

A recently-discovered map of Bolton Wood and Fell, Cumberland, 1567: Transcription, initial analysis and discussion

Sixteenth century maps of Cumberland are extremely rare. Two maps of the debateable land (TNA MPF 1/257 and MPF 1/285), and a sketch plan of Workington (TNA MPF 1/334) is the full extent of the National Archives holding according to their catalogue, while there seem to be no sixteenth century maps at all covering any part of Cumberland in the Cumbria Record Offices (and indeed very few of Westmorland). The discovery of a new map in the National Archive is therefore an event of some importance. The map came to light during the cataloguing of WARD 2 (Deeds & Evidences) documents in the archives of the Court of Wards and Liveries, and was in October 2010 drawn to the attention of Rose Mitchell, the map archivist, who realised its significance. It has now been catalogued as WARD 2/61/241/14.

On the reverse is the following text

The trew platt off the Grounde in variance Betwene Thomas Stanlaie esquire/(one the behalf off Richard Irton The Quenes Maties warde plaintiffe And John/ Senhouse esquire defend Called Bolton woode and the Loynes als Bolton fell/ Correctyd and maide perfyt Bie hus Alan Bellingham Henrie Curwen Leonarde/ Dykes and George Lamplewghe esquires Bie vertue of the Quenes Maties/ Commission hereunto Annexed the Second and thirde Daies of September in/ this present ixth yeare of the Quenes Maties reigne that nowe is As well/ Bye oure owne veiwe and advice of the parties as also bie the treadinge and bounderinge/ of the saide grounde bie xxij of the most sufficient persons that we coulde gytt ffor/ The knowledge thereof sworne ffor that purpose whereoff weare nominate bie the/ plaintiffe xij and bie the Defend xij whose names hereafter followeth

This is followed by two lists of names of the witnesses, with their ages, holdings and landlords given.

The commission is missing, and no other documentation on the case has yet come to light. However, as will be shown below, the map is centred on Bolton Wood while particular emphasis is given to the two manor houses of Santon and Irton. According to Denton, writing a generation later, Senhouse and Kirkby had lands in Bolton. Irton and 'one Wynder' held lands in Santon, while the Irtons held 'the towne and seate of Irton'. The map thus seems to be telling the story from the perspective of the Irtons, but apparently involved a dispute with Senhouse over the boundaries between Santon and Bolton within Bolton Wood, during a period when Richard Irton was under the guardianship of Thomas Stanley. This latter is presumably the Thomas Stanley who was Master of the Mint and lord of Brackenthwaite, Loweswater and Thackthwaite (see Denton).

Whatever the dispute, it would appear a two day perambulation of the ground had been arranged, accompanied by local men from both sides. The use of the words ‘corrected and made perfect’ suggests that the map was already in existence, and had been taken out and amended on those days. The original may either have been produced for an earlier stage in this dispute, or could have been in existence earlier still. Certainly the highly original style of the map, and the way it focuses on Santon and Irton manors strongly suggests that the original may have been an estate map made by or for either Thomas Stanley or, perhaps more likely, an earlier member of the Irton family. Given its appearance, it is even possible it could even have a pre-reformation monastic origin, although no monastic link to the area concerned has yet been found.

The map, on parchment, measures approximately 66.5 x 64.5 cms. It has been drawn in ink, prior to the greater part of the map being coloured in a green wash. A dominant feature of the map is the scroll work, left uncoloured, used to name the surrounding lordships. Most buildings too are left uncoloured, apart from their black roofs. However, Gosforth church, Nether Wasdale church, and the manor houses of Santon and Irton are given red roofs. Some buildings have been drawn in after the green wash was applied, which suggests that these were part of the ‘correction’ process. The writing-in of the details of the two perambulation routes would also seem to be part of this correction process.

The map has no scale. The four cardinal points are named on the map edges, and the map has north at the top. Two main rivers are shown, though left uncoloured, the *Blenge Ryvere* which comes from the north west having absorbed the *frythwythe syke* (?), and the *Erte Ryvere*, which runs from the east, having absorbed the *kidbecke*, a small feeder coming down from the north. At the top of the map, the tributaries almost join, the watershed being marked by the *cople stone*. South of Bolton Wood, the *Irt* and the *Bleng* join together and flow off to the south west down to the sea at Drigg. Two roads are shown, again uncoloured, one heading south to Santon, the other *the waie to erte*. Between these is another possible lane, while some other *waies* have been drawn in as part of the correction process.

Bolton Wood itself is defined in relation to four lordships, starting with Gosforth (*Gosforde*) in the north west corner, shown as sixteen scattered houses, most depicted with a central chimney, a door in the gable end which also has two windows, while the side elevation has three. One of the houses, not named but presumably the manor, is shown somewhat larger. Gosforth church is shown with a central tower with steeple over a crossing – bearing no resemblance whatsoever to the Victorian church which now stands on the site. However, as Nether Wasdale church is portrayed more or less identically, there was clearly no attempt to show the church as it was.

In the south west corner the scroll reads *Bolton Lordshyp parteynge to Kyckbyes* (presumably referring to Kirkby, who held lands in Bolton). The houses are depicted similarly to Gosforth, though one appears to be double-pile, and another has dormer windows.

Below Bolton *Drygge Lordshyppe* is named in a simple rectangle, but no houses are shown. The next scroll to the south reads *Halffe the Lordshype of Santon*, centred around the grand manor house of Santon, shown with three buttresses. The other houses are a mixture of double and single pile – though obviously such things should not be taken too literally.

South again, across the river Irt, the scroll records *The Lordshyp of Erton*, but *the mannor of Irton* is shown in splendid isolation, with no nearby houses, a substantial building, again buttressed, but this time based on a three-storey tower house with a pyramid roof. The focus of the map on these two manor houses and the different ways in which they are shown probably means the mapmaker was making an attempt to draw them from life.

Next, to the north, east of the Irt, is *The Reste of Santon Lordshypp*. The houses here are bunched together, as if strung out along a road, and possibly representing the settlement now named Santon Bridge.

To the north of the Irt a simple label records that this is *Therle of Northomberlandes lande* and *Nether Wastell* (Wasdale), where there is a church and a number of houses, beyond which the final scroll to the north records *The Earle of Northumberlands Foreste* (Copeland Forest).

It remains to describe what lies within the circle of the two rivers. At the south, a scroll carries the legend *The Lones*, around which cluster nine houses, while the words *Bolton Woode* appear twice above, not in scrolls. In addition, probably as part of the amendment process at the time of the perambulation, has been written in *Bolton Wood and the Loynes als Bolton Fell* – a terminology which clearly links this to the certificate on the reverse of the map. In the empty top part of the wood, two peaks are named, one appears to be *Cople stone* again, plus *Browne edge*, while the other is called *Saddleback stone*. Below these lies the settlement of Thistleton, comprising five houses and their fields. Finally, down towards the Bleng, another group of houses is shown, including one drawn in as part of the correction process. Many of these houses within the boundaries of Bolton Wood (as claimed by the plaintiff) are identified by the names of their occupiers and their landlords (such as *Patryckson, Kirkbie, Irton, the heyres of the Boltons, John Synowse*). Others are marked as freehold, while in one place some *waste grounde* and in another *Common* is identified, and various other minor topographical features are named. However, the main element of the amendment process was the writing in of the results of the perambulation, which unlike all the original writing is not oriented to the north, but is written all round the boundaries as they proceeded.

It appears that the two sets of twelve men went separately about their task. Whilst it is not clear where the perambulators actually began and ended, the most likely place is at *The Lones*, at the confluence of the Blenge and Irt. From here the twelve men nominated by the plaintiff set out up *Blenge to cabell beck* and thence as far as *blacke dyke nuke(?)*, while the defendant's men went round the outside of all the tenements across the river from Bolton (probably those named Rose Cott, Parknook and Sowermyrr on the modern OS map) as far as *cabell beck*, then round the outside of all the tenements of Thistleton. At *blacke dyke nuke* they met up again and *agreed in all places and mearce till theie came to kidbeck bridge* (just before the confluence with the Irt). From there the twelve men for the plaintiff carried on down the Irt, while the defendant's men went round to the outside of a couple of tenements now marked as Bengarth on the modern OS map, then down *the waie to erte*, after which both sides met and agreed the boundaries all the way to *blenge foote*.

The defendant's twelve men had deviated in three significant respects – in each case excluding from the boundaries of Bolton Wood/Fell tenements which the plaintiff regarded as being within those boundaries. In a couple of cases new houses have been drawn in within these excluded areas, suggesting perhaps that these are new intakes – which may indeed have been what caused the suit in the first place. Senhouse was clearly associated with some of this enclosure to the west of the wood, as he is named as landlord – but what connection, if any, he had with Thistleton and the other excluded area is unknown at this stage.

Additional Notes on Senhouse and Irton

John Senhouse esq, the defendant, inherited Seascale between 1520 and 1530. In 1553 he was pardoned for all crimes of high treason and rebellion against Queen Mary, and in 1564/5 was appointed escheator for Cumberland and Westmorland. His will is dated 1568 and he was succeeded by his eldest son Thomas (R M le F Senhouse, 'Senhouse of Seascale Hall in Cumberland', *CWAAS Transactions*, vol XII, (1893), pp.247-260). Quite what his claim to Bolton was is less clear. Nicolson and Burn (*History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmorland and Cumberland* 1777), followed by Samuel Jefferson (*History & Antiquities of Allerdale Ward*, 1842, p.197-8) says that in 1544 the manor of Bolton was held of the king by William Kirkby, but that 'afterwards' it was held by one Lancelot Senhouse, a brother of the lord of Seascales –but no date is given for this.

Richard Irton, Queen's ward, plaintiff, is less easy to identify. The manor of Irton was from the Conquest held by the Irton family. Nicolson and Burn (*History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmorland and Cumberland* 1777) give a succession with Richard, who was sheriff in 1531, being succeeded by Roger, then John, then another John. No dates are given for any of these successors. Jefferson gives a slightly different succession, with Richard, who inherited in 1503 and was High Sheriff of Cumberland in 1531 being succeeded by his son Christopher (not Roger)

in 1543, who in turn was succeeded by his son John, date not known, but who married in 1577 (Samuel Jefferson, *History & Antiquities of Allerdale Ward*, 1842, p.197-8). There is no mention here of a ward, Richard. However, C A Parker, (*The Gosforth District*, 1904) says (p.177) that John Irton married Dorothy Kirkby in 1577, and had issue John and Richard. It is not inconceivable therefore that the Richard Irton mentioned on the map was his elder brother, a ward in 1567, but who predeceased his brother. Their father Christopher married in 1543, and could well have had an elder son who was still under 21 in 1567. However, Parker only names John, Alice and Dorothea as Christopher's issue, so in the absence of further information, nothing can be concluded about the plaintiff.

Bill Shannon, June 2011