NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Project Designs and Client Reports No. CP/142/04

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING PROJECT AT LOW GREEN FARM GILCRUX MARYPORT CUMBRIA

FOR

MURRAY PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS LTD

NGR NY 1154 3815 Planning Application No. 2/04/0656

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1 INTRODUCTION

- In August 2004, North Pennines Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Murray Property Developments Limited to undertake a building survey of farm buildings at Low Green Farm, Gilcrux in Cumbria (NGR NY 1154 3815). The work was carried out prior to the conversion of two barns into two dwellings (Planning application No. 2/04/0656).
- 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 L-shaped ranges of buildings at Low Green Farm, Gilcrux, are regarded as being of archaeological significance as they both appear on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1867, and are recorded on the County Sites and Monuments Record (Reference 40702).
- 1.4 The survey was carried out in early September 2004 by Fiona Wooler BA (Hons), PIFA and Joanne Beaty BA (Hons).

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 Low Green Farm (Plate 1) is located just less than 1km south of the River Ellen, in the centre of Gilcrux (Figure 1), a village 8km north of Cockermouth and approximately 8km west of Maryport, which is on the Cumbrian coast. The farm is sited at a height of c.80m above sea level.
- 2.2 Within the vicinity of Low Green Farm is Ellen Hall (just under 1km to the north). This was once the seat of the Dykes family, but subsequently became a farmhouse and mill (now converted to dwellings). Other farms that are mentioned in the various directories are High Flatt, Grange, Grange Grassings and Greengill. Low Green Farm is not given as a farm name until the 1930's.
- 2.3 The survey is concerned with two buildings, which date from at least 1841 as they are present on the tithe map of that date (Figure 2). They adjoin the farmhouse, which has a date stone of 1711 at the front entrance and another of 1675 to the rear. There is another range of farm buildings to the rear, which like the farmhouse, do not form part of the present survey. This range was probably built before 1866, as it is present on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of that date.

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

- 2.4 Therefore, although the present survey is only concerned with the L-shaped ranges, these buildings should not be seen in isolation, rather as part of a complex of agricultural buildings.
- 2.5 Low Green Farm had ceased to function as an agricultural enterprise by September 2003, when it was purchased by the developer.



Plate 1 – Low Green Farm, Gilcrux

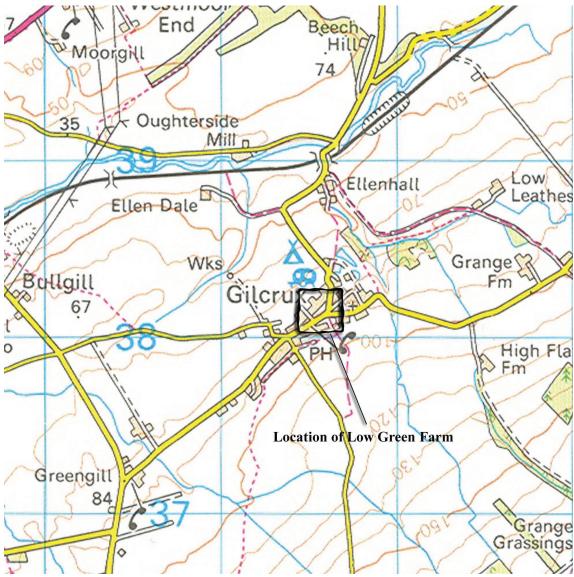


Figure 1 – Site Location



Figure 2 – Tithe Map of 1841

3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Building Survey

- 3.1.1 The survey consisted of three basic elements:
 - a written account, which includes information derived from documentary research;
 - a measured survey with accompanying drawing;
 - 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, plan 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 settings;
 - a series of 35mm transparencies showing general views of the buildings and their settings;
 - 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 had been carried out on the site.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Building 'A' (Figure 3 and Plate 2)

5.1.1 This building is attached to the northern gable end of the farmhouse, but due to the recent renovation of the farmhouse, it is not possible to assess if Building A butts up against the dwelling, or if it is a continuation. The building measures c.10.9m by c.5.75m and is constructed of uncoursed rubble masonry, a mixture of red, yellow and grey sandstone. The roof is of diminishing courses of Cumbrian slate with sandstone ridge tiles. The exterior wall of the eastern elevation has had several coats of limewash, although this is not the case on the western elevation, which is not coated. It is possible that, because this was the side facing the road, the limewash may have been used for aesthetic purposes. However, limewash was also applied to stone or clay walls to absorb some moisture, thus preventing walls from getting too damp, but as limewash is not completely impervious to water, it also allowed walls to breath². In a village with so many springs³ (a small stream flows just in front of these buildings), the use of limewash may have been mainly functional.



Plate 2 – Building A, Eastern Elevation

² Jennings, N., 2003, Page 148

³ See Appendix

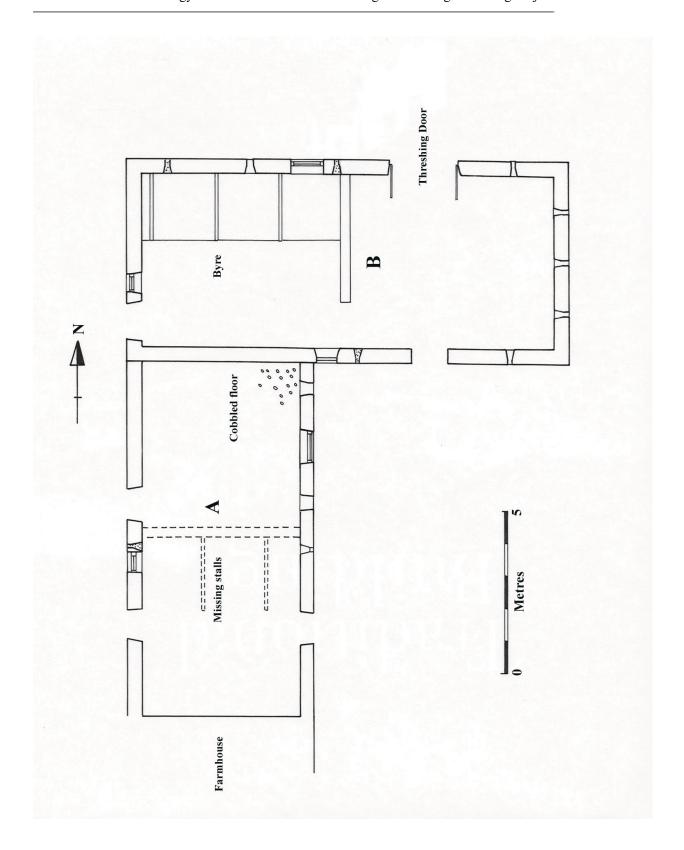


Figure 3 – Ground floor plan of Buildings A and B

- At ground level on the eastern elevation (Plate 2), there were originally two entrances, however one has more recently been blocked in and used as a window (although at the time of survey the blocking had been removed). The unblocked doorway has nicely dressed sandstone blocks for its jambs and lintel. There are two small windows along this elevation, and one blocked-up ventilation slit. Above these doorways at first floor level, there is a pitching hole, which was used for the transferring of hay or straw from the dry conditions of the upper level. Unblocked ventilation slits are visible along this elevation.
- On the western elevation of Building A (Plate 3), there are a further two doorways, both with red sandstone lintels and jambs. One of the lintels has tool marks to its upper half, this gives a simple decorative effect. Between the two doorways is a small window, with a blocked ventilation slit just to the left. The proximity of the window to the blocked vent suggests that the window is a later insertion.



Plate 3 – Western Elevation of Building A

5.2 **Building A - Interior**

At the time of survey, the interior of Building A was open to the roof, with only the beams still in-situ from the floor of the upper storey. Until recently, the ground floor was divided into two rooms. The northern end had a cobbled floor, with a shallow central channel. This may have originally been the stable or loose box. According to Brunskill, loose boxes are found on practically every farm. They generally consist of a room with a door(s), a window(s) and very little else⁴. Loose boxes were used to house single cows when sick or calving, or alternatively sick or foaling mares. They were also often used to shelter young stock in bad weather, when shelter sheds or

⁴ Brunskill, R.W., 1982, Page 73

foldyards were not available (which appears to have been the case at Low Green Farm).

- 5.2.2 The other ground floor room has most recently been used as a byre, with two double stalls and one possible single stall (Figure 3). The floor is concrete and presumably the stalls were also of concrete, although they are now missing with only the scarring of them and the partition wall visible on the floor and walls. Patches of limewash indicate that the ground floor walls were coated. There are three vertical iron tethering bars still in-situ, one on the western wall and the other two on the eastern wall. Tethering bars are more often found in association with stalls, whether concrete or wooden, although sometimes cows were tethered to stanchions (posts)⁵. The presence of the tethering bars fixed to the walls suggests that at one time there were wooden stalls positioned along the east and west walls. The upper floor would have extended along the entire length of the building, as the presence of the beams and rafter holes in each end elevation testify, and access to this upper floor was most likely by wooden internal stairs that no longer exist.
- 5.2.3 The first floor was most likely the hay loft, and there would originally have been holes in the floor that would have allowed for the pushing of hay into feeding troughs in the rooms below. Accommodating animals below hay lofts was a common practice as it provided insulation in the winter. This building is of four bays with a simple principal rafter roof, the trusses of which are of hand cut timber. On the northern gable end is a further pitching hole (with a wooden lintel) similar to the one described in 5.1.2. On the same elevation are two ventilation slits and an owl hole. All of these have been obscured by the addition of Building B, and therefore Building A must have been constructed earlier (Plate 4).

⁵ Brunskill, R.W., 1982, Page 62



Plate 4 – Northern gable end of Building A

5.3 Building B (Figure 3 and Plates 5 - 8)

5.3.1 Building B measures *c*.13.7m by *c*.6.3m, and like Building A is constructed of uncoursed rubble sandstone masonry. This barn is located at a right angle to Building A, with its western end butting up against the gable end of 'A'. This building has also been limewashed on all elevations except the western. The roof is a continuation of that over Building A, built of the same materials, this suggests that either the roof over 'A' was re-laid when 'B' was constructed, or both were re-covered at a later date. The eastern gable end of Building B has coping terminating in kneelers, and although this is the only part of the roof where coping and kneelers could have been used, it is noticeable that this is the gable end that faces the road. This simple architectural detail would have been easily seen by passers-by.



Plate 5 – Southern elevation of Building B

On the south facing elevation is a tall doorway measuring over 2m in height (Plate 5), much taller than those on the east and west facing elevations of 'A'. It has a nicely dressed lintel and jambs, into which there are four square recesses just below the lintel (two on each side). The upper holes are larger and deeper than the two below, suggesting that at one time there may have been a canopy or porch projecting from the top of the doorway. There is a sandstone step at the base of this entrance that does not appear to be a later addition, which suggests that this doorway was not intended to give access for animals.

On the eastern gable end (Plate 6) seven ventilation slits are clearly visible, each measuring approximately 50cm in height and 10cm wide externally.



Plate 6 – Eastern gable end of Building B

5.3.3 The north facing elevation has a large doorway that is over three metres in height and has 17 nicely dressed voussoirs making up the arch with dressed masonry for the jambs (Plate 7). This entrance would have allowed for fully laden carts to enter the barn, but it would also have been originally intended for assisting in the hand-flail threshing of cereals, a practice that would have been carried out on nearly every farm up to the early 19th century prior to mechanisation, and perhaps later depending on the availability of other forms of power. The hand-flail threshing of cereals involved the beating of the corn on a clean surface, such as stone flags, to separate the grain from the stalk. The process was generally carried out just inside the barn at the throughentry, in the line of opposing doors⁶.

⁶ Lake, J., 1989, Page 21

5.3.4 The draught through these opposing doorways provided ventilation for an extremely dusty and unpleasant occupation, as well as helping to separate the grain from the chaff and stalk. At Low Green Farm the opposing doorway to this large entrance on the northern elevation is the tall aperture already mentioned above. The presence of the four holes at the top of that doorway may have accommodated a canopy that helped channel the wind through the barn⁷. The large doorway would also have provided light through the winter months, when this process was carried out.



Plate 7 – Northern elevation of Building B, showing the large 'threshing' doorway

- Ventilation slits are visible along the upper storey of the northern elevation, with blocked and un-blocked ones at ground floor level. A small window to the right of the large doorway appears to be a later insertion, as the mortar around is thicker and it has a concrete lintel. There are 6 iron bolts projecting through the wall at ground floor level between the doorway and the western corner, these appear to be related to the concrete stalls inside.
- On the western gable end there is a doorway with sandstone surround, and a small window at ground floor level, and another pitching door above (Plate 8). The construction break between Buildings A and B is clearly visible on this elevation. The doorway at ground level and the pitching doorway have both been built up against the quoins of Building A.

⁷ On the day of survey in September, the wind was blowing from a southerly direction and it was easy to imagine how effective it would have been in aiding the threshing process



Plate 8 – Western gable end of Building B

5.4 **Building B - Interior**

- 5.4.1 Accessing Building B through the large double doors on the northern elevation, originally the floor immediately inside the doors would have been of sandstone flags, although these had been removed by the time of survey. To the right of the doorway is a partition wall (Figure 3), this creates a first floor to the western side of the barn, which is accessed by a wooden ladder. There is no evidence of rafter holes to the eastern side of the barn, suggesting that there has never been a first floor to this side of the barn, a feature that is common where threshing has been carried out, as an area open to the roof gives plenty of room for using threshing flails.
- 5.4.2 The barn is of five bays with a roof of the same construction as that in Building A. There are carpenters marks visible on these trusses, IIII and III were visible from the first floor, but the marks on the other two trusses could not be observed, however, presumably they have the marks II and I giving a sequence of I IIII.
- 5.4.3 The walls have been limewashed, but have, in patches, developed a pink hue, which may the result of leaching from the red sandstone. The pitching hole in the northern gable end of Building A is visible at first floor level and remains unblocked.
- 5.4.4 At ground floor level, the barn is divided into two by the later brick partition wall. This created a room that has most recently had three double concrete stalls and floor added, with the metal water troughs still in-situ. The remainder of the floor is sandstone flagged and the walls are limewashed.

5.5 The Farmhouse

5.5.1 Although not included in the present survey, the farmhouse is an integral part of any farm and they often provide evidence for development. The farmhouse is double-pile⁸ with a central entrance to the front, the porch of which has a date stone of 1711 and the initials:-

5.5.2 The doorway is a moulded square-headed opening (Plate 9). To the rear, in an outshut to the main house, is another doorway with a false four-centred arch surround⁹ (Plate 10). It is possible that the door surround to the rear is re-used from an earlier house. This doorway has a date of 1675 and the initials:-





Plate 9 – Farmhouse entrance (front)



Plate 10 – Doorway – rear entrance

The normal arrangement in a double-pile house is a central entrance with two principal rooms on either side; the two principal service rooms were at the rear – one either side of the staircase, as is the case here. See Brunskill 1997, 48

Brunskill, R.W., 2000, 141

- 5.5.3 The house has recently undergone renovation, so it was not possible to observe any evidence of re-building or extension externally or internally; however, the developer kindly allowed access to see if any original fixtures or fittings remained.
- 5.5.4 Surprisingly there are a variety of fixtures that, if still *in-situ*, are of quite an early date, these are shown in Plates 11 13 (with further examples given on CD-Rom). Possible dates have been given, although it must be remembered that some styles of fittings would have been used for long periods of time, and the time periods for the dissemination of ideas for fashionable fittings would have differed from region to region.



Plate 11 – Early 18th Century door furniture ¹⁰



Plate 12 – Early 18th Century door furniture ¹¹



Plate 13 – Cupboard of 1725 – 1750 ¹²

¹⁰ Compared to a similar example from Westmorland in a dated house of 1725 – See Alcock and Hall, Page 26

Page 20
11 Compared to a similar example from Suffolk in a dated house of 1718 – *ibid*, Page 26

Compared to an example given in Lander, H., 1982, Page 78. This cupboard has arch moulding with a dropped key block

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The two buildings at Low Green Farm, although clearly not of national importance, are good examples of the types of structures found on small farms of under 150 acres in Cumbria. They were constructed to accommodate a small number of stock, store cereals, hay and/or straw, as well as to provide shelter for the hand-flail threshing of corn through the winter months. There was no evidence that the farm utilised any other form of power after the invention of the threshing machine in the late 18th century. Hand-operated threshing machines may have been used, or a simple horse-driven machine, although any evidence for a hole through the barn wall for an axle could not be observed due to the limewash on the exterior walls. It is perhaps more likely that the farmer at Low Green Farm used the services of the local water mill to grind his cereals, Ellen Hall, to the north of Low Green Farm, was operating as a corn mill in 1901¹³, although the directories of the early 20th century also list two gentlemen who owned threshing machines (See appendix).
- It is difficult to date buildings such as these at Low Green Farm, cartographic evidence shows that these buildings were in existence by 1841 (Figure 2), although it is highly likely that they were constructed some time before that. Brunskill has noted that the rebuilding of yeomen's houses in the late 17th and early 18th centuries was often followed by the reconstruction of farm buildings or the raising of new ones¹⁴. The date stones of 1675 and 1711 on the farmhouse may hint at some rebuilding being undertaken at Low Green Farm. The initials could also refer to the Younghusband's who were yeoman farmers here in 1841.
- The L-shaped ranges at Low Green Farm would have accommodated the principal farm buildings found not just in Cumbria, but also in most parts of England and Wales i.e. a byre, stable, hayloft and barn. In Building A there is a byre and stable with hayloft above, and in Building B, a barn, with room for the processing and storage of cereals. It is possible that although the two buildings were built independently, there may have been a short time span between them.
- By the middle of the 19th century, these two structures were obviously not enough to accommodate the demands of a more scientific and efficient agricultural enterprise. Another range of buildings was constructed to the rear, with, more latterly, a modern shed to accommodate machinery.

¹³ Bulmer's History and Directory of Cumberland 1901

¹⁴ Brunskill, R.W., 2002, 95

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8 APPENDIX

The History of the County of Cumberland - W Hutchinson Volume II 1794

Gilcrux (In Allerdale ward below Derwent)

'The parish of Gilcrux comprehends one manor only, which was part of the possessions of the abbey of Calder. It was a dependant manor of the barony of Allerdale, and granted by *Waldeof*, first lord thereof, to *Adam*, son of *Lyulph*, whose daughter and heirofs married a Bonekill, who granted the same to a younger brother; and his two sons, Thomas and Walter, gave it to that religious house - After the dissolution, it was granted by Philip and Mary to Alexander Armstrong and his heirs male, under the description of twenty-four messuages and tenements, with a corn water mill etc of the yearly value of 41 15s 8d under the condition of providing five horses, well caparisoned, when ever summoned, within the County of Cumberland. In the 7th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Alexander and Herbert Armstrong, by fine, conveyed to William Armstrong, son of Herbert and Catharine Armstrong, and to William's heirs for ever, the manor of Gilcrux, with the lands etc. In the 17th year of that reign, it appears that the possessions of the Armstrong's were then granted out (under the description of late in the tenure of William Armstrong) to Soakey and Grunson, to hold as of the manor of East Greenwich; from whom, by various sales, and otherwise, the estate became the property of the family of *Dykes*'.

'This is a small parish, extending along Ellen about two miles, and in breadth little more than one mile. About one fifth part of the lands is common, lies low, has a verdant turf, and affords good pasture for young cattle, but is too wet for sheep, and consequently none are kept here. They breed a good many black cattle of a middle size'.

'Soil and produce – A heavy wet soil in general, rising off clay; not very fertile bur produces wheat, oats, barley, peas and potatoes, but no turnips – most of it is good grass land'.

<u>History, Directory and Gazetteer of Cumberland and Westmorland – Parson and White</u> 1829

Gilcrux 'Lies on the south side of the Ellen river, between Dearham and Torpenhow, and is all comprised in one manor and township, containing 377 inhabitants, and 63 houses, most of which form the pleasant village of *Gilcrux* or *Gilcruix*, distant 6 miles north of Cockermouth, and 5 ½ miles east of Maryport. The village is built in a triangular form; a fine spring rises almost at every door, and when united, form a considerable stream'.

'Joseph Dykes Ballantine Dykes Esq. of Dovenby, is the present lord of the manor, and owner of a great portion of the soil. Ellen Hall, a ruined old building, was long occupied by this family, as also was Warthel Hall, now a farmhouse, ornamented with a profusion of old-fashioned carving about the doors and windows'.

Farmers – thus * are yeoman

Thomas Craig John Johnston John Davidson, Grange Grassing *James Moffat *Carter Fearon Isaac Mossop *Joseph Fearon William Pattinson Matthew Gregg, Greengill *Samuel Hall *Joseph Smith Joseph Sibson, Grange *Matthew Smith John Holliday Thomas Heslop, High flat *Mary Willis John Iredale *John Younghusband

The History and Topography of the Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland – W Whellan 1860

'This parish is bounded on the north by the river Ellen, which divides it from Crosby, Allerby and Oughterside townships; on the west by Row Gill and part of Outfield Beck, separating it from Dearham parish; on the south-west and south by Grange Grassings farm-house, Threeping Beck and part of the road leading from Tallentire, and on the east by Gill Beck, which divides it from Plumbland. It possesses no dependant townships'.

'Gilcrux township comprises an area of 1964 acres, and its rateable value is £2,395 10s. In 1801, the population was 249; in 1811, 276; in 1821, 377; in 1831, 382; in 1841, 464 and in 1851, 504, who are principally collected in the village, and chiefly engaged in coal mining. The inhabitants are steady and industrious, and consequently are much respected; they attend the markets at Maryport and Cockermouth. The Maryport and Carlisle Railway intersects the township'.

'The village of Gilcrux is about five and a half miles east-by-north of Maryport, and five miles of Cockermouth. It is remarkable for springs, which rise at almost every door, and when united form a considerable stream. In a field a little to the east of the village are two springs, about forty or fifty yards asunder, one being fresh, and the other of slat water, the latter having medicinal properties, and being known as 'Funny Tack' [actually marked as 'Tommy Tack' on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1866]. The formation of these numerous springs is ascribed to the great dyke which, crossing by the low side of the village, prevents the passage of water, and causes it to rise to the surface. There are five excellent fresh water springs, which never fail in summer, besides numerous smaller ones'.

'Ellen Hall, an old ruined building near the river Ellen, anciently the seat of the Dykes family, is now a farmhouse. Besides Ellen Hall, the single houses having particular names are High Flatt, grange, Grange Grassings and Greengill'.

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1910

'Hubert Ballantine Dykes Esq. of Dovenby Hall, who is lord of the manor. Mrs Bell and Messrs Henry Hall and William Conaway are the chief landowners, and there are a few resident yeoman smaller landowners. The soil is chiefly strong clay and loamy; subsoil, cay. The chief crops are oats, but there is a good deal of excellent pasture land. The area is 2014 acres; rateable value, £3744; the population in 1901 was 413'.

Listed under 'Commercial' as farmers: -

John Armstrong Walt. Porteous, Jnr, Meadow Lo. William Conaway William Saul Joseph Grave, Ellen Hall Mill Joseph Simpson

Joseph Grey & Son Thomas Henderson

John Moffat John Hodgson, The Grange William Ogilvie Mary Lightfoot, Greengill

Robert Skelton, Greengill Isaac & John Lightfoot

George Mattinson – Threshing machine owner Joseph R Thompson – Threshing machine owner

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1925

Listed as farmers under 'Commercial': -

Isaac Donald Thomas Henderson John Eelbeck, The Grange Joseph Sharp Wilson Pearson Henry Hall, The Beeches

Walter Porteous John Watson George Hodgson, Ellen Hall Mill

Isaac Lightfoot & Sons John Henry Lightfoot

Mrs Mary Lightfoot, Greengill Mrs Barbara Miller, Greengill

Adam Ogilvy, Meadow Lodge

George Mattinson – Threshing machine owner Joseph R Thompson – Threshing machine owner

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1934

Farmers at Gilcrux: -

Wm Armstrong, How grn Jn Clark, East End Wm Lightfoot John Eelbeck, The Grange Henry J Lightfoot William Pearson

Matthew Gunson, West End Fm Stanley S Harrington, Greengill Fm

Herbt Hetherington, Ellen Hall Fm Rt Lightfoot, Greengill Hy Ostle, Smallholder Jn Ostle, Rectory Fm

Thomas Teasdale & Sons, High Flatt [marked as farm over 150 acres]

Mrs Muriel Thompson, The Beeches

Alex Watson, Moor Hse Thos. Wilkinson, West Side

George Mattinson, - Threshing machine owner Joseph P Thompson – Threshing machine owner

[Low Green Farm is not mentioned in this directory, however it is possible that 'Wm Armstrong, How grn' should be 'Low Green']

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1938

Wm Armstrong, Farmer, Low grn [not listed as a farm over 150 acres]

The Place Names of Cumbria – Joan Lee 1998 Cumbria Heritage Services

Gilcrux

'The early forms *Killcruce* and *Gillecruz*, 1230, seem to show the first element is Irish cill, dative of cell 'church' and Celtic crug 'hill', so the name would mean 'at the church on the hill'.

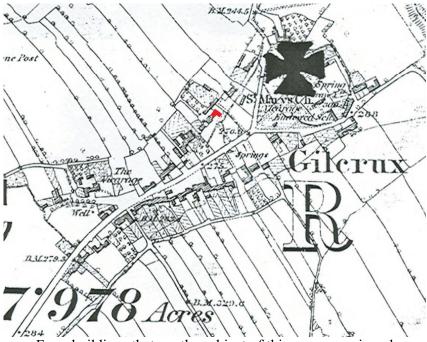
<u>Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society – First, Second and Third Series</u>

No entries for Low Green Farm, Gilcrux

Tithe Map of Gilcrux 1841 (Carlisle Record Office Ref DRC8/78)

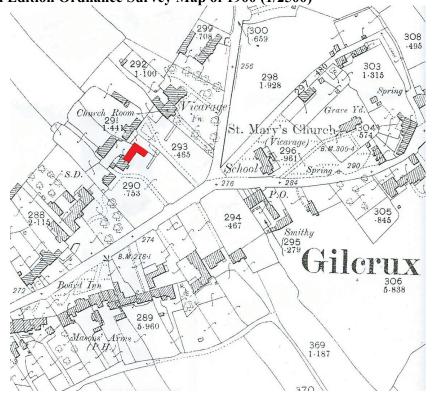
Plots 4 and 10 Landowner – John Younghusband Occupier – Himself Plot 4 – Houses and front Plot 10 – Back Garth

First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1866 (6" to the mile). No 1/2500 scale at Carlisle Record Office



Farm buildings that are the subject of this survey are in red

Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1900 (1/2500)



Farm buildings that are the subject of this survey are in red