DELINEATING THE BORDER

1. The Situation Before the Norman Conquest

Siward, Earl of Northumbria

By the early 11th century the once-mighty Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria had been broken up into three distinct regions; Lothian, Northumbria and Yorkshire.

King Malcolm II gained control of Lothian for the Scots after his victory at the Battle of Carham on the Tweed in 1018. At the same time he took over Cumbria, which meant that Northumbria was threatened from the west as well as the north.

Yorkshire was dominated by the Danes and, during the reign of King Cnut, a Danish warlord called Siward took the earldom of Northumbria by force. He secured his position in the earldom by marrying Aefleda, a daughter of the royal house of Bamburgh. King Cnut granted Siward the earldom of Northampton and Huntingdon to support an army of huscarls. With this force, Siward was able to reconquer Cumbria and place his ally Malcolm Canmore on the throne of Scotland.

When Siward died in 1055, he must have been content that he had secured the frontiers of Northumbria.

The Norman Invasion

Malcolm Canmore soon disposed of his rivals in Scotland and began testing Northumbria's defences. Siward's place as earl of Northumbria had been taken by Tostig, brother of Harold Godwinson of Wessex. Tostig lacked a power-base in Northumbria and quickly proved incompetent. The Northumbrians rebelled and drove him into exile in Norway. In 1066 Tostig returned with Harald Hardrada's ill-fated invasion force, and died at the Battle of Stamford Bridge.

Within a few weeks, England had Norman rulers. William the Conqueror made Tostig's former lieutenant, Copsig, Earl of Northumbria, and sent a force of 700 Normans to Durham to support him. The locals rose and slaughtered the invaders, which resulted in King William marching northwards to devastate the land from York to Durham in revenge.

The creation of rhis wasteland further isolated Northumbria from central government. Malcolm Canmore seized the opportunity to strike from Cumbria into Teesdale, probably intending to detach the earldom of Northumbria and establish the Scottish frontier along the Tees to Stainmore line. Many Northumbrians may have accepted this in preference to Norman overlordship, but Malcolm's mixed force of Scots, Cumbrians and Galwegians soon got out of control. They eventually withdrew, loaded with booty and Northumbrian slaves, having completed the destruction the Normans had begun. The Scots had lost perhaps their best chance to make Northumbria part of Scotland.

Two years later, King William felt secure enough on the English throne to mount a full-scale invasion of Scotland. Malcolm avoided a pitched battle with the Normans and did homage to William at Abernethy.

King William returned southwards, establishing a castle at **DURHAM** as a stronghold for his recently appointed Norman bishop, Walcher, who became the first prince bishop, combining his ecclesiastical authority with the temporal power of the earl of Northumbria.

PHOTO OR PLAN – DURHAM CASTLE

2. Fortifying the Tyne

In 1079, Malcolm Canmore broke the Treaty of Abernethy and advanced into Northumberland.

Walcher proved ineffective in defending his earldom and this, together with oppressive Norman rule, led to Walcher's murder and a second Northumbrian rebellion.

King William's eldest son, Robert, was sent northwards to harry the north again, and force Malcolm to re-ratify the Abernethy agreement.

To secure his control in the region, Robert ordered the construction of a massive **NEW CASTLE** on the Tyne, and others at **PRUDHOE** and Tynemouth.

PHOTOS – NEWCASTLE and PRUDHOE

In effect, this fortifying of the line of the River Tyne suggested that control of the lordship of Northumberland may still be debateable.

King William Rufus

The Conqueror's son, William II (Rufus) re-inforced the defence of County Durham by establishing what were called castlery lordships in the western upland zone and by retaking Cumbria.

In 1093, Malcolm Canmore's last invasion of Northumbria ended with his death, and that of his son and heir. This led to a long year period of peace on the Border, with Scotland ruled by a succession of kings who were effectively vassals of the King of England.

PHOTOS – BAMBURGH

Castles such as **BAMBURGH**, Alnwick and, Warkworth were built as clear statements that Northumberland was English territory.

The typical Norman castle was built in the form of a motte and bailey.

PLAN OF NORHAM CASTLE

Security of the fertile eastern coastal plain of Northumberland and Durham depended upon control of the routes through the western upland areas and the Pennine spine of northern England, but there were still very few Normans in the region, perhaps no more than 400 in total.

One historian, W. E. Kapelle, has suggested an interesting reason why so few Normans were willing to take lordships in Northumberland.

The typical knight of Upper Normandy, who accompanied William the Conqueror in 1066 were unwilling to settle north of the wheat-growing line. They objected to eating rough barley or oaten bread. It was only when King Henry I brought across his personal supporters from the poorer areas of western Normandy, Britanny and Flanders that effective Norman colonization could be established.

3. Scottish Control of Northumberland

Early in the 12th century, Norman influence spread into Scotland early in the 12the century when the future King David I returned from a childhood spent at the Anglo-Norman court in London.

He brought with him many Norman barons who had become his friend and rewarded them with lands and titles, particularly in the Scottish Borders. Many Norman lords married into Scottish families, resulting in large cross-Border estate holdings.

It was through this mingling of interests and intermarriage with the royal house of Scotland that the Anglo-Norman families of Baliol and Brus ultimately gained their claims to the Crown of Scotland.

David also invited congregations of Norman monks to found monasteries in Scotland and he introduced Norman customs and laws.

In England, Norman colonization was almost completed by the time of the death of King Henry I in 1135. However, Northumbria was still not permanently secured from Scottish overlordship.

King David of Scotland had married the granddaughter of Siward, Earl of Northumberland and heiress to the rich earldoms of Northampton and Huntingdon. Through this marriage, King David sought to claim the earldom of Northumberland for his son, as well as gaining the revenues from his wife's estates in the English midlands.

Following the death of Henry I England was torn by civil war between Stephen and Matilda.

King David of Scotland took advantage of the situation and invaded northern England in 1138, in support of his niece Matilda.

The Scots were halted at the Battle of the Standard near Northallerton, but Stephen was anxious to concentrate on the war in the south. In return for Scots help against Matilda, he granted to King David the earldom of Northumberland to his son Henry, with the exception of Bamburgh, Newcastle and the lands of St Cuthbert.

The Bishop of Durham was now the only powerful obstacle remaining against complete Scottish control of the North East.

When Bishop Geoffrey Rufus died in 1138 his trusted clerk, William Comyn was at his bedside. Comyn, who had also once been Chancellor of Scotland decided to seize the bishopric of Durham for Matilda and ultimately for King David of Scotland.

For nearly two years, Comyn held Durham through deception, bribery, threat and military force. He forced almost all the barons of the bishopric to swear fealty to him. Among the few notable exceptions was Lord Lumley, head of one of the oldest families in the County that pre-dated the Norman Conquest.

Eventually the political situation changed. Stephen gained the upper hand and King David's support for Comyn waned.

Some of the monks of Durham had escaped to York where they elected a new bishop, William de St Barbara, who came north to rally support from the last loyal Durham lords.

After some initial setbacks, St Barbara eventually defeated Comyn's troops on the outskirts of Durham and he was forced to make peace with the rightful bishop, who pardoned him despite the outrages that had been committed by Comyn's men against the people of the bishopric.

4. Northumberland Regained

Durham was now firmly in Anglo-Norman hands, but the Scots still controlled Northumberland and Cumbria.

In 1149, Henry of Anjou, the future Henry II, made a treaty that confirmed King David's right to hold Northumberland, together with Newcastle and the earldoms of Northampton and Huntingdon. In return, Henry demanded Scots help to take the English throne from Stephen.

It seemed that Scottish sovereignty over Northumberland was assured, but Henry reneged on the deal almost immediately he ascended the Throne of England in 1154.

King David's grandson, Malcolm the Maiden, had succeeded to the Scottish throne the previous year, In 1157, Malcolm was compelled to do homage to Henry II at Chester and to relinquish all claims to the counties of Northumberland, Durham and Cumbria.

This Treaty of Chester began another long period of Scottish subjugation to English overlordship. As a consolation prize and substitute for the loss of Northumberland, King Malcolm's brother William was given the Lordship of the Liberty of Tynedale.

After regaining control of Northumberland, King Henry II immediately set about building and strengthening the County's defences.

PHOTOS– ALNWICK CASTLE KEEP AND PLAN

The old wooden castle donjons were replaced by stone keeps, either of circular or "shell" pattern, like at Alnwick, or massive rectangular structures with walls up to 4 metres thick such as the new keep built by Bishop de Puiset at **NORHAM.**

PHOTO - NORHAM KEEP

IMAGE – WARK ON TWEED CASTLE

The castles at Wark-on-Tweed, Bamburgh and Prudhoe were rebuilt too.

In this period of English supremacy only the King, the Prince Bishop of Durham and the most powerful families in the region built and maintained castles,

Towards the end of the 12th century, King William the Lion renewed Scottish pressure on the North of England.

In 1174, after several invasions of Northumberland, William was captured at Alnwick. He was kept prisoner and was forced to sign the Treaty of Falaise, by which he acknowledged that he was the feudal subject of the King of England. This event was to have dramatic consequences a century later.

However in 1199 Richard the Lionheart, desperate for cash to fund his Crusade in the Holy Land, ransomed William for the sum of 10,000 silver marks and the Treaty of Falaise was cancelled.

5) Peaceful Conditions

Between 1199 and 1296 there was a century of relative peace between England and Scotland and these more settled conditions are reflected in the type of houses most lords built for themselves in the North East of England.

They differed very little from the manor-houses being built by similar lords in southern England, far away from marauding Scots.

The preference was for a rectangular hall-house, lightly defended against occasional small-scale raids with a walled barmkin attached to shelter livestock. These were homes constructed more for comfort than protection against a major attack.

Creating the Marches

In 1237, Henry III of England and Alexander II of Scotland signed the Treaty of York, under the terms of which Alexander resigned his claims to Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland.

The Treaty of York clearly delineated the Anglo-Scottish frontier more or less as it is today. The Treaty also established the Laws of the Marches.

The region on either side of the Border was divided into two or three March districts, each under the control of a March Warden.

MAP OF MARCH DISTRICTS

Unlike the Sheriffs, who were civilian officials, the March Wardens were usually experienced military men.

At first Wardens' Commissions were issued only in time of need, usually to substantial Border lords who had an interest in maintaining the peace.

Feudal Fealty

Peaceful conditions continued during the reign of Alexander III of Scotland who, in 1278, swore fealty to King Edward I in the King's Chamber at Westminster.

This act was to prove devastating to Anglo-Scottish relations.

The English account records the King's words as**: 'I, Alexander, become the liege man of the lord Edward, King of England, against all men.***'*

The Scots version differs: **'I become your man for the lands which I hold of you in the Realm of England, for which I owe homage, saving my Realm'.**

6. The Wars of Scottish Independence

The death of Alexander III left Scotland without a direct male heir to the throne.

Eventually, the Guardians of Scotland invited their feudal overlord, Edward I of England to choose their next king from the 13 claimants to the Crown.

Edward chose John Baliol. The rest is history!

War broke out between England and Scotland in 1296, when Edward I besieged and captured Berwick. For the next three centuries, the two kingdoms remained in an almost constant state of conflict.

With the outbreak of full-scale war in the period 1296 to 1346, the Warden's Commission was made a permanent office. They were given full responsibility for the defence of the Marches and they had the power to arrange March truce days – or trysts - with their counter-parts to discuss Border affairs and redress wrongs.

Sheriffs, mayors, bailiffs, captains and even constables of royal castles came under the command of the March Wardens in matters concerning defence or March Law.

After Bannockburn

Initial English successes in Scotland meant that the threat to North East England was limited. This changed drastically with Robert the Bruce's victory at Bannockburn in 1314.

For the next two decades, northern England was at the mercy of the Scots.

Weak King Edward II could do nothing to stop the marauders from across the Border. Law and order collapsed and many Northumberland lords, like the Middletons and the Haggerstons, took to thieving and blackmail as the only practical way to maintain their estates.

Great castles like Berwick and Wark-on-Tweed suffered sieges and sackings on frequent occasions.

There is ample evidence of the impact of the chaos in the period between Bannockburn and the Treaty of Edinburgh in 1328, which brought a brief respite.

For example, this account records the situation in Felton, near Morpeth, in1324:

"There used to be, it is stated, in the Manor of Felton in time of peace a capital messuage worth 10s a year, now worth nothing because burnt by the Scots. There are there 60 acres of land in demesne, each acre worth 6d yearly in time of peace - sum £6 10s - now worth nothing because wholly laid waste and uncultivated; 18 acres of meadow each worth yearly in time of peace 12d, now nothing on account of the poverty of the tenants and default of buyers. There used to be tenants in burgage who held burgages and paid yearly in time of peace 46s, now they only pay altogether 8s yearly, at Martinmas and Whitsuntide, on account of the destruction of the Scots. There used to be other free tenants who paid yearly 4s 10d, 1lb cumin besides 1½d in time of peace, now they pay nothing because the tenements which they held are utterly waste and uncultivated. There used to be there five cottages, which paid yearly in time of peace 10s, now there is only one paying yearly 6d at the said terms. There used to be an oven paying yearly 10s, now nothing because it is burnt by the Scots. There is a water mill which used to be worth yearly in time of peace £6 13s 4d, now only 40s. A forest and park of which the agistment used to be worth yearly in time of peace £6 6s 8d, now nothing by default of animals. There used to be three tenants who used to make a paling round the park and keep watch for two nights yearly at the time of the fairs of Mitford, and now they do nothing on account of their poverty. The pleas and perquisites of court worth in time of peace 10s are now worth nothing."

During the same period, Europe was ravaged by a series of bad harvests and outbreaks of disease in animals – murrain – that led to famine.

The Proctor of Norham's records of the income generated from the lands under his control make clear the extent of the changing fortunes between the Battle of Bannockburn (1314) and the Treaty of Edinburgh (1328), combined with the disastrous period of the agrarian crisis.

The Holy Island Inventory reveals the situation on the estates belonging to Holy Island Priory at Michaelmas 1328.

TABLE –Holy Island Inventory for Michaelmas 1328 (excluding small tithes)

Tithe Corn of:			
Fenham	£2 13 4	formerly worth	£20 0 0
Fenwick	£3 0 0		£20 0 0
Buckton	£1 6 8		£14 0 0
Beal	£2 0 0		£17 6 8
Goswick	6 8		£20 0 0
Haggerston	£1 0 0		£17 6 8
Scremerston	£1 0 0		£16 0 0
Cheswick	£3 6 8		£20 0 0
Low Linn	8 0		£8 0 0
Holburn	5 0		£8 0 0
Land Rents for:			
Fenham	£11 10 0		£19 9 6
Fenham Mill	£4 0 0		£8 0 0
Holy Island	6 0		£3 0 0
Elwick	£1 18 4		£2 5 0
Tweedmouth	Nothing		£4 16 0
Holburn	Nothing		£2 2 0
Lowick	Nothing		£1 10 0
Barmoor	Nothing		6 6
Bowsden	Nothing		£1 10 0
Ancroft	Nothing		£2 0 0
Cheswick	Nothing		10 0
Kyloe	Nothing		£2 0 0
Ord	Nothing		£1 0 0
Total; Income in 1328	**£49 0 8**	**formerly worth**	**£209 2s 6d**

TABLE – Value of Ponteland Estate

Even the value of the Ponteland estate, relatively close to the protection of Newcastle had declined dramatically by 1325.

	Value in 1325	**Formerly worth**
Manor house	6d	10s 0d
Demesne arable	13s 0d	£5 16s 9d
Demesne meadow	£1 0s 0d	£11 8s 0d
Park	NIL	6s 8d

Evidence of Crisis

Other documentary evidence shows how the unsettled situations continued throughout the 14th century.

EXTRACTS 6 – 11 CRISIS EVIDENCE SHEET

6 Felton, 1324: 'There used to be, it is stated, in the Manor of Felton in time of peace a capital messuage worth 10s a year, now worth nothing because burnt by the Scots. There are there 60 acres of land in demesne, each acre worth 6d yearly in time of peace - sum £6 10s - now worth nothing because wholly laid waste and uncultivated; 18 acres of meadow each worth yearly in time of peace 12d, now nothing on account of the poverty of the tenants and default of buyers. There used to be tenants in burgage who held burgages and paid yearly in time of peace 46s, now they only pay altogether 8s yearly, at Martinmas and Whitsuntide, on account of the destruction of the Scots. There used to be other free tenants who paid yearly 4s 10d, 1lb cumin besides 1½d in time of peace, now they pay nothing because the tenements which they held are utterly waste and uncultivated. There used to be there five cottages, which paid yearly in time of peace 10s, now there is only one paying yearly 6d at the said terms. There used to be an oven paying yearly 10s, now nothing because it is burnt by the Scots. There is a water mill which used to be worth yearly in time of peace £6 13s 4d, now only 40s. A forest and park of which the agistment used to be worth yearly in time of peace £6 6s 8d, now nothing by default of animals. There used to be three tenants who used to make a paling round the park and keep watch for two nights yearly at the time of the fairs of Mitford, and now they do nothing on account of their poverty. The pleas and perquisites of court were orth in time of peace 10s are now worth nothing.'

7 1333/4 Records of the Parish of Norham show 'the tithe corn of Tweedmouth, Ord and Allerdean destroyed by the Scots. Of the land of the smith of Shoreswood nothing, because he has been murdered by the Scots.'

8 1339 Holy Island Rolls record 'Scremerston and Barmoor laid waste and Tweedmouth burnt by the Scots'.

9 In 1279 the manor of Ellingham contained a manor house, capital messuage, demesne lands, 6 bondagers and 2 cottagers. In 1339 the manor house was ruinous and only one third of the demesne was sown, the rest waste for lack of tenants. In 1498 there were 10 tenants.

10 1400/01 - "Received this year from Shoreswood XXs (20 shillings), and not more, on account of the war. Total receipts XXXVII li VIIIs XId (£37 8s 11d)" - compared with £226 4s 4½d in 1344.

11 In 1403 Patrick de Cheswick died in possession of a capital messuage, 15½ husbandlands and 8 cottages in Cheswick, all of which were 'worth nothing due to the War'.

7. 14th Century Fortification

In response to the changing conditions, everyone who was anyone was forced to take measures to protect their homes, families and lands.

PLAN – EDLINGHAM CASTLE

IMAGE – AYDON CASTLE

As conditions deteriorated following the outbreak of full-scale Anglo-Scottish warfare, many of the lesser lords in the North East sought permission from the Crown to "crenellate", or fortify their manor houses to turn them into the form of a small castle.

Edlingham Castle near Alnwick and Aydon Castle near Corbridge are excellent examples of this development.

First, a solar-tower was added to the original hall-house to bring the lord's private chambers within the protected block. The solar tower also provided an extra strongpoint in the defences.

Then curtain walls, corner towers and fortified gatehouses were added.

PLAN – CHILLINGHAM

Some manor-houses were adapted to create more regular castles of quadrilateral design, comprising a square courtyard surrounded by curtain walls and corner towers, like Ford and Chillingham for example.

Comfortable living apartments and spacious gardens were added to castles like this in later, more peaceful centuries.

PLAN OF WARKWORTH

PHOTO – GREY MARE'S TAIL TOWER, WARKWORTH

Multiple strong towers of the latest design were added to the curtain walls of the great castles like Berwick, Norham, Wark-on-Tweed, Alnwick, Prudhoe, and Warkworth to give a field of fire along all parts of the fortifications and their vulnerable gateways reinforced with massive barbicans.

PHOTOS – ALNWICK BARBICAN

Good examples survive at Alnwick

PHOTO - WARKWORTH BARBICAN

Warkworth,

Prudhoe and the Black Gate Barbican Gatehouse in Newcastle.

PHOTO – BLACK GATE, NEWCASTLE

Dunstanburgh

PLANS AND PHOTO – DUNSTANBURGH KEEP-

A few new large castles were built, like Dunstanburgh, with its huge keep-gatehouse, the only example of its kind in the North East.

Dunstanburgh was not primarily intended as a defence against the Scots, but a bolt hole for the Earl of Lancaster, who was in revolt against King Edward II. Dunstanburgh was held for the Earl by a constable and the garrison was mostly comprised of mercenaries.
To ensure the castle did not fall to turncoat rebels from the inside, the constable and his most reliable men lived in the keep-gatehouse, giving them complete control of the main entrance.

Tower-houses

PLAN – ETAL CASTLE and PHOTO - ETAL

Many lesser lords built new tower-houses for their personal defence to which, later on, a barmkin, or walled enclosure would be added, perhaps with corner towers and a strong gatehouse like Etal.

These tower-houses were also symbols of feudal dominance and were sometimes ornately decorated with heraldic devices to impress visitors and passers by.

PHOTO – HYLTON CASTLE

Hylton Castle in Sunderland is a good example.

PHOTO – LINDISFARNE PRIORY

Monasteries and churches, too, were under threat of attack. At Lindisfarne Priory, a massive tower with bartizans at the corners, was constructed to protect the monastery from attack from the seaward side.

PHOTO – ANCROFT CHURCH

Some church towers, like those at Ancroft and Edlingham, were fortified with arrow-loops and massive beams to bar the doors from the inside.

Fortifications in County Durham

In contrast to the spate of "crenellation" that went on in Northumberland, County Durham remained largely unfortified throughout the Middle Ages.

PHOTO – BARNARD CASTLE

The only great castles in the County were the Prince Bishop's fortresses at Durham and Auckland, and the strongholds of the Baliols at Barnard Castle and the Nevilles at Raby.

PHOTO – RABY CASTLE

PHOTO – HYLTON

However, early in the 14th century, just as in Northumberland a number of baronial manor houses were fortified, such as at Hylton and Lumley.

Scottish attacks were less likely in County Durham and these castles were built as much for show as to provide defence, as the magnificent decoration on the facade of Hylton Castle demonstrates.

8) The March Wardens in the 14th to 16th centuries

By the mid-14th century, the Liberties of Northumberland including Norham and Islandshire, Tynedale and Redesdale, were also brought under the Warden's authority.

Sometimes a member of the royal family was made March Warden, but during much of the medieval period the position was considered almost an hereditary institution, held by the Percys in the English East March and the Dacres in the West March.

The expense of defending the Border grew and grew, and the power and military strength of the Wardens also grew.

Lords no longer offered personal service but commuted their Knights' Fees to cash payments instead. Professional soldiers had to be hired and captains engaged.

Some men grew wealthy as a result, such as John de Coupland who captured King David II of Scotland at Neville's Cross in 1346 and was rewarded with an annuity of £500 and the rank of knight banneret, an honour only bestowed by the sovereign on the field of battle.

Coupland gradually acquired land and wealth in north Northumberland, at the expense of local families that had been bankrupted or attainted for treason during the Border wars, and he gained offices including constable of Roxburgh Castle, sheriff of both Roxburghshire and Northumberland, and keeper of Berwick.

In 1363, Coupland was ambushed and murdered by a gang of dispossessed aristocratic youths, including John de Clifford and Henry de Lucker.

Other characters were outright profiteers such as John of Denton, sometime Mayor of Newcastle, who was apparently engaged in supplying materials of war to both sides in the conflict. Some of his fellow burgesses managed to frame him for supposedly accepting bribes from the Scots to open the town's gates. He was thrown into gaol and allowed to starve to death!

Many lords in the region were ruined as a result of the conflict, like the Umfravilles who held substantial estates in Scotland until 1296 but lost them with the outbreak of war, and as Keepers of Redesdale, the most exposed frontier area in England, their English land holdings involved considerably more expense and trouble than profits.

EXPANSION OF THE PERCY ESTATES

At the same time some families, like the Percies and the Nevilles, gained huge estates.

9) 16th Century Developments

By the beginning of the 16th century, the introduction of gunpowder and cannon had signalled the end of the medieval castle.

PHOTOS – CASEMENTS AT NORHAM

Many fortresses in the region, like Berwick and Norham had their walls further strengthened and gun towers and artillery casements were added.

These amendments to existing fortifications proved only temporary and the new defenceworks constructed in the region from 1500 onwards were of a completely new style.

PHOTO – LORD'S MOUNT

Henry VIII strengthened Berwick's medieval fortifications with the massive gun tower known as Lord's Mount.

PHOTO – LINDISFARNE CASTLE

Holy Island Castle was built as a gun-platform providing solid defence for the Island's harbour, which was an important naval base at the time.

PHOTO - CUMBERLAND BASTION

Berwick's unique Elizabethan walls demonstrate the pattern of low, thick, earth-reinforced ramparts and arrow-head bastions that were to provide the basis for military defenceworks for the next 300 years.

PHOTO – BELL TOWER

The town's medieval walls were abandoned and pulled down. Only the Bell Tower was rebuilt in the time of Elizabeth I, to act as a watch-tower. Its octagonal shape was intended to deflect enemy cannon-balls, as well as provide an all-round view.

Pele-towers and Bastles

Alhough the Battle of Flodden in 1513 was the last of the great battles of the Anglo-Scottish Wars to be fought on English soil, three centuries of warfare had chronically destabilised the region on both sides of the Border and it remained necessary for local landowners, great and small, to look to their own defence.

Pele Towers like Smailholm Tower, north of Kelso, were built by the heads of local landowning familes, in this case the Pringles.

PLAN OF SMAILHOLM TOWER

Almost every settlement in Northumberland and the Scottish Borders had its pele tower, More than 80 have been identified in Northumberland alone.

PHOTO & IMAGE – GREENKNOWE TOWER, GREENLAW

Greemknowe Tower at Gordon is another excellent example.

PLAN SHOWING ARCS OF FIRE FROM GREENKNOWE TOWER

PLAN OF BASTLE HOUSE

Many of the more substantial farmers in the region built strong bastle-houses, with living accommodation above and space for sheltering livestock on the ground floor.

PHOTOS – ELSDON and CORBRIDGE VICARS' PELES

Priests too had to defend themselves and their church treasuires. There are good examples of vicars' pele towers at Corbridge and Elsdon, and the ruined base of one at Ford.

By 1500, the landscape on both sides OF THE Border was scattered with castles, towers and other fortified buildings.

MAP OF TOWERS IN THE BORDERS

MAP OF TOWERS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

10) Crown Control in the North

By the 16th century, the Nevilles and the Percies had become so powerful in the North East that the monarchy itself felt threatened. Lord Hunsden made the famous claim that "Northumberland knew no prince by a Percy!".

Henry VIII put and end to all that!

In 1536 the Crown took control of the Liberties and Franchises by the Act for the Resumption of Franchises and Liberties.

The ill-fated Pilgrimage of Grace in the same year was an attempt to restore some of the Church's privileges and possessions, as well as privileges of the Palatinate of Durham. However, in 1550, Sir Robert Bowes reported that the 'inhabitants of North Tynedale be more obedient to their own keeper or the Lord Warden of the Middle Marches than to the sheriffs of Northumberland claiming and using always the old liberties of that country as it was before the making of that statute'.

The Council of the North was established in 1537. Based in York, this council held judicial and administrative authority over the whole of England north of the Humber, undermining the traditional position of the established northern families and creating rival royal patronages.

The Lord Wardens, Justices of the Peace and other county officials were made subordinate to the Council of the North, which continued to operate until the Civil Wars of the 1640s.

By the 1540's the monasteries had been dissolved, putting land and properties on the market for purchase by the local gentry and the merchant class - families like the Forsters, the Fenwicks and the Brandlings.

In medieval times, it was said that in Northumberland there was "no prince but a a Percy".

However, the Tudor monarchs curbed the powers of the Church and the great northern dynasties of the Percys and the Nevilles and, in 1569, the Percys were only able to raise 100 horse and the Nevilles 60 to join the Rising of the Northern Earls against Queen Elizabeth I.

The spectacular failure of the Rising opened the way for the growing gentry and merchant classes to compete with the old aristocracy.

Peace on the Border meant that it was the agricultural improvers and the industrial entrepreneurs who would hold the power and wealth in the North East.