

LAND OWNERSHIP

In his last years William the Conqueror agreed on a survey of his lands in England to establish who owned what before and after the conquest. The resulting exercise carried out with great speed and probably unique in Europe is a triumph of information gathering which must have taxed the early medieval period's organisational skills to the limits. As a precious resource no local history can fail to use it but such use must come with a "health warning" about its interpretation as experts have for years pondered over the exact meaning of particular entries. The situation with regard to Middleton is not helped by the statement in a 1915 book "Early Yorkshire Charters" which states "The feudal distribution of Middleton-on-the-Wolds was somewhat complicated and the particulars of the various tenures at the Conquest and in the Survey are incomplete and contradictory".

This account goes on to state "By combining the information contained in the Survey and the claims, and comparing it with later particulars of the feudal holdings, we arrive at the fact that there were in the whole town 18 carucates of land, thus distributed at the Survey. Archbishop Eldred had T.R.E. a manor in Middleton of 5 carucates and 6 bovates with a church: St John of Beverley had it at the Survey, when the remainder of the town belonged to the fee of Mortain and, according to the Summary, represented 12 carucates and 1 t and $\frac{1}{3}$ bovat. Of this land Nigel Fossard had Gamel's late manor (3car.), with $\frac{1}{2}$ carucate and $\frac{3}{4}$ bovat, soc of Great Driffeld; he had given up 1 carucate, late Mulegrim's, and Hamelin, according to the testimony of the East Riding men, still detained by force 2 carucates and 5 bovates with soc belonging to Great Driffeld. Richard de Surdeval had the manor late of Eldid (3 car. and 5 bov.), and held it of the count of Mortain, but the ancestor of the count had not possessed it; or, as recorded in the claims, Eldid's land was not released to count Robert. Surdeval also had 6 bovates of land, the soc of which belonged to Great Driffeld, but the king had not the soc, because Surdeval had not yet restored it. These details add to 17 carucates and $2\frac{3}{4}$ bovates. Possibly the deficiency represented the land of the church. It will be seen that if the land late Mulegrim's be added to the lands of which the soc belonged to Great Driffeld, we get a total of 5 carucates and $7\frac{3}{4}$ bovates. This was probably given by William Rufus to Ralph Paynel, who enfeoffed Robert de Meinil, whose grandson held it in 1166 of William Paynel as part of a fee of $3\frac{1}{2}$ knights. The Meinils enfeoffed one of the Trussebutts, or a Ros, and so in 1284-5 Robert de Ros is said to hold 3 carucates here. In 1299 William de Ros held of Nicholas de Meinil 6 carucates in Middleton-by-Bainton for $\frac{1}{2}$ knight's fee, a statement which probably expresses the true fact. The archbishop is credited with 6 carucates in this place in 1284-5, St John of Beverley holding half of that land.

The remainder of the town was held by Nigel Fossard and Robert his son, who probably enfeoffed Everard de Ros I, or Robert his son, of 6 carucates to hold for $\frac{1}{2}$ knight's fee. In 1279 Robert de Ros held 1 fee in Middleton, Kiplingcotes and Etton of the fee of Maulay.

In the chartulary of Whitby, in a reference to the gift of $\frac{1}{2}$ carucate in Hutton Bussell and 2 bovates in Middleton(-on-the-Wolds), made by Aze, son of Wimund de Lockington, the donor is described as nephew of William de Percy, abbot of Whitby (occ.1109)."

The expression "town" or township was used to describe a village. A carucate was about 120 acres of land whilst a bovat varies in size from 10-18 acres.

NAMES OF PEOPLE

Archbishop Ealdred (died 1069) was born in Tewkesbury and eventually became Archbishop of York. He took part in the turbulent coronation of William the Conqueror in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066.

Robert, Count of Mortain in Normandy born c.1038 was one of 3 half brothers of the Conqueror and is depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry riding beside William. They had a mother in common, Herleva and Robert's father was Herluin of Conteville but whereas Robert was legitimate William was not. Robert and his brother Odo are said to have supplied 220 ships between them to aid William's invasion of England and Robert was rewarded following the conquest by a grant of land which made him the second largest landowner after the monarch. He seems to have realised however that he could not look after his interests in Yorkshire and granted the management of them to two of his followers, Nigel de Fossard and Richard de Sourdeval.

However Mortain who died in 1091 took part in the rebellion against the next king (William Rufus) in 1088 and forfeited his lands to his two sub tenants who became tenants of the crown. Robert's own son eventually recovered most of his lands except those in Yorkshire.

Gamel, son of Osbern was an important Thane of Edward the Confessor.

Feudal society had existed in Anglo-Saxon England and was strengthened by the Conqueror. It was described by Aelfric, Abbot of Eynsham in the 990s as the throne resting on three legs, those of workers, warriors and clergymen who each had their own functions to perform. In Robert's case he had to promise to provide the King with sixty knights and in order to supply these it was necessary to divide his land into smaller units called manors. These manors were then passed on to men who promised to serve when the King needed them.

"Early Yorkshire Charters" pre 13th Century also contains the following items:

1101

Grant by William, son of Gamel de Middleton, to the altar of St. John of Beverley of a parcel of land in Middleton-upon-the-Wolds for the site of a mill, 2 perches in width and the same in length, with a common way 5 feet wide leading to it. 1190-1210.

1102

Grant by Simon Tuschet to the altar of St John of Beverley of a toft in Middleton (-upon-the-Wolds) between a toft held of St John and that which dame Sara de Ragnildtorp holds of the donor. 1190-1210

1103

Grant by Alan, son of Alexander de Middleton, to the altar of St John of Beverley and the canons of 4 acres of land in the fields of Middleton (-on-the-Wolds), namely, an acre by the way from Dalton, ½ acre on Laerhil between the road from Kiplingcotes and that from York, 1½ acre at Pesedale, between the last-named roads, and an acre on the west side of the dyke from the road of Humbelochedale to the boundary of Dalton. 1190-1210

1104

Grant by Alan son of Alexander (de Middleton) to the altar of St. John of Beverley and the canons of a toft and 2 acres in the field of Middleton (-upon-the-Wolds), namely an acre at

Lairehil, from the York road to the boundary of (North) Dalton, and an acre from Kiplingcotes-gate to the boundary of Lund. 1190-1210

In “Early Yorkshire Charters” reference is made to Simon Tuschet who died at Meaux Abbey and gave 24 acres of land and pasture for 200 sheep in Middleton.

Later names associated with land ownership in Middleton include Lord Roos and William Elwald.

The Clifford family who were active in Londesborough from 1469-1643 acquired land in Middleton and Kiplingcotes in 1601 and on the death of the last male heir the estate passed in 1643 to Richard Boyle, Viscount Dungarvan and Earl of Cork the husband of Elizabeth the only surviving child and an ardent Royalist in the Civil Wars. He was created Earl of Burlington by Charles II in 1664 for the loyalty he had shown to the previous king. Later in life he lavished more attention on the Londesborough estate.

It was however the third Earl (1694-1753) who made for himself a national reputation as a patron of the arts and an architect in his own right (he designed the Assembly Rooms in York). He has been described by art historian Sir Roy Strong as “one of the most enigmatic and mysterious figures in the history of British civilisation”. He was a friend of the poet Alexander Pope who may have visited Londesborough and of David Garrick the actor who did. In Italy in 1719 he met and befriended the painter William Kent who was born in Bridlington old town and spent part of his childhood at 45 High Street. He later became an architect and landscape gardener. Londesborough itself was often used for entertaining local gentry and the usual country pursuits of hunting as a contrast to London life.

On the 3rd Earl’s death the estate came into the possession of the Dukes of Devonshire for the period 1753-1845. It was during the later stages of the tenure that the Hall was demolished. There is a story that some of the salvaged wood was used in the roof trusses of the barn at North End Farm – Middleton.

The family name of the Devonshires was Cavendish and although they are associated with the family seat of Chatsworth in Derbyshire the name comes from Suffolk. The first Cavendish of note was Sir John who as Chief Justice in 1381 was beheaded by the rebels during the Peasants' Revolt. Later family members became involved in politics and one, Henry (1731-1810), was a scientist after whom the Cavendish Physical laboratory in Cambridge is named.

Another nationally known figure – the Reverend Sydney Smith, Rector of Foston and North Yorkshire, and celebrated wit was appointed to the Rectorship of Londesborough for a limited period and visited that village to preach three times a year. It is not known if he visited Middleton.

A report by the Humberside Archaeology Partnership in Hull gives some idea of the land ownership situation in Middleton in the seventeenth century. It states “some contraction in size appears to have taken place between 1670 when 52 households were recorded and 1743 when only 39 families were said to reside there. In 1764 the number of families was estimated as only 36.

The two major land owners in the township in 1662 were Matthias Crouch (the Rector) and William Rokeby. No reference is made to the Manby family at this date, although they are known to have held land in Middleton from at least the 1650s and in 1670 the family was

assessed for a nine hearth house there. In 1718 John Manby's land and property at Middleton included 2 closes "where 2 cottages formerly stood" at the west end of the town, which suggests that the family may have been responsible for some of the contraction which the settlement apparently experienced.

In 1740 the Manby estate was sold to Mark Kirby and his successors. A document drawn up some time after the sale, but before 1750, shows that the Earl of Burlington (who owned the neighbouring estate of Londesborough) also held a substantial estate at Middleton by this date. It is not clear when or by what means the Burlingtons had acquired their land. There were six other freeholders who held between 2 and 8 oxgangs and an undisclosed number of cottagers who held smaller amounts of land. By 1782 the major landowners were the Duke of Devonshire (who had inherited by marriage the estates of the Earl of Burlington) and the Sykes family (who had inherited by marriage the Kirkby estate) together with the Rev. Christopher Brearey who held the wealthy living. There were 20 proprietors the majority with very small holdings.

There was no early enclosure at Middleton apart from the village tofts and crofts, and no outlying farmsteads. Proposals were put forward by the Earl of Burlington in the 1730s to enclose the township, but these plans were not carried out. A pre-enclosure map shows common pastures at the west of the parish and round the village Mill Field, Middle West Field, Sand Pit Field (to the west of the village) and Bainton Gate Field, Swan Close Field and Little East Field to the east.

To be continued

