



# SURVEY OF BLYTH, ABOUT 1800

REFERENCE: ZRI/49/9 | SUGGESTED AGE GROUPS: KS1, KS2, KS3, KS4, LIFELONG LEARNERS | INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, GEOGRAPHY

## SURVEY

A survey is a type of document that lists the lands that someone owns. This survey is part of the Ridley collection and show some of the lands in and around Blyth that the family owned, as part of Newsham Lordship, in around 1800.

## FIELD LIST

On the left-hand page is a list of the fields owned and their area calculated in acres (A), roods (R) and perches (P). Each field or parcel of land is named and given a number. The names of the people renting the land is noted above the lines with the field names (Mrs Marshall's Farm, John Storey's Farm, George Storey's Farm and Messrs Clark and Watt's Farm). Fields "in hand" suggest that they have not been rented to someone else. Wastes are lands that are not used for farming.

## MAP

On the right-hand page is a map of the area. Field boundaries are marked and the numbers relate to the numbers on the list.



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## ROPERY

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Near to Ropery Field (69) a long thin structure is marked – this was a ropery or rope walk. Ropes at this period were twisted together using hand cranks in these long buildings (see videos). Two roperies are marked on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1858) for Blyth. Ropes were essential for ships.

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## SALT PANS

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The salt pans are marked on the map on the south side of the river. These were a way of using sea water to produce salt. Broad, shallow pans, often made of lead, were filled with sea water and then heated from below to evaporate the water and leave the salt. There were salt pans in Blyth from the Middle Ages until 1876. Before refrigeration, salt was one way to preserve food.

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## HARBOUR

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Just by the “salt pans” label can be seen a regular-looking shape in the bank of the river – this would suggest a harbour, possibly a man-made one. There is another a little bit further along the bank.

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## BALLAST

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Ballast – material (gravel, sand, rock) used on ships to weigh them down and keep them stable.

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## WINDMILL

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Field 59 (Low Close) has a windmill marked in it. Crofton Mill is marked in a similar place on the First Edition Ordnance Survey maps (1858).

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## WAGGON WAY

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"Waggon Way" is listed amongst the "wastes" on the left-hand page. The waggonway is marked on the map as two sets of parallel lines which run right through the middle of the diagram.

The waggonway ran from Plessey Hall Farm to the banks of the Blyth River. Wagons full of coal ran along wooden tracks to then be loaded onto ships. The wagons were pulled by horses. Although it isn't clear when exactly the waggonway was built, it seems have been in use in 1709. Today, Plessey Road marks where the waggonway once ran.

## OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

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Lochista website, page about imperial units of area: <https://lochista.com/understanding-acres-perches/>

Suscram website, page about Plessey Waggon Way: <http://suscrum.weebly.com/plessey-woods-waggonway.html>

YouTube website, video of rope making at a rope walk (2 mins 45 secs): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=By8K5mKSwDA>

YouTube website, video of rope making at Visby Medieval Market (Sweden) includes something about the history of rope making (about 7 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toyOKOi0DsM>

Salt Association website: page about salt pans: <https://saltassociation.co.uk/education/salt-history/roman-times/lead-salt-pans/>

Cheshire Museums – Lion Salt Works website, includes videos of salt making: <https://lionsaltworks.westcheshiremuseums.co.uk/>



# LEARNING ACTIVITIES: SURVEY OF BLYTH, ABOUT 1800

**TOPIC:** MINING, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, GEOGRAPHY  
**SUBJECT AREAS:** HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, LITERACY, MATHS, ART & DESIGN



Background	Activity	Resources
<p>A survey is a type of document that lists the lands that someone owns. This survey is part of the Ridley collection and show some of the lands in and around Blyth that the family owned, as part of Newsham Lordship, in around 1800.</p>	<p><b>See:</b> What does this document show?</p> <p><b>See:</b> What units are the fields measured in?</p> <p><b>See:</b> What area does the map show?</p> <p><b>See:</b> What features or landmarks are mentioned on the map?</p>	<p><a href="https://www.convertunits.com/from/rood/to/km">https://www.convertunits.com/from/rood/to/km</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.google.co.uk/maps">https://www.google.co.uk/maps</a></p> <p><a href="https://earth.google.com/web/">https://earth.google.com/web/</a></p>
	<p><b>Think:</b> What is a waggonway?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> How is a waggonway important to industry?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> Why was a waggonway important to Blyth?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> What type of cargo would have been transported using a waggonway?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> What types of vehicles would have used a waggonway?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> What is a salt pan?</p> <p><b>Think:</b> Why were ropes essential to ships?</p>	<p><a href="https://saltassociation.co.uk/education/salt-history/roman-times/lead-salt-pans/">https://saltassociation.co.uk/education/salt-history/roman-times/lead-salt-pans/</a></p> <p><a href="https://lochista.com/understanding-acres-perches/">https://lochista.com/understanding-acres-perches/</a></p> <p><a href="http://suscram.weebly.com/plessey-woods-waggonway.html">http://suscram.weebly.com/plessey-woods-waggonway.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=By8K5mKSwDA&amp;ab_channel=archanth">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=By8K5mKSwDA&amp;ab_channel=archanth</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.everythingnautical.com/blog/10-clever-diy-rope-projects-that-you-should-try/">https://www.everythingnautical.com/blog/10-clever-diy-rope-projects-that-you-should-try/</a></p>
	<p><b>Do:</b> Make a list of the types of industry you can see referenced on the map and survey.</p>	



**Do:** Discuss what you can infer about land usage from the survey and map.

**Do:** Create a conversion chart to show what acres, roods and perches equate to in present day units of measures.

**Do:** Use your conversion chart to work out the size of each field in present day units of measure.

**Do:** Look at this area using Google Maps or Google Earth.

**Do:** Create a survey of the area today in the same style as the 1800 survey.

**Do:** Compare your present-day survey to the 1800 survey. How much has changed?

**Do:** Watch the rope making video.

**Do:** Discuss why Blyth had a rope walk and how this was important to the shipping industry.

**Do:** Create an illustrated set of instructions on how to make rope.

**Do:** Come up with different ways that old nautical rope or fishing nets could be re-used or upcycled.

**Do:** Have a go at one of the ideas that you come up with.

**Do:** Create a fish or octopus with recycled rope.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m2hgOxzG0&ab\\_channel=SCoupleVlogs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m2hgOxzG0&ab_channel=SCoupleVlogs)

<https://www.sea.museum/rope-net-octopus>

<https://www.instructables.com/Macrame-Fish-Wall-Hanging-Made-From-Rope-Scraps/>