

[Notes: The disputed boundary between Hexham and Whitfield manors in the West Allen valley went to arbitration in 1757, seven years after William Ord's purchase of Whitfield Manor. Whitfield Manor claimed its southern boundary was from Knights Cleugh to Hardrigg Currock. Sir Walter Blackett claimed that his Hexham manor boundary ran further to the north-west, following a line from Hardrigg to Long Cross, then Blue Snab through Millstones enclosures to Powstile Runner, (a stream) then along to the West Allen . A map (NRO 324/W1/27) was filed to accompany the evidence gathered (not available in DD).

William Ord (c.1715 – 24 January 1768) was an English land and mine owner, the second son of Thomas Ord of Fenham and Anne Bacon. He inherited the family estates at Fenham and Newminster Abbey on the death of his elder brother John, in 1745. In 1750 he bought the Manor and estate of Whitfield, Northumberland, from the financially pressed Whitfield family. He developed lead and silver mining at Whitfield and coal mining at Benwell (which estate he bought in 1756) and at Fenham. Ord was High Sheriff of Northumberland in 1747. He was the promoter of the Alston Turnpike Road. One of the attractions of Whitfield to Ord was that the farms, although unimproved, could command high rents. Whitfield farmers were well placed to carry lead ore from Alston Moor to the London Lead company smelting mills at Whitfield Cupola, and could make a living from being ore carriers or lead miners.

See letters from Joseph Richmond to Sir Walter Blackett, 22 Nov and 2 Dec 1757 for context to the taking of the depositions. These letters also make clear that the depositions were taken between those dates, in Hexham. Monday 28th Nov is used for convenience here. The extracts given here are taken from the fuller series available in the original document in Northumberland Archives.

Whitfield boundary dispute witness on behalf of Sir Walter Blackett. The Allendale tenants named by Blackett's witnesses are all mentioned by the witnesses on behalf of William Ord, Lord of the Manor Whitfield, as having had their stock hounded off the Common, or impounded, and having had their peat stacks burnt.

28 Nov 1757 John Harrison

[Note: 'Grisley Row' is the modern Keirsleywell Row.]

John Harrison, 57, born in Allendale parish, but lived at Hawkuplee from the age of 3 to 15. At the age of 8 drove cattle and sheep up Hawkuplee, past Millstone Dyke to Carrier Hill, and turned them out to go where they would. Used to cast peats near Sandyford. He knew Wm. Johnson of Grisley Row, and that WJ and other Allendale tenants used to graze animals on Hareshaws and cast peats there.

28 Nov 1757 Elizabeth Burn

Mrs Elizabeth Burn, 52 and upwards, wife of apothecary in Penrith, daughter and heir of William Johnson of Grisley Row. She said that between the age of 7 and 19 when she married, ' in Winter she would drive her [step]father's milch cows over the Heights (Knights) Cleugh and then hound them with a dog onto the Hareshaw or where else they chose to graze and did so constantly publicly and openly for all the time she continued at Grislee Well Raw...and saith that during all that time of her knowledge the Hareshaw, Thackshaw and Sandyford were reputed to belong to Allendale; and saith that as she went from the Girslee Well Raw to the Heights Cleugh, the Powstile Well divided Allendale and Whitfield Commons and what lay on the right hand belonged to Whitfield and what lay on the left hand belonged to Allendale'said her [step]father kept English sheep, but sometimes bought Scotch sheep, and whenever he did he hired a herd to attend to the sheep on the ground in question, who 'built a little hut or shed of turf and earth between the Long Cross and Sandyford near Sym's Cleugh to shelter himself from the weather while he was herding her Father in Law's sheep...She remembered her father in law 'bringing some heath and ling from the Thackshaws across Sandyford Cleugh which was carried in Crooks on horseback from thence by the road leading to Alston down to Grislee Well Raw and employing Mathew Wilson and John Stobbart, two thatchers who lived in Whitfield Liberty to cover his dwelling house and outhouse at Grislee Well Raw and saith she is the better enabled to remember the same because she held the horses while the said heather or ling was brought across the Sandyford Cleugh '..... 'her father in law used to cast peats for fuel in the Hareshaw beyond the Heights Cleugh and saith that William Teasdale of Grislee Raw, Thomas Stout of Redheugh and the tenants of Hawkuplee Smiddy and Furnace House which last places are all in Allendale did all get their peats in Hareshaw aforesaid and never heard of any interruption that was given them or any of them.'

28 Nov 1757 Thomas Teasdale

Thomas Teasdale, 75, born in the parish of Kirkhaugh and lived there all his life said he thought the ground in dispute belonged to Allendale, said 'it was generally reputed that three Lords met at Long Cross Saith that if the ground in dispute were to be laid to Whitfield there would be little common left for the farmers of Grislee Well Raw as he apprehends.'

28 Nov 1757 Joseph Hetherington

Joseph Hetherington, near 70 years, of Four Darg House in Alston Moor, worked as a herd for a year and a half at Black Cleugh in Allendale, said Girslee Well Raw farmers grazed animals on Hareshaws and Thackshaws, not Whitfield tenants' sheep unless they had strayed there. He had heard 'several old persons ..say that when they went out of Alston Moor at the Long Cross they entered into Allendale'

28 Nov 1757 Richard Wallace

Richard Wallace of Slaggyford in Knarsdale manor, 68, mason, had heard that three manors joined at Long Cross, had seen peats newly cast on each side of the Alston Road east of the Sandyford. He said 'there was a peat way from the place where the peats were cast leading to Grislew Raw. Never heard that Mr Whitfield claimed the ground in dispute till after Mohope Groove was got'. When his master's cattle strayed from Kirkhaugh Common, which they often did, his master would tell him which manor they had strayed into, and said that animals north of Long Cross were in Whitfield Liberty, and east and southeast of Long Cross were in Allendale Liberty.

28 Nov 1757 Cuthbert Fairlamb

[Note: Fairlamb's evidence would have been seen as very disloyal by the Whitfield tenants, and 'that no Whitfield Cattle fed upon' was a rather underhand statement.]

Cuthbert Fairlamb, 66, said that about 33/34 years ago he farmed in Huntershields Quarter in Whitfield and was desired to ride along with Mr Utrick Whitfield son of Mathew Whitfield Esq. in riding the boundary of the Manor of Whitfield. Saith that in the riding of the said boundary when they came to the Long Cross, Robert Armstrong and John Armstrong who were servants to Sir William Blackett were there and in the name of Sir William Blackett discharged them from riding any further to that point towards the Hardrigg but does not remember their telling them how they should ride. And saith that Mathew Martin then tenant of Owston was present at the riding..., and after they had rode around the greatest part of the ground now in dispute, he heard Mathew Martin say that he would give Esquire Whitfield twenty pounds a year for the ground they had rode about that day that no Whitfield Cattle fed upon.'

28 Nov 1757 Joseph Walton

Joseph Walton, 53, 'being one of the people called Quakers upon his affirmation said' ...lived at Mohopehead in Allendale from age of 10 to 27 (when he married). He herded his father's sheep on Hareshaws from Hardrigg to Long Cross. About 25 years ago he saw Sir Walter Blackett and his company ride that part of the Boundary of the

Manor of Hexham and saw the said Sir Walter and the people with him ride... from the Hardrigg Currock to the Long Cross on which this affirmant went down the fell to see which way they rode from the Long Cross and saw them ride the boundary from the Long Cross to the Blue Snabb end to the standing stone in the Millstones Bottom...and he saw Mr Whitfield that day...and doth not know what way Mr Whitfield or his company rode nor of any quarrel that happened near the Millstones.'

28 Nov 1757 Robert Armstrong

Robert Armstrong of the Herbert Law, Alston, gentleman, 70, said in 1732 he rode the boundary with Sir Walter Blackett (Hardrigg-Long Cross- Blue Snab – Standing Stone in Millstone Bottom- etc)...At the time he lived in Coalcleugh in Allendale and was steward to Sir Walter Blackett there and had been employed as a steward by the Blackett family since 1717.. He said that at the corner of the new Millstones enclosure made by Mr Whitfield, his brother John Armstrong and others pulled down the fence..... Said that he and his brother met Mr Whitfield and his company at the Long Cross and told him that if he rode to the South or Southeast he would ride into the Manor of Hexham and discharged him from doing so. Notwithstanding which, the said Mr Whitfield rode from the Long Cross to the Hardrigg Currock.

Whitfield boundary dispute witness on behalf of William Ord, owner of the Manor of Whitfield.

28 Nov 1757 Henry French

Henry French, 60 and upwards, carpenter, of Planetree House, Whitfield. He said that there had been no dispute about Hareshaws, Thackshaws and Millstones Fell being in Whitfield Liberty, 'until sometime after a rich groove or lead mine was discovered in the Manor of Hexham at a place called Grisslee Raw and then he heard that Mr Blackett now Sir Walter Blackett claimed the said ground called Hareshaws, Thackshaws and Millstone Fell to be parcel of and lie within the Manor of Hexham.'..... Re Millstone enclosure in 1716/17: no part was enclosed, but some years after it was and 'he hath several times served upon the jury at the Courts held for the Manor of Whitfield when the Whitfield Tenants endeavoured to prevail upon the jury to present the said Smith for hounding and driving off their cattle from the Millstone Bottom...but they could not, it appearing that [Smith] had leave given him by his Landlord Mr Whitfield so to do And to the best of his remembrance, the said inclosure was made two or three years before Sir Walter Blackett first rode his boundary.'

28 Nov 1757 Thomas Dawson

Thomas Dawson, 63, born at Whitewalls in Whitfield manor. His father farmed there and his mother after his father's death. He was present at the Whitfield boundary riding by Mr Utrick Whitfield, son of Mathew Whitfield Esq., then Lord of the Manor of Whitfield. Saith 'that the riding of the boundary was very public and notorious and believes that there were about three hundred people collected together, some out of curiosity and others upon other accounts....He said that Whitfield tenants frequently drove and hounded the Cattle of Grisley Raw, Furnace House, Moap [Mohope] and other places within the Manor of Hexham whenever they were found.. upon Hareshaws, Thackshaws and Millstones Fell. When he was about 8 or 9, his father impounded in an old stable about 40 sheep brought from Hareshaws to Whitewalls. The owner, William Lawson of Moaphead came for them but would not pay, so Dawson's father would not hand them over. Lawson came back at night and tried to sneak them away, but Thomas' brother caught Lawson in the act, who later agreed to pay for the return of the sheep. His father would have taken much less, he said, if Lawson hadn't tried to get them back by night.

28 Nov 1757 Nicholas Lee

Nicholas Lee, 62, Mason, lived at Whitelees in the parish of Kirkhaugh from childhood. In 1728 he leased Millstones farm for 21 years, but disposed of his interest after 3 years. During his time there he enclosed with a hedge a considerable part of Millstones Common with permission.

28 Nov 1757 Robert Wilkinson

Robert Wilkinson, 67, of Dufton in Westmorland, said his father was hired as a herd by Thomas Errington of Corbygate and Ralph Whitfield of Newshield who had taken the Millstones farm as a grazing farm. It had a very large stock he believes to the amount of 1100, and the neighbours complained that Errington and Whitfield kept too large a stock of sheep upon the said Commons for their farm. In the summer they counted their stock of sheep and did this between Hareshaws, Sandiford and the Long Cross.

He used to hound the sheep of William Johnson of Grisley Row and Johnson thought he hounded them too roughly, offering Wilkinson's father a pound of tobacco to make his son treat his sheep more gently, but he (Johnson) never complained about his animals being moved off. He got sixpence for every waif and stray he took to the Bailiff of the manor at Whitfield Hall.

Lead ore carriers frequently used to unload their horses at a place called the Carrier Hall and turn them loose to graze between Millstones Bottom and Knights Cleugh. His

father was under instructions to impound any horses belonging to carriers who did not live in Whitfield, but he never knew of any.

28 Nov 1757 Mary Pattison

Mary Pattison, 59, widow, was born in Allendale but lived from the age of 16 with her father at the Millstones Tenement. She said that some Allendale tenants got peat near Knights Cleugh, but only she believed with the permission of Squire Whitfield. Peat which was cast without permission was set on fire by a servant of Squire Whitfield, and she remembered seeing it burn for several days. Squire Whitfield would not refuse permission if asked to cast peats or to take ling for thatching. She used to drive off the animals of Allendale tenants, who saw her doing it, but never complained about her doing so.

28 Nov 1757 John Hetherington

John Hetherington, 58, of the Hope in Whitfield, lived at the charge of the parish at a house in Whitfield and is maintained by the parish and has nothing of his own there. In about 1717, his father took a farm at Whitewalls in Whitfield. He remembered the riding of the boundary of Whitfield about 40 years ago by Mr Utrick Whitfield, eldest son of Mathew Whitfield Esq. Saith 'he rode a little Galloway and was able to ride through several of the mosses but others he was obliged to lead through and remembers that a great number of horses were laired on that day in endeavouring to get through the mosses'. After he came to farm at Millstones he kept 'great quantities of sheep and hath frequently had seven or eight score (140/160) of sheep at a time herded and hafted down Simm's Cleugh and up Thackshaws and Hareshaws on to the Hardrigg and none of them were ever were ever disturbed or molested' He remembered that 'when the Grisley Raw Grove was going on briskly they [the miners] made use of the water which came from the Powstile Well to help to wash their ore and this examinant was a grover there and by means of the said water being carried to the grove, the Powstile people were sometimes in want of water for their cattle and he by the order of old Mathew Ritson and his Wife turned the water of the said well into its old course towards the Powstile ground.'

28 Nov 1757 Mathew Martin

[Note: 'One Allgood' was Lancelot Allgood, 1691-1735, steward to William Blackett III and Walter Blackett. Biography available in DD.]

Mathew Martin, aged 100 years and upwards, of White Ouston in Whitfield Parish, who had given up his farm to his sons and now lived with them as a lodger, remembered the peats of Allendale tenants being burnt, and the impounding of an Allendale tenant's sheep, after which 'they were never again troubled' with them. MM had been hired to plough a new Hawkuplee inclosure north of Powstile Burn about sixty years ago (1690s).

He was with Mathew Whitfield, Lord of the Manor about 25 years ago (c.1732) at a boundary riding, when 'Mr Whitfield and his Tenants met Mr Blackett and his Company at the Hardrigg Currock and there this examinant being the next but one or two to Mr Whitfield, heard him discharge Mr Blackett from riding beyond the Hardrigg Currock into [his] Boundary, but notwithstanding such discharge, they rode up to the Long Cross. He was present when they came into Millstones Bottom and heard Mr Blackett ask to whom the Millstones House belonged and some of the Company said it belonged to Squire Whitfield upon which Mr Blackett said "Then we must be wrong" or words to that effect.

One Allgood, Mr Blackett's Steward, ordered the whole hedge near the Dyke Nook to be pulled down, and was about to pull it down but several of the Whitfield Tenants with Sticks went to oppose them, upon which both the Lords interposed and said they would not have it decided by Club Law, and so made the People quiet.'

28 Nov 1757 John Robinson

John Robinson, 63 and upwards, of Woodmas Walls in the West Allen, had lived at the Hope in Whitfield 'and hath lived there from his birth till Mayday gone two years since'. He knew the places called Hareshaws, Thackshaws and Millstones Fell, but did not particularly know the name of Thackshaws until about 24 or 25 years ago when Sir Walter Blackett rode his boundary, but that to his knowledge they were always reputed to be within the Manor of Whitfield, and he never heard any claim to the contrary until Sir Walter Blackett rode his boundary. He was present a great many years ago when Mr Utrick Whitfield rode his boundary 'together with a great number of Persons Tenants and Inhabitants within the Manor...but cannot recollect whether he this examinant went with them to the Long Cross or how the Boundary was rode from the Long Cross... but he very well remembers that they began to ride ...at Whitfield Hall and went up the boundary between Whitfield and Kingswood, and thence...between Whitfield and Coanwood and thence between Whitfield and Knarsdale and thence between Whitfield and the Lord of Barrow to the Law where a Barrel of Ale was drank, but doth not recollect whether he this examinant went any farther with them....'

He remembered that Sir Walter Blackett and Mr Mathew Whitfield had later ridden their boundaries on the same day, and described the Whitfield boundary as going by the same route as before 'and from the Law to the Long Cross and from the Long Cross to the Hardrigg Currock and there he met with Sir Walter Blackett and his Company and this examinant saw nor heard of nothing but civility between Sir Walter Blackett and Mr Whitfield at the Hardrigg Currock'

'Mr Whitfield and his Company rode from the Hardrigg Currock through the Moss to Knights Cleugh Head and [from there] to the Millstones Dyke above the houses where they met Sir Walter Blackett and his Company again who had rode from the Hardrigg Currock to to the Long Cross and from the Long Cross to the Blue Snab and [from there] through the Millstone Bottom south and that at the Millstone Dyke there had like to have been a quarrel between the Common People of Sir Walter and Mr Whitfield and the said Sir Walter interposed and told them it was a Dispute between Mr Whitfield and him which was to be decided between themselves and that they were not to engage in it or used words to that effect and so the People on both sides were made quiet.'

He said 'that he married at the age of 22 years or thereabouts and after his marriage for about twenty years followed the business of a Carrier of Lead and Lead Ore from the Groves in Alston Moor to Whitfield Lead Mill and whenever he went with his horses from the Hope to Blagill Groves which he generally did once in a fortnight or thereabouts he used to go through the Millstones Bottom over the Hareshaws to the Hardrigg Currock not keeping any Highway and often used to lie down and let his horses graze for an hour or thereabouts upon the Hareshaws'

28 Nov 1757 John Maughan

John Maughan, 67, of Upper Houses in Whitfield, born at Greystones where his father farmed and he farmed after him. Described Whitfield boundary, and driving cattle and horses in summer to graze on Hareshaws. He remembered waifs and strays being impounded and released only when the owners had negotiated with Squire Whitfield.

'About six or seven years ago, he this examinant was Overseer of the Highways in Parmently Quarter and the Roads from Leadgate to Long Cross being presented for being out of repair, one Thomas Read of Aydon was sent by the Justices to view the condition of the said Roads. William Alexander and this examinant attended the said view for Whitfield and Nicholas Watson of Taylorburn, John Richardson of Limestone Brae, John Chester of Hesley Well, and Thomas Armstrong of Ninebanks, all in West Allen, attended for Allendale and the said Watson, Richardson, Chester, and Armstrong all insisted that Allendale had nothing to do with the Repair of the Road from Knights Cleugh Head to the Long Cross.'