Parish/township: GAMBLESBY

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GAMBLESBY[1]

Gamblesby is a rural township of 9,810 acres (3,970 ha) lying on the Pennine edge about nine miles north-east of Penrith and three miles east of the River Eden. It was absorbed into the civil parish of Glassonby in 1934.[2] The township forms a rectangle, running from west to east up the Pennine slope and across the watershed. Settlement was restricted to the lower land in the west at around 650 feet (200 m) above sea level, where the village of Gamblesby and hamlet of Unthank lie; to the east, the land rises steeply up the Pennine scarp to the watershed at 2,082 feet (634 m) on Fiends Fell, before dropping down to the headwaters of streams feeding the South Tyne. The northern boundary running west from Hartside Height to Viol Moor, followed no particular topographical feature, the line across the formerly unenclosed commons running between boundary markers: Hartside Cross and Greenfell Raise ('raise' meaning 'cairn') on Gamblesby Fell and Grey Stone on Viol Moor.[3] The southern boundary followed Gill Beck, which separated Gamblesby from Melmerby, then traversed the fell to cross the watershed at Little Knapside Hill (2153 ft; 656 m)

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[1] The author would like to thank Lydia Gray and the staff at Carlisle Archive Centre for their assistance in the preparation of this article.
[2] Cumberland Review Order, 1934.
[3] OS, 1:10,560, first edition (surveyed 1860; published 1867). Greenfell Raise is mentioned in the boundary perambulation of 1805 (printed in Jefferson, *Leath Ward*, 327n), meaning these early boundary markers were existence before enclosure.

before descending to the headwaters of Aglionby Burn. At its western end, the township was separated from Glassonby by minor watercourses: Swathy Gill and Sandwath Beck. The eastern boundary across moorland from Hartside Height to Rowgill Burn separated Gamblesby from Glassonby Fell. This detached portion of rough fell land containing 706 acres (286 ha) was added to Gamblesby in 1888, thus increasing the township's acreage to 10,516 acres (4,256 ha).

The name Gamblesby derives from the Old Norse personal name *Gamel* (meaning 'the old'),[4] almost certainly referring to Gamel son of Bern, recorded as the previous owner when Gamblesby was granted to Hildred of Carlisle in the early twelfth century.[5] The name of the subsidiary hamlet of Unthank, first recorded in 1254,[6] derives from the OE *unþanc*, denoting a piece of land held 'against the will' or 'without consent'[7] and probably indicating an origin as a squatter's holding.

Landscape

Gamblesby straddles the North Pennine fault. In the west of the township the bedrock geology is of undifferentiated Triassic rocks, including mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone, plastered by drift of till, sand and gravel.[8] Glacial meltwater channels run from Whinny Hill and Boorick Hill to Hazelrigg Beck. To the east, the township is underlain by the uplifted Carboniferous rocks of the North Pennine massif, bands of limestone with sandstone capping the highest points, the moorland carrying an overburden of peat. The Whin Sill outcrops along the scarp slope. The soil is free draining and slightly acidic, and of a loamy texture in the east of the township and sandy further

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[4] *PNC*, 192.
[5] '…the land which was held by Gamel son of Bern…': *PNC*, 192; R. Sharpe, *Norman Rule in Cumbria, 1092-1136*, CWAAS, Tract Ser., XXI, 7-14.
[6] *PNC*, 193.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] https://www.bgs.ac.uk [accessed 26 March 2014].

west.[9] The acidity of the soil results in low natural fertility. The fellside was long exploited as summer pasture, and has been mined for coal and lead, and quarried for ironstone. Away from the fells, the landscape is hilly grassland, criss-crossed by stone walls, hedgerows (including many mature trees) and narrow lanes.

Settlement

Settlement in the township is concentrated in the village of Gamblesby and the hamlet of Unthank. The latter comprises a cluster of buildings to the north of Hazelrigg Beck, while the former lies on a north-south axis along the road from Melmerby to Renwick and forms a regular row plan around a village green, with long tofts radiating out behind the houses.[10] Gamblesby's position, off set from the older north-south route, raises the possibility that the village was at one time re-positioned. The only solitary farmstead in the township is Hazelrigg, recorded from 1285.[11] As is typical in the Eden valley, red sandstone is the dominant building material. In 1860, the northern extent of the village ended at the adjacent farms of Town Foot and Town End.[12] Before 1900, the village had extended northwards, following the construction of a Congregational Chapel (1864), a new school (1877), and a few houses.[13] Further new houses were built at the northern end of the village during the twentieth century, including several bungalows and two pairs of semi-detached council houses. Approval for the latter was granted in 1949.[14] In addition to these new accretions, several older buildings were converted into private dwellings in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These included several barns, the Congregational Chapel (converted 1939-40),[15] the Red Lion Inn (1998),[16] and St John's

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[9] http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/ [accessed 26 March 2014]; Kelly, *Dir. Cumb.* (1894), 17.
[10] Brian K. Roberts, *The Making of the English Village* (Harlow, 1987), 173-174.
[11] *PNC*, I, 193.
[12] OS, 1:10,560, first edition (surveyed 1860; published 1867).
[13] OS, 1:10,560, second edition (revised 1898; published 1900).
[14] CAS (C), SRDP/3/PLANS/982.
[15] CAS (C), SRDP/3/PLANS/473.

Church (2010).[17] By 2012, there were seventy-two residential properties within the village.[18] Until the nineteenth century, Gamblesby contained a small tarn which was filled in and built over by St John's Church. In 1894, water was laid on for Gamblesby and Unthank from a spring in Shields Plantation, around one and a half miles from the village.[19] Much of Gamblesby village was designated a conservation area by Eden District Council in 1994.[20]

Communications

The Penrith-Alston route, crossing the Pennine watershed at Hartside Cross (1903 ft; 575 m.), ran through the township. Before the construction of Thomas Telford's new, carefully graded road (the modern A686), one mile to the east of Gamblesby village in the 1820s, the old road passed through the village before heading up the steep scarp slope. The village itself sits at the confluence of several minor roads. The main road through the village, running south to Melmerby, and north through Unthank towards Renwick, may have been an early route linking the fellside villages. Before Unthank this road intersects the old route north and south along the fell edge, bypassing Gamblesby village.[21] Another road heads west out of the village towards Glassonby and Little Salkeld. In 2014 public transport in Gamblesby was limited to just two services a week (Tuesday and Thursday), to and from Penrith. These services were operated by Fellrunner Buses, and driven by volunteers.[22]

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[16] *Cumb. & West. Herald*, 28 Nov. 1998. http://www.cwherald.com/a/archive/eden-council-planning-decisions.248316.html[accessed 26 Apr 2014].

[17] http://eforms.eden.gov.uk/fastweb/detail.asp?AltRef=10/0725 [accessed 26 Apr 2014].

[18] http://www.colinday.co.uk/maps/EdenMaps/Gamblesby.pdf [accessed 15 February 2014].

[19] Kelly, *Dir. Cumb.* (1910), 25.

[20] http://www.eden.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy-for-eden/conservation/conservation-areas/list-of-conservation-areas/?entryid33=17345 [accessed 28 Aug 2014].

[21] The '*magna via de Appelby*', was recorded in 1167 and probably linked Brampton to Appleby though the villages along the foot of the Pennine scarp: *Lanercost Cart.* 87 (item 34); RENWICK ARTICLE.

[22] http://www.fellrunnerbus.co.uk/index.htm [accessed 26 Apr 2014].

Population and Social Character

The population of Gamblesby has never been large. The Protestation Return of 1642 names forty-four males, which suggests a total population of around 150. In 1801 there were 222 inhabitants, which fell slightly to 215 in 1811 but rose to a peak of 301 in 1831. This may have been due to mining activity in the area, but if so it was short-lived. The population had fallen back to 259 in 1841 and to 244 by 1851. Despite climbing again over the next two decades, reaching 273 in 1871, the township's population went into continual decline thereafter, until arriving at a low point of 189 in 1921. It stood at 197 in 1931, the last census year for which separate data are available.[23] Gamblesby was a predominantly farming community, without a resident lord or squire. Until the twentieth century, the township was dominated by yeoman farmers. In more recent decades, the dominant sector of the population has shifted from those working the land to commuters and retired people.

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[23] Gamblesby was absorbed into Glassonby CP in 1935.