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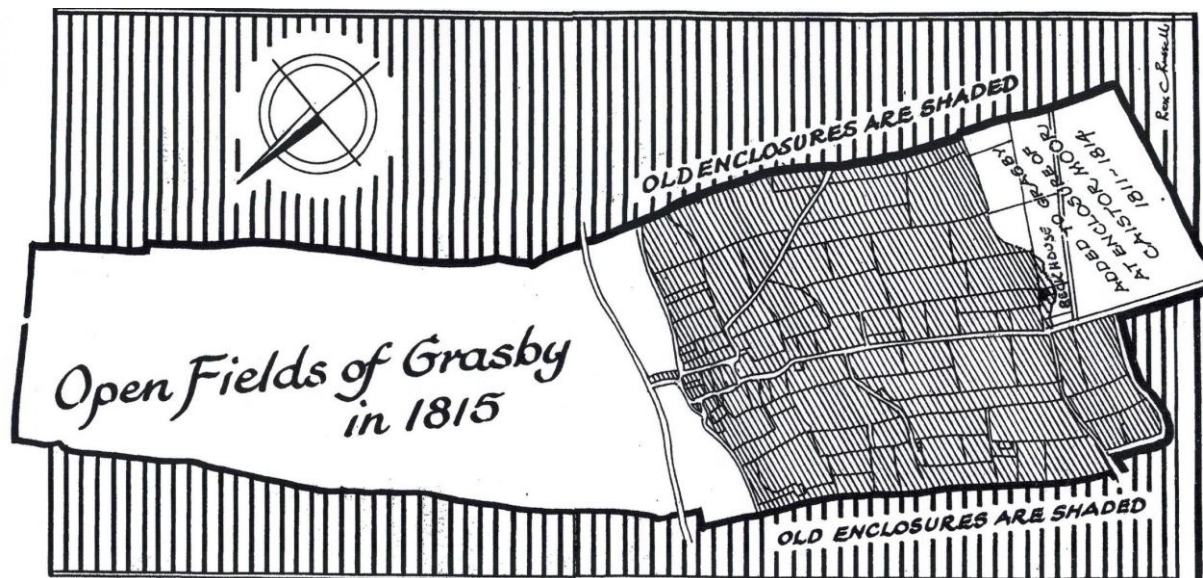
THE PARLIAMENTARY ENCLOSURES IN GRASBY

It can be assumed that, as well as replacing the system of tithes, the main driving force behind parliamentary enclosures was the rising prices of agricultural produce. These are largely attributed to the Napoleonic Wars in the early part of the C19th (1803-1815) when the price of wheat doubled. Also, the increasing population of urban areas increased the demand for agricultural produce which could now be more easily transported by canal. Following enclosure farms and farm buildings were being built on the newly acquired land, often changing the nature of the previously nucleated villages. Between about 1760 and 1870 about 7 million acres (roughly 17% of the area of England) were changed by some 4,000 acts of parliament, from common land to enclosed land. However necessary this process might or might not have been for the improvement of the agricultural economy, this was theft. Millions of people who previously had access to lands and the basis of an independent livelihood had these rights snatched away by this process.

Barley was the most important crop at this time, followed closely by wheat and oats and then by relatively small acreages of rye grass and potatoes. Turnips and rape were also grown and the proportion of grassland and pasture would have been substantial. Cattle, pigs, poultry, rabbits and horses were produced. Sheep, however, still dominated, extensively bred on the Wolds before being fattened in the lowlands and then sent to major sheep fairs at Caistor, Lincoln and Boston.

In December 1802 an entry appeared in the Stamford Mercury advertising a *“meeting to consider the expediency of applying ... to inclose open and common fields and waste ground within the said parish of Grasby And to discuss compensation made in lieu of tithes and other interests”*.

It was signed by John Turner. The Turners were an important landed family at Caistor, who it appears had acquired substantial amounts of land in Grasby before the end of the C18th, including from William Cary, presumably the same family mentioned in the 1762 Terrier above. It would, therefore, have been very much in his interest to sign the proposal. He had married Mary in 1747 and they had at least three children, including John in 1747 (who died at just over a month old), Mary in 1753, who later married George Tennyson, and Samuel in 1755 who, as the Rev. Samuel Turner, inherited the estate from his father.



Open fields, old enclosures & new land awarded by enclosure of Caistor Moor (Map by Rex Russell)

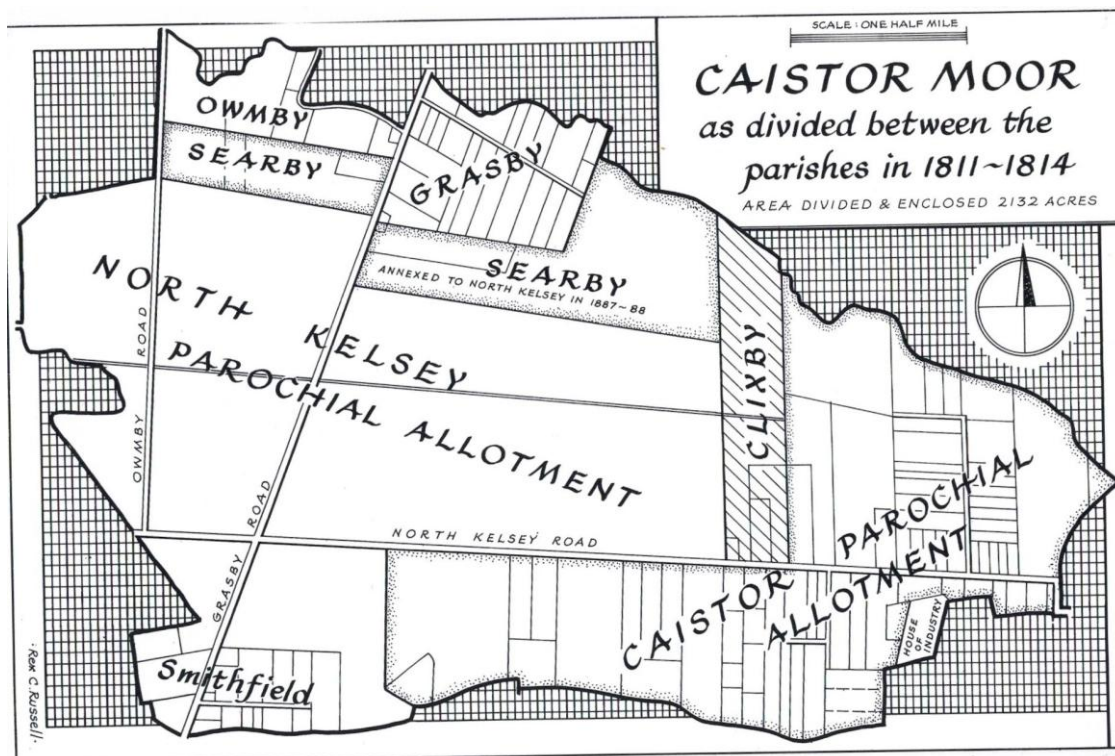
Before, however, the open fields of Grasby were enclosed (a long and drawn out affair) a separate Act was proposed for enclosing Caistor Moor which was successfully completed in just three years. Marmaduke Dixon, as clerk to the commissioners, was a key figure in the process.

As common land, cottagers and small holders would have access to the Moor for summer grazing and fuel (wood rather than peat one would think). In addition it may have had occupants known as squatters, people who had settled on waste land, built a cottage, got together a few geese or sheep, perhaps even a horse or cow, and proceeded to cultivate the ground. The common pastures and wastelands were the mainstay of the independent poor (when they were overgrazed this was often as a result of overstocking by the wealthiest commoners who were the people agitating for enclosure). With enclosure, these three groups would have lost their common rights. The small holders received a share of the land, but many were “overwhelmed” by the legal costs and expenses of fencing and ditching, and forced to sell up. For those who survived, the loss of stubble and fallow grazing on the open fields, as well as grazing on the common land, would have made life difficult. The effect on the cottager could be best described by saying that before enclosure the cottager was a labourer with land, after enclosure he was labourer without land. Those who owned their cottages were compensated by a small allotment, considered by most to be infinitely less valuable than a common right (a largish area of allotments was located south of Grasby village, in the fields below what is now the sewerage works, and existed well into the C20th).

Caistor Moor (2132 acres) was enclosed between 1811 and 1814 with each of the six adjoining parishes being granted additional land (Arthur Young visited the area before enclosure commenced, sometime before he published his original comments). As part of the process, on 17th

September 1813, the Commissioners posted a notice in the Stamford Mercury for “*setting out a drain, commencing at the angle of North Kelsey Old Inclosure, adjoining the lordship of Searby, extending along a south easterly direction through part of the lordships of Searby, Owmbly, Grasby and Clixby to the lordship of Audleby*”. This was to become part of the upper reaches of North Kelsey Beck, straightening and deepening the channel of the original stream which was previously the parish boundary and, as shown clearly on the enclosure map, ran south of the present stream. A further meeting was held on 5th October 1813 at the Angel Inn in Brigg “*at which they will be willing to contract for the cutting and compleating (sic) the said Drain, and also for fencing the tithe and glebe allotments*”. What is unknown at the moment is exactly when the new drain was completed. Entries in the Dixon pocket books refer to a meeting in June 1834 about North Kelsey Beck and on 25th November 1834: “*began to cut N. Kelsey Beck*”. This could refer to the section which flows through Grasby parish, or to a section further downstream. There can be no doubt that the Beck was diverted south from Owmbly Vale, turning at right angles after the bridge over Owmbly Lane to run alongside the road in a channel with artificial sides for 700 yards, before turning abruptly west again to flow to the southern corner of Harding’s Wood, before turning yet again at right angles to flow north along the edge of the wood before finally gradually swinging west to follow a more natural-looking course to the Ancholme. But even this final section is artificially embanked for much of its length.

An additional 101.25 acres of land south of the Beck was added to Grasby parish from the Moor. The new boundary runs from the Beck south along the field boundaries either side of the end of the metalled road leading into the farm-yard of Twelve Month Hill Farm before turning west, just before the corner of Twelve Month Hill Woods, until it meets Grasby Road opposite to where Searby Moor Farm used to be located (now completely demolished). At this point it turns south again along the eastern verge of the road until just after the entrance to White House Farm, before turning 180° and heading north along the western verge until the track which now leads to “*Knapton’s Reservoir*”. It then joins the original parish boundary and turns west again along this lane (shown on the original maps as an enclosure road) until just before the reservoir, where it heads north along a track, no longer defined or visible, before connecting with the original southern limit of the parish at the Beck. At this point there is still a bridge over the Beck which was in use by the current farmer within living memory, but which is now heavily overgrown. The five original fields (including Holmes Close) in this corner of the parish west of Grasby Road were enclosed before 1811 and were not part of Caistor Moor.



The 101.25 additional acres awarded to Grasby, south of North Kelsey Beck, by the enclosure of Caistor Moor (Source: Lincoln Archives)

The enclosure of the Moor required new roads to be cut and maintained and old field roads to be abolished, as well as the digging of new ditches and planting of hedges along all new field boundaries. On 11 June 1813 a Notice of Public Carriage-Roads and Highways stated: “And another...forty feet, called the Grasby road, beginning at the end of a lane in the lordship of Grasby, and extending in a southerly direction across the said Moor and Smithfield, till it enters the lordship of South Kelsey, called the Smithfield road”. The original bridge over the Beck at this point was constructed of brick, but was replaced in the 1960s by a metal culvert. Two “sandpits” are identified in this area, one opposite to Searby Moor Farm and one next to Beech House (now an allotment): “for the purposes of getting gravel, stone, sand and any other materials for the repairs of the several public highways and roads within the parochial allotment for the parish of Grasby”. It seems that Grasby was given an additional length of Grasby Road to maintain, identified as the strange narrow spur leading up to White House Farm entrance and extending into the parish of North Kelsey. According to maps from the time, the reservoir lane and the road leading to Twelve Month Hill Farm appear to have had status equal to Grasby Road.

The 101.25 acres of new land allotted to Grasby was divided into parcels of land granted to 22 owners. This number of awards would have been unusual and points to the fact that Grasby was an open village with a significant number of independent landowners.

The village was no larger at the beginning of the C19th, before the enclosures, than in the 11th Century. The main axis of communication

remained east/west, reinforced by the opening of the Caistor/Brigg turnpike in 1765. This changed to some extent with the enclosure of Caistor Moor and the construction of the new enclosure road which runs north/south to link with another new enclosure road running from Caistor to North Kelsey, as well as continuing directly south towards Moortown and the terminus of the Caistor /Ancholme Canal, just 4 miles from Grasby village centre. This canal was begun in 1793 and completed in 1800. It operated for only 55 years, but was a route out for surplus agricultural produce and a way in for coal, agricultural lime and general merchandise. The terminus at Moortown comprised a basin 100 yards long and 13 yards wide and the canal was wide enough to accommodate Humber Keel boats. Although never an entirely successful project, at its height 45,000 tons of coal from the Midlands was distributed annually from the Moortown terminus by the several coal merchants living in the area at the time. The house that stands at the Moortown crossroads was originally built as warehouses to serve the canal basin. There is no doubt that the coming of the railway hastened the canal's demise. North Kelsey Station opened in 1848. It would have been at this time that the road out of Grasby changed its name from "*Great Drift*" to Station Road and the new section beyond the Beck had already been officially named Grasby Road. By 1811 John Turner had died as his awards of land on Caistor Moor, and later in 1818 in Grasby, were made over to his devisees, George Tennyson and Philip Skipworth. The lord of the manor in Grasby and Caistor Moor in 1811 was Philip Skipworth, as he still was in 1818.

John Turner and George Tennyson were also granted joint awards in the 1796 Caistor Enclosure Act, as well as there being individual awards for John, Mary and Samuel Turner.

By 1835 Charles (Tennyson) Turner, son of the Rev Dr George Clayton Tennyson of Somersby (a village near Horncastle) and brother of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, was lord of the manor of Grasby and was named as such in White's Directory 1856. Charles' great uncle was the Rev. Samuel Turner, son of John Turner and brother of Mary Tennyson, who was the parson and squire of Caistor and Grasby and rector of Rothwell. Charles was named his heir and when his great uncle died in 1835 he changed his name to "*Turner*", as required by the terms of his inheritance. Before this, Charles had the curacy of Tealby, but on his great uncle's death he moved first to Caistor and then to the Old Vicarage (next to the present village hall) in Grasby. He married Louisa Sellwood in 1836 (Alfred later married her sister Emily) and had a new vicarage built (The Grange today) on what is now Vicarage Lane. This is the first evidence of a lord of the manor actually residing in Grasby during the C19th.

The 1826 valuation of Grasby for the Poor Rate indicated that by far the largest landowners were George Tennyson and the Rev. Samuel Turner, with most of the land let to tenants. (Philip Skipworth isn't mentioned, just George Skipworth, owning just 6 acres "*in the Moor*". In 1810, however,

