

C19th evidence for Holmfirth boundaries

Transcribed from documents in the Yorkshire Archaeological Society Archives by Peter Burton of the Holmfirth Local History Group

YAS/MD225/7/4/12: Depositions relating to boundaries Holmfirth and Tintwistle (Cheshire) date not stated¹

1. Joseph Haward Aged 72² – says that he was born at Brown Hill in Cartworth that when he was about 9 years of age he went to reside with one Kirk of Kilnhouse Bank in Cartworth. Kirk was a farmer and shop keeper, that he lived with Kirk till he was 20 years of age and followed the sheep of his master as shepherd that they were pastured on the commons of the extent of the walk was to the bottom of Blake Mires, that over James Howard had the walk above there and over garth of Foster place pastured his sheep down towards Red Holes, that when he was 20 years of age he went to live with one Christopher Green of Greenhouse who was a large sheep keeper the witness was employed as the shepherd that the sheep were always pastured in Holm Clough that the boundary in Holm Clough against Cheshire was always by the descent of the waters – that he recollects going the boundaries about 50 years ago – that the witness lived at Greenhouse for 20 years.

2. Eli Hurst – ages 81³ – says that he was born at Copt Hirst & resided there for a short time then removed with his father to Long Ing & remained there till he was nine years of age then went to Ellen Tree Head & remained there till he was 22 years of age & has all his time resided in the Graveship of Holme – that he has been a shepherd ever since he could do any thing & is well acquainted with the boundaries of the Graveship of Holme. That a person of the name of Castle of New Mill or a Castle of Meltham House always pastured their sheep on the common down to the Red Holes of Reddlepit that the boundary between the Graveship of Holme & Tintwistle commenced at the Red Hole & proceeded in a slant direction up to Dead Edge Top and then straight towards over Withins Moss as Heaven Water & heads to Bretland Edge Nook and forwards from thence to Stable Clough as the water falls and then over Holme Moss to the Huddersfield & Woodhead Road – that about 49 years ago he went the boundary along with Mr Marsden the steward of the Duke of Leeds & others & they went on the line as above stated – that Castles were never prevented from hearing their sheep between Red Hole & top of Dead Edge, but that within the last 4 or 5 years Browns of Woodhead have been in the habit of dogging the sheep off – that the line of boundary he lead on the 24th August last is the same that was gone 49 years ago.

3. William Hirst ages 53⁴ – says he has been a shepherd since a boy. That he first assisted Enoch Hirst his uncle who was a shepherd for Abel Tinker of Meal Hill. That Abel Tinkers sheep were always pastured from that time till about 20 years ago when they were sold at the Red Hole or Reddlepit, that witness says is the boundary between the Manor of Tintwistle and the Graveship of Holme. That the walk extended from the Red Hole to Within Brook adjoining Dead Edge. That when Abel Tinker's sheep were sold this witness and his father bought part of them and continued to pasture them at the same place since that time to the present. That Cheshire people never dis-

1 A date may be inferred from the ages of several deponents who can be identified in the parish registers. The dates' clustering around 1830 suggests that the depositions were taken by the Commissioners under the 1828 Act for the enclosure of the Graveship of Holme. - Ed.

2 Joseph Hayward, s of George of Brownhill, Cartworth bapt 31/5/1755 would have been 72 in 1827

3 Ely Hirst, s of Adam of Copthirst, bapt 19/7/1750 would have been 81 in 1831 (he was the youngest of 4 born at Copthirst; two children were born to an Adam Hirst of Long Ing bapt 1752 & 1755)

4 There are too many William Hirsts (and John Hewards, see below) to draw conclusions from these.

turbed them to this witnesses knowledge or made any claim at the Red Holes where this witnesses sheep were pastured. That the boundary between tintwistle and Holme begins at Red Holes and then proceeds the Withins Brook, but witness cannot speak to the boundary any further. That witness knows the above as the boundary having headed his sheep up to it since his earliest recollection.

4. Thomas Langley (deaf) aged 80⁵ – born at Snowgate Head. Been a shepherd greatest part of his life till the last 30 years. Began shepherding when he was 15 years old for his father. He used always to pasture them at the Red Hole. The walk entered from thence to Withins Edge. Always considered the boundary between the Manor of Tintwistle and the Graveship of Holme to be from the Red Hole to Withins Edge. The witness having always headed his sheep up to that point. That Cheshire people never interfered with his sheep when pasturing there.

5. Abel Whitehead aged 46⁶. Says that he resided at Holme Cliffe until we was 20 years of age and then removed to Upper Close where he now resides. That during the whole of his recollection he has been a shepherd and for the first 15 years he was in the habit of heading his sheep between Holme Causeway End and Head & since that time he has headed them in Holme Clough Head and other places. That there are now old clods & heaps standing showing the division of the boundaries which he can at any time point out.

6. Luke Steward⁷ aged 74.⁸ Says he was born and brought up at Holme Roids in Holme which adjoins upon the commons in the graveship of Holme. That his father was a farmer and sheep keeper & followed no other occupation. That the witness is well acquainted with the boundary dividing Cheshire from the moors within the Graveship, that is that part of the boundary which lies between the top of Holme Moss and the boundary of Saddleworth. That it proceeds as Heaven's Water & heads on the top of the moss to a certain place called Dunthrelle and from thence over Meadow Grain in a straight line to Good Greave Top and then crosses Holme Clough against Saddleworth. That he knows the boundary by reason of his having headed his sheep to the extent thereof. That the witness walked the boundary with the commissioners and went in a direct line on such boundary as such as he could. That prior to the settlement of the boundary with Saddleworth the line went from Good Greave Top to Hounds Head and from there to Arnfield Style. That the witness went the boundary walk about 50 years ago.

7. John Neward aged 42. Says that he has been a shepherd ever since he could do any thing. That when he was about 12 years of age he went to live with one James Kenward of Holme who was a shop keeper and stop'd with him for 11 years. That during that time Kenward's sheep were pastured upon Holme Clough and the extent of the boundary of the Graveship of Holme was to Dun Hill and Clun Berry Knowl and they were never disturbed by any persons but if the sheep got further they were disturbed. The Dun Hill and Club Berry Knowl being the division of the boundary between Tintwistle and Holme. That his father died & he entrusts that event to suicide on his father's farm and enjoyed the sheepwalk which he and his grandfather had previously enjoyed which walk is located on Blake Mires. That such walk was peaceably enjoyed until about 10 years ago when Cheshire people began to dispute the boundary & they have driven the sheep from the walk when witness was off but were disturbed them when present. The Withins Mouth was as far as he went & no further.

5 Thomas Langley, s of Titus of Lower Snowgatehead, bapt 22/1/1749 would have been 80 in 1829

6 Abel Whitehead, s of David of "Cliff in Holm", bapt 05/03/1749 would have been 46 in 1832

7 The Steward & Neward could both be Heward (Howard - the spelling was vary variable, even for the same person, Heward was a frequent spelling but eventually the spelling settled on Howard).

8 Luke would be Luke, s of John of Holme Woods baptised on 14/6/1755 & would have been 74 in 1829.