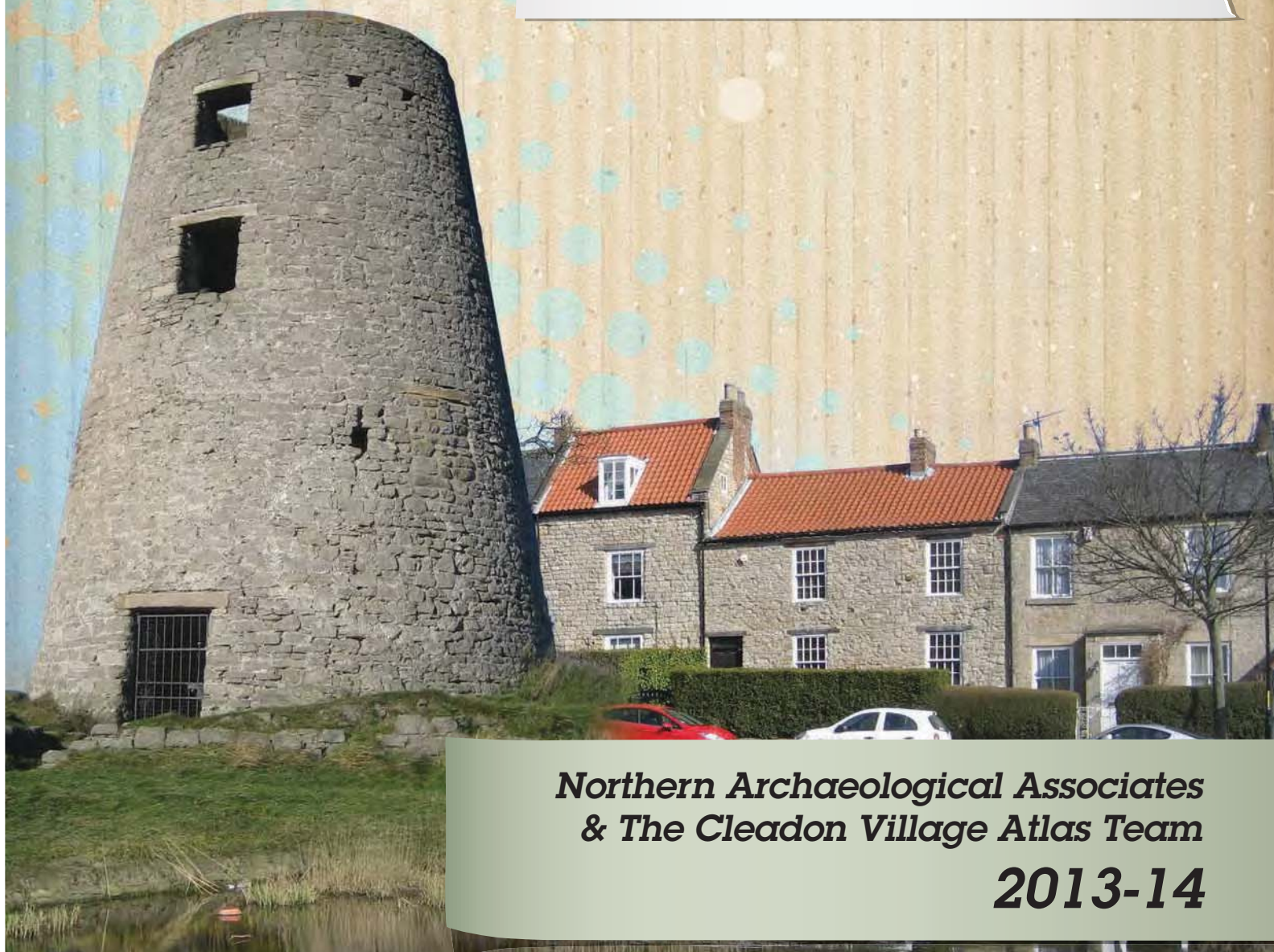




THE CLEADON VILLAGE ATLAS

*The Geology, History, Archaeology
and Ecology of a Village.*



*Northern Archaeological Associates
& The Cleadon Village Atlas Team*

2013-14

THE CLEADON VILLAGE ATLAS

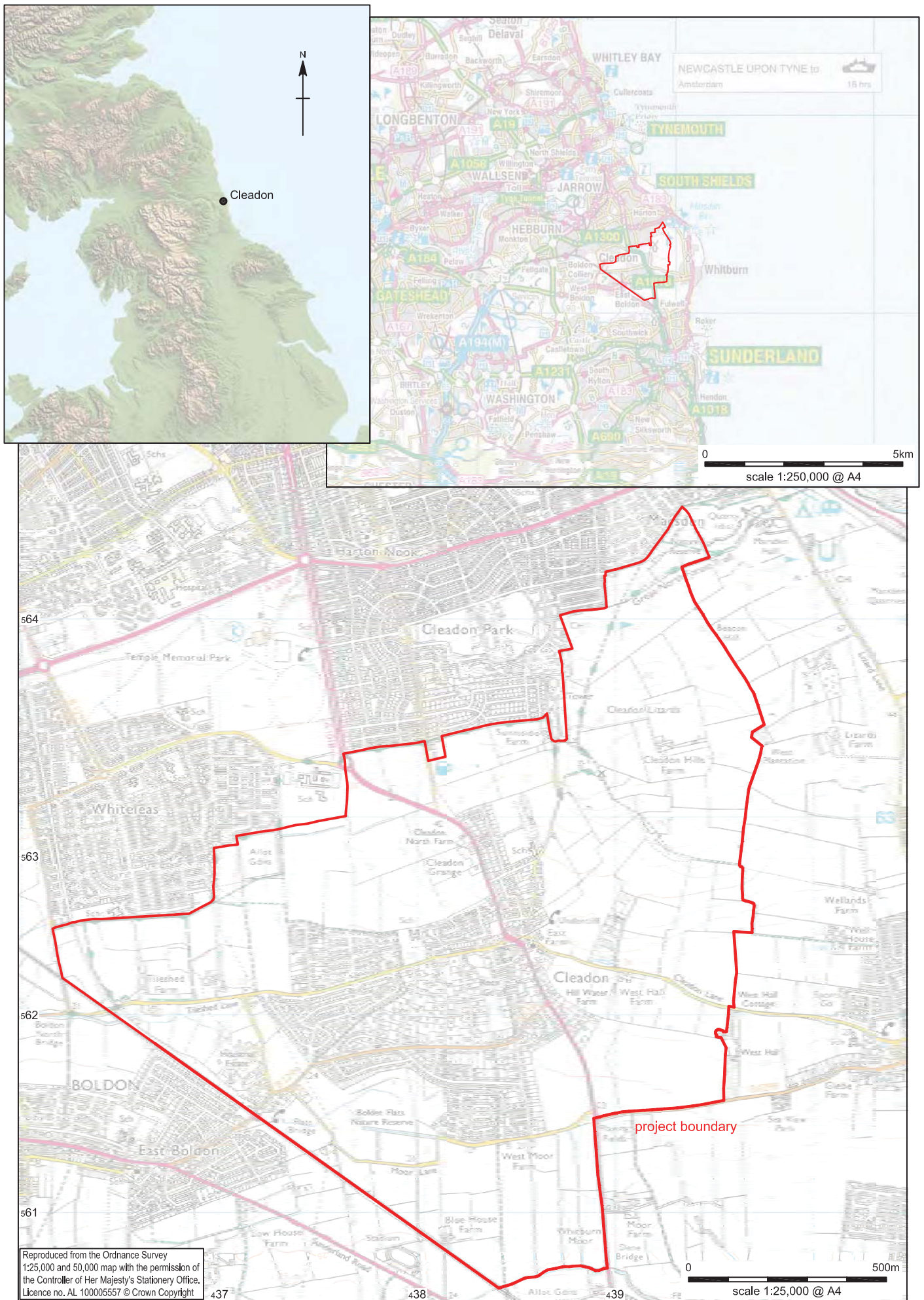
Welcome to the Cleadon Village Atlas.

As the name suggests, the village atlas aims to bring together a wide range of information and evidence – geological, archaeological, historical and ecological – to explore and unpick the various interwoven threads that make up Cleadon’s unique story. The project was conceived and funded by the Limestone Landscapes Partnership, administered by the Heritage Lottery Fund, as part of a three year programme of work to engage local communities in the discovery and conservation of the landscape, wildlife and rich heritage of the Magnesian Limestone Plateau (Natural England National Character Area Profile 15).

The Cleadon Atlas project has brought together local volunteers with specialists in various fields in order to share skills and knowledge through a series of guided workshops, field investigations, research opportunities and discussions. The project team was led by Penny Middleton, a landscape and buildings archaeologist from Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd, who was joined by ecologist, Ivan Dunn, and geologist, Brain Young. The following report is the culmination of all this hard work and provides a comprehensive study of Cleadon that will hopefully promote a greater appreciation and enjoyment of the village and its wider environment, as well as encourage local people to get involved in the active conservation of the unique biodiversity, geo-diversity and heritage of this magnificent, but potentially fragile, landscape.

Cleadon is situated at the northern point of the Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau; a broad triangle of land stretching along the east coast from the Tyne to Tees and extending inland to central Durham. The rocks that formed this unique landscape were laid down in the Permian Period, 290 to 248 million years ago, when the area was covered by a huge reef and lagoon similar to the Great Barrier Reef off the eastern coast of Australia. The result was the formation of a series of water limestones and dolomites that together are known as the Magnesian Limestone. The geology of the area has shaped the surrounding landscape, giving it a distinct character and influencing the development and fortunes of the communities that have settled upon it. The rocks, soils, natural environment and water courses of the Limestone Plateau have determined where settlements were located; what people could grow and eat; the fuel they used to keep warm and cook; the material they could use to build their houses; the development of roads and later rail networks, and the expansion of industry and the social changes that followed in its wake.

The underlying geology of the region has also influenced the development of a rich and varied habitat, home to a wide range of flowers, birds, insects and other wildlife, including rare species like the Wall Brown Butterfly that has been observed at Cleadon in some numbers but previously only found in the south of the country. The flower-rich Magnesian Limestone grasslands of the Cleadon Hills are particularly important and designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Salad Burnett, Rock Rose, Burnett Saxifrage, Betony, Small Scabious and Northern Marsh Orchid, have all been identified in this



Cleadon Village Atlas: site location

Figure 1

area.

The village of Cleadon is located on the Sunderland to South Shields road (A1018) around 4 miles (6 km) north of Sunderland and 9 miles (14 km) south-east of Newcastle (Fig. 1). The village is now in South Tyneside but prior to 1974 had formed part of County Durham, historically being a township of Chester-le-Street, one of four great estates owned by the Bishop of Durham. The first direct historical reference we have for the settlement at Cleadon is the Boldon Book, written in 1183 and often described as the Domesday Book of the North. The Boldon survey was a list of all of the taxable lands held by the Bishop of Durham, Bishop Pudsey, at the end of the 12th Century. In it, Cleadon and Whitburn are listed together and recorded as being occupied by just 28 bonded tenants. Over the next 830 years this small community bore the threat of Scottish raids, plague, famine, religious upheaval, civil war, agricultural reform, industrial expansion and the spectre of foreign invasion. Many of these events have left echoes in the landscape, but the true story of the village lies in the generations of people whose lives have gradually mapped out Cleadon's development from that small medieval village of the 12th Century to a thriving community of nearly 5,000 people. Their past can still be traced in the pattern of the landscape, the layout of the streets, fragments of historic texts and historical buildings of the area - that is, if you know where to look.



Plate 1: Members of the project team with local volunteers at the Cleadon Mill excavation in July 2013, one of the events undertaken as part of the atlas project.

But this is only part of the story. Settlement in and around Cleadon began long before the Boldon Book was written. The name itself, Clifdun, is Anglo-Saxon in origin meaning *hill with cliff*, and there is archaeological evidence that people were occupying the area around Cleadon for thousands of years before Bishop Pudsey ever commissioned scribe to put pen to vellum (animal skin used during the

medieval period as paper). Flint artefacts, possibly dating back 6,500 years, have been found on the Cleadon Hills, but even this is a blink of an eye in geological terms and this is where our story begins, with a look at the formation of Cleadon's distinctive geology. This will be followed by a glimpse into the archaeology and history of the village, and finally a fascinating overview of the natural environment of the hills, fields and hedgerows that surround the community.



Figure 2: The Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau (from Natural England NCA 15, 72).

Several people have made direct written contribution to the Atlas report and are referenced throughout the text. These contributions have been summarised in this the main report but are included in their entirety in the appendices. The appendices also include the results of the field surveys, the Cleadon Tower building report, the Old Mill Farm excavation report, and details of all the events undertaken, as

well as other supporting information. A digital copy of the all the source material – maps, documentary research, etc. - will form part of the village archive, but will be subject to the copyright of the individual archives from which they came.

The £2.8m Limestone Landscapes Partnership project was part-funded by a £1.9m Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant with additional contributions from Durham County Council and other partners. It was one of a number of village atlas projects commissioned as part of the project, the others being Hetton-le-Hole, Easington, Elwick, Ferryhill, Wheatley Hill and Thornley. It ran for over a year from April 2013 to November 2014 when the final report was submitted. However, this is just the beginning of the story and not its end. The village atlas is not finished. It will never be finished. What is contained in these pages is a snapshot that will, hopefully, be extended and expanded as more people use the skills developed through the project to undertake their own research and investigations. This should be the Atlas's legacy, not just a few hundred pages of text and images, but the inspiration across all generations of a desire to know more about this rich, fascinating and rewarding landscape you are all lucky to call home.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

A large number of people have contributed to the production of this report, either directly or indirectly, through their time, knowledge, individual research or general interest. Particular thanks are due to Brian Bage and John Robinson, without who the whole thing would have floundered, but also to Hilary Davidson, Maurice Chadwick, Andrea George, Paul Skinner, Craig Fitzakerly and Kathleen Robinson as well as others, too numerous to mention individually, who took part in various workshops and events and whose contributions were no less appreciated and welcomed. Special thanks are also due to Paul Skinner for his help with editing. We also appreciate the involvement of both Councillor Margaret Meling and Councillor Jeffrey Milburn and the Reverend Vernon Cuthbert for his continued support.

In addition, special thanks are due to Gavin and Patricia Spencer for permission to traipse through their beautiful home during the recording of Cleadon Tower, to Claire Rawcliffe and Lucy Routledge, from South Tyneside Council, and Jennifer Morrison, the Tyne and Wear County Archaeological Officer, for all their help, advice and involvement, and to Tom Charman from Natural England for arranging permission to excavate on the Cleadon Hills SSSI. Thanks also to Jane Beckett and all the teachers and pupils at Cleadon Church of England Academy for their unceasing enthusiasm, hard work and inspiring imaginations.

Part of the aim of the project was to form links with other groups in the area and to this end we would like to thank Martin Roberts and all the members of the North East Vernacular Architecture Group (NEVAG) who took part in the Cleadon Tower historic building recording, and to Belinda Burke and those from the Archaeology and Architectural Society of Durham and Northumberland (AASDN) who organised the earthwork survey and took part in the excavation of the mill. Details of each organisation

are included in the appendices. We are also grateful to the staff at Beamish, the Discovery Museum, Durham Record Office, Sunderland and South Tyneside Libraries and Durham University Special Collections.

Finally, thanks are due to Tony Devos, Ken Bradshaw and Anne Kelly from the Limestone Landscape Partnership for commissioning, supporting and mobilising the project, and to the other project contributors Ivan Dunn (ecologist) and Brian Young (geologist) for their enthusiasm, knowledge, commitment and patience; and to Pete and Ros Lorimer from Pighill Graphics for all their design ideas.

The Project Area

Before we begin this is just a short note about the project area. The original project area provided by the Limestone Landscape Partnership (LLP) was based on the Cleadon and East Boldon ward boundary, basically comprising all the area to the north of the railway line (Fig. 3) but this is a relatively modern administrative boundary and would have meant very little to our ancestors. Prior to 1974, Cleadon had for generations been defined by the old township boundary, probably first established in the medieval period, if not earlier. A township was basically a territorial unit that contained all the resources required to support a village, including pasture land for grazing, arable for raising crops, woodland for timber, underbrush for fuel and a stream or spring for water. The name derives from the Old English word *'tun'* meaning a village and has nothing to do with our modern concept of a town.

Cleadon and Whitburn were both townships within the parish of Whitburn. An ecclesiastical parish was a unit of land large enough to support a church and its ministry. In the south of the country this would often equate to a village but in the north, where there were large areas of marginal moorland land, some parishes like Lanchester could be huge. In the most basic terms, a township was a secular administrative unit dealing with the day-to-day lives of the people, while the ecclesiastical parish was responsible for the guidance and edification of their immortal souls. This should not be confused with a civil parish, formed in 1894 as a unit of civil administration.

The township, therefore, is intrinsically linked with the development and history of the village, particularly in the early periods. It is for this reason that the history and archaeology sections of the project have used the township boundary as the project boundary. This will provide a better understanding of Cleadon as a cohesive unit, but is slightly to the detriment of East Boldon. In contrast, the ecology and geology elements of the report have instead used the ward boundary as specified in the project brief. This was because the section of East Boldon to the south of the old township includes areas of particular interest in terms of bio- and geo-diversity, in particular Boldon Flatts. In contrast, the area to the north of the ward boundary, which formed part of the old township, is covered with houses and, therefore, is of less ecological significance at present.

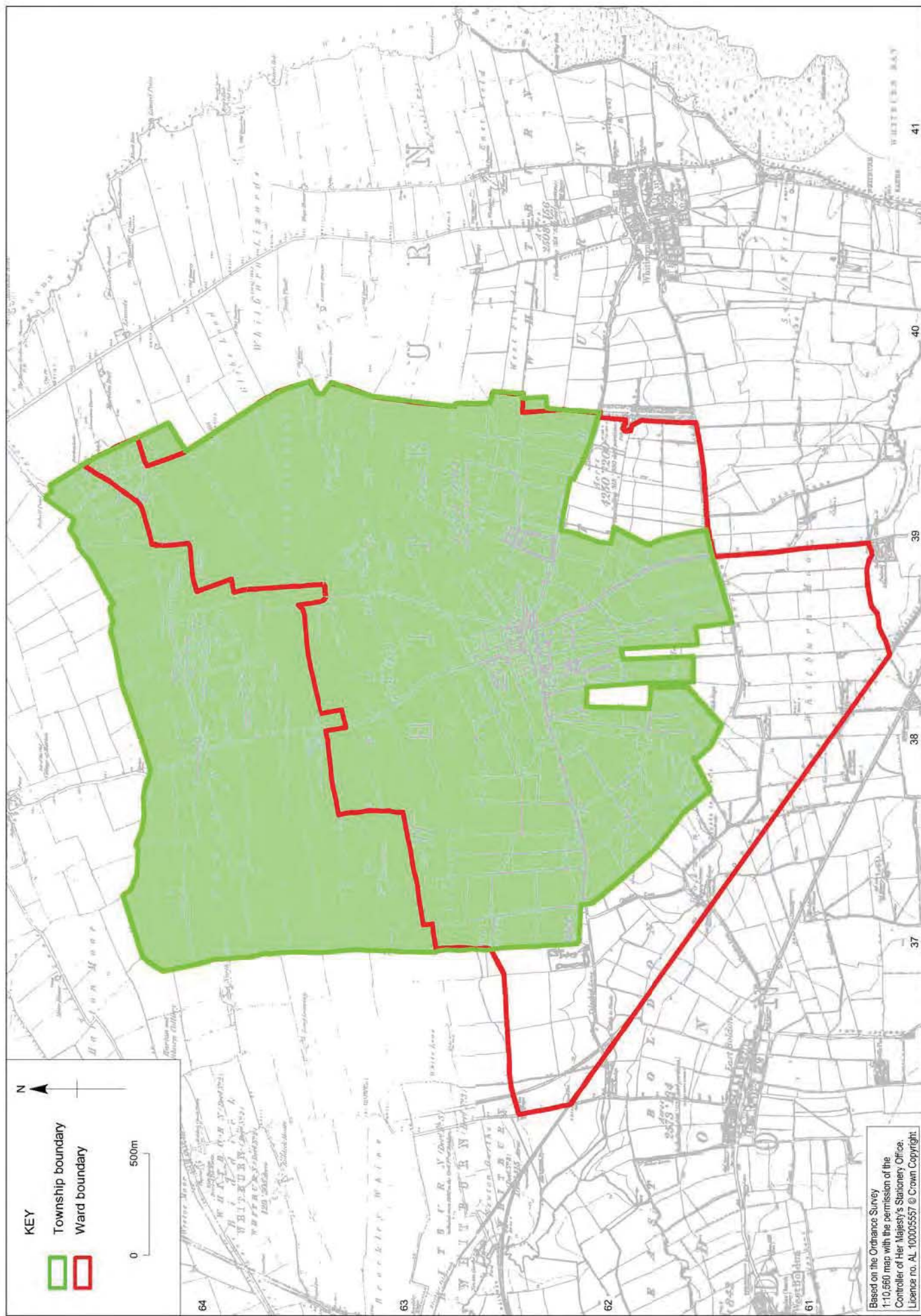


Figure 3

Cleadow Village Atlas: Township boundaries overlain on six inch first edition OS map (1862)

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