
NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Project Designs and Client Reports No. CP/178/04

**REPORT FOR AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
BUILDING RECORDING
PROJECT AT LOWBYER
MANOR FARM
ALSTON
CUMBRIA**

**FOR
HILARY PARK**

**NY 7172 4691
Planning Application Reference:
3/04/0263**

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In January 2005, North Pennines Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Hilary Park to undertake a building survey of a range of farm buildings at Low Byer Manor Farm, Alston (NY 7172 4691). The work was carried out on behalf of Ms Park, prior to the conversion of the buildings to holiday accommodation (Planning application No. 3/04/0263).
- 1.2 Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service produced a brief for a building recording project, which was to be undertaken prior to the commencement of building work. A 'Level 2' Building Survey was carried out as specified in *Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification*¹.
- 1.3 The farm buildings are regarded as being of archaeological interest and are recorded on the County Sites and Monuments Record (Reference 40363). The buildings are visible on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1865 (figure 1) and therefore date from at least the middle of the 19th century.
- 1.4 Low Byer Manor Farmhouse is a listed grade II building dating to the late 18th or early 19th century (SMR No.21056).
- 1.5 The survey is concerned with an L-shaped range of farm buildings (Figure 3) that together with the farmhouse form a U-shaped layout.
- 1.6 The survey was carried out in January 2005 by Fiona Wooler BA (Hons), PIFA and Joanne Beaty BA (Hons).

¹ Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification, RCHME, Third Edition, 1996, Swindon

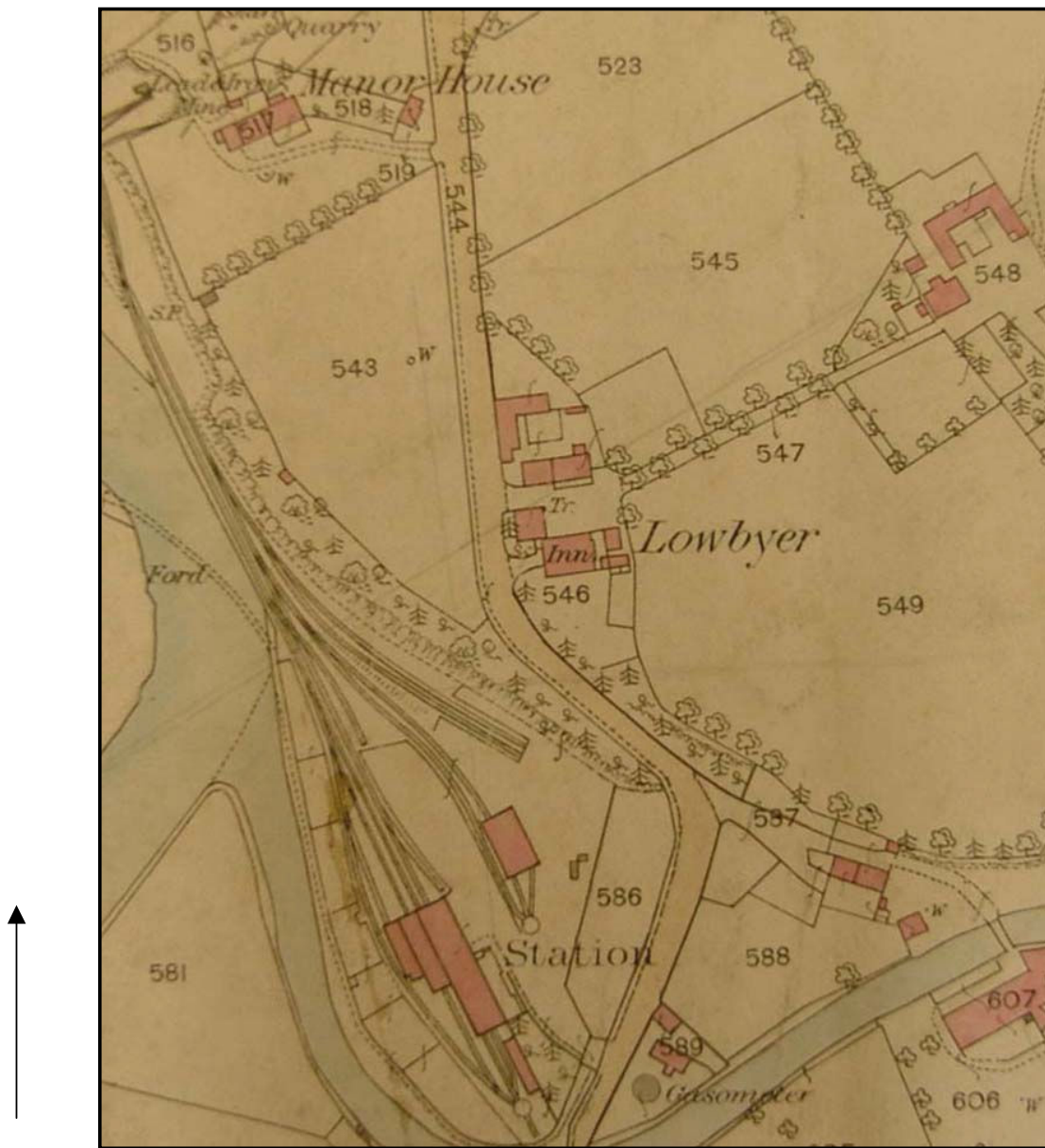


Figure 1 – First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1865, Scale 1:10,560

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 Lowbyer Manor Farm is situated less than 0.5 kilometres north of the market town of Alston, at a height of *c.*280 metres above mean sea level. The farm is located on the side of the main road from Alston to Hexham (A686) (Figures 2 and 3).
- 2.2 To the west of the farm, *c.*20 metres below, is the River South Tyne and the South Tynedale Railway.
- 2.3 To the north-east of the farm, and rising rapidly from Spency Croft, is Newshield Moss at a height of *c.*500 metres above mean sea level.
- 2.4 To the south of Lowbyer Manor Farm is Lowbyre Manor Hotel (figure 3). According to their own web-site², the hotel was originally planned and designed as a coaching inn, and was constructed in 1778 ‘with money provided by the Greenwich Hospital Trustees’. The farmhouse at Lowbyer Manor Farm was supposedly constructed as ‘an appropriate and fitting dwelling for the Manor estate’s farm manager’.

² www.lowbyer.com

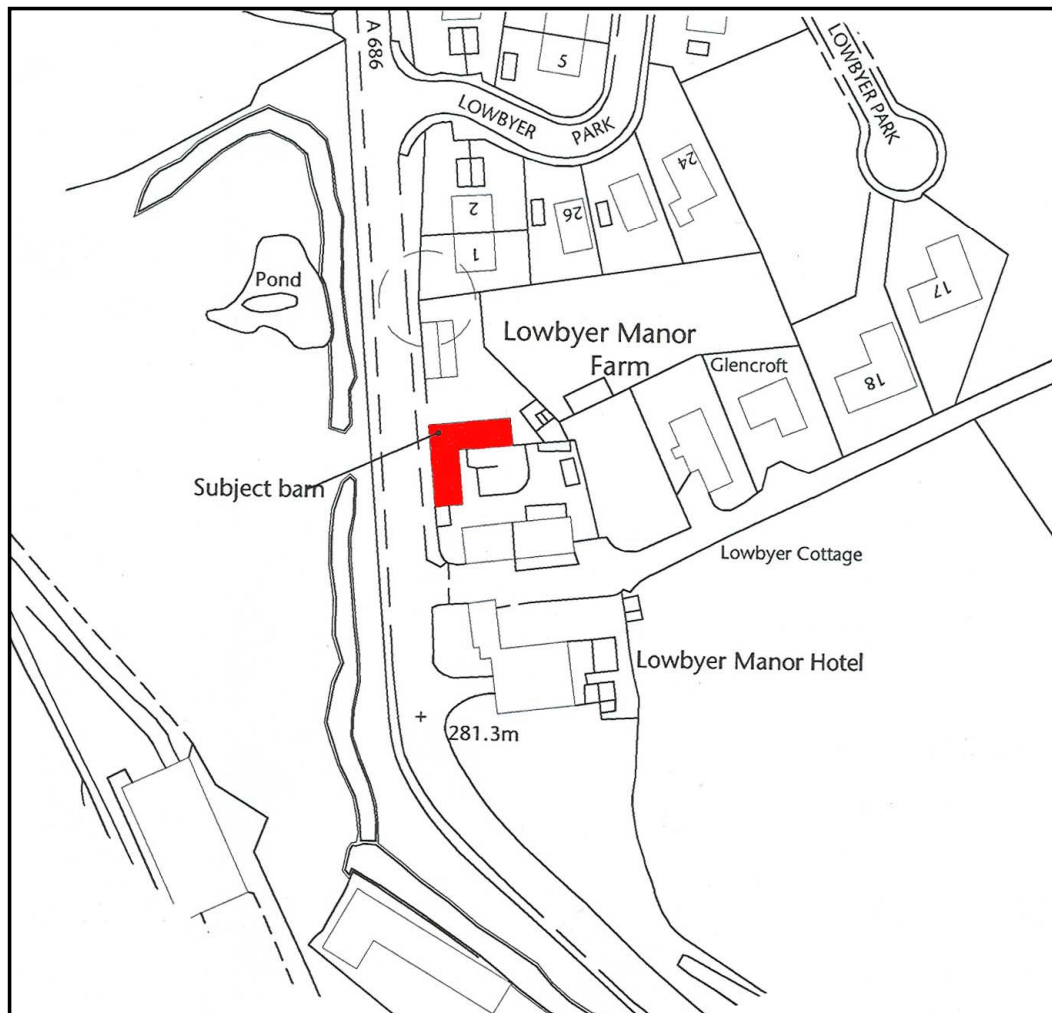


Figure 3 – Location of the farm buildings at Low Byer Manor Farm (shown in red)
(Gary Kirby Design)

3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Building Survey

3.1.1 The survey consists of three basic elements:

- a written account, including information derived from documentary research;.
- a measured survey with accompanying architects drawings;
- a photographic record.

3.2 The Written Account

3.2.1 The written account is included in this document together with a selection of photographs, plans and appendix of documentary information.

3.3 The Photographic Record

3.3.1 The photographic archive consists of the following:

- a series of 35mm black and white prints, which included general views of the exterior of the buildings, elevations and part elevations, along with specific external details (e.g. doorways);
- a series of 35mm colour prints showing general views of the exterior of the buildings and their setting;
- a series of digital views of the exterior of the buildings, the interior of the buildings and specific internal details (e.g. roof structure) supplied on CD-Rom.

3.4 Project Archive

3.4.1 The full archive of the desk-based assessment and Level 2 building survey has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with the current English Heritage guidelines set out in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP 2nd Edition 1991). The archive will be deposited within the County Record Office and a copy of the report given to the County Sites and Monuments Record, where viewing will be available on request.

4 PREVIOUS WORK

- 4.1 No previous archaeological work has been undertaken on the site.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The L-shaped range of farm buildings at Lowbyre Manor Farm are of single phase construction, built of coursed and squared yellow sandstone or millstone grit (plates 1 and 2). The wall of the western elevation of the range continues southwards to provide the back wall for a possible bothy and then turns eastwards to join the farmhouse range, and consequently encloses the farm from the road (figure 3). All the doorways and windows have well-dressed sandstone jambs and surrounds.
- 5.2 The gabled roof of the two-storey farm buildings is of diminishing courses of sandstone tiles, with sandstone triangular section ridge tiles. There are ventilation tiles along the ridge line of the western range, which contains the byre/milking parlour and hayloft, as well as skylights inserted in the eastern facing side of the roof to provide extra light for the hayloft at first floor level. There are neither ventilation tiles nor skylights in the section of roof above the barn.



Plate 1 – The farm buildings as seen from the east

- 5.3 At ground floor level, the western range, which contains the byre/milking parlour and hayloft, has a window on its southern elevation that was originally a doorway (1 – Figure 4) (Plate 3). Along the eastern elevation there are four windows and a doorway (2 – 6 on Figure 4). At the northern end of this range is a further doorway that gives access to the barn (7), and two windows (8 and 9). Ventilation slits are also visible at this end of the range (figures 4 and 6).



Plate 2 – The farm buildings as seen from the south-west



Plate 3 – South gable end showing blocked doorway

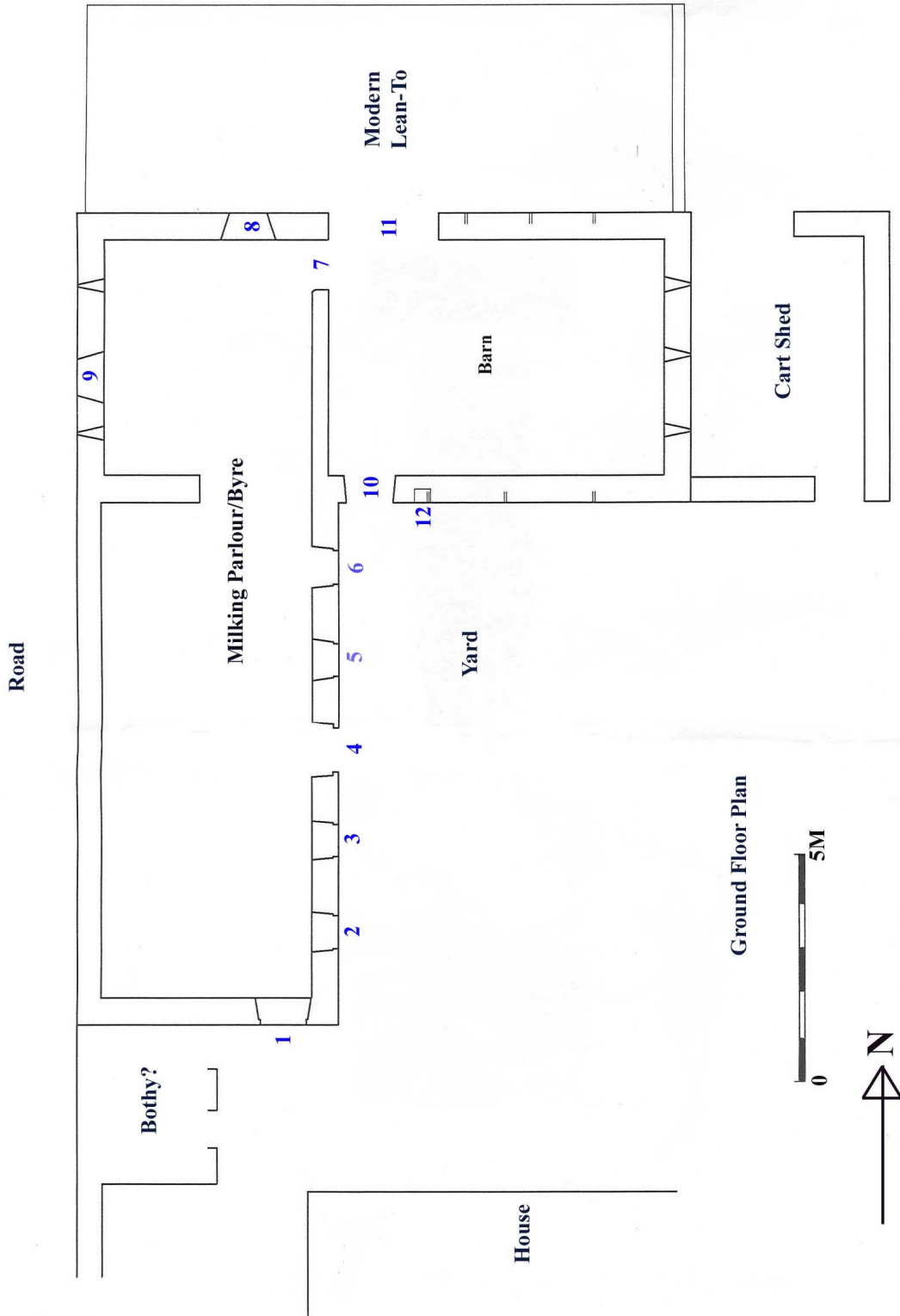


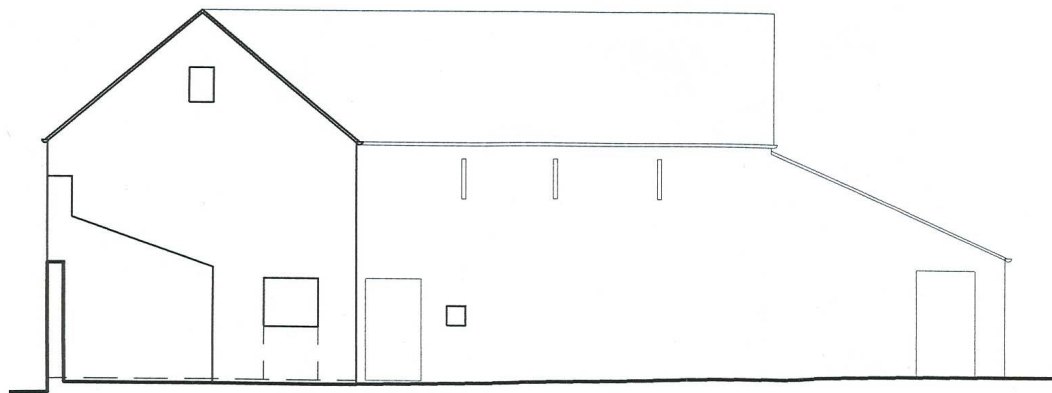
Figure 4 – Ground floor plan of the farm buildings (Gary Kirkby Design)

- 5.4 The barn is accessed via a doorway from the farmyard (marked **10** on figure 4)), opposite which, in the northern elevation, is a large arched doorway (figure 5) that measures *c.*3.5 metres from ground level to the apex of the arch (plate 4). The northern exterior elevation of the barn is obscured by a later timber lean-to.
- 5.5 The interior of the barn is open to the roof. A further doorway (7) gives access from the barn to the byre/milking parlour. Set in the exterior wall of the southern elevation of the barn, close to the entrance from the farmyard (10) is a recess which measures *c.*40cm x 40cm (12). This recess does not appear to have originally gone through the thickness of the wall, and therefore may have been used for holding a lantern, as recesses for tools, animal medicines or grooming equipment are generally found set within interior walls.

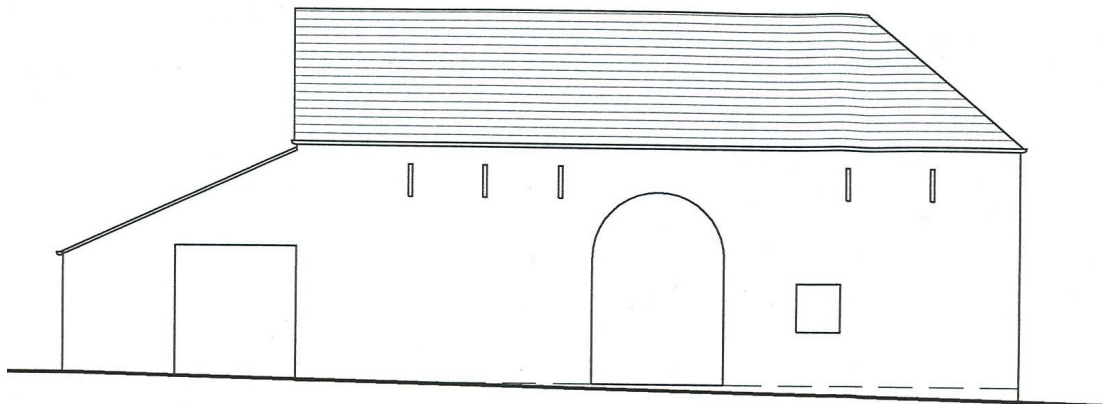


Plate 4 – Large doorway in northern elevation of barn

- 5.6 The ground floor of the byre in the western range of the farm buildings was more recently used as a byre. The floor is of concrete, with a central feeding/manure channel (measuring 92cm in width) and cattle stalls along the western wall. The divisions between the stalls are made of metal set into concrete, with metal water troughs still *in-situ*. The stalls would have provided accommodation for a maximum of 15 cows. The walls of the byre are plastered to a height of 1.46 metres from the ground, with limewash visible on the remainder. The ceiling of the byre is 2.65 metres from the ground and is constructed of machine sawn timber.



South Elevation



North Elevation (lean -to not shown)

Figure 5 – South and North elevations of farm buildings (Gary Kirkby Design)

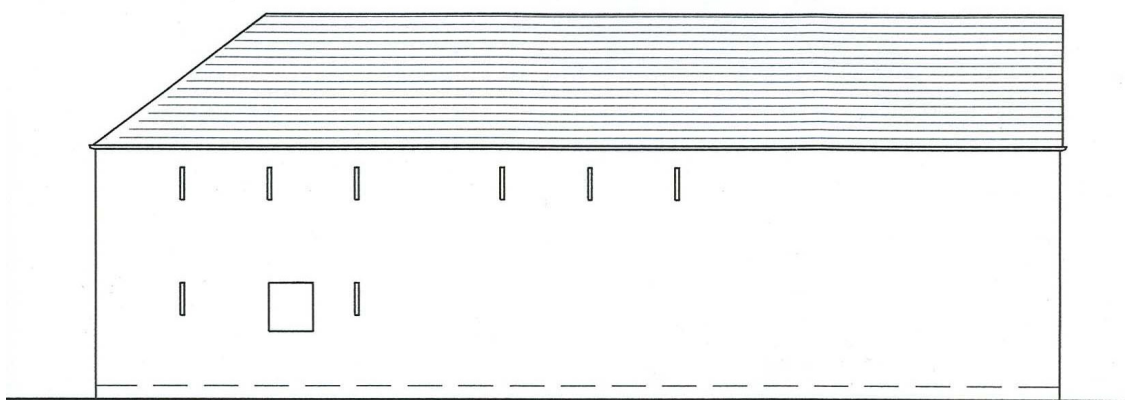
- 5.6 The first floor of the western range of the buildings (figure 7) could only be accessed by ladder into the upper doorway from the farmyard. The loft above the byre would have been used to store hay and during the winter months, when the cows were kept indoors, the hay would have provided insulation for the cowhouse below. A stone gable wall with a doorway separates the northern end of the loft from the southern (figure 7). In the southern wall and this interior gable wall there are owl holes, the southern one has its own small wooden door (plate 5). Owl holes were built into the gable ends of farm buildings to allow owls access to feed on vermin such as mice.



Plate 5 – Owl hole in southern gable end with wooden door



East Elevation (to yard)



West Elevation (to road)

Figure 6 – East and West elevations of farm buildings (Gary Kirkby Design)

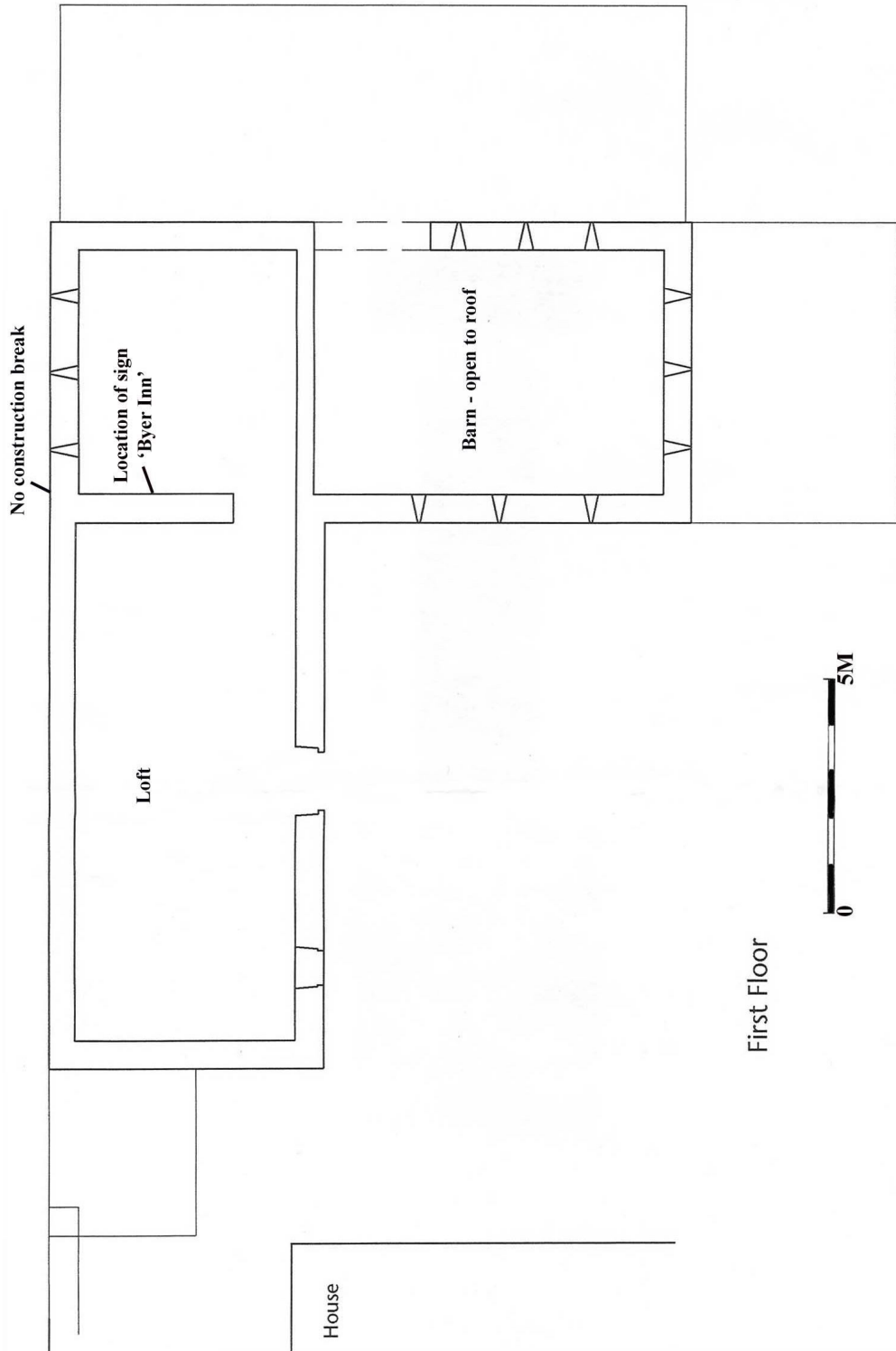


Figure 7 – First floor plan of farm buildings (Gary Kirkby Design)

- 5.7 Painted onto the limewashed walls of the stone partition wall of the first floor hay loft are the words 'BYER INN' (plate 6 and figure 7). This has proved to be slightly confusing as there is no evidence that this was once an exterior wall, as there is no straight construction break on the western elevation between the location of this wall and the northern range which runs at a right angle (figure 7). The stonework seems to be contemporary with the rest of the building and therefore appears not to have been a gable end from an earlier building. Apart from this enigmatic lettering that is stylistically late nineteenth century in style, there is no structural or documentary evidence to support this wall being the north facing exterior gable of a earlier inn as the lettering suggests.



Plate 6 – Gable wall, first floor hayloft 'BYER INN'

- 5.8 The roof structure of the hayloft, at the southern side of the stone wall, consists of three principal rafter trusses with collars. The timbers are machine sawn and there are some straight marks inscribed on several of these timbers, which probably relate to the trading of the wood. The structure of the roof for the northern range (over the northern end of the hayloft and the barn) is of king-post construction with angle struts, held together with iron bolts. The stone tiles that cover the roof can be easily seen from the hayloft, with the wooden pegs 'resting' on the laths (plate 7)³.
- 5.9 The barn (figure 7) is open to the roof with ventilation slits in the northern, southern and eastern elevations. The barn could have originally had one of two purposes; it may have been used for the threshing and winnowing of grain, with the large doors used to provide light and ventilation for these unpleasant agricultural processes that were undertaken during the winter months. The opposing smaller door would have allowed for a through draught to aid in the separating of the chaff from the grain.

³ See Brunskill, R.W., 2002, Page 162

- 5.10 Alternatively, the barn could have simply been used for the storage of hay, some northern farm buildings were constructed with as much as 75 per cent storage for hay and 25 per cent for the cattle⁴. The geographical location of the town of Alston may have meant that arable production was limited, this is certainly noted in Parson and White's History, Gazetteer and Directory of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire of 1829, where they describe the land as being 'good pasturage for sheep and cattle, but only a few acres of land in tillage'⁵.



Plate 7 – Interior of roof above hayloft showing stone tiles with wooden pegs resting on the laths

- 5.10 At the eastern end of the barn is a single-storey cartshed (figure 4) with a roof of Welsh slate. There is a domestic-sized door in the southern elevation of this building, and a large doorway on the northern to allow for access for a cart.
- 5.11 On the southern end of the byre and hayloft, there is a small single-storey building (figure 4) with a doorway leading into the farmyard, a 16-pane window and a chimney. The roof is of stone tiles like the rest of the farm buildings. This building could possibly have been a bothy for a farm labourer.
- 5.12 There are a few sets of initials carved into the stonework of door jambs. On the blocked-up doorway of the byre (marked 1 on figure 4) there are the initials 'J L', on the door jamb of the large doorway of the barn (marked 11 on figure 4) are the letters 'T D' and 'E F?', and carved into the door jamb of the upper doorway of the hayloft is the letter 'W'. The 'J L' may relate to the Lancaster family who are listed as being at Low Byer in the 1901 Directory (see Appendix).

⁴ Lake, J., 1989, Page 93

⁵ See Parson and White in Appendix

- 5.13 The farmhouse, although not part of the current survey, is an integral part of any farmstead. The farmhouse at Lowbyer Manor Farm is a double-pile house i.e. it has two-storeys and is two rooms deep (Date range of construction according to Brunskill is from about 1770 to 1850⁶). To the rear and facing into the farmyard, the house has an outshut, which is a continuation of the room to provide extra ground-floor accommodation, often for a dairy or scullery⁷. Interestingly, where normally the outshut developed to house service rooms and then staircases (a development from single storey houses) at Low Byer the outshut appears to have housed a cartshed. This is shown by a blocked-up arched doorway in the east facing elevation of the house (Plate 8). There is a '1' carved into one of the voussoirs, which according to the owner, also has an '8' after it, but it is very faint. This may indicate a date of '18..' for the house, or the insertion of the arched cart doorway.



Plate 8 – Blocked-up archway, east elevation of farmhouse

- 5.14 As is typical with a lot of farmhouses of double-pile plan, the front door and presumably the principal rooms, face away from the 'noise, dirt and smell of the yard'⁸. Adjoining the house is a further building that is now part of the dwelling; this may originally have been the stable block.

⁶ Brunskill, R.W., 2002, Page 83

⁷ *Ibid*, Page 77

⁸ *Ibid*, Page 101

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Farm buildings can, sometimes, be difficult to date, and those at Lowbyer Manor Farm are no exception. Cartographic (map) evidence suggests that neither the farmhouse nor the farm buildings were in existence prior to 1823. The earliest available map for the Town of Alston appears to be Fryer's map of *c.*1775 (Figure 8). There is little development to the north of the town on this map; however, there is an L-shaped range of buildings shown roughly where Lowbyer is today. These buildings, however, are located on the opposite side of the road, situated approximately 200 yards north of Lowbyre Manor Farm. Hodkinson and Donald's map of 1774 (surveyed 1770) again does not appear to show the farm or manor house (Figure 9). Greenwood's map of 1823 (Figure 10) shows 'Low Byer' again on the opposite side of the road to the farm, Spency Croft is marked, and the manor house may be shown but it is set back some way off the road. The farm buildings do not appear to be shown. This does not necessarily mean that the farm did not exist at this point, it would be necessary to be cautious about the reliability of these maps, not all properties may be shown. Another factor which may be relevant is to consider if the course of the main road north out of Alston has at some point changed.



Figure 8 – Fryer's map of *c.*1775 (Taken from a later copy at CRO)

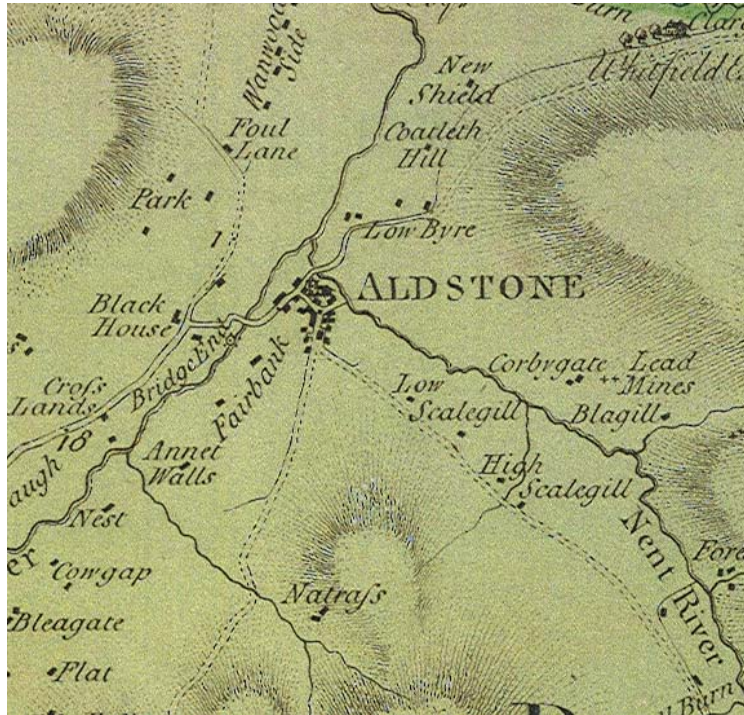


Figure 9 – Hodskinson and Donald map of 1774 (CL)

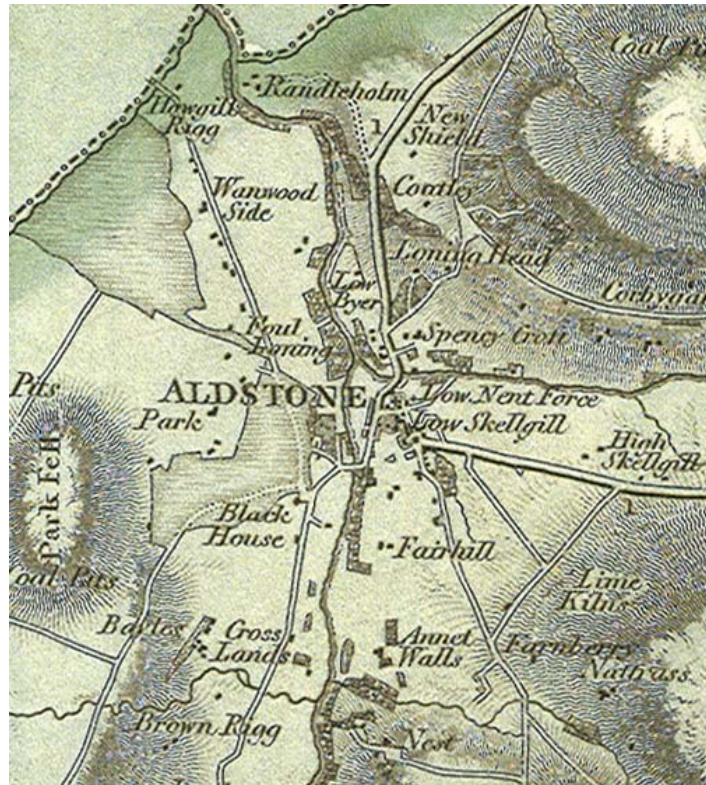


Figure 10 – Greenwoods map of 1823 (CL)

6.2 The farm buildings at Lowbyer have characteristics very similar to those observed at Denton Mill Farm, Scarrow Hill, Brampton, which date to the

middle of the nineteenth century (built between 1850 and 1863)⁹. As at Lowbyer, Denton Mill Farm consists of an L-shaped range of farm buildings, with the farmhouse creating a U-shaped plan. The functions of the buildings is also similar, with a byre, barn, cartshed and possible bothy, and a double-pile farmhouse with outshut. At Denton Mill Farm the farmhouse was in existence before the farm buildings, and this may have been the case at Lowbyer Manor Farm.

- 6.3 The farm buildings at Lowbyer Manor Farm are well-built and, on a local level, they are nice examples of the investment put into agricultural structures during the nineteenth century, at a time when agriculture was becoming much more efficient, organised and scientific.

⁹ Wooler, F., 2004

7 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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8 APPENDIX

CRO = Carlisle Record Office

CL = Carlisle Library

'The History of the County of Cumberland' William Hutchinson Volume I 1794-1797 (CRO)

'Buildings – mostly of stone, covered with lime and slated'.

'Soil and produce – soil, a mixture of clay, moss and sand – affords good pasturage for milk cows, and produces good hay; not above twelve acres of tillage in the whole parish'.

'Francis, Earl of Derwentwater, Viscount Ratcliffe and Langley, and Baron of Tyndale, by his indenture, dated May 6th 1689, demised to John Vazie, of Lowbyer, in Aldstone Moor, gent. All his leadmines and minerals, and all other mines and minerals, ores, earth, metals, and stones, (coals excepted) at Battle green, near Guttergyll, in Aldstone Moor, for 21 years, paying a fifth part of the ore, as duty ore'.

Jollie's Cumberland Guide and Directory 1811 (CRO)

'The little town of Aldston stands on a rapid declivity on the eastern side of the Tyne, over which there is an old, narrow stone bridge of one arch. This place is almost wholly inhabited by miners, or people connected with that employ- the lead mines within the precincts of this parish are numerous and generally very rich, employing about 1100 men'.

'The whole parish of Aldston, which is very extensive, is supposed to contain about 4500 inhabitants, exclusive of miners. There are some tolerable houses about Aldston; but buildings in general though formed of stone and covered with slate, are rather mean and disagreeable'.

'A History, Gazetteer and Directory of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire' – Parson and White 1829

'Alston Parish – Is a region of dreary wastes and narrow dales, rich only in mineral treasure, and pent in on the west by Cross-Fell, Hartside-Fell and Thackmoor-Fell, and on all other sides by high lands, in the counties of Northumberland, Durham and Westmorland. It is about nine miles in length from north to south, and seven miles in breadth from east to west, and is intersected by the rivers South Tyne, Black-burn, Nent, Gildersdale-burn, and several smaller streams, which rise and unite in the parish, and flow through deep and contracted dells, where in some places there is good pasturage for sheep and cattle, but only a few acres of land in tillage. The soil is a mixture of clay, moss and sand. The high lands and wastes afford but a scanty pasturage, being covered chiefly with heath and bent'.

'The Manor of Alston-Moor is held under the Governors of Greenwich Hospital, and comprises the whole parish, except the small district called Tyne-head, of which Mr Fidell has the royalties. The principal landowners in the parish are Robert Hodgson Esq. of Melmerby-Hall; George Elstob Esq. of Hexham; Mr Joseph Dickinson of Lov-Lady-Shield; and Mr John Friend, of Annet Wells'.

'Alston – The Market Town, which gives name to this interesting parish, is situated on the declivity of a steep hill, near the confluence of the rivers Nent and South Tyne, 20 miles ENE of Penrith, 23 miles WSW of Hexham, and 20 miles SE by E of Brampton. It contains about 2500 inhabitants, and 400 irregularly built houses, generally constructed of stone, and covered with slate'.

Listed as private residents at Low Byer in Alston Parish: -
John Dickinson, Gentleman, Low bier
Hugh Lee Pattinson (assay master), Low bier, [listed as a lead mine agent for the Governors of Greenwich Hospital]

Anchor Inn (and posting house), Matthew Hetherington, Low bier

Coach – *‘The Balloon, from Low Bier Inn, to Hexham, Mon, Wed and Fri. at 12 noon, and to Penrith the following day, at 1 afternoon’.*

The History and Antiquities of Leath Ward – S Jefferson MDCCCXL

‘This parish [Alston] anciently written Aldeneston, i.e. ‘Alden’s Town’, is in the deanery of Corbridge, and the franchise of Tindale, and the only parish in Cumberland which is in the diocese of Durham’.

‘The parish contains the market town of Alston and Nent-head and the villages and hamlets of Garrigill-gate, Nent-hall, Nentsbury Green and Tyne Head’.

‘The manor was given to William de Veteriponte, or Vipont, by William the Lion King of Scotland who confirmed it by grant (recited in a record about the year 1280); and a further confirmation was given by King John, May 10 1209. In 1282, Edward I by his charter stating that having recovered the manor from Robert de Veteriponte, he now at the instance of Alexander, son of Alexander, King of Scotland, restored it to his son Nicholas, to be holden in perpetuity of the said Alexander as of his liberty of Tindale, with the exception of the mine, miners and liberties of the miners within the manor’.

‘Prior to the year 1611, the lands in the manor were mostly holden by tenure of copyhold, but in that year and 1616, they were leased off to the tenants for 999 years by Henry Hutton Esq. under annual rents amounting in the whole to 63l. and by the payment of a 20d fine at the end of every 21 years. Mr Supworth says, it was in 1629 that the whole manor was sold to Sir Edward Radclyffe for 2500l. The lord continued to claim the timber on the tenants land until a compromise between the two parties introduced a clause into the act of parliament passed in 1803, for enclosure of the commons within this parish by which all right of timber was settled on the tenant’.

‘The dignity of the manor is still preserved by holding courts leet and baron at Lowbyer. Some of the court books are signed by the first Earl of Derwentwater’.

Cumberland Directory – Mannix and Whellan 1847

‘The Town of Alston – In 1841, it contained 1650 inhabitants, and 420 houses, generally constructed of stone, with slated roofs and places without much attention to regularity’.

‘The market is held on Saturday, and is abundantly supplied with all the necessaries of life; and fairs for sheep, cattle etc are held on the third Saturday in March, the last Thursday in May, the Saturday on or before the 27th September, the Saturday before the feast of St Luke (for rams only) and the first Thursday in November’.

Anchor Inn and Posting House, Mrs Walton, Lowbyer
John Walton, Farmer, Lowbyer

Post Office Directory 1858

James Cranston, Anchor Inn and Posting House, Lowbyer

'The History and Topography of the Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland' – Whellan 1860 (CRO)

'The ancient market town of Alston stands on a declivity on the right bank of the South Tyne river, 25 miles ESE from Carlisle, 19 miles NE from Penrith, 272 miles NNW from London by road, and 291 by the Great Northern and York, Newcastle and Carlisle Railways. The population of the town in 1851 was 2005 of whom 1012 were males and 993 females; the number of inhabited houses at the same period was 413, and of uninhabited, 4. The town is irregularly built; the houses are chiefly of stone and roofed with slate; a handsome new bridge crosses the South Tyne river.'

Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1873 – Kelly

Joseph Mitchel Paul, Low Byre House
Adam Walton, Manor House
James Cranston, Farmer, Low Byre

Slater's Directory of Cumberland 1876

Mr Adam Walton, Lowbyer Cottage, Alston – also listed as an Agent, a Surveyor and a Mining Overseer for Greenwich hospital
James Cranston, Farmer, Lowbyre

The railway station is listed as being at Low Byre, Alston.

[No mention in this directory of there being an inn at Low Byer]

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1897

Joseph R Walton J.P., Lowbyer Manor House – Civil and mining engineer

'History, Topography and Directory of Cumberland' – T Bulmer & Co 1901

Joseph Richardson Walton J.P., Councillor, Lowbyer Manor House
Thomas Lancaster, Farmer, Lowbyer

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1910

Thomas Dickinson, Lowbyer House
Joseph Walton J.P., Lowbyer Manor house
Thos Lancaster, Farmer, Spency Croft

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1914

James J Stoker, Old Manor House
Joseph R Walton, Civil and mining engineer, mining, land and estate agent, Lowbyer Manor House

Kelly's Cumberland Directory 1914

Joseph R Walton J.P., Lowbyer Manor House
Mrs Wilthew, Lowbyer House
Thos Lancaster, Farmer, Spency Croft

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1929

Joseph R Walton J.P., Lowbyer Manor House

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1934

Rd Dickinson, Farmer, Lowbyer Manor Farm and Black Ho.

Cumberland Directory 1954

William G Smith, Low Byer Manor Hotel
John L Elliot, Low Byer Manor Farm

Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, First Series, Volume VIII 1885-86**Notes on Alston Manorial Records – W Nanson**

'The manor courts are now held [in 1884] not in the town of Alston, but at a place called Lowbyre, a little north of the town near the river. In the Drift Roll I find that Lowbyre is 'Lawbyare', and that is doubtless the original form of the word. Law-day is a tern sometimes used instead of court leet, and Mr Gomme, in his book on folk-moots, gives an account of the Birlaw Courts of Scotland, and of the Byerlaws into which the district called Bradfield in Yorkshire was divided. He also extracts from Whitaker's History of Whalley, a code of byelaws belonging to Extwistle, as containing legislation of a primitive agricultural community, and the judgements of a primitive judicial court. We seem therefore to be warranted in concluding that Lowbyer is only an inversion of Byerlaw, and that the place gets its name from the courts which are held there'.

'A History of Alston Moor' Alastair Robertson 1999 Hundy Publications

'During the latter part of the 15th century, life for ordinary people can be glimpsed from two codes of law. The Paine Roll and the Drift Roll, which illustrate a strict but common sense approach to social affairs'.

'The Paine Roll was the code of civil law for Alston Moor, first made in the reign of Henry VII (1485 – 1509) and copied on several later occasions. This was a list of 50 penalties for breaching the bye-laws of the Manor-Court, now held at Low Byer, and was approved by the inhabitants. The laws were often those enacted by Parliament, to be enforced at a local level; game laws, border laws for defence and security and agricultural matters'.

'The other list of regulations is the Drift Roll, which concerns the rights of way for tenants of named holdings for driving sheep and cattle across Alston Moor. This was very important when land was unenclosed. By this roll, every man had to drive his livestock by a prescribed route to the fell pastures, so as not to interfere with this neighbours, for example: 'The tenement at Lawbyare, Spinster Croft and the Loveings, shall dryve over by the cowstand band and through the Dubbard mea and sow to the fell'.

'The seat of local government in earlier times was probably at Mark Close, across the river from the town of Alston and near to the Hall Hill, where the people would assemble in folkmoot in the open air on common land. Later the meeting place was changed to Low Byer (Low could well be a corruption of Law)'.

'In the 18th century, the manor court of Alston Moor was held at Low Byer, and every freeholder was liable for jury service. Freeholders included women and less than a whole property could count as a freehold'.

'Alston Moor has never been an arable land due to the climate, the altitude, the lack of flat land and generally poor soil. Even in the valley bottoms where the soil in the 1830's was described by Sopwith as a 'rich loam', there has only ever been very small percentage of the land under cultivation, insufficient for the needs of the population'.

'Leases and Tenements at Alston and Garrigill in 1611 and various years up to 1705'
Reference A937 (CL)

No mention of Low Byer

In a folder of various articles produced by Alston Historical Society located at Carlisle Library, there is a piece of work titled 'Places of interest on Alston Moor', this includes: -

'Low Byer Manor was, and the Horse and Wagon Inn is said to have been estate offices for the Derwentwater Estates'.

No Tithe Map at Carlisle Record Office for the town of Alston at CRO

John Fryer map of Alston Town c.1775, later copy at Carlisle Record Office (Reference DX/154/3)