# Stainmore and Nine Standards: an early medieval estate?

*Haydn Charlesworth*

## Aims

This article seeks to explore the history of Stainmore and the Nine Standards by examining the place of boundaries within the surrounding landscape. The analysis proposes an ancient estate centred upon Brough, with the Nine Standards as a monumental axis point on its boundary, and stable *locus*[1] of some religious, temporal and pastoral significance. This estate was incorporated within a larger territory extending across much of North Westmorland from the east of the river Eden. The establishment of Kirkby Stephen parish probably post-dated these events and cut across the previous order in the landscape while the boundaries themselves remained as a relic of the former significance.

## Territories called Stainmore

There were three (principal) entities known as Stainmore: the hunting forest,[2] the seigneurial lordship,[3] and the township. The name Stainmore was also used to describe the country (*pays*) which encompassed all of these identities. The hunting forest stretched across the Westmorland border from Bowes in Yorkshire to Brough under Stainmore, and then south through Kirkby Stephen and up to the head of the river Eden in the vale called Mallerstang.[4]

Seigneurial (lordly) Stainmore lay within Westmorland and partly overlapped the area of forest (see map 1, appendix 1). Its full extent is suggested by the detailed boundary ridings

[1] C. A. Lees & G. R. Overing, *A Place to Believe in: Locating Medieval Landscapes,* (Pennsylvania, 2006), 11.
[2] CAS (C), DCHA/11/4/2, 458; DCHA/11/4/4, 37.
[3] H.R.M. Charlesworth, *VCH Stainmore*, Local Government, 1 (forthcoming)
[4] S. Walker, *Nine Standards* (Kirkby Stephen, 2008), 20 (referencing Machell and Harrison); Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.*, 536.

dating from the 17th century. These incorporated a large part of the uplands of the upper Eden valley from the Winton township boundary through Nine Standards and around Stainmore and the Pennine water table, up to the boundary with Appleby parish.[5] There, a course down the Hilton beck suggested an older boundary than the subsequent survival.[6] All of this important extent of defined upland pasture and waste was known as Stainmore, and belonged to the lord of Brough as a part of the Honor of Brough castle. When joined together with the Honor of Appleby castle this then formed much of the Barony of Westmorland as later granted by King John in *c.* 1204.[7] These were royal castles incipient with the Norman annexation. The one at Brough was built over the previous, strategically sited Roman auxiliary fort. It is suggested that, following the Romans there were parcells of royal lands clustered along the Eden and Pennine edge which formed the core of the kingdoms of Rheged and Cumbria.[8]

Stainmore township (extending to 22,468 acres in 1843),[9] was part of Brough under Stainmore ancient parish and was purposed to service the central core of lowland settlements with (township) commons, pannage and agistment as one of the townships of a multiple estate centred on Brough (see below & map 2).

**The Forest**

There is no evidence to suggest that the forest[10] of Stainmore was 'created' by the Normans. Neither were the Saxons known to have formalised forests for hunting, but traces of their hunting practices probably survived at Brough park on Stainmore (see below). The Normans

[5] CAS (C), DCHA/11/4/3, 95; Walker, *Nine Standards,*200-202.
[6] CAS (C), DLons/L1/3/31.
[7] J. E. Prescott (ed.), *The Register of the Priory of Wetheral,* (London, 1897), 393.
[8] F. Edmonds, 'The emergence and transformation of medieval Cumbria', *The Scottish Historical Review,* vol. 93 (2014), 2, 24; quoting C. Phythian-Adams, *Land of the Cumbrians: a Study in British Provincial Origins, A.D. 400-1200* (Aldershot, 1996), 111.
[9] CAS (K), WDRC/8/131.
[10] Forest derived from Latin "foris": a door or gate, (to enclosed Forest as preferred by the Normans).

however did assume a legal entity for the forest of Stainmore after 1092, though apparently without defining its boundaries as their own law required of them.[11] Consequently in 1225 the Stainmore foresters' were restrained from claiming rights to puture (victuals) in Warcop parish, which was adjudged in court to be outside of the customary purlieus of their forest.[12]

Central to the hunting forest was the lordly power base at Brough from which it was administered by the constable of the castle and his foresters. There, and in the township of Stainmore, were six medieval parks of which three existed before the barony was granted in 1203/4 as evidenced in the grant of reversionary letters of attorney to Lady Anne Clifford in *c*. 1628 and 1637,[13] (see map 2 & table). Further, the configuration of one of the early parks had the name 'hag gap',[14] on part of its pale near the Augill ravine suggesting earlier use for deer entrapment,[15] as was practised by the Anglo-Saxons.[16] This evidence suggests that the forest was used for organised hunting and deer management in the Anglo-Norse period.

The names 'hey' and 'frith' were more commonly used than 'hag' in association with parks in Westmorland. They are later medieval usages however, whereas 'hag'[17] (also used at nearby Sowerby park) was an earlier name attached to Stainmore. 'Hag gap' at Brough park suggested a park pale, which was confirmed by excavation.[18] Further indications of the distinctiveness (or insularity if preferred), of North Westmorland are suggested by a recent

[11] CAS (C), DLONS/L/5/4/9/12; DCHA/11/4/4 (Whinfell forest bounds, Brougham); Selden Society, 013, Select Pleas of the Forest, 1217 Charter of the Forest, cxxiii (Forest bounds had to be described in Law).
[12] J. C. Cox, *The Royal Forests of England – Primary Source Edition* (undated reprint, London, 1905), 95-96.
[13] CAS (K), WDX71; J. Malay, *Anne Clifford's Great Books* (Manchester, 2015), 776-789.
[14] D. Hooke, 'Pre-Conquest Woodland; Its distribution and Usage', *Agric. Hist. Rev.*, 37, 2 (1989), 125-7.
[15] H. Charlesworth, 'The Medieval Parks of Brough under Stainmore', *CW3*, 18 (2018), 178-9.
[16] M. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose* (London, 1993), 170.
[17] G. Barnes & T. Williamson, *Rethinking Ancient Woodland* (Hatfield, 2015), 97-98 (*hagas*,'had…specialised meaning of 'fences for concentrating or corralling deer'')
[18] D. Drury *et al.*, 'Stainmore, Cumbria*:* archaeological investigation on the A66 Stainmore to Banks Gate road improvement scheme', *CW2*, 98 (1998), 123.

study of Strathclyde purchased land.[19]

A similar distinction may accord with the association of King Athelstan and with the name Athelstanesmoor, (Athel:stan:mo:re as mapped to the area in 1573),[20] written about by the historian Harrison.[21] This could be a later, antiquarian re-interpretation of the place-name, but if so recalls Athelstan's well-attested involvement in the area (as shown by the royal meeting at Eamont in 927 CE.) and his possible interest in the hunting at Stainmore. It also attests to an extended Stainmore territory 'of repute' in the Appleby district suggested in bailiffs accounts of 1523,[22] where 'Stainmore' pasture was being enjoyed by Appleby tenants.

**Seigneurial Stainmore and Brough**

The names of lords of royal, baronial, and local status appear to have been attached to the amphitheatre of hills surrounding the upper Eden valley. Their antiquity is difficult to establish and as noted a question mark remains for Athelstan's name. Of the others – Mount Ida at Helbeck is perhaps from Lady Idonea Clifford? (or else the 6th century King Ida?). Hugh Morville, baron of Westmorland is remembered in Hugh Seat, Lady Anne Clifford (1590-1675) in Lady Anne's pillar, High Dolphinsty was after the local lords Torphin, and Gregory Chapel probably was in honour of Pope Gregory.

The Stainmore seigneurial boundary riding was challenging in terms of both its terrain and length, as Thomas Machell remarked (he estimated it as three score miles), and was ridden over several days.[23] If the parish and township boundaries are then extended from where the Stainmore bounder ended, then a discreet circuit bounded by the river Eden is created of *c.* 45

[19] D. W. Elsworth, 'The Extent of Strathclyde in Cumbria: boundaries and bought land', *CW3*, 18 (2018), 87-103.
[20] W. D. Shannon, 'Cumberland and Westmorland on maps before Saxton', *CW3*, 20 (2020), 130 (fig. 7).
[21] W. Harrison, *Description of Britain,* (1577), in Johnson et. al., eds., *Holinshed's Chronicles,* (London, 1807-8), 1, 147.
[22] CAS (K), WDHOTH/6/68/7.
[23] CAS (C), DCHA/11/4/3, 95.

miles, comprising *c.* 69 square miles. Brough is centrally placed within this territory, which displays the characteristics of a 'multiple estate'(*villa integrae*),[24] (or *regio* : quarter, district, territory, ward/small shire).[25] It utilised the shared pasturage from the surrounding Stainmore commons of the lord's waste, and displayed convergent township boundaries, a characteristic of inter-commoning often deeply rooted in time (see map 1).[26] The relationship was further exemplified in the grant of pasturage to Blea Tarn Grange in Warcop parish *ante.* 1174.[27] This was a very extensive grant of common pasturage in Stainmore, translating to 'anywhere to the furthest boundary of the common pasture which pertains to Westmorland', (which carefully excluded the Yorkshire part of Stainmore, and implies a possible 'shire moor'), discussed further below.[28]

At Brough, characteristics of the multiple estate include the close proximity of the lords seat (*caput*) at the Castle, to the church (ecclesiastical centre) at Church Brough, an Infield-Outfield system (hinged on Church Brough whose tenants worked it), and the provision of specialised services from the surrounding townships to the lords *caput*.[29] Stainmore township itself provided hunting grounds, horse studs and stock rearing, Brough Sowerby probably the provision of pork, and Helbeck, pannage (in Swindale woods). Great Musgrave's church was dedicated to St Theobald who was the patron saint of charcoal burners (for smelting metals). Musgrave may have had other administrative functions within the forest part of the economy.[30] Also a separate tax called rekesilver was levied to support and maintain the castle

[24] A. J. L. Winchester, 'The Multiple Estate: A framework for the evolution of settlement in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian Cumbria', *Scandinavians in Cumbria,* (Edinburgh, 1985), 97.
[25] T. Williamson, *Environment, Society and Landscape in Early Medieval England: Time and Topography* (Woodbridge,2015), 33-5, 82-3; D. A. Kidd, *Collins Gem Latin Dictionary,* (London, 1984), 282.
[26] A. J. L. Winchester, *Discovering Parish boundaries* (Oxford, 2000), 57; R. Muir, *Landscape Encyclopaedia A Reference to the Historic Landscape* (Oxford, 2012), 138.
[27] J. Burton, 'Charters of Byland Abbey relating to the Grange of Bleatarn, Westmorland', *CW2,* 79 (1979), 37.
[28] A. J. L. Winchester, 'Shielings and Common Pasture', *Northern England and Southern Scotland in the Central Middle Ages,* (eds. A. J. L. Winchester & K. J. Stamper), (Woodbridge, 2017), 284.
[29] Muir, *Landscape Encyclopaedia* (Oxford, 2012), 183.

constable and the administrative functions of his office within the honor and forest of Stainmore.[31] What is lacking is the high status expected of the ecclesiastical centre at Brough, which was a chapelry under Kirkby Stephen when the latter was created a parish in 1088.[32] The name 'Kirkby' is generally taken to suggest pre Scandinavian origins, as its eighth century preaching crosses imply.[33] The persistence of the name 'Burgh' through the Anglian period however, is associated with settlements of declining importance, as is shown with Burgh's absorption into Kirkby Stephen parish.[34]

Consequently, it is necessary to consider earlier possibilities for the origins of the multiple estate at Brough. There are reasons why the religious primacy of Kirkby Stephen might be moderated, as the earliest artefactual evidence so far for significant Christian presence in the area came from the discovery of a fourth century gold Chi-Rho ring within the *caput* at Brough.[35] Oxford archaeology also expressed the opinion that an earlier religious establishment at Brough was suggested by the curved fields surrounding the church.[36] Brough's central siting within its multiple estate further suggests the *parochiae* status of the original estate (in some contexts indicative of an early enclosed minster site).[37] However British church sites may often have been reduced to the status of satellites of English Minsters, as John Blair suggests.[38]

Though the full extent of Roman activity at Brough has scarcely yet been investigated, the strong administrative and governance functions, evinced from the lead seals found there, and

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[30] G. Jones, *Saints in the Landscape*, (Stroud, 2007), 193.
[31] *Cal. Inq. p. m.* XVII, 13-14 (1391-9, Thomas de Clifford, Netherburgh).
[32] www.kirkby-stephen.com/ (Dr Stephen Walker).
[33] M. Gelling, *Signposts to the Past: Place names and the history of England* (Guildford, 1978) 234.
[34] C. Phythian-Adams, *Land of the Cumbrians* (Aldershot,1996), 53.
[35] E. Birley, 'A Christian monogram from Burgh under Stainmore', *CW2*, 61, (1961), 298; SMR1792 (British Museum holding).
[36] CAS (K), WDSO 185/17/4, 25 (6.1.2), re Manderley, Church Brough.
[37] Williamson, *Environment*, 26-7 (combining estate and parish in same boundary).
[38] J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2010), 33.

the sites strategic significance, have been studied and hinted at.[39] Sir Ian Richmond's suggestion that near Verteris there ought to be the site of a high status Roman villa for the Governor's procurator was credible and needed examination.[40] My own investigations suggested there was such a site.[41] Though now probably destroyed, it impacted the landscape with a gridded pattern of walls and terraces, offset from a perimeter marked by a broad straight track hidden within pasture fields parallel to the present lane. This ancient track was followed by the Brough Sowerby township boundary from the Powbrand Sike and up the hill to Limes Head. Here was a putative Roman 'Limes' (boundary, frontier),[42] which overlooked the site, suspected to be the site of a Roman fortlet, aligned between and visible from Verteris and Maiden Castle.[43] It was also at a nodal junction point for a Roman road recently confirmed by Lidar (see map 3).[44] Combined with a binary road system,[45] watchtowers, and signal stations, a centre of some regional activity and importance can be proposed for the environs around Brough. The road complexity is emphasised by the re-appraisal of a possible Roman route through (Market) Brough and a fortlet found at the entrance to the Augill gorge and its lead and silver mines, probably used to smelt the metals securely.[46]

Relics of this estate heritage may have influenced the Norman reorganisation, and the creation of the castle governance over the Honor of Brough. The Battle Hill roman road appears to have been re-purposed as a ride through Brough park, precedence passing to the

[39] E. Birley, 'Roman fort at Brough', *CW2*, 58 (1959), 45-50.
[40] I. A. Richmond, 'Roman leaden seals from Brough-under-Stainmore', *CW2*, 36 (1936), 104-125.
[41] H. Charlesworth, 'Fieldwork in the Stainmore pass' (unpublished).
[42] Queen's College Library, Oxford; J. Leland, *Itinerary*, V, 101 (fo. 116), (T. Hearne's edition 1711); O. A. W. Dilke, *The Roman Land Surveyors: An introduction to the Agrimensores*, (Plymouth, 1971), 99 (a Limes within a territory may indicate a colony).
[43] R. Farrer, 'Roman Signal stations over Stainmore and beyond', *Roman Frontier Studies*, 1979, BAR International Series, 71 (1980); Bulmer, *Dir. Westm.*, 164.
[44] www.romanroads.org/gazetteer/cumbria/M82-mc-brough.htm (accessed 2019, David Ratledge)
[45] Charlesworth, 'Medieval parks', 178.
[46] D. Ratledge, 'The Stainmore Roman Road: Maiden Castle to Brough, Margery 82,' *CWAAS News*, Summer 2022, 100, 8-10; Neil Oliver, *BBC: History of Ancient Britain, Age of Invasion* (forts as smelting sites).

Longrigg roman road (its former twin). Continuing strategic needs were emphasised in the survival of a pre-conquest Carl-stone at Market Brough.[47] Like the Carlton settlements near Carlisle and Penrith, royal estate centres and multiple estates are implied at these sites.[48] They were all sited on the southern perimeters of their settlements, and on the southbound road which led over Stainmore.

**The number nine and Nine Standards**

The Nine Standards are a group of drystone pillars on the Pennine skyline east of Kirkby Stephen near the modern borders of Cumbria and Yorkshire. Their size and bulk at *c.* 9 to *c.* 13 feet tall (*c.* 2.75-3-97 m.) makes them much larger than the usual moorland cairns. They lie directly on the course of the Stainmore boundary ridings which began in Winton township, as previously noted.

The Nine Standards marked the boundary of the Winton and Hartley townships, of Brough manor, and of seigneurial Stainmore. They extended the boundary of the multiple estate from the river Eden across the intervening ill-defined land aligned towards Nine Standards Rigg. They were also sited however to maximise their visibility from the valley and stood below the watershed, on the north side of Nine Standards Rigg, around half a mile from the county boundary. The Standards aligned onto ancient mounds, (which appeared on some maps), and which may have watched over prehistoric pasturage.[49]

The axis created by the Nine Standards' boundary arguably makes a visible linkage along the northwesterly course of the river Eden, from its junction with the river Belah and towards the vicinity of Ninekirks Church at the northern boundary of Westmorland. This may then

[47] CAS (C), DCHA/11/4/4, 33. (Carle-steayne).
[48] Winchester, 'The Multiple Estate', 98; H. P. R. Finberg, *Lucerna: studies of some problems of the early history of England*, (1964), 144-160.
[49] If these were barrows they may indicate a prehistoric boundary, or watch over important pastures – see Robert Wiseman, 'Archaeology on Furlough', *Current Archaeology*, issue 370, (Jan., 2021), 31.

suggest another territorial extension, of similar provenance to Nine Standards, and extending along the Eden to Ninekirks and the river Eamont (see map 4).

An apparent continuity with much of the modern boundaries, and with natural and topographical divisions therefore exists, though their use-origins remain obscure. It is into this space that a 'shire commons' (see note 26) may have extended and unified these territories. The grant of pasturage to Bleatarn Grange was explicitly made to the 'common pasture in Stainmore and in Felles'.[50] The literal meaning intended, included both seigneurial Stainmore and (probably) all of the forest of Stainmore within Westmorland. The Felles (or Fells) unless simply descriptive, may then refer to the Appleby territory which made up the other part of the shire. The names are then used to describe different topographies characteristic of the country (*pays*) around Appleby and Brough. Appleby is overlooked by Fell country, by name (north to south): Cross Fell, Little Dun Fell, Great Dun Fell, Knock Fell, Dufton Fell and Murton Fell. Steep fells are less prominent in the Stainmore area which is more characterised by stepped levels of moor land, more conducive to high upland settlement and farming. Together I suggest these areas may have constituted the territory of 'Applebyshire' now redundant, but possibly reformed (and revived?) in the 16th century as Athelstanmore on the Lhuyd/Ortelius map,[51] and including the Pennines up to the head of Mallerstang.

**The Stainmore of repute**

As noted, the name Stainmore attached to many aspects and areas of the landscape around Brough, across parishes, up to the edge of Appleby, into Kirkby Stephen parish and even into Bowes in Yorkshire (which still remembers it as Stainmore Forest). Part of what was under-stood as Stainmore was not so attached however, and is first heard of as 'of repute'. This included about half of what was supposed to be the Forest of Stainmore leading into

[50] Winchester, 'Shielings and Common Pasture', *Northern England*, 284; Burton, 'Charters of Byland Abbey', 37.
[51] Shannon, 'Westmorland on maps', 130

Mallerstang and which was later commonly known as the Forest of Mallerstang. However the sources repeat the assertions of Harrison (1577) and Machell (*c.* 1675) who declare that it began at the top of Mallerstang where Harrison gives it the particular appellation of 'Athelstanesmoore'.[52] This is apparently the completed picture given by the Byland charter when it applied its grant to 'anywhere to the furthest boundary of the common pasture which pertains to Westmorland'[53] so that the Stainmore 'of repute' could also apply to the Appleby district as previously suggested.[54] Professor Winchester commented that, 'The implication is that the whole barony of north Westmorland shared the wide Pennine moorland in that area,' but doubted its credentials for a shire-moor while suggesting something similar in terms of management.

The size and unity of this upland pre conquest commons in Westmorland is, I suggest, characterised by the access and liberty given to forest areas. A reason for this may be an enduring presence of settlement among the hills especially in the Stainmore *pays*, prior to any forest exclusions, and with customary rights then guaranteed by the Charter of the Forest in 1217.[55] Pre-existing settlement had to be accommodated within an existing pasturage system and within a custom of tenure based on military service, as was later proved in court by the tenants of Stainmore township (acting with others) in 1742.[56]

**Complimentary opposites?**

The apparently coincidental axis between Ninekirks and Nine Standards has already been noted and might be seen as a topic needing comment. The religious associations of Ninekirks are well known.[57] Recent aerial survey has discovered the imprint of an early

[52] W. Harrison, *Description of Britain,* (1577), in J. Johnson et. al., eds., *Holinshed's Chronicles,* (London, 1807-8), 1, 147.
[53] Winchester, 'Shielings and common pasture', *Northern England*, 284.
[54] CAS (K), WDHOTH/6/68/7.
[55] Harry Rothwell (ed.), *English Historical Documents, vol. 3, 1189-1327*, (London, 1975), No. 24, 337-40. Clause 1.
[56] TNA, C 11/1301/25, Tufton v. Earl of Thanet, 1742; CAS (K), WDDE 2/6/1.

monastic site at Ninekirks which caused Historic England to comment that 'The monastic site has traditional links with the Scottish saint Ninian and will facilitate further study of the spread of late fourth early fifth century AD Christian settlement to the upper Eden valley.' This has been likened to a similar nearby early monastery site at Hoddam in Scotland which has produced radio carbon dates ranging from the 7th to 11th centuries.[58] A Ninnianic linkage cannot be assumed but on the other hand these may be grounds to suspect a contemporary use of 'nine' from other place names within North Westmorland.

Perhaps then a religious significance might also be sought for Nine Standards? Dr Walker in his comprehensive book investigating the monument, enquired as to the significance of 'nine' in place names and was advised that it was rare and 'can usually be taken literally'.[59] He also examined possible religious connections to St Ninian and decided that the linkage was not impossible though the earliest documentary evidence for Nine Standards dated to about 1138/9. However he also found a 6th century description of a battle site at the 'toothed mountain',[60] (a British (?) victory of 504 CE against the Saxons) which may refer to the Nine Standards, suggesting origins pre 504 CE. He has recently researched this in further depth.[61]

If a religious purpose was intended a few observations might be made. The monument would probably have been a part of the Rogationtide ceremony over the three Cross Days prior to Ascension day.[62] This linkage and memory was eliminated at the Reformation when more obvious sculptural icons in the landscape were being removed (such as the ancient crosses which came to be housed in Kirkby Stephen church). Memory of the original meaning may

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[57] W. D. Simpson,'Brocavum, Ninekirks and Brougham', *CW2*, 58 (1958), 68-87; Historic England (online) – St Ninian's preconquest monastic site, site of nucleated medieval settlement, St Ninian's Church and churchyard'.
[58] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1016398 (accessed 12/09/2020).
[59] Walker, *Nine Standards*, 144, personal communication from Margaret Gelling.
[60] Walker, *Nine Standards*, 137-141.
[61] S. Walker, *Nine Standards Revisited: Earthworks, Geophysics and Dowsing*, (Whithorn, 2022), 37-62.
[62] S. Friar, *A Companion to the English Parish Church: History Handbooks*, (Stroud, 1998), 381-2.

have faded, and the effort of dismantling the stones rendered impractical due to the remote location. Lacking in recognition, the monuments meaning remained a riddle, though presumably it had been understandable to believers. Perhaps it was intended to present a challenge and a reminder, a riddle asking 'what am I?' but also saying 'you know me'.[63] Puzzles, puns, riddles and ambiguity were once the stock-in-trade of meaning, especially within the familiar landscape. This intellectual tradition might seek to challenge an observer when encountering an object, or the design on a building, church or cross, to question the viewers understanding of the intended meaning.[64]

In the early Church, stones often symbolised the individual members of the congregation, stressing that the community was the Church and not the buildings. Early name variants for 'standards' were 'standers' and 'stanners' which was used to mean a stander or pillar.[65] Pillars signified and personified the Apostles in the evangelical 'primitive' tradition. In the Jewish tradition they had referenced the pillars of God's Temple.[66] These associations might serve to inform concerning the character of the Nine Standards, but it has to be suspected that a specific meaning was intended, derived perhaps from the 'pillars of the Church'?

This leads to a more fundamental meaning as the 'nine pillars of the Church' were understood to come from St Pauls Epistle to the Galatians[67] chapter 5 verses 22-25. This describes the benefits (harvest, fruit) of a life lived in the Spirit of the Lord as: love, joy,

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[63] M. Wood, *In Search of the Dark Ages: A History of Anglo Saxon England,* (London, 2022), 103-104.
[64] J. Ramirez, *The Private Lives of the Saints: Power, Passion and Politics in Anglo Saxon England* (London, 2016), 210.
[65] A. Warrack, *A Scots Dialect Dictionary: comprising the words in use from the latter part of the seventeenth century to the present day,* (London/Edinburgh, 1930), 564, also 563, Stander – a pillar (as in A.H. Smith, *The Place Names of Westmorland,* pt. 2, 29.)
[66] D. Wenham & A. D. A. Moses, 'There are some standing here' Did they become the 'Reputed Pillars' of the Jerusalem Church? – Some reflections on Mark 9:1, Gal. 2:9 and the Transfiguration', *Novum Testamentum,* vol. 36, Fasc. 2 (Apr. 1994), 146-163.
[67] *Galatai*: Celtic (Turkey): tribal warriors, mercenaries 278BC (Livy), St Jerome noted thriving in 4th century AD spoke dialect akin to that at Trier; epistle tailored towards Celtic apostate sensibilities?

peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control. If correct then the proposition that Nine Standards was the 'toothed mountain' of 504 AD would help to date it within the range attributable to Ninnianic enquiry. It adds credence to the idea that Ninekirks and Nine Standards were roughly contemporary in origin and had a unity of purpose.

I am inclined to think that this architecture and organisation derived from the early Primitive Church tradition, before subsequent suppression and dilution by the politics and ambitions of the institutionalised Church. But ambiguity does remain, perhaps deliberately intended in order to preserve the integrity (and opacity to non-believers) of the message, personified and embedded anonymously in the landscape?

There may have been added reasons for this ambiguity if a conscious translation and assimilation was being made away from the old Celtic religion, from perhaps the Nine maidens or priestesses of the Celtic underworld.[68] It was not only a translation of metaphysics but a reform of construction from the monolithic (as found nearby in buried stone circles)[69] to pillars of stones. John Blair has recently drawn attention to possible compound meanings being incorporated for these reasons and purposes, readjusting the esoteric language in the landscape.[70] So the possibility has to be considered that 'Ninekirks' might reference not only St Ninian, (a tradition doubted by some),[71] but also the esoteric translation (9= IX, Roman I/J: Jesus, X: Christos), into Christchurch.[72] This is then complementary to Nine Standers, as representing both Christ's Apostles, and the fruits of a life lived in His Spirit, (with perhaps the reconciliation of some former customary beliefs?).

[68] K. Jones, *Spinning the wheel of Ana: A spiritual quest to find the British primal ancestors,* (Glastonbury, 1994), 224.
[69] S. Walker, *Nine Standards Revisited,* 174-176.
[70] J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society,* (Oxford, 2010), 474-475.
[71] G. P. Jones, 'Doubts about the Brittonic derivations of some Westmorland place names', *CW2,* 73 (1973), 358.
[72] A further exposition of Christchurch and places which may trace the mission are discussed elsewhere.

There are other uses of 'nine' nearby, for which meanings have not yet been found: Nine holes, and Nine creases near the Rerecross and the A66.[73] Like Nine Standards both are located at some distance inside the county boundary as if in a supportive role for a dialogue within rather than without the boundaries. I suggest that 'nine-holes' references the game of that name which was also known as merels or nine man's morris, an ancient game of strategy popular in medieval monastic cloisters but probably pre-Roman in origin, (from the Latin merellus: gamepiece).[74] There were other versions using six and twelve, but nine was popular as it was regarded as a protection against evil. This tradition may have been echoed in the Graeco-Roman gravestone known as the Brough stone, found built into the porch of St. Michael's parish church and therefore probably from the cemetery belonging to the fort (and possibly within the later churchyard). It is decorated with what are described as 'two squares, each neatly divided into eight triangles, suggestive of a gaming board'.[75] The name 'nine creases' may derive from the Scots dialect 'creech'[76] for a stony defile, which is a good description of the rocky terrain which it names, in the neck of the pass near to the top of Stainmore.

**Conclusions**

There was probably a territory created between Ninekirks and Nine Standards dating from perhaps as early as the 5th or 6th century, established in the early Christian primitive tradition. This may indicate a polity founded on aspirations to the Pauline principles of the Roman Church, of the kind usually derived from an evangelical mission of conversion or reformation. This is more likely to have been the case than the theory that it was a later revival of a Ninnianic tradition, and is supported by Dr Walker's latest research into the 'toothed mountain'. This is tentative, but it does perhaps provide a working hypothesis for further study.

[73] A. H. Smith, *Place Names of Westmorland*, 2, 78.
[74] Warrack, *Chamber's Scots Dialect Dictionary*, 380.
[75] The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (online), GR. 1. 1884. (note also the place name Penistone nearby)
[76] Warrack, *Chamber's Scots Dialect Dictionary*, 110.

The boundaries discussed in this analysis are also consistent with the proposition that a ‘multiple estate’ was centred on Brough which itself may have derived from an estate dating to the Roman period. As part of a wider territory Stainmore may have been constituted as a tribal (or sub-tribal) area and prehistoric precursor to the later unity discernible in the consolidated pasturage of the (multiple) estate.

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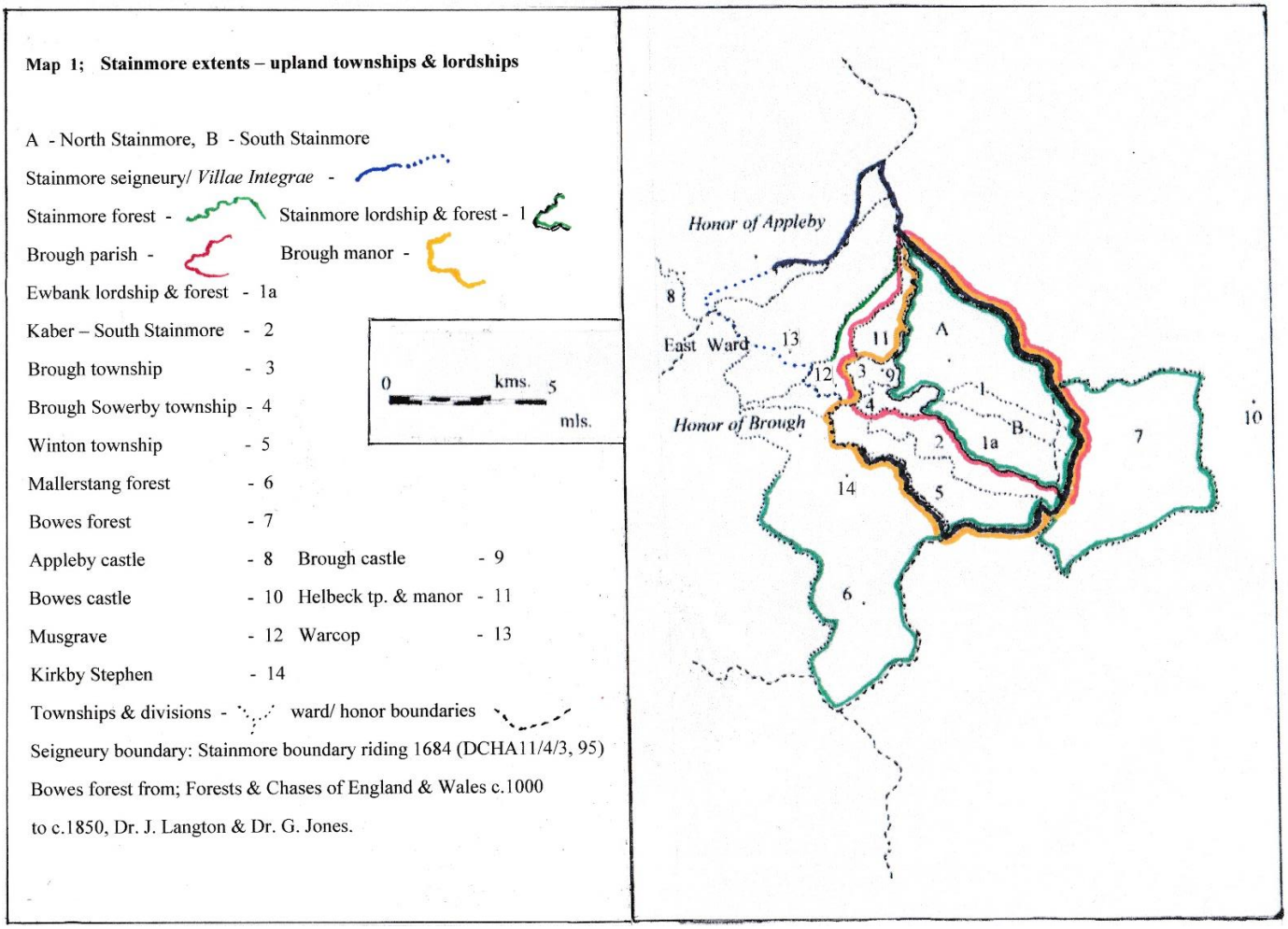
With thanks to Dr Sarah Rose and Dr Fiona Edmonds for their help, guidance and advice.

## Appendix 1

## Map 1



## Map 2

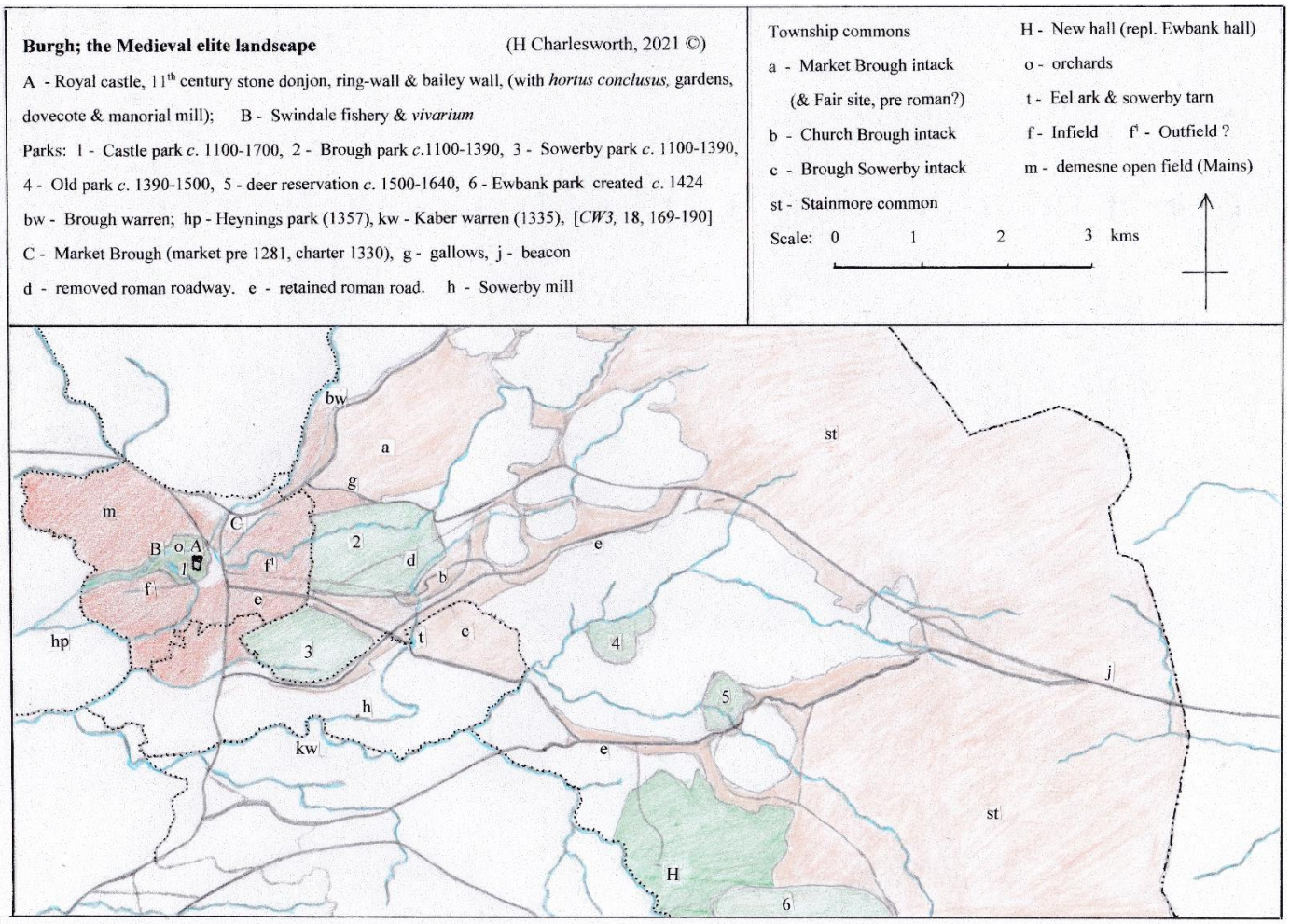
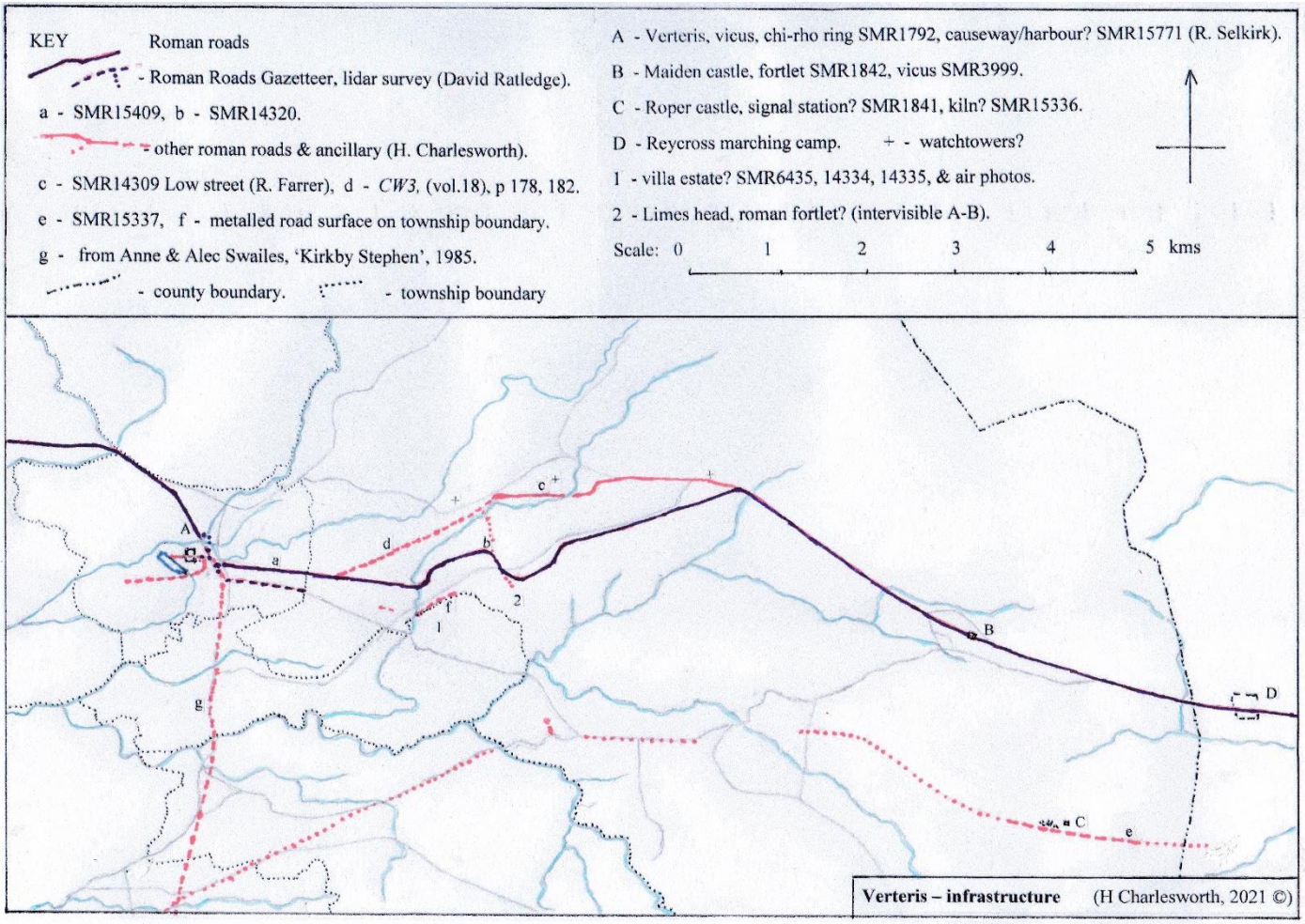


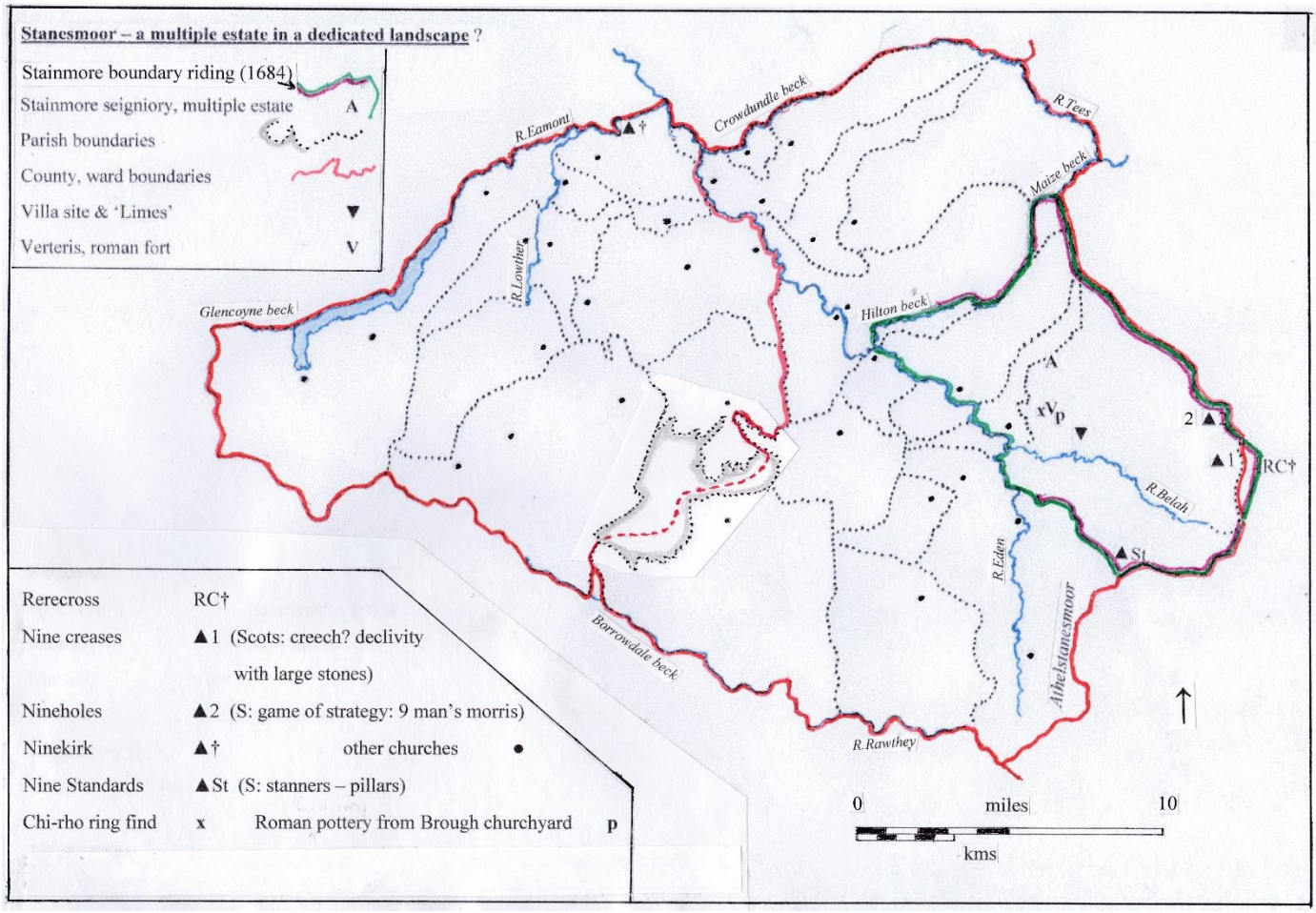

**Table** - Clifford inheritance - claims and entries

| Letters of Attorney | existing parks 1203 | status | notes | pastures & some parks post 1203 | status | notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1637 | Sowerby Park | lordship of Sowerby | now tenanted | | | |
| | Brough Park | Brough castle demesne | now tenanted | a meadow nr. Pendragon castle | forest of Mallerstang | |
| | park of Whinfell | within forest of Whinfell | (later Old Park de Whinfell) | one close pasture | lordship of Woodside | in possession of John Pattison |
| | Little Park | Browham castle demesne | | 1632 pasture called Langton Fields | Appleby castle demesne,St Nicholas | 1637 possession of Edward Guy |
| | Castle Park | St Lawrence parish Appleby | | parcel of ground Flack Brigged | | (later park) poss of Francis Earl of Cumb. |
| 1628 | Gatehouse of castle of Brough | Castle, lordship & manor of Burgh | (later Castle park) | parcel in Morehouses nr. 3 Brethren tree | forest & park of Whinfell | 1632 in possession of Simon Pattison (later Outpark) |

## Map 3


KEY
Roman roads
- Roman Roads Gazetteer, lidar survey (David Ratledge).
a - SMR15409, b - SMR14320.
- other roman roads & ancillary (H. Charlesworth).
c - SMR14309 Low street (R. Farrer), d - CW3, (vol.18), p 178, 182.
e - SMR15337, f - metalled road surface on township boundary.
g - from Anne & Alec Swailes, 'Kirkby Stephen', 1985.
- county boundary.
- township boundary
A - Verteris, vicus, chi-rho ring SMR1792, causeway/harbour? SMR15771 (R. Selkirk).
B - Maiden castle, fortlet SMR1842, vicus SMR3999.
C - Roper castle, signal station? SMR1841, kiln? SMR15336.
D - Reycross marching camp. + - watchtowers?
1 - villa estate? SMR6435, 14334, 14335, & air photos.
2 - Limes head, roman fortlet? (intervisible A-B).
Scale: 0 1 2 3 4 5 kms
Verteris – infrastructure (H Charlesworth, 2021 ©)

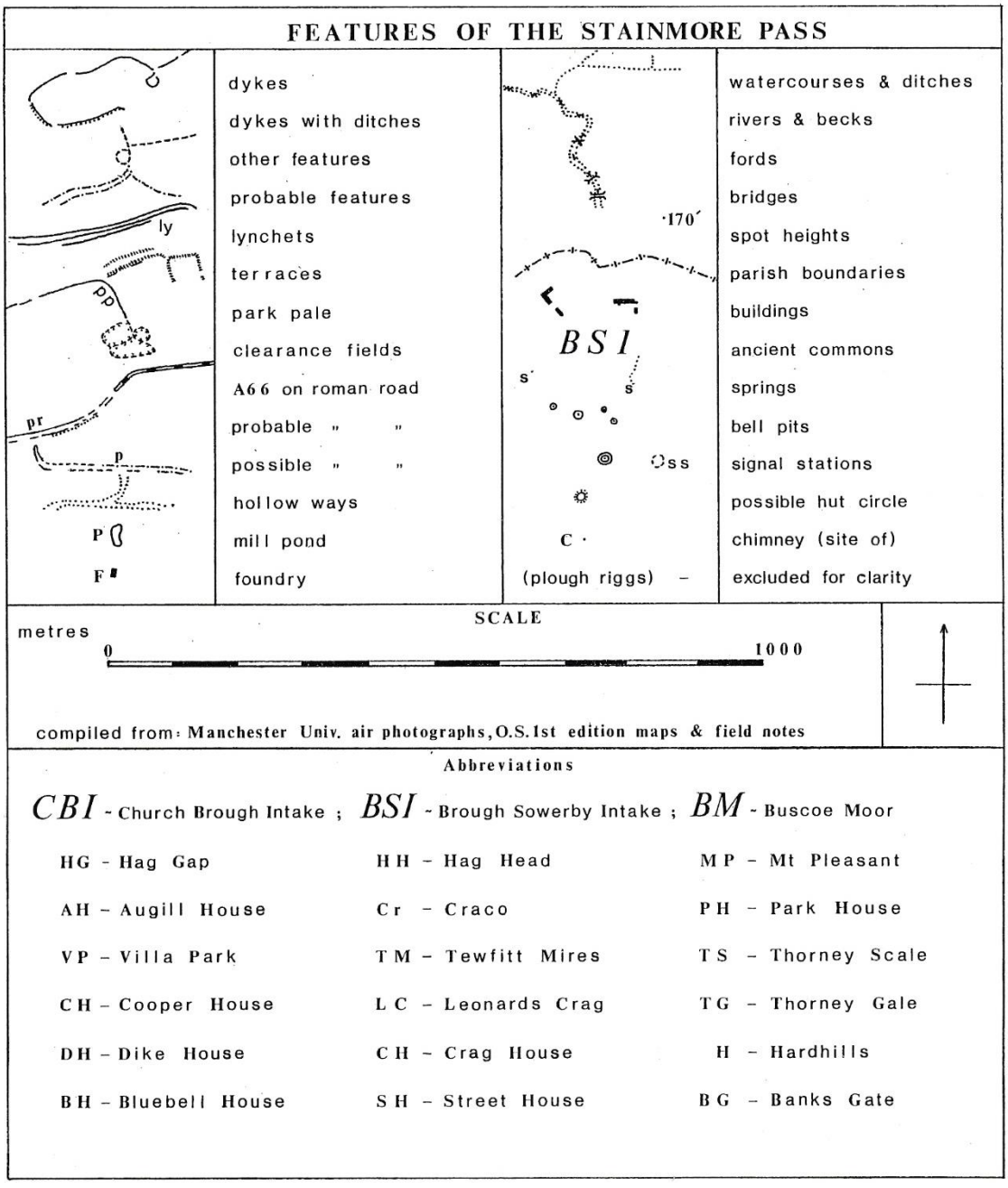
## Map 4


Stanesmoor – a multiple estate in a dedicated landscape ?
Stainmore boundary riding (1684)
Stainmore seigniory, multiple estate A
Parish boundaries
County, ward boundaries
Villa site & 'Limes'
Verteris, roman fort V
R.Eamont
Crowdundle beck
R.Tees
Maize beck
R.Lowther
Glencoyne beck
Hilton beck
A
xVp
2 ▲2
▲1
RC†
R.Belah
R.Eden
▲St
Borrowdale beck
Ahelstanesmoor
R.Rawthey
Rerecross RC†
Nine creases ▲1 (Scots: creech? declivity with large stones)
Nineholes ▲2 (S: game of strategy: 9 man's morris)
Ninekirk ▲† other churches •
Nine Standards ▲St (S: stanners – pillars)
Chi-rho ring find x Roman pottery from Brough churchyard p
0 miles 10
kms

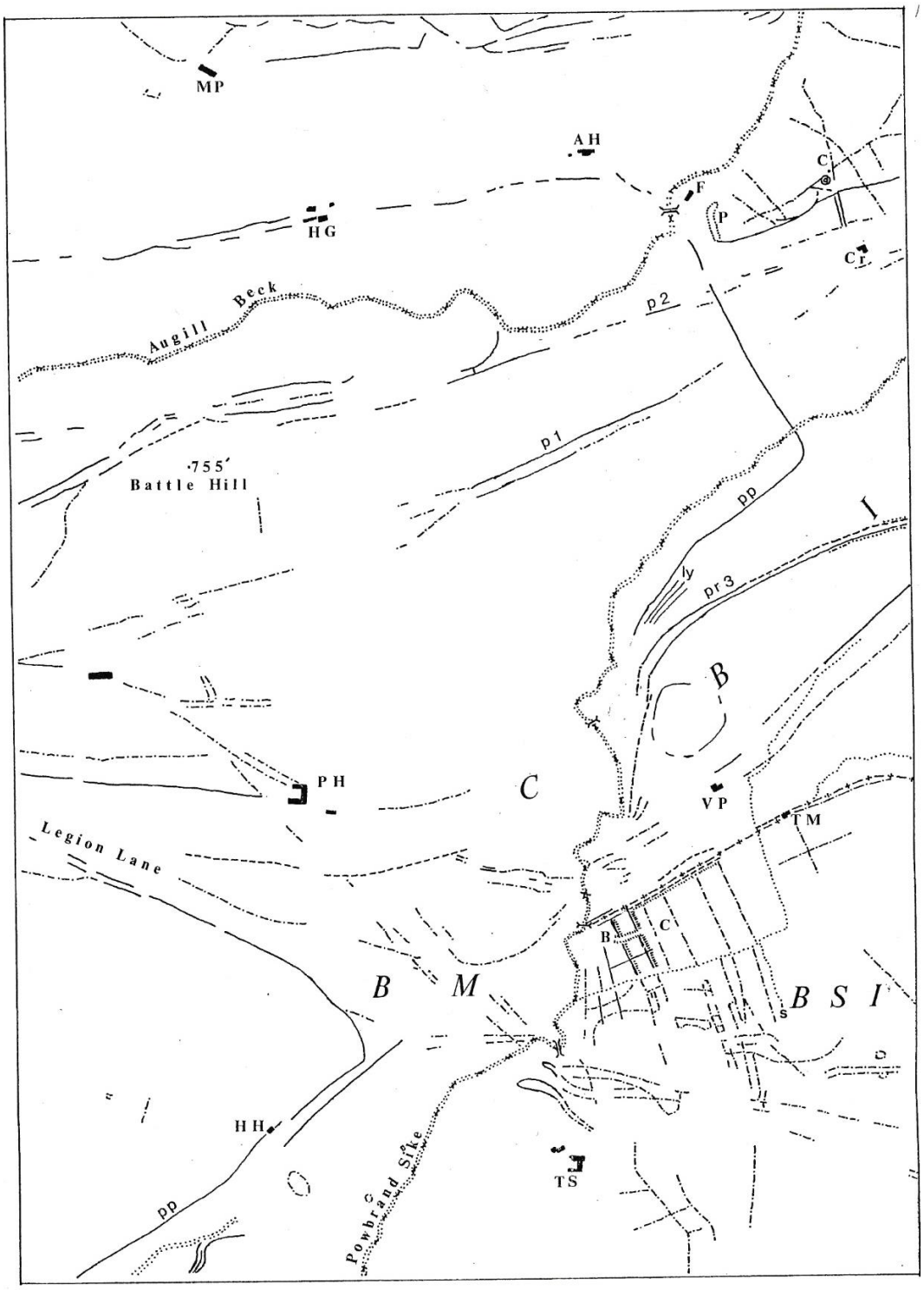
## Appendix 2

### Extracts from 'Features of the Stainmore Pass'

The following maps are intended to support those in appendix one, with information taken from air photography loaned in 1985 from Manchester University (with thanks). The article was unpublished, but as much has since disappeared it may assist modern study surveys using Lidar technology. n.b. – an article was submitted to CWAAS for publication in c. 1984 and a revision in 1985.




[n.b. the maps are unlikely to retain fidelity with the above scale]


MP
AH
C
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Battle Hill
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ly
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PH
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VP
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Legion Lane
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B M
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Powbrand Sike
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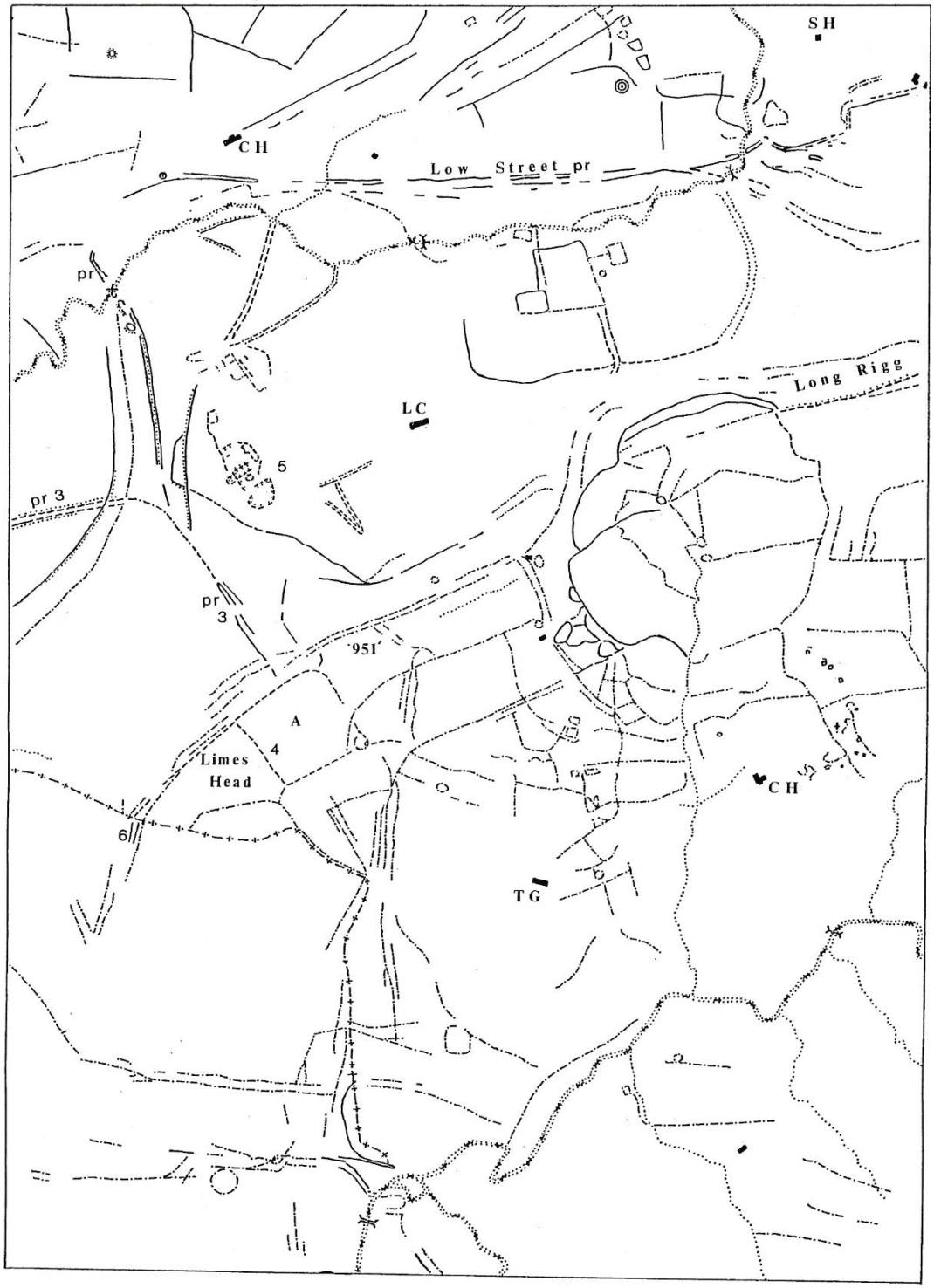
Map 2


SH
CH
Low Street pr
pr
Long Rigg
LC
5
pr 3
pr
3
951'
A
4
Limes
Head
6
CH
TG

Map 3

It was alleged that the air photography source material for the above maps could not be found. It also has to be admitted that there has been an effort to weed out material from the national collection of air photos in the decades since the survey work.

In an effort to compensate for these problems and provide some alternative and substantive evidential support for the maps I enclose copies from my own archive collection and apologise for the reduced quality of the copies transferred to digital. The air photograph (ref. 566/72 240) is © Crown copyright Ordnance Survey, All rights reserved.

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The area of Tewfitt Mires and Powbrand sike (‘Brandr’s pool); probably the site of Sowerby Tarn. The suggested villa building is the feature glimpsed as parch marks of two ‘aisles’ in the middle near the bottom of the picture.

Enlargements –

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View from Limes Head

View across terraced ‘fields’ beside Powbrand sike

Wall foundations showing breadth. Terraced downwards to the left, with gap and impoverished hedge showing continuation into the next field.

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