

## THE MORPHOLOGY OF TANFIELD VILLAGE

### Introduction

In 1970 Stanley Urban District Council declared Tanfield village a 'Conservation Area', and the then existing form of the village became fossilised. Conservation is a form of preservation, which recognises that there will be change, but seeks to preserve that which is left to preserve. For Tanfield, that act of conservation came too late, for much of its precious heritage had already been lost, its medieval form being destroyed by insensitive infilling by more modern housing.

### Situation

The village of Tanfield is a small settlement in North-west County Durham (map reference: NZ 185 555), eight miles South-west of Newcastle upon Tyne, two miles North-west of the town of Stanley and eight miles due West of Chester-le-Street. (Figure 1). Although today it is home to a thriving commuter community, commuters now being the bulk of the population, it is a village with a history.

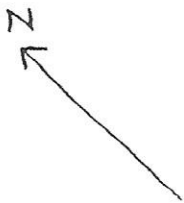
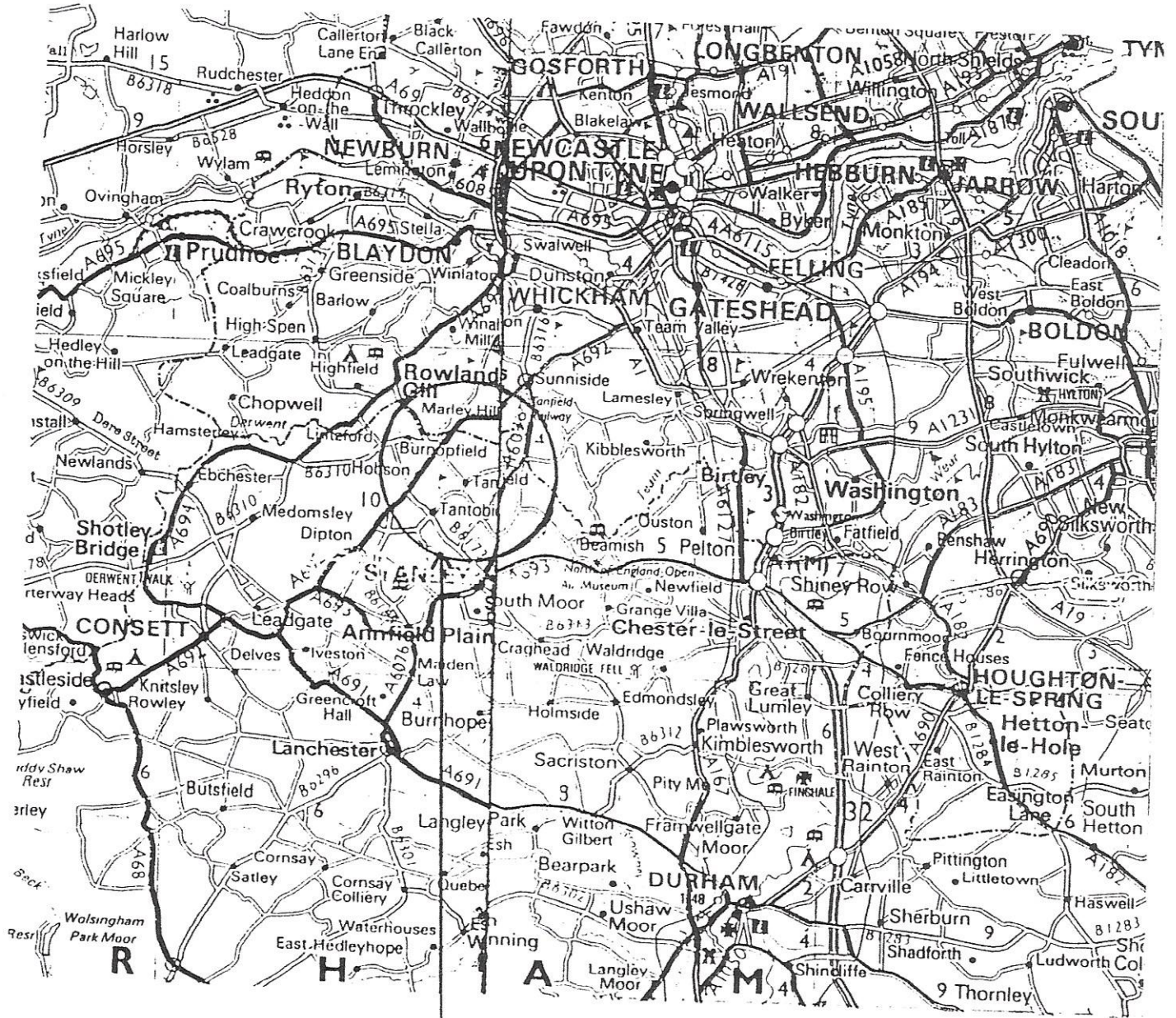
### Site

Tanfield occupies a site, which is an almost classical 'textbook' example. Several historians have attempted to describe the position of Tanfield. Surtees (1), describes Tanfield as being 'on the declivity of a hill sloping from the North', whilst Fordyce (2), as if anxious to avoid being accused of plagiarism describes Tanfield as being 'built irregularly on the declivity of a hill, which slopes to the south'.

Both of these early historians understated the true magnificence of the setting of Tanfield, which is perhaps one of the significant factors for the early establishment of a church, circa 900 AD, and an accompanying settlement.

Figure 2, is a contour map of Tanfield village, and illustrates quite clearly that the village sits on a natural terrace. However, this terrace has been continually modified and exaggerated by man over the centuries, to form a more suitable building platform. The terrace and village are south facing, and are on a natural declivity of the hill slope. South facing slopes always get more solar radiation than north-facing ones, consequently it is the south-facing valley sides which are most attractive to settlement in Britain. Moreover, the village is protected from the prevailing winds, and extremes of frosts and snows on three sides as follows: from the north it is protected by Scavitt Hill in which lee it lies; to the west it is afforded some protection by a slight rise (clay ridge) and to the east it is given additional protection by a rise known as 'Folly Hill', which is in fact a glacial moraine, some 15 metres in height from the ground level.

Figure 1: Tanfield, County Durham: General Location.



SCALE: 1 INCH REPRESENTS 3 MILES

THE STUDY AREA

Figure 2: Tanfield: Contour Map.

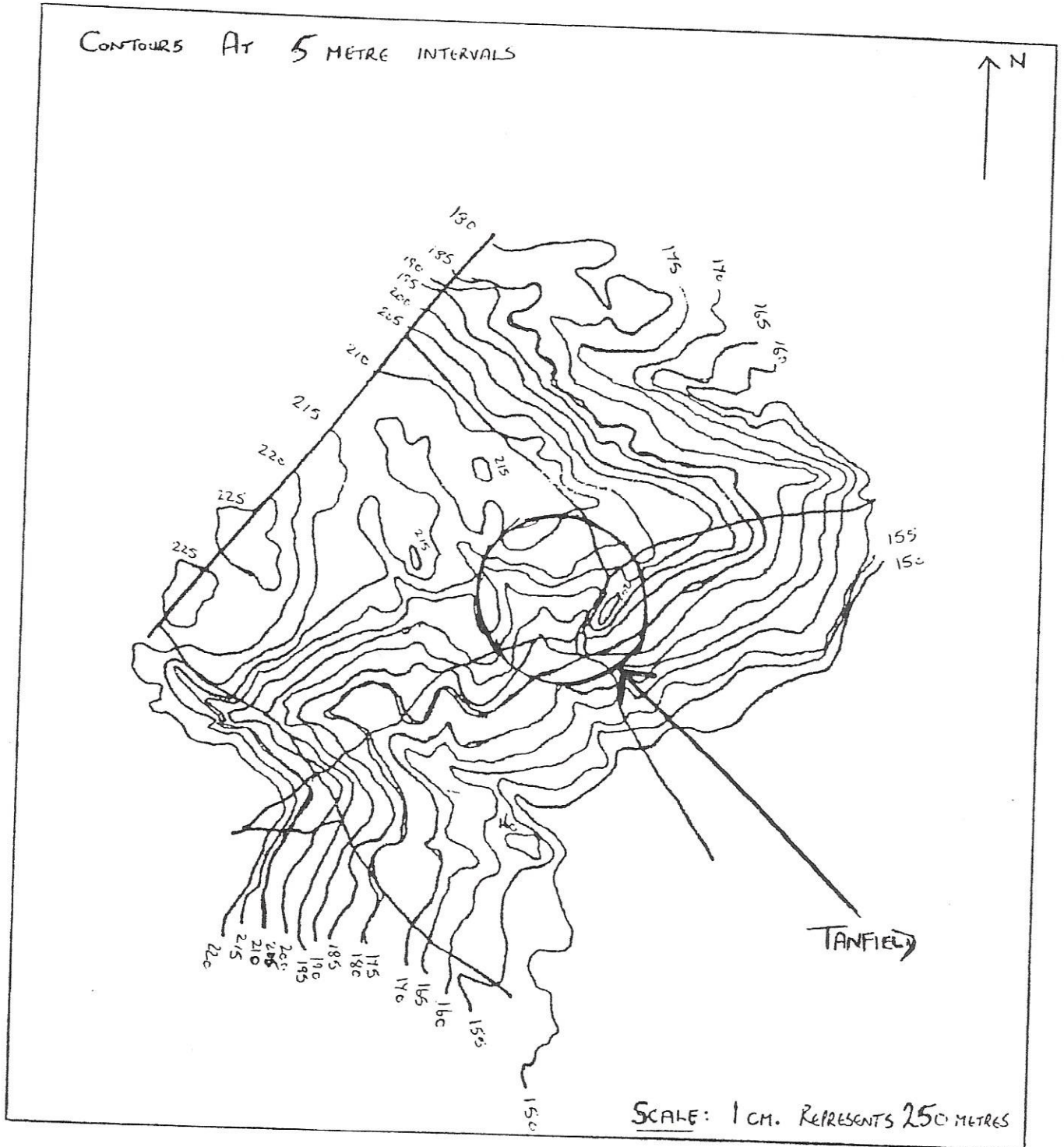


Figure 3, is a west-east and north-south transect which emphasises the sheltered position of the village. However, Tanfield is open to the less usual, but warmer southern winds. It should be noted that Tanfield stands at approximately 180 metres above sea level.

The early historians also neglected the importance of site drainage and water supply with regard to the settlement history of the village, for 'it is desirable to have not only a slight slope beneath a settlement but also freely draining soils, with a high filtration capacity' (3). Tanfield not only possesses a gently sloping southerly inclination, but also lies upon a bed of boulder clay. The consequence of this is a series of fresh water springs which break out on the terrace. Even today, after periods of heavy rainfall there are several springs which issue through the modern road surfaces. Three streams also arise in the vicinity of Tanfield, and these may have helped to give rise to the village name.

These three streams, together with the Far Leith Burn which was to form the southern boundary of the medieval village, are tributaries of the nearby River Team.

The Oxford English Dictionary of Place Names (4), gives an origin to Tanfield as 'Tamefield', or 'Feld on the R. Team'. The name is given to Celtic origins. Fortunately several historians have extended this brief entry by research of their own.

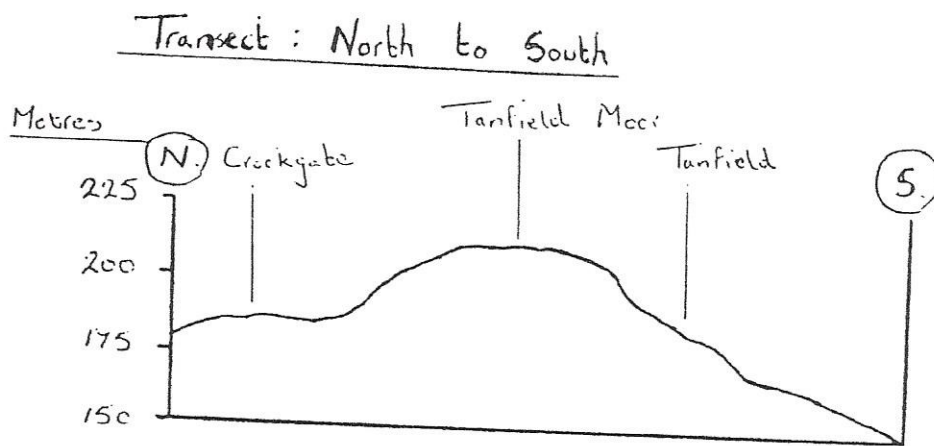
Of those historians, perhaps the explanation presented by the local historian F.J. Wade (5) is the best account as follows:

The name Tanfield is derived from the river or stream which flows through the Chapelry. This stream rises at Annfield Plain and flowing eastward is now as the Kyo Burn. At Tanfield Lea it changes its name to the Houghal Burn and in its lower reaches near its junction with the Tyne, it is called the Team or Teams. The first spellings of the name were Tamefeld, Taumfeld, Thamefeld and Tamfield. From this it would appear that this stream was once called Thame or Tame over its whole course. It is an Anglo-Saxon word meaning slow or silent running water. The name therefore means the fields on the banks of the Tame...

Although it is recognised that the study of name chronology and word associations can be very suspect, this description does at least link the early development of Tanfield to water.

Figure 4 illustrates the importance of water to the site of Tanfield. The abundance of springs, wells and fresh water streams to the geography of the site are clearly demonstrated. Indeed, two wells supplied the needs of the village until 1878 when piped water was made available to the district (6).

Figure 3: Tanfield: Contour Transects & Sections.



VERTICAL SCALE : 1 cm represents 25 metres  
 HORIZONTAL SCALE : 1 cm represents 250 metres  
 VERTICAL EXAGGERATION : 10 x

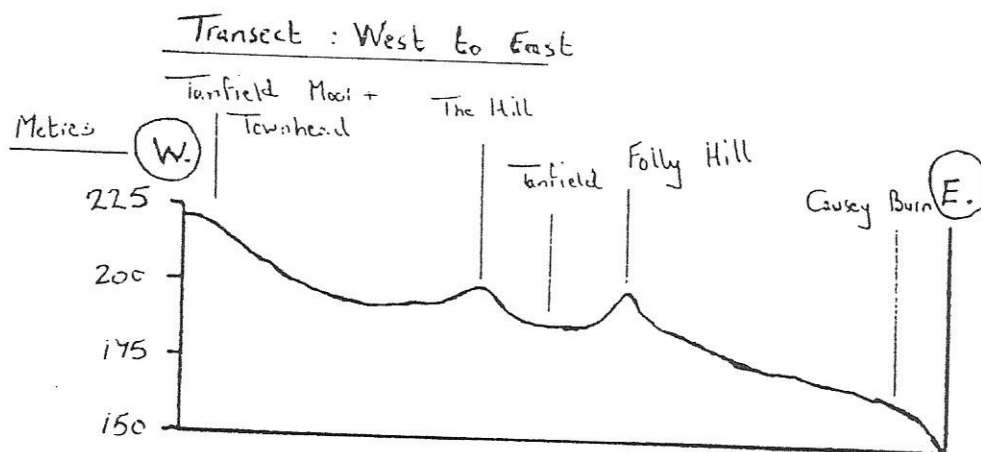
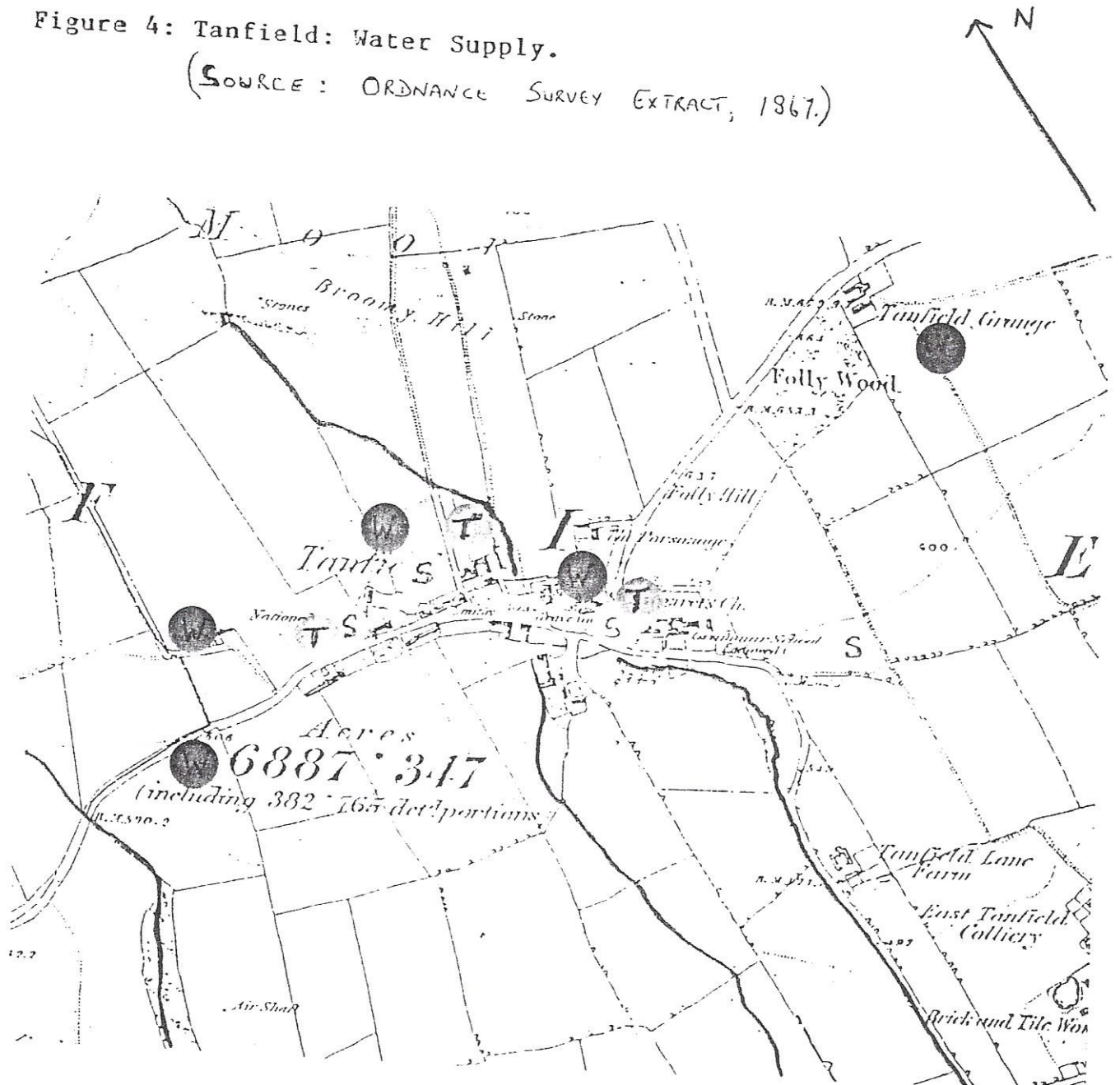


Figure 4: Tanfield: Water Supply.

(SOURCE: ORDNANCE SURVEY EXTRACT, 1867.)



KEY



WELL



TROUGH

S

SPRING



STREAM

SCALE: 6 INCHES TO 1 MILE

Ignoring the issues of the validity surrounding name chronology and origins, there certainly existed in Tanfield in the early medieval period a valuable enclave of land; perhaps not prime agricultural land but protected from the prevailing winds, and well supplied with water, resting on a platform suitable for settlement. The importance of this cannot be over stated.

The early medieval landscape was inhospitable. Even a casual glance at a modern Ordnance Survey map reveals the abundance of moorland which is/was prevalent in the surrounding landscape, by reference to the following place names: Tanfield Moor, South Moor, Black Fell, Langley Moor, Beamish Moor, Byermoor, etc. (Figure 5). Most of these moors were not cleared or enclosed until the Enclosure Acts of the nineteenth century, or until the urbanisation which followed by development of the coalfield. Tanfield represented a rare oasis amongst these 'wastes'. An early reference of these 'wastes' is given by the Prior of Hexham monastery in 1138, who provides an account of the inhabitants of Northumberland who 'concealed themselves in the waste and desolate country which surrounded the village of Tanfield' (7), during one of the incursions of King David of Scotland into the area. The inclosure awards of the nineteenth century continue to make frequent reference to these 'wastes'.

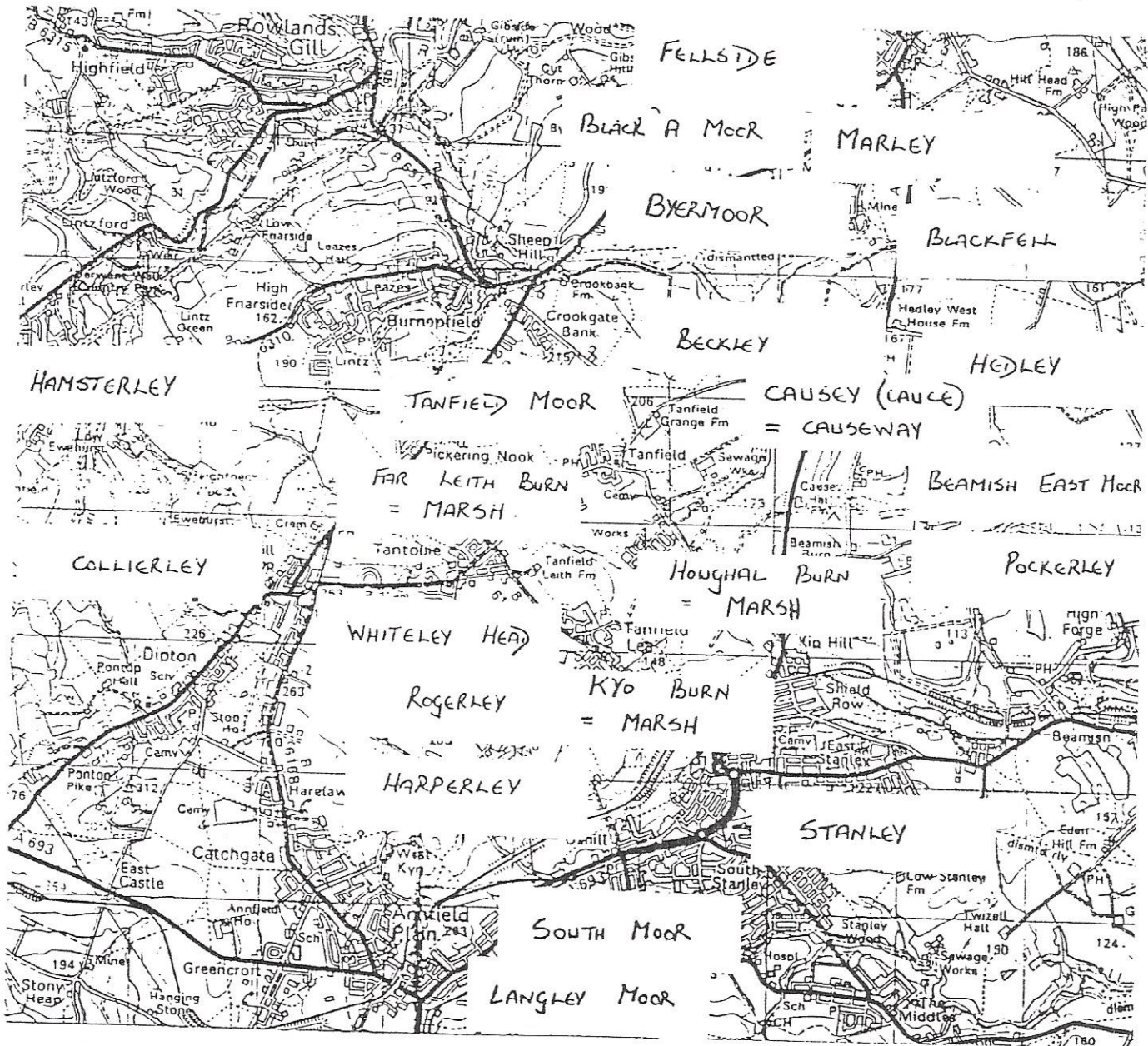
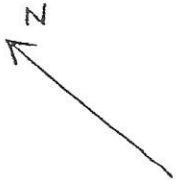
There was not only moorland, but also much of the surrounding landscape was (and still is) bog, for the valley bottoms around the Kyo/Houghal Burn were almost certainly inhospitable bog.

Although Tanfield must have gained an early importance as an enclave within what was an inhospitable, it did not exist alone. The suffix 'ley', or 'lea' (or derivatives) may be taken to be an early English word meaning a 'clearing'. Given this then a casual perusal at a recent Ordnance Survey map reveals the following place names of Stanley, Harperley, Pockerley, Whiteley (Head), Marley (Hill), Langley (Moor), Hedley, Rogerley (Hill) etc., all within the immediate vicinity of Tanfield. The antiquity of all these hamlets and villages demands further research, as does those settlements ending with the suffix 'by', believed to have Scandinavian origins, as in the example of Tantobie (the next immediate settlement to Tanfield), if a fuller appreciation of the early medieval landscape is to be gained.

#### Morphology

For a village which can boast at least 1,000 years of settlement history, there is remarkably little visual evidence of its past. The houses of the villeins have crumbled away, the church is not even the original one and the pattern of the fields and roads has changed (8). The analysis of form is also hindered by the fact that there are no surviving earthworks in Tanfield.

Figure 5: Tanfield: Adjacent Moors, Bogs & Clearings.  
 (BASE MAP: ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1990 ed, 1:50,000)



SCALE: 2 CENTIMETRES REPRESENTS 1 KILOMETRE.

KEY

'Ley' INDICATES  
 A CLEARING



Figure 7: County Durham: The Morphology of Rural Clusters.  
 (after Roberts).

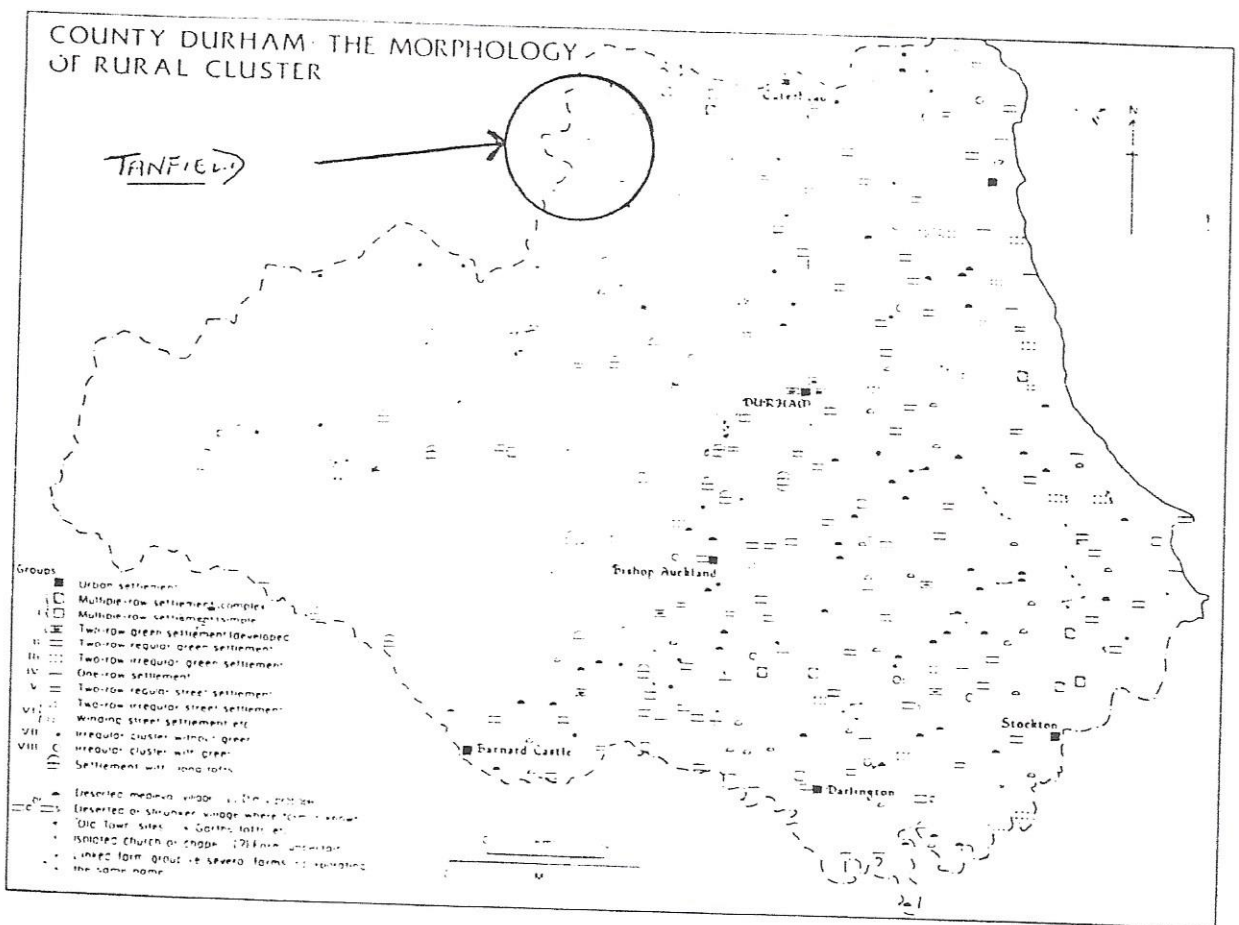
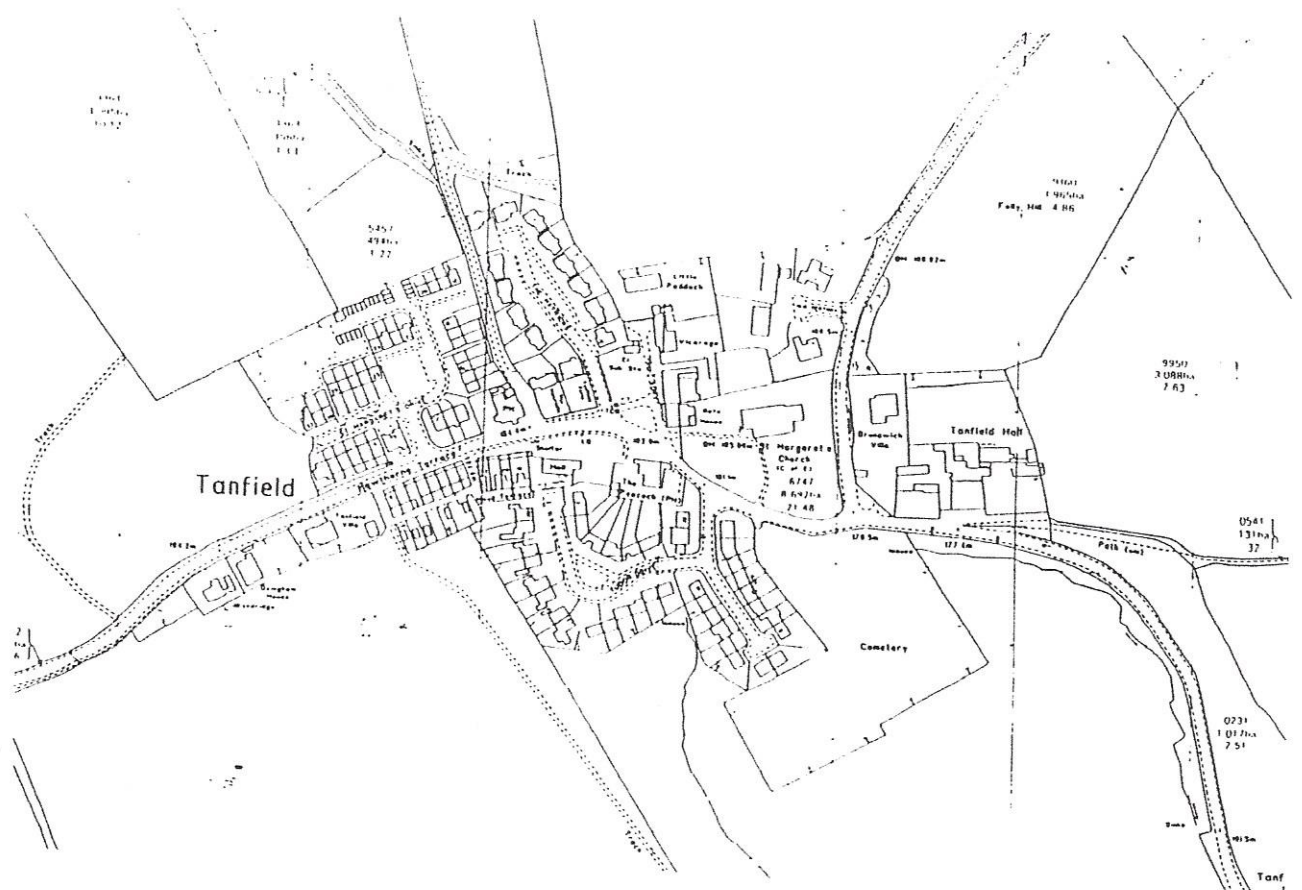


Figure 8: Tanfield: Ordnance Survey Extract, 1983.



SCALE: 6 INCHES TO 1 MILE (APPROX)

However careful sifting of the available documentation, notably maps has yielded some quite startling clues as to its past form. The map evidence has also been supplemented by fieldwork, where possible, but this is limited in extent.

Tanfield represents one of Durham's 'green villages'. The characteristic form of the 'green village' is a nucleated settlement, with homesteads clustered around a central green. Altogether some hundred 'green villages' have been recognised in County Durham, and although their distribution is mainly to the south and east of the river Wear, in that part of the county most suitable for agriculture, there are several examples occurring in the north-west of the county, namely Tanfield, Iveston and Lanchester.

The enclosed green represented a defensive shape, whereby the animal stock could be withdrawn to the green, in time of danger, and the surrounding homesteads would then represent a defensive 'corral'. Later, markets and fairs were held on the more important settlements. The greens were most often aligned west-east, and varied in size, sometimes enclosing several acres (9). Several social events took place on Tanfield Green: there was an annual flower show; twice a year there were 'Hoppings' and sports; hirings (of servants), took place in May and September and the green was also host to travelling circuses in the nineteenth century.

Brian Roberts, a historical geographer at Durham University, has spent many years in making a classification of the form of English villages, and has sought to establish general principles for analysing plans. From Figure 7 it appears that Tanfield's form has been summarised as an 'irregular cluster with green' (10).

#### The Map Evidence

Figure 8 represents Tanfield village as it is today: there has been no further development of the settlement as it gained 'conservation area' status in 1970. The medieval manor (Tanfield Hall) is to the east of the village plan, and some land has been sold off as development (Brunswick Villa). The centre of the plan is dominated by the church of St Margaret and its associated yard. The remnants of the green lie immediately to the west of the church, and is faced by Front Street, and cut by the east-west road. The medieval plan has been all but destroyed by the intrusion of the housing developments of Rectory Close, the Hayricks, Tudor Drive and St Margaret's Drive, however the land that they occupy has historical significance: Rectory Close was the site of the Victorian vicarage, and was originally known as Deans Close; Tudor Drive was the site of the 'Tudor House', The Hayricks was the village farm 'Tanfield Farm', until it was sold for development in 1963, and St Margaret's Drive was originally the site of the

'National School', and a toft and croft. To the north of The Hayricks, a track is indicated; a continuation of the track which lies to the west of the village: this may be evidence of a former back lane. A field track also provides access into the village from the fields to the north, and this track may at one time have allowed access from the common lands of the green to the pastures beyond. A similar field track exists on the southern edge of the village, providing access to the open fields beyond it.

On the south-west edge of the plan there are three plots: Tanfield Villa, Ovingham House and Wyndridge. These are sites of earlier tofts and crofts, and are indicated on plans dating to the mid-eighteenth century.

There is some evidence that Tanfield was a sizeable settlement, for Wade records that in 1762 there was a fire within the village, which started at 'a straw stack which spread to some nearby cottages and before the fire was extinguished twenty-three cottages had been burnt down'. (11)

The siting of the church relative to the local terrain is worth examining, for it occupies the highest point of the settlement, and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the site was carefully chosen (12). Certainly the church rests on a substantial building platform, which may be formed of the fabric of at least two other churches which stood here in Tanfield. It may also be a raft to prevent further subsidence of the site, as the site was undercut by coal extraction in the eighteenth century.

Figure 9 is an extract from a plan which was drafted in 1963 as part of the sale document for 'Tanfield Farm'. The plan is invaluable, for it clearly shows that the medieval form of the village was still apparent in 1963. The four housing developments, mentioned above, have yet to be commenced, and much of the clutter of the 1983 plan is therefore non-existent. This plan reveals the two distinct forms of development. Firstly, there is a ribbon development along the length of the east-west axis: amplified by the row of terraces, adjacent to the Peacock Inn, known as Waggon Row, which were soon to be demolished. Also awaiting demolition was the Board School, which is the large building to the north-west edge of the plan. The second feature is the cluster of buildings around the almost triangular green. The green has a greater definition in this plan, aided by 'Tanfield Farm', which was still standing and functioning at this date. The individual farm buildings are clearly illustrated. The large plot to the south of the plan, opposite Tanfield Hall and the church, is an overspill graveyard: this land had been given to the church in the late nineteenth century. Of interest are the several vacant plots within the village awaiting development: there are four croft sites on the western approach to the village (these tofts and crofts certainly date to the mid-eighteenth century, at least); there are two vacant

Figure 9: Tanfield: Plan from Tanfield Farm Sale, 1963.



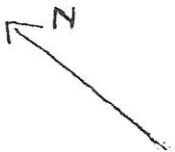
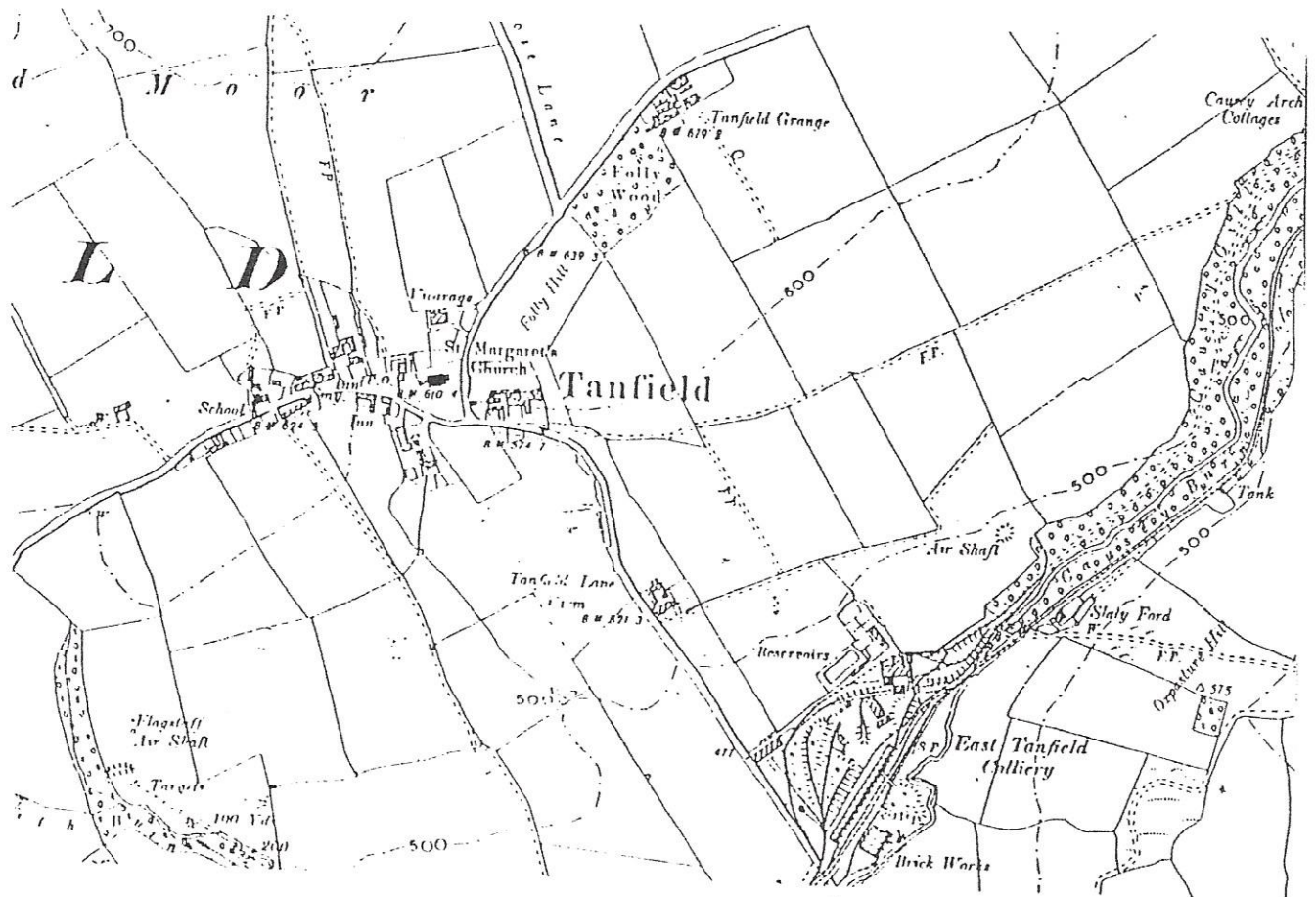
plots about the site of the 'National School', although at some earlier time there were cottages on these plots; on the south of the plan there is a large vacant plot, following the demolition of the 'Tudor House', (this plot was known by the postal address of 'The Square', and was at one time the site of the village cricket field), and to the north of the plan the site of the former Victorian Rectory is awaiting development.

Figure 10 is an extract from the second edition Ordnance Survey of 1898 (6 inches to one mile). The plan form is almost identical to the later plan/extract of the 1960s. However there are some additional details, worthy of comment. The most important feature is the outline plan of the 'Tudor House' to the south of the settlement. The shape of the main building, together with its associated outbuildings is strongly representative of a farm-house, rather than of a single manor house. There are however problems with both of these suggestions: to date the author has not recovered any documentary evidence for either a farm-house or for another 'hall' in this situation within the village! The Victorian vicarage is clearly seen to the north of the village, on land formerly known as Dean's Close, and presumably Glebe land. The Vicarage was soon to be demolished, following the collapse of its foundations due to mining subsidence. This mining subsidence may be linked to the damage done by the Reverend Wilson to Tanfield Church and vicinity after his adventures in coal mining in the 1740s. The 'National School' was in full use at this time. Two photographs exist of the village at this time (Plates 3 and 4); they clearly show the cluster of buildings around the green, and the ribbon development along the east-west axis. Even at this time the site of former tofts, to the south-west edge are still awaiting infill.

To the north of the village there is strong map evidence of a former back-lane, as the track which was first identified in Figure 8 is now almost complete, and is even marked as a 'Footpath'. Roberts places a great deal of emphasis on the existence of a back lane as being one of the fundamentals of plan differentiation, and in describing the process of village planning (13).

The presence or absence of a back lane may be a useful method of plan differentiation. On nineteenth century maps and in the modern landscape what appears may well represent no more than a mere accident of recording or survival, for it is clear that in practice a gradation now exists, from settlements with well-enclosed and surfaced back lanes, through green lanes with rough hard-core surfaces or deep mud, to back lanes which merely survive as tracks or footpaths, to back lanes where no right of way has been preserved but where clear earthworks survive, and to mere headlands, where it is reasonable to assume that there were formerly rights of access to the strips

Figure 10: Tanfield: Ordnance Survey Extract, 1898.



SCALE: 6 INCHES TO 1 MILE

which abutted them. On the other hand there are villages and toft compartments where there is seemingly no hint of a back lane on the map or on the ground... It could be that the presence or absence of a back lane is one significant diagnostic feature indicative of one phase or one context of deliberate planning, particularly in those villages where it clearly delimits a rectangular toft compartment. (14)

Fortunately this back lane also survives in the form of earthworks: a significant length of back lane survives as a sunken track together with an associated field lynchet to the north of what was 'Tanfield Farm', (now 'The Hayricks'), and there is a suspicion of another stretch of back lane to the north of the Victorian Rectory (now 'Rectory Close'). Plates 1 and 2. This latter is actually shown as a track within the grounds of the Rectory on the 1898 map sheet.

No back lane survives on the south side of the village, nor is it indicated on the map sheet. However there is every reason to assume that a back lane would at one time have extended to the rear of the tofts on the west of the village plan, separating the tofts properly from the former open field strips. Indeed, it is possible that this back lane is/was metamorphosed as the back lane, which separates 'Hawthorn Terrace' and 'Maud Terrace' from their allotments. This lane is clearly visible on Figures 9 and 10. There was also a back lane to 'Waggon Row', which would have meant a continuation of this lane almost the whole length of the southern side of the village. Back lanes are important in trying to place a limit on the physical size of a settlement, for in origin they represent the headlands where the ploughing ended along the toft tail line. They were often used with great intensity, for they often became hollowed, by the volume of traffic (animals and vehicular) using them. There is often a complex relationship between headlands, back lanes and toft tail lines (15).

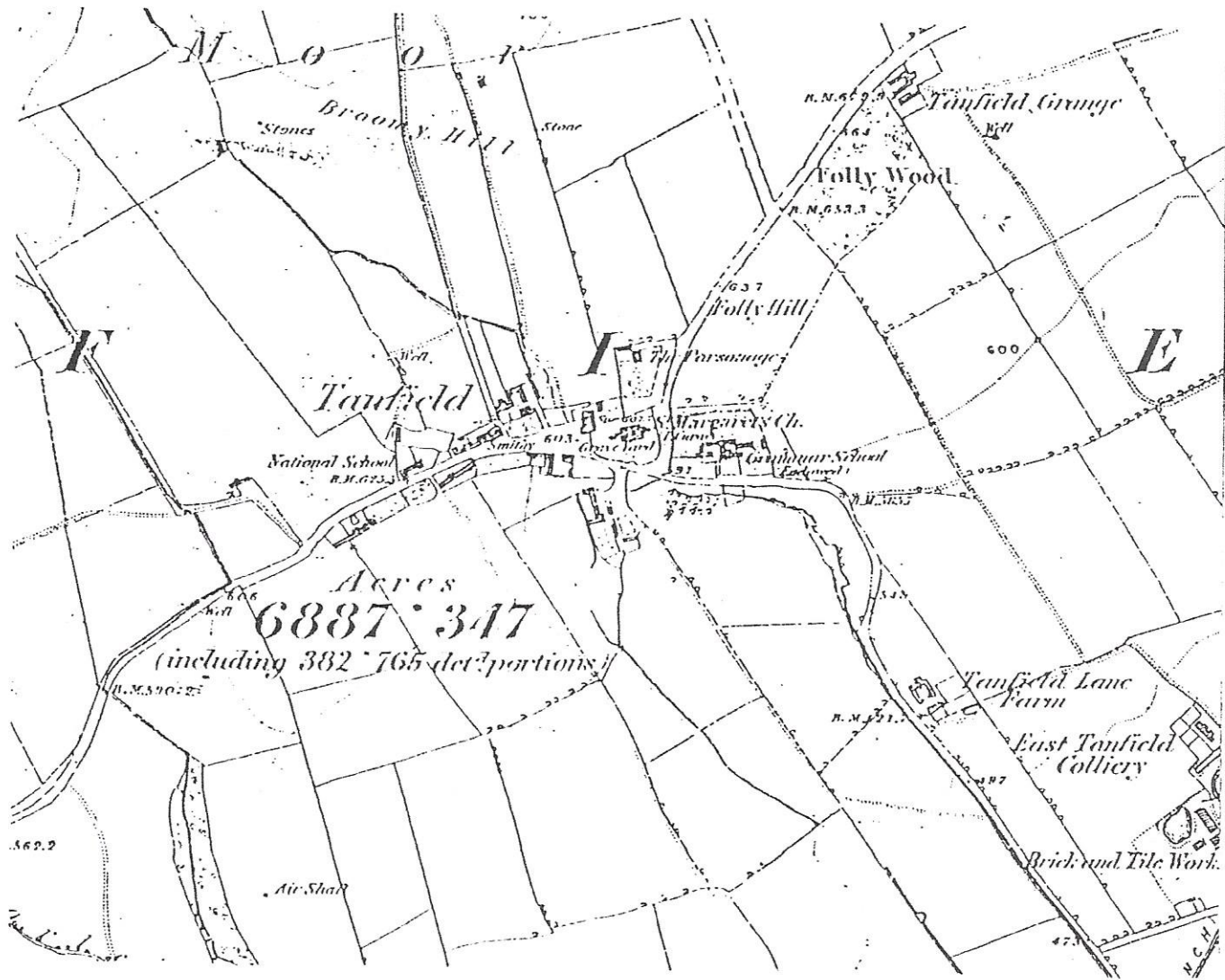
In Tanfield the surviving stretch of the back lane lies half a metre to a metre and a half below the level of the fields to the immediate north of it. (Plate 1) The back lane provided an additional function in the medieval village, in that it allowed access to the tofts it enclosed (16). In Tanfield, the back lane illustrated in Plate 1 continued to allow access to 'Tanfield Farm' throughout its working life, until 1963.

The only other significant features illustrated on Figure 10 are the presence of a smithy within the village, and a small cottage to the north-west.

Figure 11 is an extract from the first edition (6 inches to One Mile) Ordnance Survey of 1867. There are only a few differences between this and the later map of 1898 worthy of comment. The basic plan remains unchanged, however, the large enclosure to the east of the village has now disappeared (the extension to the churchyard), and is now represented as open field.

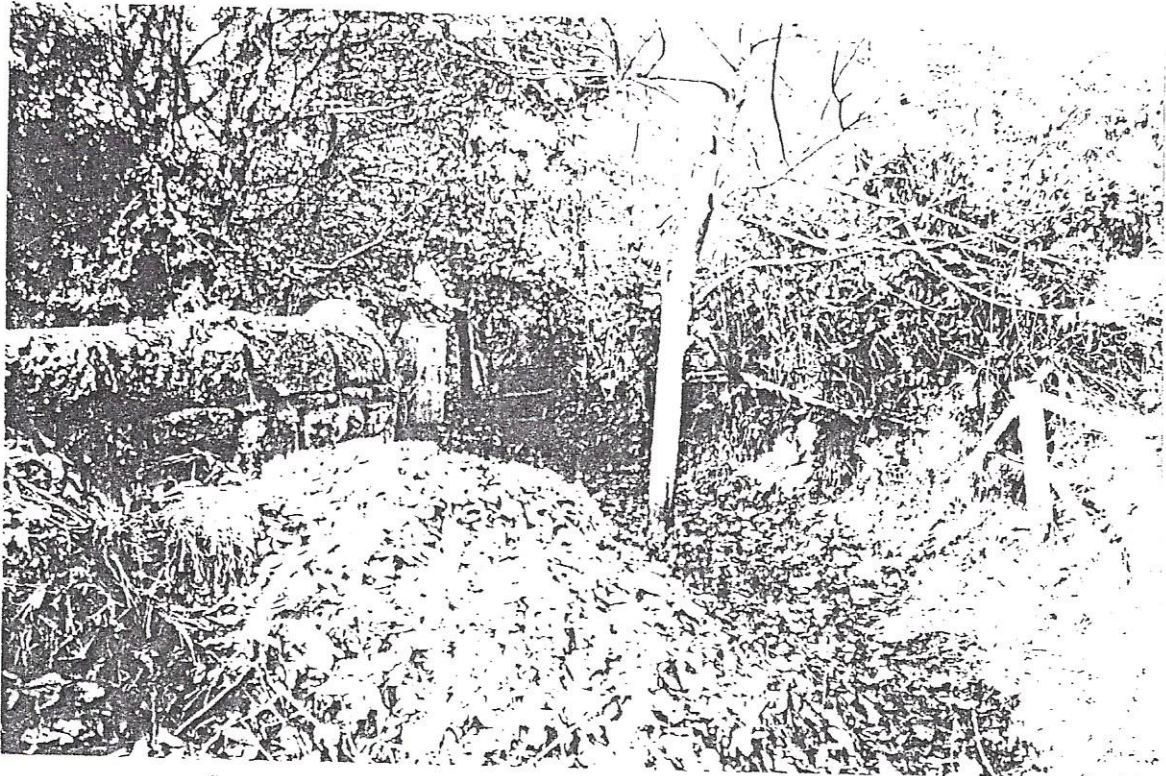


Figure 11: Tanfield: Ordnance Survey Extract, 1867.



SCALE: 6 INCHES TO 1 MILE

Plates 1 & 2: Tanfield: Evidence for a Back Lane.



There is a small enclosure opposite 'Tanfield Hall' (now labelled as 'Grammar School - Endowed'): it is possible that this small enclosure may have been the pinder or pound, a feature common to the medieval village.

The tofts and crofts to the west of the village still remain largely unoccupied, however an earthwork of an earlier toft is clearly illustrated within one of the enclosures.

The complex of buildings, later known as 'The Tudor House' now have all the trappings of being a farm complex.

Figure 12, is an extract of an Ordnance Survey map (25 inches to One Mile) of the same date (1867) and provides some additional detail as it is a smaller scale plan. The formal gardens of both 'Tanfield Hall' and 'The Parsonage' are visible, and could be invaluable for any person wishing to reconstruct these gardens today.

The row of tofts and crofts on the southern side of the village are very evident, especially the shape of the garths. Several crofts are vacant, and one contains an earthwork. Some of the cottages abut directly onto the road ('Waggon Row'), whereas those on the west edge of the village abut onto the field enclosures, and this certainly strengthens the argument for a 'missing' back lane on the south side of the village.

There is also a communal oven within the village, as indicated on plot 611.

Unfortunately the details for 'The Tudor House' are obscured by the poor quality of the original document.

There are also some interesting elongated field strips indicated on the north side of the village (plots 607, 608, 510 and 511). There is no further Ordnance Survey evidence: earlier details are provided by surveys for Tithe, Enclosure and Estate plans.

Figure 13, although in negative format is reproduced from a survey by Thomas Bell, on behalf of the tithe Commissioners, 1847, (scale is 6 inches to One Mile). Although this plan does not provide the details of the later Ordnance Survey series, it is invaluable in that its simplification of detail shows a change in the overall shape of the settlement. The plan has opened out, and the shape of the green appears to be extended towards 'The Tudor House', to the south of the village. The postal address for 'The Tudor House' was 'The Square': the logic to this is now apparent.

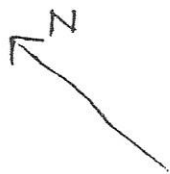
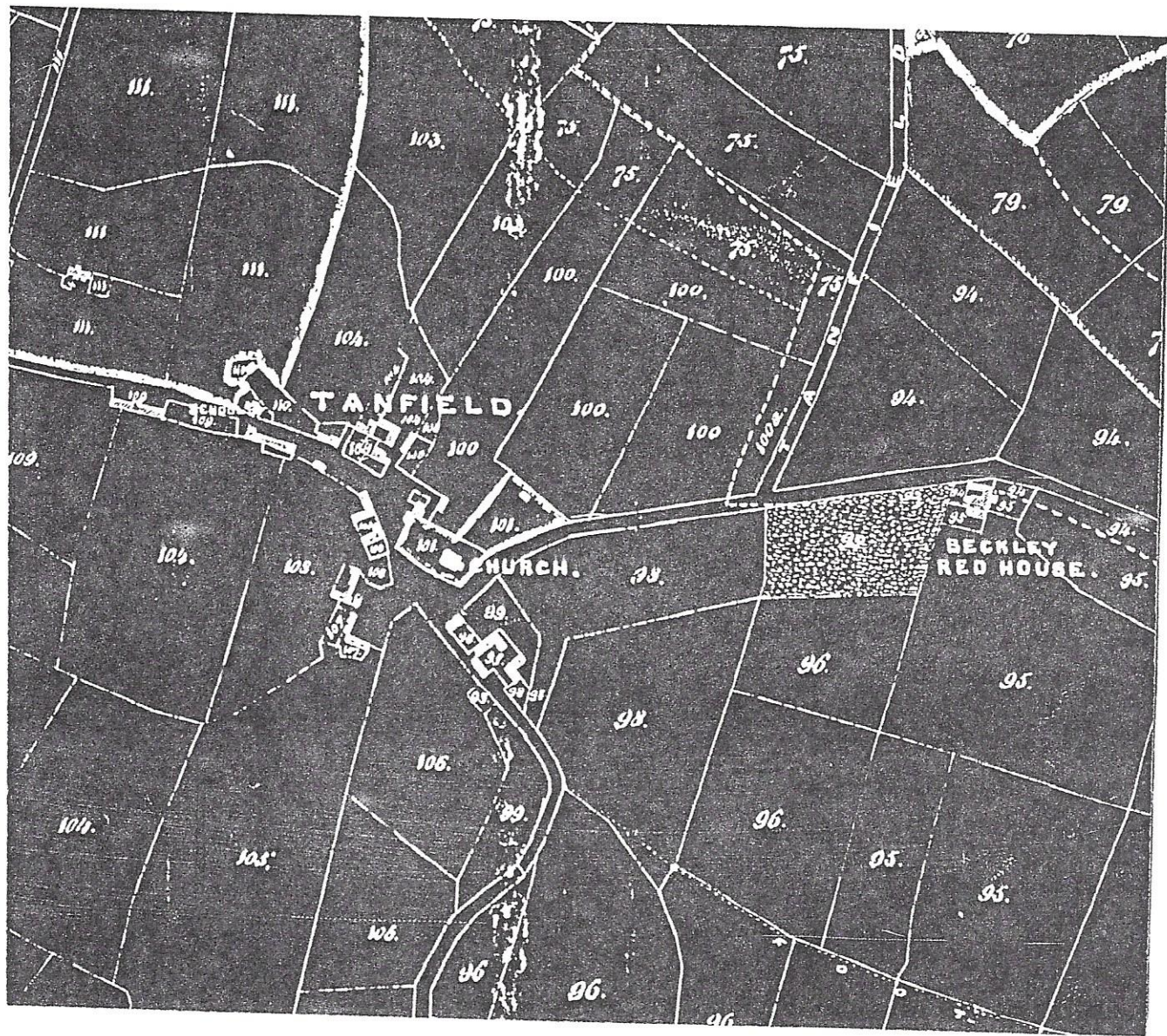
The Parsonage is no longer represented in Plot 101, to the north of the church, (at this time the parson was living in 'Tanfield Hall') and the church is represented as being without its tower, as it was in 1847.

Several facets of the medieval field system are now revealed, namely the elongated field strips, to the north of the village (plot numbers 100, 101, 103, 104 and 110). The toft, to the west of the village (Plot 109).

Figure 12: Tanfield: Ordnance Survey Extract, 1867.



Figure 13: Tanfield: Extract from Tithe Plan, 1847.



SCALE: 10 INCHES REPRESENTS 1 MILE

is still vacant. The croft and toft (Plot 109), now has historical significance as Tanfield South West Farm (see below).

Some details of ownership can now be gained:

Plot No.	Landowner	Occupier	Description
98	J. Eden	Rev. W. Simpson	Tanfield Hall Grounds
99	"	G. Turnbull	Tanfield Garden Farm
100	"	J. Robinson	Deans Close Estate
101	The incumbent of Tanfield		Glebe Lands
103	J. Eden	J. Robinson	Part of Tanfield Estate
104	"	"	Tanfield West Farm
107	"	C. Jackson	Lands at Tanfield
108	"	R. Stott	"
109	"	R. Laws	Tanfield South West Farm
110	Sir W. Eden	M. Brown	Premises at West End

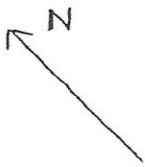
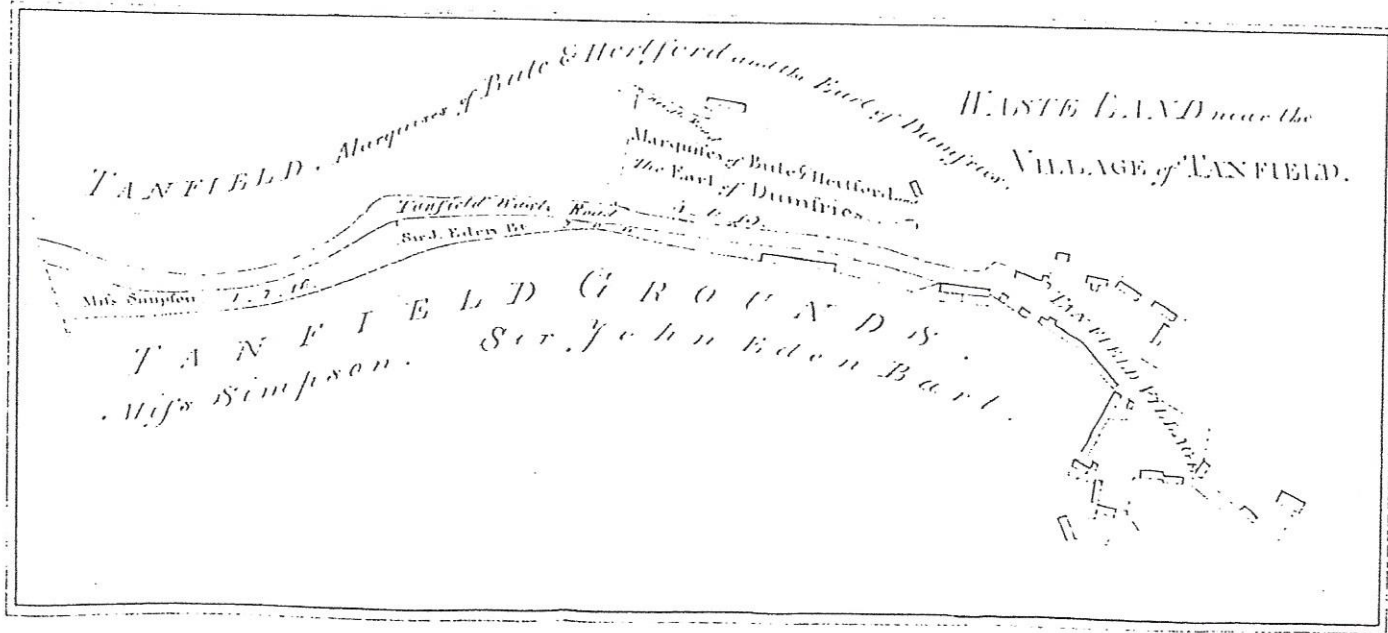
(Source: Durham University Library. Tithe Plans & Apportionments. Tanfield 1847)

Figure 14, represents a plan drafted by the surveyor John Fryer in connection with the Enclosure of part of the Beamish Estate, in 1810 (DRO/Q/D/E1). This plan is an over-simplification of the ground plan and is quite without details. It reveals however, the elongated shape of the village green, with two definite clusters of buildings: to the south of the plan the cluster is represented by the 'Tudor House', and to the north of the plan the cluster is represented by Tanfield West Farm, the 'Gate House' and several additional unidentified buildings on the north edge of the green facing to the south. The ribbon development along 'Tanfield Waste Road' is represented by several tofts, notably 'Tanfield South West Farm', which was first identified in the later Tithe Plan of 1847.

Figure 15, is the final plan in this series, and is a very early plan, dated 1739, drafted on behalf of the Beamish Estate to illustrate the location and ownership of the early coal pits and shafts. The original document is now missing, and a photocopy lies in the archives of Beamish Museum, of which Figure 15 is a copy. The poor quality of the reproduction lacks detail, but still reveals the two major facets of the morphology of Tanfield, namely the nucleus of buildings around the central green, and the ribbon development along the east-west axis. Of greater importance it reveals much of the open field system which existed before enclosure.

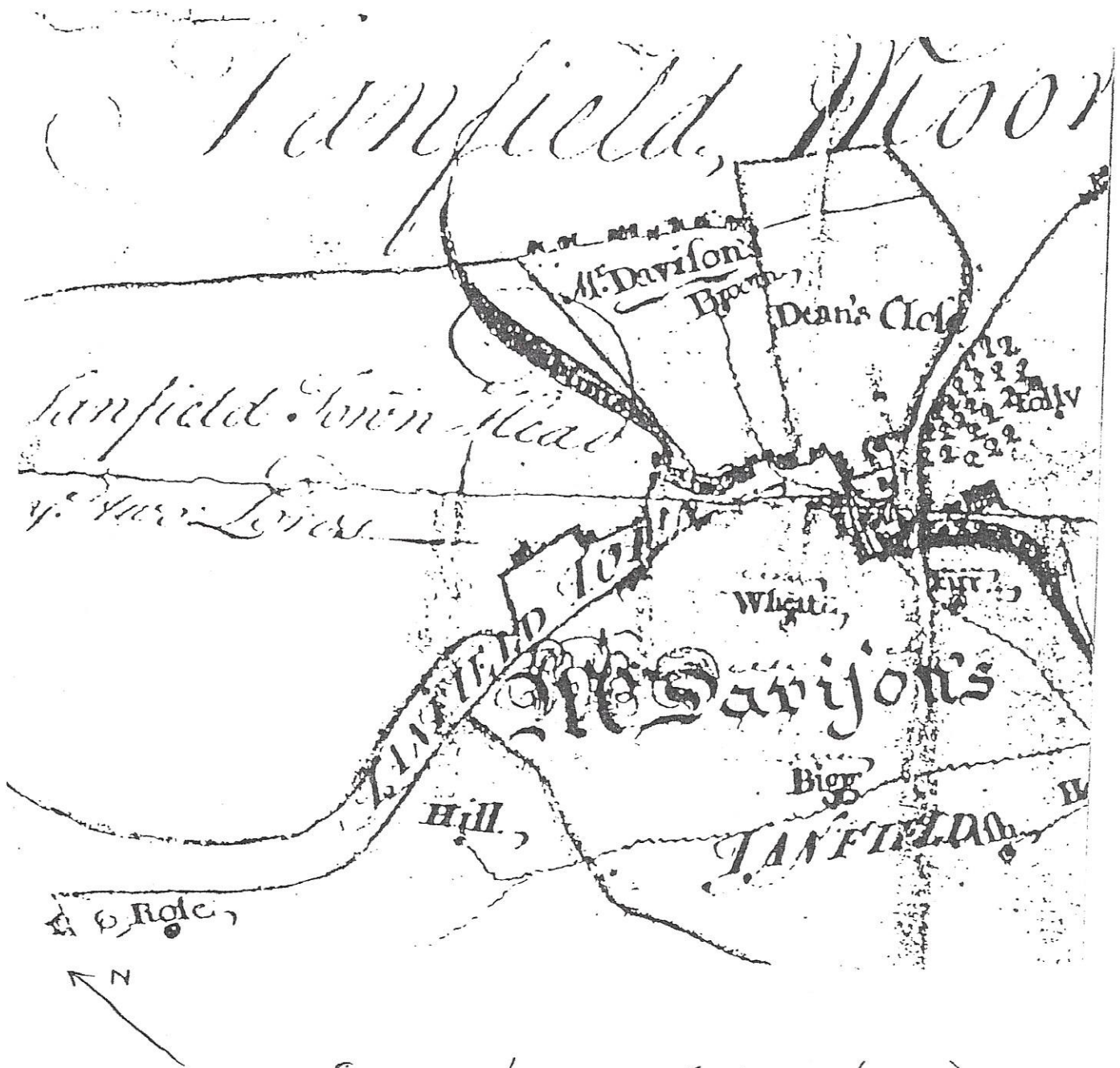
There may be other map and plan evidence awaiting discovery. However Tanfield is represented on several early maps, notably by Kitchen (1760); by Saxton's plan of 'The County Palatine and Bishopric of Durham (1686). and Speed's 'Atlas of the Bishopric of Durham' (1620), amongst others. None of these early maps provide any details other than illustrations of the church, albeit with a spire in the case of Kitchen's map!

Figure 14: Tanfield: Extract from Enclosure Award, Beamish, 1810.



SCALE: 6 INCHES TO 1 MILE (APPROX).

Figure 15: Tanfield: Extract from a Survey of The Western Partnership Collieries, 1739.



SCALE: 6 INCHES TO 1 MILE (APPROX).



Another document which gives some clue to the early morphology of Tanfield is given in Bishop Hatfield's survey of 1386. A transcription of this document appears in Surtees, as follows:

William Jonson holds four messuages and six parts of Taumfeld legh, containing eight score acres, once John de Britley's of Twysill, and used to pay 53s.4d now only forty shillings. Bertram Monboucher holds seven parts of Taumfeld legh, as they are divided in fifteen parcels (in antiquo rentali) and pays 9s.4d; the same Bertram holds the vill of Taumfeld legh and six score and six acres, 39s.10d.

Surtees makes the observation that the above description also includes the whole of Tanfield, both town and legh, and both seem to have been held by the Monbouchers and Percy's till they parted company after the land was seized by the Crown and granted to Jackman in 1598. (17) Hatfield's survey for some reason lists Tanfield under the manor of Lanchester, rather than within the manor of Beamish, as was granted in 1067. The chapelry of Tanfield was a result of the division of the lands belonging to the parishes of Chester-le-Street and Lanchester.

At this stage some consideration needs to be given to the principal buildings within the village of Tanfield.

#### Principal Buildings:

Plates 3 and 4 provide a general view of the village, looking eastward, circa 1900. The National School is to the immediate left of the photographs, the village green is clearly seen with its associated cluster of buildings. In the middle distance lies the church of St Margaret's, and in the far distance, beyond the trees is the manor house, Tanfield Hall. The original caption to Plates 3 and 4 describe the cottages as being thatched (18): they seem more likely to be pantile roofs in a state of poor repair.

#### The Church of St Margaret's:

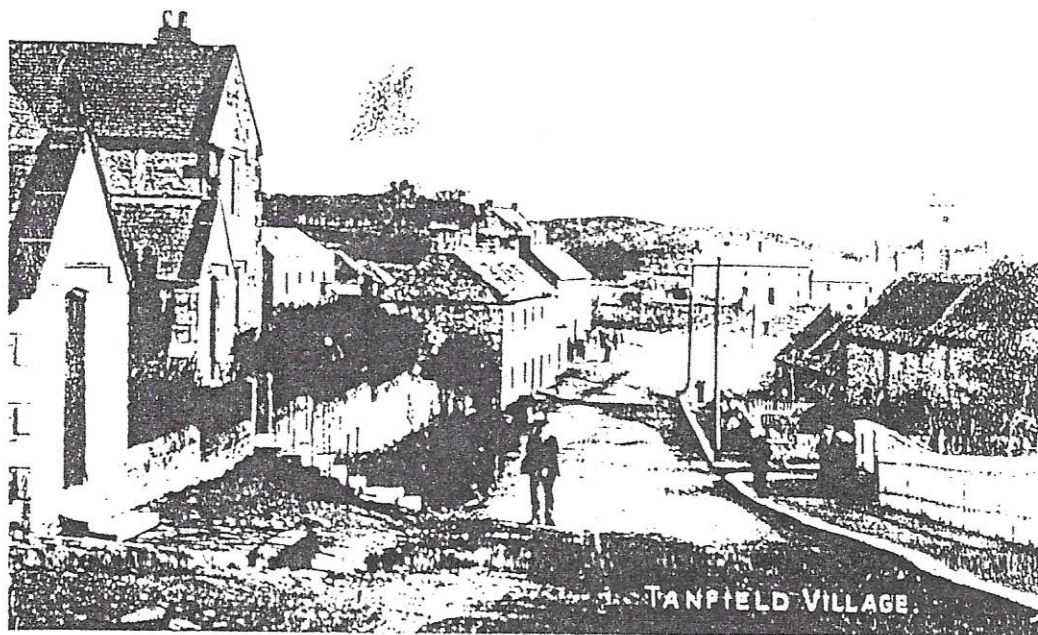
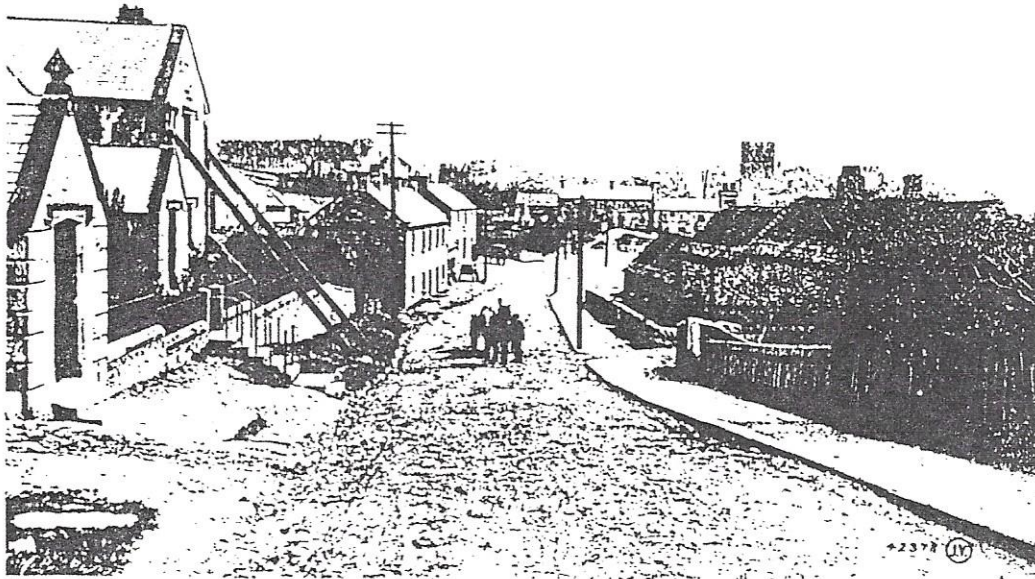
Pevsner gives a brief description of St Margaret's as follows:

All crisp and smooth, of ashlar. W tower of 1853 with short diagonal buttresses and oversized machicolated battlements, perhaps on C13 foundations. Nave of 1749 (inscription), the arcades raised on aisles with neo-Perp windows added in the remodelling of 1878. Lower chancel with three E lancets 1864. (19)

Admittedly, St Margaret's Church is not the most handsome church in the county of Durham, however it is more deserving of a better character reference.

It is a commonly held belief that there has been a church standing in Tanfield since 900 AD. A notice board on the site of the present day church of St Margaret's makes reference to its early foundation, and several historians also make reference to this fact, notably Wade who states: 'there

Plates 3 & 4: Tanfield: General View, circa 1900.



have been two different churches on the site of the present church' (20) and Hindhaugh:

Tanfield was first mentioned around 900 when a church was built by the monks of Chester-le-Street. In the early 11th century William the Conqueror noted the village as a manor. The church was then re-built on more spacious lines. (21)

Sadly neither historian quotes the source of his evidence, and neither is there documentary evidence available in the church. There is no visible archaeological evidence to point to an early church, and for the present the origins of this belief can not be substantiated by the author. It would certainly be very welcome to believe that Tanfield was a site of religious importance in Saxon times, and this would further strengthen the importance of Tanfield to the early medieval landscape. Without doubt, had there been a Saxon religious foundation then it would have been founded by the Community of St Cuthbert who settled in Chester-le-Street in 882 AD.

There is an early mention of Tanfield in 1240, given in the deeds of the Chantry of Stanleigh (Stanley), which occur in the Almoner's Book of the Convent of St Cuthbert of Durham, which states that 'Stanleigh lies between Sheleburn and Smaleburn near Tamefeld', and later in the same document it says Stanley 'is south of the water of the Tame in the Villa of Tamfeld'. (22)

Of all the historians, Wade alone gives evidence of research into the founding of the chapelry of Tanfield. Unfortunately for later researchers, Wade never gives the source of his material, although the antiquarian Surtees (23) was the source of much of his inspiration and material. However, in this instance Wade adds to the information originally provided by Surtees.

In 1286, Bishop Bek of Durham, founded a Collegiate Church at Chester-le-Street, consisting of a Dean, seven prebendaries, five chaplains, three deacons and other ministers to provide church services for the church and chapels of the Parish, and to whom their tithes would be paid.

To the fifth Prebend were allotted the tithes of Tanfield, Lynce (Lintz), Crook (Crookgate), Tanfield Leigh, Caldsit (Causey), and other lands in the Chapelry of Tanfield.

The Chapelry itself was formed out of the civil parishes of Chester-le-Street and Lanchester. It included the hamlets of Tanfield, Tanfield Lea, Tantobie, Whiteley Head, Stanley, South Moor (part of), Causey, Shield Row, Beckley, Andrew's House, Burnopfield, Ewehurst, Lintz, Beamish Hall, Priestfield, Leazes, and High and Low Friarside.

The principal Manors were Beamish, Tanfield and Lintz. Although the Lord of the Manor of Beamish and Tanfield resided at Beamish, the factor to stress was that now the centre of the Manors and Chapelry was the village and church of Tanfield.

Even had there been no earlier church, following the creation of a chapelry, a church would certainly have been established in 1286, or thereabouts. This thirteenth century church could have been expected to be a grand building, for it was to serve a large parish. However if the plans contained in Durham Record Office (DRO) are genuine (DRO/EP/TA/27), it was a modest building. (Plate 5)

A description of this building has been found, as follows:

The church prior to the present one consisted of an aisleless nave, with a south porch to the centre of it, and a chancel.

The nave was 43'0" long by 18'0" wide and its chancel was 38'0" long by 14'6" wide. The north side of the nave and chancel were windowless and the chancel was lighted by a n east window and by two lights, (small windows), in the south wall. The nave had two windows, one on each side of the porch in the south wall. There was a bellcote at the apex of the west gable end. (24)

Sadly little remains of this medieval church. In the early part of the eighteenth century, the incumbent, the Reverend Robert Wilson gave permission for coal to be worked in the adjoining field (presumably Dean's Close), and for a wagonway to be laid into the church yard to carry away the coals. This drift mine actually extended under the medieval church itself! In 1736 the church wardens made appeal for this work to cease, and eventually Bishop Chandler of Durham ordered an inquiry: 'He forbade the laying of a wagonway in ye Churchyard or making a pit or any other work under ye Chapel to endanger or injure it'. (25)

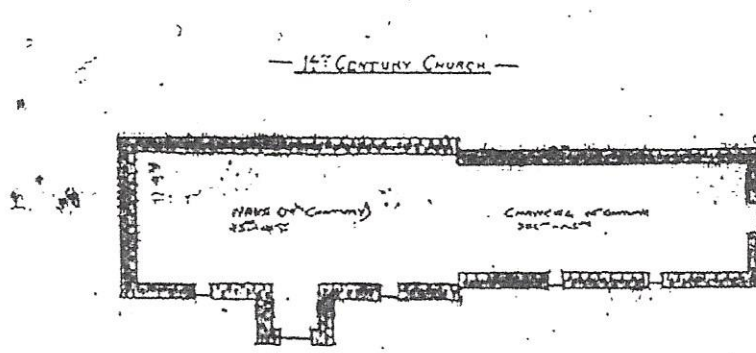
The damage however, had been done, and the Chapel had to be completely rebuilt from the foundations upwards.

The only remains of this earlier church are a thirteenth century piscina, set in the wall of the nave, and some stone flaggings which are of an earlier date and of a different stone to the rebuilt chapel. There is also a very fine stone tomb, on the floor of the south side of the chancel dedicated to Sir William Wray, Knight, who died in 1628, and who owned Beamish manor at that time. Several gravestones dating to the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century still remain in the churchyard, and pre-date the existing building. The present church rests on a substantial building platform, or it may be a 'raft' to protect the building from the effects of the coal extraction below it.

Following the virtual collapse of the medieval church, a new chapel was built after the raising of public subscriptions, with most of the monies being donated by the Eden family of Beamish Hall.

The church was almost entirely rebuilt in 1749, and even since then has been subject of several restorations and additions. The rebuilt church

Plate 5: Tanfield: The Thirteenth Century Church (plans).



consisted of the nave, aisles and chancel, however the chancel at this time was still the original medieval shell, and this was not replaced until 1864.

It was re-opened for service on 5th April 1750. The plans for rebuilding the church are given in the church-wardens' account book, which shows estimates for details of construction and details of the actual construction itself: one page shows the elevation of the south front of the nave. (DRO/EP/TA/95). Originally the north and south elevations of the nave had four round topped windows, which were replaced by the present tracery windows in the 1877 restoration. Entrance to the nave was by both north and south doors. The nave was supported by six simple pillars, without capitals. Plate 6 illustrates the simple nature of the 1749 rebuild.

Wade provides additional detail of this rebuild:

The building was covered with a flat leaded roof surrounded by a battlemented parapet wall. At the west end a gallery was erected by the owners of White-le-Head Colliery for their own workmen. This chapel with its flat roof and gallery remained unaltered until 1873 (sic) when the tower was erected by John Eden Esq., Beamish Hall. At the same time the lead roof was replaced by a pitched roof, the old entrance was walled up and the present one came into use. (26)

In 1853, a massive square embattled tower was added by John Eden Esq., of Beamish Park. An inscription on the tower records the date of its erection. The church was beginning to acquire its present day looks (Plate 7). Although Plate 7 is a photograph taken of the church circa 1890, it is extremely difficult to take an unobstructed photograph today, due to the growth of trees.

In 1864 there was another alteration. The medieval chancel was demolished, and then a chancel similar to the style of the 1749 rebuild was erected. This work was completed by James Joicey, the coal owner who had his residence at Beamish Hall. An inscription below the east window marks his work. In 1877 there was another major restoration in which the round topped windows in the nave were replaced by square windows with their tracery, and the south door was blocked. Entrance to the church was now through a door in the tower. The flat roof was replaced by a roof with a low pitch, and an internal ceiling was fixed. An organ was also installed into the building. The restoration cost a mere £4,000.

Other than the replacement of gas lighting by electric, the last major alteration was the raising of the pitch of the roof in 1928, in order to solve water run-off problems, and to replace some rotten timbers. A new clock was installed in the tower in 1919 as a commemorative War Memorial to the 1914-18 Conflict. Plate 8 illustrates the final form of the church.

Plate 6: Tanfield: St. Margarets Church - the 1749 rebuild  
(plan).

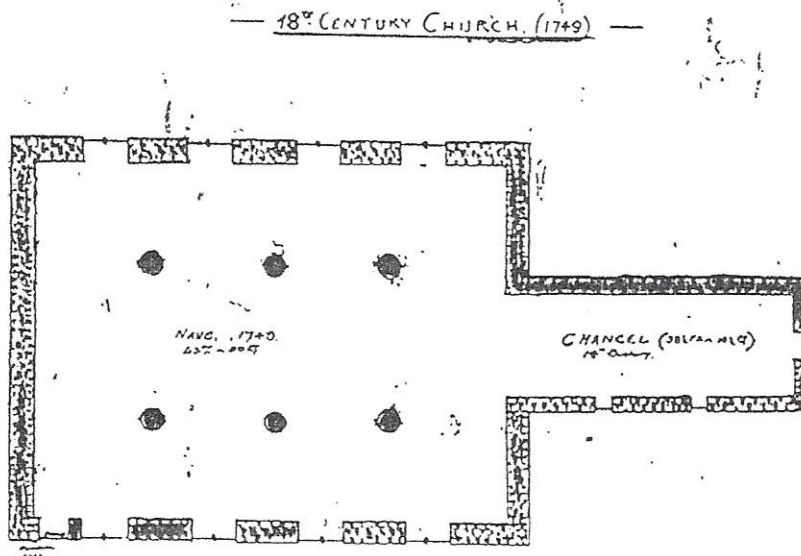


Plate 7: Tanfield: St. Margarets Church, circa 1900.

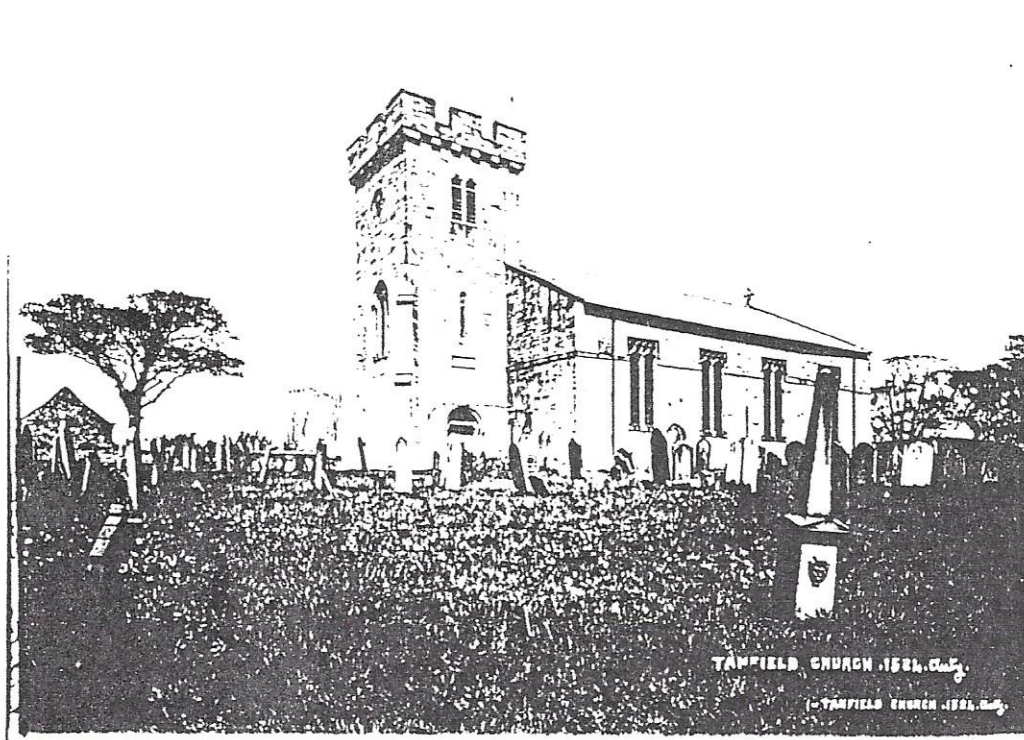
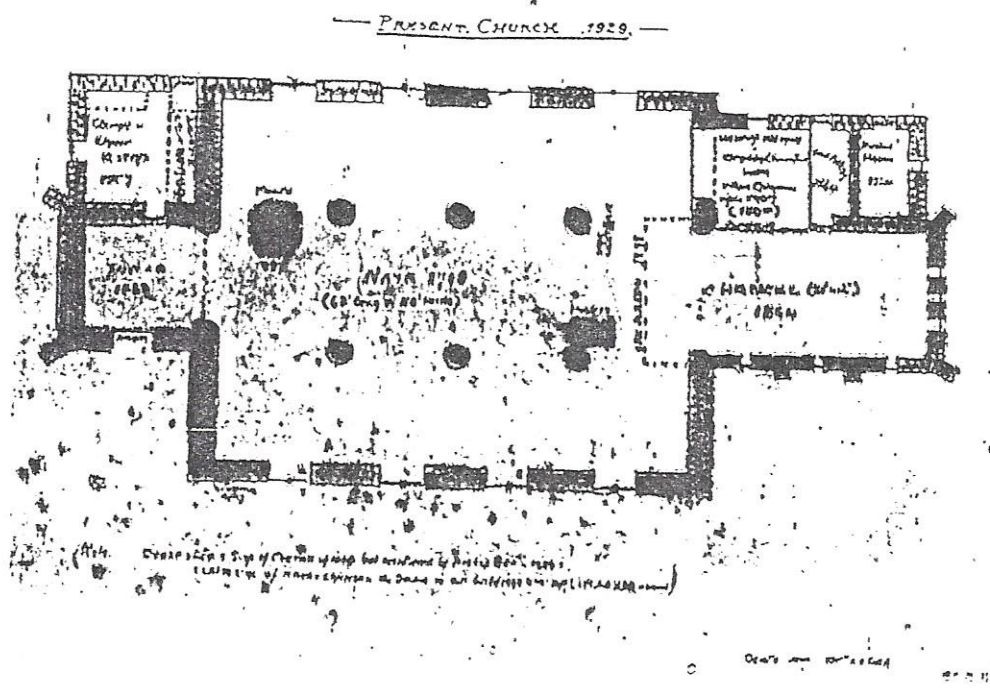


Plate 8: Tanfield: St. Margarets Church, 1928 and present form (plan).





### The Churchyard

The church of St Margaret's is set within its own graveyard. St Margaret's was the only church in the chapelry until the late nineteenth century, when the increase of population within the Durham coalfield created the need for the building of churches at Pelton, Stanley, Ox Hill, Dipton, Burnopfield, etc. Until this time all births, deaths and marriages within the Conformist church were carried out at Tanfield. The contents of the graveyard reflects this.

The churchyard was actually enlarged towards the end of the nineteenth century, by bringing forward the road to its present position. Fieldwork evidence reveals a lip in the present ground surface, where the road made its traverse. An extension to the churchyard was made circa 1880 to the south side of this road, in the form of a graveyard.

Headstones record burials from nearby hamlets and settlements, including Beamish, Shield Row, The Lintz, Causey, etc., all within the chapelry of Tanfield. Fortunately, many of the graves actually pre-date the rebuilding of the chapel, and there are several graves dating from the early eighteenth century, and even a few from the seventeenth century. The earliest dates from 1624 and is to Jane Porter, and has the arms of Blakiston and Porter engraved upon it: 'Here lieth the body of Jane Blaxton, wife of Nicholas Blaxton of Gibside, knight, and daughter of William Porter, Gentleman of Shielrawe...'. The family of Blaxton or Blakiston lived at Gibside, and it is from this family that the Strathmores are descended. (27)

Some of the later nineteenth century headstones record many tragic deaths in the coal mining industry.

Although several of the headstones have conservation orders placed upon them, a full survey of the churchyard and its contents is needed.

### Tanfield Hall

The description that Pevsner applies lacks lustre: clearly Pevsner was not enamoured by this building:

C17. refronted in the plainest style possible in the C18. Five bays, two-and-half storeys. Modern roof: it may have had hipped dormers... (good staircase inside. DOE) Large gates with overthrow and screen to the front garden, the finest work that early C18 blacksmiths did in the county (cf Beamish). Heavily rusticated piers at the outer corners of the wall. (28)

Fortunately, Wade is able to provide a more lively and fuller description:

Tanfield Hall was once the manor house of Tanfield Chapelry as distinct from the Beamish part of the Parish. It is a stone building of three storeys and probably dates back to the same time as the Tudor House, because it has the same large outside chimney flues.

It occupies a commanding position at the east end of the village and standing well above the road. It has been the residence of many families connected with the ancient history of Tanfield.

It was once the Vicarage and the Reverend Joseph Simpson, when Vicar of Tanfield, lived in it from 1790 to 1830, he was the master of the Grammar School...

Under the date 1788 Sykes informs us that an accident occurred at Tanfield Hall when it was the residence of the Spearmans. Part of the roof fell in and buried two children. One was killed and the other badly injured by the debris falling on them.

There is a fine Jacobean staircase, but its greatest treasure is the magnificent handmade wrought iron entrance gate, a really fine example of local craftsmanship. Placed on top of a short flight of circular stone steps is the large single gate with broad side panels. These are flanked by open piers embellished by scrollwork and surmounted by an elaborate overthrow with a circular monogram at its centre. Above the overthrow is a weathervane. At the base of the overthrow a long rectangular panel contains another central circle from which radiates more scrollwork. These gates were renovated in 1958 at Shotley Bridge... These gates are supposed to have been made in 1730 by the Tanfield Village blacksmith... (29)

Tanfield Hall is very much an under-researched building: much about its history and its owners remains to be discovered. For instance, from 1763 until 1860 it was known as 'Tanfield Grammar School', as the Tanfield Boarding Academy was established in part of the Hall grounds. The author has had the opportunity to visit the Hall on several occasions, and is convinced that this C17/18 frontage is a shell for a much earlier building, for within the Hall there is evidence of a blocked-in central fireplace, and rebuilding work by the present owners points to a large single room (now subdivided into three separate rooms) which served the ground floor. There is in addition evidence for an external staircase to the rear of the building. Many small mullioned windows are contained within the building fabric. A Tudor fireplace had been removed at some time by previous owners and was discovered in an outhouse. The Hall and gates now have a preservation order served on them.

Both the Hall and the gates are illustrated in Plates 9 and 10, which although photographed at the turn of the century are included because the growth of vegetation makes present day photography very difficult.

#### The Tudor House

Wade is once again the sole source of documentation with regard to the Tudor House. He establishes that the Tudor House lay in the east end of the village, in an area known as The Square. The Square was bounded on two sides by rows of stone built cottages, but dominated by the gables, chimneys and red tiled roof of the Tudor House.

Plate 9: Tanfield: Tanfield Hall, circa 1900.

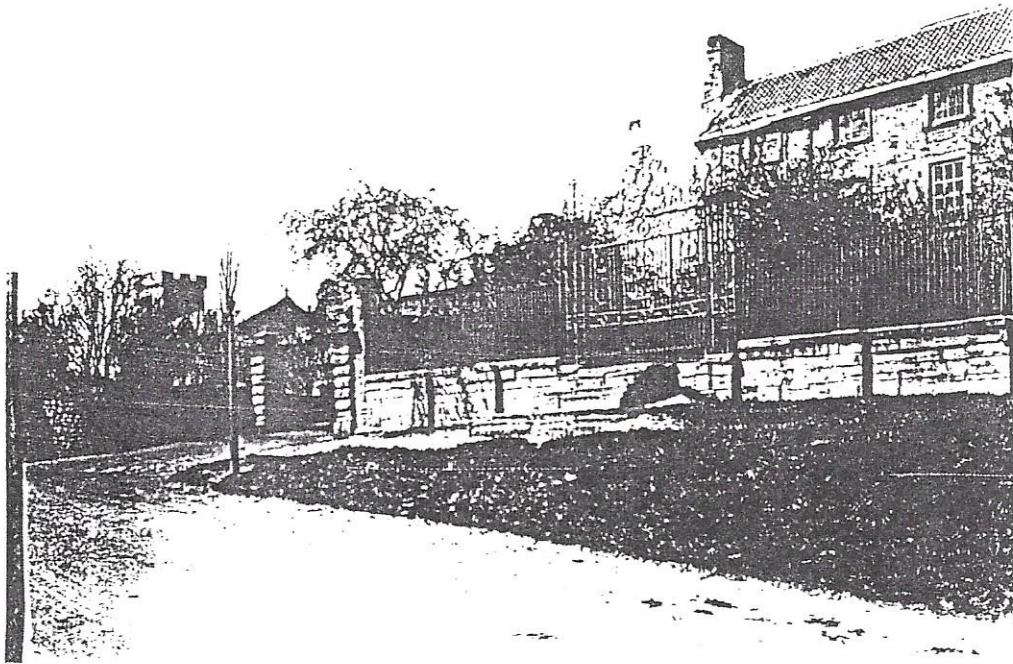
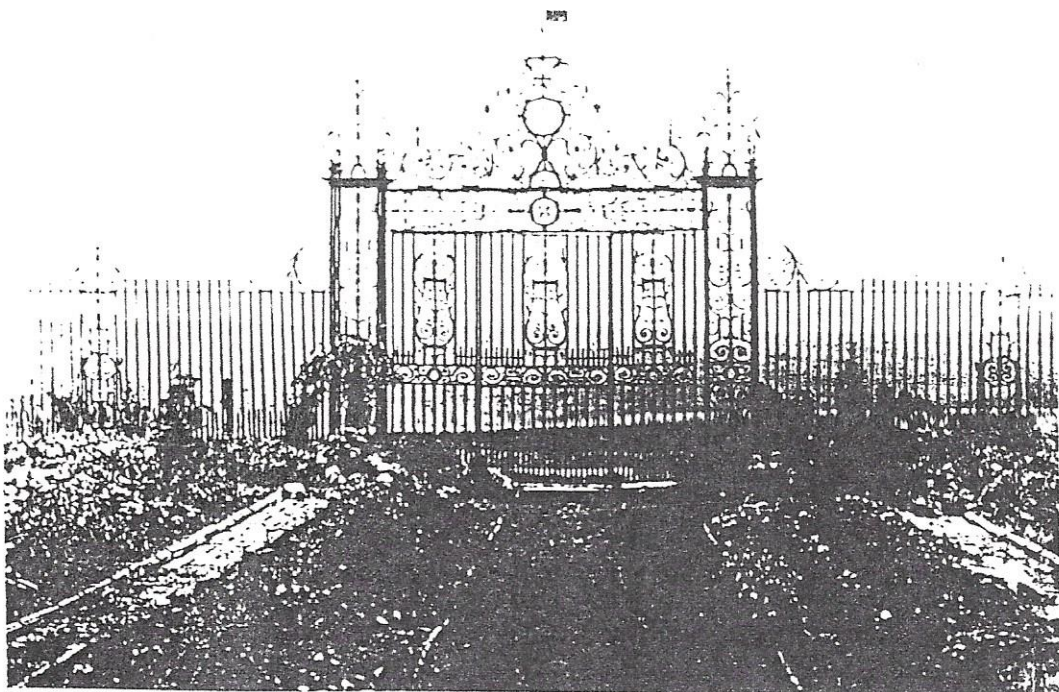


Plate 10: Tanfield: Tanfield Hall Gates, circa 1900.



In plan the house was a simple oblong with a back wing, containing an oak staircase, the plan form thus was in the shape of a 'T'.

Wade is able to provide a great amount of detailed information with regard to its dimensions (but not to its date!):

It consisted of a main building 22'2" by 53'3". The stairway wing measured 16' x 12'. The entrance door was in the centre of the south front and opened into a stone paved hall 20' x 18'. West of this hall was the parlour which contained a large stone beer trough and a stone sink.

East of the hall was the kitchen with a great open fireplace 5'9" wide. A door from the hall gave access to the stairs which ascended to the first floor where there were three rooms. The stairs continued to the attic in the oak-timbered roof. The attic (was) lighted by dormer windows on the south side. Each room excepting those in the attic, had a moulded stone fireplace of Tudor Gothic design. All ceilings were plastered excepting that over the kitchen where the oak joists were exposed. These joists were moulded on the lower edges.

The external walls were of freestone rubble and the roof was red tiled with bottom stone margins: originally the roof was probably entirely covered by stone flags.

In the eighteenth century two of the first floor rooms were joined to form a 'salon' and in 1855 the mullioned windows on the south side were replaced by Yorkshire sash windows. The dormer windows were removed and a large new window made in the west gable. The old fireplaces were blocked up with hob grates and the interior so arranged to form two tenements which were in use until 1928... (30)

Soon after the tenements were vacated thieves began to vandalise the building and to remove its internal fittings. The building gradually fell into disrepair, and despite the raising of funds for its restoration, the building had to be demolished, on safety grounds in 1958. An estate, called Tudor Drive now occupies the site.

In its long life the Tudor House also served as a school, a workhouse and the public offices for the Vestry. Prior to its demolition the Tudor House featured in many articles in local papers, and was duly photographed.

Plates 11 (circa 1890) and 12 (circa 1955) illustrate details of the Tudor House, and Plate 13 gives a broader perspective of the area known as The Square (circa 1955).

#### Tanfield National School

The Tanfield National School was opened in 1844. It was an infants and mixed school, and was a single storey building in the west end of the village (Plates 3 and 4). The school master's house which adjoined it was a two-storied building. The Grammar School and the National School were the only schools in the district at one time, and pupils travelled to them from all the villages in the Chapelry of Tanfield. The school was later

Plate 11: Tanfield: The Tudor House, circa 1390.

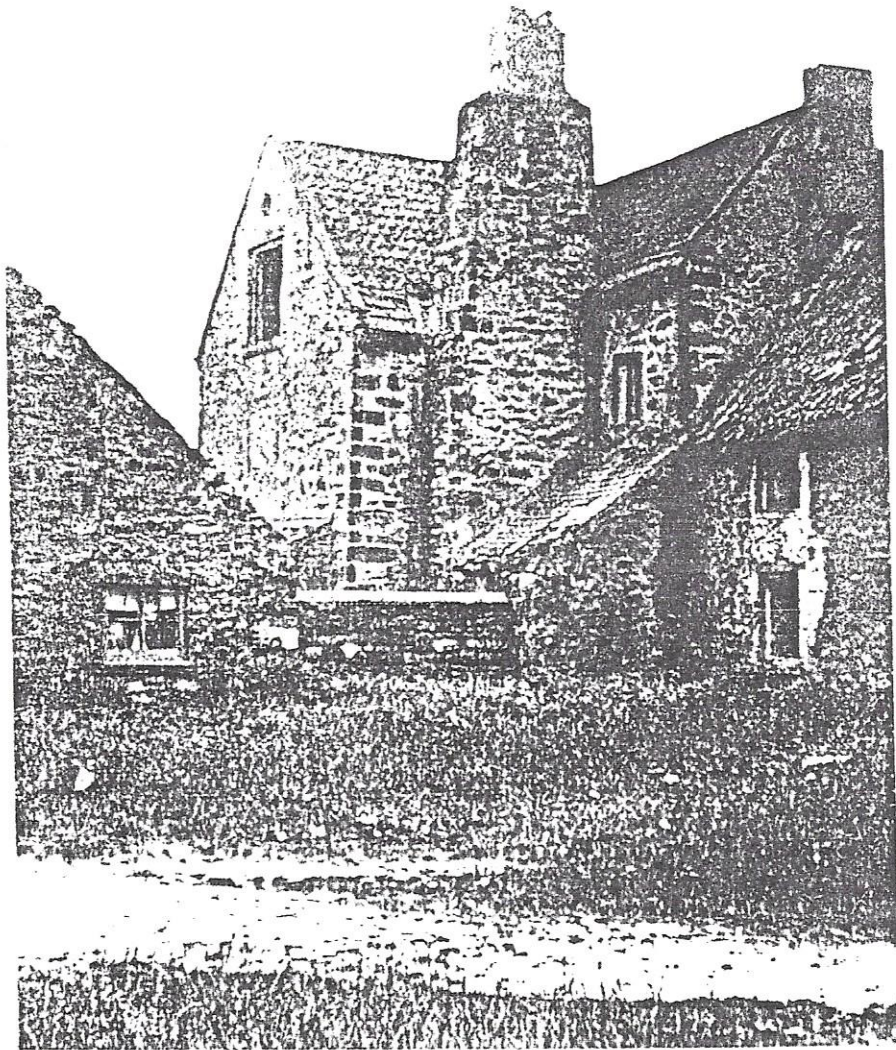


Plate 12: Tanfield:

THE TUDOR HOUSE  
(CIRCA 1955)

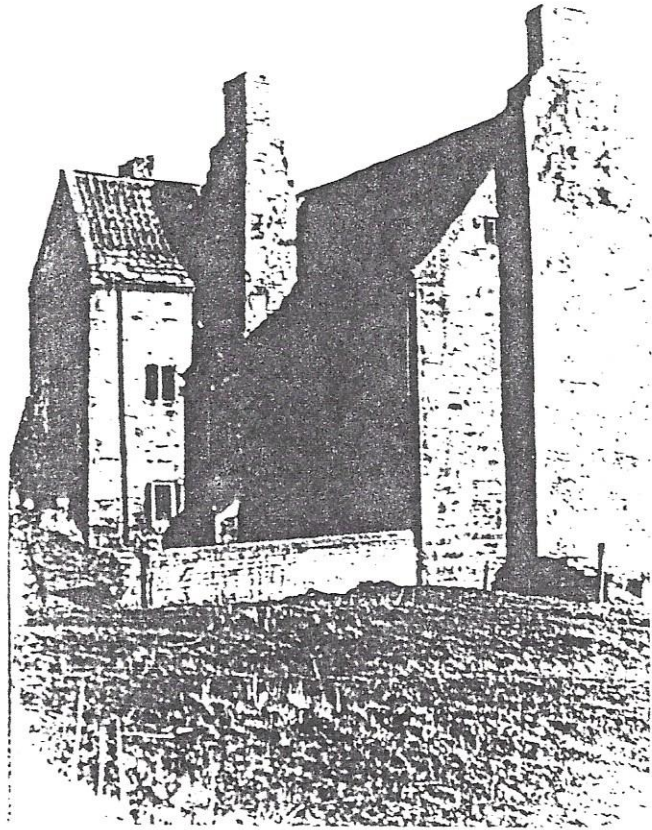
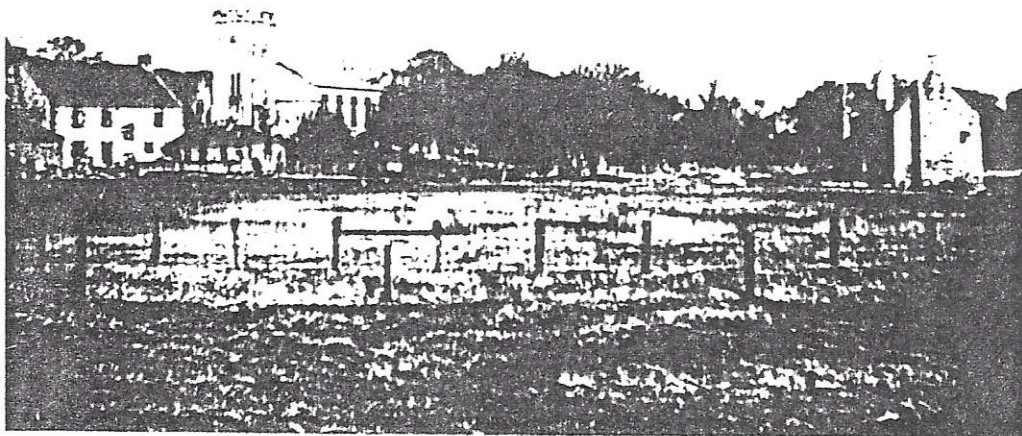


Plate 13: Tanfield: The Square & Tudor House, circa 1955.



known as the Board School when Tanfield School Board was formed in 1890, following the Board School Act of 1870. The school was demolished in 1962 owing to colliery subsidence. (31)

#### Other Principal Buildings

These include the Farm House, a large stone house in the centre of the village, which was built circa 1800, and continued as a working farm (known as Tanfield Farm) in the centre of the village until it was sold in 1963 for housing development. (Plate 14)

St Margaret's House, facing the village green was also constructed around 1800, and was once two adjoining cottages. It and its outhouses (stables), are now the subject of a preservation order. (Plate 15)

The Gate House, also facing the green, and built of stone is a complex house, especially when viewed from the rear of the premises, and may be earlier than its present dating of circa 1800. In the late nineteenth century it was the village post office. It is also the subject of a preservation order. (Plate 16)

Tanfield has two public houses, both constructed of stone, circa 1800. The 'Packhorse' probably takes its name from being a stage or call house, when goods were carried on the backs of horses. The 'Peacock', although this is its original name the provenance of the name is uncertain. Both buildings were substantially altered by the breweries in the 1970s. (Plates 17 and 18)

J. S. Thompson

February 1993

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10. B.K. Roberts, Village Plans (Shire Publications, 1982), 29.

Plate 14: Tanfield: The Farm House.

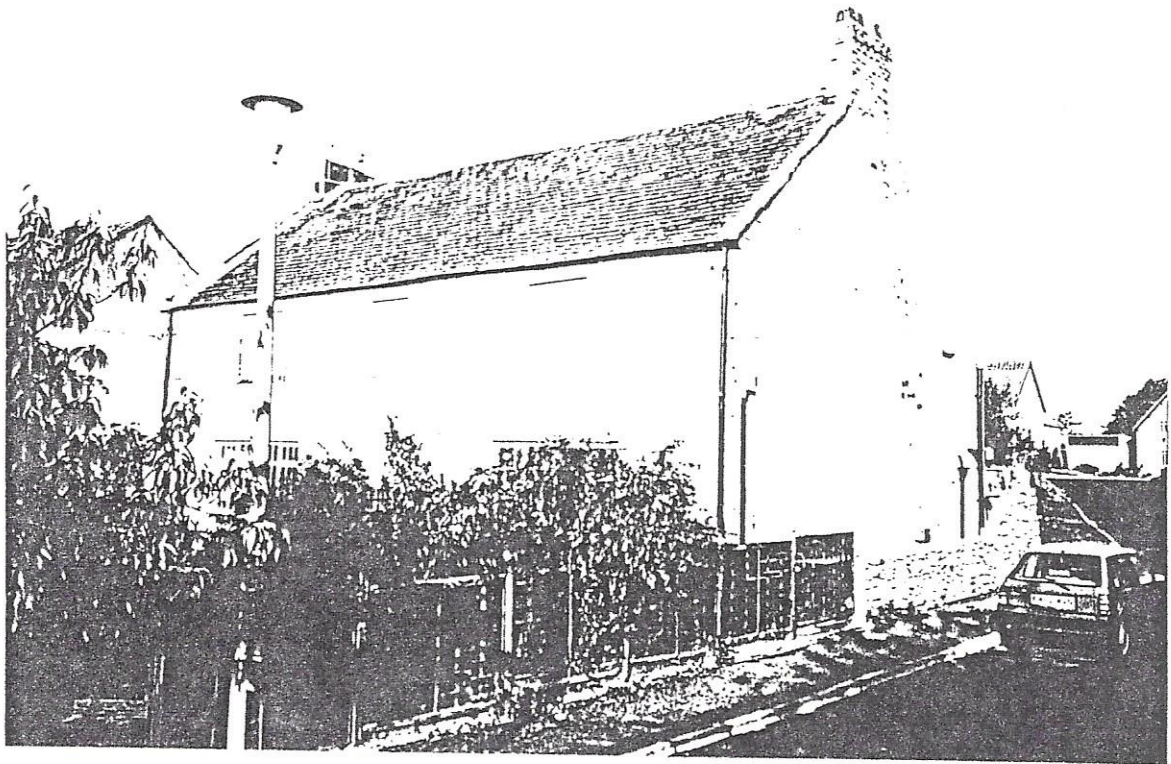


Plate 15: Tanfield: St. Margarets House.

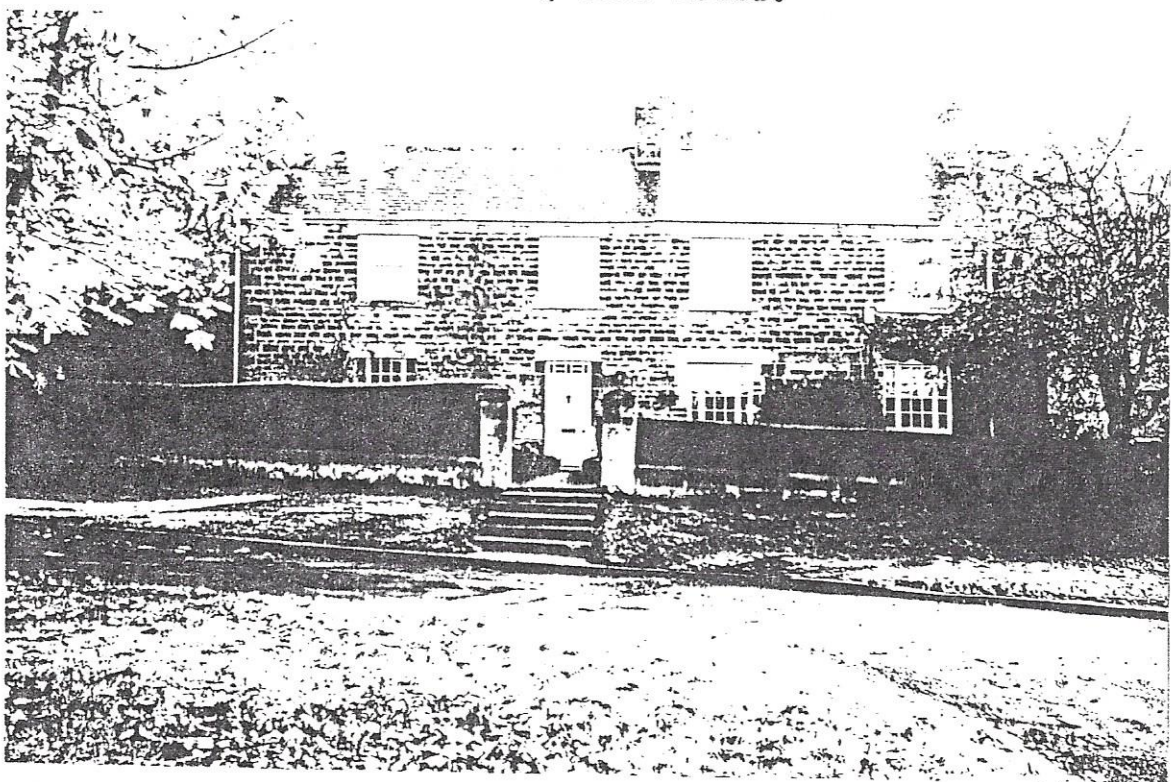




Plate 16: Tanfield: The Gate House.

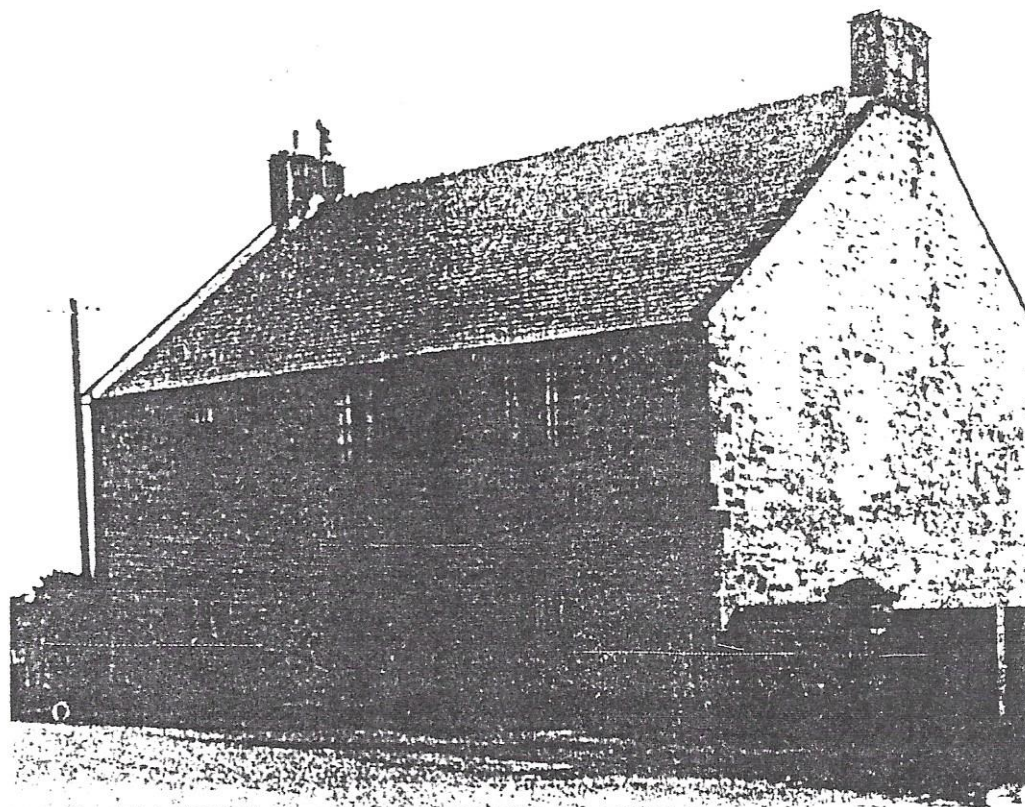


Plate 17: Tanfield: The Pack Horse Inn.

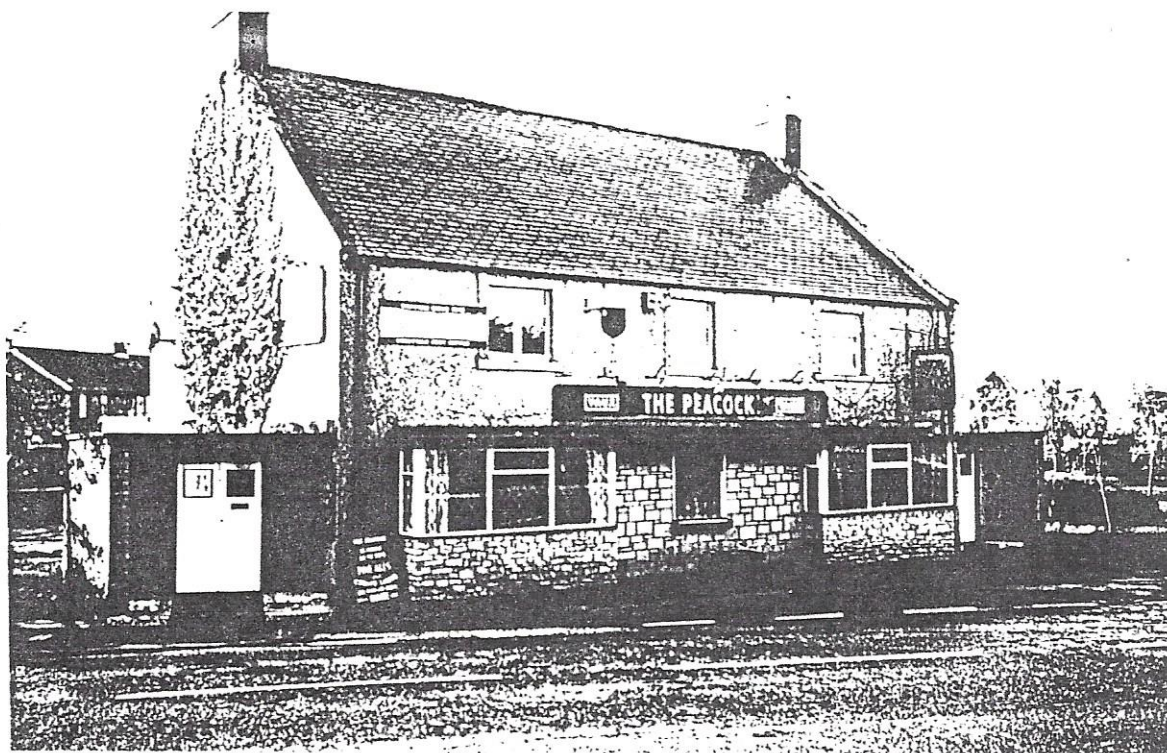


Plate 18: Tanfield: The Peacock Inn.

(i), circa 1930.



(ii): At present.



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31. F.J. Wade, op cit., 33.

*The Bungalow  
Front Street  
Lanchester, Dec. 1923*

*Mr. Hamilton  
Newbiggen  
Lanchester*

**J. D. THOMPSON**  
Painter, Paperhanger and Decorator  
Paints mixed to order.

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New  
General Smith and Hardware Dealer,  
RANSOMES' PLOUGH METALS ALWAYS IN STOCK.

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*MALTON COLLIERY OFFICE,  
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TYRES, PETROL, OIL, SPARES, ETC.  
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**DR. TO GILHESPY & SMITH**  
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of the undermentioned Rate now due from you, viz. 1927 to meet the expenses which the Lanchester Rural District Council of Lanchester

	Amount of Rate		
	£	s.	d.
and other	4	13	0
to meet the expenses which the Lanchester Rural District Council of Lanchester	10	0	0
total	14	13	0

LANCHESTER, AND WALLNOOK MILL, LANGLEY PARK,

T. Hamilton, Newbiggen, Lanchester.

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Grocers, Corn & Cake Merchants.

RECEIPT.

LANCHESTER PARISH OF LANCHESTER

The 19th day of May 1924

PAID OF Mr. J. Hamilton

the sum of 7 pounds, 13 shillings and 4 pence in respect of the Poor Rate of the above Parish, viz. -

*Builder, Joiner, Cartwright and Undertaker.*

**JOHN HALL**

Newsagent, Confectioner and General Dealer.

Front Street LANCHESTER.

JOS. INNES, Secretary.

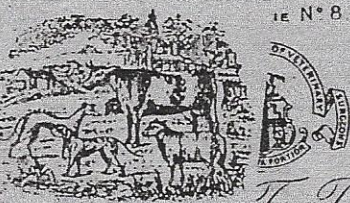
HIGH BURNHOPESIDE FARM, LANCHESTER, 21st December 1923

To Lanchester Farmers' Mutual Benefit Society Co., Ltd.

Lanchester, Co. Durham,

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Apr 8 1922

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*Mr. J. Hamilton Newbiggen*

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