike which descends from Milnedene, and so to Milnedene...⁵⁶

A subsequent agreement adds a little more detail, specifying that the agreement relates partly to the boundary between Sturton Grange and Shilbottle and partly to that between Sturton and Guyzance. Here 'Drie dich' is 'fossatum quod vocatur Rubedyk'.⁵⁷

'Drie dich' or 'Rubedyk' ran north to a field-balk, i.e. into cultivated arable land, then followed the balk and on north across meadow. This is a locality north east of the present (Guyzance) East House. Tentatively we can mark the possible locations on the map. The deep letch running steeping down to the Coquet is largely dry today, so 'Drie dich' is very applicable, but the letch is short and soon rises to the field level. From the letch, the modern boundary line runs north-west, pierced by the main London-Edinburgh railway, and into a

small copse, where the line changes angle northwards. This copse is largely fenced in today, but is mainly composed of old hawthorn and related species, and has a very marked boundary ditch and banks within it. This may well be the 'boundary-thorn' or 'Merethorn' of the charter (NU 221 047).

The charter boundary then runs 'and from Merethorn towards the north across the meadow by heaps of stones and so by a certain sike to Hunthakesden'. This was through 'meadow' and not through cultivated land separated by green balks. This line can be followed along field boundaries, crossing the Warkworth Moor road, until at NU 222 053 the modern boundary turn westward through ninety-degrees. The area abutted onto Warkworth Moor and enclosure was undoubtedly late, so there may have been some regularising of boundaries, but the general line is of considerable antiquity. At NU 218 054 the boundary runs into a depression, where a large shallow pond is fed by two 'sikes' or very small streams, one from the south and one from the north-west. The boundary goes into the pond and then follows the sike to the north-west, where it is continued by a ditch-and-bank (NU 218 054 to NU 214 055). The pond is on the boundary of Guyzance and Sturton, but the Tithe Map shows a small area, adjoining the pond, as part of Walkmill, so that it has access to the water. This post-medieval piece of Walkmill, known as 'Bowmen', was subsequently added to Sturton South Side. The sike running into the pond is probably that referred to in the charter. Here the present boundary ditch is a seasonal water-course containing damp vegetation. 'Hunthakesden' remains unidentified, and could be any location from the depression by the pond itself, north-westwards. The depression to the north of the pond, within Sturton township, is boggy as the nineteenth-century field names of Far Bog and Near Bog demonstrate. If 'Hunthakesden' is related to 'unthank-den' then this depression may be its location.

The southern boundary between Sturton and Guyzance starting at this pond is undoubtedly a very old one, and parts of a boundary bank and ditch can still be clearly traced. This

section, north of Bank House Farm, is probably that between the Hunthakesden and the sike that descends from Milnedene. The latter sike is now the upper section of the Quarry Burn, which runs south through Guyzance to the Coquet.

The 1586 Percy Survey of Guyzance traces this section, in reverse sequence because it runs clockwise around Guyzance. Beginning on the boundary between Guyzance and Hazon to the west of Bank House, we can read:

..then along Hason dicke northward to a little loynng which devideth Hason feild and the Graindge field, from thens the sowth dicke of the Graindge is the marche betwyxt the Graindge and Guysans to the ende therof, from thens sowthe alonge Guysance newe dicke to the Walke-mylne crosse dicke noyke, then downe the same dicke to the water of Coquet wher we did begyne.⁵⁸

The description ‘little loynng’ still captures the section where the three townships join in a tree-lined lane (NU 206 056). Here a fine section of old boundary dyke has been preserved: when the Whittle Colliery mineral railway line was constructed (in the early twentieth century) westward from its junction with the main line on Warkworth Moor it cut through the southern fields of Sturton Grange and then into Hazon. In almost touching the southern Sturton boundary it left a small portion cut off from the main fields, and here, by the roadside north of Bank House farm, one can see the old ditches and woodbanks (fig. 10), preserving the line of the medieval boundary (from NU 212 055 westwards to NU 207 055).

One of the frustrations of attempting to locate this part of the boundary and its place-names is the paucity of field names on available maps. The tithe maps for some of these townships⁵⁹ simply use field numbers (as does the Ordnance Survey), rather than field names, and this is true of the Sturton map. ‘Milnedene’, a pivotal location in terms of identifying the boundary sections, is a case in point, but one that proves ultimately rewarding. Hodgson, in his original paper on Sturton Grange in 1886, noted that one of the fields on the western boundary of South Side farm was still called



Fig. 10 The ditch and woodbank defining the boundary between Sturton and Guyzance (NU 207 047).

‘Milden’ – after a gap of over 700 years.⁶⁰ Hodgson did not, however, identify the actual location. Documentary evidence was lacking until the present writer located a field surveyor’s notebook for 1860.⁶¹ William Harrison surveyed the crops of South Side on October 12 1860, calculating the field acreages under different crops. Amongst these was the ‘North West Oat Field, “Mildean”’, so the name had indeed survived all those centuries from the original charter. A further source was a map for the same year, prepared for John Tate of Bank House in Guyzance. At that date Tate occupied South Side as well as Bank House and Walkmill, and the map showed all three properties, with ‘Milden’ clearly identified.⁶² Not only



Fig. 11 Milden (on the right of the photograph), a field name maintained through 800 years. The boundary line runs north up the headwater of the 'Milneburn' (Quarry Burn) on the left.

can the field be identified (NU 206 065), but the current owner of South Side confirms the name is still in use today, almost 850 years after the original charters used it (fig. 11). Milden forms the highest point in Sturton township, with fine views to the sea and Coquet Island.

The present Quarry Burn – the 'Milneburn' of the charters – runs south between Hazon on the west and Sturton and Guyzance on the east. It originates in a small col of land between Hart Law (originally part of Hazon) and Sturton South Side. From the boundary ditch-and-bank in 'the lonning' north to Milden the burn (or sike) forms both the charter boundary and the modern boundary (i.e. NU 206 055 to NU 205 065). This col, probably once a glacial meltwater channel, marks the watershed between the part of Sturton Grange draining south via the Quarry Burn ('Milneburn') into

the Coquet and the part draining north and east towards the Coquet.

THE NORTHERN SECTION

The northern section begins with the descent from Milnedene to Colepethburn (fig. 12). In the original charter this ran: 'from Milneburn to Colepetheburne, and thence to Harethorneburne, and from Harethorneburne by a path which goes northwards as far as the road that runs by the great tree-trunk to Harethorneley, and thence to the other Harethorneley, and thence across by Lemetheley towards the north-east to the aforesaid Alreburn'. The 1240 agreement defines it:

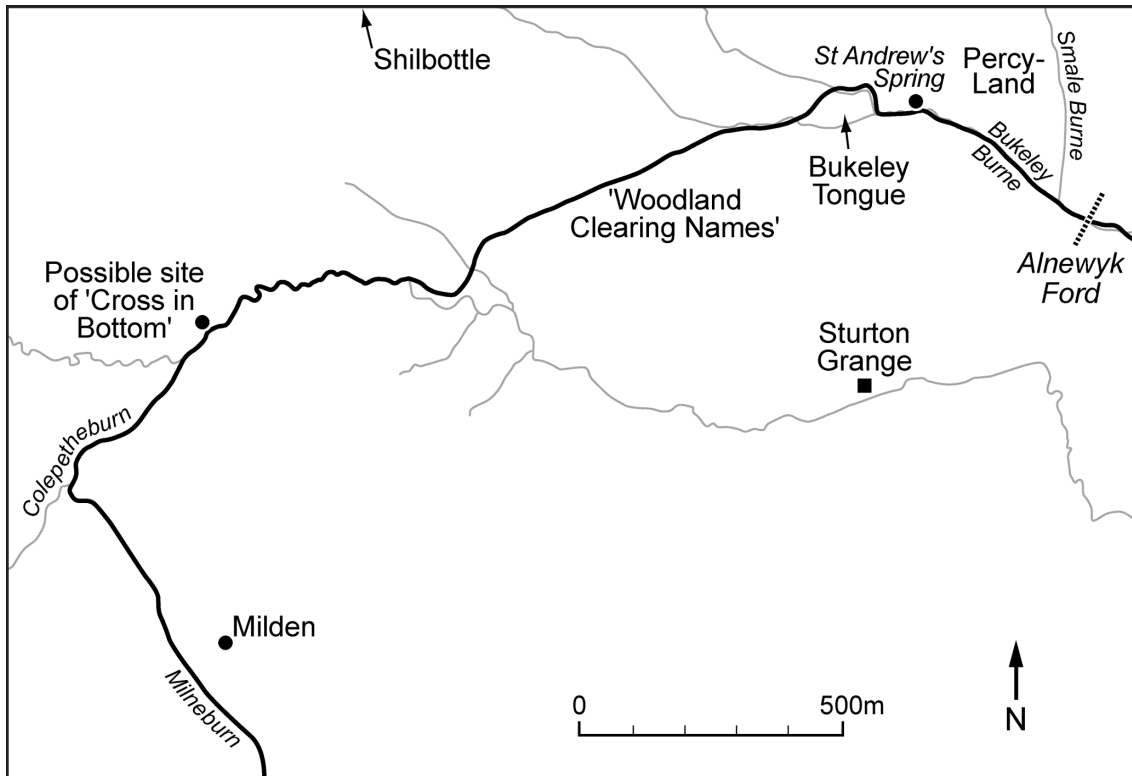


Fig. 12 The northern (Shilbottle) section of the boundary.

de Milnedene per vetus fossatum usque in Colepeteburne, et de Colepeteburne descendendo usque ad semitam quae vocatur Gysnerod, et per eandem semitam ascendendo de Colepeteburne usque horam bosci, et sic per horam bosci usque ad viam quae ducit subtus Harethorneley, et inde usque ad alterum Harethorneley, et deinde per Greteley usque ad Leuietley, et de Leuietley versus northest usque in Alriburne

Translated:

From Milnedene by an old ditch to Colepeteburne, and from Colepeteburne descending to the footpath called Gysnerod, and by that footpath ascending from Colepeteburn to the summit of the wood [ad horam bosci], and so by the summit of the wood to the way that leads under Harethorneley, and thence to the other Harethorneley, and next by Greteley to Lemeteley, and from Lemeteley towards the north east to Alriburne.⁶³

It then amplifies this in the description of the whole boundary from Coquet to Allerburn. After the western section to Milnedene (quoted above), it continues

... et inde per divisam inter monachos et Hugonis de Haysand, sicut fossatum descendit in Colepeteburne usque ad unam cruce[m] sitam in profundo, et de illa cruce sicut fossatum quod Alexander levavit se extendit usque in Alriburne.

Translated:

... and thence by the boundary between the monks and Hugh de Haysand as the ditch descends to Colepetheburne, and so descending by Colepetheburne to a cross in the bottom, and from that cross thence as the ditch which Alexander erected extends itself to Alriburne.

The first section can be traced today as the field boundary which descends from the col of

Milden north east of Hart Law (NU 205 065), running into the upper section of what is now the Grange Burn (at NU 203 068), just south of the present road from South Moor to Sturton Grange. Colepetheburne [coal-path burn or coal-pit burn?] can thus be identified with this stream. Up to the stream the boundary is that between Sturton and Hazon, down the stream it lies between Sturton and Shilbottle.

The original charter then runs the boundary to Harethorneburne, before leaving the stream northwards by a path. In contrast the 1240 agreement does not mention Harethorneburne, but leaves Colepetheburne by a footpath called Gysenrod. This may well mean that Harethorneburne was simply the lower section of the Colepethburne [both of which are now portions of the Grange Burn]. The footpath may have been an old route from Shilbottle to Guyzance, as 'Gysen-rod' suggests. The 'cross situated in the bottom' mentioned in 1240 was still there when the Percy estates, including Shilbottle, were surveyed over three hundred years later in 1567 by Clarkson. The Shilbottle boundary description, running clockwise and so east-to-west in this section abutting Sturton, reads:

... and as the same [Tylaw] burne there goeth to Graindge borne, and from thence to a cross of stone standyng nye the sayd burne, and then upp the burne to a reade forde, and from the saide fourde by certaine marche stones ...
64

The 'red-ford gate', where the Sturton to South Moor road crosses the 'Colepetheburne' (NU 203 068) was a term in use when Hodgson wrote in 1887. Today one can trace the line of the boundary from its entry into the 'Colepetheburn'. The area on either side of this burn (now the Grange Burn) right down to Sturton Grange itself is heavily wooded, much of the wood dating from after 1945, but it is possible to walk down the burn into 'the bottom', where the 'Colepetheburn' (Grange Burn) is joined by another, smaller burn coming in from Shilbottle Moor to the north-west (NU 204 071). The 'cross in the bottom', noted in both the medieval charters and the 1567 Percy survey, has not been recorded since then. Hodgson

does not report on it in his 1887 paper, and he surely would have remarked on it if it had been extant. (The cross may have been similar to the Brinkburn Priory boundary stones, carved with crosses, which can be found on the moors above Thrunton Wood south of Whittingham.) The present writer has searched the channel and sides of the burn at length, but without success.⁶⁵

Much of the subsequent boundary section between Sturton and Shilbottle was woodland only cleared relatively late, and this section contrasts with the section running between abutting arable fields or across open pasture lands. South-east Shilbottle remained substantially wooded up to and beyond the late sixteenth century, as the Percy estate surveys show. Shilbottle Woodhouse was a farm with its closes held in severalty, separate from the open-field system of Shilbottle itself. The Percy estate map of *c.* 1624 shows the very substantial South Wood adjacent to the Sturton boundary.

This was the boundary section characterised by the 'woodland clearing' names in '-ley': the two Harethorneleys, Lemetheley, Greteley. A later agreement (discussed below) also introduces Moryley, Bukeley and Wyteleys. Defining boundaries and their associated pasture rights through wooded areas was a common difficulty, and the Hilton-Newminster agreements sprang from the need to resolve this problem as both sides made more use of the land and wood resources. The 1240 agreement did not end the disputes, and perhaps Alexander de Hilton's dyke from the cross to Allerburn was not completed fully, for the issue returns in a subsequent generation, between and Robert de Hilton (probably Alexander's son) and the Abbot in about 1270. This new agreement⁶⁶ permitted Robert

fecit quondam hayam ab aqueductu quae venit de Colepethford, inter parcum abbatis et boscum dicti Roberti, ad crucem lapideam. Et se extendit illa haya ultra le Munekes super usque ad Moryley, et sic usque ad lyngam quae venit Bukeley, et sic versus orientem ad Wyteleys, et sic usque ad fossatum quod est divisa inter campum de Stratton et terram quam vocant terram Percy; ita quod omnes

placiae infra dictam hayam versus Siepesbotle quae fuerunt dictorum abbatis et conventus, remaneant dicto Roberto de Hilton et heredibus suis in escambium perpetuum pro omnibus placiis ex altera parte hayae versus grangiam de Stratton quae fuerunt eiusdem Roberti de Hylton, quas possidere debent dicti abbas et conventus, et eorum successores imperpetuum.

Translated:

make a fence from the watercourse which comes from Colepethford, between the park of the abbot and the wood of the said Robert, to a stone cross. And that fence extended itself on the far side of 'le Munekes' as far as Moryley, and so to the tongue of land which comes from Bukeley, and so towards the east to Wyteleys, and so to the ditch which is the boundary between the field of Stratton and the land called Percy land. Accordingly, all places within the said fence towards Siepesbotle which were the Abbot and Convents were to belong to the said Robert de Hilton and his heirs in perpetual exchange for all places on the other side of the fence towards the grange of Stratton, which were Hilton's, and were now to be the possession of the Abbot and Convent and their successors.

The original charter had written of 'all Strectuneles beyond the aforesaid boundaries to the fields of Sipplebottle *in common* between Strettune and Sipplebotle'. Now any remaining interspersed patches cleared and claimed by one side or the other were being rationalised into a convenient division. A further agreement⁶⁷ between the two parties focused on the last part of this boundary between Shilbottle and Sturton Grange, allowing Robert to make 'a dyke from that dyke which is the boundary between the field of Stratton and the land called Percy land, and extended as far as Smalburne, which is the boundary between the land of the said Robert and the land of [Low] Buston'. Again, all land to the south was to be the Abbot's and all to the north Robert's. The monks also made an agreement on the boundaries between Sturton and the lands of John de Akedone [Acton?] and Gilbert de Aula of Buston.⁶⁸ John and Gilbert were allowed to make a dyke 'quodam fossatum de fonte Sancti

Andreae, sicut Smalburne descendit in Buckleyburne usque ad vadum quod vocatur Alnewykford', 'from the spring of St. Andrew, thence [as] Smalburne descends in Buckleyburne to the way which is called Alnewykford.' Yet again the southern side was confirmed to the Abbot and the other side to John and Gilbert. This traces out the final section where the Smallburn stream joins the Tylee Burn, to become the Allernburn at Low Buston.

After the junction with the smaller burn, the modern township boundary follows the 'Colepethburn' (Grange Burn) for a distance before climbing north-eastwards out of the burn bottom at NU 209 072. The property boundary (and parish boundary) between Sturton and Shilbottle runs slightly north of the present field boundary, and Michael Brewis of Shilbottle Woodhouse farm noted that an old boundary mound was ploughed out here about ten years ago. The ascent then slackens but the land continues to rise until a point marked today by an ash tree (NU 212 075). This may possibly mark the 'hoar of the wood'. From here to the Allernburn it is not possible to locate the '-leys' of the early charter agreements, but the 'new agreement' of 1270 proves very illuminating. This noted that Robert de Hilton's new fence extended 'on the far side of 'le Munekes' [the monks of Sturton] as far as Moryley, and so to a tongue of land which comes from Bukeley'.

On the ground this 'tongue of land' (centred on NU 217 075) stands out and its name is extremely apt. The tongue is also very visible on a vertical air photograph (fig. 13). The northern boundary of Sturton gradually descends from the ash tree, with the line marked by a very distinct bank, lower on the Sturton side, until it runs into a small stream from the north-west; for a short distance this stream (now known as the Brewis burn, but identifiable as the Buckley burn of the medieval charters) forms the boundary. However, the boundary then crosses the stream and climbs a slope northwards around a tongue of land, with the first part of the arc marked by an old bank and treeline containing several old oaks, before descending to the line of another stream



Fig. 13 Vertical air photograph of the northern section of the boundary. Sturton Grange farm (and site of the monastic grange) are at the bottom, and the arc of the hedge-line boundary between Sturton and Shilbottle is clearly visible to the north, with 'Bukeley tongue' in the centre. © Ordnance Survey.

entering from the north, a stream now known as the Woodhouse burn. The result is a small area of land belonging to Sturton but difficult to access because it lies on the north side of the Buckley burn running through from the north-west. It is a distinctive patch of scrubby land, hard to use for anything except some grazing or rough shooting, and 'tongue' is just the right word for it. It has been sticking out across the stream from Sturton for well over 800 years.

The charters included a further agreement on the boundary to the east of the Bukeley tongue. As noted earlier this allowed two Low

Buston landholders to make a dyke 'from the spring of St. Andrew, thence [as] Smallburne descends in Buckleyburne to the way which is called Alnewykford'. Once again Michael Brewis was able to lead me from Bukeley tongue over the small stream to a spot in his field where water welled up from the ground – St. Andrew's spring, still locatable after 700 years (NU 218 075). There is a marvellous passage in one of W. G. Hoskins' essays where he writes:

And I remember deciding in my room one day that a certain 'black spring' recorded in

charters [of a Leicestershire parish] from the 1280s onwards must lie in a certain part of a particular field today, and how when I reached this spot I found a spring welling almost imperceptibly out of the ground into a tiny pool, a few inches across, that was jet black even on a sunny afternoon: it was ‘the black spring’ precisely as the medieval peasant saw it in the thirteenth century, when he knelt down to drink from it on a sweaty afternoon.⁶⁹

The discovery of St. Andrew’s spring gave us that same excitement, and contact with the medieval past.

The final section is from here to the Allerburn and Low Buston village. Today the small streams coming from the Shilbottle-Sturton boundary join with the Tylaw or Tylee Burn to the immediate west of the Shilbottle-Low Buston road at NU 222 074. The resultant stream is then runs to Low Buston, where it is joined by the Colepethburn (Grange Burn) at NU 226 073. The mill leat comes off the Colepethburn just before this point, and leads to the mill on the Sturton side, opposite the deserted village of Low Buston. The Allerburn was the name of this lower section, but the upper portion was known as the Smallburne. The agreement between Robert of Shilbottle and the monks was to make ‘a dyke from that dyke which is the boundary between the field of Stratton and the land called Percy land, and extended as far as Smalburne, which is the boundary between the land of the said Robert and the land of [Low] Buston’. ‘Percy land’ was the field in the extreme south-east of Shilbottle territory, so identifying the Tylee Burn, which forms the Shilbottle-Low Buston boundary, with the Smallburn. The second charter for this locality was that between the monks and John de Akedone [Acton?] and Gilbert de Aula of Buston.⁷⁰ John and Gilbert were allowed to make a dyke ‘from the spring of St. Andrew, thence [as] Smalburne descends in Buckleyburne to the way which is called Alnewykford.’ Yet again the southern side was confirmed to the Abbot and the other side to John and Gilbert. This tracks the Sturton boundary down from the rediscovered spring, along the final section of the Buckley Burn to its junction

with the Smallburn (Tylee) to the point where the stream is now culverted under the road, but which was formerly a ford.⁷¹

CONCLUSION

The reconstruction of the boundary perambulation is completed with the return to the Allerburn. Despite the extinction of place names since *c.* 1170 it has proved possible to identify the various sections, if not the location of every individual name. The reconstruction has also illuminated the growing pressures on land resources during the period of medieval expansion and population growth of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with the increased use of woodland clearance and pasture and the need to carefully define and physically demarcate the boundaries in these sections. The original charter grants Sturton with all its appurtenances ‘in bosco et plano, in pratis et pasturis, viis et semitas, aquis et molendinis’;⁷² ‘in wood and plain, in meadow and pastures, in roads and lanes, waters and mills’. The expression is conventional, yet the medieval landscape revealed by the charter boundary shows precisely these features. Locating the detail of this landscape allows one to connect with the people who worked those Northumberland lands over eight hundred years ago.⁷³

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Estates. The maps were drawn by Jonathan Tooby of the School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol.

NOTES

¹ J. T. Fowler (ed.), *Chartularium Abbatiae de Novo Monasterio* [SS, 66] Durham (1876), 74–82. See J. C. Hodgson, ‘The lordship of Kidland and its successive owners’, *AA*³, 8 (1912), 19–36. A boundary ditch dug by the monks and mentioned in the grant is still visible today; see J. Philipson, ‘Cross-ridge dykes on Clennell Street, Northumberland’, *AA*⁵, 8 (1980), 164–8.

² *Liber de Melros*, 1, Edinburgh (1837), 267. See P. J. Dixon, *The Deserted Medieval Villages of North Northumberland: A Settlement History from the Twelfth to the Nineteenth Century* [PhD thesis, University of Wales] Cardiff (1984), 592–3.

³ Compare C. O’Brien, ‘The early medieval shires of Yeavinger, Breamish and Bamburgh’, *AA*⁵, 30 (2002), 53–73.

⁴ *NCH* 5, 18–19.

⁵ W. E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North. The Region and its Transformation, 1000–1135*, London (1979), 191–230.

⁶ Recent accounts of medieval Northumberland are set out in R. Lomas, *North-East England in the Middle Ages*, Edinburgh (1992) and R. Lomas, *County of Conflict: Northumberland from Conquest to Civil War*, East Linton (1996).

⁷ Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest*. See also B. K. Roberts and S. Wrathmell, *Region and Place, A Study of English Rural Settlement*, London (2002), 140–1.

⁸ See R. A. Butlin, ‘Northumbrian field systems’, *Agricultural History Review*, 12 (1964), 99–124; R. A. Butlin, ‘Field systems of Northumberland and Durham’, in A. R. H. Baker and R. A. Butlin (eds.), *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles*, Cambridge (1973), 93–144; R. A. Dodgshon, *The Origin of British Field Systems: An Interpretation*, London (1980). Butlin and Dodgshon would be the first to note that much of their evidence is post-medieval and that field-systems were evolving throughout the medieval period.

⁹ For accounts and recent work on the Cistercians, see D. Robinson (ed.), *The Cistercian Abbeys of Britain: Far from the Concourse of Men*, London (1998), and G. Coppack, *The White Monks: The Cistercians in Britain 1128–1540*, Stroud (1998).

¹⁰ W. P. Hedley, *Northumberland Families*, 1, Newcastle (1968), 224–6.

¹¹ See Robinson, *The Cistercian Abbeys*, 156–7; B. Harbottle and P. Salway, ‘Excavations at Newminster Abbey, 1961–1963’, *AA*⁴, 42 (1964), 95–171.

¹² Fowler, *Chartularium*, *passim*.

¹³ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 198, 300.

¹⁴ C. Platt, *The Monastic Grange in Medieval England. A Reassessment*, London (1969), and the essays in L. Pressouyre (ed.), *L’Espace Cistercien*, Paris (1994). An interesting recent reconstruction of a Cistercian boundary charter is provided by Mary C. Higham, ‘Souterscales – a Furness Abbey estate in Lonsdale’, in A. R. Rumble and A. D. Mills (eds.), *Names, Places and People*, Stamford (1997), 131–43.

¹⁵ Harbottle and Salway, ‘Excavations’; H. L. Honeyman, R. Bertram, and C. H. Hunter Blair, ‘The tile pavements at Newminster Abbey’, *AA*⁴, 6 (1929), 95–115.

¹⁶ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 201.

¹⁷ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 200–01.

¹⁸ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 211–13.

¹⁹ See F. W. Dendy, ‘A memoir of John Crawford Hodgson’, *AA*⁴, 4 (1927) 122–34.

²⁰ J. C. Hodgson, ‘Sturton Grange’, *Proceedings of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club* [henceforth *PBNC*], 12 (1887), 138–48.

²¹ J. C. Hodgson, ‘Low Buston’ *PBNC*, 12 (1890 for 1887–1889), 507–525, and ‘Brotherwick’, *PBNC*, 15 (1897, for 1894–95), 104–16.

²² J. Philipson, ‘Cross-ridge dykes’, 168.

²³ Alnwick Castle MSS A.I.1.

²⁴ Alnwick Castle MSS A.II.1.

²⁵ Alnwick Castle MSS A. IV. (4, 7 & 8) and A. V. (3 & 5), with Robert Norton’s maps (O).

²⁶ *NCH* 5, facing 136 (Warkworth), 376 (Acklington), 416 (Shilbottle).

²⁷ NRO ZHE 62/1, ‘Plan of Brotherwick and Warkworth 1772 by Thomas Wilkins’.

²⁸ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 197–8.

²⁹ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 198–9.

³⁰ P. J. Dixon, *The Deserted Medieval Villages of North Northumberland*, 79.

³¹ A. J. L. Winchester, ‘The medieval township in the western Lake District: some problems of definition’, *CW*², 78 (1978), 55–69.

³² Fowler, *Chartularium*, 207.

³³ See M. J. and B. K. Roberts, ‘The deserted village of Low Buston, Northumberland: a study in soil phosphate analysis’, *AA*⁵, 6 (1978), 107–16.

³⁴ *NCH* 5 250.

³⁵ For discussion of these disputes and agreements, see Fowler, *Chartularium*, 208–10; *NCH* 5, 221–3; Hodgson ‘Sturton Grange’, 141, and ‘Low Buston’, 508–09.

³⁶ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 199.

³⁷ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 199.

³⁸ W. Page, *Northumberland Assize Rolls* [SS, 154], Durham (1880).

³⁹ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 199–200.

⁴⁰ Page, *Northumberland Assize*, 153.

⁴¹ *NCH* 5, 165.

⁴² *NCH* 5, 165 and 180.

⁴³ E. Miller, 'The inscriptions on the effigy in Warkworth church', *PSAN*⁴, 11 (3) (1947), 115–17.

⁴⁴ NRO ZHE 62/1, 'Plan of Brotherwick and Warkworth 1772 by Thomas Wilkins'.

⁴⁵ Hodgson, 'Sturton Grange', 140.

⁴⁶ I am grateful to Dr. Angus Winchester, Lancaster University, for confirming this for me.

⁴⁷ This suggestion was made by several of those present when a version of this paper was given to the Society in June 2003.

⁴⁸ M. W. Beresford, *History on the Ground*, London (1957), 62.

⁴⁹ One might reasonably ask if this is not simply one of a number of field clearance stones put into the hedge line, but this is in fact the only substantial stone in a long line of hedge and is at precisely the right location.

⁵⁰ *NCH* 5, 165.

⁵¹ A. D. Mills, *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, Oxford (1991), 169.

⁵² A parallel etymology is found for Harbottle, as here-botl or 'army building'. A. Mawer, *The Place-Names of Northumberland and Durham*, Cambridge (1920), 101. R. Newton draws attention to an established route through coastal Northumberland to Warkworth castle, and it may be that in earlier years it was directed to ford the Coquet at the Hereford, rather than at the village of Warkworth. R. Newton, *The Northumberland Landscape*, London (1972).

⁵³ On Walkmill see *NCH* 5, 251–3, and J. C. Hodgson, 'Additional notices of the Walk-mill in the Parish of Warkworth', *AA*³, 2 (1906), 87–93.

⁵⁴ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 200.

⁵⁵ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 201–03.

⁵⁶ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 202.

⁵⁷ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 203.

⁵⁸ *NCH* 5, 476.

⁵⁹ NRO DT 439 L (Sturton Grange), DT 63 (Brainshaugh), DT 72 S (Brotherwick), DT 225 M (Hazon), DT 416 M (Shilbottle), DT 517 M (Shilbottle Woodhouse), DT 470 S (Walkmill). Only the Brotherwick map includes field names.

⁶⁰ Hodgson, 'Sturton Grange', 148.

⁶¹ NRO 2835/21 'South Side Crops, Surveyed Oct 12 1860, W. Harrison'.

⁶² NRO 110/M1–M13 (Guyzance), including '1860: Plan of the Several Farms of Bank House, South Side and Walk Mill in occupation of John Tate'.

⁶³ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 202.

⁶⁴ *NCH* 5, 424.

⁶⁵ The burn is now difficult to penetrate and survey because much of it is heavily wooded. However, it was not afforested until after the Second World War, and Rita Hall, who lived at Sturton Grange before the War, cannot recollect any mention of a stone cross in the burn. Equally Michael Brewis of Shilbottle Woodhouse, who played in the burn as a child during the War, never saw any signs of a stone cross. It may, however, still be there in the burn-sides.

⁶⁶ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 203–04.

⁶⁷ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 204.

⁶⁸ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 204–05.

⁶⁹ W. G. Hoskins, 'The Rediscovery of England', in *Provincial England* (London, 1963), 219.

⁷⁰ Fowler, *Chartularium*, 204–05.

⁷¹ A document of 1690/91 refers to the ford at this location as 'St. Andrew's ford': *NCH*, 5, 231.

⁷² Fowler, *Chartularium*, 197.

⁷³ The present study has not attempted to enter the thickets of boundary dating by botanical study of species in hedges. See E. Pollard, M. D. Hooper and N. W. Moore, *Hedges*, London (1974) and O. Rackham, *The History of the Countryside*, London (1986), 181–204. The method does not appear to have been much applied in the north of England. The Sturton Grange boundaries have been maintained, reproduced and reconstructed through the centuries, rather than preserved, and I would not like to claim botanical antiquity for any of the charter boundary, but potential locations for such study might be the boundary of 'Bukeley tongue' (NU 217 075) and the copse identified with the 'Merethorn' (NU 221 047).