



Northumberland County Council

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL
RIGHTS OF WAY SUB-COMMITTEE
13 February 2019

REVIEW OF THE DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY ALLEGED PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY NO 6 PARISH OF MIDDLETON

Report of the Executive Director of Local Services
Cabinet Member: Councillor Glen Sanderson, Environment & Local Services

Purpose of report

In this report, the Council is asked to give consideration to all the relevant evidence gathered in support and rebuttal of a proposal to upgrade to public bridleway, Parish of Middleton Public Footpath No 6 from existing Public Bridleway No 1 west of Greymare Farm in a general south-easterly direction passing to the south of Lower & Upper Swinhoe Lakes to join the U2038 road north-west of Swinhoe Farm.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council agree that:

there is insufficient evidence to indicate that public vehicular rights or public bridleway rights have on the balance of probability been proven to exist over the route

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 By virtue of Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, the County Council is required to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and make modification orders upon the discovery of evidence, which shows that the map and statement need to be modified.
- 1.2 The relevant statutory provisions which apply to adding and upgrading a public right of way on the Definitive Map and Statement based on historical

documentary evidence is Section 53(3)(c)(ii) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, which requires the County Council (as Surveying Authority) to modify the Definitive Map and Statement following:

“the discovery by the authority of evidence which (when considered with all other relevant evidence available to them) shows:

“that a highway shown in the map and statement as a highway of a particular description ought to be there shown as a highway of a different description;”

- 1.3 All the relevant statutory provisions and competing rights and interests have been considered in making this report. The recommendation is in accordance with the law and proportionate, having regard to individuals' rights and the public interest.

2.0 PUBLIC EVIDENCE

- 2.1 In December 2017, Edward Liddle of Steel, Hexham submitted an application to amend the Definitive Map and Statement by upgrading to public bridleway, Parish of Middleton Public Footpath No 6 from a point marked P on Public Bridleway No 1, 760 metres west of Greymare Farm in a general south-easterly direction for a distance of 2200 metres passing to the south of Lower & Upper Swinhoe Lakes to a point marked Q on the U2038 road 150 metres north-west of Swinhoe Farm.
- 2.2 The application is supported by historical evidence including Fryer's Map of 1820, the 1st Edition 6" & 25" O.S. extracts and accompanying Book of Reference, the 1st Edition 6" O.S. Map of 1866, the 1st Edition 1" O.S. Map (revised) of 1894, the 2nd Edition 6" O.S. map of 1899, an 1873 Highways Diversion for Middleton & Detchant townships, the Finance Act Plan of 1910 with the accompanying Book of Reference and the New Popular 1" O.S. map of 1945.
- 2.3 The application was also accompanied by the following submission:

Swinhoe

The application route

“1. The route follows the full length of public footpath 238/006 in the parish of Middleton. It can be seen on OS Explorer 340.

“2. It begins close to Swinhoe Farm (A) at grid ref NU 083 350 at the junction between public bridleway 238/013 and a minor tarmac road, the U2038, and travels north west to join public bridleway 238/001, west of Greymare Farm (D), at grid ref NU 067 358.

“3. It starts as a hedged lane between fields. It then continues as a stone track through the woods (B) along the edge of Swinhoe Lake. At the end of

the woods it passes through a field gate (c) on to rough pasture where the line of the old track can still be clearly seen, though it is now grass covered.

“4. It is approx 4m wide.

See photographs

Documentary evidence

1. 1820 Fryer’s County map

“The approximate line of the application route can be seen on this map. It is shown as an ‘other road’ as opposed to a turnpike road.

See extract

2. 1836 & 1836 Tithe Awards for Middleton township and Detchant township

These are not available at Woodhorn

3. 1866 1st ed OS, scale 1:2,500, the 25”

Sheet XV/8

“This sheet is unavailable at Woodhorn and is also missing from www.old-maps.co.uk The sheet has been seen at the British Library and the extracts are from there. The route is in the parish of Belford and the townships of Middleton and Detchant. The township boundary crosses the lane between A and B, with Middleton, to the east and Detchant to the west.

The plot numbers are as follows with their land use as described in the OS Book of Reference for these two townships in the parish of Belford:

Middleton township	Plot 70	Arable & roads
Detchant township	Plot 97	Arable, streams & roads
	Plot 100	Arable, rough pasture, roads & streams

See extracts

4. 1866 OS 1st ed scale 1:10,560, the 6”

Roll 4

“The full length of the application route is shown, the eastern part as an enclosed lane and the western part unfenced, as today.

See extract

5. 1894 OS 1st ed revised, the 1” and 1899 OS 2nd ed, the 6”

NLS

“These extracts from the National Library of Scotland map collection website on which the alleged route has been highlighted in yellow show clearly that it was a recognised part of the landscape in the late 19th century.

See extract

6. 1873 Highways diversions Middleton & Detchant townships QRH/213

"This document is titled '*Plan showing planned diversions of a Public Highway in the townships of Middleton and Detchant. Parish of Belford and County of Northumberland.*' Although the road subject to the diversion is not the alleged route, it joins the road leading to Swinhoe farm. This road is labelled '*to Detchant Buildings/Swinhoe Farmstead.*' On the plan at this point (A), the first part of the alleged route going in a northwesterly direction is shown. This suggests it was a public road, otherwise there would have been no need for it to be included on a formal plan concerning public highways.

See extract

7. 1899 2nd ed OS, scale 1:10,560, the 6" sheet number XV NE

"The full length of the application route is clearly shown. It is not labelled FP or BR but it is shown with spot heights and bench marks which suggests that it was of a higher status, probably a cart track or minor public road. It is joined at the north end by a route labelled 'BR' which further supports the view that it was either a bridle road or public cart road. This 'BR' route is a recorded public bridleway today.

See extract

8. 1910 Finance Act plan & field book for the parish of Belford NRO 436/XV.8

"On the plan the section of the alleged route from Swinhoe Farm (A) to the west end of Virginhill Plantation (C) is shown as a '**white road**' with a broken brace, separated from the adjacent hereditaments belonging to identified landowners. This indicates that it was not subject to development tax and so was likely to have been a public road.

Beyond that point where the route follows the edge of open ground it is shown to be in plot 217 in Detchant parish. On page 15 of the field book for that parish **NRO 2000/31** it is shown that the owner of that plot is Major Leather of Middleton Hall and the occupier is Foster Bros of Grey Mare Farm and that a **deduction** for 'rights of way or user' **of £65 has been allowed..**

See extracts

9. 1945 OS New Popular edition, scale 1:63,360, the 1"

"The application route is clearly shown on this much later OS map and is not labelled as a FP or BR.

Conclusion

"The evidence above suggests that the application route has been known as a public road from the nineteenth century. Please can you investigate whether the public footpath along it should be upgraded to public bridleway or restricted byway?"

3. LANDOWNER EVIDENCE

3.1 By emails dated 28th March and 4th June 2018, Claire Nixon of Swinhoe Farm responded with the following comments.

- i) "Yes I meant 238/007 as we know this issue was raised in the 1990's by Sustrans when Greenwich Hospital owned the estate and was managed by J M Clark and Partners of Haltwhistle. No evidence was found to prove that the footpath number 6 was anything other than a footpath however 238/007 was upgraded to a bridleway as that was the road from Detchant to Middleton in 2000.
- ii) "We the Nixon family (J M Nixon & Son) object to the upgrading of the footpath to a bridleway. We have been to Woodhorn and barter books (where I found books on the history of Middleton Hall Estate and the Leather family).
- iii) "Please find evidence of Middleton Hall Estate which was purchased by Mr John Leather in 1858 (" A History of Northumberland"; issued under the direction of the Northumberland County History Committee, printed and published by Andrew Reid sons & co London: Have the Estate being purchased in 1857 by Mr J Towerlerton Leather for £83,000), which was his Tree Model where gentlemen would travel up from London on the Train to visit his estate. Looking at his woodlands from the seedling, planted tree to felling and then back to the sawmill! on the internal railway line (made with German Railway lines) the Leather Family installed. The Swinhoe Lakes were originally a quarry which was filled in and used as a gentlemanS swimming pool.
- iv) "The internal track from the farm to the end of the wood past the Swinhoe Lakes was installed for a forestry track to access and remove felled timber.
- v) "Fryers County Map of 1820 - No evidence of any road - swinhoe lakes are not on this map!
- vi) "All of the **OS Maps** (1866, 1894, 1899, 1945, including book of reference) are not evidence as they clearly state **NB: The representation on this map of a road track or footpath is no evidence of the existence of a right of way!**
- vii) "The 1873 Highways Diversion for Middleton and Detchant township - does not show any road however it shows the existing bridle path - CRB No 7.
- viii) "The Finance Act Plan of 1910 shows the existing bridle path - CRB No 7.
- ix) "I will forward you the rest of the evidence of the estate. Please let me know if you require anymore evidence as I have also read a lot of books on the history of the estate."

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 In March 2018, the County Council carried out a consultation with the Parish Council, known owners and occupiers of the land and the local representatives of the “prescribed and local organisations” listed in the Council’s “Code of Practice on Consultation for Public Path Orders”.
- 4.2 By letter in March 2018 the County Access & Bridleways Officer for the British Horse Society responded to the consultation with the following comments:

“Much of this route, currently a public footpath, is a wide stone track through woodland. When it comes out onto rough pasture, the line of the old road is clear to see as it is elevated, levelled and with stone edges. It is regularly used by cyclists, which explains why there is now a sign saying ‘No cyclists’. It forms part of a good network of public bridleways in the area, part of which is the promoted route St Cuthbert’s Way.”

5. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

- 5.1 A search has been made, relating to historical evidence and the following copies are enclosed for consideration.

1769 Armstrong’s County Map

There is no evidence of a track approximating the claimed route.

1820 Fryer’s County Map

There is no evidence of a track approximating the claimed route.

1828 Greenwood’s County Map

There is no evidence of a track over the claimed route.

1820-32 Cary’s Map

There is no evidence of a track approximating the claimed path.

1860 1st Edition O.S. Map: Scale 1:2,500 & Book of Reference (Applicant’s Plan)

There is evidence of a track over the entire length of the claimed route coloured ochre.

The path has no specific number but crosses the field parcels numbered 70, 97 & 100 which are annotated in the Book of Reference as ‘Arable, Rough Pasture Streams & Roads’.

- 1865 1st Edition O.S. Map: Scale 1:10,560
- There is evidence of a track over the entire length of the claimed route.
- 1899 2nd Edition O.S. Map: Scale 1:10,560
- There is evidence of a track over the entire length of the claimed route, enclosed from point Q north to where it leaves Virgin Hill Wood.
- 1925 3rd Edition O.S. Map: Scale 1:10,560
- There is evidence of a track over the entire length of the claimed route, enclosed from point Q north to where it leaves Virgin Hill Wood where it is identified as a Bridle Road (BR) and annotated with Bench Marks'.
- 1956 Bridges & Roads Committee Minutes
- The alleged route was included as a bridleway on the 'Draft' definitive map. Objections to the inclusion of the route were submitted by the then landowner Greenwich Hospital Estates and following a hearing by a member of the Local Bar (J R Johnson), a report was considered by the Bridges and Roads Committee at their meeting on 18th June 1956. The Committee approved the recommendation that Detchant 6 and Middleton 5 be shown as footpaths instead of Bridleways.
- 1957 Provisional Edition O.S. Map: Scale 1:10,560
- There is evidence of a track over the entire length of the claimed route, enclosed from point Q north to where it leaves Virgin Hill Wood.
- 1969 Provisional Edition O.S. Map: Scale 1:10,560
- There is evidence of a track over the entire length of the claimed route, enclosed from point Q north to the south of Lower Swinhoe Lake.

6. SITE INVESTIGATION

- 6.1 A site visit is scheduled prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

7. COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE DRAFT REPORT

- 7.1 In January 2019, a draft copy of the report was circulated to the applicant and known owners / occupiers of the land who responded to the consultation.

8. DISCUSSION

8.1 Section 53(3)(c)(ii) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, requires the County Council to modify the Definitive Map when evidence is discovered which, when considered with all other relevant evidence available to them shows:

that a highway shown in the map and statement as a highway of a particular description ought to be there shown as a highway of a different description;

8.2 When considering an application or proposal for a modification order, Section 32 of the Highways Act, 1980 provides for “any map, plan or history of the locality or other relevant document” to be tendered in evidence and such weight to be given to it as considered justified by the circumstances, including the antiquity of the tendered document, the status of the person by whom and the purpose for which it was made or compiled, and the custody in which it has been kept and from which it is produced.

8.3 The representation of a path or track on an Ordnance Survey map is not conclusive evidence that it is a public right of way. It is only indicative of its physical existence at the time of the survey.

8.4 Neither Armstrong, Fryer, Greenwood or Cary’s County Maps appear to depict a track over the full length of the alleged route. The applicant suggests that Fryer’s map depicts an approximation of the route but the scale is such that the route could also be judged to follow Public Footpath No 5 further to the west.

8.5 All of the Ordnance Survey plans from the 1st Edition map c.1860 to the plan in 1952 depict a track over the full length of the claimed route. It is also noted that the path is annotated as a Bridle Road on the 1925 plan suggesting that the surveyors of the route considered the physical appearance of the route was likened to a bridleway rather than just a footpath.

8.6 While the information relating to the 1910 Finance Act is valuable there is no direct correlation linking the financial deduction for public rights of way in the Valuation Books to the tracks identified within the plots on the Valuation Plans. Also the deduction gives no indication as to the status of any presumed right of way.

8.7 While the applicant accepts that the 1873 Highways Diversion Order is not concerned with the alleged route he also appears to have misinterpreted the plan as the stretch of track highlighted by the applicant in red as A - B, on the submitted plan, is not part of the alleged route.

8.8 The evidence submitted by the landowner giving an account of Detchant Wood and the Middleton Estate provides a useful insight into the area in the mid 1920’s. While the article is focused on Detchant Wood further to the north-east of the alleged route, it is interesting to note the comment that ‘good roads suitable for heavy timber haulage are being systematically constructed,

and these intersect the whole of Detchant Wood. The plots are drained by deep ditches cut on either side of the roadway, and other ditches carry off the drainage water into Buckton Burn”.

- 8.9 On the Ordnance Survey plan of 1925 evidence can be seen of the ‘Light (Forest) Railway’ which was mentioned in the report of the meeting and visit at Middleton Hall in 1924. The railway ran through Swinhoe Farm to the east of Swinhoe Lakes. The ‘1914 Plantation’ also mentioned in the various newspaper articles, although not identified on the O.S. plan is likely to abut the alleged path. The article also includes the quote ‘the road-making policy is continuous. Lakes have been damned by staff labour, bridges have been built, and, in short the whole estate is as self-contained as it possibly can be”.
- 8.10 Upon inspection of the documents for the preparation of the Definitive Map and Statement it is apparent that although the alleged route was not identified on the ‘survey’ document it was included on the ‘Draft’ map as a bridleway. However, when the then landowner, the Greenwich Hospital Estates, objected to the path being included on the Definitive Map as a bridleway and following a hearing, it was determined that the path should only be added as a footpath, and not a bridleway. The County Council is unaware of the nature of the evidence produced at the Hearing but it must be assumed that the evidence was sufficiently relevant for the proposed status of the route to be downgraded.
- 8.11 It is accepted that there is some historical evidence (mainly the Ordnance Survey Maps) to suggest that the route may have higher rights than public footpath. However, given the historical information relating to the forestry management in the area it is not surprising that the Ordnance Survey plans reflect routes/tracks that could accommodate the timber growing industry on the estate. Although there is evidence of commercial forestry activity within the estate there is little evidence to suggest that a track existed prior to the first edition Ordnance Survey plan of 1865.
- 8.12 Most applications are determined using the lower level ‘reasonably alleged’ test. This current application might satisfy such a test. However, because this alleged bridleway route is already recorded as a public footpath, the sub-committee must be satisfied that any bridleway/restricted byway rights exist after applying the higher level ‘balance of probability’ test.
- 8.13 In the light of the evidence submitted it appears that the historical evidence is insufficient to demonstrate that, on the balance of probabilities, public bridleway or public vehicular rights have been proven to exist over the route.

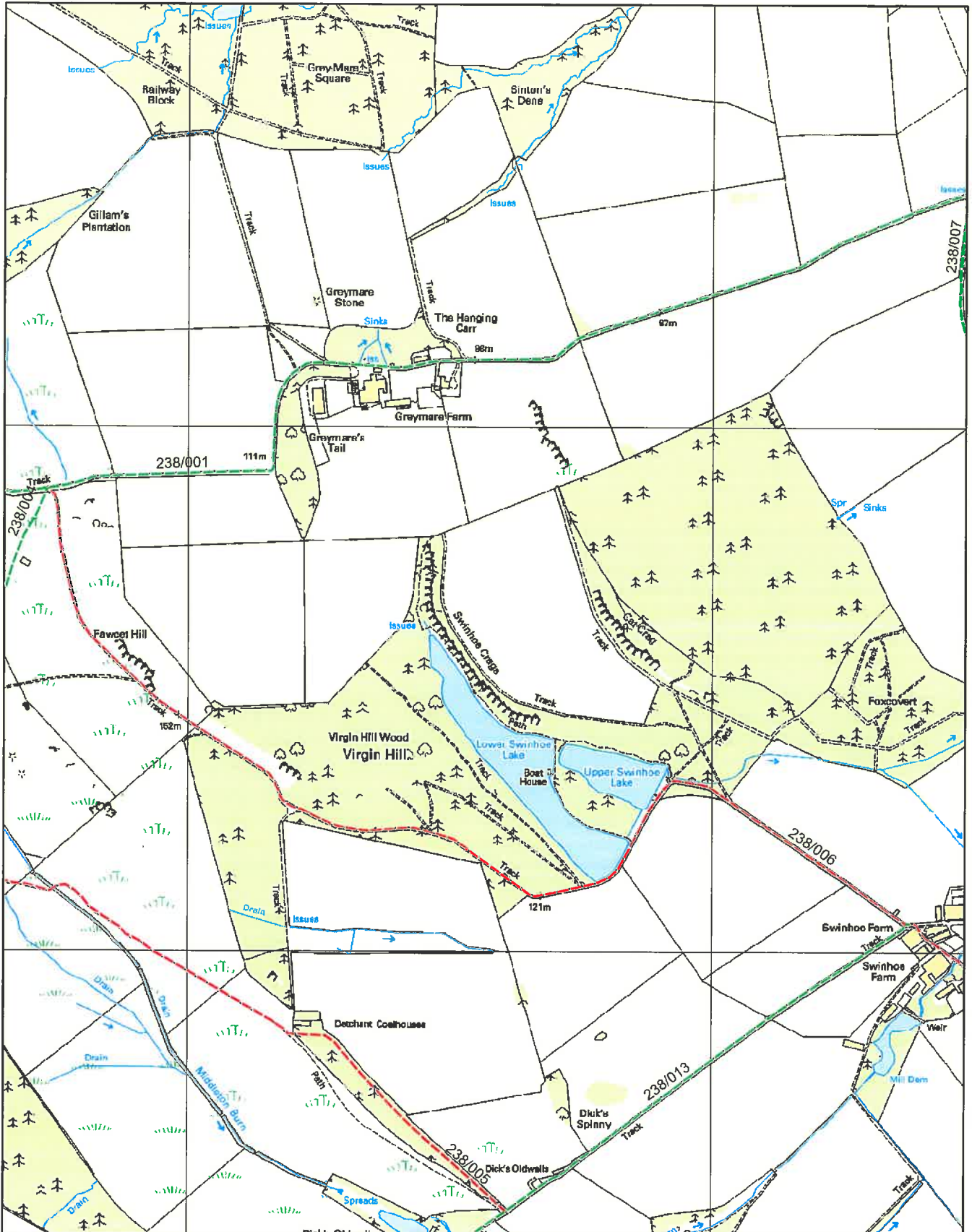
9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 In the light of the evidence submitted it appears that public vehicular rights or public bridleway rights have not on the balance of probability been proven to exist over the route.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Services Group File B/38/6z

Report Author John McErlane – Definitive Map Officer
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John.McErlane@northumberland.gov.uk




Northumberland
 County Council

Contact: John McErlane
 Tel: 01670 624136
 Email: John.McErlane@northumberland.gov.uk

Legend

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Byway Open to All Traffic

This is a computer generated extract of the Working Copy of the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way

Scale: 1:10,000

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PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981, PART III
DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT FOR THE COUNTY OF NORTHUMBERLAND

APPLICATION FOR MODIFICATION ORDER

Former Borough/District BERWICK

Parish Middleton Rights of Way No. _____
(on Definitive Map)

To: Asset & Infrastructure Manager
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

I/We EDWARD LIDDLE (Name)

of Chapel House Steel (Address)
HEXHAM NE47 0HD

hereby apply for an order, under Section 53 (2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, modifying the Definitive Map and Statement for the County of Northumberland, by:-

1. Adding the (footpath) (bridleway) (restricted byway) (byway open to all traffic) (*Delete whichever is inapplicable*)

from _____

to _____

2. (Upgrading) (~~downgrading~~) to a (footpath) (bridleway) (~~restricted byway~~) (~~byway open to all traffic~~) the (footpath) (bridleway) (~~restricted byway~~) (~~byway open to all traffic~~) (*Delete whichever is inapplicable*)

from NU 083 350 close to Swinhoe Farm

to NU 067 358 west of Greywade Farm

3. Deleting the (footpath) (bridleway) (restricted byway) (byway open to all traffic) (*Delete whichever is inapplicable*)

from _____

to _____

4. (Varying) (adding to) the particulars relating to the (footpath) (bridleway) (restricted byway) (byway open to all traffic) (*Delete whichever is inapplicable*)

from _____

to _____

by providing that _____
as shown on the plan attached.

I/We attach copies of the following documentary evidence (including statements of witness) set out overleaf in support of this application.

Dated 1st December 2017 _____

NOTE: This application **must** be accompanied by a map showing the right(s) of way applied for. Legally such a map must be at a scale of not less than 2½" to 1 mile, but 6" to 1 mile (being the scale at which the Definitive Map is to be prepared and maintained) will normally be preferable.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981, PART III
DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT FOR THE COUNTY OF NORTHUMBERLAND

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE OF NOTICE OF
APPLICATION FOR MODIFICATION ORDER

Former Borough/District BERWICK

Parish MIDDLETON

To: Asset & Infrastructure Manager
Local Services Group
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
NE61 2EF

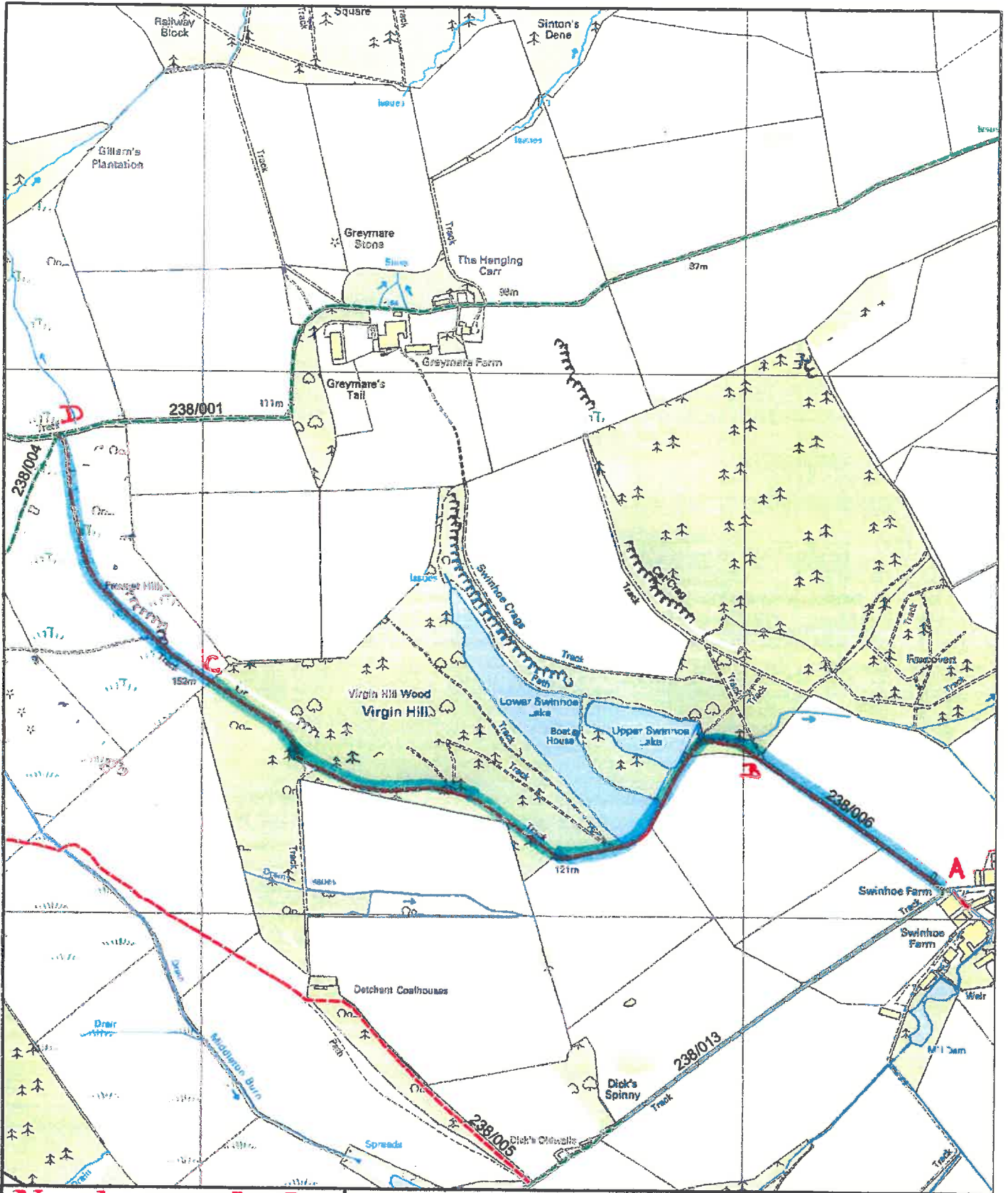
I/We (Name)

of (Address)

hereby certify that the requirements of Paragraph 2 of Schedule 14 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 have been complied with, and each of the following landowners and occupiers affected by the claim have been notified.

Name	Address
..... Mr A Nixon Swinhoe Farm, Middleton,
..... Belford, NE 70 7LJ
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Dated 1st December 2017 Signed



NORTHUMBERLAND
 Northumberland County Council

 Infrastructure Local Services
 County Hall Morpeth Northumberland
 NE61 2EF Telephone 0345 600 6400

Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981

 Claimed Public Right of Way

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.

Former District	Berwick	Parish	Middleton	Scale	1:10,000
Def. Map. No.		O.S. Map		Date	

Swinhoe

The application route

1. The route follows the full length of public footpath 238/006 in the parish of Middleton. It can be seen on OS Explorer 340.
2. It begins close to Swinhoe Farm (A) at grid ref NU 083 350 at the junction between public bridleway 238/013 and a minor tarmac road, the U 2038, and travels north west to join public bridleway 238/001, west of Greymare Farm (D), at grid ref NU 067 358.
3. It starts as a hedged lane between fields. It then continues as a stone track through the woods (B) along the edge of Swinhoe Lake. At the end of the woods it passes through a field gate (C) on to rough pasture where the line of the old track can still be clearly seen, though it is now grass covered.
4. It is approx 4m wide.
See photographs

Documentary evidence

1. 1820 Fryer's county map

The approximate line of the application route can be seen on this map. It is shown as an 'other road' as opposed to a turnpike road.

See extract

2. 1836 & 1836 Tithe awards for Middleton township and Detchant township

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The route is in the parish of Belford and the townships of Middleton and Detchant.

The township boundary crosses the lane between A and B, with Middleton to the east and Detchant to the west.

The plot numbers are as follows with their land use as described in the OS Book of Reference for these two townships in the parish of Belford:

Middleton township	Plot 70	Arable & roads
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See extracts

4. **1866 OS 1st ed scale 1:10,560, the 6"** **Roll 4**
The full length of the application route is shown, the eastern part as an enclosed lane and the western part unfenced, as today.
See extract

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See extract

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See extract

7. **1899 2nd ed OS, scale 1:10,560, the 6"** **sheet number XV NE**
The full length of the application route is clearly shown. It is not labelled FP or BR but it is shown with spot heights and bench marks which suggests that it was of a higher status, probably a cart track or minor public road. It is joined at the north end by a route labelled 'BR' which further supports the view that it was either a bridle road or public cart road. This 'BR' route is a recorded public bridleway today.
See extract

8. **1910 Finance Act plan & field book for the parish of Belford** **NRO 436/XV.8**
On the plan the section of the alleged route from Swinhoe Farm (A) to the west end of Virginhill Plantation (C) is shown as a '**white road**' with a broken brace, separated from the adjacent hereditaments belonging to identified landowners. This indicates that it was not subject to development tax and so was likely to have been a public road.
Beyond that point where the route follows the edge of open ground it is shown to be in plot 217 in Detchant parish. On page 15 of the field book for that parish **NRO 2000/31** it is shown that the owner of that plot is Major Leather of Middleton

Hall and the occupier is Foster Bros of Grey Mare Farm and that a **deduction** for 'rights of way or user' **of £65 has been allowed.**

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The application route is clearly shown on this much later OS map and is not labelled as a FP or BR.

See extract

Conclusion

The evidence above suggests that the application route has been known as a public road from the nineteenth century. Please can you investigate whether the public footpath along it should be upgraded to public bridleway or restricted byway?

Sent to NCC December 2017

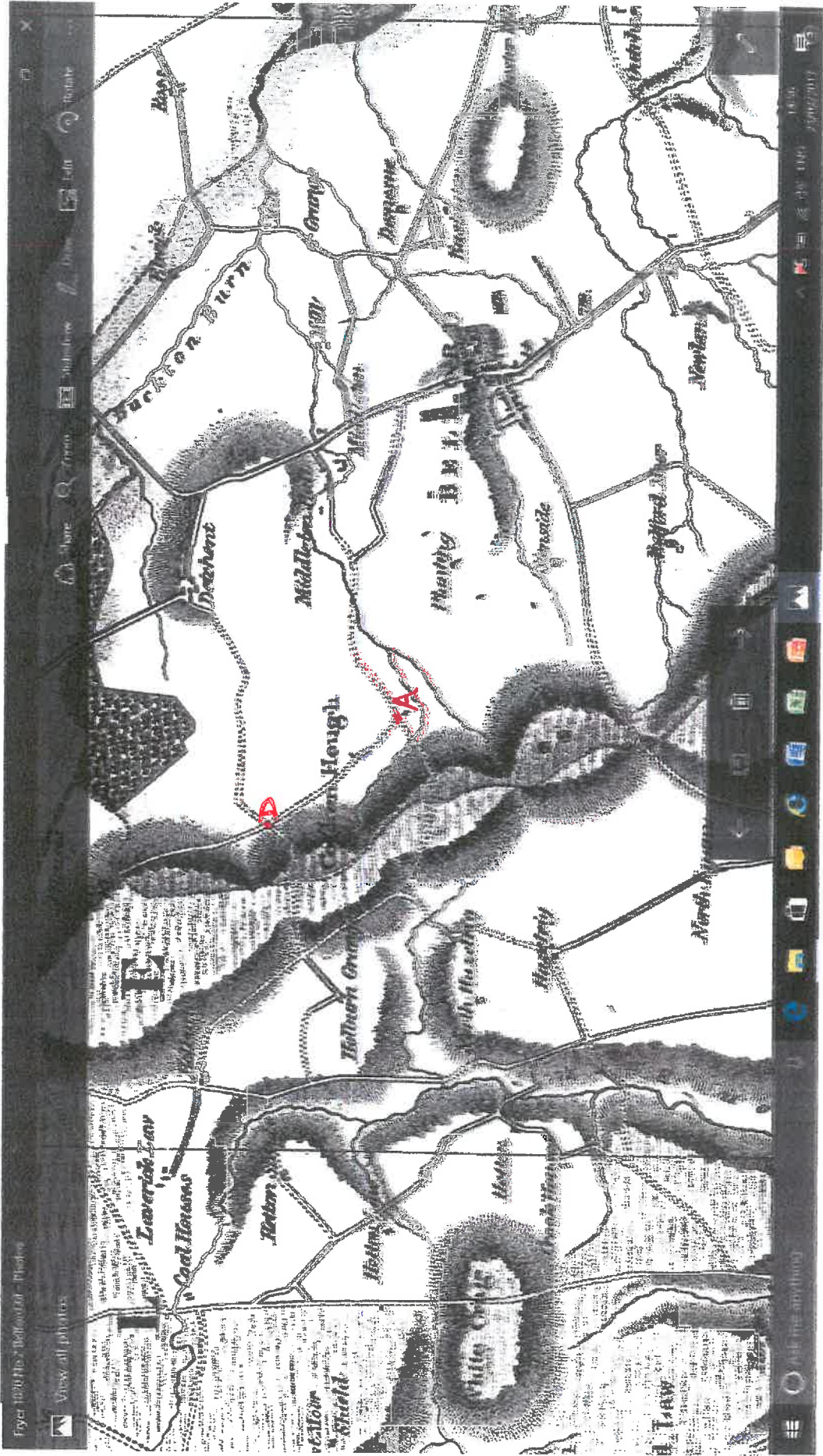
Looking towards B



Looking towards D

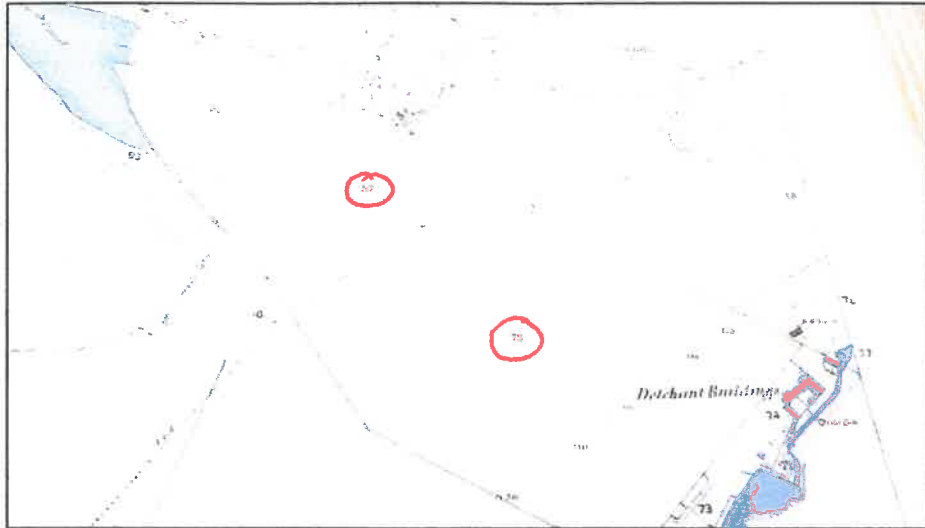


1820 Fryer's county map

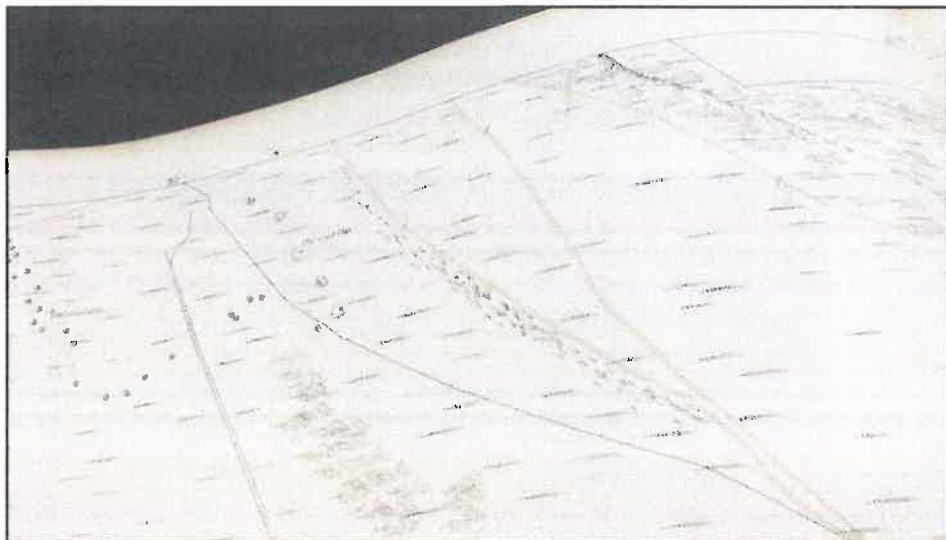


1866 OS 1st ed sheet XV/8 scale 1:2,500, the 25" [source British Library]

Eastern part of the alleged route showing plots 70, 97 & 100



Western part of the alleged routes showing plot 82



TOWNSHIP OF MIDDLETON.

No. on Plan	Area in Acres	Description	No. of Ties	Area in Acres	Description
1	29 928	Arable & streams.			
2	32 808	Arable & stream.			
3	17 929	Arable	30	511-867	Brought forward
4	18 179	Arable	40	171	Island (brushwood).
5	27 698	Arable, rough pasture, & stream.	41	6-492	Pond.
6	4 558	Plantation (4 pieces)	12	092	Arable, old quarry, & small plantation.
7	722	Arable	38	5-040	House & yard.
8	111	Arable	44	7-282	Arable.
9	28 958	Arable & stream.			Arable, old quarry, & stream.
10	23 807	Arable & stream.	45	189	Plantation.
11	35 417	Arable & stream.	46	570	Private road.
12	3 080	North East on Railway	47	154	Lodge & garden.
13	21 900	Arable & road.	48	780	Plantation.
14	7 287	House & farmsteadings.	59	12-711	Arable & road.
15	29 288	Arable	50	282	House & garden.
16	27 288	Arable, rough pasture, roads, & stream.	51	1-185	Houses, gardens, rough pasture, & road.
17	100	Orchard & yard.	52	3-888	Public road.
18	14 798	Arable & stream.	53	120	Houses & gardens.
19	6-027	Plantation.	54	4-122	Arable & road.
20	3-029	Rough pasture.	55	3-738	Rough pasture, quarry road, & stream.
21	18-289	Arable & road.	56	28-266	Arable & old quarry.
22	8-255	Arable & road.	56a	1-218	Rough pasture, rocks, & stream.
23	7-67	Farmsteadings & gardens.	57	22-877	Arable & stream.
24	9-129	Arable	58	14-983	Arable & stream.
25	21-492	Arable, road, & stream	59	21-393	Arable & road.
26	6-925	Arable, road, & stream	60	020	Kennel.
27	27-678	Arable	61	130	House & garden.
28	24-296	Arable & stream	62	6-766	Plantation, stream, & roads.
29	1-517	Quarry & rough pasture	63	13-876	Arable.
30	2-808	Arable	64	9-374	Arable, rough pasture, & stream.
31	6-607	Plantation & stream	65	2-434	Private road.
32	5-147	Meddleton Hall, offices, garden, & ornamented grounds.	66	441	Mill pond.
33	4-183	Ditch.	67	020	House & ornamented ground.
34	199	Marsh.			
35	241-867	Carried forward.			
			689502	Carried forward.	

TOWNSHIP OF MIDDLETON.

No. on Plan	Area in Acres	Description	No. on Plan	Area in Acres	Description
68	689-868	Brought forward	81	822-340	Brought forward
	920	Rough pasture, road, & stream.	82	11-022	Arable.
69	2-213	Farmsteadings & garden	83	24-213	Arable.
70	28-199	Arable & roads.	84	25-842	Arable & rough pasture
71	653	Mill pond.	85	27-707	Rough pasture, roads, & stream.
72	1-288	Rough pasture, marsh, & stream.	85a	2-129	Rough pasture, old quarry, & water
73	517	Garden & rough pasture.	86	53-289	Arable, roads, & stream.
74	1-833	Farmsteadings & rough pasture.	87	11-799	Arable, rough pasture, & road.
75	015	House.	88	180	House & garden.
76	10-989	Rough pasture, stream, & roads.	89	9-140	Arable & rough pasture
77	62-879	Arable, rough pasture, & stream	90	48-423	Arable, rough pasture, road, & stream.
77a	5-025	Rough pasture & rocks	91	109-428	Arable & stream.
78	2-282	Plantation.	92	16-986	Rough pasture, farm, & stream.
79	12-891	Plantation.	93	48-066	Rough pasture, farm, & stream.
80	2-903	Plantation & rough pasture.	93a	120	House, shed, & yard.
	822-340	Carried forward.		1281-006	

RECAPITULATION.

1216-554	Land.
1-245	Water.
3-888	Public Road.
3-094	Private Road.
6-320	Railway.
1281-006	Total Area of the Township of Middleton.

TOWNSHIP OF DETCHANT.

No. on Plan.	Area in Acres.	Description.	No. on Plan.	Area in Acres.	Description.
1	192	House & garden.			
2	493	Pasture.			
3	26-228	Plantation.	38	558-085	Brought forward.
4	568	Plantation.	39	94-183	Arable & stream.
5	6-610	Arable.	40	25-729	Arable.
6	551	House & garden.	41	2-706	Public road.
7	3-112	Arable.	42	0-81	Water.
8	15-708	Plantation.	43	1-80	Water.
9	172-262	Plantation, streams, & roads.	44	5-06	Waste.
10	150	Garden.	45	718	Rough pasture & stream.
11	335	House & garden.	46	63-025	Arable.
12	284	Arable.	47	14-286	Arable.
13	3-404	Arable.	48	2-632	North Eastern Railway.
14	3-625	Arable.	49	45-976	Arable.
15	21-988	Arable & stream.		29-368	Arable, rough pasture, roads, & streams.
16	5-210	Plantation & stream.	50	84-270	Arable, rough pasture, roads, & streams.
17	374	Plantation & stream.	51	44-454	Arable, rough pasture, roads, & stream.
18	16-403	Arable.		654	Plantation & stream.
19	1-938	Plantation & stream.	52	2-798	Arable.
20	28-892	Arable.	53	1-139	Plantation & stream.
21	28-356	Arable, rough pasture, & stream.	54	21-817	Arable.
22	170	Pond.	55	23-083	Arable & old quarry.
23	1-009	Plantation & stream.	56	23-901	Arable & road.
24	20-401	Arable.	57	11-085	Arable & stream.
25	6-259	Arable & stream.	58	11-977	Arable & stream.
26	2-206	Arable.	59	3-055	Rough pasture & road.
27	408	Rough pasture & stream.	60	8-739	Arable & streams.
28	270	Plantation & stream.	61	1-248	Houses, gardens, & waste.
29	890	Farmstead & garden.	62	346	Houses & gardens.
30	0-10	House.	63	670	Farmstead & garden (part of).
31	19-847	Arable & stream.	64	5-547	Public road.
32	88-243	Arable.	65	1-061	House, garden, & ornamental ground.
33	43-798	Arable & stream.	66	1-859	Farmstead (part of).
34	65-532	Arable & streams.	67	699	Pasture.
35	23-543	Arable & streams.	68	123	Garden.
36	21-699	Arable, rough pasture, & stream.	69	1-881	Arable.
37	0-448	Public road.	70		
	558-085	Carried forward.		1013-928	Carried forward.

TOWNSHIP OF DETCHANT.

No. on Plan.	Area in Acres.	Description.	No. on Plan.	Area in Acres.	Description.
71	1013-928	Brought forward	88	1893-360	Brought forward.
72	1-199	Mill pond.	89	6-781	Rough pasture & furze.
	28-300	Pasture, streams, & furze.	90	52-154	Arable, rough pasture, road, & stream.
73	14-841	Arable, road, & stream.	91	74-898	Arable, rough pasture, & stream.
74	55-117	Arable & road.			
75	6-486	Rough pasture.	92	15-210	Arable & rough pasture.
76	6-666	Plantation (2 pieces).	93	3-414	Marsh & rough pasture.
77	0-050	Arable (2 pieces).	94	6-789	Pond.
78	16-937	Arable & stream.	95	7-768	Rough pasture, furze, & rocks.
79	0-029	Lodge.			
80	0-899	Garden.	96	6-515	Arable & stream.
81	5-12	Arable.	97	11-349	Arable, streams, & roads.
82	573-513	Rough pasture, roads, streams, &c.	98	31-348	Arable, rough pasture, & stream.
83	0-60	House & garden.			
84	15-098	Arable, furze, & stream.	99	3-350	Houses & gardens.
85	60-171	Arable, rough pasture, road, & stream.	100	69-538	Arable, rough pasture, roads, & stream.
86	7-758	Arable.	101	591	Arable & stream.
87	35-031	Arable & rough pasture.			
88	66-777	Rough pasture, furze, & rocks.		2178-063	
	1893-360	Carried forward.			

RECAPITULATION.

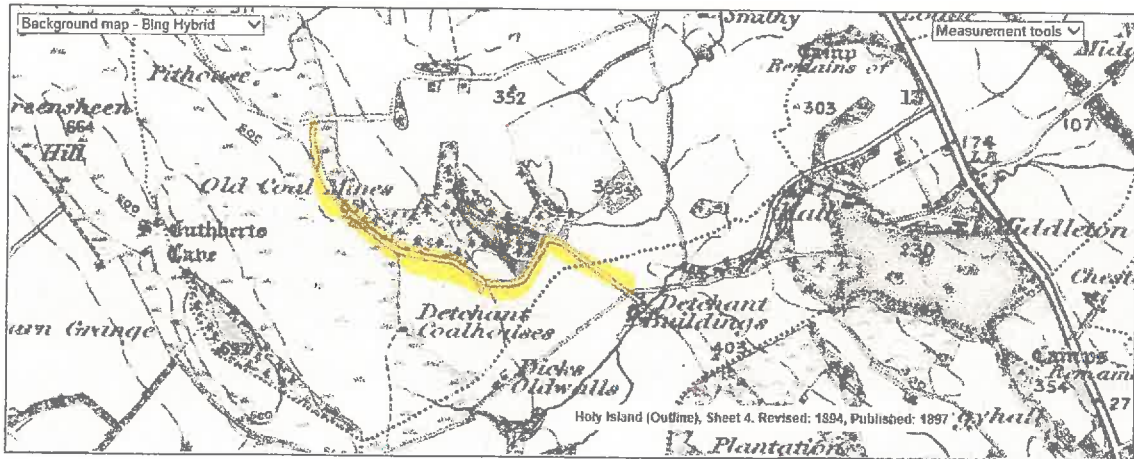
2153-386	Land.
8-269	Water.
18-626	Public Roads.
2-632	Railway.
2178-063	Total Area of the Township of Detchant.

1873 Plan showing planned diversions of a Public Highway in the townships of Middleton and Detchant



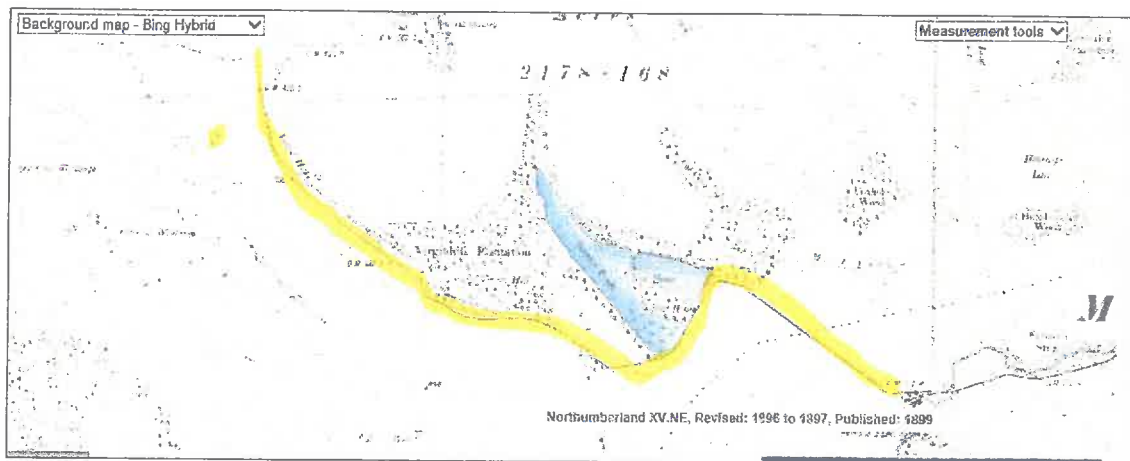
1894 OS 1st ed revised Scale 1:63,360 (1")

NLS website

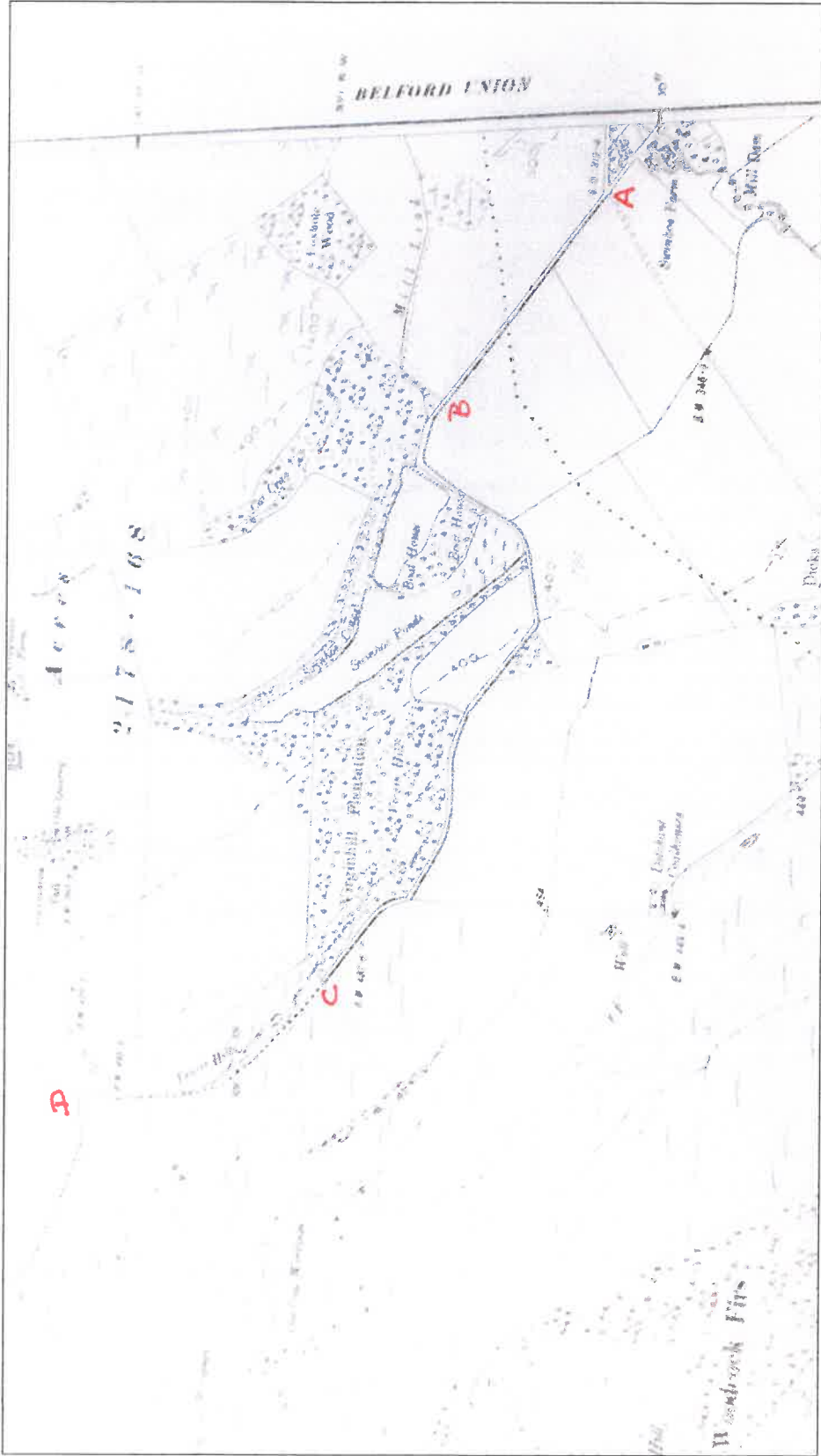


1899 OS 2nd ed Scale 1:10,5560 (6")

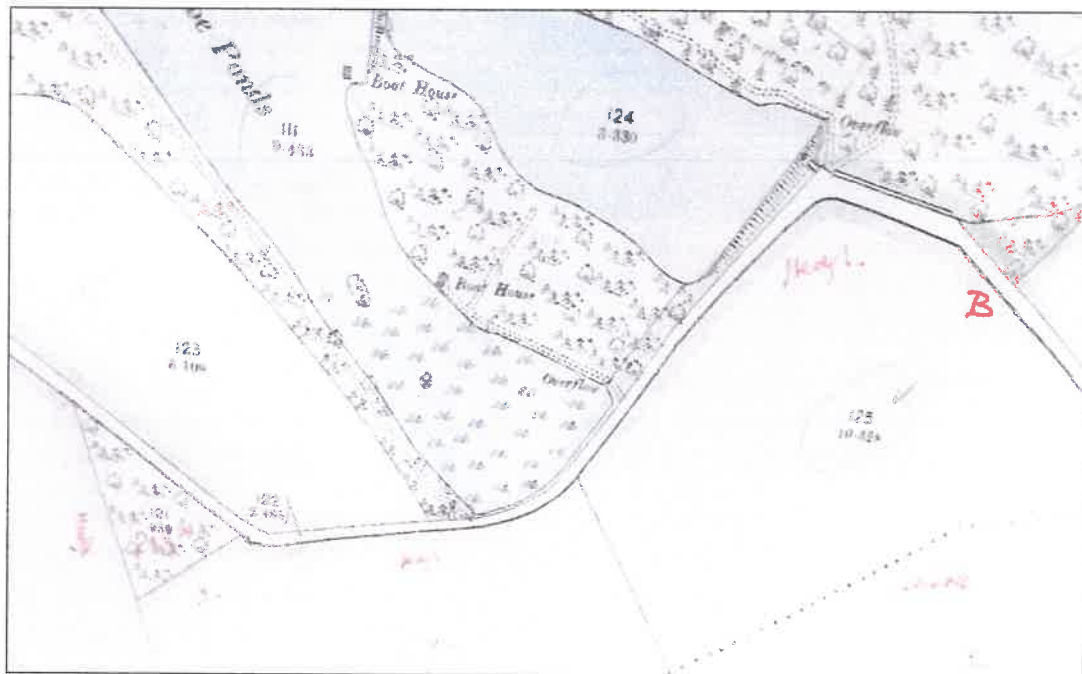
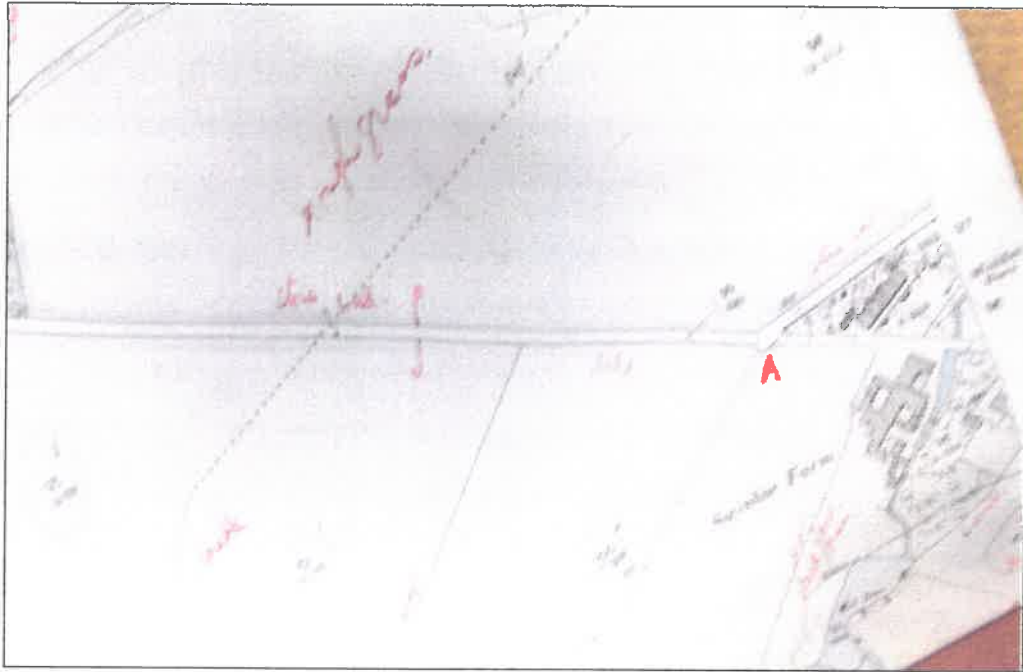
NLS website

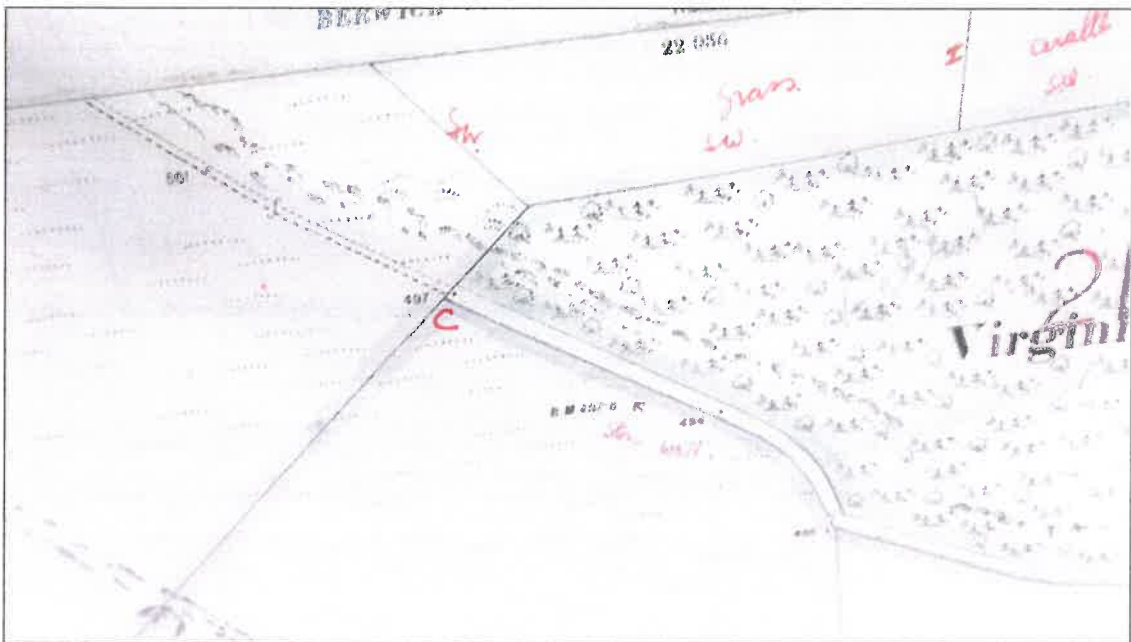
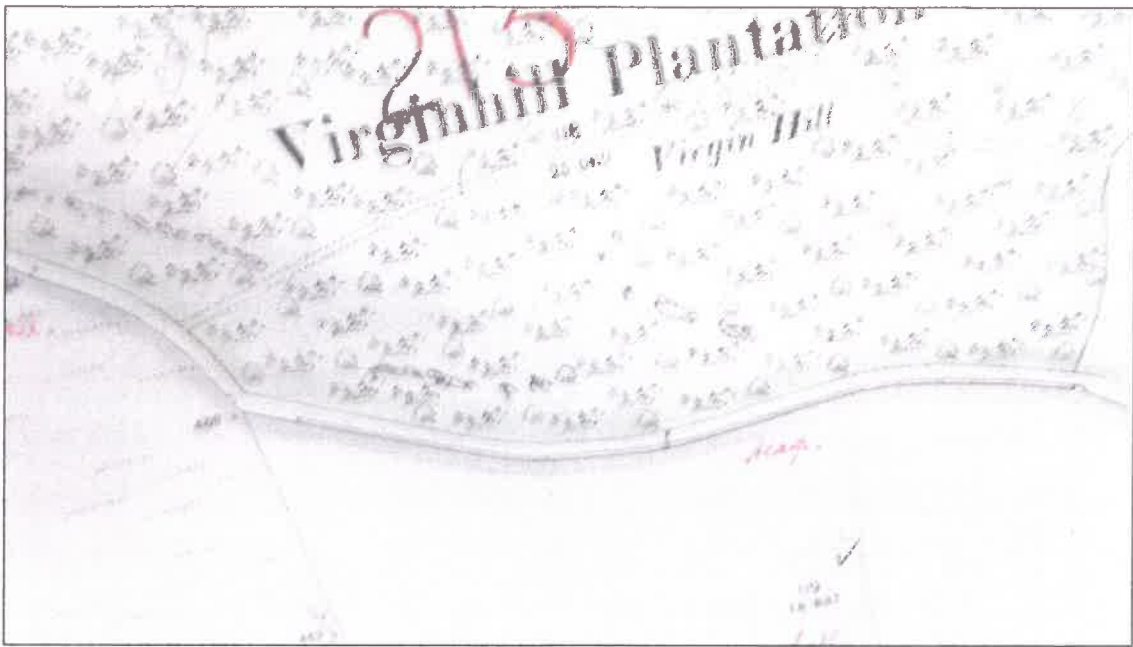


1899 OS 2nd ed scale 1:10,560 (6") Sheet number XV NE



1910 Finance Act plans showing A – B – C as a 'white road'





A handwritten page from a field book, likely a ledger or inventory. The page is divided into columns by faint lines. The text is written in cursive. The number '217' is circled in red in the left margin. The entries in the table include:

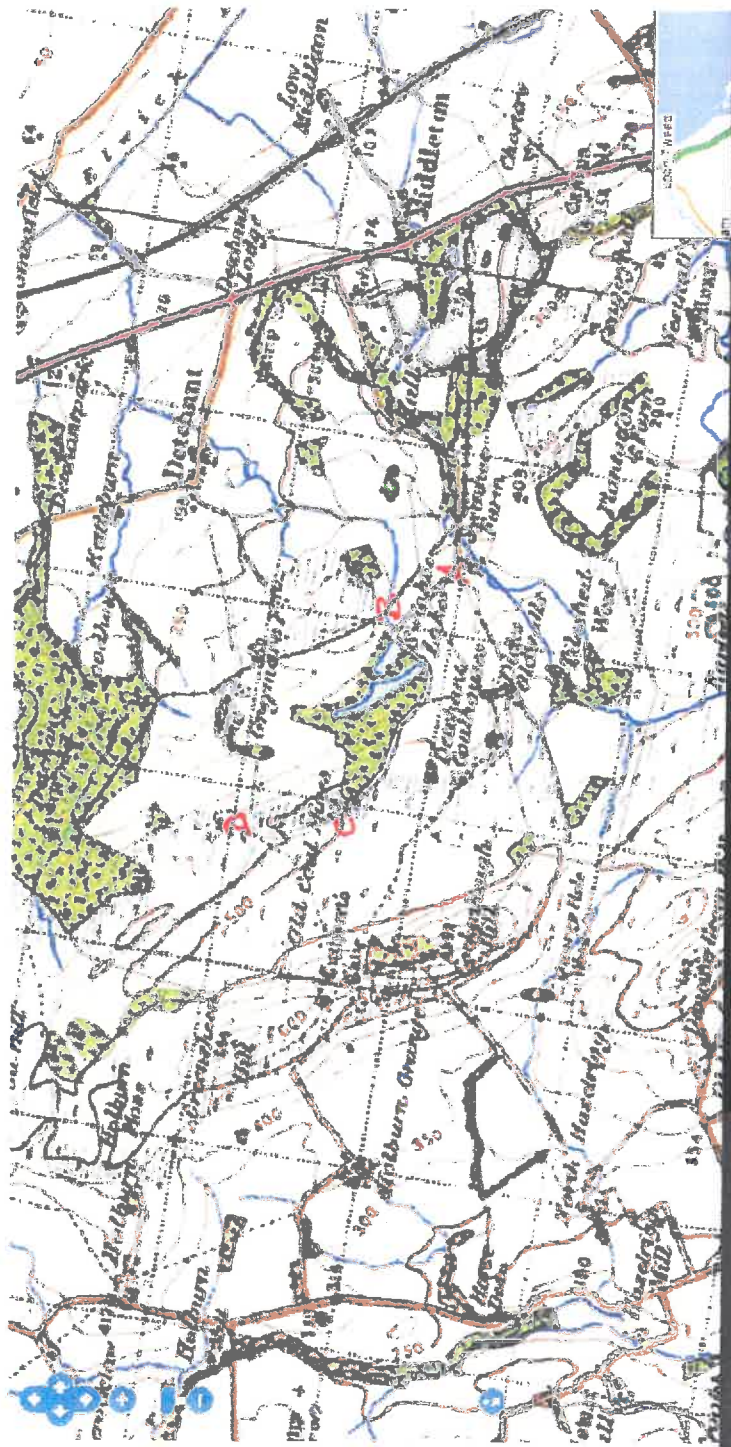
Parcel No.	Description	Area	Notes
217	Field	1/2	
218	Field	1/2	
219	Field	1/2	
220	Field	1/2	
221	Field	1/2	
222	Field	1/2	
223	Field	1/2	
224	Field	1/2	
225	Field	1/2	
226	Field	1/2	
227	Field	1/2	
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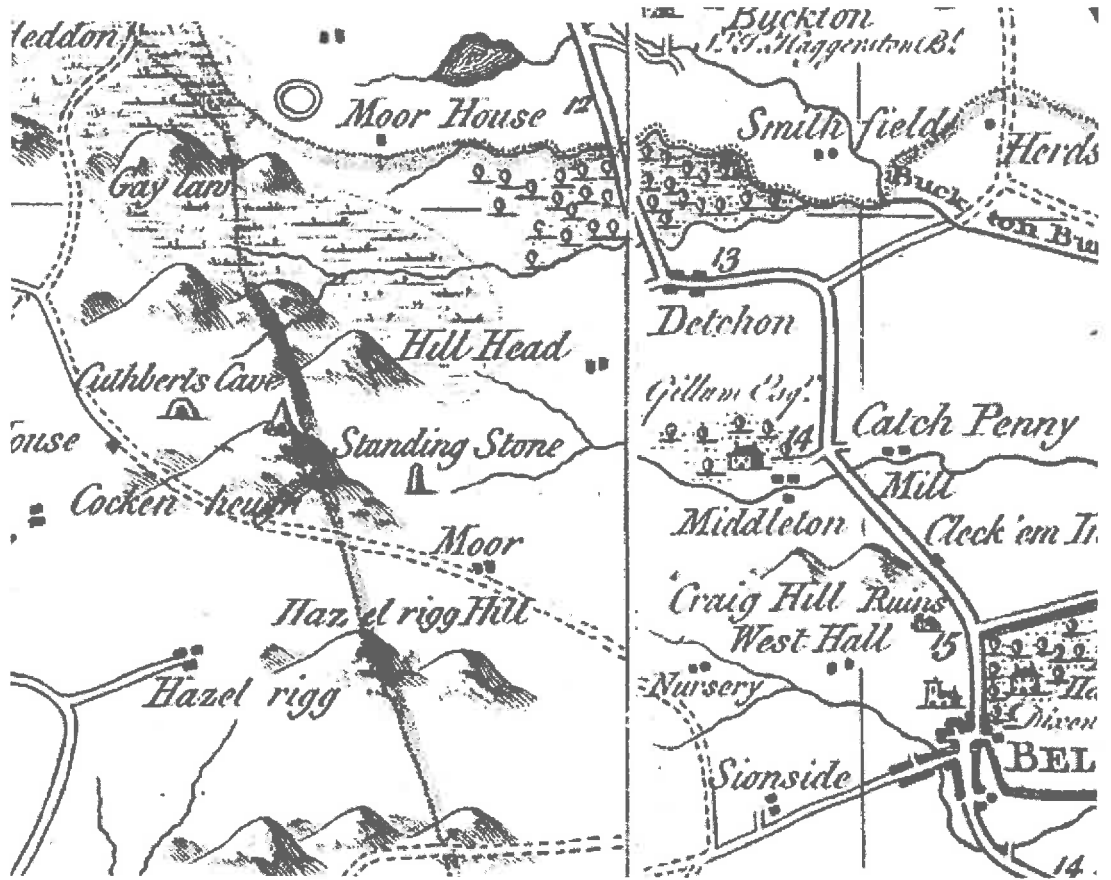
Parcel No.	Description	Area	Notes
217	Field	1/2	
218	Field	1/2	
219	Field	1/2	
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1945 OS New Popular Edition, scale 1:63,360 [source Vision of Britain]

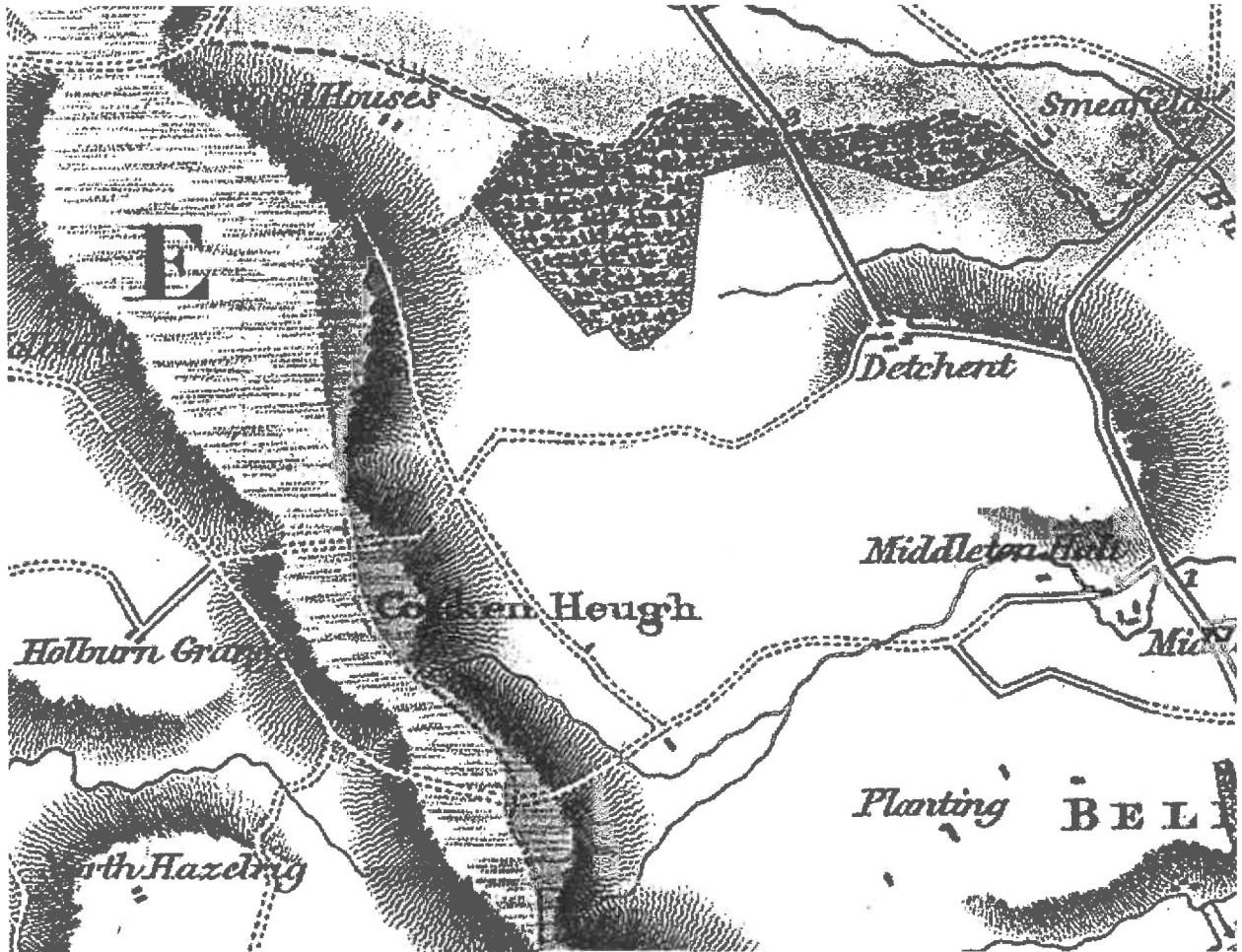
British War Office GSGS 4127, Ordnance Survey Popular and New Popular Editions



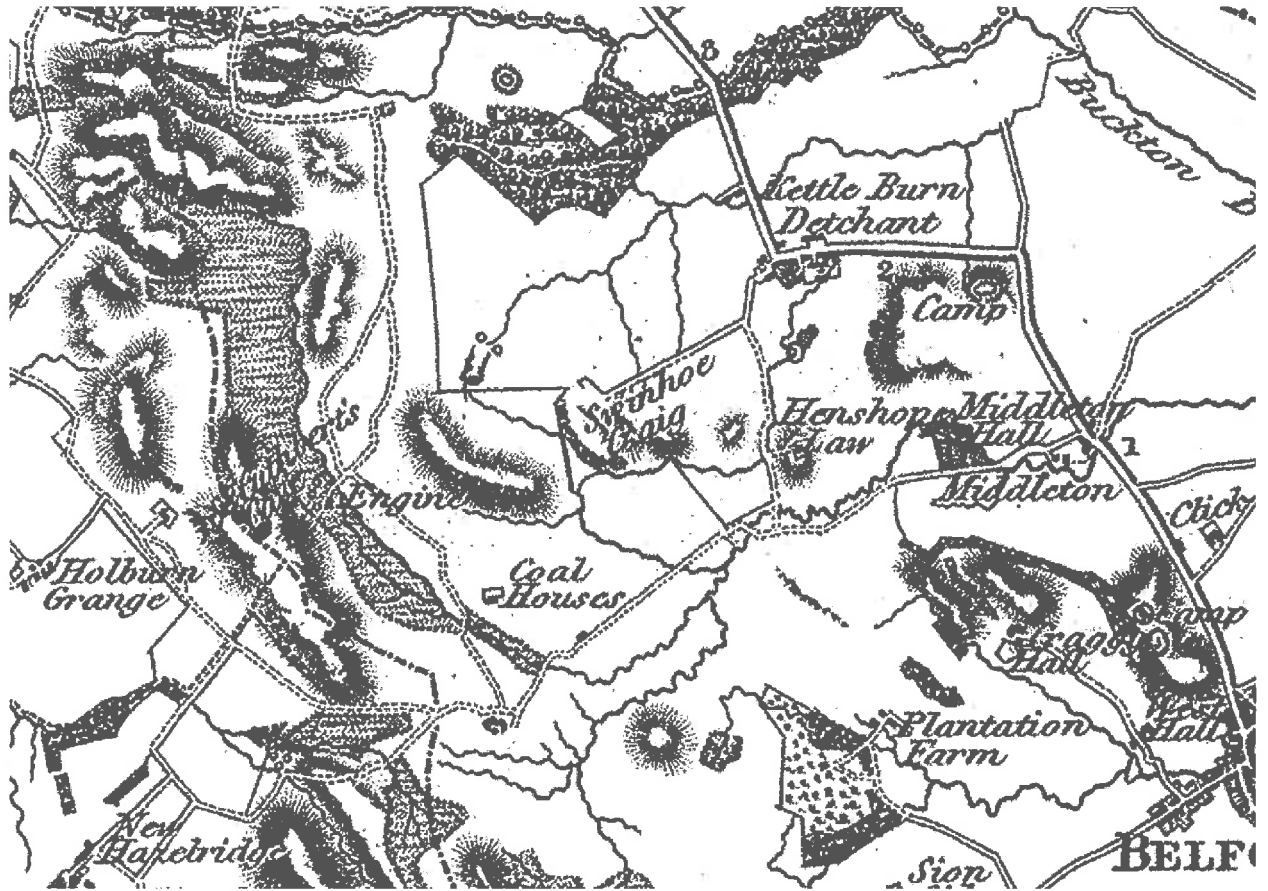
ARMSTRONG'S COUNTY MAP
1769



FRYER'S COUNTY MAP
1820

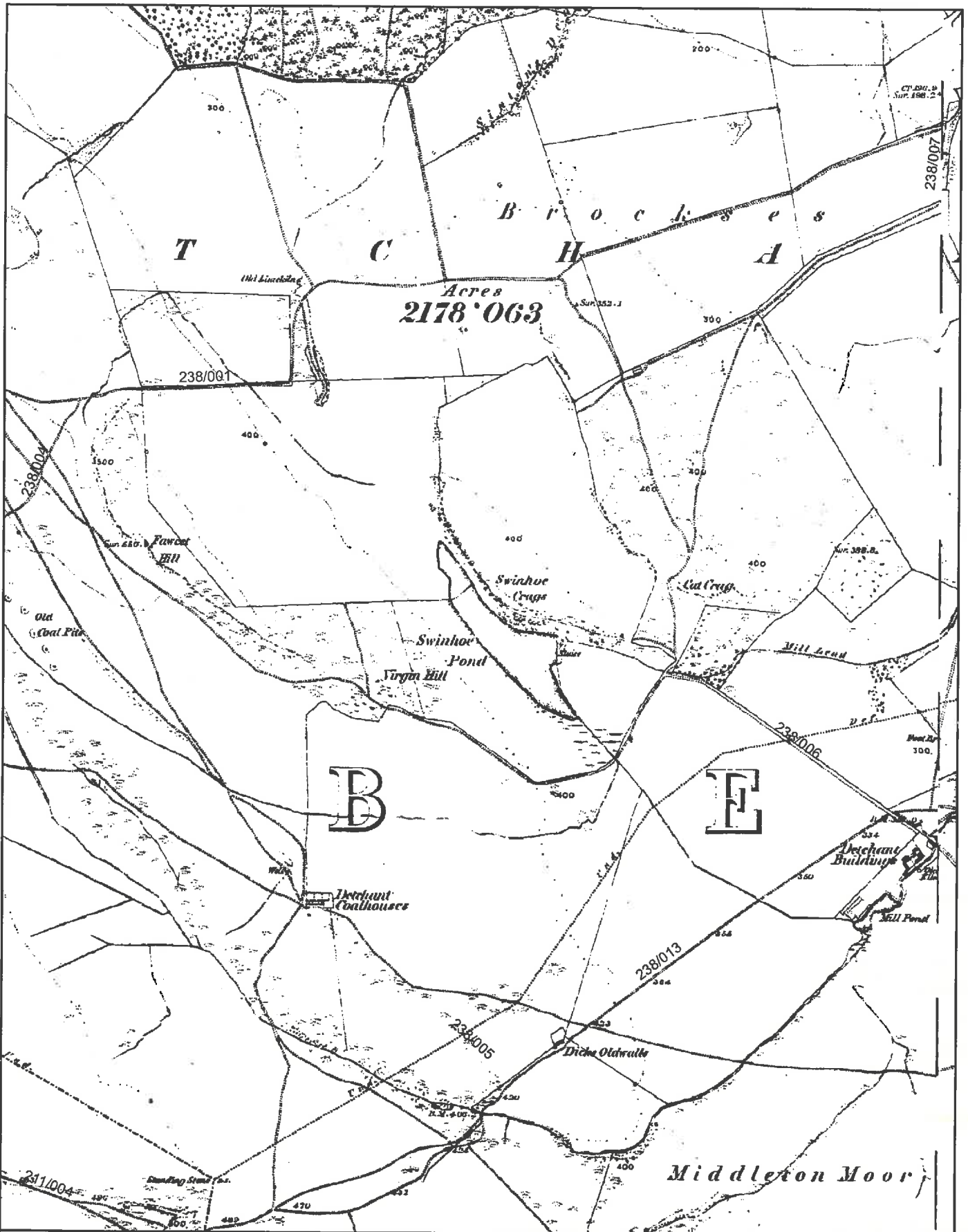


GREENWOOD'S COUNTY MAP
1828



CARY'S COUNTY MAP
1820-32





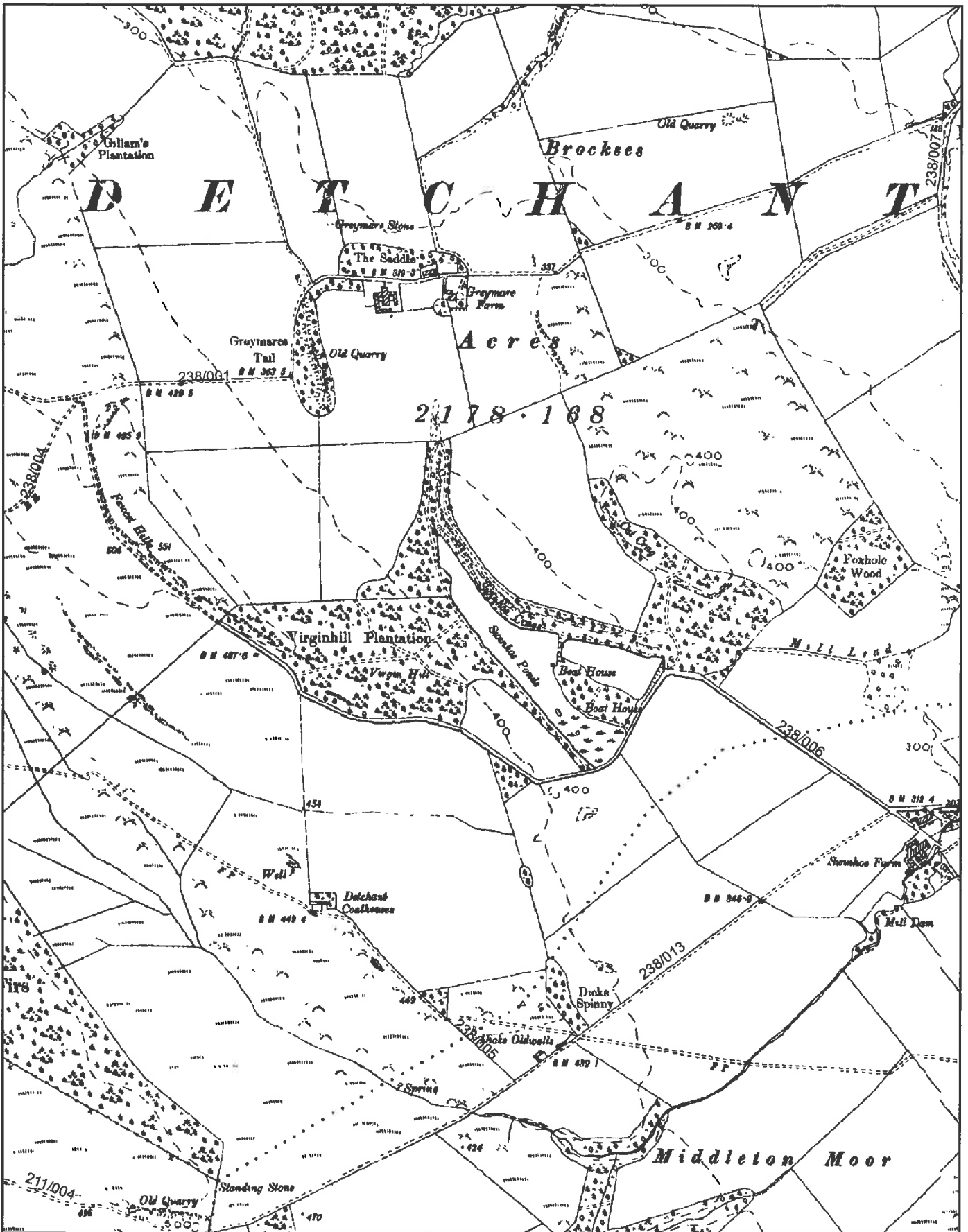
Northumberland
County Council

Ordnance Survey Plan 1865

Contact: John McErlane
Tel: 01670 624136
Email: John.McErlane@northumberland.gov.uk

Scale: 1:10,560

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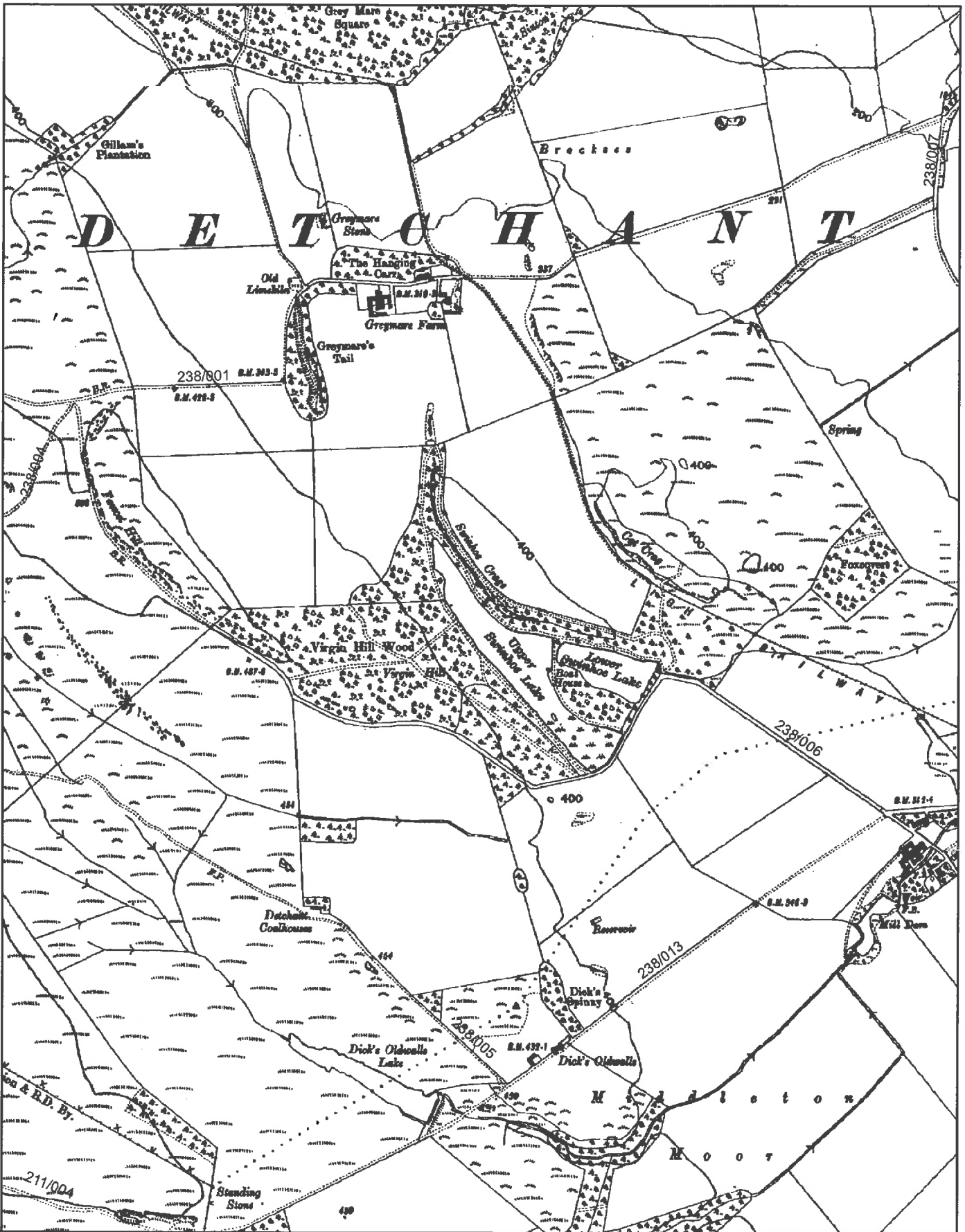
Northumberland
County Council

Ordnance Survey Plan 1899

Contact: John McErlane
Tel: 01670 624136
Email: John.McErlane@northumberland.gov.uk

Scale: 1:10,560

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Northumberland
County Council

Ordnance Survey Plan 1925

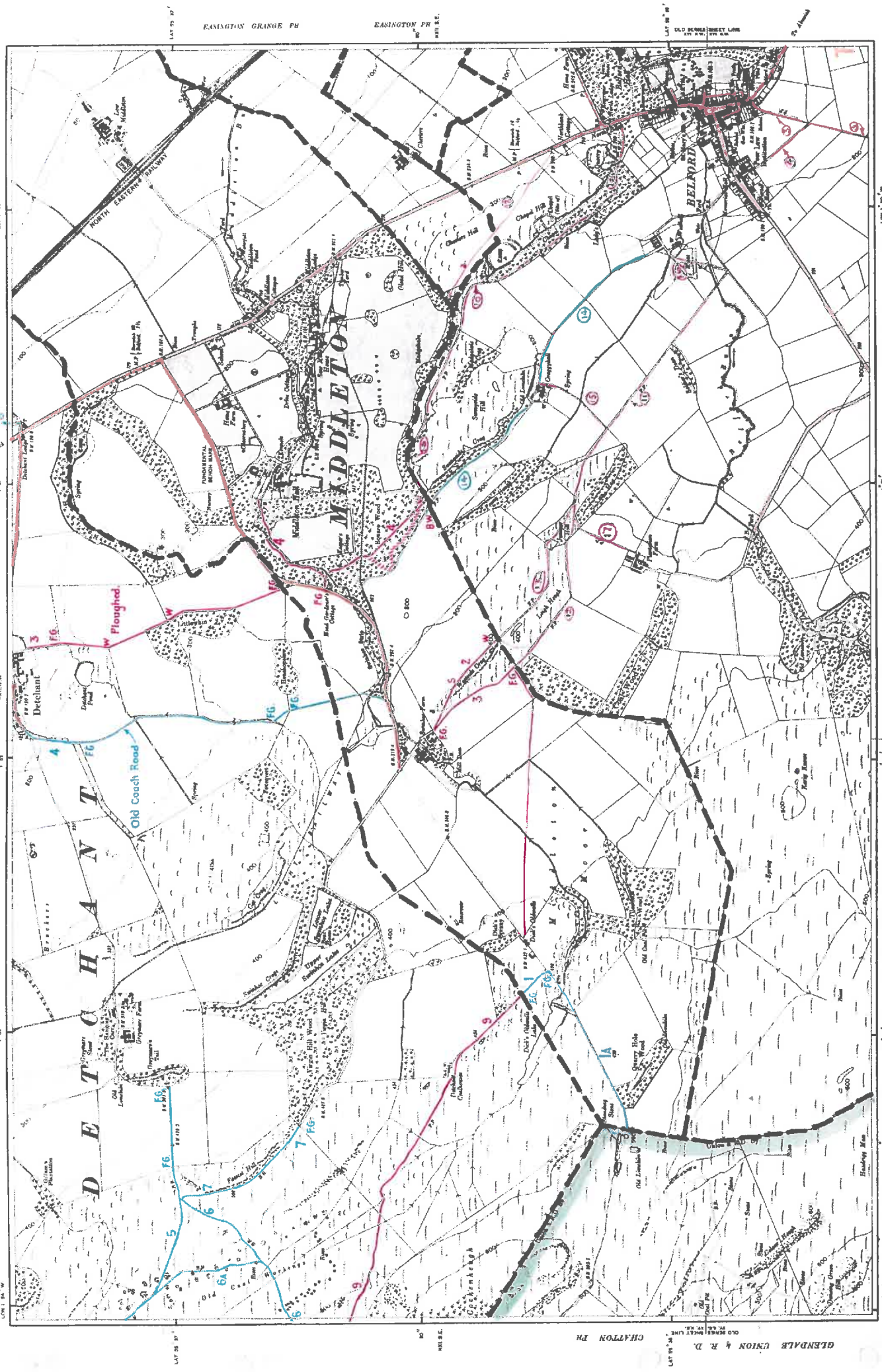
Contact: John McErlane
Tel: 01670 624136
EMail: John.McErlane@northumberland.gov.uk

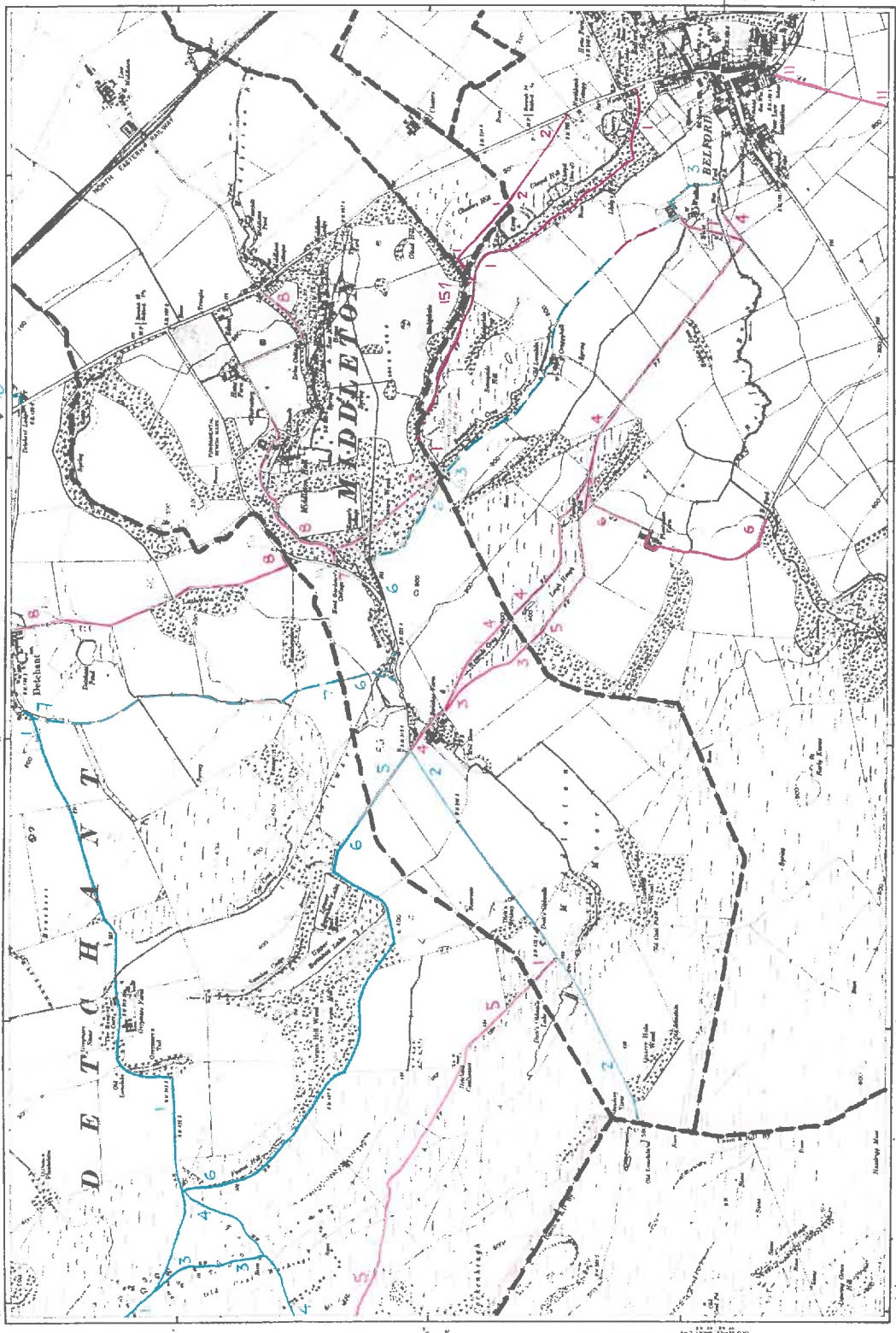
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Path No.	Representation Made by	Recommendations.
Uigham 15	Uigham Parish Council	That the draft map and statement be modified by the insertion of a path (No. 15) from Widdrington Station-Hage House Road opposite Fernwood in a northerly direction to join Path No. 15 (Widdrington) at the Widdrington Parish boundary near High Doctor's Bush.
Widdrington 15	Widdrington Parish Council	That the draft map and statement be modified by the insertion of a path (No. 15) from Path No. 15 (Uigham) at the Uigham Parish boundary near High Doctor's Bush in a northerly direction to join Path No. 10.
East Chevington 3	National Coal Board	That the draft map and statement be modified by the extension of Path No. 3 northwards to join the South Broomhill-Low Coldrife road at the east end of Hadstone Row.
Path No.	Objector.	Recommendations.
Belford Rural District, Bamburgh 3	Mr. J. E. Hutchinson	That the path remain as shown on the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. O. Wraghton).
Bamburgh 4	Do.	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement.
Elford 2	Mr. F. Hodgson	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement.
Elford 3	Do.	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement.
Elwick 3	Mr. J. R. Reay	That the path be shown as a bridle road instead of as a road used as a public path.
Belford 2	McLaren & Company (Belford) Limited	That the path remain as shown on the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. W. Steer).
Easington Grange 1	Do.	That the path remain as shown on the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. W. Steer).
Bradford 2	Mr. L. Robson	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. W. Steer).
Belford 1	Mr. J. O. Riddell Mr. Matthew Arris	That the draft map and statement be modified by the deletion of that portion of the path from North Bank northwards to where it joins Path No. 15 (Belford) just to the east of Loan Plantation. (Objector's case heard by Mr. W. Steer).

Path No.	Objector.	Recommendations.
Belford 7	Mr. J. O. Riddell	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement.
Ross 2	Messrs. Sanderson & Son	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement.
Ross 3	Messrs. Sanderson & Son War Department	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. W. Steer).
Ross 4	Do.	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement.
Ross 5	Do.	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement.
Ross 6	Messrs. Sanderson & Son	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. W. Steer).
Belford 8	Mr. G. H. Mouat	That the path remain as shown on the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. W. Steer).
Detchant 6	Greenwich Hospital Estates	That the path be shown as a foot-path instead of as a bridle road. (Objector's case heard by Mr. J. R. Johnson).
Detchant 8	Do.	That the path remain as shown on the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. J. R. Johnson).
Detchant 9	Do.	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. J. R. Johnson).
Middleton 4	Do.	That the path remain as shown on the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. J. R. Johnson).
Middleton 5	Do.	That the path be shown as a foot-path instead of as a bridle road. (Objector's case heard by Mr. J. R. Johnson).
Middleton 6	Do.	That the draft map and statement be modified by the deletion of that portion of the path from the Belford Parish boundary to the Swinhoe Farm road at Swinhoe Strip. (Objector's case heard by Mr. J. R. Johnson).
Middleton 7	Do.	That the path remain as shown on the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. J. R. Johnson).
Middleton 8	Do.	That the path be deleted from the draft map and statement. (Objector's case heard by Mr. J. R. Johnson).





NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

PARISH of **BELFORD** in the Rural District of **BELFORD** of **BELFORD** (Date when the Parish was constituted)

PLAN (Date when the Plan was made)

DRAFT (Date when the Draft was made)

DIVISIONAL (Date when the Divisional was made)

DEFINITIVE (Date when the Definitive was made)

Survey made on the day of the month of the year 1925. Rep with the sanction of the Controller of the Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton.

TOTAL No. 123

NATIONAL PARKS AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE ACT, 1949. PART IV.—PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY.

SYMBOLS TO BE USED IN MAKING MAPS. (MARK SYMBOLS IN CAPITALS.)

Kind of Path	Mark
Footpath	—
Bridle Road (including driveway for cattle)	—
Public Footpath	—
Green Lane (unimproved)	—
Green Lane (improved)	—
Cart-track	—
Track	—
Scoping Stone	—
Wicket	—
Wicket Gate	—
Wicket	—
Wicket Gate	—
Gate (in field or hedge)	—
Ridge or Direction Pole	—
Post	—
Land	—
Field	—
Wood	—
Water	—

MEANS OF PASSAGE

Kind of Path	Mark
Footpath	—
Bridle Road (including driveway for cattle)	—
Public Footpath	—
Green Lane (unimproved)	—
Green Lane (improved)	—
Cart-track	—
Track	—
Scoping Stone	—
Wicket	—
Wicket Gate	—
Wicket	—
Wicket Gate	—
Gate (in field or hedge)	—
Ridge or Direction Pole	—
Post	—
Land	—
Field	—
Wood	—
Water	—

OBSTRUCTIONS, NOTICE BOARDS, DIVERSIONS

Obstruction	Notice Board	Marked Wire	Former course of path
Obstruction	—	—	—
Notice Board	—	—	—
Marked Wire	—	—	—
Former course of path	—	—	—

NOTES

- (1) Show Paths, etc., in solid black line.
- (2) Number each Path progressively commencing at 1 for each Parish or District.
- (3) Where condition of Path, Sides, etc., is different from that shown on the map, the condition should be noted in the margin of the map.

EXAMPLE

MAP No. **R 125W 7**

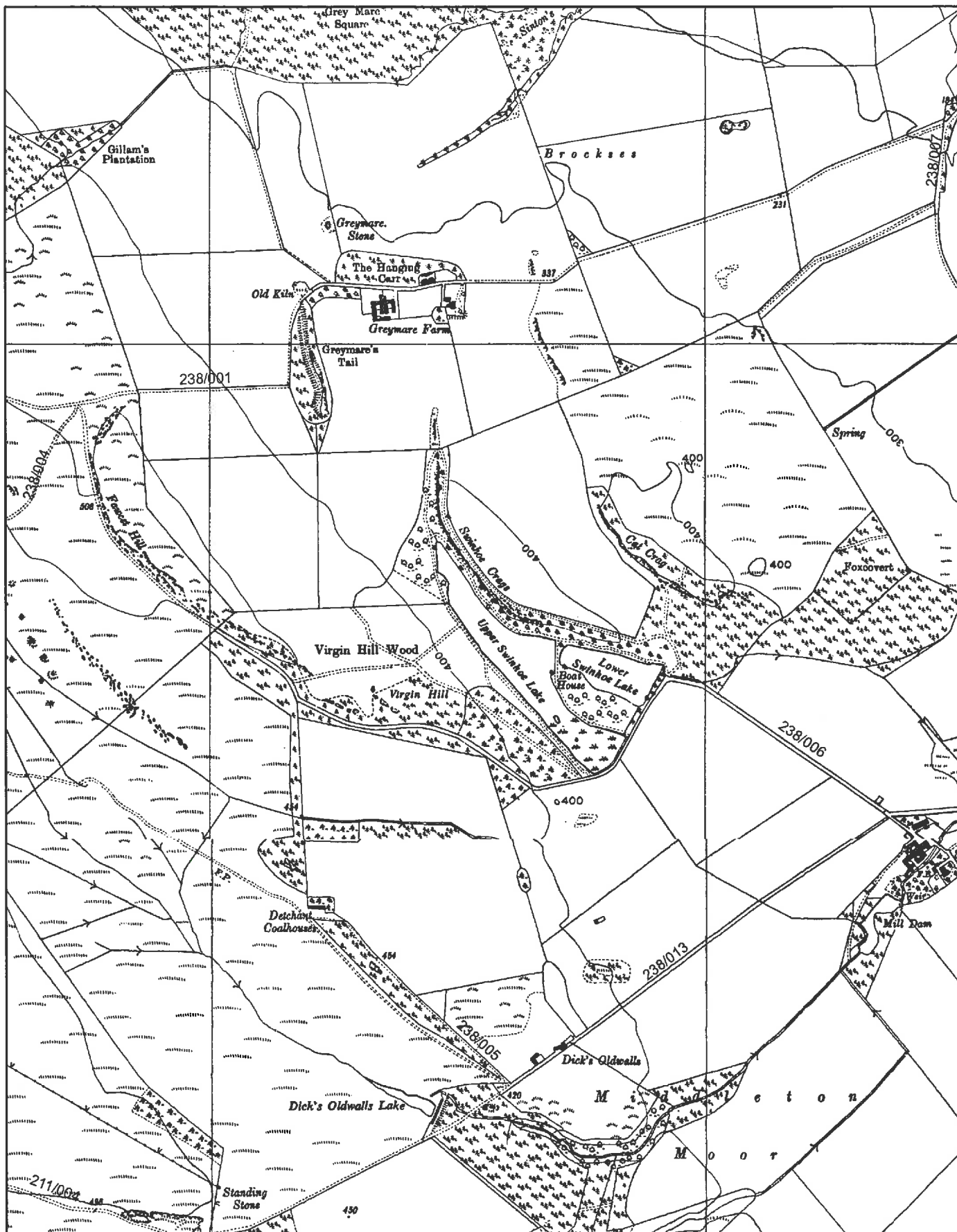
Surveyed by _____

Address _____

Date _____

I, CERTIFY that this map, except the information required by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, is a true and correct copy of the original map as deposited with the Controller of the Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton.

Chairman, Clerk.



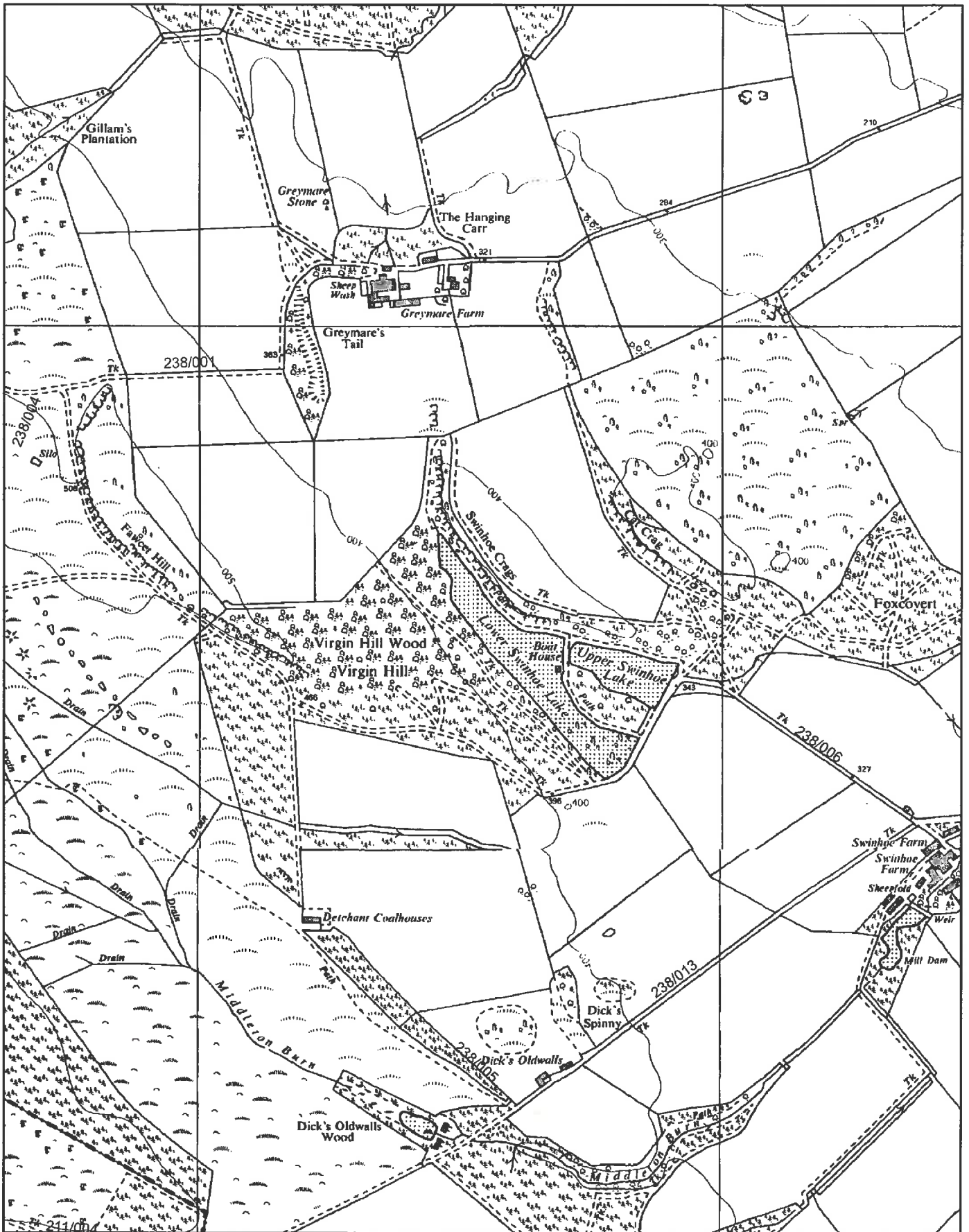
Northumberland
County Council

Ordnance Survey Plan 1957

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Northumberland
County Council

Ordnance Survey Plan 1969

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A SHORT ACCOUNT
OF
DETCANT WOOD
AND THE
MIDDLETON ESTATE SAWMILL,
BELFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND.

Reprinted from the Berwick Advertiser, October 19th and 26th, 1923.

Few of those who have occasion to use the great north road between Belford and Haggerston dream of the vast tracks of woodland which stretch back from the road to the Kyloe Hills, and fewer still are aware that here is a block of old timber, which is part of the original oak and birch forest that clothed the hillside in olden days. In the heart of the woods yet, if one is fortunate to occupy a position down wind, deer may occasionally be seen to speed across a clearing from one block of timber to another, just as they did centuries ago before man knew the use of powder and ball. To walk through the woods owned by Colonel Gerard F. T. Leather is indeed an experience brimful of enjoyment and interest. One can picture what it was like away back in distant years before so-called civilisation penetrated Northumberland and man lived by the strength of his arm and his keenness of hunting sense. Could the woods speak, or could we catch the song of the pines when the winds boom through their branches like the chords of a mighty harp, we might learn of dark and bloody work in the shadows of these wooded glades. Perhaps we might know the story behind the curiously-shaped skull which was dug out of the soil in the heart of the forest and which shows by the fractures in it cold-blooded murder by spear shaft from behind. But the woods keep their secrets well. Beneath their mantle of pine needles the warlike tribesmen of long ago sleep soundly.

There are some 500 acres of woodland on the Middleton estate, but it is Detchant Wood which commands attention. This wonderful wood now covers an area of 335 acres, and so far as can be ascertained it has always been a wood. A portion, as we have said, was part of the old forest, though it will be cleared and replanted before long. A rare engraving by Hollar shows the army of Charles I encamped at Detcham (sic) Wood on May 23rd, 1639, while on his way to Scotland.

The Detchant wood was formerly the property of the Dichend family and formed part of the Barony of the Powerful Muschamp family. In 1168 it was held by Hugh de Dichend, in 1297 by Sir Henry de Dichend, and in 1349 by Sir John de Dichend. From what can be gathered from historical records the family, like so many others, died off during the Plague. The Plague in England was as disastrous in its own way as the earthquake in Japan. There is a record of 3000 oaks having been blown down in Detchant wood by a gale in 1800, and the fallen timber was advertised for sale in the press at that time. The first note extant of any planting operations is a letter written by Stephen Freyar Gillum, the then proprietor, to Mathew young, gardener, Belford, dated march 4th, 1813. The letter runs:- "I wish you to plant the small parcel of ground without delay with equal quantities of ash, plain and horse chestnut; at the same time a few Scotch firs will be required in addition to the plants . . ." (Remainder of the letter obliterated).

THE RESTART IN 1858

When Mr John Leather, the grandfather of the present owner, purchased the estate in 1858 most of the marketable trees had been cut and sold. Mr Leather did a great deal of planting and filling up. Most of this work was done by contract (3800 trees to the acre at a cost of £4 7s 9d), and it was not wholly successful. The trees which survive, however, prove how suitable the ground is for the growth of timber. A report on Detchant Wood made soon after the purchase in 1858 says "The wood consists of 220 acres of planting, 50 acres of which are almost valueless. All the large timber with the exception of some larch, Scotch, and spruce firs have been felled, but it is fairly stocked with young timber, of which the oaks are looking remarkably healthy, also the spruce, but the soil appears to be too wet for the larch, as it only attains medium size and then shows signs of premature decay." This wood, continues the report, can be rendered healthy by cutting open drains, the outfall being excellent. This advice was taken by the owner and the whole wood was drained with open ditches, some of which were dug at considerable depth. Notes on an old estate map show that spasmodic attempts at planting up the wood were made from 1863 to 1867, but after that nothing appears to have been done by Mr John Leather or his successor, except perhaps a little thinning when fencing was required for the estate. To them the wood was considered valuable only as a game cover and a useful draw for foxes. It is stated that so derelict did it become that few people entered it as they were afraid of losing their way in the tangled mass of wood and undergrowth. It was in 1889 that three plots at the north-east extremity of the estate were considered ripe for the axe, and they were disposed of to a local timber merchant at the price of £500 for 5½ acres. In this lot were 282 magnificent larch trees (some of them over 100 cubic feet), 118 good Scots firs, 176 ash, 72 oak, 80 elm, and 344 ciphers. There can be no doubt that the timber merchant had the better of the deal.

The estate came into the hands of the present owner in 1890, but as he was then in the Army he was unable to pay much attention to details. He, however, authorised his agent to replant the cut out portions of Detchant wood above mentioned, and as there was no staff of foresters on the estate in those days the planting was done by contract, the price being £7 16s per acre for trees planted four feet apart. Unfortunately after the young trees had been delivered in bundles bad weather came on and heating took place. The result was naturally disastrous to the planting, and with rabbits and hares working havoc amongst the young trees which survived, the plots became more or less derelict and were a constant expense in beating up with young trees. Such a bad start might well have deterred Col. Leather from proceeding further, and even have put him off forestry for life, but fortunately he persevered. He ordered other two plots to be planted and protected by wire netting to keep out ground game, but unfortunately his deputy planted larch, for which the ground was not suitable, being flat and rather damp, and though the trees survive they are being cut out and Douglas fir, a quick-growing and hardy tree, planted in their stead, the ground being very suitable for this class of timber. A certain amount of planting was done each year on the estate, but not much in Detchant wood until 1902, when Col; Leather took up residence at Middleton Hall.

From this period up to the present day afforestation has been carried out on scientific lines in Detchant wood and other portion of the estate, and it is with a view to letting the public know what progress has, and is being made here, that this article is written. Recently, by the courtesy of the proprietor, representatives of the "Advertiser" visited Middleton Hall and were shown over the woodlands and the up-to-date plant erected for cutting up and dealing with the felled timber. The subject of the saw-milling plant will be dealt with later, but we will give first a few notes on what has been done to improve the woodlands.

Middleton estate marches on the north with Haggerston, on the west are the Holburn and Hetton estates, while to the south is the recently broken up estate of Belford Hall, and on the east runs the great north road. It is one of the best timbered estates in the North of England. Amongst the British trees are oak, horse chestnut, Scotch fir, spruce, ash, elm, birch, willow, cypress and sycamore. Several of the latter are growing near the mansion house, and from the annular rings on one cut down in recent years their date of planting appears to be about the reign of Mary.

MODERN DEVELOPMENT

The modern forester believes in planting quick-growing trees. While oak takes 160 years to grow to marketable size and Scotch fir some 60 year, foreign varieties, amenable to climate and soil can be grown and marketed in a little over 25 years. The value of quick-growing trees as a commercial asset will be readily recognised when we mention that Col. Leather has cut a number of blocks of timber planted since he came into possession of the estate. Douglas fir, Sitka spruce, Japanese larch, and Thuja Gigantea have been found to grow well on the estate, and the wild gales which sweep over the county-side from the sea in winter time have been proved to affect them but little. The great point, however, is to choose the ground most suitable for the various types, and in this direction Col. Leather has had a considerable measure of success after his first rather costly experiences. Larch, which has the greatest commercial value as timber for estate work, such as gates, fencing, and other essentials will not thrive at all on a soil which is too damp. To use a woodman's term, "They will not grow with wet feet." Soil must be chosen preferably on a slop or brae, and this so far as possible has been done on the estate. In plots where larch has been planted formerly and where growth has been stunted or the trees have become diseased, cutting out has taken place and Douglas fir planted instead.

One has only to follow the paths through the wood to see what has been done on Middleton. There will be found well ordered blocks of timber from the unthinned stage right up to maturity. Here and there plots can be seen where unhealthy trees or others unsuited to the soil have been cleared and fresh and more suitable varieties introduced. This is known as "renovation," and it is of interest to note that Col. Leather received in addition to his many prizes at the recent Royal Show a medal at the Darlington Show for having so improved this previously unsatisfactory wood. To those with little knowledge of forestry it does seem rather strange to find young woods planted so closely that there is little more room than a yard between the saplings, that beneath the trees is semi-darkness, and that there is hardly room for branches to be thrown out. But all this is done for a purpose. Close planting and the absence of sunlight beneath the trees is the only way to kill out bracken and other weeds which smother the young transplants. Again, close planting has a tendency to stop the lower branches from growing too large, thus forming knots in the timber, and the trees hemmed in on every side as it were shoot upwards to the light as straight as billiard cues. Particularly so can this be noticed with the Douglas fir. It sends a straight shaft up amongst the slower growing varieties and becomes in a very short time the dominant tree of the wood. While the planting of Douglas has advantages from a commercial point of view, it also has the disadvantages in mixed plantation, in that it soon becomes dominant and the other trees in the block become crowded out and suppressed. Consequently it is best to plant Douglas pure, and only use it for "beating up" in mixed plantations, when the other varieties have a good start and can look after themselves.

The method of thinning practised in England generally and also in Germany, we believe is to take out suppressed trees, but in France they go on exactly the reverse practice and fell the dominant tree. Which method gives the best result is of course a matter of opinion. In a young wood the first thinning is not of much value commercially. The saplings are hardly as thick as a man's wrist, but still they can be made to serve some useful purpose, and when sheep are being put out on the turnips there is quite a good market for thinnings as sheep net stakes. Second thinnings come in useful as cheap fencing posts such as are often to be seen on farms.

HOW BRACKEN AND GROUND GAME ARE KEPT DOWN

The whole of Detchant wood grows splendid bracken, which is a sure sign of a deep soil, and whenever a block is entirely cleared and replanting done the bracken quickly gets a hold, and to cut this in full growth, with the young trees, only a foot or so high growing up amongst it, is work which calls for all the skill of a qualified woodman. A man trusted with a scythe and possessing only an elementary knowledge of forestry and the distances at which the young trees have been planted could by indiscriminate cutting amongst the bracken wipe out in an hour many young trees that had taken three years to rear in the nursery. The six men Col. Leather keeps employed in his woods are all experts in the cutting of bracken where young trees are growing. When visiting the estate we had the opportunity of seeing the skilful way they cleared the undergrowth without damaging the young trees. At this early period of their growth, practically their first year out of the nursery, trees are very liable to damage by rabbits, and every precaution has to be taken to shut out these pests. They can soon make a mess of a plot by nibbling off the tender shoots. Until the young trees get away it is necessary to keep down the bracken and net out the ground game. Even occasional deer, which travel between the Haggerston and Middleton woods, have to be contended with. Natural regeneration from seed will never take place where there are rabbits, as the bunnies nip off the young shoots as they appear above the ground. Were ground game non-existent Britain would be heavily wooded.

There are many other things which those who would keep woodlands at their best must guard against. Disease in transplants and trees of more mature growth is not now to be seen to any great extent on Middleton, though but for "renovation" of some of the groves it might have been rampant. If, for instance, larch and spruce are planted together in a block of timber there is every possibility of disease showing before long. Larch disease is set up by a certain aphid, the male of which prefers to live on the larch, while the female prefers the spruce, and when the two come together on one or other of the trees, disease is set up by the larvae boring into the green needles of the spruce or the bark of the larch and causing the trees to become diseased, when they take on a rusty cast. The moral therefore is to plant your larch and spruce away from each other.

Good roads suitable for heavy timber haulage are being systematically constructed, and these intersect the whole of Detchant wood. The plots are drained by deep ditches cut on either side of the roadway, and other ditches carry off the drainage water into Buckton Burn. All the young woods and those plots which have benefited by "renovation" are looking very healthy and are conclusive proof that within the last twenty-five years the woodlands on Middleton have been much improved.

When Col. Leather took up residence at Middleton Hall in 1902 a survey was made of Detchant wood, but there appeared to be so much to do that it was difficult to know where to

make a beginning. It was finally decided to clear the wood from east to west against the prevailing wind. A plot which had been cut in 1899, was cleared, netted and replanted, but rabbits got in and beating up was necessary in future years. better luck was encountered with a plot which had been agricultural land. Even here there were many blanks, and these were filled up about six years after the wood had been planted with Douglas firs - the first to be planted in the woods on the estate. They had a poor chance of catching up with the larch, which was the main crop, and most of them were suppressed, but those surviving are level with the larch. This plot is interesting as showing the value of Douglas as a tree for beating up with even as late as six years after planting. This plot has just been thinned for the second time, and an official of the forestry Commission stated that it was one of the most interesting blocks of young wood he had ever seen.

As Detchant wood marches for two miles with the neighbouring estate of Haggerston the rabbit question was bound to be a serious one. As rabbits were harried on one side of the boundary they crossed to the other, and as both sides were wooded it was impossible to exterminate them. A rabbit-proof fence was erected along the boundary at the joint expense of the owners, and this to a very great extent has kept the rabbits within bounds.

Plots 1 and 34 were cut and planted in 1911-12, and plots 2, 3 and 4 were again beaten up, mostly with Douglas and Japanese larch. The bracken on these plots was very troublesome, but after the third year of growth the trees got the better of it. Plot 4 was so bare of trees of the first planting that now it is practically pure Douglas, with a few dominant larch trees from the first planting, and some seedling ash. This plot was awarded the second prize at the Darlington Show in 1921 for "Rarer Conifers." Plot 6, which has been left as a shelter belt, was planted in 1911, but was heavily beaten up in 1913 with Douglas.

Before the war 50 acres at Naboth were added to the wood on the west and the ground was ploughed out, several crops of excellent oats being harvested, with the idea of suppressing the strong growth of bracken. Planting was started here in 1913 and a vigorous programme was in contemplation. However, the war also started, and as the keepers left to serve their country the ground game arrived. Wire-netting had to be erected and very little planting could be done until 1919-20, when the plot was completed, though even now some portions remain to be done. Plot 31, which had been cut just before the war, was planted in 1917, but as wire-netting was unprocurable a clean sweep was made of the young trees by the ground game, consequently the plot had to be replanted. In 1919 plot 18 was cut, a windbreak being left at plot 19. A new sawmill was erected near to where the tree nursery now is in Detchant wood, and was connected with the North Road and the main sawmill by a 24-inch gauge tram line three miles in length, over which sawn timber was transported to the North Road. This mill has now been done away with as it was found more convenient to transport timber in the round on the tram line to the Central Estate Sawmill. When the wood has been planted and reorganised, it is hoped to increase the area gradually by another 400 acres to the west of Naboth. The ground is very suitable for trees and of little value otherwise. It is only necessary to look at the fine specimens of Scots pine just over the boundary on the Haggerston estate planted by Sir Carnaby Haggerston in 1780 to understand the possibilities. Kylloe Wood with its 1000 acres, added to Detchant, nearly 400 acres, with another 400 acres extension, will be one of the finest areas of timber in the North of England.

As we have said, there is a nursery of young trees near to the spot where the sawmill stood in the heart of the wood. The trees are grown from seed in small wire-covered frames, and here can be seen some hardy young specimens of the Stone Pine which Col. Leather grew from

seed taken from a cone which he brought home in his pocket from abroad. After one or two years in the frames the young trees are planted out in beds, which are marked "two year - one" or "two year - two," according to whether they have been two years in the seed frame and either one or two years in the bed.

CREOSOTING AND SAWMILL PLANT

Leaving the railhead in the heart of the wood at the nursery, the tram line runs for three miles through woodlands and pastures down to the Central Estate Sawmill, where her again great improvements have been carried out by the owner. When he came into the estate there were practically no estate workshops. An old-fashioned water wheel, which used a considerable quantity of water, made a big noise and did comparatively little work, was harnessed up to an antiquated saw bench, which had to do all the cutting up of wood needed for estate purposes. In place of the water wheel Col. Leather had a water turbine installed, and this do-day is driving the old saw bench (now used for cutting up firewood), a band saw, and the compressor pumps used in connection with the creosoting plant. The turbine is driven by water from the lake with a 16-foot drop and, we understand, with a very small consumption of water the turbine can keep all the plant going in this building, which is just an old farm building brought up to requirements. The creosoting plant is one of Messrs Geo. Black and Sons' well-known pressure creosoters. In creosoting the procedure adopted is first to fill the boiler, which is some six feet in diameter so that the workmen are able to carry the wood right inside and build it up in position, after which the manhole at the end is closed. Once the boiler has been filled and sealed, a 20 lb vacuum is worked up by the pumps and then the cocks to the lower boiler containing the creosote are opened. The vacuum sucks up just enough creosote to thoroughly fill the boiler, then pressure to the extent of 100 lbs is applied by pressure pumps, which forces the creosote right into the wood. Experience shows that no advantage is obtained by applying a higher pressure than 100 lbs., as if this pressure is exceeded a superfluity of creosote is forced into the wood causing the timber to become brittle. As soon as a 100 lbs pressure shows on the gauge indicator, the pressure pumps are shut off, the creosote run out, and a vacuum again applied, which sucks out the superfluous creosote from the wood. A considerable quantity of creosote is thus saved by adopting the vacuum process, as the creosote sucked out passes back to the lower boiler and can be used again, whilst the treated timber can be at once handled.

At the end of the building in which the creosoting plant is situated is the joiner's shop, where the estate work and outside jobs are done. While we were there we had the opportunity of seeing work on a cart body, built entirely of oak, ash, elm and poplar grown on the estate. It may be mentioned that in this portion of the sawmill a large quantity of spade handles are turned out from time to time for Messrs Black's Spade Works, Spittal. The wood for these ash handles must be perfect, and any portions with flaws or knots in it must be discarded.

Running at right angles to this building is the main sawmill. The timbering which is used in the building was entirely made by the estate workers. At the end of the sawbench is an ingenious lumber chute. It is constructed on a slope from the tram line and runs on heavy timbering over the burn (which flows between the tram line and the mill) to a platform level with the travelling saw-bench. By the aid of this chute and cant hooks (similar to those used by lumbermen in Canada) two men can roll heavy trees from the trucks down the slope and on to the saw-bench. Without the chute and this implement from Canada, which is a stout ash pole with a swivel hook which locks over the log, it would take a team of men to do the job.

Trees run into the mill on the saw-bench are cross-cut by a big pendulum circular saw, which is brought into action by pulling a chain. Immediately the saw has done its work the chain is released and the big saw is swung back out of the road by a counter-balance. The saw-bench is quite up-to-date and is able to deal with trees of all sizes. Here, too, are turned out roof "shingles," which have been found to work so well in Canada as a roof covering.

The mill is driven by a 40 horse power Tangye engine driven by suction gas made from burning sawdust. The engine also drives a dynamo, which supplies light and power to the Hall and which drives the planning machine and other plant in the joiners' shop. The process of making gas from sawdust is a very interesting one. The sawdust is taken by a hoist to the top flat of a high fireproof building, and there it is shovelled into the top of the furnace, which is constructed of steel on the same principle as a smelting furnace. After the hopper has been filled up, a proceeding which need only be gone through twice a day, it is closed by a steel trap lid, which is screwed tightly down. The sawdust smoulders from the bottom of the furnace or retort and the smoke given off is what ultimately becomes gas. The smoke passes through a dust extractor and a washer, the latter being on much the same lines as a gas washer in an ordinary gas house. The crude tar from the smoky mixture is washed out and passes into a settling tank before going to the filters. It is necessary that this tar be extracted by filtration before the water gets to the bur as it has been found to be highly poisonous. After passing through the washer the gas goes into a drying cylinder and thence into the mixer, and the engine sucks what it requires from there. The gas generated, while suitable for driving an internal combustion engine, could not be used as an illuminant, as it only gives off a dull blue flame.

Labour-saving machinery is a feature of the plant on Middleton, and though there is a sawmill, creosoting plant, cartwright's and joiners' shop at the mill, only five men and one boy are needed to keep the place running.

Before leaving the sawmill our representatives had an opportunity of examining some of the farm timbering and roof shingles turned out in large quantities at the mill. The Middleton Estate makes a special feature of farm gates and succeeded in winning the only two silver medals for gates at the Royal Show this year. All gates are fitted with an adjustable bottom hinge so that if they should sag through time a turn of a nut will bring the gate "true" again. The gates are all wood pinned at the morticings, and are creosoted so that they stand the weather. They are also fitted with an automatic latch, formed by a billet of wood suspended on a chain, falling into a socket when the gate is allowed to swing close.

Water power is extensively used on the estate, and in passing we might mention that at Middleton Hall beneath the Estate Office a high power water turbine drives a dynamo which can store enough electricity to keep the house going for lighting and power purposes. This turbine is driven by water, which is led down from a lake on the moor, a fall of about 80 feet, and a horse-power is obtained of 35-40.

The Royal English Arboricultural Society
Northumberland & Durham Branch
Local Meeting at Middleton Hall,
by invitation of
Colonel Gerard F. T. Leather
on Saturday, July 12th, 1924.

Members travelling via Newcastle will leave the Central Station at 9.20 a.m.'
Morpeth, 9.45; Alnmouth, 10.13; Chathill, 10.31; arriving at Belford at 10.42 a.m. Cars will
be waiting to convey the Party to Middleton Hall at a small charge.

Members travelling by their own cars will drive to the Hall.

Reduced Tickets for the railway journey from Newcastle will be obtained **from the
Secretary at the entrance to the North Platform.**

Each Member will carry his own Lunch.

On arrival at the Hall, Colonel Leather will welcome the Members and conduct them
through the Garden. Here the seed beds for young trees may be seen, and a walk of a quarter
of a mile will take the Party to the

SAWMILL,

where, on entry, a water turbine may be seen on the left, occupying the position of an old
water wheel. This 8 H.P. turbine drives the old mill (now used for light work), also the
creosoting plant and bandsaw.

The joiner's shop may here be inspected, also in its shed the 20 H.P. Simplex Petrol
Locomotive, used on the forest railway.

Entering the next yard, with blacksmith's shop, mason's shed, paint shop, etc., the
main saw is seen, driven by a 40 H.P. gas engine by gas generated from sawdust. The
inclined plane for feeding the bench with timber should here be noticed. Timber can be put
on either from a wood waggon or the train. A pendulum cross-cut saw is installed, and ascale
of feet from zero in either direction saves all measuring up of timber on the bench. A deep
sawdust pit is provided, so as to save constant cleaning up, and the sawdust is bagged, taken
to the store alongside engine house, and drawn up to the loft above through trap doors. Here
it is dried to some extent before feeding into the hopper. Water (of which a good deal is
required for cooling the engine and for the scrubber) is constantly pumped into a large
e=cistern in the sawdust loft, and the surplus flows back to the burn.

The suction gas plant is of the ordinary type, but larger than a coke plant. The main
principle is that the sawdust from the hopper falls in to a smouldering fire, and the smoke is
drawn through the apparatus by the action of the engine. When the engine is being started, a
fan is used to drive the smoke through. The smoke first has all the dust extracted, and then
passes through the scrubber, which is filled with wood blocks, and has a constant stream of
water flowing through it. the tar is washed out of the smoke, which thus becomes colourless.
About a quarter of a barrel of tar per day is extracted, but no real use has been found for this
bye-product. Afterwards the smoke is passed through a drier into the mixing chamber, and
thence to the engine.

In the yard, stocks of home-grown timber may be seen in the sheds, and the foresters'
shop inspected. This is lit by electric light, and is used on dark mornings and wet days. A
small electric wood-worker is installed.

Samples of the gates that took the first prize at the Newcastle Show may here be seen.

Leaving the sawmill, the Party will proceed by the

FOREST RAILWAY

through the Park into the SQUARE WOOD. This wood was considered ripe for cutting in
1912, and it was planned to cut it in strips against the prevailing wind, replanting as cut.

However, the War came after two strips had been dealt with, and the whole of the remainder was cut, except a small shelter belt. This cut portion has been replanted mostly with Douglas, but with groups of Scots Pine, Poplar, etc., to suit the ground.

The railway runs through Swinhoe Farm, and here the Party will dismount and take a walk of about a mile to inspect Swinhoe Lakes. These are stocked with trout and have been caught over 3-lbs. The Lakes are favourite places for duck and some thousands may be seen here in the winter months. This year, mallard, widgeon, teal and golden eye duck have bred round the Lakes.

A plantation of about 6 acres, planted in November, 1914, and called "the 1914 PLANTATION," may here be seen. It was the last to be planted until after the Armistice, and it was one of the first to be planted in groups to suit the ground, some of which is somewhat wet. The Thuja Gigantea has done remarkably well, but the Sitka Spruce is much affected with gall aphid. A number of the Scots Pine have lost their tops, probably owing to beetle.

Walking round the Lake, the train will be rejoined and the Party proceed towards DETCHANT WOOD, passing Greymare Farm, where some recent felling operations may be seen. Arriving in

DETCHANT WOOD,

Block 2, planted 1862, will be seen. This is the best sample of old timber in the wood.

The train will now be left and the local Nurseries will next be inspected. After this "NABOTH" will be passed through. This was rough moorland and bracken, cultivated 100 years ago, but abandoned. The growth of trees here is very vigorous; it has been planted in groups to suit the soil and aspect. A block of 35 acres, planted this year by the aid of the Forestry Commission Grant may be seen. From this point there is a beautiful view of the Kyloe Hills and Kyloe Wood, the property of Captain Leyland, of Haggerston.

The next block visited will be old Ash and Larch mixed; then a new block, "the Big Square," planted in 1922-23, in groups, mostly Douglas.

After this a block of mixed planting, planted 1910, and beaten up with Douglas in 1912, which has become the predominant crop.

Shortly after this comes a fine Douglas block; which was awarded 2nd prize at the Darlington Show. It is spoiled by a few predominant Larch trees, relics of a previous planting, which was a failure.

A large mixed block will now be seen, which has only just been thinned after 20 years. Larch is the main survivor, though it is evident that the ground does not suit it and Douglas should have been the crop.

Turning backwards, the Party will now be taken through other young woods, planted in groups. A block of Larch, planted by the owner in 1902, and of which some has already been marketed, and a fresh crop is on its way in the cleared ground, may be of interest.

Lunch will be taken at this point, after which a short Business Meeting will be held. After lunch, the stroll through the wood will be continued and attention is called to "Taty Land," a wood planted in 1902 on an old arable field. Here, contrary to expectations, Larch has done well. The wood was beaten up with Douglas 8 years after planting, and in places has done well.

Walking down the hill to Kettleburn Farm, the cars will be reached, and the Party will proceed to the Blue Bell Hotel, Belford, for tea, and afterwards to Belford Station to catch the 4.53 p.m. train, arriving at Newcastle at 6.42 p.m.

EDWARD DAVIDSON,
Secretary.

Estate Office,
Haydon Bridge.

MEMBERS ATTENDING BRANCH MEETING AT MIDDLETON HALL

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Armstrong, W. A., Westoe House, South Shields 2. Bailey, John, Askham, Penrigh 3. Balden, John, Stocksfield 4. Bell, John R., Thorp Perrow Estate Office, Bedale 5. Bennett, W. H., Brackenburgh Estate, Calthwaite 6. "Berwick Advertiser" 7. Bond, Thomas, Lambton Park, Fence Houses 8. Broadfoot, D., Moor Lodge, Alnwick 9. Burdon, Col. Rowland, Castle Eden 10. Butler, George Grey, Ewart Park, Wooler 11. Do. (Friend). 12. Carr, Thomas, Wentworth Nurseries, Hexham 13. Clark, Thomas, Wentworth Nurseries, Hexham 14. Cleghorn, J., Wooler 15. Coates, M. A., Estate Office, Haggerston Castle, Beal 16. Davidson, J. E., Brackenburgh Estate, Colthwaite 17. Davidson, E., Estate Office, Haydon Bridge 18. Dixon, Robt., Burn Cottage, Shotley Bridge 19. Dobson, Robt., New Alston, Haydon Bridge 20. Dunn, J. F., 5, Park View, Burnmoor, Fence Houses 21. Edmondson, Robt., Station Lodge, Beal 22. Embleton, Isaac, Linnolds Cottage, Hexham 23. Farbridge, T., Foresters' Cottage, Healey, Riding Mill 24. Ferguson, John, Dial House, Newcastle-on-Tyne 25. Grey, Eric I., Milfield, Wooler 26. Do (Friend) 27. Guthrie, T., 8, Linden Gardens, Harton 28. Hall, Henry I., Saw Mills, Forest Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne 29. Hedley, R. Cecil, Estate Office, Corbridge 30. Do (Friend) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 31. Irving, John A., West Fell, Corbridge 32. Johnson, I.K., Windlestone Estate Office, Rushyford, Ferryhill 33. Ker, A. H., Southwood, Riding Mill-on-Tyne 34. Lowther, Anthony, Lowther Castle, Penrith 35. Luke, T. W., Greenshaw Plain, Hexham 36. Maber, H., Greenshaw Plain, Hexham 37. McDonald, Wm., Mill Wood Farm, Rushyford, Ferryhill 38. Mark, A., Charlton Mires Cottage, Alnwick 39. Matheson, T., Morpeth 40. Michie, A., The Nurseries, Alnwick 41. Milne, Wm., Royal Nurseries, Hexham 42. Musgrave, T. H., 17, Eldon Square, Newcastle-on-Tyne 43. "Newcastle Daily Journal" 44. "Newcastle Illustrated Chronicle" 45. Nixon, G. R., Shawdon Cottage, Alnwick 46. Ramage, J. L., Bothal, Morpeth 47. Rich, Frank W., Dues Hill Grange, Hepple, Morpeth 48. Do. (Friend) 49. Robson, H. A., Bailiffgate, Alnwick 50. Ross, George, The Nurseries, Hexham 51. Shanks, C., 1, Haggerston Cottages, Beal 52. Smith, H., Shincliffe Village, Durham 53. Smith, J. S., Allerwash, Fourstones 54. Stobart, Col. G. H., Harperley Park, Harperley 55. Symm, John, Newton, Stocksfield-on-Tyne 56. Tipping, Gartside, Col., Duns 57. Warde-Aldam, Lt.-Col. W. St. A., D.S.O., Healey Hall, Riding Mill 58. White, Thomas, Cocken Estate, Fence Houses 59. Wilson, J., Delilah Farm, Harton 60. Wylam, R. J., 1, Park View, Burnmoor, Fence Houses |
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Belford's model timber estate - unknown newspaper report
BELFORD'S MODEL TIMBER ESTATE
Inspected by Scots Forestry Society
Tribute to Colonel Leather's Work
By Our Special Representative

"Here is an example of what can be done where a private proprietor and his staff set themselves to the task of not only growing timber but finding a market for the produce," said Captain G. I. Campbell, of Succoth, President of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society, when the members visited the estate of Colonel Gerard F. T. Leather, at Middleton, Belford, yesterday.

There were over 100 guests in the party and they had, by common consent, one of the most interesting excursions in the history of the Society. One of the great thrills of the day was to be transported to the various parts of this extremely well-managed estate on the miniature railway which runs round and through it.

Colonel Leather himself gave a short talk at all the halts and questions were asked and discussions held on the various aspects of forestry on the estate.

The tour started in the saw mills, well laid out and with rail facilities to the main North Road for the finished timber, where it lay graded ready for the road. Some indication of the intensive cultivation of timber can be gauged from the fact that in 1890, when Colonel Leather succeeded his father, an 8,000-acre estate had only 350 acres of woodland, and now the 4,200-acre estate carries 800 acres of woodland, some tried and successful, some experimental, and much of it useful growing timber certain of absorption in the timber market.

WORK ALL YEAR

Work is possible all the year round, whatever the weather. Excellent accommodation for indoor work for bad weather is everywhere, and the road-making policy is continuous. Lakes have been dammed by staff labour, bridges have been built, and, in short the whole estate is as self-contained as it possibly can be.

In passing, the visitors could see how excellently the farm land is utilized, some splendid stock being carried.

One section which created interest was a plantation of healthy Scotch firs on what is virtually a whinstone outcrop. It had been forecast that the experiment would be a failure, but the timber is, in fact, among the best of the young wood at Middleton.

The first part of the tour ended with a delightful picnic lunch at Ivy House. At the close of the tour Colonel and Mrs Leather entertained the party to tea.

"REMARKABLE ESTATE"

Captain Campbell, proposing a vote of thanks to Colonel and Mrs Leather, said that when the timber came to maturity Colonel Leather did not intend to let it go to outside hands but to prepare it for market in his own mills.

"That seems to me the remarkable thing about Middleton estate and its policy. We should go away and preach all over the country what we have seen in Northumberland to-day. It proves that a determined owner can make things go.

All over the country we hear people complaining and saying they would take more interest in their woods if they could make them pay. On the face of it it is not easy to answer that view, but I am more than ever convinced to-day that given sufficient thought and application and acumen in marketing the thing can be done."

Newcastle Chronicle
14 July [1924?]

SCENIC FOREST RAILWAY
Novelties and Charm of the Middleton Hall Estate
SUPERIOR TO WEMBLEY
Col. G. F. T. Leather's Foresight & Pluck

The possibilities of scientific forestry as a commercial proposition bringing in benefits to the planters as well as making provision for the future were demonstrated to the members of the Northumberland and Durham branch of the Royal English Arboricultural Society who held a meeting on Saturday on the Middleton Hall estate, by invitation of Colonel Gerard F. T. Leather.

About 60 members including several visitors from Cumberland were present and they were received at the Hall by Colonel Leather and were provided with light refreshment before touring the estate.

In the old days, said the host, the timber thereabouts was poor. Dr. Johnson, in his account of his tour of the Hebrides mentioned the fact that only round the houses of the gentry was there any timber to be seen, and that applied to that particular district also.

The place was practically derelict so far as timber was concerned when in 1858, his grandfather purchased the place. His grandfather began to plant in the 60's, but there was little regard for suitability of soil and other circumstances, with the result that there was a survival of the unfittest.

The estate, which now embraces 500 acres of woodland, came into the hands of the present owner 34 years ago. He was then in the army, and did not take up residence at Middleton Hall until 1902, although, in the meantime a certain amount of planting was done each year. From 1902, however, scientific afforestation has been carried out in Dechant wood, which occupies 335 acres, as well as on other parts of the estate. The estate is now one of the best timbered in the North of England.

Begrudged No Expense

Col. Leather has pursued "his hobby," as he calls it, with courage, always going on scientific lines, begrudging no expense where it meant an improvement, and he is living on the estate to enjoy the obvious fruits of his labours.

One of the novelties which gave zest to the visit on Saturday was a trip on the forest railway, which has over three miles of track. This came after an inspection of the gardens, nurseries, the sawmill with its 40 h.p. gas engine, the creosoting plant which drives the creosote into the heart of the timber, and provides half a barrel of tar everyday out of smoke from the sawdust, the forester's shed with its electric woodworker, and samples of the farm gates made on the estate, winners of the only two silver medals offered for gates at the Newcastle "Royal" Shoe.

Driven by a 20 h.p. Simplex motor, the forest train carried its 70 passengers very comfortably, at an exhilarating speed, through narrow openings in the forest, across bracken-covered moorland, grass fields, over bridges and roads. Several members voted it superior to Wembley in many respects, certainly for fresh air and scenery.



At Swinhoe Farm, the party alighted and walked about a mile to Swinhoe Lakes, which are stocked with fine trout, some over 3lbs. having been taken. These lakes are a favourite haunt of ducks and some thousands may be seen in the winter months. This year, mallard, widgeon, teal and golden-eye duck have bred round the lakes.

Close at hand is "the 1914 plantation" - the last six acres of wood to be planted until after the Armistice, and one of the first to be planted in groups to suit the ground.

The Thuja Gigantea has done remarkably well, but the Sitka spruce is much affected with gall aphid. A number of Scots pine have lost their tops probably owing to beetle.

After adjoining the train the party proceeded to Detchant Wood, passing Greymare Farm, where some recent felling operations were inspected. Here was seen the best sample of old timber in the wood, planted in 1862. The local nurseries proved of great interest, and then the party passed through "Naboth," rough moorland and bracken, cultivated 100 years ago, but abandoned.

Colonel Leather said that when he came to the estate he had never seen bracken as flourished at this point. When he rode through on the back of a pony it reached to his neck. It was ploughed over, several crops of oats were taken, and it was now more or less planted.

A block of 35 acres was planted this year by the aid of the Forestry Commission. Where there was bracken there was deep soil and the trees were growing vigorously.

Members of the party were irresistibly drawn to admire the view from here, commanding the Kyloe Hills and Kyloe Wood - the property of Captain Leyland - and also embracing a stretch of sea, with Holy Island.

Business Meeting

A business meeting, presided over by Mr Jon Balden, Stocksfield was held before the return journey was begun. On the motion of Mr Goerge Ross, seconded by Mr T. Bond, it was decided to re-elect Mr John Graham chairman for the county of Durham, and to elect colonel Leather, chairman for Northumberland, in succession to Mr C. H. Sample, who wished to retire as he had gone to the South. The hon. secretaries (Mr G. Ross, for Northumberland, and Mr Thomas Bond, for Durham) were re-elected, and a vote of thanks to Mr Sample was passed.

Lieut.-Colonel W. St. A. Warde-Aldam, who moved a vote of thanks to Colonel Leather, for his hospitality, said that their host's experience was very encouraging to all foresters. He had shown that the planter could also reap.

Col. G. H. Stobart, seconding, said he had been amazed at the breadth of vision and great foresight as well as a pluck which Col. Leather had displayed in laying out so much capital on a business which they were led to consider was unremunerative. He admired him for it.

Col. Leather responding, thanked the members for electing him chairman for Northumberland. He had been asked about rabbits. They had not seen any that day. Well, he had got a good keeper. Yet with the best keeper they knew how difficult it was to get the last rabbit, and 7,000 couples were taken regularly every year.

Col. Leather added that if the Labour schemes were carried out he did not know what would happen to the old country. He was afraid it would be denuded of trees like Ireland. It was best not to think of the prospect, but to shut one's eyes and go ahead; that was what he had done.

Tea was served at the Blue Bell Hotel, at the invitation of Col. Leather, and here a pleasant and profitable day terminated by a tribute to the work of Mr W. Davidson, general secretary, who had organised the outing.



FORESTRY'S FUTURE

Notable Developments on Belford Estate

DANGER OF LABOUR'S INTERFERENCE

Resplendent in their summer garb, and bearing evidence of kindly and skilful treatment at the hands of Colonel Gerard F. T. Leather, stately giants of the forest and tiny saplings on the Middleton Hall estate, near Belford, raised their heads to the bluest of skies on Saturday, and there was vast pleasure as well as scientific instruction for the 50 members of the Northumberland and Durham branch of the Royal Arboricultural Society who inspected the 500 acres of well-timbered woodlands.

Well-ordered blocks of trees, from the earliest stages to maturity, were admired, and special interest was taken in the samples of home-grown timber from which were made the farm gates that gained the two silver medals awarded at the Royal Show in Newcastle last year.

Colonel Leather, in his welcome to the visitors, expressed his pleasure at the large gathering of members. He explained that the woods were run on utility lines, the timber being marketed as soon as possible.

SURVIVAL OF THE "UNFITTEST."

In the old days, he recalled, timber was only to be seen in the houses of the "gentry," and that spot had only recently been made wooded. When his grandfather began planting at Middleton in the "50s," not very successfully, he followed the old rule of planting irrespective of suitability of the soil, aspect, and other conditions. The result was the survival of the unfittest.

The comprehensive tour included an exhilarating journey on the forest railway, driven by a 30 h.p. Simplex motor, through the pine woods, over the moors, and across bridges spanning rippling streams. The track is three miles in length, and a speed of 15 miles an hour can be attained.

A visit was paid to the famous Detchant Wood, covering an area of 335 acres, which forms part of the original oak and birch forest that clothed the hillside in the olden days. The block of trees planted in 1862 provides the best specimens of old timber in the wood. Referring to a block of 35 acres, which was planted this year by the aid of the forestry Commission grant, Colonel Leather said he had never seen such fine bracken as that which flourished there before the site was given over to timber. On one occasion he rode through on a pony, and his head was just visible above the bracken.

The party inspected Swinhoe Lakes, which are stocked with trout, and where some thousands of duck may be seen in the winter months.

SOWER DOES NOT REAP

Following luncheon in the open, a short business meeting was held under the chairmanship of Mr John Balden (Stocksfield).

Lieut.-Colonel W. St. A. Warde-Aldam, D.S.O. (Healey Hall, Riding Mill), said it was often stated that forestry did not pay the generation that planted - the man who sowed did not reap - but he thought it could be shown that some benefit could be derived by planters in their own lifetime. He was trying to follow Colonel Leather's example on his own estate, and was devoting all his spare time from the Army to further the development.

Colonel G. H. Stobart (Harperley Hall) said he had been amazed by the breadth of vision and amount of foresight that had been displayed in the laying out of the estate. There was also a great deal of pluck behind it, because the ordinary man hesitated before laying out so much capital in a venture that was considered to be [so] unremunerative.

In reply, Colonel Leather said there was a great deal of talk about forestry, and it was a great pleasure to him to meet people who could discuss the subject intelligently.

Officers were elected as follow:- Chairman for Durham, coroner John Graham (re-elected); chairman for Northumberland, Colonel Leather, in place of Alderman C. H. Sample, who now resides in the South; hon. secretary for Durham, Mr Thomas Bond (Fence Houses); and hon. secretary for Northumberland, Mr George Ross (Hexham).

SMASHING UP OF ESTATES

After continuing the tour, the visitors were entertained to tea as the guests of Colonel Leather at the Blue Bell Hotel, Belford.

Proposing a vote of thanks to their host, Mr Balden said that at a time when large estates were being smashed up they had, as foresters, received great encouragement by all they had seen, and by the fact that Colonel Leather was standing fast and continuing development.

"Forestry is my hobby," said Colonel Leather in reply. "But you know the difficulties that landowners are going through. It takes a great deal of pluck to plant a tree nowadays. You don't know who is going to cut it down, or how it is going to be cut down. you feel sorry for the poor old tree in a way. (Laughter and applause.) I don't know what will happen to the old country if the Labour schemes go through. I am afraid the whole country would be denuded of trees in the same way as Ireland. It is best not to think about it. the only thing is to close one's eyes and go straight ahead. That is what I have done." (Applause.)

In addition to those already mentioned the party included Mr W. A. Armstrong, South Shields; Mr J. R. Bell, Bedale; Mr W. H. Bennet, Calthwaite; Mr D. Broadfoot, Alnwick; Colonel Rowland Burdon, Castle Eden; Mr G. G. Butler, Wooler; Mr T. Carr, Belsay; Mr T. Clark, Hexham; Mr J. Cleghorn, Wooler; Mr M. A. Coates, Haggerston Castle Estate; Mr J. E. Davidson, Colthwaite; Mr R. Dixon, Shotley Bridge; Mr r. Dobson, Haydon Bridge; Mr J. F. Dunn, Fence Houses; Mr R. Edmondson, Beal; Mr I. Embleton, Hexham; Mr T. Farbridge, Riding Mill; Mr J. Ferguson, Newcastle; Mr E. I. Grey, Wooler; Mr T. Guthrie, Harton; Mr H. I. Hall, Forest Hall; Mr R. C. Hedley, Corbridge; Mr J. A. Irving, Corbridge; Mr I. K. Johnson, Ferryhill. Mr A. H. Ker, Riding Mill; Mr T. W. Luke, Hexham; Mr H. Maber, Hexham; Mr W. McDonald, Ferryhill; Mr A. Mark, Alnwick; Mr T. Matheson, Morpeth; Mr A. Michie, Alnwick; Mr W. Milne, Hexham; Mr T. H. Musgrave, Newcastle; mr G. R. Nixon, Alnwick; Mr J. L. Ramage, Morpeth; Mr F. W. Rich, Morpeth; Mr H. A. Robson, Alnwick; Mr G. Ross, Hexham; Mr C. Shanks, Beal; Mr H. Smith, Durham; Mr J. S. Smith, Fourstones; Mr J. Symm, Newton, Stocksfield; Colonel Gartside Tipping, Duns; Mr T. White, Fence Houses; Mr J. Wilson, Harton; Mr R. J. Wylam, Fence Houses; and Mr Edward Davidson, Haydon Bridge, the secretary and treasurer of the society, who ably carried out the arrangements for the day's outing.

Newcastle Journal 1958

The man who kept on planting trees Experts go back to colonel's woods

By George Jobson
Our Agricultural Editor

Between the wars, when Britain's reserves of home-grown timber were getting low, Colonel Gerard Leather kept on planting trees.

He planted tens of thousands of them on his Middleton Hal estate at Belford.

Silviculture was much more than a mere interest with the colonel - he devoted his whole life to the science.

He even constructed a light railway from the estate sawmill three miles into the hinterland as far as Detchant Woods.

For years this private railway was the main transport route for all the timber felled on the estate.

Railway gone

Thirty years ago, when the colonel was their national president, members of the royal Forestry Society toured his extensive woods - and used the light railway to get from one point to the next.

Yesterday, 17 years after the death of this great Northumberland silviculturist, many of the same landowners, land agents, and working foresters returned to Middleton to see how the trees had grown since their previous visit in 1928.

This time, however, they had to use rough-riding estate cars to get round, for the light railway was sold during the war, and nothing is now left of it.

Enterprise

Colonel Leather died in 1941, and the main estate now belongs to Greenwich Hospital, which owns a lot of land in the North of England and the Scottish Borderland.

The hospital - it is an Admiralty establishment - bought Middleton in 1945 from the colonel's son, the late Group-Captain R. T. Leather.

The forestry experts were recalling other enterprising projects which the colonel initiated. For instance, he utilised sawdust from the estate sawmill for some years to produce gas to drive the sawmill machinery.

Water supplies

He also constructed half a dozen ponds to provide emergency water supplies in case of fire in the woods, and he tapped two of these ponds to supply the Hall and estate with electricity.

The estate now has mains electricity, but an auxiliary sawmill, the wood-working machinery, and a pressure-creosoting plant are still worked off one of the ponds.

Afterwards, the foresters made a similar tour of the plantations on the adjoining Shiellow estate, owned by the colonel's grandson, Colonel Mark Leather.

This estate of 979 acres, mostly moorland, came into being about 25 years ago.

ROYAL ENGLISH FORESTRY SOCIETY
Fellowships to Mark 50th Anniversary
NORTHERN RECIPIENTS

In order to mark the 50th year of its existence, the council of the Royal English Forestry Society, with the full approval of the annual general meeting of the society, has inaugurated a Fellowship, to be awarded to those who hold a high position in the forestry world.

The Fellowship will be limited in point of numbers, and at this stage only 20 have been selected. The election of the additional Fellows will be left in the hands of those Fellows already appointed. Five new names will be added annually until a maximum of 50 has been reached.



Among the first twenty elected appear the names of two North Countrymen, Colonel Gerard Leather of Middleton Hall, Belford, and Mr W. T. Bennett, of Brackenburgh Tower Estate, Penrith. Colonel Leather is well known to Northern foresters, having succeeded the late Duke of Northumberland as chairman of the Northern Division of the Royal English Forestry Society. He also served his period as President of the Royal English Forestry Society, and it was during his presidency that he inaugurated what is known as "The Divisional Scheme," by which England and Wales were divided into nine separate divisions as complete forestry units under the Royal English Forestry Society. This scheme has been working successfully for the last four years, and has done much to increase the interest in forestry throughout the country.

Colonel Leather has made a great hobby of forestry since he left the Army 32 years ago, and his estate has become a Mecca for those interested in forestry, and was specially visited by the members of the Royal English Forestry Society during their annual meeting at Newcastle in 1926. On the Middleton Estate every phase of forestry may be seen, from the tree nursery planting, thinning, felling, up to the final conversion of the timber at the estate sawmill. A forest railway intersects the estate, and takes the foresters to their work, bringing back timber to the mill. Power for the sawmill is obtained from water and also from suction gas generated from sawdust and waste. There is also a large pressure creosoting plant, the second to be installed on a private estate in Northumberland, the plant at Alnwick Castle being the first.

In 1922 the estate was awarded a special medal at the Royal Agricultural Show at Newcastle for the best run forestry estate in the four counties.

Mr W. T. Bennett is on the council of the society, and is well known to Northern foresters. He has often acted as judge of the forestry section at the Royal Show, and had a good deal to do with the success of the forestry section at the County Show at Newcastle last summer.