

Victoria County History of Cumbria Project. Draft parish/township histories

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Parish/township: GAMBLESBY

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GAMBLESBY¹

LANDOWNERSHIP

The manor of Gamblesby (also known as Gamblesby and Unthank) can be traced to the reign of Henry I, when it was granted, together with the neighbouring manor of Glassonby, to Hildred of Carlisle, to hold by cornage.² Gamblesby and its adjoining hamlet of Unthank descended with Glassonby to Hildred's heirs for several generations [[SEE GLASSONBY ARTICLE](#)]. However, following the forfeiture of Christopher de Seaton for siding with Robert de Bruce in 1306, Gamblesby and Glassonby were divided, with Gamblesby being granted in fee to William, 2nd Lord Latimer (d.1326).³ The manor descended regularly to William, 4th Lord Latimer, on whose death in 1385, it passed to his daughter and heiress, Elizabeth, the second wife of Sir John Neville of Raby (d.1388).⁴ On her husband's death, Elizabeth took livery of her father's lands.⁵ Her son and heir, John Neville (d.1430) was a minor at the time of his mother's death in 1395,⁶ and he did not inherit

¹ The author would like to thank Lydia Gray and the staff at Carlisle Archive Centre for their assistance in the preparation of this article.

² *Abbreuiatio Placitorum* (1811), 66; Denton, *History*, 147; Denton, *Perambulation*, 331; Sharpe, *Norman Rule*, 7-14.

³ *Cal. Pat.*, 1301-07, p.434; *Complete Peerage*, VII, 465.

⁴ *Complete Peerage*, VII, 475.

⁵ *Cal. Close*, 1385-89, pp.545-546.

⁶ *Complete Peerage*, VII, 475-476.

until 1403.⁷ Divorced from his wife and lacking issue, in 1417 John Neville demised Gamblesby and two manors in Yorkshire⁸ jointly to his half-brother, Ralph Neville, 1st earl of Westmorland (d.1425), who had acquired the honour of Penrith in 1397-8, and to the latter's second wife, Joan Beaufort. For this the earl and countess gave £300.⁹ At the time of the agreement, Gamblesby was held for life by William de Lowther.¹⁰

In 1430, Joan and Ralph's third son, George Neville (d.1469), succeeded to the former Latimer estates, and he was subsequently summoned to Parliament as Lord Latimer.¹¹ However, Joan Beaufort continued to hold Gamblesby of George until her death in 1440.¹² In 1451, George was declared insane and custody of his lands was granted to his eldest brother, Richard Neville, earl of Salisbury (d. 1460).¹³ Salisbury had already acquired the honour of Penrith in the settlement of the Neville inheritance in 1443, and so Gamblesby may have effectively been administered as part of the honour from the 1450s. Following the death of Salisbury's son and heir, Richard earl of Warwick in 1471, Gamblesby became a possession of the crown. It was subsequently granted by Edward IV to his brother, Richard duke of Gloucester, along with the lordship of Penrith and other Neville possessions.¹⁴ Christopher Moresby, Richard's steward of Penrith, was also made steward of Gamblesby in 1484, 'with governance of the king's tenants there'.¹⁵ He continued in post under Henry Tudor.¹⁶

⁷ *Ibid.*, 476.

⁸ Scotton in Richmondshire and Drydale.

⁹ TNA, CP 25/1/291/63.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Complete Peerage*, VII, 479.

¹² TNA, SC 6/1124/3.

¹³ *Cal Pat.*, 1446-52, p.430; this grant was renewed by Edward IV in 1461: *Cal Pat.*, 1461-67, p.71.

¹⁴ *Cal. Pat.*, 1471-76, p.266.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1476-85, p.453.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1485-94, p.91

During the reign of Henry VIII, Gamblesby and the honour of Penrith were granted to the wardens of the West March in order to fund repairs and pay the wages of soldiers at Carlisle Castle.¹⁷ In the seventeenth century, Gamblesby was included within a collection of manors known as Queen's Hames, whose revenues were assigned to the Queen.¹⁸ This continued until 1696, when it was arranged that on the death of Catherine of Braganza, the Queen Dowager (d.1705), Gamblesby and the honour of Penrith would be granted to William Bentick, earl of Portland.¹⁹ In 1787, Bentick's great-grandson, the 3rd duke of Portland, sold Gamblesby and the rest of the honour to his brother-in-law, William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire (d.1811).²⁰ The manor of Gamblesby remained in the Cavendish family to the time of writing.

The lack of demesne or free rents in Gamblesby was noted in 1688.²¹ The majority of tenants continued to hold by customary tenantry until copyhold tenure was abolished in 1925. This was despite a serious challenge to this form of tenure in 1609, when the crown attempted to convert customary tenants who owed border service into leaseholders unless they could produce evidence of their copyhold status.²² The tenants won their case on this occasion. In the absence of a resident lord, local society was headed by the yeomanry. In 1839-41 there were forty-two individual landowners, of whom thirteen possessed fifty acres or more.²³ The majority (thirty-two in all) were

¹⁷ TNA, E210/9784; *Letters & Papers, Foreign & Domestic*, Henry VIII, iv, 749-757; vii, 462-475

¹⁸ Queens Hames, which included the honour of Penrith, had been created on the marriage of Margaret, daughter of Henry III to Alexander III of Scotland in 1251: N&B, ii, 397.

¹⁹ *Cal. of Treasury Books*, XI (1696-97), 126.

²⁰ *Complete Peerage*, IV, 346-347.

²¹ Denton, *Perambulation*, 331.

²² CAS (C), P 90/15.

²³ CAS (C), DRC 8/76.

also occupiers,²⁴ by far the largest landowner amongst them being John Falder, with 174 acres [70 ha].²⁵

Enclosure had a significant impact on landownership in Gamblesby. Forty-two individuals benefitted from the enclosure of Low Fell in 1860, half of whom were resident in the township.²⁶ Substantial allotments were made to resident yeoman farmers, including Thomas Watson, Benjamin Salkeld, John Morton Jnr, and George Falder, each of whom acquired between 90 and 110 acres. Holdings were further increased by the enclosure of Gamblesby High Fell in 1868.²⁷ Again, the largest allotments were made to resident yeomen, the most significant being some 223 acres [90 ha] acquired by George Falder, who purchased several allotments from other tenants. According to the 1871 Census, George Falder owned 600 acres in total.²⁸ Similarly, John Morton, whose father held 60 acres [24 ha] in 1839,²⁹ possessed 317 acres [128 ha] by 1871.³⁰ Both the Falder's and Morton's ties with Gamblesby can be traced back to the seventeenth century.³¹

By the early twentieth century, the number of landowners had remained stable, but there was a significant decline in owner-occupation. By 1910, three quarters of the total acreage in Gamblesby and Unthank was tenanted, and of the forty-three landowners listed, only fifteen were occupiers.³² Among the most substantial estates was that of the Falder family (represented by John George, Joseph, and Thomas Falder³³), who possessed 621 acres [251 ha] at Unthank, which were then

²⁴ This included ten individuals with more than fifty acres.

²⁵ Will of Anthony Falder of Unthank, 1672.

²⁶ CAS (C), QRE 1/111.

²⁷ CAS (C), QRE 1/113.

²⁸ Census 1871.

²⁹ *Ibid.* John Morton moved his family to Gale Hall Farm, Melmerby after 1831: QRP 2/1/2.

³⁰ Census 1871.

³¹ Will of Anthony Falder of Unthank, 1672; will of John Morton, yeoman of Gamblesby, 1688.

³² CAS (C), TIR 4/5/9.

³³ T.F. Falder was living in New Zealand in 1931: CAS (Carlisle), PR 29/92.

leased to a single tenant. The Rowleys, a Yorkshire family who owned Glassonby Hall, had amassed a significant estate within Addingham parish, including 653 acres [264 ha] in Gamblesby (mostly on the Fell), which was divided between three tenants.³⁴ However, there were still several owner-occupiers with fairly large estates. William Westgarth and Joseph Benson³⁵ owned and farmed 183 and 160 acres [74 and 65 ha] respectively, while Mary Jane Toppin of Hazelrigg had 225 acres [105 ha].³⁶ But by far the most significant owner-occupier was George Morton, with 487 acres [197 ha] at Unthank.³⁷ In 1938, he was named as one of Gamblesby's principal landowners.³⁸

³⁴ CAS (C), TIR 4/5/9.

³⁵ His ancestor and namesake, Joseph Benson of Gamblesby, was an associate of John Wesley.

³⁶ CAS (C), TIR 4/5/9.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Kelly, *Cumb. Dir.* (1938), 24.