

Analysis of William COCKSHOT Will by Sarah LISTER of Settle

Tenancies in those days were for ages and could be hereditary. There are a number of tax records which show William, along with many others, renting from Mrs Elizabeth Widdall, 'tenant for life with remembrance of the Rt Honourable Thomas Philip Widdall, Lord Grantham'. Elizabeth was probably the Lord of Grantham's widow and she held all the land in the area. On one record the Duke of Devonshire rented from her! It looks as though she owned most of Wigglesworth on those days, just as the Duke of Devonshire owned most of the Settle area. So if you wanted to live in Wigglesworth area you had to rent from them. When Elizabeth died it would probably have handed over to their descendants but tenants would often be given first refusal if and when they were sold off as the century progressed. Of course this custom and practice came to quite an abrupt halt with the introduction of inheritance tax after WW1.

However William also mentions [just before line 100] 'in case my son shall be mindful and desirous to sell and dispose of my said estate at Foxup' suggesting that he owns Foxup, lucky man. It was quite common for wealthy men to own some properties and rent others from the likes of Mrs Widdall, and also rent others out to tenants and even sub let properties which they rent off others.

I've had a good look at Henry Hornby but can't find any relationship between them, so, if they are related, he's more of a distant relation. He must have been a good friend.

The Hornbys came from Settle but seemed to move over to Kirkby Malham in the first half of the 19th century. Henry 1786-1861 was a bachelor who farmed in the village of Kirkby Malham and lived with his widowed sister Mary Wray.

Henry left his estate to his niece Ellen (Hornby) Howarth who lived at Capon Hall with her husband James. Ellen was the daughter of Henry's brother John.

The 'Manor of Newby' is Newby Hall near Ripon and was the residence of Lord Grantham. The TV series Downton Abbey is based on the real Lord Grantham. Old Ing is in the Parish of Horton in Ribblesdale and is in the middle of nowhere beyond the viaduct.

Thomas Cockshott states he owns Old Ing "in my own occupation free from all claims and demands in respect of growing crops or tillages" but still has to pay a charge "But subject nevertheless to and charged and chargeable with the payment of the said rent charge of twenty pounds also subject to the customs of the said manor in respect thereof"

I would think that the landowner sold his land subject to an annual charge 'for the privilege' of having that land. In medieval times the landowner owned everything and all proceeds from the land went to him with a small salary paid to the workers and the landowner made up all the rules for a justice system, infrastructure and looking after the poor, which would have been really variable.

Over time, because of pressure from the peasants, this changed so that workers could become tenants on the land, paying rent but keeping some of the proceeds and later all of the proceeds. Parish councils gradually gained more authority although the landowners often remained influential in the church, it was customary for the youngest son to become a vicar. This process happened between the 16th and 19th century but at different rates across the country.

Loyal tenants were sometimes allowed to purchase properties and land, perhaps the arrangement in Thomas' Will was a halfway house to complete freehold ownership? I doubt Thomas would have got much in return.