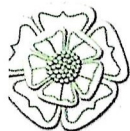


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FARNDALE AND ITS MEDIEVAL BEGINNINGS

The story of a dale told by those who still bear its name

Richard Farndale

One of five dales which run southwards from the central watershed of the North York Moors, Farndale was a forested wilderness until the eleventh century when it became a nominal part of the estate of an elite class. Its name first appeared in 1154 when two small parcels of land were given to the Cistercian monastery of Rievaulx. Its southern reach was concurrently subsumed into the growing royal forests of Pickering and Galtres. In the thirteenth century the lay elite landowners began to clear large areas of the dale for settlement by a villein class who, over time, became tenanted farmers. This was a period of tension between the monastic, royal and lay interests. Those of lower status who occupied the dale came off worse from that tension, particularly in their encounters with a draconian forest law which challenged their traditional freedoms. Nevertheless, by the fourteenth century there was a burgeoning population and the evidence allows us to build a vibrant picture of life in the dale, and the individuals who lived there.

This is the story of Farndale as it first blinked into the historical record.

Wilderness

A traveller in the mid twelfth century who looked down from the moorland on Blakey Ridge into the wilderness that would soon become known as Farndale would have seen the canopy of an expanse of forest that filled the valley and continued southward to the edge of the Vales of Pickering and York. This was frontier country at the edge of civilisation.

There is evidence that the forest had once spread across the high ground as well as through the dales¹. At Burton Howe, immediately northwest of the head of Farndale, the forest was still thick in the Bronze Age.

The surrounding heights on Westerdale and Rudland Rigg provide some of the richest flint tool sites in Britain². Raymond Hayes found over 800 flints from within a ten square metre plot³, probably a temporary camping site in a forest clearing once occupied by hunters following red deer. On Rudland Rigg the Cammon Stone, *cam maen* or bank stone, is a prehistoric standing stone that sits beside the main track.

Flint arrowheads and an urn at were found Stony Rigg on Farndale slope⁴. Bronze Age barrows overlook the dale from the moors. The round barrow at Blakey Howe marks the remains of a prehistoric funerary monument and the promontory of Horn Ridge⁵ which juts from the western slope into Farndale, is rich with relics of the Bronze, Celtic and Roman ages.

In the second or third century CE a Roman soldier had dropped his bronze arm purse near a prehistoric cairn overlooking the dale⁶.

Yet, after Cedd had founded the monastery at Lastingham, only a couple of miles from the mouth of the dale, centuries later in 653 CE, Bede told us that Cedd had found a land *vel bestiae commorari vel homines bestialiter vivere conseruant*, 'fit only for wild beasts, and men who live like wild beasts'⁷.

Human encounters with the dale over eons of time were, like our imaginary twelfth century traveller, observations made from above the dale and not the experience of folk who lived there.

² *The Mesolithic Period in northeast Yorkshire*, J Radley, Yorkshire Archaeological Journal Volume 42, 1966, page 314

³ [Old Roads & Pannierways in North East Yorkshire. R. H. Hayes.1988], Raymond H Hayes, Escaping the Mad Parade in the Smell of Water.

⁴ Yorkshire Archaeological Journal Vol. 41, page 574 and page 581.

⁵ I explore separately the possibility that the *Horn Ridge* was a place of religious significance associated with Kirkdale and may have been the location of the cornu vallis where Ceolfrith of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow rested before his final journey towards Rome.

⁶ British Museum Collections, Reference Number 1873,1219.175. At the time of writing the arm purse is on display in the Roman Britain section of the British museum, a portal to the edge of the dale two thousand years ago.

⁷ *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* by Bede, Book III, Chapter 23, edited by Judith McClure and Roger Collins, Oxford University Press, reissued 2008.

The deep slumber continued through the Saxon and Scandinavian periods, but by the eleventh century, Orm Gamalson, Yorkshire's *Hrothgar*⁸, held lands across the region which included the estate of Kirkbymoorside, recorded as *Chirchebi* in the Domesday Book⁹. The estate of *Chirchebi* by the time of the Domesday Book was likely focused on the small settlement *Chirchebi* itself, and another small community around the exquisite seventh century minster at Kirkdale, only a couple of kilometres to the east. Around those two small communities was a constellation of *berewick* farms at such places as Hoton (Hutton-le-Hole) and Gillamoor, nestled into the edges of the dales; and from Kirby Misperton to Harome across the northern reaches of the Vale of Pickering. Nevertheless the forested dale lands seem to have been nominally incorporated into the wider estate since Domesday Book recorded estate dimensions of 12 by 2 leagues, or about 60 by 10 kilometres¹⁰ suggesting estate boundaries roughly pencilled in Map 1 below.

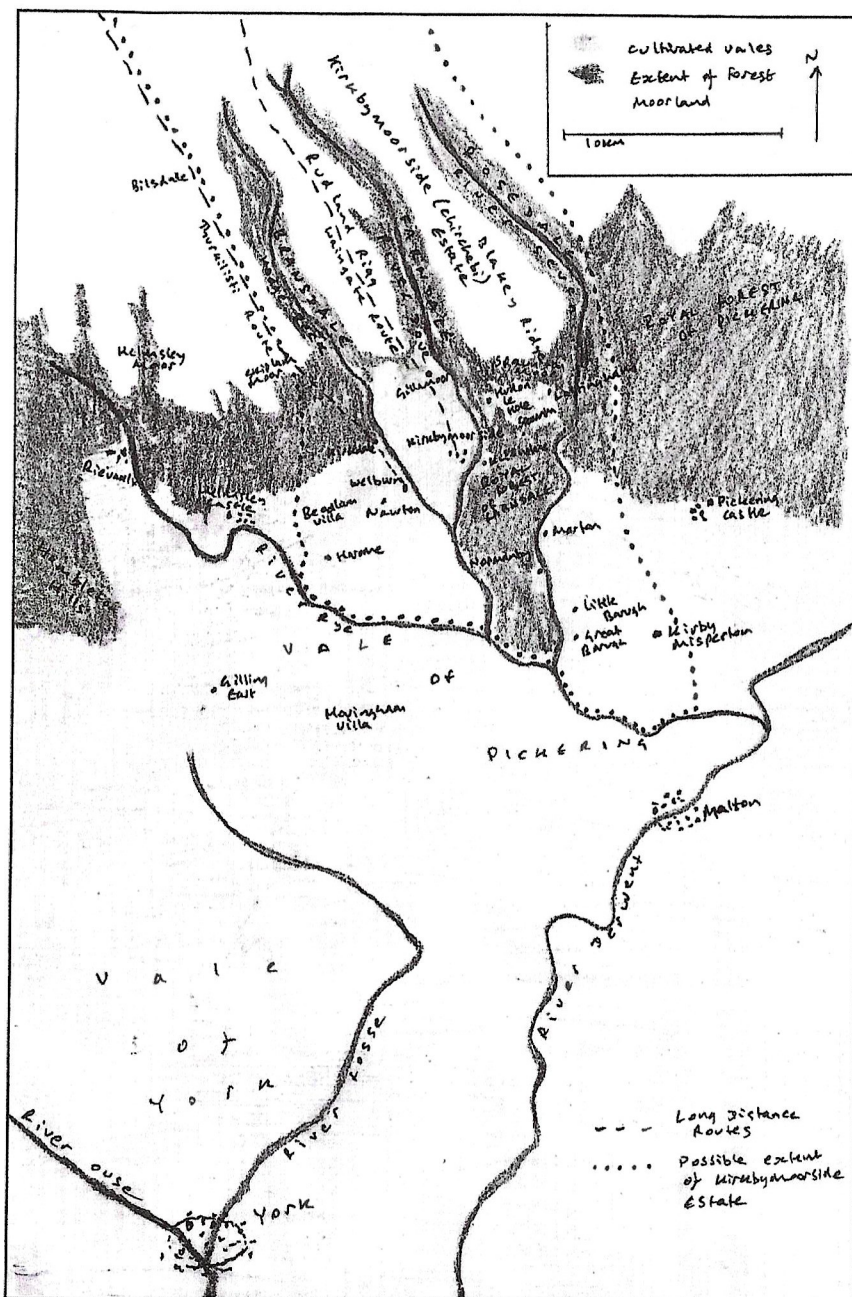
After the Conquest, the manor and estate of *Chirchebi* had passed to Hugh Fitz Baldric, a German archer who became the Sheriff of the County of York in 1069. When he died in 1086, the estate passed to the Stuteville family¹¹. However the turn of the twelfth century was a challenging period for the Norman nobility obliged to chose the right brother to support in the royal clashes between the Conqueror's sons. When this period of uncertainty ended with Henry I (1100 to 1135)'s defeat of his elder brother Robert Curthose in Normandy in 1106, it was Nigel d'Aubigny who emerged as one of Henry's 'new men'. Nigel's mother was Avice of Montbray in Normandy. He married Gundreda of Gournay, and they had a son who would become Roger de Mowbray. It was House Mowbray who took control of Kirkbymoorside as the dust settled.

⁸ *Hrothgar* was the Danish King of the great mead hall in the Beowulf saga which epitomised Anglo-Saxon concepts of warlord protection.

⁹ Kirby [Moorside] in the Domesday Book, 1086, reproduced as Open Domesday by Anna Powell-Smith at <https://opendomesday.org>.

¹⁰ Domesday Book, Yorkshire page 60, The National Archives, E 31/2/2/6262, E 31/2/2/5539, E 31/2/2/6257, *New Settlements in the North Yorkshire Moors 1086 to 1340*, Barry Harrison in *Medieval Settlement in North East England, Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland Research Report No 2*, edited by B E Vyner, 1990, page 25. A League is 3 statute miles (4.83 km), so the area referred to is about 60 x 10 km.

¹¹ *Early Yorkshire Charters*, Volume 9, Stuteville, C T Clay, 1952, page 70.



Map 1 The estate of Kirkbymoorside (Chirchebi) as it may have been bounded in the eleventh century. © the author

As the Mowbray interest emerged, Henry I reserved an extensive area across Ryedale and Pickering as Royal Forest, solely for the use of the King's household. Officers were appointed to manage and protect the royal forests. In Yorkshire, within the forested land from the Dove to the Seven *was to be preserved all my needful things, the hart and the hind, the wild boar and the hawk, in the same land*¹². The great royal forests of Galtres and Pickering in time came to subsume the Farndale forest¹³ at this stage an area of forest south of the dale between Farndale's River Dove and Rosedale's River Seven.

Thus it was that half a millennium after Lastingham was founded, the dale was little changed, still a place of monastic isolation, where a hermit called Edmund made his home. That was about to change.

First Contact

It has been suggested that Henry I, the Conqueror's youngest son, first gifted pasture in Farndale and Bransdale to the nuns of Keldholme to feed their sheep, pigs and cattle¹⁴ although the record of this transaction, and the name of the place, did not appear until the later thirteenth century. There is doubt as to whether such a grant was made as early as the reign of Henry I¹⁵.

The name Farndale first appeared in the written record in the Rievaulx Cartulary, which recorded a gift by the Mowbrays made in 1154. A cartulary was a register of lands and rights kept by the great noble houses and by monasteries.

A new monastic order was founded at Citeaux, near Dijon, in 1098, a rejection of a perceived Benedictine relaxation of the more austere standards set by the desert fathers¹⁶. By the early twelfth century, under the direction of the Burgundian Bernard, the new order was engaged in international expansion. In 1131 Walter Espec, a burly military figure of Helmsley Castle, founded a new Cistercian Abbey at a tranquil

12 *Mandate from Henry I. to Osbert, Sheriff of Yorkshire, The Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops*, Cambridge University Press, 5 June 2014.

13 *Historic forests of England*, Ralph Whitlock, 1979, page 160 to 161.

14 *The Placita de quo Waranto of Edward I*, page 195.

15 *Early Yorkshire Charters*, Volume 9, Stuteville, C T Clay, 1952, page 93.

16 The early Christian hermits of Roman Egypt from whom monastic communities evolved.

location on the banks of the Rye, which river gave its name to Rie-vaulx a corruption of the French *valle*. In 1147 the charismatic Aelred became abbot. He later wrote of the *peace, everywhere serenity, and marvellous freedom from the tumult of the world, where our food is scanty, our garments rough, our drink is from the stream and our sleep is often upon our books*¹⁷. Yet the influence of a seemingly isolated community at Rievaulx would soon stretch across Ryedale.

In 1154 Roger de Mowbray bestowed upon the new Cistercian monastery of Rievaulx, *Midelhovet, that clearing in Farndale where the hermit Edmund used to dwell; and another clearing which is called Duvanesthuat and common of pasture in the same valley of Farndale*¹⁸. *Midelhovet* was, no doubt, the craggy heights above the northern end of Farndale known as Middle Head today. It has been suggested that *Duvanesthuat* was likely to have been the area where the fallen Duffin Stone lies today, along the West Daleside Road. It is more likely to have been land in Douthwaite Dale, adjacent to Hutton-le-Hole, the latter having already been long settled by that time. *Thwaite*, from the Old Norse *thveit*, is generally associated with a meadow or clearing, which might suggest some low level prior cultivation there. Although prior settlement and cultivation was on a small scale at this time, monastic grants were not always of pristine land. Some of the land was *de culta terra*, 'of cultivated land'¹⁹. Nevertheless the endeavours of the monks after receipt of land grants gave rise to a rapid extension of cultivation into formerly virgin forest such as in Farndale.

The grant by Roger followed a previous grant to the Order on an unknown date but during Roger's minority, by his mother Gundreda of land at *Middelhovet* adjacent to an ancient route over the moors known as *Thurkilesti*²⁰.

The name Farndale seems to derive from the Celtic *fearn* meaning 'fern' and the Scandinavian *dalr*, meaning 'dale,' and so was the 'dale where

¹⁷ Aelred of Rievaulx, *Mirror of Charity*.

¹⁸ *Cartularium Abbathiae de Rievallie* reproduced by the Surtees Society Publication Volume 83, 1889, page 36.

¹⁹ *The Monastic Grange of North east Yorkshire*, Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, Volume 40, page 636.

²⁰ *Cartularium Abbathiae de Rievallie* reproduced by the Surtees Society Publication Volume 83, 1889, page 30.

the ferns grew.' though there is an alternative suggestion that Farndale derives from the Celtic *farnoch* and means the place of the alders²¹. There are indeed many alders in Farndale today, though the fern is a woodland plant and no doubt flourished there. Any use of the name prior to 1154 was oral, so we cannot know when it was first uttered.



Photo 1 Middle Head in 2025 from the northern heights above the dale (© the author)

The reference to the hermit Edmund was to a legendary figure of the North York Moors in the twelfth century. He is also associated with Hob Hole on Westerdale moor and was reputed to have been a cousin of King Stephen.

In 1154 those living in the indigenous communities would have wondered in awe at the elven halls of the Cistercians of Rievaulx Abbey, which had risen out of the soil beside the Rye in only twenty years since the Cistercian monks had first arrived there. Such places as *Midelhovet* and *Duvanesthuat*, dimly known to the farming folk around Kirkdale, came into contact with a new order of monks, so recently arrived, bringing French Cistercian traditions and constructing towering halls, a *Rivendell*²² to the agricultural people of the settlements on the Vales.

²¹ Early Man in North East Yorkshire, 1930, page 223.

²² The otherworldly Elven halls conjured by the Anglo-Saxon historian, J R R Tolkien.

When Henry I had died in 1135 he had precariously left the English throne to his daughter Matilda. The throne was immediately seized by Matilda's cousin, Stephen of Blois who reigned until 1154. There followed another period of turmoil known as *the Anarchy*, during which the elite classes again had to choose sides. It fell to Matilda's son by her second husband, Geoffrey Plantagenet (named after the sprig of broom, *planta genista*, which he wore in his hair), to overwhelm Stephen in 1153 and establish a new Plantagenet monarchy in England. That son, who became Henry II (1154 to 1189), found a land in crisis which coincided with the emergence of Farndale from the shadows. The uncertainty was not yet over as Henry sought to wrest the church's jurisdiction over the legal affairs of his realm ending in the controversial murder of Thomas Becket and faced another family revolt, spurred on by his ambitious wife Eleanor of Aquitaine which was not resolved until the mid 1170s.

The eventual outcome though was a more centralised state when Henry took castles across the land into royal control and established legal jurisdiction over criminal and civil law after the Assize of Clarendon in 1166 had wrested control from the church. Royal sheriffs and justices took responsibility for the enforcement of the law and juries of twelve local men were obliged to report to them under oath all the crimes that had been committed in each community. This was a period when the reach of royal government began to stretch into local communities.

By the end of the revolt Roger de Mowbray was compelled to hand back Kirkbymoorside to the House Stuteville along with many other fees. Robert de Stuteville III granted privileges in Farndale to other monastic houses. In 1166 he allowed privileges in Farndale to a small daughter abbey of St Mary, York at Spaunton near Hutton-le-Hole²³. At about the same time he granted rights to timber and wood in Farndale to Keldholme Priory together with pasture and cultivated land in Bransdale²⁴.

The accumulation of land by the new monastic orders such as Rievaulx was alarmingly rapid and large numbers of granges were established

23 Curia Regis Rolls in *Early Yorkshire Charters*, Volume 9, Stuteville, C T Clay, 1952, page 87.

24 Assize Roll, 1076 8 to 9 Edward I in *Early Yorkshire Charters*, Volume 9, Stuteville, C T Clay, 1952, page 92.

by the end of the twelfth century²⁵. Over time the former donors of the landowner classes came to regret their gifts and began, often unsuccessfully, to attempt to evict the monks from their lands.

Concurrently with growing tension between nobility and church, Henry II's Assize of the Forest²⁶ in 1184 imposed vigorous control over the royal forests. By this time about a third of the lands of England were royal forest. The carrying of bows and arrows in the royal forests was forbidden, oaths of good behaviour were demanded and dogs had to have their toes clipped to prevent them pursuing game. Savage penalties were often imposed. A complex hierarchy of verderers, regarders and agisters were appointed. Customary rights to timber were to be overseen. The right to wood was referred to as *bote*. Pickering folk could use green or dray wood for *housebote*, dry wood for *firebote*, or *haybote* for fencing²⁷.

After the expensive interlude of Richard I's ambitions in the Holy Land, when few could resist demands to fund the King's ransom and his subsequent fresh consolidation of royal power, King John (1199 to 1216) started to sell off tracts of royal forests in the north east to raise revenue²⁸. Nevertheless John passionately embraced the Plantagenet legal machine to touch every aspect of the lives of ordinary people²⁹ since there was profit to be made from the selling of writs. Travelling courts asserted royal rights across the nation and royal eyres between 1207 and 1210 raised thousands of pounds from the encroachment of forest land and from poaching offences.

Discontent with the laws ensured that the forest became a political issue. The Northern Barons, who included William de Mowbray and Richard de Percy, were united in kinship and in their dislike of the King. They led the revolt that led to Magna Carta wherein, hidden amidst a plethora of more bespoke terms, there were some gems of English justice. No man should be imprisoned except by the lawful judgement of his peers. Justice was not to be delayed. Since the worst excesses of royal authority

25 The Monastic Settlement of North East Yorkshire, Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, Volume 40, page 481.

26 The Assize of the Forest 1184 was also known as the Assize of Woodstock.

27 John Rushton, *The History of Ryedale*, 2003, page 80.

28 John Rushton, *The History of Ryedale*, 2003, page 78.

29 *The Plantagenets*, Dan Jones, 2013 page 181.

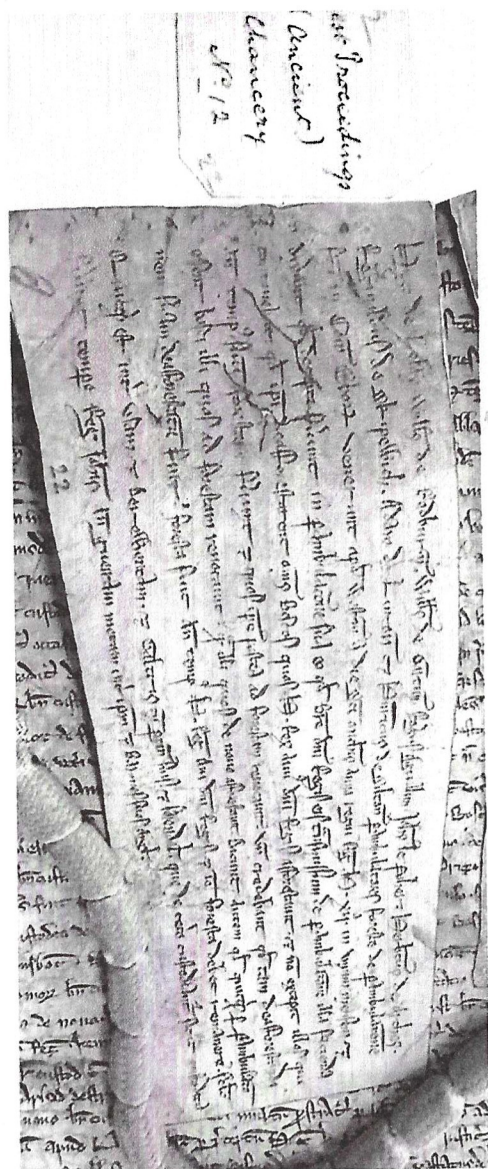


Photo 2 Henry's decree of 1228 on the forest of Farndale. (Chancery Records, The National Archives). © The author

were exercised in the royal forests, such as at Pickering and Farndale, Magna Carta was accompanied by the Charter of the Forest which sought to address the worst of the restrictions and provide some limitation on the King's power arbitrarily to add to the growing size of the royal forests. John soon repudiated the agreement, but the regime of the young Henry III reissued Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest in 1225³⁰ to provide some curb to royal power³¹.

Yet when Henry III (1216 to 1272) declared himself of full age on 9 January 1227 even within the restrictions of the new law, he began measures to reclaim the forest rights of the Crown (Photo 2)³². The political issue continued until the later fourteenth century, by which time large areas of forest had been deforested.

By the early thirteenth century there was thus a tension between the competing rights of Crown, nobility and the monasteries. The Crown sought to regain its interests in the protection of the royal

forests. The monasteries increasingly relied upon their lay brethren's efforts across their widespread gifted lands to provide a commercial income, particularly from the blossoming wool trade, to support their monastic communities. The elite landowners by this time had come to realise that by clearing land for cultivation, they could settle the villein classes to eek out a subsistence level existence, while paying in service, goods or rent for the privilege.

In 1225 Nicholas II de Stuteville brought a case against the abbot of St Mary's York complaining about the exercise of the 1166 grant of timber rights in Farndale, eventually resolved in 1233 by recognising the grazing rights of Nicholas and his tenants whilst recognising the abbot's right to timber *provided they do not tarry in the said pasture*³³.

In a verdict recorded in the chancery records on 29 October 1228³⁴ Henry III decreed that *the whole of the forest of Galtres and the forest between the Ouse and the Derwent, and the forest of Farndale, are ancient forests and that those who trespassed into the forest were deceived in the perambulation of the forest, in which it was recognized that certain parts of those forests were newly afforested, which they have just brought back to the forest.*

When Nicholas Stuteville died in 1233, his daughter Joan, the Lady of Liddell became Lady of the Stuteville estates. She married Hugh Wake who died on Crusade in 1241, but left three sons including Baldwin Wake. Joan married her second husband, Hugh le Bigod, but as a widow continued to be known as Joan de Stuteville. Her seal was embossed with the image of a lady riding sideways, a style which she is said to have been the first to adopt.

In 1253 the King committed to Hugh le Bigod *the whole forest of Farnedala* until he returned from Vasconia (Gascony) where Henry was dealing with an uprising stirred on by the harsh approach taken by his

33 *Early Yorkshire Charters*, Volume 9, Stuteville, C T Clay, 1952, page 19. [Yorkshire Fines? Volume 67. The same timber rights were the subject of a further order by Henry III regarding the Farndale woodland in 1250, The National Archives, Fine Roll C 60/47, Henry III Fine Rolls Project.

34 The National Archives, C 47/11/1/22.

30 The National Archives, Charter of the Forest 1225.

31 *The Plantagenets*, Dan Jones, 2013, page 227

32 *The Royal Forests of England*, Raymond Grant, 1991, page 143.

governor, Simon de Montfort³⁵, another costly campaign which left the Crown heavily in debt. After the King's return, on 2 May 1255 Hugh le Bigod paid 500 marks for the office of forester of Farndale, which included his right to hunt hares with dogs in all Yorkshire's forests³⁶.

On 30 June 1267 Edmund Crouchback knelt before his father, Henry III, to accept the charter which made him Earl of Lancaster. He rose as the owner of land in almost every corner of England, and which included the Honour and Forest of Pickering³⁷. The Great Cowcher or *caret regum*³⁸, comprises evidence of title for the Duchy of Lancaster. It focuses on land and property transactions, including details about the landscape and the nature of tenure across the duchy's estates. It is an invaluable source for the Lancastrian holding in Ryedale including the activity of the first settlers of Farndale.

This was two centuries prior to the Wars of the Roses, but serves to illustrate that the later competing interests between the Houses of York and Lancaster related to a competition between noble houses, not as is often imagined today, a geographical civil war involving the two modern counties.

By the first half of the thirteenth century, whilst there remained extensive protected forested land, there were also islands across the dale relied upon by monastic houses for privileged rights such as grazing and the collection of timber, and there was a fast growing area within Farndale, perhaps centred around the Dove, but stretching across the central dale, that was being rapidly claimed for cultivation and settled for lay use.

Colonisation

Assarting is the act of clearing forested lands for use in agriculture. It was illegal to *assart* any part of a royal forest without permission. The process was sometimes undertaken by individuals or groups of

35 Calendar of Close Rolls, 39 Henry III, page 84. Calendar of Liberate Rolls, 39 Henry III, page 212.

36 Fine Rolls, C39/405, Henry III Fine Rolls Project.

37 R. Somerville, History of the Duchy of Lancaster I, 1265-1603 (1953), Pastoral Farming on the Duchy of Lancaster's Pickering Estate in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, Bryan Waites, Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, Volume 49, page 77. North Riding Records Yorks, The Honour and Forest of Pickering, 1894, Volumes I to IV, of which Volume II and Volume III is available on line.

38 National Archives DL42 References

individuals, but in Farndale it was likely to have been instituted by the land owners as part of a campaign of settlement. Land outwith the royal forest which had previously been common land, became privately owned after assarting, so that those in occupation of the land were required to pay rent and faced new restrictions in land use.

This process of *assarting* in Farndale was probably underway by the second or third decade of the thirteenth century. We can judge the extent of this process, because there are three recorded snapshots of the progress of cultivation in 1276, 1282 and 1301.

By the mid thirteenth century there is an undated deed recording a grant given by Joan de Stoteville to Nicholas Devias for service. It included a right to rent amounting to 20s from Farndale land held by Adam de Ellerschae and eleven marcs from two watermills in Farndale³⁹.

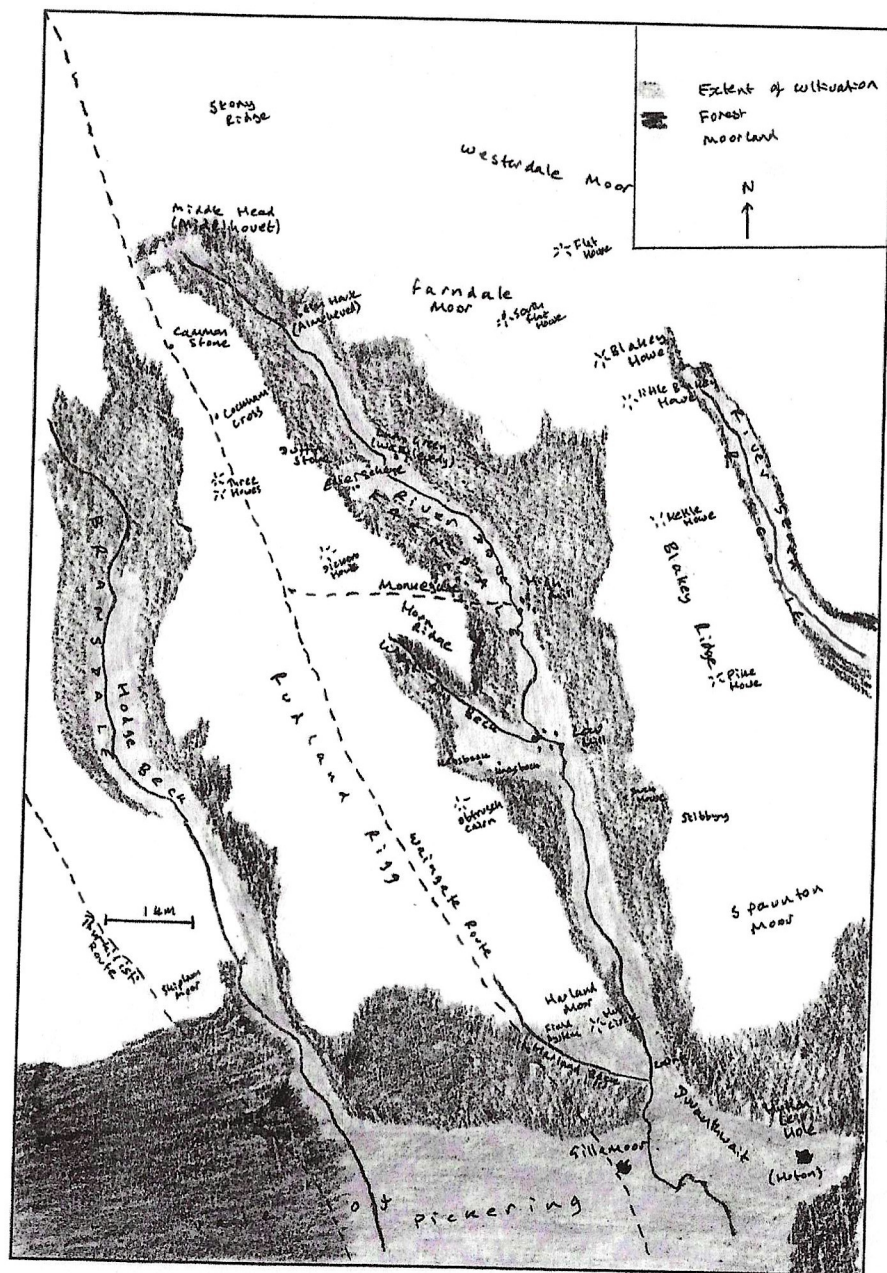
Hence, by the mid thirteenth century Farndale was a community of sufficient size to have two watermills, with rent being paid by named individuals. It is likely that the principal mill was at Low Mill⁴⁰, where the West Gill flows down to meet the Dove, and another probably smaller mill a little upstream at High Mill, where the Daffy Café refreshes walkers today. The funding for these state of the art projects must have come from the Stutevilles and seems to have been completed in the first half of the thirteenth century, in the early phase of clearance.

An Inquisition Post Mortem taken after Joan's death in 1276 (Photos 3 and 4). evidenced the extent of settlement that had taken place. Bonded tenants paying a standard rent of 1s per acre provided an income of £27 5s 0d⁴¹. With 20s to a pound, this evidenced a cultivated area of 545 acres in Farndale. Seven cottars in Farndale raised another 15s 8d and Duthethwayt was listed separately as producing 32s per annum from holdings held by plot rather than by acres. The record also evidenced

39 The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, Vol 16, 1893, page 92.

40 It is probably Troutbeck Cottage on the fast flowing West Gill that marks the site of the original medieval mill, with Mill House on the Dove being the site of a later mill.

41 Yorkshire Archaeological Record Series, Volume 12 *Yorkshire inquisitions of the reigns of Henry III and Edward I (1241-83)*, vol i, ed William Brown, 1892, page 167 to 168, the National Archives C 133/15/2. Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Volume II, Edward I, 1906, page 120.



Map 3 Farndale in the late thirteenth century © the author

of letting by the landowner's servants, as had occurred in Goathland for instance, as part of a coordinated campaign⁴⁵.

In 1301 Edward I, *Longshanks*, had subdued rebellion in Wales and built castles at great expense to exercise his control there. He turned his attention to Scotland and required funds to pay for his campaigns. Among his enemies were the direct descendants of the Yorkshire de Brus family of Skelton Castle, destined to take the Scottish throne in 1306. In 1301 he therefore imposed a Lay Subsidy valued at one fifteenth of the value of every person's moveable possessions. The Yorkshire Lay Subsidy⁴⁶ provides a remarkable record of the settlement pattern and the names of individuals and their occupations and locations at the turn of the fourteenth century. The record for Farndale⁴⁷ listed 39 individuals and the rent they paid. The Subsidy also recorded some of the places within the dale where they lived. There was a family at *Wakelevedy*, which is likely to be the location of Wake Lady Green on the East Daleside Road. Another lived at *Monkegate*⁴⁸, where Monket House provides holiday lets today. There were individuals at *Ellescaye*, presumably descendants of Adam, likely to be the location of Eller House on the West Daleside Road today. Others lived at *Westgille*, the burn which flows down from Rudland Rigg into the hamlet of Low Mill. There were others who had come to the dale from such places as Fadmore and Hoton (probably Hutton-le-Hole). See map 3 opposite and map 4 on page 71.

We can therefore envisage the transformation of a forest wilderness during the course of the thirteenth century into a thriving community, with agricultural activity across eight hundred acres and more of cultivated land, serviced by two watermills along the river Dove, and populated by a complex mix of folk whose energy created a new landscape within a remarkably short timescale.

45 *New Settlements in the North Yorkshire Moors 086 to 1340*, Barry Harrison in *Medieval Settlement in North East England*, Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland Research Report No 2, edited by B E Vyner, 1990, page 27.

46 *Yorkshire Lay Subsidy 1301*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series Volume 21, 1897, ed William Brown

47 *Ibid*, page 48.

48 Originally the name of the track up onto Rudland Rigg, Monkegate suggests an association with monks, but it may drive from *mened cet*, 'forest hill'.

Recognisable individuals started to become identifiable at the time when the system of names between non elite communities had begun to evolve. Individuals started to differentiate between themselves by nicknames, occupations and residence. As settlements grew in size, names became more discerning. When *de Farndale* was no longer sufficient to differentiate between those who all lived in Farndale, folk were referred to by places within the dale such as Westgille or by their occupation. In time it was those who left the dale to move to other places who might use *de Farndale* as an identifier. As the new practice bedded in, these names started to become hereditary. Our narrative of the history of Farndale, is therefore able to enrich its depth with the stories of ordinary individuals at the very earliest period when this became a possibility.

Population

*All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances and one man in his time plays many parts. His acts being seven ages.*⁴⁹

The Lay Subsidy provides a *dramatis personae*. The evidence allows us to bring our nascent dale to life, with the stories of the actors who lived there eight hundred years ago.

The highest rent was paid in 1301 by Simon *Molendinario*, 'the miller' who paid 7s 9d rent, suggesting a worth in moveable goods of £5 16s 3d. His servant (*serviente ejus*), Johanne paid 3d. We might imagine the heart of a community at Low Mill where the West Gill flows down to meet the River Dove and that this was likely to have been the location of Simon's mill.

Simon must have paid a significant rent to the Stuteville landlord for his state of the art technology. By the turn of the century this was Thomas Wake, the Second Baron Wake of Liddell. The rent was eleven marcs⁵⁰ from the two watermills in the mid thirteenth century and Simon's mill was likely the more substantial with a higher rent. We might imagine a model whereby he received an annual income from operating the mill of say £8, with a deduction of say £4 to pay his rent, and annoying impositions of national taxes, like his payment of 7s 9d in 1301, together

⁴⁹ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act II Scene VII.
⁵⁰ A marc was two thirds of a pound or 13s 4d.

with the costs of operating the mill, and pay to his servant John. We will shortly discover that Simon's sons were the victims of draconian forest laws, and the imposition of fines that would have further depleted family resources. Although he may have had a far more substantial turnover than the other folk of the dale, he may not have been so wealthy in the residue of funds he had left to feed his family. He was left with a comparative wealth in moveable comforts, which might equate to a value of about £4,000 today, perhaps the value of about six horses⁵¹, but much of this value may have been in the tools of his trade.

Simon's servant Johanne in time came to be called John the Miller, and it may be that the miller-servant relationship blossomed into a partnership in time.

Radolpho and Willelmo Westgille, who also paid relatively high tax in 1301 in Farndale, presumably represented a family on the slopes above Low Mill alongside the beck. It seems likely that their brother was Richard de Westgill who paid tax in the 1327 and 1333⁵² Lay Subsidies in *Kirkebimoresheved* (Kirkbymoorside) amidst a relatively select group, including the *Domino* Thomas Wake, suggesting a family that was punching above its weight. Richard's sons were trespassers and poachers in Pickering Forest, though such activity ranged from the only alternative for survival by subsistence levels villeins to the sporting activity of the elite classes⁵³.

In medieval Europe, a cleric was often an ordained person sometimes in minor orders of the clergy. A *clericus* was also appointed in lay legal matters by the thirteenth century, including in the operation of the forest laws⁵⁴. De Willelmo *clerico* who paid 23d in the 1301 subsidy might therefore have been a priest or an administrator of forest laws. On 19 November 1388, a licence was given to the inhabitants of *fferndall*

⁵¹ A useful tool to provide a ballpark value of medieval wealth is the National Archive's Currency Converter.

⁵² The Yorkshire Lay Subsidies, The North Riding Record Society, *The Honour and Forest of Pickering*, Edited by Robert Bell Turton, Volume IV, 1897, pages 146 and 152.

⁵³ See for instance *The Poachers of Pickering Forest 1282-1338* by Derek Rivington (Medieval Prosopography, Vol. 17, No. 2, Autumn 1996, pages 97 to 144).

⁵⁴ The Duchy of Lancaster Records, from the North Riding Record Society, *The Honour and Forest of Pickering*, Edited by Robert Bell Turton, Volume IV, 1897, page xxxvi.

to have masses celebrated in their chapel⁵⁵, so we might imagine that William was an early religious leader in the dale.

Roberto *ad Pontem* perhaps lived at a bridge across the Dove and we might imagine him to have lived around Lowna at the entrance to the dale where the bridge which crosses the Dove would later inspire the tale of the fateful entrantress, Sarkless Kitty.

Syther' vidua, the widow of Syther, paid 4d tax. Robert de Brakeanthayt ('the bracken field') paid 4s 7d. The Ruddock brothers paid 2s and 4s. Laurencio Syffewrythe (Latin for 'suffocation', but we know not why) paid 4d. There were others. This was a rich, diverse community.

Early fourteenth century Farndale was a community of developed social structure, *from the infant, mewling and puking to the generation of the sixth age, turning again toward childish treble, pipes and whistles in his sound*⁵⁶.

Grazing rights around the dale varied. Some pasturages continued to be reserved for the use of the King where there was no right in common and here, cattle were grazed at a fixed price or agisted, to be paid to the bailiff. Not the least of the profits derived from the possession of a forest was that arising from the agistment of cattle in waste grounds⁵⁷. Agistments were also made on the high moor. These sums were collected by the agisters, of whom there were two in each ward. (see Table 1)

A number of local folk had taken draught beasts into Pickering Forest in the reign of Edward III in 1310, where the beasts were found and forfeited for a price⁵⁸. Thomas Wake, the Lord of Liddell, whose tenants they were, claimed that the price had already been paid and the tenants should be discharged of the matter.

55 York Archbishop Registers, Register 14 f.6 (recto) entry 4.

56 William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act II Scene VII.

57 The Duchy of Lancaster Records, from the North Riding Record Society, *The Honour and Forest of Pickering*, Edited by Robert Bell Turton, Volume IV, 1897, page xxvii

58 *The Great Cowcher of the Duchy of Lancaster*, The National Archives, DL42/1 Folio 273, 273v, DL 42/1/23/U64 folios 273 to 274v, North Riding Records Yorks Volume III, *The Honour and Forest of Pickering*, 1894, Edited Robert Bell Turton, page 61.

Table 1 : Agistments

Individual from Farndale	Draught animals found in Pickering Forest	Value of the beasts agisted
Robert the Smith of Farndale	1 oxen and 2 stirks ⁵⁹	7s 4d
Walter, son of Robert the Smith of Farndale	5 oxen	20s
John, son of Simon of Farndale	3 oxen	12s
Hugh Laverok of Farndale	1 cow and 1 stirk	4s 8d
William Stibbyng of Farndale	6 oxen	24s
William de Waldehus of Farndale	5 oxen, 4 cows and 4 stirks	38s 8d
John, son of Walter of Farndale	4 oxen and 1 stirk	17s 8d
Alice, daughter of Roger	1 cow	3s
Henry, son of Hugh of Farndale	6 oxen, 2 bullocks and 2 beasts of burden	38s
Nicholas, son of Adam of Farndale	6 oxen and 1 cow	27s
Hugh del Radmire of Farndale	6 oxen	24s
William ad Portam of Farndale	5 oxen	20s
John the shepherd of Farndale	9 oxen, 1 cow and 1 stirk	41s 8d
Roger, the groom of John the shepherd of Farndale	1 bullock	4s
Nicholas de Harland of Farndale	1 ox and 1 bullock	7s
Alan de Wrelton of Farndale	4 oxen and 2 cows	19s
Stephen, son of William	2 bullocks and 1 ox	12s
John, son of Helewise	4 oxen, 3 bullocks, 1 cow, 2 beasts of burden and 1 stirk	38s 8d

The dale's early story continued to be one of two parts, of the ordinary folk who worked the dale and of the elite class who owned it.

In 1325 Thomas Wake asked that the justice of the forest should be commanded to deliver his wood of Farndale. The King replied that Thomas should deliver a writ to the justice of the forest to certify the reason for taking the wood. In a subsequent document, again Thomas asked that the justice of the forest should be commanded to deliver his wood of Farndale and added that he had *seized it without reason*⁶⁰. The King eventually ordered that the official *do justice to Thomas Wake, according to the usage and law of the forest*. It seems that the bureaucracy and the ambiguity of the law was ever thus. Since every writ made money for the Crown, there was every reason to prolong the experience.

On 30 July 1347 Thomass Wake obtained licence for a grant of a toft and ten acres of land on the moor at Blakenhowe, then part of Farndale, to the House of the Holy Cross, to allow them to found a house of their order there, and to build an oratory and dwelling houses⁶¹. The Friars of the Holy Cross, also called the Crutched Friars, were not one of the four principal Mendicant Orders of Friars and they struggled in their bid for recognition after being disapproved of by the Archbishop of York. Religious bodies were often granted land for building which they never in fact occupied. It was partly in an attempt to prevent abortive grants of land that Edward I passed the Statute of Mortmain in 1279. Yet these Brethren of Holy Charity do seem to have had a chapel on Blakey Ridge above Farndale. Two years later, in the Inquisition Post Mortem on the death of Thomas Wake in 1349, in *Farndal a house with a chapel of the brethren of holy charity*⁶² *was of the avowson of the said Thomas and the said brethren hold their tenements there of the said Thomas in frank almoin*⁶³. It has been surmised that the Lion Inn at Blakey might have been built on the same site as the friars' chapel. Since houses of friars traditionally provided accommodation and refreshment to travellers, this seems a natural progression.

60 National Archives, SC 8/8/358. National Archives, SC 8/174/8667.

61 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 21 Edward III, page 370

62 The Brethren of Holy Charity, de *Sancte Caritate*, do not appear elsewhere in the medieval records and it seems likely to have been a reference to the same order.

63 Calendar of Inquisitions, Volume 9, 23 Edward III, page 207. *frankalmoin* was a feudal tenure whereby an ecclesiastical body held land free of military service.

In 1349, the dale remained part of the community of Kirkby Moresheved, where there was a yearly fair, and there were still two water mills in Farndale.⁶⁴

On 19 November 1388 licence was granted to the inhabitants of Farndale to have masses celebrated in their chapel⁶⁵.

The dale was filled with agricultural activity, from the Duffin Stone, Eller House and Monket House on the west side, to Lady Green to the east, focused around its mills and with its hub at Low Mill. Simon the Miller worked the mill in Low Mill, alongside his servant and later partner, John the Miller, serving a diverse agricultural community. Robert was the community's smith. John the Shepherd of Farndale had at least 9 oxen and 3 cattle, and a groom, called Roger. Bells may have tolled high above the dale from the Friary on Blakey Ridge and the folk of Farndale had their own chapel, where William may have been their first priest.

Poaching

*And then the justice, in fair round belly with good capon lin'd, with eyes severe and beard of formal cut, full of wise saws and modern instances and so he plays his part*⁶⁶.

Of a second generation, Roger the Miller, may have worked at High Mill, perhaps the person also known as De Rogero Bernard (the 'brave bear') in 1301. He was regularly involved in poaching activity together with his sons, Richard, John and Thomas who were all excommunicated for their misdeeds. Meantime, William the Smith of Farndale may have continued the family smithy business of Robert, perhaps his father.

We are given a sense of a hard working first generation, who had acquired some comparative wealth by the turn of the fourteenth century, and an adventurous, reckless or sometimes desperate younger generation who came increasingly into contact with the burgeoning royal jurisdiction.

64 Calendar of Inquisitions, Volume 9, 23 Edward III, page 203.

65 York Archbishop Registers, Register 14 f.6 (recto) entry 4.

66 William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act II Scene VII