

## **An Introduction to the History and Archaeology of Hapton Tower and Deer Park**

This introductory survey outlines the history of Hapton in the post- medieval period which lasted from around 1500 AD upto the period of the Industrial Revolution which began about 1780. For much of this time over half of the 4000 acres comprising the township of Hapton, which stretched from the top of Hambledon and beyond down to the River Calder, was the site of a deer park belonging to the Towneley Family.

The Deer Park was first established by John Towneley who succeeded to the Towneley estates, which by then included Hapton, on the death of his father in who died from his wounds obtained in fighting the Scots at Berwick in 1482. It has been suggested by Dr Whitaker, who write the first serious history of the area in 1800 that there had been an earlier '*parcus de Hapton*' probable established by the de la Legh family in the Middle Ages. However a Charter of 1329, upon which Dr Whitaker appears to rely, contains no such reference.

John Towneley was only 9 at the time of his father's death and was cared for by his widowed mother and her brother Sir Christopher Towneley who no doubt helped to manage his estates. However in 1497, by which time he was 26 and had already been knighted, Sir John Towneley obtained a licence from King Henry the Seventh to buld a Tower at Hapton and to create a park in 'certain old enclosed lands' of Hapton. Some 17 years later in 1514 King Henry the Eighth granted Sir John to extend his park to include the open fields and wastes of the township which increased the size of the Park to some 1100 Lancashire acres (about twice the size of a statute acre hence the figure of some 2000 acres suggested above. At the time Hapton was the largest deer park in Lancashire although it was subsequently overtaken by the Earl of Derby's at Knowlesley

It seems likely that the '*old enclosed lands*' would have been the small irregular fields on either side of the modern Accrington Road which would have been farmed by the occupiers of the small hamlets around Lane Ends and Bentley Wood whereas the 'open fields' taken in by the 2<sup>nd</sup> enclosure would have been those worked jointly by the villagers probably using strip farming methods. The discovery of ridge and furrow cultivation in the area round Hapton Tower appears to confirm this. The now demolished 17<sup>th</sup> century aisled barn at Bentley Wood Green seems indicative of mixed farming, including the cultivation and processing of grain crops and payments by Sir John Towneley to the Abbey of Whalley in 1536 show that amounts from sheaves (of corn) amounted to £2-13-4 for Hapton whereas lambs and wool produced only £1-8-0. So it is perhaps not surprising that by 1515 Sir John was in dispute with the copyholders, or tenants, of Hapton who claimed that he had enclosed lands over which they had rights. In 1524 Madame Anne Birtwistle of Huncoat Hall successfully obtained judgement against Sir John over his wrongful passion of her lands The proximity of Hapton Tower to the lands which appear to have comprised the medieval *vill* of Birtwisle (see the companion essay about Hapton in the Middle Ages for the identification of Birtwisle) would seem to suggest that the inhabitants of that holding may have also been casualties of Sir John's enclosures. In any event Sir John seems to have acquired an unfortunate reputation and there is a long tradition that his unhappy spirit 'walked or wandered in the neighbourhood of his ill-acquired lands.

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Not with standing these difficulties Sir John appears to have chosen Hapton Tower as his favourite residence over both Towneley Hall and his wife's house near Worksop and lived there until his death in 1539-40. The last of the Towneleys to reside permanently at the Tower was Lady Jane (nee Assheton) widow of Richard Towneley, Sir John's great grandson, who died there in 1637 and the inventory to her will provides some information about its interior (see Fig.11 of the main report *Hapton Heritage - A Landscape History and Village Survey* for a summary). Her son Christopher – the famous archivist who transcribed many of the Townely family papers for posterity- also lived there with her until he to live at Carr Hall, Barrowford on his marriage.

The building was still inhabited in 1667 *and subsequently* there were several dwellings patched up out of the out-buildings etc although it had been 'destroyed to the foundation' by 1800. However Whitaker reports a description offered by two aged persons of the remains of the tower in about 1725 when they stood some six yards (5.5m) high and appeared to have been a large square building which had on one side the remains of three cylindrical towers with conical basements). It also appeared to have had two principal entrances opposite to each other with a through lobby between and not to have surrounded a quadrangle. The 1801 edition of Whitaker contains a drawing of the Tower which in no way appears to conform with the description and is presumably conjectural. Hamilton's Map of 1661, which was presumably drawn when the Tower was still occupied may be a more accurate depiction. This shows it as two opposing tower blocks separated by a walled courtyard with a possible entrance centrally placed along the courtyard wall This depiction seems to contradict Whitaker's assertion that there was no quadrangle (see Figs 9 &.10 of the main report)..

The site now comprises some low earthworks and tumbled stones is crossed by a prominent stone field wall which contains what may be a rough hewn two light mullion window. A number of buildings both locally and further afield appear to contain worked stone from Hapton Tower and no doubt many as yet undiscovered fragments are similarly located at nearby sites. At nearby Watson Laithe Farm the gable wall above barn incorporates a moulded coping with 4 carvings: a rose, IHC (Jesus), a rampant lion, and a crucified figure (all ex situ, probably late medieval). According to (Raines 1878, 23n48-see main report ) on the 5 Nov.1497 John Yngham was ordained at Lichfield and later in 1501 “ad stipend Joh'is Towneley”. Raines seems to conclude from this that there was a Chapel within the Tower although there are no references to it in Jane Towneley's will (although this was almost 150 years later). Various mullioned windows at Watson Laithe may have come from the Tower and there is also a newel (spiral) which may be that referred to by Titus Thornber has having being moved from the Tower to a secret location and is certainly much to grand for a farmhouse. At Dyneley Hall, Cliviger are some gargoyles 'in the form of naïve masks' which are also reputed to have come from the Tower and similar carvings are now built into the fireplace at Hapton Hall. The fireplace at Browsolme Hall in Bowland also has an over mantel bearing the Towneley coat of arms which is said to come from Hapton Tower

The Park itself is clearly shown on Speed's Map of Lancashire 1610 with the Tower occupying a central position. However we are fortunate to have maps at a much larger scale from a slightly later survey of the Towneley Estates carried out by James Hamilton in 1661 which show the full extent of the Park boundaries. These are most easily identified on the summit ridge of Great Hill and Black Hill where there is a well defined ditch now accompanied by a stone wall which sweep round in an impressive arc clearly marking the southern boundary of the Park. A feature known as the Long or Pale Dyke (ie carrying a

paling fence) is still marked on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey six inches to one mile scale map of 1848 although it now appears to have been obliterated by the groundworks around the masts on the summit of Hameldon..

The boundary appears to follow the left (west) bank of Habergham Clough from where the A679 road crosses its deep valley at Spa Wood and follows the Clough up to its junction with Micklehurst and New Barn Cloughs where it continues up the left bank of the latter to its confluence with its short tributary of Helm Clough. Whitaker noted that in the contiguous desmesne of Habergham was a hollow which was traditionally regarded as a pitfall dug for impounding stray deer and also known as a 'deer-lope'. This must have been quite close to the Deer Park and Township boundaries-possibly near to Lower Micklehurst or Habergham Hall Farms but a brief reconnoitre has revealed no obviously likely features. The Deer Park boundary then follows Helm Clough through a right angled left turn up Hameldon to a former farmstead shown on the 1848 OS Map as Porter's Gate but actually shown on Hamilton's survey as Postern Gate, from where it follows the public footpath westwards to a former reservoir on Black Hill. According to Whitaker "near the summit of the park where it declines to the south are the remains of a large pool, through which tradition reports that the deer were driven by their keepers in the manner still practised in the park at Lyme". Could this be the origins of this feature which appears latterly to have supplied the residents of Dunnockshaw with water? The boundary then turns south to meet the wall and ditch on the main ridge of Hameldon which it follows until the wall swings sharply south close to the modern weather station and masts mentioned above.

The boundary then crosses the headwaters of Thorney Bank Clough and turns north down to the scant remains of the pre-1848 Thorney Bank and the rebuilt pre-1894 version and 'Top of Barley' where a house is also shown on the 1848 map. From here it follows the easternmost footpath down to its junction with Hameldon Road but rather oddly bypasses Park Gate and follows the public footpath to Horse Hill. Here it crosses the main road and then turns right long the public footpath to Bentley Wood Green which must have been the old road to Burnley. Just short of the modern public house and restaurant, at about the point where the overhead powerlines cross the footpath the boundary made a sharp diversion south shortly picking up the footpath to Watch House Cottage. Just west of the Cottage the Park boundary turns sharply back north to cross the line of the main road just east of Bentley Wood Green Farm. The final small stretch of boundary back to Habergham Clough is slightly unclear. It may have followed the line of the main road or possibly gone due east along the fence line towards Valley Gardens.

However the Park's use for the purpose for which it was created does not seem to have much outlived Sir John himself. By 1546 the need for the services of the park-keeper were in dispute which suggests that the use of a deer park may have ceased with his death. However when the Trustees of Robert Nowell's bequest were issuing monies to the poor of East Lancashire between 1568 and 1580 they made a gift of 6s 8d to the 'Keperes of Hapton Park' which indicates their continued existence even if on hard times. Although deer husbandry had ceased by 1615 the Park was not divided into separate tenements before the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and these were not sold off until they were put to auction in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century along with most of Hapton, which until then, had remained in Towneley hands. The auction sales particulars are still available for scrutiny in Burnley Library.

