

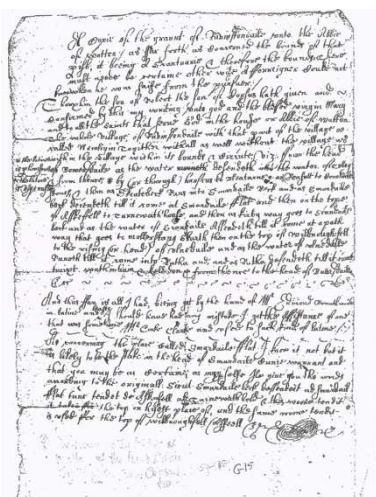
## Torphin's grant

**Background:** The manor (of Ravenstonedale) with the advowson appendant, was granted by Torphin son of Robert, son of Coptus, to the priory of Watton of the order of Sempringham in Yorkshire. Which Torphin son of Robert seems to be the same person who gave the manor of Blaterne to the abbey of Byland, and who lived in the reign of King Henry the second. But the church was not appropriated to the said priory of Watton till the year 1336, Gilbert de Wiggeton the rector then resigning.

The tenor of Torphin's grant is set forth in an account given to the reverend Thomas Machel, by Mr Anthony Prockter, curate of Ravenstonedale and Mr George Fothergill of Tarnhouse; as also in a manuscript written in the year 1645\* by Mr Anthony Fothergill of Trannahill, great grandfather of the late Mr Anthony Fothergill of Brounber, whose account was taken from an office copy of the charter of donation remaining amongst the evidences in the tower or palace of the late abbey of St Mary without the walls of York; which tower was blown up with gunpowder by Oliver Cromwell in the year 1644, and this with many other valuable charters belonging to the religious houses was thereby destroyed and lost. The said charter was (in English) as follows:

"Know all men present and to come, that I Torphin son of Robert, son of Coptus have given, and by this my charter confirmed, to God and the blessed virgin and all the holy men serving God in the monastery of Watton, all the whole vill of Ravenstandale, with that part of the vill called Newbiggin, with the boundaries and limits thereof as well without the vill as within; that is to say, from the head of Beverdale, as the water of Beverdale runs till it comes into the water of Tebey; and from thence by Hanscus to the Blea Tarn; and from thence into Rasett; and so to Couling Stones; and from Couling Stones to Skeat beck runs in to Smerdale beck; and so by Smerdale beck till it comes to Smerdale Flatt; and from thence till it come to the highest place on Ashfell; and so to Tarn wath hole; and from Tarn wath hole, as Kirkby way goes, till it come at Scandal water; and so going up that water into a pathway that goes to Mallerstang fearth; and then on the top of Wildboar fell to the head of the water of Ulunedale; and as the water of Ulunedale runs till it come into the water of Rothay; and as the water of Rothay runs till it come betwixt Washingham and Keldon; and from thence to the head of Beverdale."

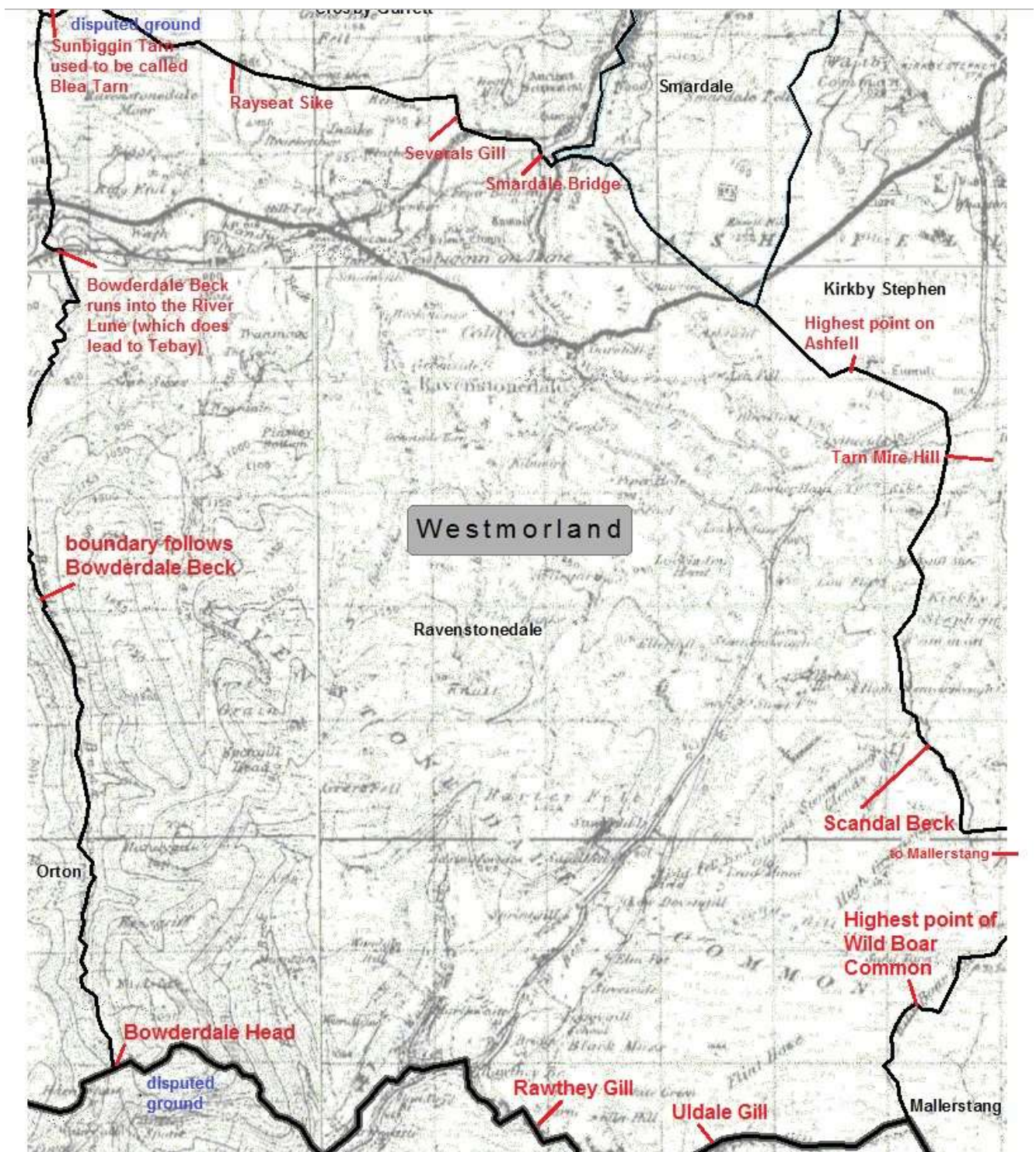
**Source:** Transcribed from *Nicholson, Joseph & Burn, Richard, History of Cumberland and Westmorland, 1777* (available online at [Archive.org](https://www.archive.org/details/historyofcumberl00nich))



\* a larger version of the image shown left of 'a copy of the Graunt to the Abbot of Watton' is available on the [Ravenstonedale Independent History Archive](https://www.ravenstonedaleindependenthistoryarchive.org/). Following the above text which seems to be an exact transcription, a new paragraph states: "*And thus far is all I had, beeing got by the hand of Mr Edmond Branthwaite(?) in Latin ...*" the document goes on to explain the probable locations mentioned in the grant, but unfortunately this document is undated and neither can I make out the signature! However, I would imagine this is the document consulted by Nicholson and Burn and transcribed above (SM)

The online course I am studying at present is looking at parish boundaries, and this inspired me to take a closer look at the description of the ancient boundary of the parish in the above Grant. The boundary shown on the **1851**

**map** below (from 1851 jurisdictions layer of map of Ravenstonedale at Family Search Maps) correlates almost exactly with the current parish boundary on a modern OS map (OL 19 – Howgill Fells & Upper Eden Valley 1:25 000 scale) AND (except for two instances where there is history of a dispute) can be followed against most of the places listed in the description of the boundary from the above grant of the Manor by Torphin to the Priory of Watton. **Here is my attempt to reconcile the ancient placenames with places at or near the current boundary:**

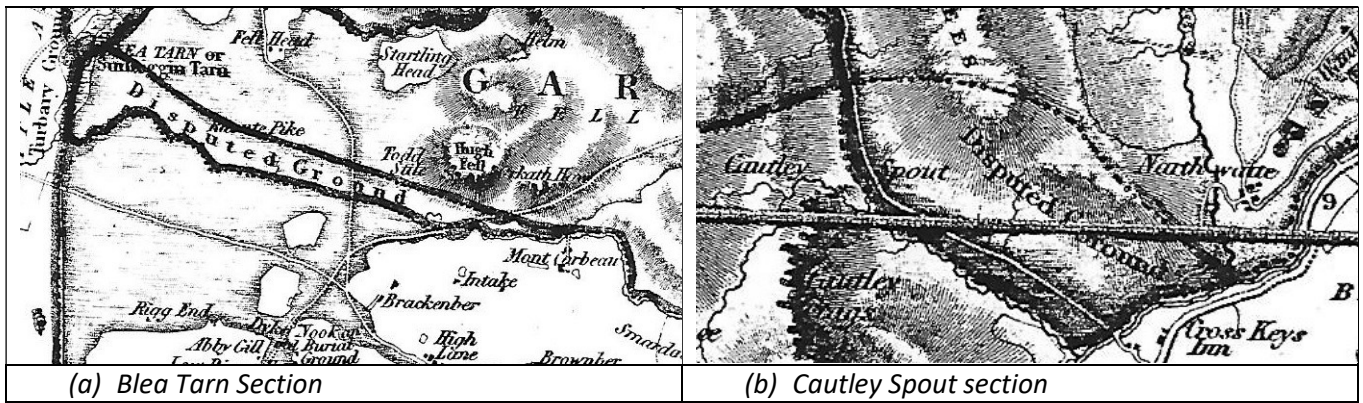


#### Queries on names of locations:

- Close to the place which is described as '**Couling Stones**' there is an ancient Cairn and a spring marked on the current OS map.
- I cannot find a **Skeat beck**, but the boundary at that point follows the course of Severals Gill – perhaps a new name for the same water course?
- I can find no locations on old or current maps that correspond with **Hanscus, Washingham** or **Keldon**.

**Disputed grounds** I do however, hold an old map (I have no clue as to the date or source, but it definitely predates the railway which was built circa 1861 and the 1851 jurisdiction map shown above. It shows the current road through Fell End as a 'proposed road' so I think it would date to the early 1800s. Whatever the date, it shows two areas of 'DISPUTED GROUND') and it seems that the first area is now NOT included in the parish of Ravenstonedale, but the second HAS been added to the parish lands:





- a) **Blea Tarn** – now called Sunbiggin Tarn, this map confirms that in the past it was known as Blea Tarn – it also shows an area of disputed ground – the current boundary runs along the southern edge of this ground, so it seems that the original grant included this tranche of land as it stated ‘Blea Tarn’ as being one of the boundary points. So, they must have lost this dispute!
- b) **Near Cautley Spout** – the second section of map shows an area of disputed ground which includes the ancient track called ‘Boutherdale’ which ran through the neighbouring parish of Orton, to the west of Bowderdale Beck (which forms the boundary between the two parishes for most of its length) right down to the road leading south to Sedbergh. On the current map, the boundary now runs just to the north of Cautley Spout, just above a current footpath, which may actually be the old track called Boutherdale (very close to the south-western boundary of the ‘disputed ground’) but Interestingly, this more northerly boundary of the disputed ground corresponds exactly with the County Boundary between Westmorland and Yorkshire – so it seems though Ravenstonedale parish won this dispute and gained a small section of land, but that small new section of Ravenstonedale parish still belongs to the County of Yorkshire!

**DLONS/L/5/2/34/2** folder held at Carlisle containing ‘Papers: disputes with adjacent manors, including bounders and perambulations of the boundary and plan – this may resolve some of the queries above.

Can any of you with more practical knowledge of Ravenstonedale comment on my efforts, or throw any light on those placenames that I didn’t recognise?

Sue – January 2018