

Map 2

(upper) Lineholme in Rathmell township, Yorkshire (West Riding).  
 (lower) Evidence for flax processing, Draughton and Halton East townships, Yorkshire (West Riding).

## The Medieval Boundary of Burton Chase: Identification and Implications

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At an inquest held at Boroughbridge in 1307, two of the King's Commissioners sat with a jury of twelve men, six of whom appear from their surnames to be local to the Burton-in-Lonsdale area, to consider 'by what metes and bounds' the ancestor of Sir John de Moubray held the free chases of Burton-in-Lonsdale and Nidderdale, Yorkshire.<sup>1</sup> The Burton bounds are set out first (Appendix 1), and follow a predictable pattern, with the boundary points being taken in a clockwise sequence, beginning and ending at the *caput* of Burton-in-Lonsdale, with the linear distance covered by the boundary in excess of 100 km. Because of the length of the boundary, it cannot be said that the most arduous section was done first, as often happens with township boundary perambulations, as any 'beating of the bounds' of Burton Chase would have taken considerably longer than one day.<sup>2</sup>

There are only twenty-five separate points mentioned, which, considering the distances involved, seems quite few. The number does, however, appear almost excessive when compared with the four mentioned in the *Quo Warranto* proceedings of 1293, which enquired by what right John's father, Roger, held the Chase.<sup>3</sup> That much of the

This is a summary of a more detailed paper, illustrated by slides of points on the boundary, given on 6 April 1991 at the 23rd Annual Study Conference organized by the Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland, held at the University of Leicester. It is hoped that the complete text, with discussion of identifications and full grid references, together with additional material, will be published in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* in 1994.

<sup>1</sup> 1. *Yorkshire Inquisitions*, Vol. IV, edited by W. Brown, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, XXXVII (Leeds, 1906), 148-49.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this investigation, the boundary was walked *in toto* and, excluding repeat visits for certain stretches, took at least two full weeks.

<sup>3</sup> *Placita de Quo Warranto*, ed. W. Illingworth (London, 1818), pp. 218-19.

area was upland, which Kapelle sees as 'an area that was normally beyond the control of local forces of law and order . . . the refuge for . . . the wolf and . . . the outlaw', might be thought to explain the relative lack of boundary markers:<sup>4</sup> there might be little point in defining boundaries if the people living there would not, and could not, be compelled to respect them.

Detailed research suggests that this is not the case. It was possible to interpolate boundary information taken from monastic records of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which demonstrate that large portions of the boundary were certainly known and clearly defined long before 1307.<sup>5</sup> This implies that the boundary was so well known in 1307 (and even in 1293) that there was little need to define it more precisely, the points mentioned being sufficient to set the parameters within which the complete detailed boundary might be placed. The Burton boundary points fall into three main groups:

1. Those which refer to natural features: *Gemme Syke*, *Penegent* (Pen-y-Ghent).
2. Those which mark a change of alignment, often marked on the ground by a tumulus. For example, the boundary at Fourstones is marked by 'Round Hill', alias 'Queen of the Fairies Chair'—a tumulus, as is *Harlaw*.
3. Those located where routes cross from one territory to another, for example *Caldkeld* above Cam. This was just one place where *cheminage* was collected.<sup>6</sup> These crossing-points (toll-points?) were apparently marked in the medieval period by a small stone cross, as at Ewcross.

The place-names themselves, almost without exception, survive in recognisable form for a very long period. Indeed, *Douuegill* and Pen-y-Ghent contain elements which are British in origin. The precise location of the points named was obtained from mid-nineteenth century Tithe Apportionment records and First Edition OS 6" maps, and it was notable that in many cases the boundary point was still on an important boundary. The location of the points is summarized in Appendix 2.

<sup>4</sup> W. E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North* (London, 1979), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the boundaries of the Souterscales and Selside estates, in *The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey*, edited by J. Brownbill, vol. II, pt. 2, Chetham Society, n.s. LXXVI (Manchester, 1916), pp. 325–7 and 334, provide intermediate points.

<sup>6</sup> Illingworth, *Quo Warranto*, pp. 218–19.

It can be demonstrated that, although documentary evidence only survives from the medieval period, the boundaries of Burton Chase and those incorporated in the monastic grants relate to land units already in existence in the pre-Conquest period. Gelling's comments regarding the survival of early administrative units into modern times is highly pertinent, for she notes: 'If these units have kept their identity for a thousand years . . . it is reasonable to suppose they were already of some antiquity when their boundaries were written down'.<sup>7</sup> What the research on the Burton Boundary has shown is that medieval boundary records, largely ignored because they are felt to be too late to be of any real value, are the northern equivalent of Anglo-Saxon charters, and may be used similarly, for they contain information relating to landscape features, early routeways, and indeed territorial units, which pre-date the documents by several centuries.<sup>8</sup>

#### Appendix 1. *The Metes and Bounds of Burton Chase*

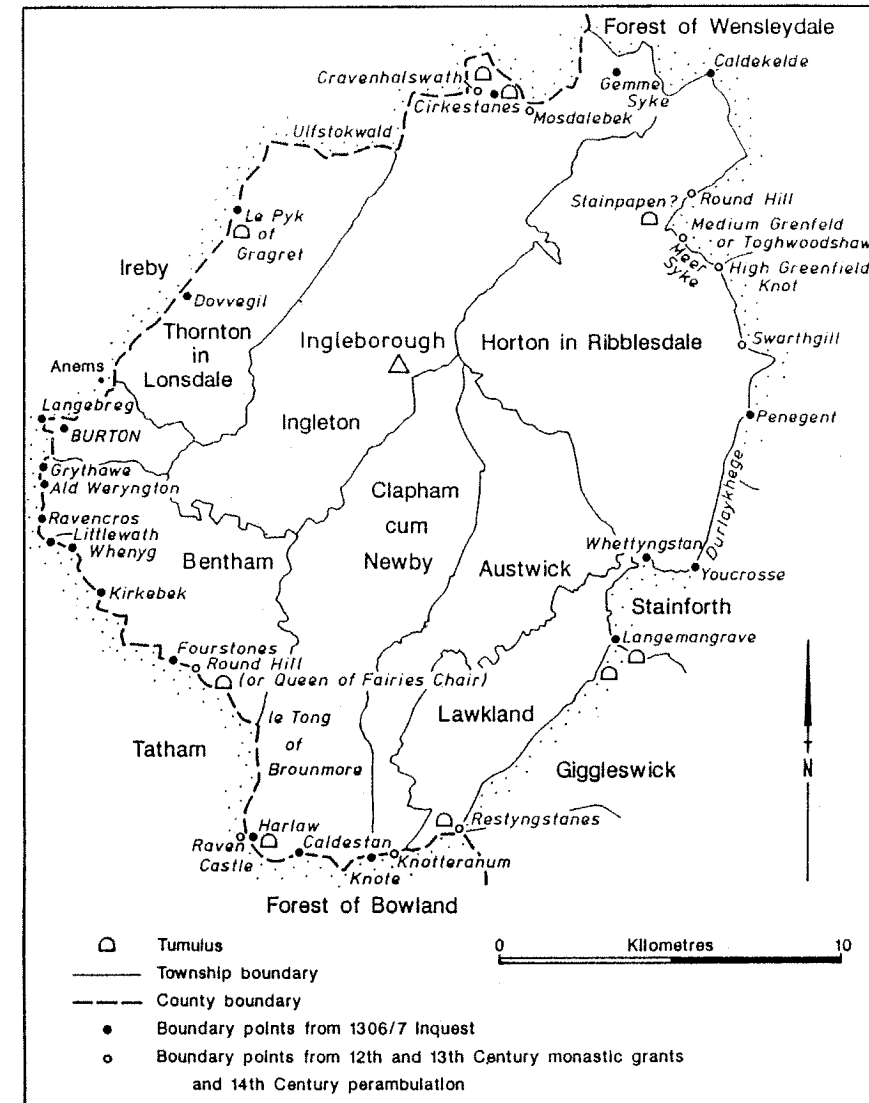
. . . The metes and bounds of the chace of Burton in Lonnedale begin at Langbreg' towards the west, between the county of Loncaster and the county of York; and so from Langbreg' to Douuegil', and so from the head of Douuegil' to *le Pyk*' of Gragret', and so through Ulfstokwald and the boundaries (*divisas*) of Dent between the land of the said John [de Moubray] and the land of Henry son of Hugh to Cirkestanes, and from Cirkestanes to Gemmesyke, and from Gemmesyke to Caldekelde above Camb, and so from Caldekelde above Camb to the top of the hill (*cacumen montis*) of Penegent, between the fees of the said John de Moubray and Henry de Percy, and from Penegent to Durlaykhege, and so by the boundaries between the fees of the said John and Henry de Percy to Youcrosse, and from Youcrosse to Whettyngstan', and from Whettyngstan' to a place called Langemangrave, and so by Knot . . . to Caldestan', between the fees of the said John and the earl of Lincoln, and from Caldestan' by a place called Harlaw to *le Tong* of Brounmore between the county of Lancaster and the county of York; and so by Fourstanes to Kirkebek', and from Kirkebek' to the water called Whenyg' and to Littlewath, and from Littlewath below Ravencros, to Ald Weryngton and Grythawe and from Grythawe to Langbrig'.

<sup>7</sup> M. Gelling, *Signposts to the Past* (London, 1978), p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> M. C. Higham, 'The *Regio Dunutinga*—A pre-Conquest Lordship?' *Regional Bulletin* n.s. 6 (Lancaster University, 1992).

**Appendix 2.** Boundary points relevant to the identification of the boundary of Burton Chase. (For the boundaries of Souterscales and Selside see note 5 above; that of the Percy lands in Craven is printed by T. D. Whitaker, *The History and Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven* (London, 1912), p. 506.)

BURTON	SOUTERSCALES	SELSIDE	PERCY
Cirkstanes	Kyrkstanes		
	Rarun		
	Mosdalebek	Mosdalbeck	
Gemme Syke		foresta comitis de Richem[undia]	
Caldekelde above Camb		Caldkeld super Camp	Cold Keld
		Stanepapan	Stanepapane
		inde Medium Grenfeld	Toghwoodshaw
			Meer Syke at ye West end of Greenfield Knot
			Swarthgill
the top of the hill of Penegent			the hill of Penaygent



Map 1. The boundaries of Burton Chase.

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## Charters and the Landscape

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The initial results of a study of charter boundaries were presented at Durham in 1978.<sup>1</sup> The study was then primarily concerned with the Worcestershire evidence. Subsequent forays through the charters of much of the rest of the country have confirmed many of the ideas that had already emerged at that stage, and have also provided more detailed insight into the use of charters for an understanding of settlement and land-use history.

It was clear from the beginning that the charter evidence, limited as it was to short topographical descriptions and boundary perambulations, provided further evidence of the different types of landscape regions revealed by the work of Professor Darby and his colleagues on Domesday Book.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the charters showed such regions in an entirely pre-Norman context, in a period of considerable change. Although the basis for such regional landscapes had always been the natural topography and its resources, the Anglo-Saxon period was a formative one which experienced massive changes in, for instance, the organization and location of arable land, on the one hand, and the regeneration of woodland, on the other. On both of these the charter boundary-clauses have much to say.

Little can be gained, however, by rushing to the nearest Ordnance Survey map. An essential pre-requisite for all such work is the many hours spent poring over individual charter solutions and relating these to later historical and cartographic evidence. To some extent all interpretation remains subjective, but at least such detailed work

This is a revised version of a paper given on 6 April 1991 at the 23rd Annual Study Conference organised by the Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland, held at the University of Leicester.

<sup>1</sup> D. Hooke, 'Anglo-Saxon landscapes of the West Midlands', *JEPNS*, 11 (1978-79), 3-23.

<sup>2</sup> *The Domesday Geography of England*, edited by H. C. Darby, 7 vols (Cambridge, 1952-77).