

Fields, farms and sun-division in a moorland region, 1100–1400^{*}

by Richard Britnell

Abstract

Earlier work combining the pre-Black Death charter evidence and post-medieval maps for county Durham has shown how extensive areas of waste survived in the county until the early modern period. This paper begins by considering the enclosed arable land of townships within the larger waste, showing how it was normally held in furlongs which often show evidence of subdivision according to the principles of sun-division. The right to graze the remaining waste is discussed. The Bishops of Durham were in the habit of granting enclosures from the waste by charter: the arable of these enclosed farms might also be divided by sun-division.

Recent research in the medieval archives of the bishopric and priory of Durham, in conjunction with cartographic evidence drawn from more recent periods, has established that in county Durham before the twelfth century, small townships, with their fields, were separated from each other by extensive tracts of waste. Land use was modified between the twelfth and early fourteenth centuries, especially in the less heavily settled parts of central Durham, by peasant clearing of new lands and the creation of hundreds of new, compact farms, but even in the early fourteenth century there remained large areas of moor, not only in the land rising west of the Wear, and above the Wear valley, but also in more easterly parts of the county. This abundance of colonizable land was characteristic of many parts of northern Britain: similar landscapes in West Yorkshire, Northumberland and Cumbria have been well described in recent studies, though from types of record different from those available in Durham.¹ Though many characteristics of such late colonized landscapes are best illustrated in a general overview, any detailed account of how these landscapes developed must rely on concentrations of more local evidence. This paper draws primarily on charter evidence to examine the development of the fields in a

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¹ Helen Dunsford and Simon Harris, 'Colonization and wasteland in County Durham, 1100–1400', *EcHR* 56 (2003), pp. 34–56; M. L. Faull and S. A. Moorhouse (eds), *West Yorkshire: an archaeological survey to 1500* (3 vols, 1981); R. A. Lomas, *County of conflict: Northumberland from Conquest to Civil War* (1996); Angus J. L. Winchester, *Landscape and society in medieval Cumbria* (1987); Brian K. Roberts, Helen Dunsford and Simon Harris, 'Framing medieval landscapes: region and place in County Durham', in C. D. Liddy and R. H. Britnell (eds), *North-eastern England in the Middle Ages* (forthcoming).

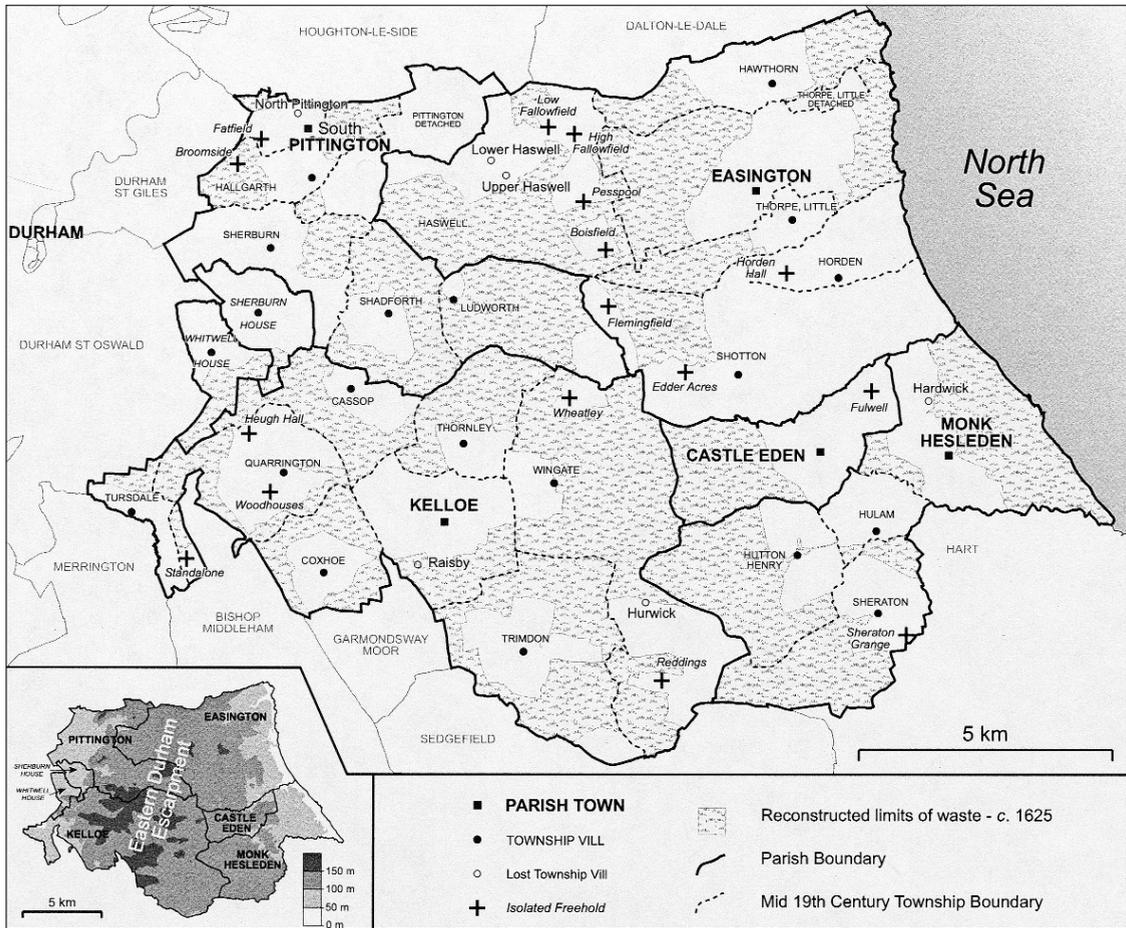


FIGURE 1. Parishes and townships between Durham and the North Sea.

region of extensive moorland, and to show the role of sun-division or *solskifte* in the sub-division of arable. It then considers the use of the moors both as common pasture and as land upon which to create new farms, which might themselves be subject to partition by sun-division.

The region in question, a portion of east Durham between the city of Durham and the sea (Figure 1), was chosen because it contains the township of Haswell, which has more extant charters than any other township in Durham County – 166, excluding duplicates.² Besides Haswell, the study includes the extant charters of 29 other neighbouring townships, so offers a fair range of comparison.³ The charters in question come from two principal sources. One, the

² Durham Cathedral Muniments (hereafter DCM), 1.2.Finc. 1–60, 67: Haswell Ch. 1–108, excluding 66 (Boisfield), 67 (Fallowfield), 81 (not a charter), 88 (Pespool); 3.6. Spec. 27.

³ Burnmouth, Cassop, Castle Eden, Coxhoe, Easington, Hardwick, Hawthorn, Monk Hesleden, Horden, Hulam, Hurworth Bryan, Hutton Henry, Kelloe,

Ludworth, North and South Pitlington, Quarrington, Raisby, Shadforth, Sheraton, Sherburn, Shotton, Thornley, Thorpe, Turdale, Trimdon, Wheatley, Whitwell, Wingate. In addition there are charters from Fallowfield, Pespool, Boisfield and Flemingfield which were not described as townships.

largest, concerns the estates of Durham Priory and related bodies, including those of the priory's cell at Finchale. The other is a large group of miscellaneous charters, many of which were deposited in the priory by outsiders for safe-keeping in the late Middle Ages. Charters for Haswell come from both sources. About 62 from the priory collection relate to a property that belonged to Finchale Priory. A further 104 relate to an estate assembled in the fourteenth century by the Menville family and transferred to the Claxtons through the marriage of Isabel, daughter and heiress of William Menville, to Sir William Claxton in 1374; these were probably deposited in the Priory on the death of Sir Robert Claxton in 1483.⁴ These two groups of charters show that there were three nuclei to Haswell in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. One was Finchale Priory's property of Finchale Grange, near the present Elemore Hall School; this had been a separate township of Little Haswell at the time of its acquisition by Henry du Puiset from Geoffrey of Haswell sometime in the late twelfth century.⁵ There were also the two settlements of High and Low Haswell (or Over and Nether Haswell). The charters sometimes treat High and Low Haswell as a single township, sometimes as two.

This patch of the country is in eastern Durham on the magnesian limestone plateau, a region whose surface undulates gently east of the River Wear up to higher land at 130–170 metres (about 420–560 feet) before dropping down again to the sea. There is some surviving ancient woodland, notably around the former Finchale Grange, and in deep gullies (Hawthorn Dene, Castle Eden Dene) that carry burns eastward into the North Sea. The rarity of references to woods in the medieval charters nevertheless suggests that the land was already mostly open and bleak. Though the loams and boulder clays that overlie the limestone are capable of supporting arable farming, local place-names show that within historical times there has been extensive moorland in the region on patches of thin soils. As late as the seventeenth century there were extensive areas of moorland in the area; these have been reconstructed with a high degree of probability in Figure 1.⁶ In the early twelfth century the extent of moorland was even greater.

A number of township names have Old English or Scandinavian personal-name elements: Coxhoe, Easington, Garmondsway (though the personal name here was evidently attached to a road rather than to a settlement), Pittington, Raisby, and Sheraton. Of these, Raisby is late, having been assigned only in the twelfth century.⁷ Most township names, however, recall natural features with no personal or residential association. Some evoke the earlier vegetation of the region: for instance, Haswell and Hesleden are 'hazel spring' and 'hazel valley', Thornley is 'thorn clearing', Hawthorn is 'hawthorn'.⁸ Some suggest wildness; Cassop seems to be 'wild cat valley', and Wingate is 'wind gate'.⁹ Other names are taken from springs and streams, or other water features: Eden, Sherburn, Whitwell, Shadforth. Ludworth could be 'Luda's enclosure', but it may mean 'enclosure on the loud stream'.¹⁰ These names suggest some of the characteristics

⁴ Brian A. Barker, 'The Claxtons: a north-eastern gentry family in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Teesside, 2003), pp. 10–11, 49–50.

⁵ M. G. Snape (ed.), *English episcopal acts, 25, Durham, 1153–95* (2002), no. 92, p. 82; id., *English episcopal acts, 26, Durham, 1196–1237* (2002), no. 211, pp. 214–5; G. V. Scammell, *Hugh de Puiset, bishop of Durham* (1956), pp. 221–3.

⁶ I am indebted to Dr. Helen Dunsford for this map and the research behind it.

⁷ Victor Watts, *A dictionary of County Durham place-names* (English Place-Name Soc., Popular ser. 3, 2002), pp. 31, 37, 48, 95, 101, 111.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 55–6, 79, 124.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 140.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 74, 110, 111, 138.

of the region during the Anglo-Saxon period. There is little trace of earlier settlement in prehistoric or Roman times.

Though Durham and Sunderland were the nearest towns, some settlements within the region had central-place characteristics. There were five parochial centres, Easington, South Pittington, Monk Hesleden, Kelloe and Castle Eden. None of these had any commercial significance, and even the largest of them was of modest size. Four of them, besides having parish churches, were significant for the operations of large estates, and to that extent were centres of secular as well as ecclesiastical authority. Easington, an episcopal manor, gave its name to one of the four wards of the Palatinate. Pittington and Monk Hesleden were similarly the property of St Cuthbert, though they had both been allocated to the maintenance of the monks when the estates of St. Cuthbert were divided, and were the chief properties of Durham Priory in the region. Pittington had a large territory, and there were already two Pittingtons, North and South, by the late twelfth century.¹¹ The lordship of Kelloe was fragmented at an early date; it too had once been church land, but had been granted away before 1183. The bishop retained demesne land at Quarrington that acted as the headquarters of an estate called Quarringtonshire of which there were still relics in the 1180s.¹² It is likely that the church at Kelloe was originally associated with the bishop's demesne at Quarrington as an element in the shire complex. Castle Eden was a property of the Bruce family from the early twelfth century, and seems to have become a separate parish only about that time, perhaps following the grant of the chapel there by Robert Brus to the Priory sometime between 1143 and 1152.¹³

Boldon Book records 36 tenants in Easington and Thorpe together, 22 in Shotton, 54 in the bishop's townships of North Sherburn, Cassop and Shadforth, 19 in South Sherburn and apparently 12 in Tursdale. For what it is worth that implies an average of 18 households in each of these townships.¹⁴ In the early 1380s an episcopal estate survey records 38 tenants for Easington, 18 for Shadforth and 10 for Cassop, suggesting numbers not very greatly different from two centuries before.¹⁵ A similar numerical range was characteristic of the fifteenth century. Hutton Henry had 24 messuages in 1439.¹⁶ Coxhoe had 14 messuages and 20 cottages in 1432.¹⁷ Half the manor of Sheraton had four messuages in 1429.¹⁸ There were seven messuages and seven cottages in the manor of Great Haswell, and three messuages in the manor of Hulam in 1421.¹⁹ With numbers like these, especially since the figures for the 1180s and 1380s are biased towards larger settlements, it is unlikely that these 30 townships had more than 2,500 inhabitants between them, except perhaps in the thirteenth century when that figure may have been exceeded. That represents a population density of only 36 per square mile, at a time when most of Essex and East Anglia had five to ten times as many. In the period of declining population during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, some of these places were deserted. Horden had

¹¹ H. S. Offler (ed.), *Durham episcopal charters, 1071–1152* (Surtees Soc., 179, 1968), nos. 3, 3a, 4, pp. 6–25, 26–33. See the editor's comment, p. 11.

¹² William Greenwell (ed.), *Boldon Buke* (Surtees Soc., 25, 1852), pp. 9–10.

¹³ DCM, 3.8. Spec. 9; Robert Surtees, *The history and antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham* (4 vols, Durham, 1816–40), I, p. 40.

¹⁴ Greenwell (ed.), *Boldon Buke*, pp. 9–11.

¹⁵ William Greenwell (ed.), *Bishop Hatfield's survey* (Surtees Soc., 32, 1857), pp. 127–32, 146–7, 150–1.

¹⁶ PRO, Durh 3/2, fo. 296r.

¹⁷ PRO, Durh 3/2, fo. 269v.

¹⁸ PRO, Durh 3/2, fo. 246r.

¹⁹ PRO, Durh 3/2, fo. 260v, 262r.

eight wasted messuages and eight derelict cottages in 1421, when it was already described as ‘a wasted village’ (*villa vastata*).²⁰ Even Coxhoe had gone by 1818, when Surtees’s first volume reports that ‘there is no village’. He also reports this of Tursdale.²¹

Townships had a number of functions. As elsewhere in northern England and Scotland they were often units of lordship, in which case they were the territorial equivalent of manors in southern England.²² They were units for the collection of tithe.²³ Some were chapelries; at Haswell, for example, there was a chapel between High and Low Haswell whose ruins are marked on the Ordnance Survey map, and the tithes were owed to Finchale Priory.²⁴ It would be a fair guess that insofar as there was any communal element in agricultural practices the township was a significant unit.²⁵ In most cases township status was assumed to imply definite bounds, as elsewhere in northern England.²⁶ These bounds sometimes ran across moorland, sometimes round the edge of township arable. When the bounds of the moor between the townships of Garmondsway and Fishburn were perambulated in 1235, they were defined as running from the highroad between Durham and Sedgfield by ‘Stinckandeleche’ towards the east to the ploughland once belonging to Ralph Fat, along the diked stream to the boundary of ‘Kichinbotisdic’ towards the east and thence by the diked boundary of the ‘Cotesflat’ to ‘Keluelausti’ between Trimdon field and Fishburn moor, and by ‘Kelvelausti’ to ‘Mustergate’, and then by ‘Mustergate’ to the boundary of Thomas de Yobiun’s ‘Coteflat’ towards the west, and then by the dike between Fishburn field and the moor again to the highroad.²⁷ Most of the boundary, this seems to say, was defined by dikes, even where there was a stream. The existence of such boundaries, whether or not they all had ditches, can be documented from the earliest charters. They are demonstrable for Tursdale on the fifteenth-century map of Tursdale Beck, which includes the legends (in Latin) ‘Here begins the territory of Tursdale on the south side’, and ‘The hostillar’s meadow partly in the territory of Tursdale and partly in the territory of Hett’.²⁸ Charters usually locate property by reference to the territory of the township in which it was situated.

I

How was the arable of these small townships organised? Little is known of the cropping patterns of the region. At Pittington in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the areas under

²⁰ PRO, Durh 3/2 fo. 260v; Surtees, *History and antiquities*, I, p. 26.

²¹ Surtees, *History and antiquities*, I, pp. 66, 76.

²² Winchester, *Landscape and society*, p. 29.

²³ Ben Dodds, ‘Tithe and agrarian output between the Tyne and the Tees, 1350–1450’ (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Durham, 2002), pp. 71–2, 139–40.

²⁴ DCM, 1.2. Finc. 4*, 5, 5*, 22; Haswell Ch. 10, 50, 65A, 65B.

²⁵ Lomas, *County of conflict*, p. 76; D. J. H. Michelmere, ‘Township and tenure’, in Faull and Moorhouse (eds), *West Yorkshire*, II, p. 236.

²⁶ S. A. Moorhouse, ‘Boundaries’, in Faull and Moorhouse (eds), *West Yorkshire*, II, pp. 268–72, 281–3; Winchester, *Landscape and society*, pp. 27–8. There is a photograph of a thirteenth-century moorland boundary in Angus J. L. Winchester, *The harvest of the hills: rural life in northern England and the Scottish borders, 1400–1700* (2000), p. 29.

²⁷ DCM, Sherburn House Deeds 3/6.

²⁸ M. G. Snape and B. K. Roberts, ‘Tursdale Beck, County Durham, circa 1430 x circa 1442’, in R. A. Skelton and P. D. A. Harvey (eds), *Local maps and plans from medieval England* (1986), p. 173.

TABLE 1. Composition of grain harvests at Pittington, 1377 and 1449

	1377 %	1449 %
Wheat	31.7	20.2
Barley	18.5	48.2
Peas, beans and vetch	8.4	4.2
Oats	41.4	25.6

Source: Ben Dodds, 'Tithe and agrarian output between the Tyne and the Tees, 1350–1450' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Durham, 2002), p. 145.

wheat and barley were about equal to the area under oats and legumes (Table 1), which would be compatible with a simple three-course rotation of crops if the barley was winter-sown. It is unlikely, though, that this was normally resolved into a three-field system of the classic Midland type. On Gray's well-known map defining the boundary of the two-field and three-field systems, this region is almost its northernmost tip, though extensive wastelands made its agriculture very different from that of the Midlands.²⁹ An approach to the Midland pattern is exemplified at Castle Eden. A fifteenth-century terrier of Thomas Claxton's property, recording 109¼ arable acres, shows the land entirely divided between an east field, a south field and a west field.³⁰ The fields were about equal in size – 39 acres in the east field, 38¾ acres in the west field and 31½ in the south field – which suggests that they were cropping and pasturing units. These fields were quite lightly subdivided. The demesne was made up of 59 separate parcels of which only eight were as small as a rood and 31 – that is over half – were of an acre or more. Some of Claxton's holdings were whole named units, presumably the equivalent of furlongs. In the east field, for example, he had 8 acres called 'Hallowflat', 3 acres called 'Arcars', 5 acres called 'Westfullwell', 3 acres called 'Estfullwell' and 1 acre called 'Adamdaure'. It is not possible to take this property back in time to see how it had come into being, but the field system itself was at least several centuries old, its existence being implied in two late twelfth-century charters. One of these, indicating an earlier two-field system, concedes a toft in Castle Eden with 24½ acres, being 12½ acres in the eastern part of Eden and 12 acres in the western part, together with two named meadows and common pasture in Eden.³¹ The other is a difficult charter by which William of Thorpe gave land in Castle Eden to make up an estate he had promised Durham Priory. Besides 2 tofts, 2 turbaries and 6 acres of land he granted them 'the edge (*costura*) between the east and Blacrikesflat as far as the sike (*sihc*), and another edge at the south as far as the stream, and a third edge at the west as far as the sike'.³² This seems to be a grant of land on the margin of each of the three fields, east, south and west, at the point where they are bounded by ditch or stream. Castle Eden is the only township in the region where the field-name element 'furlong' occurs. In the east field Claxton had two separate pieces on 'Langforthlang' or 'Langforlang', one of 4 acres and one of 3 roods, and he had

²⁹ Howard Levi Gray, *English field systems* (1915), frontispiece.

³⁰ DCM, 3.8. Spec. 30.

³¹ DCM, 3.8. Spec. 11.

³² DCM, 3.8. Spec. 7.

three separate roods on 'Waterforlang'. The system was perhaps imposed from above in the twelfth century, and perhaps by a member of the Brus family. The only other township that has left a clear trace of such a system in medieval records is Tursdale. In 1359 Thomas Surtays attested that a croft that William of 'Elmeden' claimed in severalty in Tursdale used to be fallowed every third year with the west field, when the fallow was grazed by the prior and other free tenants of Tursdale. This supplies the evidence, missing from the Castle Eden information, that free tenants at least had common grazing on the fallow field.³³ There may also have been a regular field system in part of Pittington, where there is a mention of 'Estfeld' in the manorial account for 1412/13.³⁴ The sparseness of such references to regular field systems in this part of Durham during the Middle Ages implies that, as often in north-eastern England, the furlong was generally the basic unit rather than the field.³⁵

To examine whether the light degree of subdivision of the fields was an old feature of the system or the result of recent engrossment, it is necessary to examine townships where there was no regular field system but where there is earlier evidence of the composition of holdings. The best starting point for this is in Ludworth. The priory records contain a terrier made in May 1419 of two properties in Ludworth, one called the Commonar's land and the other called the Prior's land.³⁶ The commoner was one of the priory obedientiaries. From about the same time, perhaps 1406, we have a legal statement about these properties that makes it possible to track them back about two hundred years. The priory acquired the Commonar's land in the earlier thirteenth century, perhaps about 1240, though an earlier charter takes its history back to before 1209. Sometime c. 1200 this property was put together by Walter of Ludworth, lord of Ludworth, who combined a bovate from his demesne and a bovate previously occupied by a tenant called Ketil.³⁷ The combined acreage was 32 (presumably customary) acres. The other property, the Prior's land, is first known from a charter of c. 1240, when Prior Melsanby granted it to Ivo the smith of Ludford for an annual rent. The memorandum of c. 1406 says that this land was of 46 acres.³⁸ These, then, are lands that had been in the priory's hands since the early thirteenth century; there is no charter evidence of exchanges or augmentations that would imply any intervening restructuring. In both cases the memorandum of c. 1406 says that the lands were interspersed in the field between the lands of the lord of Ludworth and of other free tenants ('iacent in campo in diuersis locis inter terras domini ville et aliorum libere tenencium'). The terrier of 1419 does not record acreages but measures the land in rigs. Like the demesne at Castle Eden these properties are subdivided, but rather lightly so. The Commonar's land of 32 acres lay in 30 pieces varying in size between a single rood up to six rigs lying together. There were 108 rigs all told, so the average rig was about 0.3 of an acre. On this reckoning 20 out of the 30 pieces of Commonar's land were over an acre in size. The Prior's land confirms the point well. Here there were 108 rigs, so the rig averaged only about 0.25 of an acre, but the land was divided into only seventeen pieces. The largest three, of 28, 22 and 22 rigs, were probably all of over 5 acres in a single piece. This is very reminiscent of the demesne

³³ DCM, 1.14. Spec. 21.

³⁴ I owe this information to Dr. Benjamin Dodds.

³⁵ 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 (1973), pp. 141–4.

³⁶ DCM, 2.8. Spec. 18.

³⁷ DCM, 2.8. Spec. 3.

³⁸ DCM, 2.8. Spec. 1.

TABLE 2. Grant of 50 acres from his land of 'Duna' by Alan of Pittington to Durham Priory (early thirteenth century)

27 acres	at Aldetunestede
8½ acres	at Langethorn and Moreslawe forde
14 acres	at Bromflat and Culverflat
½ acre	at Stanne in the east of Bromflat
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50 acres	

Source: Durham Cathedral Muniments, 1.8. Spec. 3.

TABLE 3. Grant of a half carucate from his demesne in Hawthorn by Simon of Hawthorn to Durham Priory (early thirteenth century)

6 acres	between the meadow of Holpethe and the Dene
2 acres	on the western side of the same meadow of Holepeth'
8 acres	by the white thorn towards the west
4 acres	above the tofts running from south to north beside the main road
4 acres	above the tofts running north by land of Simon son of Ralph
8 acres	on the south side on Leyflat'
4 acres	on Kydon' towards the north
4 acres	on Seflat next land of Guy de Gransard towards the south
8 acres	on Crocsflat beside the road going from Thardene to the sea all the land below Harehouh all my meadow of Holpeth'
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48 acres	

Source: Durham Cathedral Muniments, 2.8. Spec. 45.

at Castle Eden, and suggests that light subdivision was an old feature of demesne lands, going back to at least 1200, rather than a new feature of the fifteenth century.

The same point can be demonstrated from some of the earlier charters of the collection. One example is the early thirteenth-century grant by which Alan of Pittington gave 50 acres to the Durham Priory from his land of 'Duna' (Table 2).³⁹ Another is the grant from the same period of half a ploughland from Simon of Hawthorn's demesne in Hawthorn (Table 3).⁴⁰ These records attest a system in which the lands were located by reference to furlongs, often called flats, without any high organization into fields. They also suggest that a relatively light degree of subdivision was a general characteristic of the region.

It is unlikely that a distribution of land of this erratic kind should derive from any primeval principle of co-aration or land sharing, but among the lands described in these charters it is not uncommon to find systematic relations between neighbouring field units. For example, early in the fourteenth century Reginald of Witton drew up a charter conveying a bovat of

³⁹ DCM, 1.8. Spec. 3.

⁴⁰ DCM, 2.8. Spec. 45.

TABLE 4. Grant of 8 acres in Great Haswell by William Burdon of Haswell and his wife Ada to Matilda of Seaton, widow of John of Hardwick (1323)

3½ acres	in Harmer	next land of Margaret widow of Ralph of Greatham on the east
½ acre	in Harmer	next land of William chaplain on the east
1 acre 3 roods	in a place called the Feringes	next the moor of Shadforth
½ acre	in Laytholf	next land of the said Margaret on the west
1 rood	between the streets	next land of the said Margaret on the east
3 roods	at the Coves	next land of the said Margaret on the west
1 rood	at Refowe	next land of the said Margaret on the east
1 rood	at Spitellandes	next the road (iuxta stratam)
1 rood	at Smalburn	next land of the said Margaret on the north
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8 acres		

Source: Durham Cathedral Muniments, Haswell Ch. 39.

TABLE 5. Grant of toft and 6 acres in Great Haswell by William Burdon of Haswell and his wife Ada to Isolda daughter of Richard of Herrington (1320 x 1330)

Toft		between a toft of Margaret widow of Ralph of Greatham and a toft formerly of William of Scotland
4½ acres	in a place called Heshhawehill	next land of the said Margaret
1½ acres	on the Firing(es)	next land of the said Margaret
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6 acres		

Source: Durham Cathedral Muniments, Haswell Ch. 43

land in the township and territory of Over Haswell. It is described as lying in the field in scattered parcels ('in campo per partes diuisim') between land of Thomas Burdon on one side and land of Geoffrey of Dunstan on the other.⁴¹ Two grants of land by William Burdon of Haswell and his wife in the 1320s (Tables 4 and 5) show a similar recurrent relationship between their land and that of the widow of Ralph of Greatham.⁴² If this is not the outcome of some primitive practice of field-planning it needs some other explanation, and in fact these charters contain abundant evidence to demonstrate an alternative source of such subdivision.

Sometime between 1188 and 1212 John of Hulam granted to the monks of Durham 12 acres with a toft in Hulam and with rights of common pasture for the monks and their men alongside his own beasts and those of his men. In effect he had created a new bovate on which the monks could settle a tenant. The way he had done this is clearly stated in the charter. The land is granted 'in my 12 *culture* in that township in which I have assigned the monk's 12 acres, that is to say one acre nearest towards the sun ('propinquior aduersus solem') in each *cultura*.⁴³ The translation of *cultura* is problematic, but John would probably have said 'flat'. This is an

⁴¹ DCM, Haswell Ch. 106.

⁴² DCM, Haswell Ch. 39, 43.

⁴³ DCM, 3.7. Spec. 6.

important charter because it apparently shows an early stage of subdivision in a terrain of compact holdings. The flats are implied to belong to John of Hulam – presumably blocks of demesne land like those encountered on the demesne at Castle Eden. But rather than give the Durham monks a block, the donor systematically subdivided each of 12 flats to give them the southern or eastern acre in each. That presumably meant assigning to the monks three or four rigs from the end of each of the 12 flats. This example provides the key to understanding a grant by Alan of Hutton, son of William of Hutton, to Nigel of Rounton, for his homage and service, of half his demesne land in the field of Hutton. He describes this as 23 acres 3 roods of cultivated land lying nearest the sun in

Thinnethornes, Stanilawe, Ticclinwelle', Dedeside, Fulewelle, Hallingwelle ac Alizkilne ac Gilbert hus hirning, Grenebanc, Hodic, Toddelande up an dun, Crokedlandesende, Thene Thornesker attentherende, Stokeside, Morheved, Cutethoren, Pittelcroft, Trebrigge west fra the lawe, the but bi sut Hodic, Langgerigges bi est the ker bi the segges, Mulekenforde, Langelandes, Sutherkattelawe attendes up bi the strete dun to the forde ac Herilawe.

Together with this he granted half his meadows, peat diggings, moors, pastures and other demesne lands, nearer the sun, and a toft that Richard son of Swayn held in Hutton.⁴⁴ In this case it is less open to surmise that the parcels of the donor's demesne were complete flats, but the principle of division is the same. The halving of the demesne had divided not one piece of arable land but at least 24. The operation of such a principle could reduce compact lands to shreds within a few generations. Several historians have examined the justification for such fragmentation; it recognized the variable quality of land and the need to ensure that partitions of land were conducted fairly.⁴⁵

The previous examples illustrate two of the circumstances in which free land was alienated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the donation of land to pious foundations and the rewarding of dependants, though it is questionable just what the significance of Nigel of Rounton's 'homage and service' might be. Family settlements were a further occasion for the splitting of lands, and there are cases to illustrate this too. In 1321 William son of Hugh Burdon granted to his son in law, Peter Burdeus of 'Harebaru', on the occasion of the marriage, all lands and tenements that he had in the township and territory of Great Haswell except for one bovate. We have a complementary charter by which less than a fortnight later he granted that bovate to William the chaplain of Haswell. Both charters specify where the bovate in question lay, and it is here apparent that the bovate had been newly created by the process we have already observed. William divided ten of his lands rather than maintain such integrity as his property had (Table 6).⁴⁶ This type of family subdivision is relevant to charters where the granter's land is consistently next to that of some family member. We do not know that that

⁴⁴ DCM, Misc. Ch. 6284.

⁴⁵ R. A. Dodgshon, 'The landholding foundations of the open-field system', *Past and Present* 67 (1975), pp. 14–22; id., 'Towards an understanding and definition of runrig: the evidence for Roxburghshire and Berwickshire', *Trans. Institute of British Geographers* 64 (1975), pp. 28–9. Later discussion has mostly originated

from the debate inaugurated by D. N. McCloskey, 'English open fields as behaviour towards risk', in P. Uselding (ed.), *Research in economic history* 1 (1976), pp. 124–70, and S. Fenoaltea, 'Risk, transaction costs and the organisation of medieval agriculture', *Explorations in Economic History* 13 (1976), pp. 129–51.

⁴⁶ DCM, Haswell Ch. 36, 37.

TABLE 6. A bovate granted by William son of Hugh Burdon of Haswell to William chaplain of Haswell in the vill and territory of Great Haswell (1321)

1 acre	in the Croft	nearer the sun
1½ acres	in Owlonlandes	nearer the sun
3 roods	at the Grenlawe	nearer the sun
1 acre	at Refhowe	nearer the sun
1 acre	at Shitirlawe	nearer the sun
1 acre	at Midrigg(es)	nearer the sun
1 rood	at Axlaulepes	nearer the sun
1 acre	at Refhowetes	next meadow
1 acre and ½ rood	at Sywyneacreside	nearer the sun
1½ roods	at the Haluerodes	
<hr/>		
9 acres		

Source: Durham Cathedral Muniments, Haswell Ch. 37; cf. also Haswell Ch. 36, which excepts this land from the grant of William's other lands.

is the case in the charters of William and Ada Burdon discussed earlier, though it would not be surprising to find that Margaret of Greatham was the sister of Ada Burdon. But in a parallel case from the early fourteenth century the situation is sufficiently clear. William Gery with the consent of his wife Alice, granted away all the land that Alice had inherited from her mother Alice in the townships and fields of Upper and Lower Haswell, and the land is described as lying between land of Alice's sister Emma and land of Richard son of Emma of the Hall.⁴⁷ The relationship between Richard and the two sisters is unknown. The origins of subdivision in this part of Durham are mostly earlier than our documentation. However, the evidence is quite enough to show that the breaking up of arable lands needed no principle other than the division of properties by the splitting of individual flats, and that even compact demesnes were liable to become subdivided in the course of time.

There were seemingly methods of splitting other than dividing lands nearer and farther from the sun; the grant to Matilda of Seaton, discussed earlier, shows that Margaret of Greatham's land was sometimes east and sometimes west of the land being granted. However, some of these examples clearly relate to the practice of sun-division, or *solskifte*. When in 1941 Homans discussed the relevance of the concept to English villages, he had in mind a sun-division principle involving 'a complete village plan', in which tenants' strips followed the same sequence in each furlong. This systematic allocation of strips implies some past moment of collective, or authoritarian, planning whose principles were assiduously respected by successive generations; otherwise there would have been nothing left of the plan by the thirteenth century. Homans duly interprets irregularities in the distribution of plots as evidence of decay.⁴⁸ This understanding of sun-division has since been criticized, notably Göransson. This method of defining divisions between the land of different occupiers, which was widespread in northern Britain,

⁴⁷ DCM, 1.2. Finc. 13*.

thirteenth century (1941), pp. 94–100.

⁴⁸ George Caspar Homans, *English villagers of the*

was not a simple legacy of Scandinavian settlement, as was once supposed.⁴⁹ The evidence we have examined contains no suggestion of primeval subdivision, but rather that the primitive lay-out of the land was in blocks. Sun-division here was rather an ad hoc device to subdivide holdings parcel by parcel. A Scottish memorandum of 1428 by Patrick of Dunbar, lord of Biel, records how he supervised the partition of the West Mains at Hassington (Berwickshire) between the abbot of Melrose and Walter of Hallyburton. A local assize judged that the two ploughlands there could be divided most fairly 'rundale by four rigs and four to either part'. So advised, 'the said abbot and the said lord of Hallyburton took two cables ('kabillis') and brought me them and I cast them the t'one to the sun and the t'other to the shadow, and thus it was departed'. This procedure is a form of taking lots, presumably depending on the arbitrator's not knowing whose cable was whose.⁵⁰

Subdivided furlongs were in this way created by sun-division in the course of time, rather than having been laid out all at once. As a principle of dividing property it sometimes goes unsaid. Sometime before 1316 Richard son of Emma of the Hall, of Lower Haswell, granted to Robert Page, of Upper Haswell, a quarter of the land with tofts and crofts which Walter Tussard, his grandfather, once held in the townships and territories of Upper and Lower Haswell.⁵¹ This grant is superficially underspecified, but it needs only the addition of the words 'nearer the sun' to define the transfer precisely. Sun-division was a sufficiently convenient device to be used independently of long cultural inheritance, though in fact it seems to be particularly common in northern England and eastern Scotland.⁵² Many of the examples historians have used as evidence for primeval sun-division would equally well serve as evidence for the on-going procedures we have observed.⁵³ On the assumption that an ancient distribution of strips would be unlikely to survive without irregularities, the more regular the pattern, the more likely it is to represent some recent subdivision than some ancient master plan. The examples of Worting and Tayllard manors in Kibworth Harcourt, as described by Hilton, are readily intelligible as an instance of late sun-division, given that the procedure had here been used to divide two pre-existing demesnes; Hilton was right to be sceptical of the relevance of sun-division in Homans' sense.⁵⁴ Sun-division as a means of sharing property was not designed to create regular field layouts, and so it is not necessary to explain irregularities as evidence of a degraded system.⁵⁵

As long as landlords imposed restrictions on the break-up of customary holdings, tenants were presumably prevented from subdividing land in this way, but we have few details about how the customary bovates of Durham were structured at this time. In later sources when ancient holdings were still common, northern husbandlands were commonly made up of

⁴⁹ M. L. Faull, 'The post-Roman period', in Faull and Moorhouse (eds), *West Yorkshire*, I, pp. 197–8; S. Göransson, 'Regular open-field pattern in England and Scandinavian solskifte', *Geografiska Annaler* 43B (1961), pp. 80–101.

⁵⁰ Cosmo Innes (ed.), *Liber Sancte Marie de Melros* (2 vols, Bannatyne Club 56, 1837), II, pp. 519–21 (spelling modernized).

⁵¹ DCM, 1.2. Finc. 7.

⁵² Dodgshon, 'Landholding foundations', pp. 5–6; idem, 'Scandinavian "solskifte" and the sunwise division

of land in eastern Scotland', *Scottish Stud.*, 19 (1975), pp. 3–5; id., *The origin of British field systems: an interpretation* (1980), pp. 32–3.

⁵³ E.g. J. A. Sheppard, 'Field systems of Yorkshire', in Baker and Butlin (eds), *Studies in field systems*, p. 175.

⁵⁴ R. H. Hilton, 'Kibworth Harcourt – a Merton College manor in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', in id., *Class conflict and the crisis of feudalism: essays in medieval history* (1985), p. 10.

⁵⁵ cf. Dodgshon, *Origin of British field systems*, p. 52.

scattered and interspersed strips in open fields.⁵⁶ If these had originally been allocated by the sun-division, in the interests of equality, it is possible that landlord's conservatism had preserved some ancient and regular field divisions of a *solskifte* form. This is unlikely, however, to have been a recognizable feature of the field pattern except in a few larger villages. Husbandmen were few in the predominantly small lordships of the Durham villages we have examined; none are mentioned in the charters of Haswell, and it seems unlikely that they constituted more than a small minority of the rural population.

II

The arable of the settlements under discussion was subordinate, at least in acreage, to a pastoral economy based in part on common lands. Some of the Haswell charters substantiate the suggestion that township territories contained common pastures. Sometime between 1244 and 1258 William son of Guy of Haswell, seemingly the lord of Haswell, quitclaimed to Finchale Priory two carucates of land in Over and Nether Haswell. He granted the monks and their men of the Haswells common pasture through all the moor of the Haswells, provided that they did not sell or grant it away to others, together with full common towards the north through the whole, from the west of Great Haswell by the brook, beginning at 'Catteholes' and ending in 'Espedene', and from the east likewise towards the north through the whole, from the road from Great Haswell to Fallowfield.⁵⁷ This concedes rights over a wide area of the territory of Haswell. Cat Hole, still to be found on the modern Ordnance Survey map, marks a point on the west moors, and the road from Great Haswell to Fallowfield must define land within Haswell's territory to the east.

The Haswell charters also show that there was scope for intercommoning between townships on pastures within their separate territories. In 1314, a deal with the bishop of Durham enabled Thomas du Bois, Lucy of Haswell, William of Silksworth, William of Burdon, and Ralph of Greatham, all landowner in Haswell, to enclose the moors of Haswell and hold them in severalty. This involved giving the bishop 24 acres of moor in Haswell to hold in severalty, and simultaneously renouncing all claims to common rights in the townships of Sherburn and Shadforth. In exchange the bishop renounced all claims of commoning in Haswell both for himself and for the men of Sherburn and Shadforth.⁵⁸ In an agreement of 1329 Richard, prior of Finchale, Thomas du Bois, Lucy of Haswell, Margaret widow of Ralph of Greatham, John de Meneville, Lucy daughter of William of Silksworth, John of Kelloe and William Burdon, all owners of land in the fields of Haswell, described themselves as lords of the moor of Great Haswell.⁵⁹ They were under pressure to accommodate an outside party who claimed that his common rights had been disregarded in the recent enclosure of the moors. These charters all have the virtue of demonstrating that there could be commoned moors within township territories as well as beyond them.

The rights of freeholders on the extensive moors beyond their township bounds require further research, but there is good evidence that such rights were exercised, subject to some

⁵⁶ Butlin, 'Field systems', p. 138.

⁵⁷ DCM, 1.2. Finc. 2, 54(a).

⁵⁸ DCM, Haswell Ch. 61.

⁵⁹ DCM, 1.2. Finc. 17.

measure of seigniorial control. Such intercommoning is to be found on extensive waste throughout England, but it was particularly important for the pastoral economies of the north and the west.⁶⁰ A notarial instrument of 1430 established that within living memory the tenants of Shincliffe grazed on Quarrington Moor between Shincliffe and Tursdale.⁶¹ This was at a time when the priory was challenging the claim that Quarrington Moor belonged to Tursdale Manor.⁶² The moor between Garmondsway and Fishburn was perambulated in 1235 to define land that should remain for ever common between the townships of Garmondsway and Fishburn; the deed is endorsed 'Perambulation of common pasture between Garmondsway and Fishburn'.⁶³ Similar intercommoning was practised on Easington Moor. In 1316 the bishop of Durham's granted his servant William de Denum 20 acres of the bishop's waste in Easington Moor, formerly belonging to Robert of Pespool. He granted with it the right to common with the bishop's other men in Easington and Shotton, except on the bishop's own severalties and on improvements wherever he or his successors choose to make them.⁶⁴ The saving clause here conveniently confirms what must be suspected from the bishop's grants of wasteland, that lords could in some circumstances restrict intercommoning rights over extra-territorial waste. The bishop was probably the greatest wielder of claims over moorland in the region, and his rights of control over Easington Moor are demonstrated from his recorded grants of land there. The historical origin of this right presumably derives from the bishop's lordship of Easington and its dependencies, including dependent townships, wastes and moors, according to some version of the characteristically northern 'shire' structure. Easington is a plausible centre for such a shire, given its other central-place attributes, and the dependence of other townships upon the lordship there is implied by the details of labour services in *Boldon Book*. It is certain that the bishop did not control all the extensive moorland in the region; Sir William Blaykeston, for example, had 100 acres of pasture and 1,000 acres of moor attached to his manor and township of Coxhoe in 1432.⁶⁵ None of the charters for this region specify stints on the use of common pasture either within township territories or beyond, which implies that any restrictions on the use of commons was informal rather than part of the structure of land tenure.

At the time when the bishopric was brought under Norman domination in the late eleventh century much of the moorland of Durham was capable of being cultivated. The most extensive area of potential arable in the moors of these parishes was a stretch of relatively high and exposed land between Haswell and Easington, running roughly parallel to the coast. In the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a string of isolated and compact properties was created along this line, cutting into the moor. The origins of the earliest of them are undocumented. The southernmost within the region, Edder Acres meaning 'Ethelred's cultivated land', was founded before 1184, since it is recorded in *Boldon Book*, though there are no details there concerning its size or character.⁶⁶ Another such farm was Fallowfield, subsequently divided between High and Low Fallowfield, carved out of Hawthorn Moor at 120 metres (about 400

⁶⁰ Baker and Butlin (eds), *Studies in field systems*, pp. 137, 157, 246, 250, 327, 365; S. A. Moorhouse, 'The rural medieval landscape', in Faull and Moorhouse (eds), *West Yorkshire*, III, pp. 672–3.

⁶¹ DCM, 1.14. Spec. 26.

⁶² DCM, 1.14. Spec. 27.

⁶³ DCM, Sherburn House Deeds 3/6.

⁶⁴ DCM, Misc. Ch. 5152.

⁶⁵ PRO, Durh 3/2, fo. 269v–270r. See also Dunsford and Harris, 'Colonization', pp. 49–52.

⁶⁶ Greenwell (ed.), *Boldon Buke*, p. 9; Watts, *Dictionary*, p. 37.

feet). It first occurs in the records, but with no details concerning its character or origins, in the later twelfth century (1162 × 1189).⁶⁷

To the south of Fallowfield was Pespool, about on the 125-metre contour (about 410 feet). The name means 'long grass pool', 'reed pool', or 'rush pool'. The farm dates from the mid-thirteenth century when Walter Kirkham, bishop of Durham (1249–60) granted his servant John Haldan 156 acres of moor in Easington. The bounds of the property are described as running from 'Coves' to Pespool stream, to Pespool, to 'Houstrete', to 'Houhope', to 'Pesehopeburn' to 'Petekerford', to 'Coveburn', and back to 'Coves'.⁶⁸ Cove Holes is marked on modern Ordnance Survey maps. A later account of the property from 1316, when it was leased, records both the capital messuage of the manor of Pespool and 119 acres of land lying within stated bounds, beginning on the west side at the ditch between the manor of Pespool and the field of Haswell, and stretching along this ditch on the west side.⁶⁹ The ditch in question was evidently a boundary between Pespool and the lands of the township of Haswell. The whole property, again called a manor, was described in 1431 as having 200 acres of arable and 100 acres of pasture.⁷⁰ Its attractiveness declined during the fourteenth century; by about 1383 the annual rent owed to the bishop had diminished to 13s. 4d. from £2 10s. 0d. at some previous point.⁷¹

A medieval farm called Boisfield lay in or around where Pespool wood is marked on modern maps, at about 140 metres (about 470 feet).⁷² It was created, sometime between 1261 and 1273, when Robert Stichill, bishop of Durham, granted his servant (*valetus*) John du Bois a carucate from the bishop's waste on Easington Moor, bounded from 'Blakrig' to 'Blacden', to 'Wytemer', to 'Grimeswellemerse', to 'Hokendenthorn', to 'Lethelowe'.⁷³ John acquired an adjacent 24 acres of waste on Easington Moor between 'Blakerigg' and 'Howynstret' in about 1283.⁷⁴ This was another compact farm, explicitly created outside existing township territories, on the bishop's waste. A later charter of 1316 confirms that it had rights of common pasture, presumably on Easington Moor, though it does not specify the extent of this right.⁷⁵ Presumably the moor was large enough not to need stinting. Boisfield was adjacent to Pespool, and was later integrated with it to make a single farm; they were already in the same hands by about 1383.⁷⁶ In 1421 this property was described simply as '140 acres of land called Boysfeld', and again in 1431 as having 160 acres of land 'with appurtenances'.⁷⁷

The latest example of a farm created from the waste is from nearby at Flemingfield Farm at 150 metres (about 490 feet). In 1283 Robert of Holy Island, bishop of Durham, granted to John the Fleming of Newcastle and his wife Isabel a portion of the bishop's moor of Shotton and Easington with stated bounds, that is from the road from Castle Eden to Haswell across 'Goreburne', then from that road northwards up to the bounds of Ludworth, as enclosed by a ditch, then down along the bounds of Ludworth through the middle of 'Wydeker' southward

⁶⁷ DCM, Haswell Ch. 1.

⁶⁸ DCM, Misc. Ch. 5150. The property was conveyed back to Roger de Herteburn in 1261: Misc. Ch. 5153; Watts, *Dictionary*, p. 94.

⁶⁹ DCM, Misc. Ch. 6159.

⁷⁰ PRO, Durh 3/2, fo. 261r.

⁷¹ Greenwell (ed.), *Bishop Hatfield's survey*, p. 127.

⁷² I owe information about the location of Boisfield to

Dr Simon Harris.

⁷³ DCM, Misc. Ch. 6153; 6152 is a copy and 6151 and 6154 are copies of an *inspeximus* of 1273.

⁷⁴ DCM, Misc. Ch. 6151.

⁷⁵ DCM, Misc. Ch. 6155.

⁷⁶ Greenwell (ed.), *Bishop Hatfield's survey*, p. 127; Surtees, *History and antiquities*, I, p. 19.

⁷⁷ PRO, Durh 3/2, fos. 205v–206r, 261v; Durh 3/165/3.

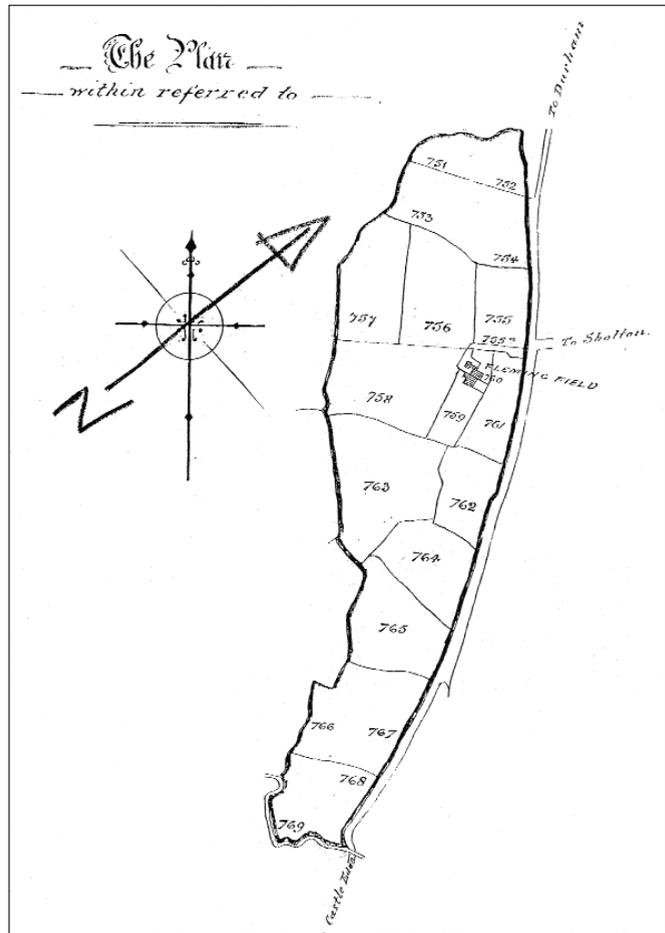


FIGURE 2. Bounds of Flemingfield as drawn on a title deed of 1894. Duham Cathedral Muniments, CC 315/267222.

to 'Goreburn', then down along 'Goreburne' eastward to the road from Castle Eden to Haswell, to hold from the bishop and his successors in severalty all days of the year, with common pasture in the moors of Shotton and Easington.⁷⁸ The bounds of the farm are clearly defined on a title deed of 1894 (Figure 2),⁷⁹ and can easily be picked out on modern 2½ inch Ordnance Survey maps. The road from Castle Eden to Haswell is the B1280, and the bounds of Ludworth are now the boundary between the modern civil and ecclesiastical parishes of Haswell and Shotton. Gore Burn retains the same name it had in 1283. Flemingfield, like Pespool, was exceptionally vulnerable to falling land values, and in c. 1383 its rent was reported to have declined from nearly £4 to 13s. 4d.⁸⁰

Although the farms on Easington Moor constitute the largest examples of late settlement, Quarrington Moor and its environs was another such territory. In the late twelfth century Bishop Hugh du Puiset gave 50 acres of land in the bishop's moor of Quarrington to Robert son of Stephen.⁸¹ Raisby must also have been settled for the first time in the later twelfth

⁷⁸ Known from DCM, Misc. Ch. 6158, 7083

⁷⁹ DCM, CC 315/267222.

⁸⁰ Greenwell (ed.), *Bishop Hatfield's survey*, p. 127. Cf. Durh 3/2, fo. 264v.

century. It was granted to Sherburn Hospital probably in 1183 by Race Engaine, who was described later in the 1180s as the first person to cultivate and inhabit the site; its name – ‘Raceby’ in its earliest form – is derived from this man’s name.⁸² In 1293 Bishop Anthony Bek gave Master Richard of Coxhoe, clerk, 80 acres of land by Tursdale field bounded by ‘Wydehopeburn’ on the north and ‘Fenneburn’ on the south. Though the land was said to be already enclosed by ditches,⁸³ a confirmation of the grant of 1298 gave Richard licence to enclose the land as his severalty.⁸⁴ In 1300, Bek gave 34 acres from the waste in Quarrington Moor to Walter of Rothbury. This land is described as enclosed by ditches and stretching from Croxdale field on the west side to the highway from Tursdale to Durham on the east side, and from Shincliffe Moor on the north side to Tursdale Moor at ‘Brademerbecke’ on the south side.⁸⁵ These are all smaller intakes than those recorded on Easington Moor, but exemplify the same practice, and similarly resulted in the creation of compact farms.⁸⁶ Pespool, Boisfield and Flemingfield, the new farms for which we have an exact provenance, describe these properties as on the moor rather than in the territory of a township, though abutting onto township lands. Pespool and Boisfield abutted on to the field of Haswell, from which they are separated by ditches, and Flemingfield abutted onto Ludworth, from which it was similarly separated by a ditch – further examples of the township boundaries discussed earlier.

It is impossible to judge from the bare terminology of the charters just how these new farming ventures were initiated. The charters that created Pespool and Boisfield were both explicitly granted by a bishop to his servants. John Haldan, who created Pespool Farm, served as sheriff under Walter de Kirkham (1249–60).⁸⁷ Such grants imply that patronage was involved to some extent, though the impetus behind these investments is likely to have come from the beneficiaries themselves. So much colonization of wasteland, especially over inhospitable terrain like Easington Moor, implies a rising demand for land, still capable of being satisfied in the early fourteenth century. The subdivision of peasant holdings and enlargement of township fields in many parts of the Palatinate was no doubt in part a response to rising population and land hunger, as elsewhere in the North.⁸⁸ The creation of new farms by the bishops’ servants, on the other hand, suggests either a search for a more secure status through landholding as a free tenant of the bishop or awareness of commercial possibilities. The creation of Flemingfield by a

⁸¹ DCM, Sherburn House Deeds 1/4.

⁸² Snape (ed.), *English episcopal acts*, 25: *Durham 1153–1195*, no. 145, pp. 121–4; Watts, *Dictionary*, p. 101.

⁸³ DCM, Misc. Ch. 6414. Misc. Ch. 6415 is a confirmation the following year by the prior of Durham. The fifteenth-century map of Tursdale Beck marks both ‘ffenburn’ and ‘Wydoppe burn’. The former ‘is present today as the small stream crossing the Durham to Stockton road near the northern end of Coxhoe village at Four Mile Bridge (NZ 316365)’, and the latter ‘must be the Bowburn Beck, which rises near Bowburn and flows south-westwards to join the Tursdale Beck to the south-east of Tursdale House (NGR NZ 296368)’: Snape and Roberts, ‘Tursdale Beck’, p. 175.

⁸⁴ The original seems to be lost. DCM, Misc. Ch.

Misc. Ch. 7223 is a fragmentary copy on paper. Misc. Ch. 6416, a better text, is the prior’s confirmation charter, also of 1298.

⁸⁵ The original charter seems not to have survived, but DCM, 4.13. Spec. 16 is a late copy (? c. 1400) and it is transcribed in 1.14. Spec. 27. It is printed in C. M. Fraser (ed.), *Records of Anthony Bek* (Surtees Soc., 162, 1953), no. 64, pp. 56–7.

⁸⁶ DCM, Misc. Ch. 7223.

⁸⁷ Haldan is recorded as sheriff in DCM, 1.1. Finc. 6. I owe this reference to Simon Harris.

⁸⁸ Richard Lomas, *North-east England in the Middle Ages* (1992), pp. 152–5; Marie Stinson, ‘Assarting and poverty in early-fourteenth-century western Yorkshire’, *Landscape Hist.*, 5 (1983), pp. 53–67.

Newcastle man perhaps represents both motives acting concurrently. Although off the beaten track these moorland farms were all in a position to supply grain and pastoral produce to Durham city, which was by this time a city of several thousand inhabitants. The new farms may, too, have been profiting from England's rising wool exports, which peaked in the early fourteenth century.⁸⁹ The creation of farms of this kind from the waste was far from being a localized phenomenon. Similar farms were numerous in north-eastern England,⁹⁰ and in the Yorkshire Pennines, sometimes for specialized development in cattle-raising.⁹¹

The new farms of the age of expansion might seem to represent a more modern ideal of compact units, free from the complexities of open-field agriculture. Yet they, too, were subject to division in the course of land grants and family settlements, and it is striking testimony to the cultural prevalence of the system of subdivision already described that even in this context sun-division might be thought appropriate. Sometime in the early fourteenth century, before 1316, Walter of Haswell divided his lands at Fallowfield between the two sisters, Lucy and Juliana, daughter of Robert of Haswell. They were perhaps Walter's nieces.⁹² Indented deeds were made out, one each to Lucy and Juliana, both attested with the same witness list and no doubt drawn up on the same day. Lucy's document gives her 'half a toft nearer the sun in Haswell and half all the arable land, meadow, turbary and moor nearer the sun with their appurtenances in Haswell in a place called Fallowfield'. Juliana's document gives her 'half a toft further from the sun in Haswell and half all the arable land, meadow, turbary and moor further from the sun with their appurtenances in Haswell in a place called Fallowfield'.⁹³ There was some chance that these halves of the property would come together again, but the splitting of properties between sisters is a very frequent source of permanent fragmentation. By such means, even a farm like Fallowfield had started down the road to subdivision between interspersed holdings. The practical advantages of compact farmland were evidently a less powerful consideration than traditional principles of fairness.

There is a limit to what be achieved with charter evidence. It shows well enough some features of the agrarian structure, but conceals others. In particular there is inadequate material to define how the arable lands of this part of eastern Durham were pastured. The moorland context is presumably relevant to explaining why townships had mostly not adopted a regular two- or three-field system, and the low population of the region would explain why the subdivision of lands had not proceeded further. It would be good to know whether furlongs were managed as separate units of cropping and fallow pasturing, or as elements in more comprehensive systems. But perhaps 'system' was something these townships did not share with the Midlands. Their few inhabitants could have managed their agrarian resources with a degree of informality that would hardly have been tolerated in a large Midland village.

⁸⁹ E. M. Carus-Wilson and O. Coleman, *England's export trade, 1275-1547* (1963), p. 122.

⁹⁰ Dunsford and Harris, 'Colonization and wasteland', pp. 53-8; R. A. Lomas, 'Crookbank, Beckley and Andrew's House, and the de Laley family', *Durham Archaeological J.*, 13 (1997), pp. 99-102; id., *North-east England*, pp. 155-8.

⁹¹ Moorhouse, 'Rural medieval landscape', pp. 597-8,

602-6, 660-7, 676-7; George Redmond and David Hey, 'The opening-up of Scammonden, a Pennine moorland valley', *Landscapes* 2 (2001), pp. 65-9; Stinson, 'Assarting', pp. 57-8.

⁹² For the possibility of this relationship of Walter to the sisters, see DCM, Haswell Ch. 102.

⁹³ DCM, Haswell Ch. 3, 4.

In a region that lay beyond the main area of Romanisation, it is not surprising that the 5th century saw little discernible change in management of the landscape. These palaeoenvironmental sequences suggest that around the 7th–8th centuries, however, there was a significant change in the patterns of land-use, which it is suggested relates to the introduction of a regionally distinctive system of agriculture known as ‘convertible husbandry’™. This may also have been the context for the creation of today’s™ historic landscape of small hamlets and isolated farmsteads set within a near continuous fi