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BOWLAND: THE RISE AND DECLINE, ABANDONMENT AND REVIVAL OF A MEDIEVAL LORDSHIP

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For more than four centuries, between 1399 and 1649, English monarchs styled themselves *Lord Kings of Bowland*. After 1660, the lordship of Bowland, a creation of the late eleventh century, was held in succession by eight dukes, an earl and a baron. Yet, after 1885, the lordship was lost for more than a century before being rediscovered by a researcher in 2008, claimed from an extinct family trust and offered for auction.

The rise and decline, the abandonment and revival of the Lordship of Bowland are the subject of this study.

THE CREATION OF BOWLAND

Bowland was absorbed into the kingdom of Northumbria in the seventh century. Anciently, it may have formed part of the ancient British kingdom of Rheged. However, after the collapse of Northumbria in the late ninth century, the westernmost areas of Bowland became part of Amounderness, a territory forged by the Scandinavian *hold* Agmundr.

In the early tenth century, Amounderness was annexed by Aethelstan, king of the West Saxons, as a spoil of war. It was granted to Wulfstan I, Archbishop of York, in 934. According to Aethelstan's grant, Amounderness at that time stretched "from the sea along the Cocker to the source of that river, from that source straight to another spring which is called in Saxon *Dunshop*, thus down the riverlet to the Hodder, in the same direction to the Ribble and thus along that river through the middle of the channel to the sea" (Whitelock 1955: 504-8). As such, Amounderness encompassed a significant portion of western and south-western Bowland.

Ekwall (1922) thus describes the eastern boundary of Amounderness as "being formed by the fells on the Yorkshire border"; a description which places the ancient boundary firmly within the modern-day Forest of Bowland. While it is difficult to pinpoint *Dunshop*, the confluence of the rivers Dunsop and Hodder at Dunsop Bridge seems a likely locale, situated as it is close to the eastern mouth of the Trough of Bowland whose Grey Stone marks the line of the pre-1974 county boundary.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, the origins of the name Bowland have nothing to do with archery ("the land of the bow") or with medieval vaccaries (Old Norse, *bú-*, farmstead). According to Smith (1961), the name derives from the Old English *boga-*, Old Norse *bogi-*, meaning a "bow or bend in a river". As such, Ekwall (1922) suggests it was coined in the tenth century to describe the topography of the Hodder basin, with its characteristic meandering river and streams (142).

The Domesday *Bogeurde* is an instance of this usage – a placename thought to designate Barge Ford (known until the seventeenth century as *Boward*), a ford that sits on the wide, pronounced bend of the Hodder at its confluence with Foulscates Brook, due southwest of Newton (Lancashire Record Office, Slaidburn Court Rolls, 1539-1608, SCR 16/75/79/85).

In describing a *lordship* of Bowland, a careful distinction needs to be drawn between the geographies of Bowland and Craven and the respective fees of the De Lacy and Percy families which were based loosely on those geographies and whose boundaries were drawn at the watershed between the upper waters of the Ribble in Yorkshire and the Hodder basin.

However, Ekwall (1922) shows this distinction could be blurred even as late as the thirteenth century: his citation of Bolton-*in*-Bowland, as a precursor of the modern-day Bolton-*by*-Bowland, may suggest the topographical concept of the “land of the bows in the river” was continuing - even after two centuries of Norman rule – to trump well-established feudal boundaries in the minds of the local populace.

THE RISE OF THE LORDSHIP

The Forest and Liberty of Bowland were created by William Rufus sometime after Domesday, the area having formerly been in the possession of Tosti, son of Godwin, Earl of Wessex. The fee was granted to Roger de Poitou in 1092, possibly to reward him for his role in seizing Carlisle and what is now northern Cumbria from Scots king Malcolm III (Lewis 1991, 1998, Palliser 1992). In all likelihood, it was this grant that subsumed the eastern portion of Amounderness into the Lordship of Bowland for the first time.

However, the Domesday record, according to Higham (1985), almost certainly supports a pre-Conquest organisation of Bowland akin to the Old Welsh *maenor wrthtir* (upland estate), an organisation on which, she asserts, the Normans imposed their own distinctive feudal template (159).

Higham points to certain distinctive Brittonic characteristics within the landscape: principally, the presence of both a hillfort at Simpshey and an ecclesiastical centre at Waddington, close to Grindleton; and the presence of a hillfort at Dunning and an ecclesiastical centre at Catlow, north of Slaidburn. That Catlow may indeed have been an important centre appears to be corroborated by a late seventh-century grant of lands by Kings Ecgfrith and Aethelwine: “by the Ribble and in Yeadon, the region of Dentdale, Catlow and other places” (“iuxta Rippel et Ingaedyne et in regione Dunutinga et Incaetlaeuum et in caeterisque locis”) (Colgrave 1927).

By the same token, the particular recording of thirteen *vills* – *Bradeford* (West Bradford), *Widitun* (Waddington), *Baschelf* (Bashall), *Badresbi* (Battersby; later Dunning), *Neutone* (Newton-in-Bowland), *Esintune* (Easington), *Radun* (Radholme),

Sotelie (Lees), *Mitune* (Mitton), *Hamereton* (Hammerton), *Slateborne* (Slaidburn), *Bogeuurde* (Boward; later Barge Ford), including a *caput* or capital manor at *Gretlintune* (Grindleton) – may suggest Bowland’s organisation as a “multiple estate” or “shire” in line with Jolliffe’s model of Northumbrian institutions (Jolliffe 1926, Jones 1971, Gregson 1985).

Of course, these are shadows we may or may not choose to chase along on the ground. The early history remains obscure. Roger de Poitou’s lordship was short-lived – he fell from Royal favour after 1094 and was stripped of all his English estates and exiled in 1102 (Lewis 1991). Coincidentally, it was also in that year that the Honor of Clitheroe was formed, an amalgam of the lands of Bowland, the fee of Clitheroe and holdings in Hornby and Amounderness. Some commentators suggest the De Lacys, Lords of Pontefract, may already have been in possession of Bowland by the late eleventh century but this claim is unproven (De Lacy-Bellingari 1928, Wightman 1966).

A close examination of the manorial record shows that, from the twelfth century onwards, Bowland came to comprise a seigneurial chase, later a Royal Forest and a Liberty of ten manors spanning eight townships and four parishes and covered an area of almost 300 square miles on the historic borders of Lancashire and Yorkshire (Lancashire Record Office DDHCI).

A re-ordering of this feudal landscape took place somewhere between the late twelfth and the end of the thirteenth centuries. The *caput* of the Liberty moved from Grindleton to Slaidburn, whose manor was held in demesne and was in turn granted its own liberty comprising Newton-in-Bowland, West Bradford, Grindleton. Nine dependent manors emerged at Knowlmere, Waddington, Easington, Bashall, Mitton, Withgill (Crook), Leagram, Dunnaw (formerly Battersby) and Hammerton, granted to a number of mesne lords.

The De Lacys were created Earls of Lincoln in 1232 and continued to hold the lordship until 1311. In 1311, the Honor of Clitheroe was subsumed into the Earldom of Lancaster. Between 1351 and 1661, it was administered as part of the Duchy of Lancaster. In 1661, the twenty-eight manors contained within the former Honor of Clitheroe, including the Forest and Liberty of Bowland, were granted by the Crown to General George Monck as part of the creation of the Dukedom of Albermarle. Monck had been a key figure in the restoration of Charles II. The Lordship of Bowland then descended through the Montagu, Buccleuch and Towneley families.

The heraldic devices of the Lord of Bowland and of the De Lacy, Towneley and Buccleuch families are illustrated on the rear cover of this publication.

The extent of the early Forest is detailed in Perambulations of the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries (Smith 1894: 181):

“From Graddell near Grange by the Hodder to Cross of Greate, north-east of the lordship of Hornby, to Croasdale and Whitedale; from Brennand by Tarnebrooke, Ughtersik, Millhouse, over the Threape Hawe to the stone in the Trough that divides Yorkshire from Lancashire. From thence west from Sykes, which bounds upon Marshay, Hathernwaite, Catshay, Calder, Bleasdale, Fairsnape, Blindhurst and Wolfhall, by the end of Chipping town, and about 16 rods down Chipping Brook to Red Bank. From thence, along the Pale, which bounds upon Thornley and Bradley; from thence by Clement Townson’s land, Rauthmell’s land, to Wyerburne Foot, Browsholme, and Newhay. Then over Bradford and Grindleton moors, to the vaccary of Harrop, which bounds on south-east side of Bolton-by-Bowland”.

The seventeenth-century Perambulation is explored in depth in Greenwood & Bolton (1955: 116 ff) but in essence, what both Perambulations show is that, for the most part, the modern-day civil parish boundaries of Easington, Bowland Forest High, Bowland Forest Low, Bowland-with-Leagram, Newton and Slaidburn still mark the outer edges of the original Forest. The exception is the westernmost portion of the Forest which appears to have followed the line of the Calder River through Bleasdale. Also, Harrop was originally but is no longer a separate, isolated section of the Forest islanded between Lower Easington, Slaidburn and Grindleton.

These Perambulations contain a number of vanished placenames - most notably, Gradale, that stretch of the upper Hodder valley flanked by Collyholme and New House whose southernmost reaches now lie submerged beneath the waters of the Stocks Reservoir. Gradale must have lain due north of the drowned village of Stocks-in-Bowland but its name was already lost almost two centuries before the construction of that great artificial lake took place. Rushton/Rishton Grange, an ancient monastic grange whose image survives in Buck’s *Yorkshire Sketch Book* of 1719-23 (Hall 1979), lay to the south-east of Gradale. Originally part of Kirkstall Abbey’s Bowland holdings, it too now sits beneath the water.

Topography also plays a significant role. For instance, the Cross of Greet marks the highpoint of the Lune-Ribble watershed, dividing Tatham Fells from Slaidburn parish. A strategic crossing-point, it sits west of Catlow and south-west of Bowland Knotts, the gritstone crags (Old Norse *knott*, “craggy hill”) that mark the northeasternmost boundary of the Honor of Clitheroe with its neighbor, the De Mowbray Honor of Burton-in-Lonsdale in North Craven.

Rivers and streams are important – the Calder, Chipping Brook, the Loud, the Hodder, Mill Brook (Wyerburne Foot), Holden Beck all mark boundaries. There are also obscure landmarks on the high north-western fells, such as Ughtersik (Middle English “outer stream”), references to former landowners (Townson at Stakes, Rauthmell at Lees) and long forgotten bounds (the southern boundary of Leagram Park being *the Pale*).

The Perambulations tell us much about the ancient Forest but it is possible that an even earlier sense of its boundaries may be gleaned from the occurrence of *eaves* affixes in Bowland place-names. The Old English *efes* (Middle English *eves*)

denotes the “edge of a wood”. Tellingly, Bashall Eaves, Waddington Eaves, Grindleton Eaves were all *vills* whose boundaries may at one time have marked out the southern and southeastermost extent of the Domesday Forest (Smith 1961: 192).

Today, the division of Bowland Forest into two large administrative units - *Great Bowland* (Bowland Forest High and Bowland Forest Low) and *Little Bowland* (Bowland-with-Leagram) – continues to reflect these ancient boundaries.

The Perambulations also help us understand how the extent of the Lordship of Bowland was established from earliest times as being coterminous with the extent of Forest and the land of the ten manors within the Liberty of Bowland, including, from the late thirteenth century, the demesne of Slaidburn with its townships of Newton, West Bradford and Grindleton.

BOWLAND AND SLAIDBURN

The Lordships of Bowland and Slaidburn share a common history. In 1086, Domesday records Slaidburn as a constituent part of the extensive Manor of Grindleton that encompassed much of modern-day Bowland (Faull & Stinson 1986).

By the late thirteenth century, the Lord of Bowland had made Slaidburn his demesne and as such, he held his *halmote* there (see www.chrisspencer.co.uk/Manor_of_Slaidburn.html). Up until that time, the same court had been held at Grindleton (Ackerley 1947). His hundredal court had been held in Waddington up until the first half of the fourteenth century (Farrer 1901).

After 1399, the Lordship of Bowland became the property of the Sovereign, part of the Duchy of Lancaster, and as such, the Lords of Bowland became known as *Lord Kings of Bowland*.

The Lord King of Bowland used the halmote at Slaidburn for two purposes: to administer common law across Bowland (Court Leet); and in his capacity as Lord of the Manor, to administer manorial law (Court Baron) within the demesne Manor and Liberty of Slaidburn itself (ie across Slaidburn, Newton-in-Bowland, West Bradford and Grindleton).

In addition to this halmote, the Lord of Bowland held two forest courts at Whitewell until the first half of the nineteenth century, a *swainmote* and a *woodmote*. An abrupt end to manorial records suggests that these courts were either deliberately discontinued or allowed to lapse following Peregrine Towneley’s purchase of the Bowland Forest Estate in 1835.

Throughout their history, Slaidburn and Whitewell were distinct and separate manorial jurisdictions and the Lord of the Manor of Slaidburn in his own right had no power in

Whitewell. It was simply that the administration of forest law lay under the control of the Lord of Bowland who also happened to be the Lord of the Manor of Slaidburn.

In short, the Lord of Bowland used his Lordship of the Manor of Slaidburn as a means of administering common law *outside and beyond the confines of the Forest of Bowland* and as a means of administering manorial law *within the Manor and Liberty of Slaidburn* - Slaidburn being described as a liberty because it contains two townships (Newton-in-Bowland, West Bradford) and a former *caput* manor (Grindleton) in addition to the demesne of Slaidburn itself.

Prior to the 1660 Tenures Abolition Act, the Lord of Bowland was thus *lord paramount* over the Forest and all ten manors of the Liberty of Bowland. Indeed, the Lord of Bowland enjoyed technical paramountcy (ie rights and precedence) over the Lord of Slaidburn, despite the two Lords being one and the same person (namely, the Duke of Lancaster). After the 1660 Act, manors became freehold property and paramountcy was abolished.

This meant that, after 1835, Peregrine Towneley held the Lordship of Bowland and the Lordship of Slaidburn as two entirely separate freehold properties (so-called “incorporeal hereditaments”) that could be sold or conveyed as he saw fit like any other freehold property. Technically, after 1660, the Liberty of Bowland also became merely an honorific because by law the Lord of Bowland could not exercise any rights over the freehold property of others under the terms of that Act.

THE LORDS OF BOWLAND AFTER 1660

The granting of the Honor of Clitheroe to George, 1st Duke of Albemarle in 1661 brought to an end almost three centuries of Royal ownership in Bowland. After 1660, the Lordship of Bowland passed to a succession of aristocratic families, on at least two occasions through the female line. These included the Dukes of Albemarle, the Dukes of Montagu, the Earl of Beaulieu, the Dukes of Buccleuch, the Barons Montagu and finally, the Towneleys. A full list of the Lords of Bowland is included in Annex 1.

THE COURTS OF THE LORDSHIP

The maintenance of forest law was an important feature of the early Lordship. Enforcement took place through two courts – *swainmote* and *woodmote* – that, as stated, ceased to function after 1835. It is thought that the original Forest courts may have been held at Hall Hill as early as the twelfth century before moving to nearby Whitewell sometime in the fourteenth.

Higham (1991) argues for Hall Hill being a medieval motte, perhaps linked in some way to the Domesday *vill* and deer enclosure (laund) at Radholme. The Hill’s natural limestone mound shows signs of being adapted as an earthwork and this may in turn have accommodated some form of modest fortified dwelling. Some commentators, such as Hoyle, have speculated that Hall Hill may date from the period of the Anarchy

during the reign of King Stephen (1135-1154). Earlier commentators had thought that the Hill might have housed some form of small Roman encampment (Parker 1815: 23).

The halmote court at Slaidburn moved from its original site in the village to an upstairs room at the *Hark to Bounty* (formerly The Dog Inn) in the early years of the nineteenth century and was finally disbanded following the abolition of copyhold in 1922. Prior to 1660, it had been known as the “Court of the Lord King of Bowland”; during the Civil War period, this regal style was dropped; after 1660, stripped of its Royal connection, the halmote was described as the “Court of the Manor” or “Court of the Fee of Slaidburn”. Furthermore, after Albemarle’s succession to the Lordship, the focus of the court was limited almost exclusively to questions of copyhold.

THE OFFICES OF THE LORDSHIP: MASTER FORESTER, CHIEF STEWARD AND BOWBEARER

Over the centuries, the roles of Master Forester, Chief Steward and Bowbearer shifted and changed. In consequence, it is often difficult to assess the relative importance and function of the respective offices in any consistent way through the course of Bowland’s history.

It is clear, however, that the Master Foresters of Bowland were Royal appointees and thus a fourteenth-century creation. The office was certainly less ancient than that of the Bowbearer, an officer of the ancient seigneurial chase and as such, first recorded in the twelfth century (Bolton 1862, 1889). Chief Stewards existed prior to 1660 but after the demise of the Lord Kings of Bowland in 1661, Master Foresters ceased to be appointed and their place at the head of manorial administration was taken by Chief Stewards. That said, even as late as 1687, there is evidence of Chief Stewards – Curwen Rawlinson, William Kirkby, Ambrose Pudsay – choosing to style themselves *Master Foresters*. The historical record of the Master Foresters, Bowbearers and Chief Stewards of Bowland is included in Annex 2.

A Bowbearer was originally a noble who acted as ceremonial attendant to the Lord of Bowland by literally bearing (carrying) his hunting bow, but over the centuries, the Bowbearer’s role underwent many changes. Indeed, after 1399, it is probable that the Bowbearer of Bowland acted as ceremonial attendant upon the Master Forester rather than the Sovereign (Whitelock 1979: 42).

At an early date, the Bowbearer was a *forester in fee*, holding his own feudal lands within the Forest. The first record of such a Bowbearer, Uchtred de Bolton, dates from sometime after 1157 (claims for an earlier holder of the office, Edwin, Comes de Bolton, in the late eleventh century cannot be substantiated). At this time, the office is said to have covered the Forests of Bowland and Gilsland in Cumberland (Bolton 1862, 1889). The Boltons were Bowbearers for five generations until 1311 when Bowland and its Lordship passed to Thomas, 2nd Earl of Lancaster as part of a marriage settlement.

By the late fourteenth century, the Forest of Bowland had become a Royal Forest. While the Bowbearer retained his forest fee well into the sixteenth century, he became subordinate to a Master Forester appointed by the Crown after 1399 and his responsibilities grew nearer to those of a *chief verderer* – an unpaid official appointed to protect vert and venison and responsible for supervising and assisting in the enforcement of forest laws (Shaw 1956). Perhaps the most notorious Bowbearer of the late medieval period was Nicholas Tempest, executed at Tyburn in 1537 as one of the northern leaders of the Pilgrimage of Grace, the Catholic uprising against Henry VIII (Hoyle 2001).

By the second half of the seventeenth century, two Bowbearers were being appointed as officers of the Bowland Forest courts (Greenwood & Bolton 1955: 112). Over the course of the next three decades, as the last remnants of the ancient forest vanished, the office of Bowbearer was reduced to little more than an honorific (Porter 1974: 44). The Parker family of Browsholme Hall today claim to be *hereditary* Bowbearers of Bowland but this claim cannot be supported by the historical evidence (Greenwood & Bolton 1955: 22).

While the Parkers and their relatives, the Listers, certainly served as Bowbearers over a number of generations in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they were always subject to grants made by the Lord of Bowland and never held any hereditary right.

Thomas Lister Parker (b. 1779) appears to have been the first to style himself *hereditary Bowbearer of Bowland*. His *Description of Browsholme Hall*, one hundred copies of which were published privately in 1815 and circulated to courtly friends in London, made the case for this claim based on a collection of family letters “from original manuscripts in the reigns of Charles I, Charles II and James II”. In so doing, it drew heavily on Whitaker’s 1801 *History of the Original Parish of Whalley, and Honor of Clitheroe*.

A close examination of these letters, however, proves inconclusive – they provide no firm evidence that the Parkers were Bowbearers prior to the Restoration nor do they indicate any hereditary right to the office. On the contrary, the claim appears to be founded almost entirely on an assertion from Whitaker (p. 235), repeated by Parker in his *Description* (p. 23):

“the ... office is now held by Thomas Lister Parker, Esq., as it has long been by his ancestors”

There are grounds for being gravely suspicious of this historiography. According to the *Preston Guardian* of 6 March 1858, Parker helped fund Whitaker’s *History* by paying out of his own pocket for all four engravings of Browsholme Hall that appeared in the book, including one by Turner. He also provided content for the book: “The manuscripts in his library, principally relating to the antiquities of the neighbourhood and rich in genealogy, were largely used by the Historian of Whalley”.

Parker was a close friend of Thomas Dunham Whitaker and a patron of his church at Whalley – the great heraldic east window installed in the Chancel at St Mary and All Saints in 1816 being almost certainly a Parker gift. This window not only boasts two achievements for the Browsholme and Alkincoats branches of the family but also places the Parkers in the exalted company of the De Lacys, Earls of Lincoln, and the Dukes of Buccleuch as well as other notable families. The stained glass itself is remarkably similar to the heraldic glass installed at Browsholme Hall during Thomas Lister Parker's restoration of 1804-17 and may even indeed originate from the studio of the same glassmaker.

There is one further compelling reason to doubt the validity of any hereditary claim. The restoration of Browsholme Hall had been largely funded by the disposal of Parker copyhold lands. When, in 1820, overspending forced Thomas Lister Parker to sell the remainder of the Browsholme estate to his cousin, Thomas Parker of Alkincoats, his cousin was immediately appointed as "one of the Bowbearers" by Elizabeth, 3rd Dowager Duchess of Buccleuch – an office to which he was then re-appointed by her grandson, the 5th Duke of Buccleuch, in 1827 (Lancashire Record Office DDB 71/6, DDB 71/9). By contrast, in February 1827, Thomas Lister Parker was being appointed to the sinecure of His Majesty's Serjeant of all Trumpets, Drums and Fifes (*London Gazette*, 23 March 1827).

For all these reasons, it is improbable that Thomas Lister Parker retained any right to the office of Bowbearer after 1820 although his obituary from the *Preston Guardian* of 6 March 1858 plainly shows that he continued to claim the title right up until the time of his death.

After 1835, change was afoot. After his purchase of the Bowland Forest Estate, Peregrine Townley appears to have discontinued the forest courts at Whitewell and as a result, the tradition of Bowbearers being appointed as officers of those courts ceased. It seems the new Lord of Bowland wanted to see efficient management of his estate and had little time for ceremony.

Thomas Parker of Alkincoats had died in 1832 and it is probable that Richard Eastwood (1801-71), a Burnley lawyer closely associated with the Towneleys, was brought in to manage the Bowland Forest Estate soon afterwards.

A butcher's son, Eastwood styled himself *Bowbearer of the Forest of Bowland* but he was every inch the modern estate manager (Chapples 1987: 35). He divided his time between Dunsop Bridge and a Towneley property called Swinshawe Hall near Burnley. On his 5,000 acre Thomeyholme Hall estate, he bred shorthorn cattle, including a prize bull, aptly-named *The Duke of Bowland*, that he sold to the Duke of Buccleuch for a handsome sum (Sinclair 1907). He also oversaw the running of the Towneley stud at Root Farm from which the 1861 Derby winner *Kettle drum* emerged (Dixon 1862, 1895).

Indeed, it was Eastwood's winnings from that race that allowed him to found St Hubert's at Dunsop Bridge, a Pugin-designed Catholic chapel that houses the Towneley family vault and where Eastwood himself, who died in 1871, has his tomb

(“Opening of a New Catholic Chapel, in the Forest of Bowland”, *Preston Guardian*, 27 September 1862).

After Eastwood’s death, the office of Bowbearer became extinct. The management of the Bowland Forest Estate devolved into the hands of land agents – most notably, from the 1880s, father and son, Frank and Noel Parmeter. Initially, Frank Parmeter was based at Middle Lees in Bowland.

However, by the late 1920s, the management of affairs had shifted to offices in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, perhaps to better accommodate Towneley family interests in the Stella Estate in County Durham. From that point on, it was the Clitheroe Estate Company based at Clitheroe Castle that administered affairs in Bowland on the Parmeters’ behalf.

THE DECLINE OF THE LORDSHIP (1835-1885)

Peregrine Towneley (b. 1762) had bought the Bowland Forest Estate, comprising some 9,000 acres of “the Forest and Liberty or Wapentake of Bowland” for the sum of £99,000 in 1835. The sale included the hereditary office of Master Forester, the Lordships of the Forest of Bowland and of Slaidburn, West Bradford and Grindleton as well as certain rights relating to the Manors of Beamond and Bolton, of Winterburn and of Penwortham, as specified in the indenture of October 1835.

Towneley had been acquiring land in the area well before 1835 and he continued to purchase property in stages thereafter (Chapples 1987). By the time of his death, Peregrine Towneley had amassed a total 17,800 acres of Bowland (Lewis 1848).

In 1846, the family’s Lancashire and Yorkshire estates, including the enlarged Bowland Forest Estate, were inherited by Peregrine’s eldest son Charles (b. 1803). It was an inauspicious time to be a manorial lord. After the protracted economic downturn of the 1840s, the repeal of the Corn Laws led to a steep decline in cereal prices that was to herald three decades of agricultural depression. Ever falling income from copyhold rents did nothing to help balance the books.

Like any businessman under pressure, Charles Towneley sought to diversify – moving into sheep and cattle farming and racehorse breeding. Dixon (1862) describes the transformation that took place across Bowland at this time: “those who remember the killing of the last buck have long since grown into greybeards, and when antlers were extinct, the curved horn of the Lonk King reigned paramount on the dark heather sides, and up the ash and sycamore gulleys of the Forest of Bowland, of which Mr Richard Eastwood is the Bowbearer”. It was said that the Bowbearer himself had a flock of more than two thousand lonks (Pennine sheep), cross-breeds, Shropshires and Southdowns spread across the fells and grasslands of Bowland (Dixon 1895).

On Charles’ death in 1876, the administration of the family estates passed to his younger brother, John (b.1806). John Towneley, a former MP for Beverley, preferred quiet living at Thorneyholme, the former residence of the Bowbearer, to the grandeur of Towneley Hall.

However, John's time in Bowland was short-lived, blighted by the early death of his only son and heir, Richard, who died in 1877. John himself died in London a year later. Both father and son are interred in the family vault at St Hubert's.

With no male member of the family to continue the administration of the Towneley estates, the family was compelled to seek a Private Act of Parliament to enable assets to be distributed.

After seven years in which administration lay with John Towneley's widow (Anderson 1970), the 1885 Towneley Estates Act "authorised the apportionment of the estate between the seven beneficiaries, the two surviving daughters of Charles Towneley, plus the family of his daughter Lady Norreys, who had died in 1873, and the four daughters of John Towneley" (Chapples 1987: 43).

THE ABANDONMENT AND REVIVAL OF THE LORDSHIP (1885-2009)

The details of the Bowland Estate - the original Bowland Forest Estate of 1835 plus additional properties - are recorded Schedule 2 of the Towneley Estates Act 1885. As well as the Manor and Liberty of Slaidburn, West Bradford and Grindleton, these included "the forest and liberty of Bowland ... the office of master forester ... and all other rights royalties franchises offices messuages farms lands tenements hereditaments and premises with the appurtenances thereto" and as such, are deemed to include the Lordship of Bowland. The proceeds of this Estate - which totalled 21,341 acres in what was then the West Riding of Yorkshire and County Durham - were to be held in trust for the four daughters of John Towneley.

Since all four of John Towneley's daughters died childless, the last daughter Mrs Lucy Murray dying in 1928, it fell to the trustees of the Bowland Estate to dispose of its freehold lands and hereditaments as they saw fit. Accordingly, in 1938, some 6,000 acres were sold to the Duchy of Lancaster for £75,000 to create what is now known as the *Whitewell Estate*. The sale included mineral, sporting and forestal rights but specifically excluded "any manors offices or rights to compensation for manorial incidents or (save as heretofore expressly mentioned) any other manorial rights or property vested in the Vendors or their predecessors under the Towneley Estates Act 1885" - an exclusion that certainly applied to but does not specifically reference the Lordship of Bowland.

The return of this area of Bowland to the Duchy of Lancaster after almost three centuries received a rapturous welcome in the local press - with the *Clitheroe Advertiser and Times* of 5 August 1938 headlining "The King's New 6,000 Acres Estate in the Hodder Valley" and writing of happy tenantry in the "Switzerland of England".

By the same token, some seventy years later, it was the discovery by a researcher of this self-same exclusionary clause from the 1938 sale that led Charles Towneley Strachey, 4th Baron O'Hagan, a great-great-grandson of Charles Towneley, to step forward on behalf of the Towneley family to claim the Lordship of Bowland. In April 2008, that claim attracted headlines and then controversy when Lord O'Hagan declared his intention to sell the title at auction in London in May of that year.

Lord O'Hagan's decision was almost immediately contested by lawyers representing Lord Clitheroe and the Assheton family. It transpired that, in 1950, the title to the Manor and Liberty of Slaidburn, West Bradford and Grindleton, together with its mineral and other rights, had been acquired by then Tory MP, Ralph Assheton, later first Baron Clitheroe, for the sum of £100.

This title had been passed to his younger son, the Hon Nicholas Assheton in 1977 and in 2003, to Nicholas' son, Thomas Assheton. The Asshetons had been advised that this purchase gave them automatic title to the Lordship of Bowland. During the course of the following months, examination of the legal documentation proved this contention to be without foundation and in the summer of 2009, the Assheton claim was formally withdrawn.

On 29 October 2009, a press announcement from the Manorial Society, the body representing Britain's 1,900 lords of the manor and feudal barons, finally confirmed the sale of the Lordship to an anonymous buyer for an undisclosed sum. Newspapers from Burnley to Pendle, Clitheroe to Longridge, Preston to Lancaster, Garstang to Leyland announced "an ancient Lancashire lordship dating from the time of Domesday but forgotten for more than a century has been found" and in so doing, confirmed that, after almost a thousand years, the Lordship of Bowland still retained an allure and merited a place in the public consciousness.

CONCLUSION

Of necessity, this brief account of the rise and decline, the abandonment and revival of the Lordship of Bowland has had to be highly selective. A lordship that survives the course of nine centuries is a rarity and the chances of evidence about such a lordship surviving on a consistent basis throughout its long history rarer still. Secondary literature on the history of Bowland is sparse and while this paper is based largely on primary material previously unpublished, much of it indeed uncatalogued, it would be foolhardy to regard this account as the last word on this ancient lordship.

The Lordship of Bowland has survived much. Following its revival, one may also imagine that it has a fascinating future ahead of it.

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ANNEX 1: THE LORDS OF BOWLAND

Lords of Bowland (1092-1649)

1092-1102	Roger de Poitou
1102-1123	Henry de Lacy, endowed Kirkstall Abbey
1123-1193	Robert de Lacy, built Clitheroe Castle
1193-1211	Roger de Lacy
1211-1240	John de Lacy, 1st Earl of Lincoln
1240-1258	Edmund de Lacy, 2nd Earl of Lincoln
1258-1311	Henry de Lacy, 3rd Earl of Lincoln
1311-1322	Thomas Plantagenet, 2nd Earl of Lancaster
1322-1345	Henry Plantagenet, 3rd Earl of Lancaster
1345-1361	Henry of Grosmont, 4th Earl, later Duke of Lancaster
1361-1399	John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, Duke of Aquitaine
1399-1413	Henry IV, Duke of Lancaster
1413-1422	Henry V, Duke of Lancaster
1422-1461	Henry VI, Duke of Lancaster
1461-1470	Edward IV, Duke of Lancaster
1470-1471	Henry VI, Duke of Lancaster
1471-1483	Edward IV, Duke of Lancaster
1483-1483	Edward V, Duke of Lancaster
1483-1485	Richard III, Duke of Lancaster
1485-1509	Henry VII, Duke of Lancaster
1509-1547	Henry VIII, Duke of Lancaster
1547-1553	Edward VI, Duke of Lancaster
1553-1558	Mary I, Duke of Lancaster
1558-1603	Elizabeth I, Duke of Lancaster
1603-1625	James I, Duke of Lancaster
1625-1649	Charles I, Duke of Lancaster

Lords of Bowland (1649-2008)

1649-1660	Charles II, Duke of Lancaster
1661-1670	1st Duke of Albemarle (granted by Charles II)
1670-1688	2nd Duke of Albemarle (inherited from father)
1692-1709	1st Duke of Montagu (acquired by marriage to widow of 2nd Duke of Albemarle)
1709-1749	2nd Duke of Montagu (inherited from father)
1749-1790	4th Earl of Cardigan later 1st Duke of Montagu (second creation) later 1st Baron Montagu of Boughton (inherited from father-in-law)
1790-1802	1st Earl of Beaulieu (inherited from father-in-law)
1802-1812	3rd Duke of Buccleuch (inherited from wife's brother-in-law)
1812-1819	4th Duke of Buccleuch (inherited from father)
1819-1827	5th Duke of Buccleuch (entailed on uncle following death of 3rd Dowager Duchess)
1827-1835	2nd Baron Montagu of Boughton (inherited from mother, 3rd Dowager Duchess)
1835-1846	Peregrine Towneley (acquired by private treaty)
1846-1876	Charles Towneley (inherited from father)

1876-1878	John Towneley (inherited from brother)
1878-1885	Lucy Towneley (inherited from husband surrendered to trustees of Towneley Estates 1885)
1885-2008	Towneley Settled Estates Trust
2008	Charles Towneley 4th Lord O'Hagan (claimed on behalf of Towneley family)

ANNEX 2: MASTER FORESTERS, BOWBEARERS, CHIEF STEWARDS

Master Foresters and Bowbearers of Bowland (1150-1650)

1157	Uchtred de Bolton
1212	Elias de Bolton
1220	Richard de Bolton
1260	John de Bolton
1300	Edward de Acre
1304	Richard de Spaldington
1304-1311	John de Bolton
1311-1322	Thurstan de Norleygh
1322-1327	Edmund Dacre
1327-1330	Richard de Spaldyngton
1331-1353	Adam de Urswyk
1353-1372	John de Radcliffe
1372-1403	Sir Walter Urswyk
1403-1424	Sir Henry Hoghton
1424-1425	Sir Thomas Hoghton
1425-1432	Sir Thomas Tunstall
1432-1437	Sir William Assheton
1437-1459	Richard, Earl of Salisbury
1459-1471	Sir Richard Tunstall
1471-1485	Richard, Duke of Gloucester
1485-1485	Sir James Harrington
1485-1519	Sir Edward Stanley, later Lord Monteagle
1519-1526	Sir Richard Tempest
1526-1543	Sir Thomas Clifford (Bowbearer Nicholas Tempest, executed 1537)
1543-1553	Sir Arthur D'Arcy
1554-1554	Sir Thomas Talbot
1554-1594	Sir Richard Shireburn of Stonyhurst
1594-1630	Sir Richard Hoghton
1631-1642	Sir Gilbert Hoghton
1645-1650	Sir Richard Hoghton

Chief Stewards of Bowland (1650-1922)

1650-1660 George Pigot
1660-1664 Henry Brockden
1665-1682 Richard Kirkby of Kirkby Ireleth
1682-1686 Curwen Rawlinson of Cark Hall, Cartmell
1686-1687 William Kirkby
1687-1693 Ambrose Pudsay
1693-1700 James Sloane
1701-1709 Thomas Coulthurst
1710-1749 Thomas Dummer
1750-1757 William Folkes
1757-1775 Lawrence Robinson
1775-1782 John Barcroft
1782-1806 Martin Richardson
1806-1811 William Carr
1811-1835 Thomas Carr
1835-1839 William Thomas Carr
1839-1878 Dixon Robinson
1878-1912 Arthur Robinson
1912-1922 Frederick Robinson

Bowbearers of Bowland after 1660

1662-1682 Thomas Parker
1682-1689 Curwen Rawlinson
1689-1706 Thomas Lister of Westby
1689-1721 Edward Parker
1707-1745 Thomas Lister of Westby, son of above
1721-1754 John Parker
1745-1757 John Fenwick of Burrow Hall, Lord of Claughton
1754-1794 Edward Parker
1794-1797 John Parker
1797-1820 Thomas Lister Parker (claimed until 1858)
1820-1832 Thomas Parker of Alkincoats
1835-1871 Richard Eastwood

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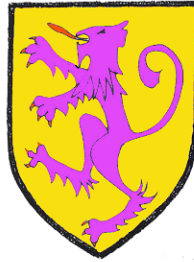
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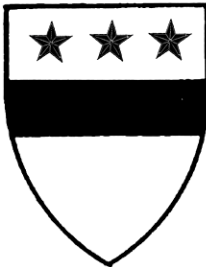
BOWLAND



DE LACY



TOWNELEY



BUCCLEUCH



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