Chapter 10 Military action in and around the Castle

The Border Troubles

The first half of the 13th century saw constant warfare for Cumberland. Early in his reign Richard I sold the county to William of Scotland to raise money for the crusades, but his brother John retook the territory, to lose it to Alexander II in 1216. Scottish dominion of the northern counties of England ended with an agreement made at York in 1237, but the feuds between the two kingdoms continued for more than three centuries. A chance of peace was missed about 1290, when the intended marriage of the grand-daughter of Alexander to the son of Edward I was thwarted by the death of the girl.

In 1296 Edward I invaded Scotland and John Balliol surrendered the crown to England. The following year William Wallace, who had become the champion of Scottish independence, defeated the English at Stirling and, bypassing the garrison at Carlisle, advanced into Cumberland and laid waste the whole of Allerdale as far as Cockermouth. A number of unsuccessful attempts to take Cockermouth Castle were possibly made during the early years of the 14th century.

Edward II attempted to retake Scotland but his army was defeated at Bannockburn in 1314 and the following year the Scots again poured into Cumberland. They were led by Black Douglas and Robert Bruce (who had become King of Scotland in 1306 by stabbing the rival claimant) and laid waste the area from Cockermouth to St. Bees, plundering Brigham church. There was a further raid in 1319 under James Douglas and Thomas Randolf. Whether this force reached Cockermouth is uncertain, but three years later Bruce again ransacked West Cumberland.

In these troubled times Cockermouth Castle was an important factor in English offence and defence. The feudal lords had to give 40 days free service a year, being paid for anything in excess of this - an expensive business when war was as continuous as it was around 1300. The lords had to provide their quota of cavalry and infantry. Cockermouth men would be conscripted for service by the lord of the manor.

For service outside the county the rates of pay were 4s. [20p] per day for a banneret (a knight in command of troops provided by other knights), 2s.[10p] for a knight, ls.[5p] for a trooper (a mounted soldier), 2d.[about 1p] for an infantryman (archer or spearman). In 1300/1 two thousand foot soldiers were summoned from Cumberland for service against the Scots, but only 940 turned out, and many of these returned home after a few days, concerned to protect their homes against marauders. [1]

The Statute of Winchester had laid down in 1285 that

> "Every man between 15 and 60 years of age shall be assessed and obliged to have arms according to the quantity of his lands and goods; that is, he who holds land worth £15 a year and goods worth 40 marks shall have a coat of mail, an iron helmet, a sword, a knife, and a horse; from land worth £10 and 20 marks of goods, a coat of mail, an iron helmet, a sword, and a knife; from land worth £5, a doublet, an iron helmet, a sword and a knife; and from 40 up to 100 shillings' worth of land, a sword, a bow and arrows, and a knife; and they that have less than 40 shillings' worth of land shall be sworn to keep halberds, knives, and other smaller weapons; and they that possess goods worth less than 20 marks shall equip themselves with swords, knives, and other smaller weapons; and all others out of the forest shall have bows and arrows, and within the forest bows and bolts.
>
> The view of arms shall be made twice each year. And in every hundred and franchise two constables shall be appointed to make the view, and the constables shall bring before the justices, when they come into their area, the defaulters whom they have discovered ." [2]

Edward I wanted a thousand men from Cumberland in 1307 and for the local contribution a commission was issued to John de Eglisfeld and Thomas de Musegrave to select in the liberty of Cockermuwe sixty men "to be at Carlisle next Monday" [3]. Financial help was also demanded. Edward II commanded Gilbert de Culwenne, keeper of the castle and honour of Cockermouth in 1309, to pay David, Earl of Athol 50 meares towards the expenses of his march into Scotland.[4] It was essential that the castles should be not only garrisoned but kept in good repair and there are records of money being spent on repairs to the defences and to the accommodation at Cockermouth and on the victualling of the garrison. At the time of the invasion following Bannockburn Thomas de Richmond successfully held Cockermouth Castle with 20 men-at-arms (heavily armed horsemen), 46 hobelars (light horsemen) and 80 archers.

Andrew de Harcla similarly held Carlisle when besieged for ten days by Bruce, with a garrison four times the size of Cockermouth's, and as a reward he was given Cumberland by the king. The Cockermouth garrison included craftsmen for the castle's maintenance as well as troops. About 1320,

the complement when the Scots threatened was 37 men-at-arms, 51 hobelars, 8 crossbowmen, 60 footmen, 2 porters, a watchman, an engineer, a mason and a carpenter. When the Scots did not threaten this was reduced to 8 men-at-arms and 20 footmen, with the engineer, carpenter, porter and watchman. When Anthony de Lucy took over from de Harcia the numbers at Cockermouth were very low - no knights, 2 men-at-arms, 3 hobelars and 4 foot. The corresponding figures at Carlisle were 5,34,40 and 40, but Egremont had only 0,1,0 and 3.[5]

Raid and counter raid continued, decreasing towards the end of the century - although Carlisle Castle was still attacked four times in the 1380s. These raids affected Allerdale and Copeland to varying extent. In 1387 the Earl of Fife, the Earl of Douglas, the Lord of Galloway and others, with an army of 30,000 Scots, ravaged Cumberland for three days. Cockermouth Castle held out, but some think the garrison may have been surprised, [6] although with the warning system of the time this may be only conjecture. What is reasonably certain is that the Scots set fire to the castle, for it was reroofed soon after the raid.

During this century there was intense poverty in the border counties. Edward I had to retire to Carlisle after the Battle of Falkirk in 1298 and after taking Caerlaverock Castle in 1300 because the country was too impoverished to support his troops.[7] People must often have been at starvation level. In 1302 the bishop asked no disme (his tenth) from some of the churches and only two-thirds of it from many others. The value of the possessions of Lanercost Priory fell from over £72 in 1292 to nil in 1318. The papal taxation return for Carlisle diocese shows that over the same period the total value on which the tenth was assessed dropped from £3171 to a seventh of this amount, £480. [8]

In 1389 Cumberland, together with Westmorland and Northumberland, petitioned for remission of tax arrears, a remission which was granted on account of their poverty. Again, in 1403, Henry IV pronounced

> "This king pardoned and released to the men of the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, all escapes of felons, fines, issues, and amerciaments, with all kinds of tenths, fifteenths, etc. - on account of the grievous injuries they had sustained by the Scots, and their great losses by the falling of bridges, occasioned by sudden inundations of waters;" [9]

Exemption from tax was again granted in 1488 and even as late as 1555 a similar allowance was made, this time extended to Durham.

The stronger government of the Tudors improved the situation in these northern counties. Henry VII pursued a policy of peace and his daughter Margaret married James IV of Scotland. The attempted union of the two countries under a common king in 1603 was ineffective and relationships had bad periods until the final Act of Union in 1707. The lessening of national conflict resulted in men who were used to burning and plundering turning to this as a way of life when no longer enlisted in the armies, but these border troubles would rarely affect Cockermouth directly.

During the earlier period of border warfare there developed not only the system of castles noted at the beginning of the last chapter, but the building of peel towers, of which nearly a hundred are to be found from the border areas as far south as Morecambe Bay. These fortified towers, some of which have been incorporated into later buildings as in the halls at Dovenby, Isel and Lorton, consisted of three floors - the ground floor, with ventilating slits, for cattle, sometimes extended by a stockaded enclosure or barmkyn; a first floor with a fire-place, serving as a communal hall; and an upper floor with rooms for the women. From the flat or pitched roof invaders could be fired on. The towers were intended only as short-term refuges until danger had passed. They could not be taken by an ordinary raiding party and there was nothing to burn.

Edward I instituted the system of watching and lighting beacons, which were an important element in defence. In the Cockermouth area they were placed on Workington Hill, Moota, Sandale, Skiddaw, Eaglesfield and 'Watch Hill' (the Hay) to the east of the town. [10] Warning could be quickly passed on by beacon fires, starting with those in the north, such as Brampton and Carlisle Castle. The warning system was useless unless rigorously enforced and we have evidence of this being done as late as 1602. In that year there was delivered to a jury of burgesses a

> "petition by John Newcome of Simonscales, in the Township of Eaglesfield, against being amerced by the Cockermouth Jury for not watching at the Beacon on the Hay, saying that he and his ancestors watched at the Eaglesfield Beacon". [11]

His appeal was successful.

A later development of the border troubles was the establishment of country-keepers. An act was passed in 1662-3

> "for preventing of Theft and Rapine upon the Northern Borders of England" by "a great number of lewd, disorderly and lawless persons, being thieves and robbers, who are commonly called Moss-Troopers"

and who constantly crossed from one country to the other to avoid punishment. The justices in Cumberland in Quarter Sessions were empowered to raise £200 (similarly £500 in Northumberland) to employ what came to be known as country-keepers. Usually appointed from one of the leading families, the officer held what rapidly became one of the most important positions in the county. He had a force of 12 men (30 in Northumberland) to help him catch offenders, and we may picture these groups patrolling the border area. [12]

However, his salary of up to £200 had strings attached. Owners registered their horses and cattle with the booker or book-keeper in the nearest market town, giving full details of each animal. If an animal was stolen or strayed the loss was reported within 48 hours and, if it was not found, the owner had the right to recover its value at the next Quarter Sessions supported by a certificate from the booker - and if he was successful in his claim the money came out of the £200.

Although far from the trouble area and unlikely to make claims. Cockermouth helped by providing some of the officers from local families and no doubt bore a share of the cost. The Fleming-Senhouse papers record that in 1738 Humphrey Senhouse followed his father in the office, the salary being then £140. [13] Cockermouth inhabitants would also be reminded of the scheme when claims were made at the Quarter Sessions held in the town. The plan was intended for five years only, but was so successful that it was repeatedly renewed until found to be no longer necessary in 1757, 50 years after union.

The Wars of the Roses

In the Wars of the Roses (145 5-1485) Cockermouth Castle saw little action. It was held by the Lancastrians until April 1461 and then by the Yorkists after the defeat of the Lancastrian army at the Battle of Towton, near Tadcaster. The Earl of Wiltshire and Dr. John Morton, chancellor to the young Prince of Wales, were captured at the castle with very different consequences - the Earl was beheaded at Newcastle soon afterwards, the Doctor became Archbishop of Canterbury. We saw in an earlier chapter how the castle changed hands at this time, passing from the Lancastrian Percies to the Yorkist Warwick and returning later to the Percy line. It was only under Mary in Tudor times that the Percy estates were fully restored.

Mary Queen of Scots

One of the occasions in Cockermouth's history most frequently referred to is the visit to the town of Mary Queen of Scots in 1568. Her forces had been defeated at Carberry Hill on 15th June 1567 and she abdicated in favour of her son, James. She herself was imprisoned in Lochleven Castle but escaped, and when her supporters were again defeated at Langside near Glasgow on 13th May 1568 she sailed from Abbey Burnfoot, landing at Workington on Sunday evening, 17th May, after a four-hour crossing of the Solway. Sir Henry Curwen took her to Workington Hall for the night, where Lady Curwen is said to have given the Queen and her maids a change of linen. She wrote to her cousin Elizabeth, whose protection she was seeking, "I am in a pitiable condition, not only for a queen, but even for a gentlewoman, having nothing in the world but the clothes in which I escaped."

The Curwens, who had no wish to be involved in plot and counterplot, regarded Mary's arrival "as a very troublesome and unwelcome business" but they acted kindly towards her.

The next day Sir Henry, his son and other gentlemen accompanied the Queen to Cockermouth. News had spread and tradition says that the town turned out in its best attire to welcome her. The Earl of Northumberland was not in residence at Cockermouth but at Topcliff in Northumberland, so she was entertained for the night by Henry Fletcher.

(Another version is that the castle was not in a fit state for her to stay there, but this is less likely to be correct, especially as an incident described below shows that the Earl was indeed away.) The Fletchers, ancestors of the Fletchers of Hutton and the Vanes of Armathwaite Hall, were successful merchants and had acquired land and property. Henry lived in a large house in the Market Place (later demolished and replaced by an Elizabethan mansion which became known as Cockermouth Old Hall)

and it was here that the Queen spent the night. Her host gave her 13 ells (about 16 yards) of rich crimson velvet for a dress. The following morning, after holding court in the Fletcher house for the ladies of Cockermouth, the Queen left on a horse litter for Carlisle, watched by the people of the town. She was conducted to Carlisle by Sir Henry Lowther, sheriff of the county and deputy warden of the western marches, who had hastened to Cockermouth to meet her.

The Earl of Northumberland, learning of these events, went to Carlisle and demanded to take charge of her, since she had landed in his liberty of Cockermouth, and he wished to take her to Alnwick. Sir Richard refused to hand over the Queen, whereupon Northumberland became angry, very angry, as described by Lowther:-

> "My Lord growing into some heat and angre and a like language, calling me 'varlett' and suche others as I neither desserved at his handes neither looked for at anye man's hand for the servyce of the prynce. " [14]

The insulted Lowther having complained to Queen Elizabeth, the Earl was severely rebuked. This rebuke was one of the factors which led him to join in the 'Rising of the North' in the following year, an unsuccessful attempt under the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland to rescue Mary from imprisonment, to bring down the government of Elizabeth, and to restore the Catholic faith. [15] As he owned the barony of Cockermouth he must have drawn some of his supporters from this area.

The story has two sequels - Mary, who had hoped for the sympathy of her cousin, spent 18 years in prison before being executed at Fotheringay Castle in Northamptonshire; and, on a happier note, when James I, son of Mary, visited Carlisle in 1618 he summoned Richard Fletcher, grandson of Henry, and knighted him in appreciation of the help given to his mother by the Fletcher family.

It is interesting to speculate what course English history might have taken if the Earl had been at home to receive Mary.

The Civil War

Cockermouth next saw action in the Civil War (1642-8). We have seen how Algernon Percy hated the Stuarts because of their treatment of his father and the castle was garrisoned for Parliament. Most of Cumberland supported the King, including the local families of Fletcher, Lamplugh, Vane, Stanley and Dykes. Among the few supporting Parliament were the Lawsons of Isel and of course the Earl of Northumberland.

> "Cockermouth was a den of Puritanism, for it was under the influence of the Earl of Northumberland,. .... who had espoused early the side of Parliament." [16]

Events in Cumberland at first moved slowly. Carlisle garrison had been disbanded in 1641 following a treaty with the Scots, and the arms and munitions were stored in the Cathedral Fratry. It was regarrisoned when the war began and an attempt was made to seize it for Parliament in 1643. [17] In April 1648 there were two strong Royalist forces in Carlisle, the English and the Scottish being under separate commands as the former would not take the covenant supporting Protestantism and the Presbyterian system and the Scots would not combine armies unless they did! [18] General Lambert, in command of Parliamentary forces in the north, made his headquarters at Penrith. Life was still quiet in Cockermouth, where Lieutenant Bird was in charge of the castle for Parliament. Then in July all three armies moved south into Lancashire and beyond. The Royalists thought they now had Cumberland at their mercy and 500 of them, under Sir Marmaduke Langdale, laid siege to Cockermouth Castle.

Cromwell's forces began to move northwards again and as they did so, passing through Penrith to take Carlisle Castle, a force was sent under Lieutenant-Colonel Ashton to relieve the besieged garrison in Cockermouth. The Roundheads were freed on 29th September 1648, the Royalist besiegers withdrawing to Appleby having suffered some casualties, as listed below. By now the end of the war was near, for Charles was executed four months later.

Nicholson and Burn (1777) and Askew (1866) mistakenly state that the castle was garrisoned for Charles I and that it was besieged by Cromwell's forces. Mate attributes the confusion to a mistake in copying from the church register, writing 'reduced' instead of 'relieved' by Parliamentary forces, the former wrongly implying that the Royalists were inside the castle. Askew further states that the besieging forces erected a half-moon battery "above Fitz House", a quarter of a mile south-west of the town, and at the time he was writing a ditch eight or nine feet deep could still be seen. He also attributes the origin of the Broughton Baptist Church to the presence of the Parliamentary troops and a

former Baptist Church in Waterloo Street would probably begin at the same time. The troops seem to have created an impression in Cockermouth - they were God-fearing, paid fully for anything they bought, did not gamble and did not molest the women. When there was no immediate Royalist threat the castle garrison would be free to move around the town.

The site of the half-moon battery is traditionally at the corner of Fitz Road and Lamplugh Road, where the 'pepperpot' house now stands. There was possibly another battery in the Wood Hall area. [19]

Casualties were few in the siege. A page in the register for the chapelry has the following entries:

"The fiege was laid agt Cockermouth Caftle Auguft 1648 and the Caftle was relieved the 29th. September in which time were flain of the Befiegers

1. George Bucke near the Goate bridge.
2. Chnftopher Burne, on Cockerbridge.
3. Anthony Johnfon of Workington, shot on Cockerbridge.
4. John Cape, Milner, shot in the ftreet near the Mootehall.
5. John Hartley.
6. Henry Dalston.
7. John Hire,
8. . . . a Trumpeter in Mr. Tukell loft.
9. Myles ffisher of Cockermouth shot about the quenching of Mrs. ffearons back-houses (bakehouse?)..
10. Captain John Hobson, shot on Cockerbridge.
11. Robert Murell, shot in ye Caftle being all that was flain in ye Garrison, September 21, 1649." [20]

The castle buildings may not have suffered greatly but when the Parliamentary troops withdrew roofs were removed and the upper walls demolished. Only the outer gateway and the flag tower, venue of the Quarter Sessions for many years, were left intact. The empty building was looted, for in April 1649 a list was made of castle goods recovered in the town - a cartload of lead, many planks and joists, five bedsteads, two doors, a table, etc.

A sequel to the siege came six years later, when two of Cromwell's supporters claimed promised compensation.

"September 1st. 1654. Minute of Council of State. Petition of Richard Uriel and Thomas Crosthwaite, late merchants of Cockermouth, Cumberland, to the Protector. In 1648, by order of Major-General Lambert, we assisted the later Major William Bird to defend Cockermouth Castle. on a three months' siege by Sir William Huddleston, who totally plundered our estates, value £1965, by which we have been disabled to maintain ourselves. When the Castle was relieved by you on your march from Lancashire to Carlisle we told you our losses, and you acknowledged our fidelity and ordered us to appeal to you in London when something should be done for our relief. This we did, but after our long journey found you had gone to Ireland. We have since been often solicited by persons of quality, and in June 1652 were promised speedy relief, but have obtained none, to the total ruin of our families, and our creditors daily threaten to imprison us. We beg speedy relief, according to your former gracious promises. "[21]

Two certificates were appended, each with 12 signatures testifying to the loss of £1000 by Richard Uriel and his father and of £965 by Thomas Crosthwaite.

The claim was considered by a committee and an order made for settling land in Ireland, the order being finally approved on 2nd September 1654 [22]

"for their faithfulness to Parliament and losses at the siege of Cockermouth Castle".

The Jacobite Risings

In the next important military events at national level, the Jacobite Risings of 1715 and 1745, the castle was not involved, for activity in Cumberland was largely along the Carlisle-Penrith-Kendal road and Cockermouth was by-passed. The people of the town were however drawn into national affairs. On the first occasion forces were raised under the Militia Acts - a troop of horse and seven companies of foot from Carlisle, Cockermouth, Penrith, Millom, Appleby, Kendal and Kirkby Lonsdale areas. The Cockermouth force was commanded by Thomas Lamplugh and sent to Penrith, the Penrith company being moved up to Carlisle. The company from Millom, under a Senhouse, was stationed in Cockermouth. [23] There was no active support for the Jacobites, any likely leaders (including Curwen of Workington) having already been imprisoned in Carlisle Castle.[24]

The above arrangements suggest that for military purposes Cumberland and Westmorland were regarded as one unit and in the 1745-6 rising there is a reference to "the Regiment for Westmorland

and Cumberland". On this later occasion Colonel Pennington (of Muncaster) had a company raised from Allerdale-above-Derwent based at Whitehaven and Major Senhouse a company from Allerdale-below-Derwent stationed in Cockermouth with leave to march to Workington. [25]

Again nothing much happened in the Cockermouth area, but there were a number of alarms. A Mrs. Dorothy Palmer of Great Broughton wrote letters [26] at the time which indicate the state of unrest. Under the date 18th October 1745 she relates

> "As for us hear (sic) at Broughton and the towns about we are not terrified about the Rebills marching this way, as we were some time since, nor do we think the Rebills will attempt to take Carlisle."

This confidence had been shaken by 12th November -

> "....this day an Express came to Cockermouth, that they had left Carlisle, and marching towards Penrith, we're all in the utmost consternation here, especially at Whitehaven and Workinton (sic), where they have shipped their best effects and put to sea most places about have removed their best effects I have sent our Horse with 2 of Bro: Fletchers to Mrs. Clarke of Buttermere."

The 1745 militia has been described as a rabble. Men were enlisted only a month before the Highland forces reached Carlisle and they were untrained, undrilled, without uniforms, carried an assortment of arms and were inclined to run from the enemy. The parish or landowner, having to provide a quota, tended to make a contract with the first idler encountered, sometimes giving him arms, sometimes promising a wage. The low standard of the militia, not only in Cumberland, led to the passing of the 1757 Militia Act providing for regular training, etc

Forests, parks and waste

The names "Skiddaw Forest" and "Copeland Forest" appear prominently on the ordnance map of the Cockermouth area. It is obvious that these areas are not 'forests' in the sense in which the word is now used. They were so named in Norman times, when certainly a large proportion of the land was wooded, but when 'forest' denoted a tract of country over which strict controls were exercised.

The whole of north Cumberland, from Crossfell to the sea and from the Solway to the Derwent, was at one time the "Forest of Cumberland". South of the Derwent, stretching from Borrowdale to the coast, lay "Copeland Forest".

The original very extensive areas tended to be divided into smaller units, which could still be quite large. Near Cockermouth was the Forest of Derwentfells, sometimes known as Cockermouth Forest and part of Copeland. There is a record of it being granted c. 1170 by Alan the son of Waldeof. [1]

In the 13th century, forests were restricted by Henry III, considerable areas being disafforested, including the land from the Cocker to the coast. Derwentfells remained and was divided in 1247 between William de Fortibus III and Alan de Multon.

Life in and around a forest was governed by forest laws, aimed at preserving the game, especially deer. Inglewood, for example, sent venison in the 13th century to such places as Windsor, York, Nottingham and Winchester. [2]

To foster game the cutting of timber was strictly controlled. In the free chace no one could hunt a deer, wolf, boar or any of the smaller animals - hare, fox, beaver, badger, otter, squirrel, pole cat, wild cat, pine marten, etc. - without permission of the holder of the franchise. The chace was not 'free' in the sense of being available to all .

The management of a forest was under a warden, an hereditary position which carried certain privileges, such as permission to take timber. There were fines for breaking the forest laws - injuring or felling trees, poaching, assarting. Such laws applied not only to the wooded areas within a forest but to 'waste'.

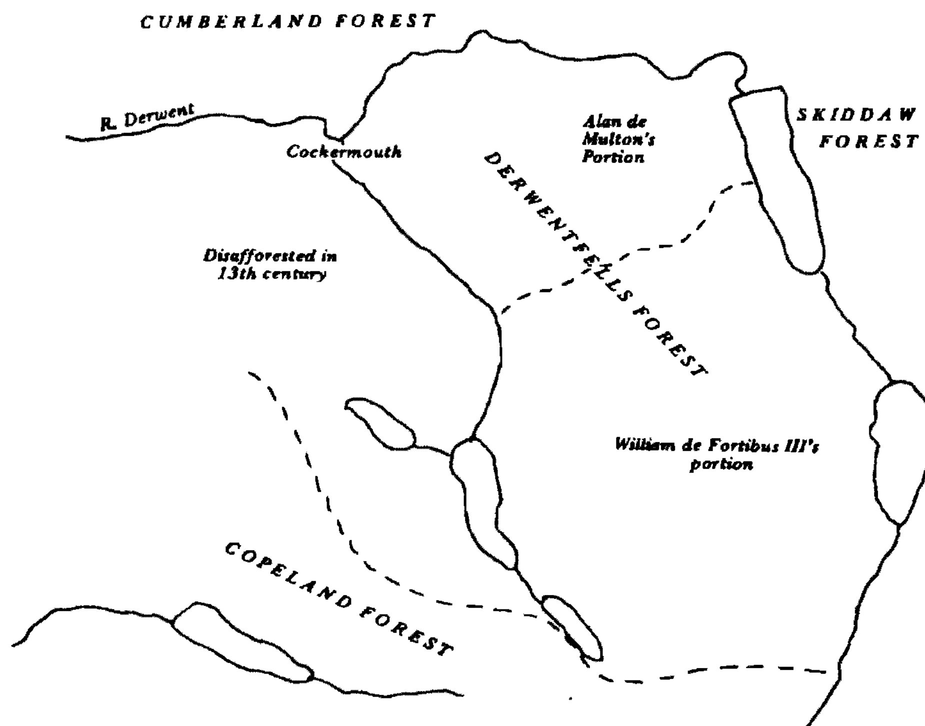

Fig 30. *The forests south of Cockermouth (after W. H. Liddell, NS66)*

The "committing of waste" (eg.: building a house) was a very serious offence. Forest laws of this kind obviously hindered the development of land and the growth of settlements at a time, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the population was increasing. The only concession might be permission to pasture animals in the restricted areas or to drive in pigs each day to feed upon the acorns.

Timber for building or burning or additional land for cultivation could only be obtained under licence. However, some encroachment on forests was authorised at quite an early date, as shown by a charter granted in 1202 by Richard de Lucy to Adam de Mosser. 'Mosser' meant 'the shieling on the moss', a moss of which there are still remains between the present hamlet of Mosser and the villages of Pardshaw and Pardshaw Hall. The charter enabled scattered farms to develop along its edge, stating that

> "the aforesaid Adam and his heirs shall till, build and assart the wood" [3]

This marginal development may have been exceptional at so early a date, but gradually landowners came to realise that there was profit to be had in clearing and cultivating land and that at the same time they could still reserve considerable areas for hunting and hawking.

Trouble could come not only from poaching peasants but from a neighbouring landowner. The division of Derwentfells Forest, mentioned above, was soon in dispute. In the year of the division, William de Fortibus complained that Alan de Multon and his wife Alice

> "were causing waste, sale, and damage in the forests of Alredal, Cokermue and Kaldebek (Allerdale, Cockermouth and Caldbeck), which should be common to both parties."

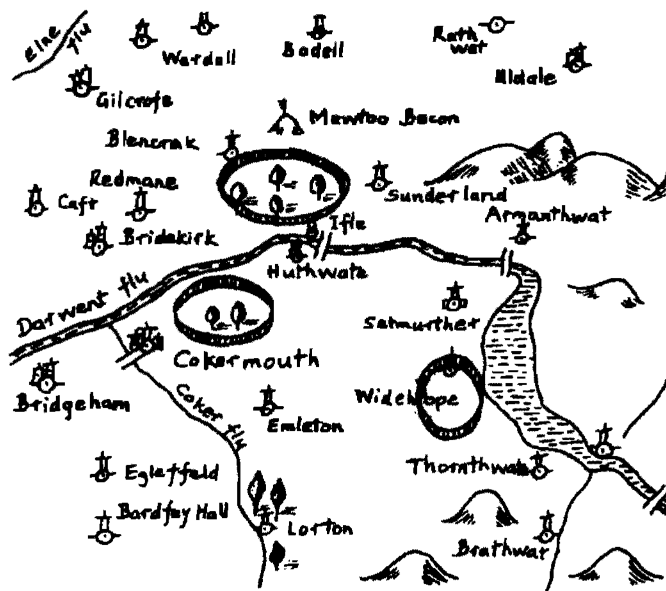

Fig 31. *The three parks near the town based on the John Speed map of 1610*

The boundary was finally settled in the King's Court at Bedford as running from the mill of the Prior of Carlisle in Lorton by Wychebeck (Whit Beck) to the top of Lauerdsate (Lord's Seat) and by Bethwythop (Beck Wythop) to the summit of Skydehowe (Skiddaw) and down into the Caldew. Nine years later de Multon complained that de Fortibus was depriving his men of "reasonable estovers in Derwentfells".[4]

Rather later, in 1285, Thomas de Lucy granted to Sir Thomas de Ireby 85 acres of land and meadow outside the coverts which the latter already had at Embleton (the tun or farmstead of a Norseman Emer or Amer), Shatton and Stanger in the waste and free chace of Derwentfells. In return for a rent of 4d. per acre per year Sir Thomas and his "free men and tenants dwelling in the same improvements" were to enjoy common pasture, housebote and haybote, green wood for building and dead wood for burning, in the waste and free chace everywhere in Derwentfells, except in the new improvements made by Thomas de Lucy.[5]

The same Sir Thomas was granted the liberty of enclosing a park around his manor of Embleton in the grantor's forest of Derwent Fells, as recorded in a deed for Cockermouth Castle witnessed in c. 1285 by John de Lamplugh and contained in St. Bees Register. For this the lords of Ireby had to do homage at Cockermouth Castle and the Lucies retained the right to slay two beasts a year - a stag between the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin (15 August) and the Feast of St. Michael (29 September) and a doe between the Feast of St. Andrew (30 November) and the Feast of St. Hilary (13 January). Eighty years after the agreement an order was made

> "to release from suite of court, indent: Thomas de Lucy, lord of Cockermouth, to Robert de Tilliell, lord of Ireby: Whereas Robert owes suit every three weeks at Cockermouth for manor of Ireby, Thomas releases him

for life, except that he is bound to do suit himself or by attorney at the three chief courts." [6]

All the map makers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries show parks in this area. Speed in 1610 has them at Cockermouth, Wythop and Isel, depicted as surrounded by fences. 'Park' comes from the French for an enclosure for arable farming or for pasture, but here means an enclosure for keeping deer near at hand. Thus a supply of fresh meat was assured and one or two animals could be released from the park for hunting over a wider area when desired.

The Lucy Cartulary has a copy of a charter granted in 1323 by Anthony de Lucy giving free warren in his demesnes lands of Cockermouth and elsewhere. The holder of a warren had the right to take hares, foxes and other small animals. The Normans were very religious and liked to endow religious houses and in this way much of Cumberland passed into the possession of the monasteries, which extended their lands by purchase as their wealth increased. Alice de Rumelli sold upper Borrowdale to Furness Abbey for £156-l3s-4d. in 1209 and the land between Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite to Fountains. [7] St.Bees had land in Loweswater, Carlisle Priory in Wythop and Holm Cultram in Blindcrake, Isel and Setmurthy.

Sheep (and to some extent minerals) were big business with the monasteries. They organised their lands efficiently (Fountains Abbey had 41 farms and a grange in Borrowdale); [8] built boundary dykes to their holdings which may still be traced in places on the hills; and sent their representatives to the wool markets. A tenth of their income went to Rome

When William de Fortibus III died in 1259/60 an inventory of his possessions included 60 acres of demesne land and the Park, two leagues in circumference, "which may be closed to sustain the bucks and hindes therein contained, of which there are by estimation 100". This lay NE of the town. In 1530 the sixth Earl of Northumberland granted the park to Thomas Wharton, comptroller of his household, and when it came back into the estate in the 18th century the timber had been felled for the tanneries in the town and the land ploughed. The Percy Survey of 1577/8 described the park, 340 acres enclosed by a wall, a hedge and ditch, and the River Derwent. 200 acres were pasture, the remainder wooded.

"There is.... a great number of small oke trees worth now presentlie to be soulde at one with another 6d. the tree as followeth: Horse Close Wood 1340; Middleton Spring 5220; St. Anthonie's Wood 5080;. ..etc."

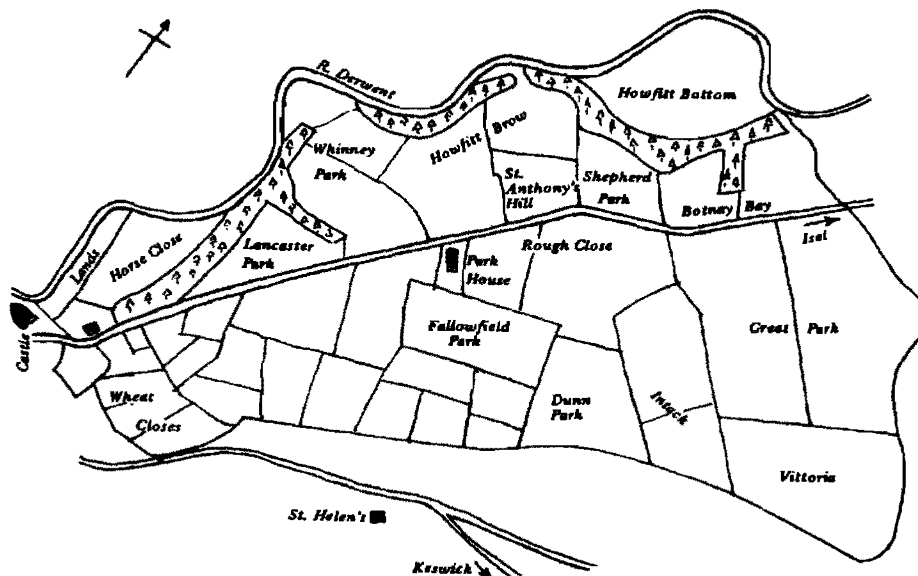

Fig 32. *Cockermouth Parks from a map in the castle records*

There is no mention of deer in the survey, indicating a possible change of emphasis from preserving timber in order to have animals available to selling it for its financial value.

The same survey states

"there is also about the said Castle certain Domain Lands as followeth:

The Garden and Orchard adjoining the Castle Green worth		3s-4d.
The Dear Orchard adjoining to the said gard.contg. 2 acres		10s-0d.
The land between the Horse Close and the waters of Darwent containing by est. 4 acres		26s-8d.
The Horse Close lying betwixt the said land and the park containing by est. 16 acres		40s-0d.
The Wheat Close adjoining to the Park cent. 20 acres		50s-0d.
Sum total of the said domains	£6-10s-0d."	[£6.50]

Eventually almost all the former forests and hunting preserves became huge areas of common land. There was a large area of waste to the north of Cockermouth and two commons bordered it to the south, Cockermouth Moor to the east of the Cocker and Gallowbarrow Moor to the west. Both these commons had gates to prevent stock from wandering and there were penalties for not using them properly, as witness a Court Leet ruling of 1679 that

> "It is put in pain that ye inhabitants within this boro' shall not cast off ye hinges or prop open ye public gates subpoena 6s-8d." [9]

Two years later it was decided

> "We find it convenient to have four yeates (gates) to be hung two above bridge (Cockermouth Moor, etc.) and two below (Gallowbarrow, etc.) at the charge to the Borough for securing the goods upon the Common." [10]

The bridge was Cocker Bridge. In 1694 there is a record of four entrance gates into the town, including the Moorgate somewhere south of Christ Church [11]

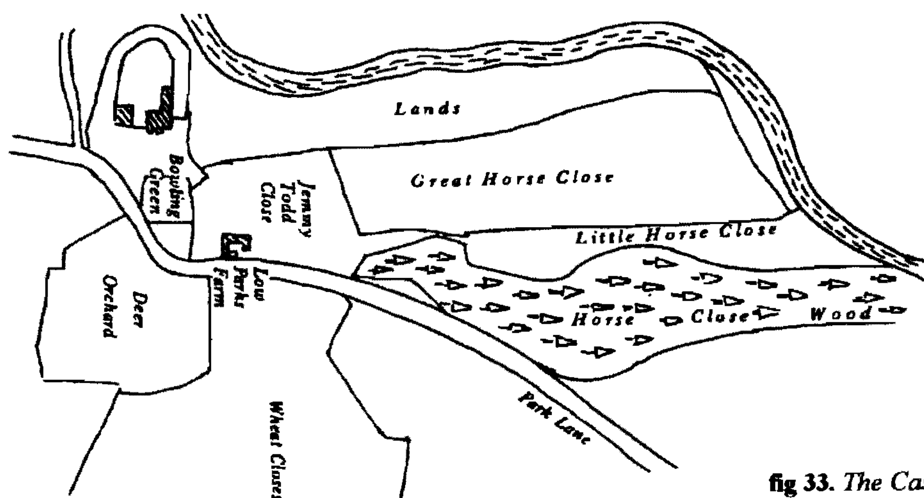

fig 33. *The Castle demesne lands*

Chapter 12 Fields, enclosures and farming

From maps and records it is possible to follow the enclosure of the commons and the development of the field system in Cockermouth from the late 18th century, but there is less certainty about the arrangement in earlier times. There were small enclosures at an early date. Thomas de Lucy referred in an agreement of 1285 to enclosure improvements at Embleton. [1] As early as about 1290 Furness Abbey was given permission to enclose Pastures adjoining the forest of the Lord of Egremont. [2] The Abbey was free to choose its own method of enclosure - dyke, wall or fence - to keep in the sheep, but the boundary must be low enough for deer to leap.

Isolated farmsteads, villages and small towns like Cockermouth would from their very beginnings have a number of small enclosures round them, with ways or 'bars' through these fields to the commons beyond.

The method of development from these beginnings varied considerably over the country, but the infield-outfield system was widespread and lasted a long time in northern England. This consisted of intensively and continuously cultivated infields, growing oats, barley, beans, etc., heavily cropped and heavily manured each year. Beyond lay the outfields or larger cropped areas, cultivated to varying extent according to the immediate need and manured by cattle pastured there after they had been gathered. Manure was a valuable commodity. The Court Leet passed the following resolution in 1690

> "It is put in pain that no inhabitant within this borough shall sell or give any manure to any in Brigham sub poena 6s. 8d. "(33p)

and even in recent farm-letting agreements occur clauses such as

> "all vewtures shall be consumed on the farm"

ensuring that the farm land is not impoverished during the tenancy.

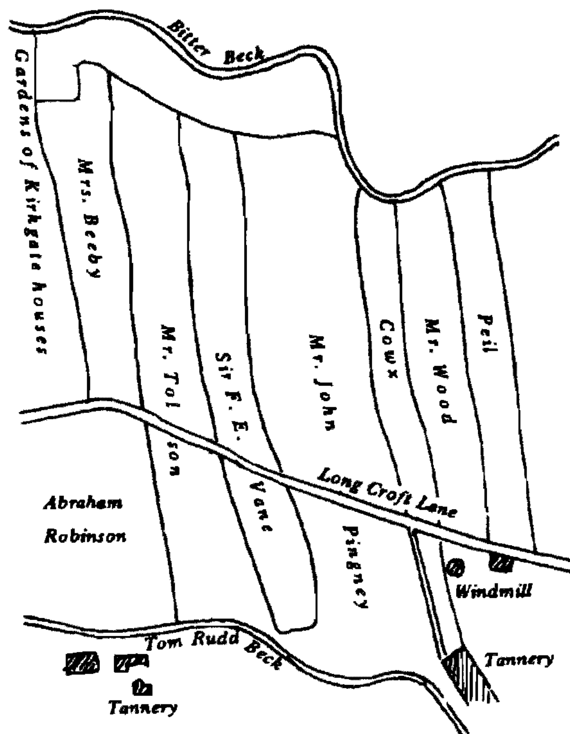

Fig 34. *The Long Croft fields based on Woods map of 1832*

As population increased the infields would extend at the expense of the outfields, which in turn would push further out on to the waste.

In early medieval times Cockermouth would have fields of arable land divided into strips. A man might farm several strips in various fields, so that he had a share of both the better and the poorer land. The fields themselves were enclosed by hedge or wall, but neighbouring strips (in a corn field of the width a sweep of the scythe could cut) were divided by only a furrow or small ridge. There had to be co-operation regarding crops, so that the whole field could be harvested at the same time, enabling stock to be turned into it to graze. The stubble of a strip of oats could not be grazed while a tempting root crop grew unprotected alongside.

The strip fields in some of the villages around Cockermouth have been located, for example a fairly extensive system north-east of Bridekirk which was confirmed by aerial exploration in 1976. In Cockermouth itself we do not know how many fields were strip-farmed - building has made aerial confirmation impossible - but there are indications that one such field was east of Kirkgate in Long Crofts. Wood's map of 1832 shows a number of very long, narrow fields, much longer in proportion to width than the usual rectangular fields of the enclosure around this date.

Individuals would buy or exchange strips, enabling them to have a number together which were easier and more economical to farm than scattered holdings.

Eventually a group of strips might be large enough for the tenant, subject to the agreement of his neighbours, to enclose them as a field of his own. Possibly this happened in Longcrofts to produce

the 1832 field pattern. The 3-field system did not develop here, but there is evidence that fields were left fallow to improve them. [3]

As far back as the second half of the 13th century there is a record of the manor of Cockermouth having a close of 25 acres below the castle; 83 acres of arable land in Ourebyfeld and a field near St. Helen's chapel; and another 56 arable acres in le Cragges and Brudekirkefeld. [4] There were demesne meadows named Apeltonmeded, Braythemire, Spytelenge and Kirkemire. We still have Spittal Ing. Kirkemire was presumably near the church, swampy ground along the Cocker or Bitter Beck. Early records make it possible to locate the fields of Longcrofts, Urebyfield (or Overbyfield the above-town field) and Hulland Closes to the east of the town, and Laithwaite (or Lathead) to the west. Norse ending of Ureby is evidence that there was a farmstead or small settlement in Cockermouth before the castle was built. A 17th century map (Plate 1) labels Deare Orchard, Whete Cloffe, Horseclofe and Laund (Lands) in the lord's demesne. It suggests a complex of fields in other parts of the area, with "The Common" and Derwent Fells beyond, but one cannot be certain whether, in an ornate picture map of this kind, the apparent boundary lines are merely decoration or whether they depict reasonably accurately the field pattern at this time (Figure 33).

We have seen that co-operation was necessary in order to farm the infields and this also applied to the outfields - how much should be cultivated, which areas should lie fallow, how many animals a man might have on the common pasture a stinting system still in operation today on unfenced fell land such as Skiddaw. Co-operation required that those concerned should meet, in either a manorial court or a town meeting. The extent of the field system depended largely on the size of the population and the consequent demand for food.

To take two examples: - The 4 million population of the country on the first outbreak of the Black Death in 1348 was reduced to little more than a half during the next 25 years and numbers began to increase again only about 1450, taking until 1600 to return to the 1348 level. [5] Many fields would obviously fall into disuse, some abandoned strips being consolidated into hedged pastures after about 1450 to meet the increasing demand for wool. Then again as the population increased in the 17th and 18th centuries and restrictions on development of 'waste' lands were relaxed., smallholdings would be started along roads, near streams etc., om hitherto uncultivated land. This rather haphazard

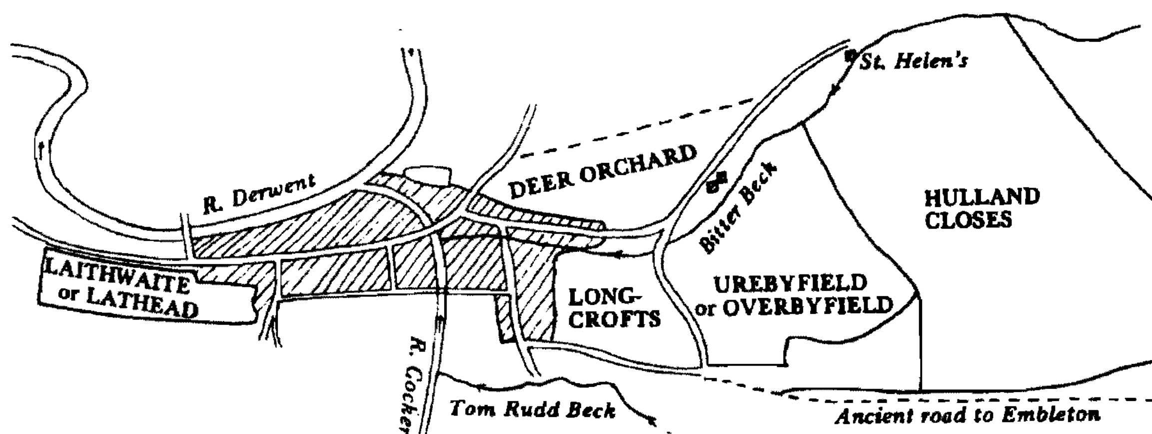

Fig 35. *Early fields, based on the researches of A.L. Winchester.*

development proved insufficient to meet the demand and economic factors in the 18th century necessitated the speeding up of the process. Much enclosure was done by agreement, land being disafforested, and sometimes there was agreement not to enclose, retaining the common grazing rights.

In 1704 proposals were 'humbly offered' by the inhabitants of Cockermouth to the Duke of Somerset to 'improve' waste ground and common in the borough, with suggestions for fees and inheritance fines on each improved acre.'[6]

Much enclosure was achieved under parliamentary acts. There was an application to Parliament for Cockermouth enclosures in 1777. The Cumberland Pacquet carried the announcement –

Fields, enclosures and farming

> "Cockermouth Inclofure. Notice is hereby given purfuant to a Refolution of the Honourable the Houfe of Commons, That an Application is intended to be made to Parliament in the next Seffion of Parliament
>
> for obtaining an Act for Dividing and Inclofing certain commons and Wafte Grounds lying near the Town of Cockermouth in the County of Cumberland. September 12, 1777." [7]

In 1810 a meeting was held in the Moot Hall of proprietors of lands and others interested in the enclosure of further commons and waste and on 21 April 1813 Royal Assent was given to a further act for inclosing 1200 acres, probably the area of Cockermouth Moor extending from St. Helen's Street to Strawberry How road. The act ran to 31 Pages and contained well over 200 claims, such as –

> "No. 2. Allison Wm. Claims a portion of common for the dwelling houses occupied by himself and Daniel Harrison and John Black situate in Cockermouth known by the name of the Old Hall." [8]

There was concern that the rights enjoyed on the common lands, for example taking turf for fuel, should not be ignored.

The Castle has a plan of the enclosure, dated 2 December 1815, signed by John Huddleston and Richard Atkinson, Commissioners, and Jas. Steel, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for Cumberland.

Over the whole country some 2000 acts were passed for different parishes from 1793 to 1815, the rate then falling as the number unenclosed dwindled. The increase of population, the lack of imports because of war and the big rise in prices in the period 1760 to 1810 made investment in hitherto unproductive land an attractive proposition. Local enclosures at this time included Eaglesfield and Blindbothel 1812, Brigham 1812-3, Setmurthy and Embleton 1813, Great and Little Broughton 1815, Greysouthen 1819. Whinfell 1820 and Lorton 1826. [9]

Enclosures made at this period may be easily recognised by their straight sides and frequently rectangular shape as distinct from the irregular fields of earlier times. Such may be seen on the approach to Moota along the Carlisle road. The new fields tended to be of five to ten acres, with larger enclosures of 50 acres or more further out, but the latter proved to be too big even for pasture and were mostly divided into smaller units. [10]

The powers of parliamentary enclosure increased. In 1836 a two-thirds majority of landowners could compel a parish to enclose, but by 1845 a permanent commission had powers to enclose land wherever it was considered desirable. Eventually the public became aware how much access was being lost and the Commons Preservation Act of 1876 curbed the process unless it was recognised as being for the benefit of the community. The crowded inhabitants of the growing industrial towns needed open country within reach.

The effect of enclosure survives in Cockermouth, although there are now few fields actually within the town boundary, for the overall shape of housing estates on the outskirts of the town has been determined by the pattern of the fields on which they were built.

The landowners and larger farmers benefitted from having their own enclosed fields- easier to work, no restrictive communal rules, more varied crops, an ability to drain and improve one's land without waiting for the full agreement of other people. Land value doubled and trebled. The people who suffered were those who had been able to work one or two strips or to keep an animal on the common and now found themselves with nothing.

The mid-17th century was prosperous (sturdy farmhouses and strong oak furniture date from this period), but by the beginning of the following century Cumberland was one of the most backward agricultural areas in the country.

> "The extensive commons, the distance from markets and commercial centres, all encouraged the idea that Cumberland should be content to feed and clothe itself, and keep alive its poor herds of stock over the winter. A few sheep, the poorer sort of Irish and Scotch beasts, grazed on the higher lands. . . Draining was hardly heard of. The implements of husbandry were of the rudest character, and everything about the farms was similar. . . The dependence of the small farmer was on the commons." [11]

There he kept horses, pigs, geese, sheep and cows and found turf and peat for fuel, wild berries for food and rushes for lights. It was stated in 1794 that

"There are probably few counties where property in land is divided into such small parcels as in Cumberland; and these small properties so universally occupied by the owners; by far the greatest part of which are held under the lords of the manors, by that species of vassalage, called customary tenure; subject to the payment of fines and heriots, on alienation, death of the lord, or death of tenant, and the payment of certain annual rents, and performance of various services, called Boon-days, such as getting and leading the lord's peats, plowing and harrowing his land, reaping his corn, haymaking, carrying letters, etc., etc., whenever summoned by the lord." [12]

Often a small farmer and his family supplemented income by home spinning and weaving, quarrying, mining or lime burning.

The prices which a farmer might expect for his crops in 1782 were fixed by Quarter Sessions held in Cockermouth as £1-18s-8d for a quarter (8 Winchester bushels) of wheat, £1-ls-4d for rye, 10s-8d. for oats, £1-16s-8d for bigger barley, £1-ls-4d for beans, £1-l2s-0d for malt and 18s-8d. for gray pease. [13] The expenses of raising crops in 1804 were:-

Barley: For 3 ploughings and harrowings at 10s.		£2-l0s-0d
30 loads of manure, leading and spreading		£4-15s-0d
	Total:	£6-5s-0d
Wheat: for 40 bushels of lime and leading		£2-l0s-0d
Manure 25 loads and leading and spreading		£3-1 9s-2d
Four ploughings and harrowings		£1-17s-6d
	Total:	£7-16s-8d
Turnips: Ploughing, manuring, cleaning	Total:	£611s-0d [14]

Standards gradually improved, largely through the inspiration of John Christian Curwen of Workington and J. R. G. Graham of Netherby, who experimented in selective breeding of stock, grew more fodder and turnips for winter feeding to obviate the autumn slaughter, manured and drained their land. Still there were hazards which could not be foreseen ...long frosts, droughts, or wet summers bringing sheep rot and other diseases. There were other hazards besides natural forces, such as the collapse of corn prices in 1815 when many who had borrowed money to expand to meet the demand of the war years were unable to repay. Ruined as farmers they became landless labourers or drifted into Cockermouth and other towns to find work. There came competition from American grain and Australian frozen meat (first in 1880). Sometimes the growth of industry helped, for people needed meat and vegetables, but this might be offset by the migration from our area to the new industrial towns further south.

In ten years from 1871 the number of farm workers in the country fell by about 100,000. Once even the top of Whinfell was ploughed, but in contrast there were long periods of depression, the most recent being 1880 to 1940 when many farm buildings around Cockermouth fell into disuse, to be eagerly sought in recent years for conversion into dwellings.

Acts of 1892 and 1908 relating to smallholdings and allotments (2 acres and a cow) endeavoured to turn the tide. The two wars boosted demand for home grown food. Derating of farm premises came in 1929, there were marketing acts in the 1930s and grain subsidies were introduced, and since the last war there has been a variety of help and, in particular, subsidies for hill farmers in our area. Still the drift from the land continued at about 10,000 workers a year between the wars. The number of farm workers was halved from 1870 to 1930. With amalgamations and increase mechanisation the situation is now more static. Meanwhile Cockermouth has continued its centuries-old function as market and supplies centre of an agricultural area, a function we shall examine later.

One of the expenses farmers (and others) had to meet was the tithe or tenth payable to the church. This was distinct from the church rate or cess levied for the upkeep of the structure and over which parishioners had control in both its amount and its use through elected churchwardens and vestry meetings. Tithes were taken in kind by a rector or by the impropriators (lay owners) of a living who were obliged to appoint and pay a vicar. They were payable on the increase of all living things - hay, corn, honey, hens, etc., etc. In return every parishioner, including dissenters, had the right without favour to the ministrations of the church.

A Lamplugh record gives some idea of the thoroughness of the system. In 1771 the rector, Richard Dickinson, wrote:-

Corn ... The Owner cuts down, binds up and stooks the Corn, and the Parson by the Owners knowledge and consent sets out every tenth Stook and tenth part with liberty to dry his Corn on the Stubel. Wool... The

> Owner lays it in five heapes and the Rector takes one and divides that in two and the Owner takes one half back again, Lambs... If the Owner have One he pays a Halfpenny, Two a Penny, Three three halfpence, Four Twopence, Five Half a lamb, Six a whole lamb paying Twopence out, Seven paying Three halfpence, Eight paying a penny, Nine paying a halfpenny, and the Owner sets them ten together beginning with ten of the Best then takes up Two and the Parson One and so on. .

and so on for geese, pigs, hens, bees, cows, roots and hay. [15]
We may note here certain fees which all parishioners had to pay, listed in the same memorandum –

> "For every Communicant after the first time of Receiving is Three Halfpence pay'd on Easter Tuesday.
> An oblation for every Churching of Women fourpence.
> Every Wedding by Bands one shilling, by licence five shillings."

Rates would be similar in Cockermouth.

In addition the parson had "right of Common on all the Commons in the parish". Land brought newly into cultivation was free of tithe for seven years. Men would be employed to collect wool, corn, etc., and to take it to the tithe barn. They would act for the rector in selecting the tenth.

A record of 1700 for Arlecdon Parish states

> "Lambs set out in Tens, owner take up 2; Tither take 1 out of 8. Touch and take.
> Fleeses of Wool laid out in Tens, owner take up 2; Tither take 1 out of 8. Touch and take. [16]

"Touch and take" prevented handling before making a choice. The tithe payer would know his stock, but the collector had to rely on appearances.

When dissenters refused to pay tithes a warrant for distraint was obtained from the magistrates and goods sold to raise the money. For Quakers in Dean parish this was usually £3-8s-0d., but the Rector's expenses in obtaining it averaged £4-17s-6d.! [17]

It gradually became more convenient for all concerned to make a money payment instead of giving a tenth of stock or produce. This began to some extent before 1600 (tithes date from pre-Norman times) and by 1750 all tithe on corn in Dean was paid in cash. [18] Unfortunately we do not have the records for Cockermouth. Finally all payment in kind was ended by the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836. An assessment was made of the value of every field and building and a rent fixed based upon the price of wheat, barley and oats. This was revised every seven years and tables published annually to help in calculation. The evaluation for the country in 1836 was about four million pounds.

The Articles of Agreement on Tithes for Cockermouth [19] dated 31 March 1840 give the area of the town as 2222 acres, of which 1262 acres were subject to payment of tithes in kind - 492 acres of arable land, 709 of meadow or pasture and 60 of woodland. The land not subject to payment in kind belonged to three owners - Henry Wyndham, whose 887 acres (including Cockermouth Parks) were "exempt from the render of all Tithes in Kind by the Payment of One Stone Weight of Wool Yearly at Michaelmas"; John Hodgson for 16 acres of St. Helen's Closes, etc., by the payment of 10s.; and Humphrey Senhouse whose 56 acres were excused from tithe by an allotment of land given to the impropriator.

The Agreement sets out the following rates of payment for all other Cockermouth holdings:-

> "For Each Milch Cow Threepence For Each Foal Sixpence
> Three Halfpence is paid for every Communicant above the Age of Sixteen Years throughout the said Township and Ten Shillings for a Mortuary
> For Each Cast of Bees Twopence. ."

Richard Atkinson of Bassenthwaite Halls was appointed valuer to apportion the rents in lieu of tithes, the gross rent charge being £150. The price per bushel of wheat was given as 7s-0¼d [35p], of barley 3s-11½d. and of oats 2s-9d. [20]

The Bishop of Chester, Bishop Gastrell, made a survey of his diocese in 1714 and posed the question "Have you any particular or unusual system of Tything?", to which Cockermouth replied:-

> "We have four men called Proctors which collects of every Inhabitant at Easter three Halfpence which they call Communicant money but neither provides bread nor wine with it.
> We Have these four proctors wch if anybody above ye age of 16 years refuse to pay their dues (as they call it) They get a Conviction before ye Justices of ye Peace and makes them pay unreasonable Charges. They will not receive their dues sent by any Quaker unless they will carry such fees themselves: but gets them Convicted. They farm these tythes to make a proffit. [21]

Fields, enclosures and farming

Tithes are not yet quite dead. The Tithe Redemption Commission was laid down as recently as 1960 and its work of phasing out tithes by the end of the 20th century transferred to the Board of Inland Revenue.

Very detailed maps were drawn for Cockermouth for the commutation of tithes, one representing the very centre of the town, the other the surrounding areas. [22] Each plan was accompanied by a schedule, Part 2 for the centre, Part 1 for the rest. Entries (there were over a thousand) were made under eight headings - landowner; occupiers; number on plan; name and description of land or premises; state of cultivation; area in acres, perches and roods; amount of rent-charge apportioned upon the land and payable to the impropriator; remarks.

There is much of interest in the thousand items, but space forbids more than five by way of example, the first from Part 1, the others from Part 2.

Rudd William Esq.	Himself	1	Croft	Pasture
		56	Common Field	Pasture
		28	Gallowbarrow Field	Arable
	Jonathan Coney	9	Low Laithwaite	Arable
		10	High Laithwaite	Arable
		22	Common Field	Meadow
	Joseph Armstrong	190a	-.	Arable
Johnstone Gee. William	Johnstone R.	360	Public House, Yard and Garden	
	Himself	1065	Garden	
		767	House and Yard	
Meeting Independent	Williamson	48	Dwelling	
	Armstrong	49	Dwelling	
		50	Meeting House	
	Wordsworth and others	150	Infants School	
Stamper William	John Bell and others	297	Weaving Shop and Dwelling	
	Stoddart	427	House and Garden	
	Swinburn	777	Houses etc.	
	Mitchell	778	Houses etc.	
	Garner	7791	Houses etc.	
Swan John	Fallows	1023	Barbers Shop	
	Swan John	102	Public House and Garden	

Cockermouth's tithe barn no longer exists. Presumably it was in the area of the Tithebarn Hotel in Station Street and the barn mentioned several times as standing near the Station Street/South Street corner may well have been it. General Wyndham had 125 properties entered, 86 in Part 1 occupying 887 acres, for which he paid the stone of wool in lieu, the 114 acres of the remaining entries being in Part 2 and rented at £7-5s-7d. The other landowners with more than 100 acres were Andrew Green (50 entries totalling 170 acres, rent £18-11s.0d.), John Watson (42 entries, 200 acres, £22-ls-6d.) and the Trustees of William Park (29 entries,149 acres, £17-ls-6d.). John Hodgson had 15 entries, many of them connected with his tannery - tanyard field, tanyard wood, tanyard and buildings. Thomas Mackreth got his 73 properties in less than two acres, rent 5s., but Mackreth was a builder and these were presumably small houses, many of them not yet occupied as they were listed as 'empty'. As more land was enclosed a whole variety of distinguishing names for new fields was needed. Occasionally a name incorporates one of the three basic types of farm land – arable, -ploughed and seeded; meadow - natural grass near a river; and pasture - grazing outside the 'head dyke' which protected the arable land from stock on the lower fell slopes. . Sometimes the type of land became part of a name - mire if wet and boggy; holme if an 'island' not quite as wet as its surroundings; or butts if an awkward part of a field difficult to plough. 'Croft' indicates a home field, near the house, and 'acre' the amount of land which could be ploughed in a day, as in Ten Acre Field.

A map of 1810 showing the new fields in Hulland Close illustrates a variety of methods of naming. Clover Field, Corn Close and Wheat Field would be named after crops grown in them and the names retained after the land was used in other ways. Local features provided a convenient means of reference and Hulland has Barn Field, Barn End Field, Spring Meadow and Fell Field. A very unusual method found here is straightforward numbering, as in first to seventh fields on the town side of the occupation road. A later map shows that as enclosure spread eastwards there appeared Newlands north, middle and south, and beyond that Brick-kiln Close - west, middle and east. Near' and 'far' are very common sub-divisions, and other descriptions such as 'higher' and 'lower' or 'large' and 'small'

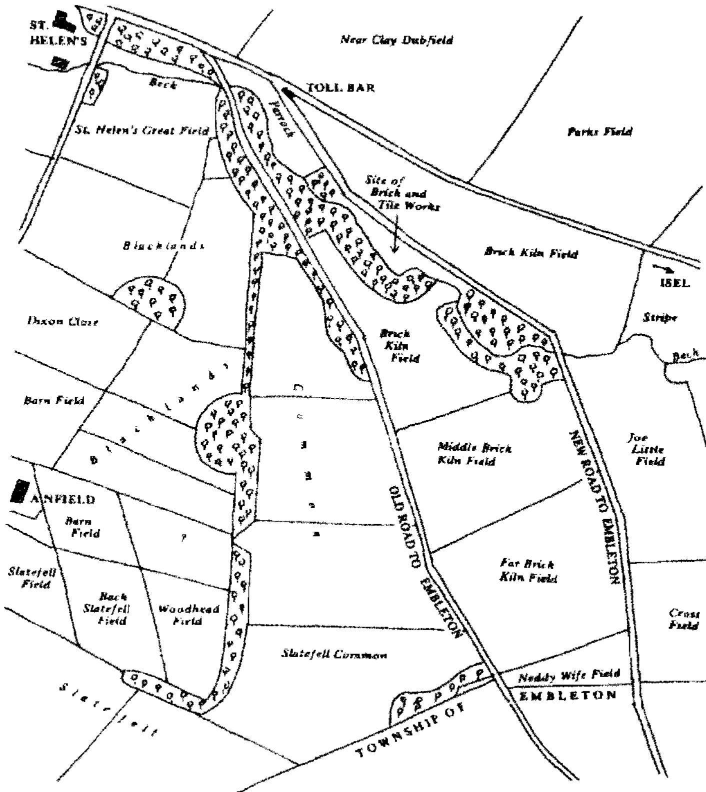

Fig 36. *Examples of field naming, based on the Tithe Map*

ST. HELEN'S
Spring Meadow
Near Piels Field
Wood Head
Far Piels Field
First Field
Second Field
Near Clover Field
Far Clover Field
Third Field
Near Gill Field
Fourth Field
Far Gill Field
Fifth Field
Barn-end Field
Sixth Field
BARN
Barn Field
Seventh Field
Corn Close

Fig 37. *Enclosure field names in Hulland Closes (based on a map of 1810)*

occur frequently. Recent events and well-known people were commemorated, Waterloo and Wellington Farms proving that these areas were enclosed and the farms built soon after the Napoleonic Wars. There were many examples in Cockermouth of owners' names becoming attached to fields. To take just one, a field described on a map of the Parks enclosures as 'Land occupied by Mr. John Atkinson' had become 'Atkinson Field' by the tithe map of 1840. Finally, remote fields were sometimes given the names of remote places . if we travel far enough beyond Park House along the Isel road we come to 'Near Botnay Bay' and then 'Botnay Bay'.

Cumbria was badly hit in 2001 by a massive outbreak of foot and mouth disease in cattle and sheep. [The last previous outbreak had been in 1967-8]. It was suspected that the source had been illegally imported meat from the Far East, infecting sheep which were traded at Longtown Market. The resulting problem was widely distributed in 44 British counties, unitary authorities and metropolitan districts from the Scottish Borders to Anglesey to Cornwall. Cumbria was by far the worst affected with 891 outbreaks recorded by the Carlisle Disease Control Centre out of 2026 national outbreaks. Cockermouth was no exception although by fewer direct infections than the lowland areas along the M6 corridor, through Eden district and, to the North. Apart from total restrictions on access to the countryside, which seemed to be well respected by walkers, a programme of culling animals was put in place, not only those infected but also those from neighbouring farms which might have become infected. The epidemic lasted 221 days and in total, nationwide, approximately 4,200,000 animals were culled (12% cattle, 3% pigs and 85% sheep). Whilst farmers received compensation , the tourist industry was badly hit and took some time to recover.

The early town

Although 'Ureby' suggests a pre-Norman settlement, the first written record of the town occurred in c. 1150 when COKYRMOTH appeared in the Register of the Priory of St. Bees. In charters, rolls, etc., of the 13th century there appeared KOKERMUE, COKERMUA, COCREMUTH, COKIRMOWTH and KOKERMUTH. These and other variations continued to be used until the present spelling became generally accepted, but in every case the same three elements of COCK-ER-MOUTH occur. The first two syllables come from either the Welsh 'cock-or' for a red mountain (heather on Grassmoor?) or the British 'kukra' or 'cucrā' meaning crooked. The name ends with 'mot' for the meeting of waters or rivers, as also found in Becker-met and Egre-mont. The river was referred to as the KOKER in Holm Cultram records of c. 1170, as KOK in the 1195 Feet of Fines, as COKER in the Patent Rolls of 1305 and COCKAR in Camden's 'Britannia' of 1610.

Whatever the origin of its name, the present town began near the meeting of the two rivers . it is not, as Britton and Brayley described it in their 'Topographical and Historical Description of the County of Cumberland', 'a large sea-port town'!

A deed of about 1195-1200 mentions a fulling mill and house and land at Cockermouth [1] so there must have been some settlement by AD 1200.

Cockermouth has the two essential features of a medieval town a market place, the focus of the local community where goods were sold or exchanged and business done; and a castle, the seat of power. Authority could be exerted from either a castle or a cathedral, sometimes both, usually, as in Cockermouth, situated in an enclosure slightly apart from the rest of the town. Cockermouth would develop as a centre for the surrounding countryside and the lord of the manor doubtless encouraged its growth as the base for the administration of his land and for dispensation of justice.

In addition to the market, the town had a further attraction in the freedom enjoyed by some of its citizens, which we will briefly explain.

William I insisted on homage and regular military service from his tenants-in-chief and his successors continued this system. The tenant had to provide an agreed number of armed horsemen for 40 days service a year. In return, as Henry I stated,

> "To knights who hold their land by military service, I grant as my own gift that their land shall be quit of all gelds and all labour requirements, so that, relieved of so heavy a burden, they may equip themselves well with horses and arms ready and able to serve me and to defend my realm." [2]

Henry still imposed a fine on change of tenancy .

> "If any baron or earl of mine or anyone else who holds from me directly shall die, his heir shall not redeem his land as he would have done in my brother's day, but he will redeem it by a just and lawful payment." [3]

Within the town were burgesses, custory (or customary) tenants, and villeins or serfs. The first, usually farmers, craftsmen or traders, rented burgages in the heart of the town. They farmed strips in the town's fields and were allowed to sell in the market without paying the tolls charged to outsiders. They elected the town officials and were excused fines on change of burgage tenancy, as distinct from the customary tenants who paid fines on a change of ownership. The burgesses were free men, able to travel and to trade.

On the other hand, the villeins were a class of peasant occupier or cultivator entirely subject to the lord. Serfs were only distinguished from full slavery by certain limits placed by law or custom on service to their master.

From the beginning of the 13th century Cockermouth was consistently referred to as a borough, until comparatively recent times, and enjoyed borough status. In 1829, for example, there were within Cumberland one city (Carlisle), one parliamentary borough (Cockermouth) and 17 market towns (Maryport, Workington, Whitehaven, Penrith, etc.) [4] Although no original charter has been found, that such a grant of borough status had been made was implied by a charter issued by Alice de Rumelli before she died in 1215:-

> "Alice de Rumeli daughter of William Fitz Duncan to all who shall see and hear this charter, greeting. Know that I have granted and by this charter confirmed to my free men who reside in the vill of Cockemouth and to all their heirs that they are quit of all services to me and my heirs for ever. That is I free them from bearing witness with serfs and from all suit and from all servitude and things which are prejudicial to the liberty and free custom which are held to belong to the free men. (There follow regulations regarding disputes and debts.) ...... I also grant to them all their easements and customary liberties and commons in wood and plain, in the vill and outside it within their right and proper boundaries. Rendering annually to me and my heirs for each

whole toft four pence, half at Pentecost and half at Martinmas for all service except foreign service and customary pannage and mill toll. All these things I and my heirs grant and will warrant to them and their heirs for ever. And for the grant of these liberties the vill of Cockermouth will give me in acknowledgement eight pounds of wax annually at the Assumption of the Virgin Mary."[5]

An inventory of the Honour of Cockermouth made in 1260 (following the death of William de Fortibus III the previous year) gives a picture of an active and growing town. In addition to the castle, demesne land and park there were the rents of 177¾ tofts, totalling 59s-3d. at the standard national rate of 4d. per toft; two water mills valued at £13-6s-8d. a year; a fulling mill at £11-6s-8d; a dye works (tinctorie) at 20s.; three 'fabricae' or workshops, probably smithies as each of the tenants had the name 'Faber' (a worker in metal, wood or stone), rented at 3s., 2s-6d. and 2s.; market tolls of £6-13s-4d.; a malt kiln; and the castle fishery worth 106s-8d. per year. The total value of the borough was put at £55-5s-10½d. and the whole honour valued at £155-6s-2d. [6]

Surnames of burgesses indicate even at this early date the importance of wool and animal products in the life of the town, names which translated meant skinner, tanner, weaver, fuller, dyer and smith. The accounts of rents collected in the period 1266-1318 tell something of life in the town. In 1267/8 the fulling mill rent was £3 greater than ten years later [7], the drop being explained in the records as due to an outbreak of sheep murrain. This is known to have swept the country in the late 1270s and Cockermouth did not escape. In 1289/90 6s. 2½d. is given as "decayed rent of certain burgages, burnt and wasted", so a major fire had apparently destroyed 18 burgages at a time before the Scottish raids.

This was not the end of the downward trend. In 1310 the fulling mill was worth only £3-6s-8d. and by 1316-8 it lay derelict and without a tenant. The dye works too fell in value, from 20s. in 1267/8 to 6s-8d. in 1310. Rents from burgages rose until 1310 (possibly because of an expansion of the town) but were down to 52s. by 1316-8, where the entry "propter guerram Scotorum" (because of Scots wars) gives the clue to this general falling off in values. By 1368, 44s-4d. was received from 133 burgages, but an additional explanation to Scottish raids may be that as properties became vacant and reverted to the lord he was at this time re-letting them to tenants at will or customary tenants.

Conditions began to improve in the 15th century. In his accounts for 1437/8 the bailiff mentioned four shops "under the Tolbothe", the Flesh-shamels and the Fish-shamels, with rents respectively of 26s-8d.(£1-34p) for the four, 8s.(40p) and 3s.(15p) The fulling mill was back in action and worth 13s-4d.(68p), while the corn mill tolls brought £17 and fishing in the Derwent and the herbage of the Park each £13-6s-8d. [9]

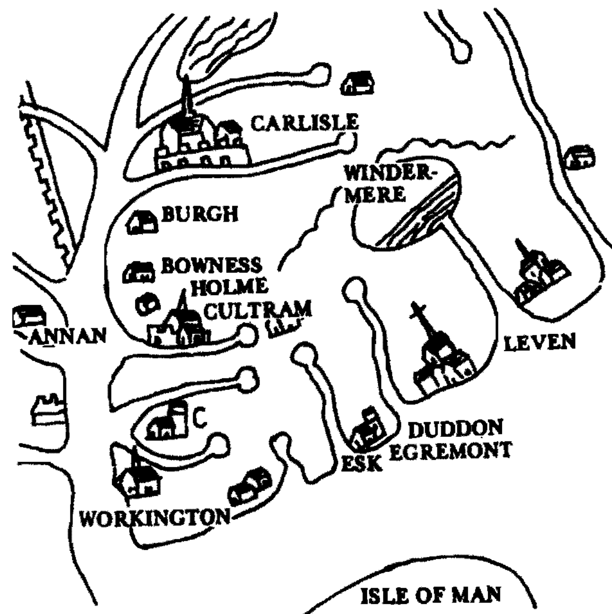

Fig 38. *Based on the Gough or Bodleian Map AD 1325-50 with modern splelling. 'C' has same castle symbol as Egremont (most likely to be Cockermouth between rivers Ellen andDerwent.)*

By 1478 some new names appear - 'Carlton Close', rented at 4d.; a burgage described as being next to 'Sketirbek'; a parcel of land called 'Kirkbank' and another beside the Cocker named 'Lymepitts'. 'Tenturholme' occurs and Laytheld has been divided into 'Highleytheld' and 'Lawleytheld'. R. Norman repaired the chapel of St. Helen and was rewarded with a close in Urebyfeld called Seynt Elynclose.[10] It seems that the tenancy of this Part of Urebyfeld was the payment for keeping the chapel in repair (Fig. 34).

Moving into the next century there is little change. Mills, fishing and herbage remain the same in value, but there are various 'improvements', areas of land newly brought under cultivation.

'Middynsted' is one of these, the four-acre 'Scrawlesymyes' an improvement on the moor and there was one of ten acres next to 'Slatestonefall'. By 1518-20 one of the fulling mills was again untenanted, the other with its parcel of land being rented at 8s10d. [11] In 1541-3, when Thomas Wharton had acquired part of the estate, values were the Park £13-6s-8d, fishing £7-6s-8d, corn mill with tolls £13-6s-8d, mill 5s-4d., garden called Applygarth 12d., and Seynt Elyn close 13s-4d. [12]

The town had certainly spread to the west of the Cocker by this time. 'Spitelhowse (hospital) was mentioned in 1260 and St. Leonard's Close (calella sancti leonardi) about 1280, the latter probably a triangle of land between the river, the road westwards and the town boundary, later to be the station site and for a time occupied by Thomas Armstrong Ltd (building contractors). Excavation in 1980, before the restoration of Strickett's Court and 75-85 Main Street, revealed that this end of the town was inhabited by 1300 AD or earlier. In 1270 AD there were 163 burgage properties, which must have stretched a considerable distance from the Castle/Market Place area. In the early 1500s there were references to burgages "on the west side of Cocker Bridge", "in the west part of the town" and "in a street called Ketywent", this last indicating that side streets were developing off Main Street.

The bailiffs accounts for 1578-80 show Wharton still held the herbage of the Park, the mills and their tolls, and the Derwent fishing, of total value £34-8s-10d. Three mills are recorded - the new water corn mill (40s. [£2] rent), the water corn mill near the close called Langcrofts (20s, [£1]) and a fulling mill near Moorclose (22d.). The shambles are listed at 14d. [6p] and six shops at 4d., 8d., 3s-4d., 4s., 4s. and 6s-8d.- a wide range in rent value.

This was the time of the great Percy Survey. There were then (1578) 108 burgages, but many would have been divided and there may have been as many as 200 units with street frontage. In addition there were 19 messuages and at least 13 shops, mostly in the Market Place. Allowing an average of 4½ persons to each dwelling, the population of the town at this time would be about a thousand.

Before leaving the 1578 survey some of the entries are worth examining in more detail. A number of closes of land and a walk mill were situated at Moor Close, but this is not the Moorclose of Fletcher Christian's family, since it is described as "otherwise High Lathelds", an area to the north of and below the present Fitz Road, extending beyond the later railway line. A new mill referred to in the accounts of the bailiff was "recently erected at Casbay on the water of Cocker" and was probably Rubby Banks Mill, although Cocker Lane has been described as leading down to Casbay. The name may have been a general term for this stretch of river and possibly have a derivation other than our present 'bay'. The corn mill on the lord's waste near Long Crofts was mentioned as formerly a fulling mill and, since it was a water mill, must have been on Tom Rudd Beck.

By now a number of enclosures had been formed further out on the waste - Strawberry Howe (ON haugr for hill or OE hōh for a projecting ridge) of seven acres of arable, meadow and pasture was described as situated on the common or moor; Graystone Close, in the angle between the present Lorton and Strawberry Howe roads, was some eight acres and Symonskell (Simescales, Simonscales, Sunscales) had 18 acres. Other closes were located at Badskine (between Simonscales Lane and the Cocker), Moor Hills, High Close, Sowter Closes, St. Helen's, the Crofts and Galla Burgh. There was a kiln on the lord's waste at Long Crofts and somewhere a smithy. Many of our present names are thus 400 years old, several of them much older.

Galla Burgh Close is said to be under Milne Hill, so there must have been a mill in the area. There is no water in the Gallowbarrow area (the present Moor). Was the Parkside Avenue and Cocker Brows rise once known as Milne Hill because of its proximity to Double Mills?

Mawkyn Close in the 1578 survey is the same as Carlton Close mentioned in 1453, a block of fields at the upper end of St. Helen's Street which intrudes on to the demesne enclosure Wheat Close. 'Carlton' occurs within a mile or so of the centre of several Cumbrian towns and probably signified the settlement of the peasants who tilled the lord's demesne, the name coming from 'ceorls ton', the town of the peasants. Winchester suggests that this settlement was on Bitter Beck, possibly the forerunner of the Market Place settlement. If this is so then Ureby, an earlier settlement, was probably on Tom Rudd Beck supporting evidence being a reference in 1547 to land in Urebyfeld in Langcroft, suggesting that it lay between Bitter and Tom Rudd Becks, and references in 1619 and 1778 to Tom Rudd as Ureby Beck. [13]

In addition to the detailed knowledge gained from records of the routine management of the manor lands we can form general impressions of the town from the accounts left by those who visited

it. One of the first was William Camden, the headmaster of Westminster School but also an antiquarian and historian, who in his 'Britannia' wrote of Cockermouth in 1582

> "From hence (the Keswick area) sometimes within a narrow channell, other whiles with a broader streame speedeth him (the River Derwent) very fast Northward to entertain Cockar. Which when they doe meete doe incompasse, almost round about, Cockarmouth a mercate town of good welth, and a castle of the Earles of Northumberland. The town is built fair enough, but standeth somewhat with the lowest betweene two hills; upon one of which the Church is seated, and upon the other right over against it, a very strong Castle."[14]

In 1665 the Herald's Visitation, a nation-wide enquiry, found in Cockermouth five families of sufficient standing to have coats-of-arms. Comparing this number with Carlisle's two and Penrith's and Kendal's one each, we see how important Cockermouth had become in the 17th century.

In the Fleming-Senhouse papers of 1671 we find .

> "Cokermouth, ye best Market Towne in this part of ye county wch being adorned with a stately Castle (belonging heretofore to ye Earles of Northumberland), a Fair Church, two good stone bridges, a fair house (belonging unto Sir Geo. Fletcher of Hutton in this county, Baronet, being ye ancient seat of that Family) and many other fine buildings doth give it small reputation." [15]

Bishop Nicholson gave a more detailed description of the town as it was shortly before the end of the century (1685).

> "The houses are built of stone and slated mostly with blue slates; they comprise two streets, one above the River Cocker in which is the Moot Hall, Market House, Corn Market and Shambles; and in the other is the Beast Market." [16]

Between 1325 and 1350 a map of Great Britain was produced which shows most of the principal castles and abbeys, known as the Gough or Bodleian Map. Cockermouth is not named, but a building shown east of Workington may represent it.

Early maps showing details of the town are few. That of about 1620 (Plate 1) has houses along both sides of Main Street, Market Place and St. Helen's Street from Sullart Street to Waste Lane, with Castlegate also built up. The only other development extends for short distances along Sullart Street, Challoner Street, Market Street and Kirkgate, to use the modem names.

By 1587 the number of burgages had risen again to 135. Then in 1665 the hearth tax returns show a considerable number of houses of an appreciable size -10 had 5 hearths or more (the old hall headed the list with 16), 7 had 4 hearths, 21 had 3, 56 had 2 and 62 had 1. Much of Kirkgate was built in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. A map of 1739 shows little change - a few houses nearer Derwent Bridge on the river side of the street and perhaps a slight extension up St. Helen's Street. It shows clearly, however, the Moot Hall and the gate closing the upper end of Castlegate and leading to the Castle Green. During the middle years of the 18th century there was considerable expansion of the town. Hodkinson and Donald's map of 1775 shows more houses at the western end, expansion in St. Helen's Street beyond the turnpike, and further growth along Sullart Street, Challoner Street and Kirkgate. These three side streets were linked up by Cocker Lane and Back Lane (or Cross Went, later South Street) and houses were scattered right along this link, the level part of Cocker Lane being completely built up. The most notable growth was in Kirkgate, where houses stretched from its upper end beyond Longcroft (now Windmill Lane) and into Skinner Street and Scaw Brow

Note: Excavations in the summer of 1980 revealed that there was some development at the western end of Main Street (present nos. 75-85 near Sullart Street) as early as AD 1300.

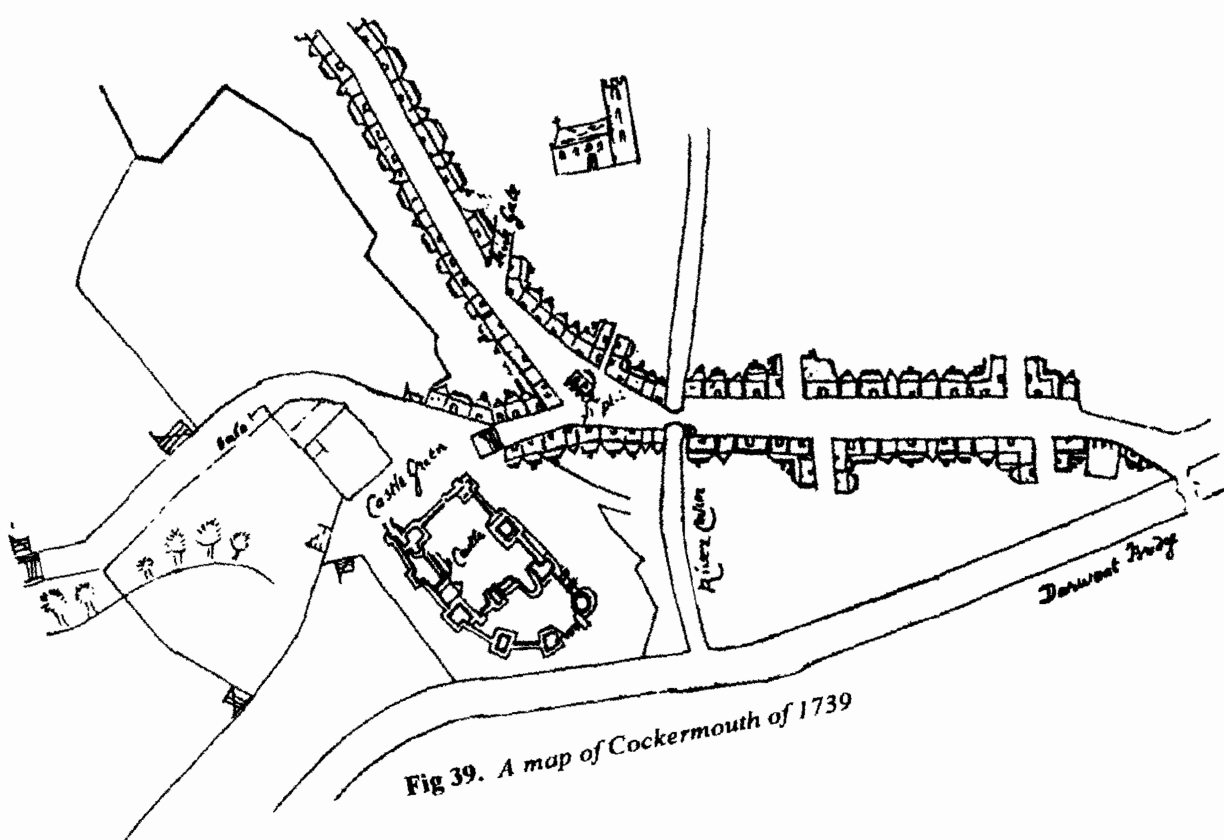

Fig 39. *A map of Cockermouth of 1739*