

**What Bolton Priory
and manorial records
tell us about Long Preston
in the late medieval period.**

by Tony Stephens

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Introduction

A surprisingly rich variety of records survive for Long Preston, providing insights into the history of the township in the late medieval period which are not available for other North Craven townships. Particularly important are records of Bolton Priory, which had substantial financial interests in Long Preston between the 14th and 16th centuries, and manorial records of the Earls of Northumberland and Cumberland. Of the manorial records, a survey carried out for the Earl of Cumberland in 1579 is perhaps the most important (transcriptions of this survey have recently been deposited at the Yorkshire Archaeological Society in Leeds and with the Long Preston Heritage Project). The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief summary of what has been discovered to date about Long Preston in the late medieval period, including crop yields and diet of a typical family. A more detailed discussion on these matters will appear in a booklet to be published by the Long Preston Heritage Project in 2009.

Purchase of the glebe land

In 1304 Bolton Priory purchased the rights to the Long Preston tithes, together with 8 oxgang⁺ of arable land, which it gave as an endowment to Long Preston church. This glebe land was reduced to 6 oxgangs in 1321, but remained at this level until the priory was dissolved in 1539. No hint is given in early records of the location of the glebe land, but it will be shown how it is possible to identify the 8 oxgangs purchased in 1304 as a block of land lying between Sour Dale lane and Back lane (see figure 3).

14th century records

Throughout the late medieval period, Long Preston was one of the holdings of the Earls of Northumberland and, when Henry Percy died in 1314, an inquisition into his holdings (NA C134/41/8) established that the township comprised 6 carucates of arable land (48 oxgangs). Bolton Priory was then the other Long Preston landlord, with 8 oxgangs of glebe land, making the total amount of land in cultivation in 1314 56 oxgangs. Records from later centuries suggest a similar amount of land in cultivation, leading to the conclusion that Long Preston's field systems were already fully developed by the beginning of the 14th century.

A rising population in the previous century had left much of England with scarcely sufficient land to feed its population at the end of the 13th century, and several years of extremely poor weather and crop failure in the second decade of the 14th century led to widespread crop failure and famine. Although North Craven was insufficiently important for anyone to record the effects of this catastrophic weather on its townships, Bolton Priory's records (Kershaw 1969 & 2000) enable us to reconstruct a fairly detailed picture of Long Preston's agricultural economy, including the effect on that economy of the extreme weather.

⁺ *The oxgang varied from township to township, but in Long Preston was 8 ancient acres, or approximately 13.6 modern acres.*

The priory records for the years 1310-20 provide particularly useful insights into the effects of this catastrophic weather. There are no records for 1319, the priory being abandoned because of Scottish raids, and for all other years apart from 1316 the priory sold its tithes in Long Preston. In 1316 the priory was so short of grains of all types that it took its Long Preston tithes to Bolton, recording these as 65 qrs of oats and 19 qrs 11 bushels of barley. Winchester records (Dyer 1998) suggest that the volumetric yield of barley was 2.19 times greater than that of oats in the 14th century and, since tithes represented 10% of Long Preston's grain production (*decima garbarum*), the 1316 returns enable us to estimate that roughly 87% of Long Preston's arable land must have been devoted to oats production and 13% to barley.

In years when the priory had a surplus of oats or barley, the prices achieved for the surplus were recorded in the priory accounts, and the average recorded prices are shown in table 1. For years when the priory accounts recorded the prices of both oats and barley, it is possible to calculate from the monetary value of the tithes the average yields on Long Preston's 56 oxgangs, as shown in table 1 (the figures in brackets for 1316 being derived directly from the tithes taken as grain).

Year	Tithes £.s.d	Oats price shillings /bushel	Barley price Shillings /bushel	Oats Yield (bushels per acre)	Barley Yield (bushels Per acre)
1310	£23.6.8	0.5	1.26	7.73	16.94
1311	£17	0.48	-		
1312	£16	0.5	0.83	6.27	13.74
1313	£12	0.7	0.5	4.2	9.21
1314	£13.6.8	0.43	1.1	5.1	11.17
1315	£17.6.8	-	-		
1316	-	1.66	-	(3.93)	(8.60)
1317	£23.6.8	1.2	2.1	3.74	8.19
1318	£14.8.6	0.9	-		
1319	-	-	-		
1320	£14.8.6	0.59	1.18	5.16	11.31

Table 1 Long Preston tithe returns and calculated yields

Figure 1, which is derived from table 1, shows the relationship between the yield and the price of oats for the period 1310 to 1320, for the years for which there is sufficient data to make the calculations. In 1310 the oats yield was 7.73 bushels per acre, very close to the long term average yield of 7.89 bushels per acre recorded on the Winchester estates, while the lowest yield, in 1316, was only 50% of that recorded in 1310. It is interesting to see that Winchester recorded a similar yield reduction below its long term average in 1316, and also noted two years of continuous floods and wet weather in 1315 and 1316 (Parry 1979).

Prior to the onset of catastrophic weather, the prices recorded by Bolton priory appear to have been fairly stable at 6d (0.5shillings) per bushel, and to have increased steeply in periods of poor harvests, peaking at 1s8d (1.66shillings) per bushel in 1316. It is almost certain that Long Preston will have suffered severe famine in 1316 and 1317, particularly in 1316 when the grain harvest was around 50% of its normal level, and the priory took the tithes which were normally sold in the township to Bolton.

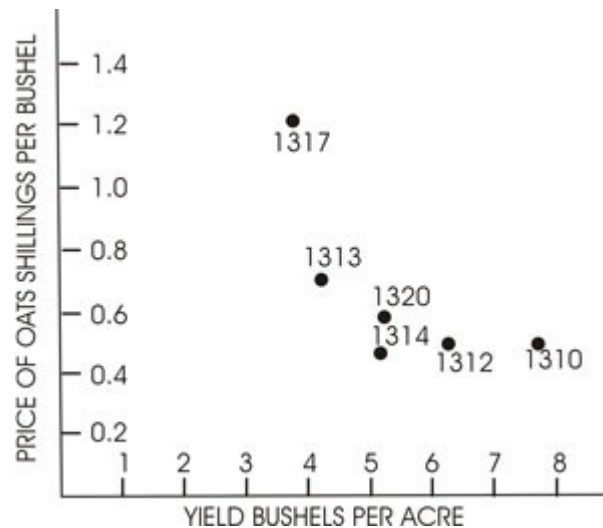


Figure 1 The relationship between oats production and price, 1310-20

According to Singman and McLean, the 14th century English peasant had a diet of typically 3500-4300 kcal/ day (Singman & McLean 1995), a man requiring slightly more calories than a woman because of the different nature of their work. Of the several typical diets suggested by them, the one which must have been closest to the northern diet comprised mainly 2-3 lbs of bread and 2-3 pints of ale per adult per day. In 1310 the Long Preston farmer with an oxgang of land would have been able to provide his family around 7.3lbs of oats and 6.6 pts of ale a day - very close to the diet suggested by Singman and McLean for a family of two adults and two children. We have no records of how much meat or dairy products would have been available to the 14th century Long Preston family, but it is unlikely to have made much of a contribution to the diet, since pressure to produce oats for human consumption would have severely limited the amount of land available to produce the hay needed to over-winter animals. Indeed, the main task of cattle may have been to fertilize the fields, since a "semi-fallow" cropping regime was used. Left fallow over winter, oats could be sown on the same fields each spring, provided that fertility was maintained by adequate manuring. Many of the crofts behind the Long Preston residences, which survive to the present time, were of two acres and more, and may have provided much of the hay.

The Scots suffered the same cataclysmic weather as the English and mounted a series of raids into northern England between 1317 and 1320, travelling down the east of the Pennines at harvest time, before returning home through Craven with plundered cattle. Bolton Priory's location meant that it was particularly badly affected by the raids, and the priory accounts for 1317 record Long Preston being levied £15 6s 8d for a "*nova taxacio propter invasionem Scotorum*" (new tax on account of the Scottish invasion). The most severe raid was in 1319, causing the priory to be abandoned, and an addendum to Henry Percy's inquisition of 1314, added in 1319, records that Long Preston's lord of the manor had also suffered financially, his rents from Langstrothdale being reduced because of "*depradation*" by the Scots.

The calamitous weather of 1315-6 and successive Scottish raids left Bolton Priory's finances in a parlous state, and its accounts record a reduction in the Long Preston glebe land from 8 oxgangs to 6 oxgangs in 1321. Although the accounts do not record the purchaser, it is likely to have been Fountains Abbey, since later records show abbey tenants holding two oxgangs in Long Preston.

15th and 16th century records

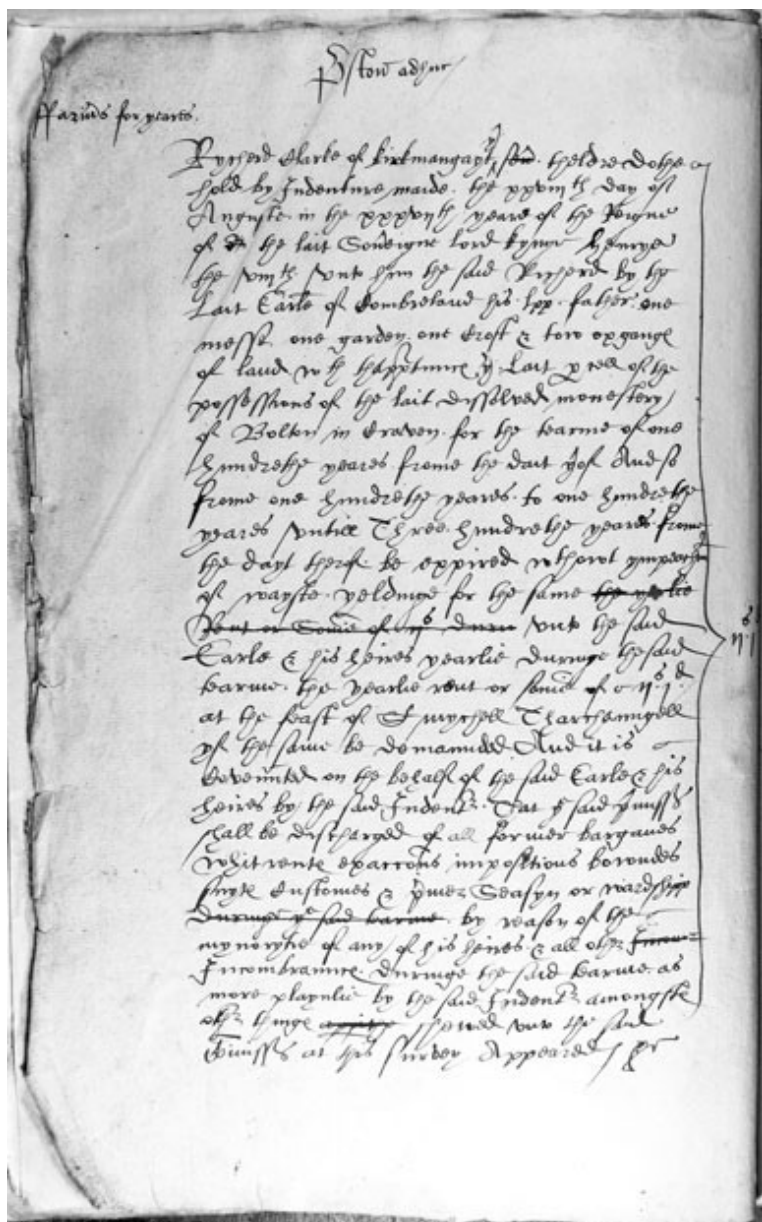


Figure 2 Rycherd Clarke's of Kirkmangayt's entry in the 1579 Clifford Survey

Rycherd Clarke of Kirkmangayt...

by indenture 28 August 38th yeare of the Reigne of the lait sovereigne lord king Henrye the 8th ...

..... one mess one garden one croft and two oxgangs... lait pcell of the possessions of the lait dissolved monastery of Bolton ...

..untill three hundrethe yeares from the dayt therof..

... the yearlie rent of 2s 1d.. ..yf the same be demanded

Priory accounts for 1473 provide the first names of the Long Preston monastic tenants- Thomas Knoll, Thomas Clerk and Thomas Mone, and the dissolution accounts for 1539 (Kershaw,1969) show the 6 monastic oxgangs (bovates) in the hands of the same families as in 1473 viz Stephen Knolles- 2 bovates- 20s, Margaret, wife of Thomas Clerk – 2 bovates- 20s, Richard Moone- 1 bovate- 10s and Nicholas Clerke – 1 bovate 10s.

The Cliffords of Skipton inherited the Percy estate in Craven through marriage in the 16th century, and a detailed rental survey which was carried out when George Clifford became the Third Earl of Cumberland in 1579 (YAS DD121/24/2) is one of the most important documentary sources for North Craven. The survey gives us the first indication of the location of the former monastic glebe land, the entry for “Rycherd Clarke of Kirkmangayt” revealing that he held two oxgangs of former monastic land on a 300 year lease dated 28th August 1545. Today Kirkmangate is the name of a Victorian villa on the west side of the A65.

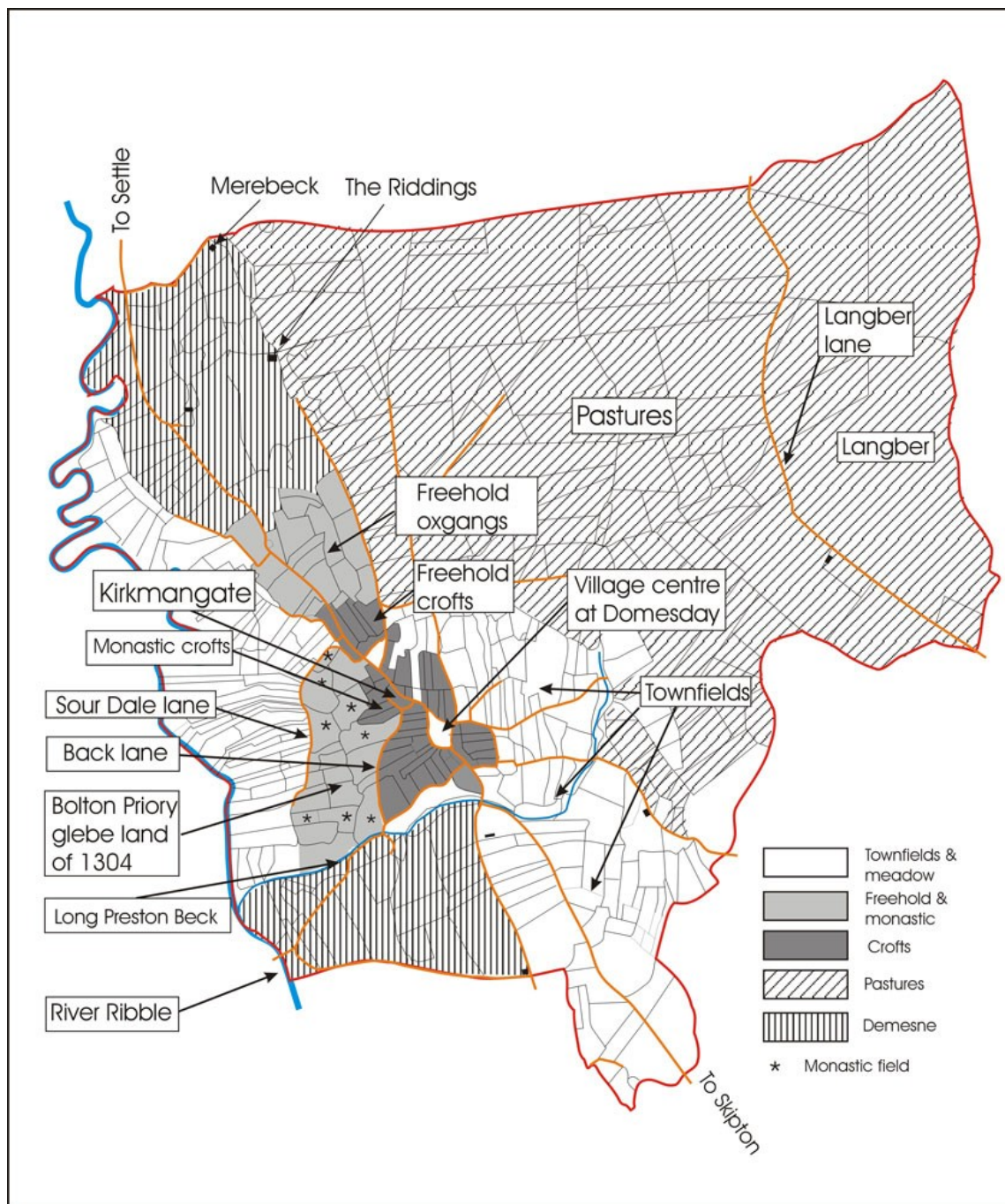


Figure 3. Long Preston field systems and crofts

The Long Preston crofts

Where they survive, crofts can provide a useful guide to a township's medieval layout, but many townships lost their crofts when they expanded during the later stages of the Industrial Revolution. This expansion did not happen in Long Preston which, although economically successful in the early decades of the 19th century as a centre for hand loom weaving, declined when power loom weaving was introduced into Craven (see table 2).

Year	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851
Population	573	610	733	808	708	590

Table2. Census statistics for Long Preston 1801-1851

A booklet currently in preparation by the author for the Long Preston Heritage Project explains how the township developed at three different centres, each centre having an associated group of crofts (see figure 3)

- a central square, the location of the township at Domesday, from which radiate some 2 dozen crofts
- a group of freehold crofts at the north end of the township (Moor Lane), established circa 13th century, when new land was needed to feed a rapidly expanding population
- a group of crofts on the west side of the main road, in the vicinity of Kirkmangate, held by monastic tenants.

Location of the former monastic glebe land

When the monastic land was re-let to former monastic tenants by the Cliffords after the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the tenancies offered were extraordinarily generous, with rents of around 1s (12d) an oxgang compared with typical rents for other tenants of 6s8d. It was possibly these favourable rents which led to the land remaining in the hands of descendants of the monastic tenants for several centuries, and still being in the same family hands when the country's first deeds registry opened in Wakefield in 1704.

Deed WYAS/O116 178 of 1719 records the Moons holding an oxgang with a rent 12d, by deed of 37th year of Henry VIII, and deed WYAS/ W475 614 of 1725 associates fields *Tranmoores, Fleets and Borks* with their holding. Field names associated with the Clark(e) *Kirkmangate ½ oxgang* are given in WYAS A308 459 of 1708 as *Brocklands* and *Gooselands*. The Knowles monastic holding passed to the Holgate family, and a deed of 1804 in the Lord collection at Northallerton tells us that William Holgate's portion of the glebe land consisted of *Lower Close, Brocklebutts and Longdales*. The survival of these field names to the Tithe Survey of 1841 allows us to identify the fields marked (*) in figure 3 as former monastic fields and, since the area bounded by Sour Dale lane, Back lane, and the Long Preston Beck is found to be equivalent to 8 oxgangs, this is likely to be the location of the glebe land purchased by Bolton Priory in 1304.



Figure 4 The crofts and barns associated with the Moon and Clark(e) families

The Tithe Survey allows us to identify the crofts and barns associated with the former monastic holdings of the Moon and Clark(e) families, as shown in figure 4. A feature of the Moons' barn, now Guy's Villa Barn - an insignia MRE 1708 (Moon Richard and Ellin) carved on a beam -suggests that the barns were probably rebuilt in the 18th century close to older barns held by the monastic families, and architectural expert Stephen Haigh believes the beam is from a former cruck building. Carbon dating may confirm the beam as the oldest surviving secular building material in Long Preston.



Figure 5. Roof beam inscription in former barn associated with the Moon family

The most long lasting of the former monastic tenants in the township were the Clark(e)s, John Clark who held the Kirkmangate barn and adjacent croft in 1841 undoubtedly being a descendant of "Rycherd Clarke of Kirkmangayt" of 1579 and Thomas Clerk of 1473.

16th century Long Preston roads and their boundary walls

It is unusual to be able to say anything about roads in North Craven townships as early as the 18th century, but documentary sources allow us to establish the existence of several Long Preston roads and trackways in earlier centuries.

In his address to the Mechanics Institute in 1886, Long Preston antiquarian John Thompson made mention of local knowledge that an ancient road had run over the hilltops at Langber, and that a stone guide post indicating Settle 3 miles and Skipton 7 miles had once stood in the Vicar's allotment there. In John Thompson's time this guide post was in the vicarage, but today it is to be found standing on the side of the Maypole Green.



Figure 6 Ancient stone guide post from Langber which is now on the Maypole Green

That Langber lane was already in use in Elizabethan times is confirmed by a document in the Huff collection in Leeds entitled “ *A Boke of the Frameing of the Overends of Long Preston into three parts*”. This is a somewhat confusing title for an agreement between the 36 property holders who lived in the north end of Long Preston about how to divide their pastures, which lay to the north of the township, between Langber lane on the east, and a line between the township and Mearbeck on the west. The pasture to the west of the upper reaches of the Long Preston beck were to be divided into three roughly equal portions of 80 acres— Banks, Ragburke and Heathergillbargh- and tenants with rights on particular pastures had responsibility spelt out for building and maintaining specific road boundaries. The track to the north east from Queen’s Street towards Cracko Myre/ Blackhills, seen in figure 7, is clearly the division boundary between Ragburke and Heathergillbargh established by the “ *Frameing Boke*”.

Tenants on Horse (also called Hawes) Close were responsible for maintaining what is now known as Langber lane, while tenants on several pastures had responsibility for Queen’s Street, which was to be 5 gadds wide. A gadd was a measure which varied from locality to locality but, fortunately, John Thompson tells us the gadd was 12 feet in Long Preston. The distance between the road boundary walls on Edge lane is today 60 feet, confirming it as the 16th century Queen’s Street. Since the major influx of Scottish droving animals only arrived in Craven in the middle of the 18th century, Queen’s Street’s original function must have been to bring local cattle from their summer pastures into the village rather than serve long distance travellers. Those travelling down the Ribble/ Aire valleys are likely to have used Langber lane, a much more direct route between Settle and Skipton. Indeed, three Neolithic axes found in the vicinity of Langber lane suggest that it may have been the preferred route for long distance travellers since antiquity; the finding of a single axe might suggest carelessness on the part of a user, but a horde of several axes is more indicative of loss in transit.

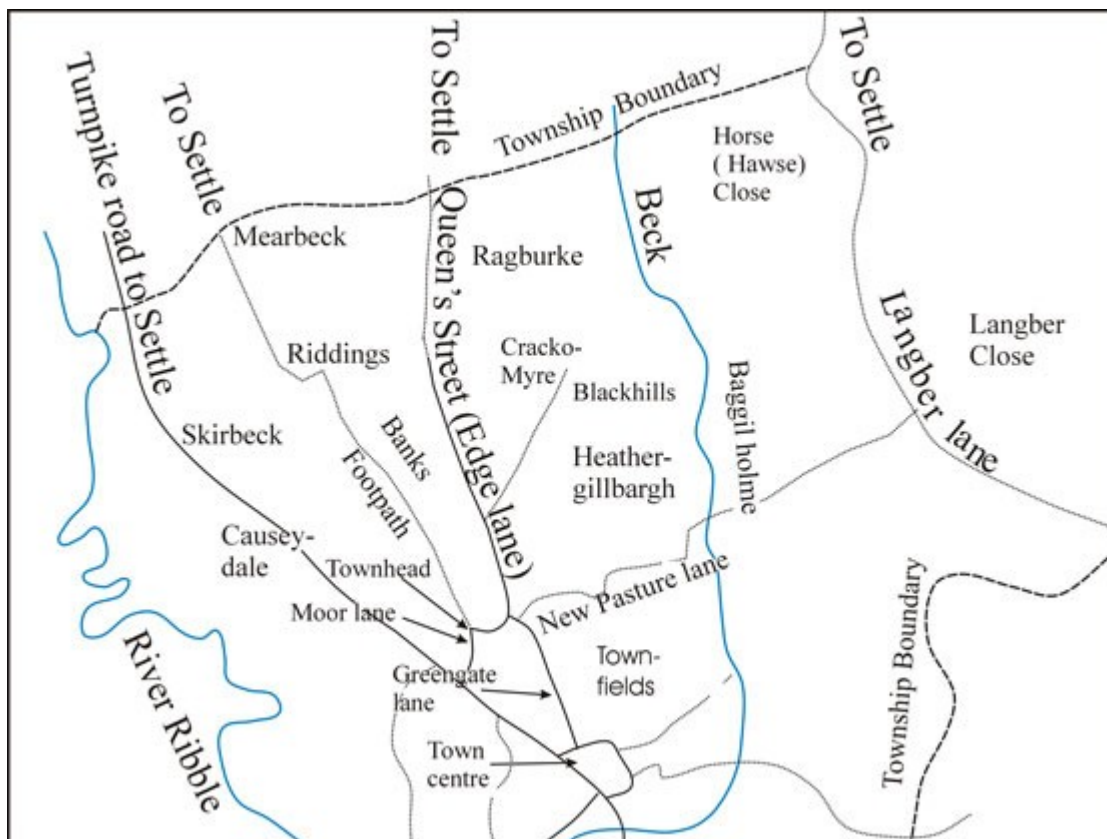


Figure 7 Long Preston roads and tracks

Phraseology used in the "*Frameing Boke*" suggests two almost separate farming communities in Long Preston in the 16th century, the residents at the top of the town farming the arable lands and pastures at the north of the township, and those living in the town itself farming the townfields and the pastures to the east. In the "*Frameing Boke*" the residents in the north of the township described themselves as "*us*", while those who farmed the townfields and pastures to the east were described as the "*lower end of the towne*". Responsibility for making and maintaining the boundaries of the northern end of Queen's street rested with residents of the northern end of the town, while the lower portion of Queen's Street, today known as Greengate lane, was a joint responsibility with the "*lower end of the towne*".

Although the "*Frameing Boke*" is undated, it is possible to estimate a date of around 1590 by comparing the names of the 36 tenants listed with the 10 tenants named in an agreement of 1601 for "*the division of ten oxgange of pasture lying in Preston More*"; 7 out of the 10 tenants listed in the 1601 agreement appear in the "*Frameing Boke*", suggesting that it pre-dates the 1601 document by about a decade.

At the top of Moor lane a footpath today follows the pasture boundary to the Riddings, and is a more natural continuation of the lane than Queen's Street; this would appear to be the line of a trackway to Settle which predates the building of Queen's Street, whose names strongly suggests an Elizabethan origin. We must also entertain the possibility that there was a pre-turnpike road to Settle along the valley bottoms, since a survey of bridges in the West Riding in 1725 makes mention of an arch bridge at Skirbeck, and several early 18th century Wakefield deeds refer to a field named Causewaydale (sometimes Causeydale) in the vicinity of the later turnpike road.

Causeway and causey are names usually associated with ancient roadways and, although these field name did not survived to the Tithe survey, they are consistently associated in deeds with fields taken to build the railway (and were therefore in the vicinity of the turnpike road).



Figure 8 Queen's Street (Edge Lane) today and as in Bowden's map of circa 1720

Although we can only infer a rough date for Queen's Street, we can be more specific about New Pasture lane, since the "*Frameing Boke*" tells us that "*for the common benefit and proffit there shall be a high and direct way from town head of the said Long Preston and that place of ground called Langber Close*". From Queen's Street, New Pasture lane follows a line between the townfields and the pastures, and the deep hollow-way at the top of Bookilbergill syke would appear to be its most easterly section, as it approaches Langber lane. Exposures of an "engineered" trackway just up the syke from the Long Preston beck may also be part of the 16th century trackway.



Figure 9 New Pasture lane descending to Baggil Holme and as it approaches Langber Close

Concluding remarks

A number of fortuitous circumstances have resulted in Long Preston having an unusually meaningful set of historical records from different centuries, which enable us to understand much more about the early development of the township than is normally the case for North Craven townships.

The Inquisition Post Mortem for Henry de Percy of 1314 provides lengthy but incomplete details about townships such as Settle and Giggleswick, details which are of relatively little historical value. In contrast, since Long Preston was sub-let by Henry de Percy to the Earl of Gloucester, the inquisition only provides the information that Long Preston then comprised 6 carucates. However, this minimal information is invaluable when studying quantitative aspects of the agricultural economy. It is also extremely fortunate that Bolton Priory held Long Preston's tithes and glebe land for over 200 years, creating records which enable us to estimate Long Preston grain yields and diets.

The Long Preston information in the 1579 Clifford survey is much more complete than the information for other townships simply because Long Preston was surveyed first. After surveying Long Preston, the earl's commissioners seem to have realised that the effort invested in surveying the free-holdings was not justified by the recovery of an almost trivial amount of rent; for other townships the free-holdings were omitted from the survey. Only for Long Preston therefore does the 1579 Clifford survey provide a complete listing of all the township holdings, enabling us to see that the land in cultivation had changed little since the early 14th century. It is also fortuitous that the descendants of the monastic holdings should still be resident in the township when the Wakefield deeds registry opened in 1704, and that some of their early deeds registered at Wakefield should make reference to entries in the 1579 Clifford survey; it is the field names identified in these 18th century Wakefield deeds that enable us to locate the monastic holdings established in 1314.

Only because of the combination of fortuitous circumstances listed above do the surviving Long Preston records allow us to suggest how the village developed from a single centre at Domesday, and to conclude that the basic structure of both the Long Preston townscape and landscape has changed little between the 14th century and the present day.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mr Sebastian Fattorini of Skipton Castle for permission to photograph for transcription the 1579 Clifford Survey at the YAS. Both the images of the survey and transcriptions have recently been deposited at the YAS by the author, and figure 2 is reproduced here with Mr Fattorini's permission. Thanks are also due to Mr Chris Moorby and the Long Preston Heritage Project for permission to photograph their copy of the Long Preston Tithe Survey, enabling figure 3 to be produced, to Mr and Mrs Lord for permission to reproduce a picture of the beam at Guy's Villa Barn, and to the Long Preston Primary School for use of their census data, from which table 2 was drawn up.

Abbreviations

NA National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office)

WYAS/W West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield

YAS Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Bovate	An oxgang
Bushel	Measure of grain by volume. qr = 4 bushels
Carucate	8 oxgangs
Glebe land	Land assigned to the church
Inquisition	Searching examination, investigation or detailed survey
Oxgang	Measure of land that varied from township to township. In Long Preston an oxgang was equivalent to 8 ancient acres (approx 13.6 modern acres) which was enough to support 1 subsistence family
Tithe	Bolton Priory was entitled to 10% of Long Preston's production of grain (oats and barley)