

A 13TH CENTURY DEED DESCRIBING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BOLD, ST HELENS

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Among a series of transcriptions of deeds pertaining to the Township of Bold which is to be found in Warrington Local History Library (W.L.H.L.) is a document which is dated 1254 (MS 403). This gives a detailed description of the boundaries of the Township and reads as follows:

'William Ferrers, Earl of Derby, grants to William de Bold the whole manor of Bold and all his other messuages, lands, and tenements, rents and services in the vill of Bold with mills, meadows, pastures and grazing lands, ways, byways, pools, woods, underwoods, moors, mosses, hays, ditches dug and to be dug, with common of pasture, wards, marriages, reliefs, services, escheats, courts in the vill of Bold within these bounds -

Beginning at the Hardsty in Burtonwood, following the straight bound between Bold and Burtunwood on the east to the bounds of Sankey near Hurlischalles, following a sike and boundary between Bold and Sankey on the south to Pighullsbroke, along this on the west to the east of Cumbalwod, following the ditches and bounds between Bold and Sankey on the south to Penketh, then along the ditches and bounds between Bold and Penketh directly south to the east end of the Crow heth in Bold and near Penketh and Ceyrdley; along a ditch on the west between Crow heth and Ceyrdley to a lane leading to Ceyrdley and following the boundary between Bold and Ceyrdley to the merestone near Bold, Wyddns and Ceyrdley on the west; then along the high road to five lanes on the west, following the road to Lontysheath and so on the west over Lontysheath to Pexhyll hyll to Chester layne, and thence to Croslyne on the north. Then following the road leading to Prescott to the High Cross of Bold which is the boundary of Bold and Raynyll. Thence straight along the boundary of Bold and Raynyll to Wyndiats near to Sutton on the north, then following the lane between Bold and Sutton to the east end of Cudleslayne and along the boundary between Bold and Sutton to the East woods in Sutton as far as Priest's Ouller and following the boundary to Baylebyrcke and Morkelmose near Bold, Sutton and Parr on the north, then along the boundary between Bold and Parr on the east towards Wynwhyke to the boundary of Burtunwood, along this to Hayleyhed in Burtunwood and so to the east end of Ladelers layne, and then along the straight boundary between Burtunwood and Bold to Hardsty.'

The description of the boundary begins with a place called 'Hardsty' in Burtonwood. The 'Hardesty' is also mentioned in a document dating from c.1225 which describes the boundaries of the Royal Forest 'by these bounds, to wit from the Hardesty as far as from Sankey

and from Ravensneslake unto Bradelesbroc' (Shaw, 1956, 107). There is no evidence of a place called the 'Hardesty' in the modern landscape but a place called 'Harchesty' is mentioned in a deed dated 1327 (W.L.H.L. MS 468) and the Victoria County History of Lancashire mentions 'Harderesley' which contained a messuage granted by William de Ferrers to Tiltey Abbey, Essex, in 1251 (Farrer and Brownbill, 1907, 325). The 1839 Tithe map of Burtonwood (L.R.O. DRL 1/14) shows a field called Heartsley which lies along the boundary between Burtonwood and Bold (Fig. 1).

The deed continues by mentioning a 'straight bound between Bold and Burtunwood' and the modern parish boundary between Bold and Burtonwood from the location of the field called 'Heartsley' is also straight (Fig. 1). When the boundary reaches the township of Sankey, a place called 'Hurlischalles' is mentioned. No reference to this has been found in any other documents, and it does not appear on any maps of the area. However, 'hall' (OE 'halh') means a nook of land (Field, 1972, 95) and there is a 'Three Nook Field' marked on the 1847 Tithe map for the Township of Great Sankey (L.R.O. DRL 1/70). The location of this field is shown on Figure 1. It is possible that Hurl or Hurli is a name of the period; hence Hurli's hall - the nook of land belonging to Hurli. Similarly, 'Thurstanshachis' is a place mentioned in a 13th century deed describing the bounds of a piece of land in Sutton (Hawkes, 1937, 69) and Thurstan was a popular christian name of the period (St Helens L.H.A. M/PO/161). Many of the fields shown on the Tithe maps for the area are named after their owner, for example. Critchley's Field, Matthew's Meadow, Johnson's Plantation.

From 'Hurlischalles' the boundary follows a sike or brook, and the boundary of the Parish of Bold prior to the Boundary Commission changes of 1974 also follows the line of the watercourse which flows into Whittle Brook (Fig. 1). A reference to 'Pighullsbroke' is made in the 13th century deed, and this could be the same watercourse which is known today as Whittle Brook. Pig Hill is the name of a field on the 1843 Tithe Map for the Township of Parr (L.R.O. DRL 1/61) which lies to the north of Bold, and the word 'pighill' is most likely a corruption of 'pigtel', a Middle English word for a small piece of land, rather than a reference to pigs (Old English 'pigga', see Field, 1972, 166), although the pig was a common livestock animal in medieval times with many deeds of the period referring to rights of pannage. The 'poghdenbroke' is mentioned, without a capital letter, suggesting an informal name, in a 13th century deed describing an area of Sutton adjoining Bold (Hawkes 1937, 69), and this may refer to the western end of Whittle Brook.

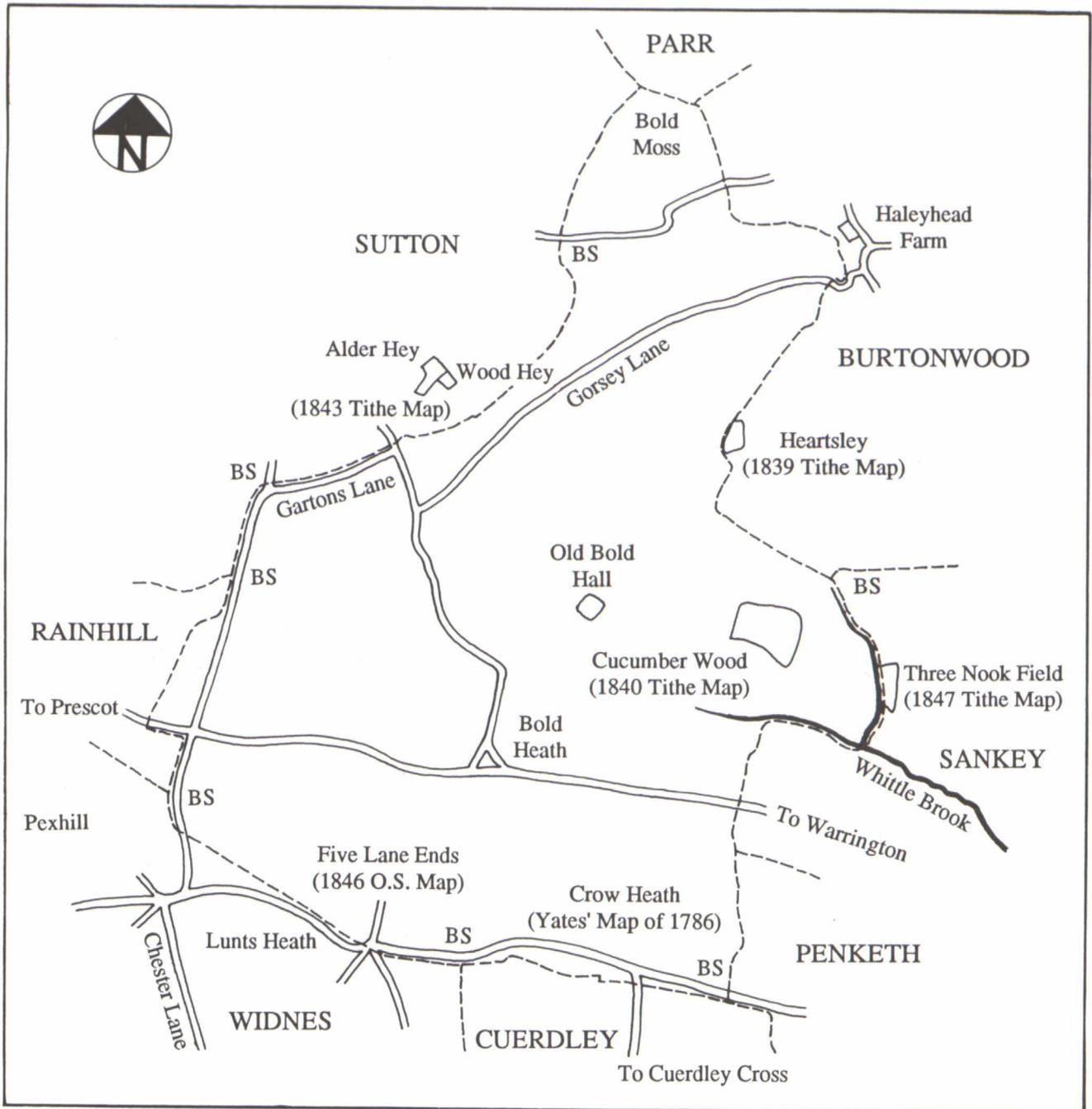


Figure 1: The pre 1974 boundary of the parish of Bold with suggested locations of the places referred to in the 1254 deed superimposed. BS = boundary stone as shown on the 1846 OS map.

The description of the boundary continues by following 'Pighullsbroke', 'to the east of Cumbalwod'. 'Cumbal' or 'Cumberwalle Wood' is referred to in a number of Bold deeds (W.L.H.L. MS 405, 428, 507) and a group of fields on the 1840 Tithe Map of Bold (L.R.O. DRL 1/11) is called Cucumber Wood (Fig. 1), although the land use is given as arable.

The boundary then follows ditches and bounds between Bold and Sankey to Penketh then along 'ditches and bounds between Bold and Penketh' to the east end of the 'Crow heth'. Although the exact location of these ditches and bounds cannot easily be determined in the modern landscape, the location of 'Crow heth' is marked, as Crow Heath' on Yates's 1786 Map of Lancashire (Harley, 1972, 30) and the modern parish boundary follows a watercourse which fits in with the description given in the deed (Fig. 1).

The 13th century boundary continues by following a ditch to a lane leading to Cuedley, and the modern boundary also follows a watercourse to a farm track which goes towards Cuedley, rather than following the main A5661 road towards Widnes as might be expected. The deed mentions a 'merestone' near Bold, Widnes and Cuedley, and the 1849 First Edition 6" OS map Lancashire Sheet 115 (St. Helens L.H.A.) shows a boundary stone at the junction of these three townships. The boundary continues 'along the high road', as does the modern boundary, to five lanes, which is marked as 'Five Lane Ends' on the 1849 OS map, and is still a five lane junction today (Fig. 1).

From 'five lanes' the 13th century boundary follows the road to 'Lontysheath', the Lunt's Heath of modern times, then over the heath to 'Pexhyll hyll' and Chester Lane. The modern boundary leaves the line of the road at Lunt's Heath and continues towards Pexhill, which is some miles away in the Parish of Cronton, until it reaches Jubit's Lane. The continuation of this road from 'five lanes' towards Widnes to the south is called Chester Lane, as is the stretch of road northwards from Sutton Manor to Marshall's Cross, so it is likely that Jubit's Lane was once part of the Chester Lane referred to in the deed.

The boundary then follows Chester Lane northwards until 'Croslyne' is reached. From 'Croslyne' the boundary turns eastward along the road leading to Prescott, and the modern boundary also follows this line (Fig. 1). It is unlikely that 'Croslyne' is the name of a road, i.e. Cross Lane, because the road which crosses Chester Lane is the main highway linking Warrington and Prescott and is referred to in other 13th century deeds (W.L.H.L. MS 419, 453, 531) as the 'high road'. Cross Lane would be an appropriate name for this road which is known to have at least two crosses along its length. One is the High Cross of Bold referred to in the deed, and the other is at Bold Heath, which is marked on the 1849 First Edition 6" OS map. It seems more likely, however, that 'Croslyne' should be 'Croslynes', i.e. a cross roads, and the fact that a cross

is also referred to is coincidental.

The 13th century boundary leaves the Prescott road at the High Cross of Bold which is the boundary of Bold and Rainhill, to follow the straight boundary between Bold and Rainhill northwards towards Sutton, and the modern boundary follows a similar line (Fig. 1). There is no obvious landmark today to show where the boundary leaves the road, but it seems likely that this was the location of the high cross of medieval times. It does not appear on any maps of the area, suggesting that it had been removed before the beginning of the 19th century.

A place called 'Wyndiats' is mentioned in the deed as being 'near to Sutton on the north'. John Norris made a grant of lands in Sutton called Pymfields, Northall and Wingates (Farrer and Brownbill, 1907, 359) and 'Windyates' is referred to in documentary evidence pertaining to a dispute concerning a plot called 'Bold's Acre and Windyates' (Farrer and Brownbill, 1907, 362). The location of 'Bold's Acre' is given as being west of Chester Lane, and the 1845 Tithe map of Rainhill (L.R.O. DRL 1/67) shows a series of three fields known as Bold Field, Little Bold Field and Big Bold Field to the west of Chester Lane and abutting the boundary between Rainhill and Bold, which could have been 'Bold's Acre' (Fig. 2). The document pertaining to the dispute between Richard Bold and Peter Stanley also describes 'a great byland or sparth' between the two portions owned by the respective parties and it is possible that the boundary followed the line of this bank. 'Windyates' comes from the Old English word 'windgeat', meaning a gap in a hedge (Field 1972, 256), which would be difficult if not impossible to locate in the modern landscape, but in the 13th century would have been a convenient place to join Chester Lane. Field name evidence from the Tithe maps (Fig. 2) suggests that open field agriculture was practised in this area in medieval times, when gaps in long stretches of uninterrupted boundaries around the common fields would have been important landmarks.

The 13th century boundary follows Chester Lane northwards 'to the east end of Cudleslayne', then 'along the boundary between Bold and Sutton'. The modern boundary follows Chester Lane or Jubit's Lane as it is known today, and on reaching the east end of Garton's Lane, follows the road to Clock Face (Fig. 1). The location of Garton's Lane suggests that it could be 'Cudleslayne', but the 13th century boundary does not necessarily follow the line of 'Cudleslayne' so there could be a discrepancy here between the medieval and modern boundaries, or indeed between the location of Garton's Lane and 'Cudleslayne'.

The 13th century boundary continues 'to the east woods in Sutton as far as Priest's ouller'. The 'east wood' is referred to in another document dated 1319 when Adam, son of Adam de Leatherbarrow granted lands to John de Holbrook in the 'East Wood' abutting the boundary of Bold (Farrer and Brownbill, 1907, 361),

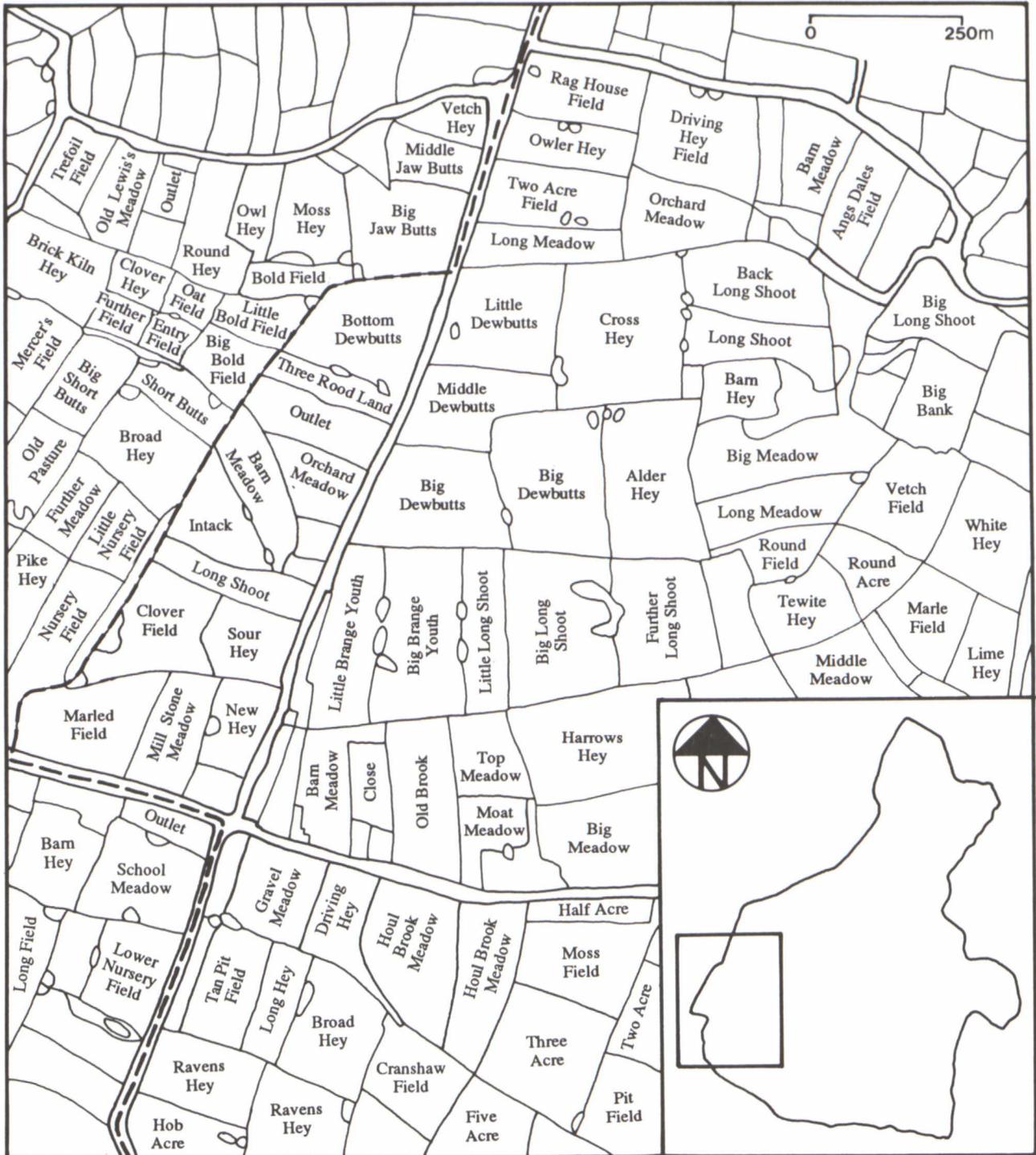


Figure 2: Part of Bold and Rainhill showing a possible location of Bold's Acre (Bold Field, Little Bold Field and Big Bold Field) and field name evidence for open field agriculture in this area. Redrawn from the Tithe maps for Bold (1840) and Rainhill (1843).

but its exact location with reference to the modern landscape has not been determined and it is possible that 'east woods' was a general term used to describe the area of woodland to the east, rather than a specific wood. Similarly, the location of 'Priest's Ouller' is not easily ascertained. A 'Prestesholirs' is mentioned in a 13th century deed describing the boundary of a piece of land in Sutton (Hawkes, 1937, 69) and the Victoria County History (Farrer and Brownbill, 1907, 358) in describing the boundaries of Burtonhead in Sutton says that 'the bounds went to Priesteolers and by Raven Syke to Ritherop Brook which divides Sutton from Rainhill', so it is unlikely that this is the same Priest's Ouller as that referred to in the Bold deed.

Ouller is from the Old English word 'alor' meaning alder (Field, 1972, 156-7) and commonly occurs in field and place names. There are two fields, Alder Hey and Big Alder Hey, on the 1843 Tithe map of Sutton (L.R.O. DRL 1/77) adjacent to the boundary with Bold (Fig. 1) and several field names in Bold have the word alder in them.

Local landowners, including members of the Bold and Norris families, were of the Catholic faith and at the time of the Reformation were noted Recusants. It is likely therefore that many references to priest's would have been lost at this time, making it difficult for landmarks such as 'Priest's Ouller' to be located in the modern landscape, although there is a field called Priest's Hey on the 1840 Tithe map of Bold (L.R.O. 1/11).

'Baylebyrcke' can be translated as Bailliff's Birches, from the Old French 'baillie' meaning bailiff and 'birce', the Old English word for birch (Field 1972, 20), but like many other place names which refer to ownership, is difficult to locate in the modern landscape. A 13th century deed (Hawkes, 1937, 69) describes a place called 'Balesbirches' as being in 'Norkel's Moss' (Morkel's Moss), while the Bold deed implies that 'Baylebyrcke' and 'Morkel's Moss' are separate places. 'Morkel's Moss' features in a number of documents of the medieval period (St Helens L.H.A. M/PO/161), and it is also marked on a map of c. 1580 showing the Burtonhead Estate (L.R.O. DDSc 32/1). Farrer and Brownbill (1907, 358) say that Morkel's Moss is near Marshall's Cross, but the Bold deed being discussed here distinctly describes 'Morkel's Moss' as being near Bold, Sutton and Parr on the north. There is much documentary and field evidence for an extensive area of mossland where the boundaries of Bold, Sutton and Parr meet, and a tiny remnant of this still remains today. However, both Marshall and Morkel are likely to have been derived from the Old English word 'mercel' which refers to a boundary mark (St Helens L.H.A. M/PO/161).

There is a manuscript copy of the Burtonhead Estate map in St Helens Local History and Archives Library which has 'Morkelsse mosse' written on it but a document describing the original map (St Helens

L.H.A. M/PO/36) says that the lettering must be 'Gaskells Moss' because the first letter is definitely a 'G'. Bagley and Hodgkiss (1985, 26) also suggest that Morkel's Moss is Gaskell's Moss when referring to the original map. At first glance the words on the original map do look like 'Gaskells Moss' because the first letter looks like a 'G' and is dissimilar to the first letter in the word 'moss'. However, the second and third letters are almost certainly 'or' and not 'as', and the 'm' in 'moss' is lower case whilst the first letter is clearly a capital. This suggests that the Burtonhead Estate Map (L.R.O. DDSc 32/1) is a valid source of evidence for the location of Morkel's Moss.

The 13th century boundary then runs eastward between Bold and Parr towards Winwick until it reaches the boundary of Burtonwood. The deed then mentions a place called 'Hayleyhed in Burtunwood', and there is a Hayley Head Farm here today (Fig. 1).

The east end of 'Ladeler's layne' could refer to Gorse Lane which the modern boundary crosses to the south of Hayley Head Farm. By following the fairly straight modern boundary southwards from here, the location of the hardsty can be reached, thus completing the boundary of Bold.

It can therefore be concluded that the pre-1974 boundary of the Parish of Bold has changed little from the township boundary as described in 1254.

References

Printed sources:

- Bagley J.J. and Hodgkiss A.G. 1985 *Lancashire: a history of the County Palatine in early maps*. Manchester: Neil Richardson.
- Farrer W. and Brownbill J. (eds) 1907 'The Victoria History of the County of Lancashire 3' *The Victoria History of the Counties of England*. London: Constable and Co.
- Field J. 1972 *English field-names—A dictionary*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles.
- Harley J.B. 1968 'A map of the County of Lancashire, 1796 by William Yates' *The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*.
- Hawkes J.A. 1937 'Some thirteenth and fourteenth century deeds relating to Parbold, Ince and Sutton' *Trans Lancashire and Cheshire Antiq Soc.* **51** (for 1936) 60-74.
- Shaw R. Cunliffe 1956 *The Royal Forest of Lancashire* Preston: The Guardian Press.

Documentary sources:

St Helens Local History and Archives Library (St Helens L.H.A.):

Archive nos M/PO/161, M/PO/36

Warrington Local History Library (W.L.H.L.):

Bold Deeds, Ms nos 403, 405, 419, 428, 453, 468, 507, 531.

Maps and Plans:

Lancashire Record Office (LRO):

Bold	Tithe 1840 DRL 1/11
Burtonwood	Tithe 1839 DRL 1/14
Great Sankey	Tithe 1847 DRL 1/70
Parr	Tithe 1843 DRL 1/61
Rainhill	Tithe 1845 DRL 1/67
Sutton	Burtonhead Estate c. 1580 DDSc 32/1
Sutton	Tithe 1843 DRL 1/77

Ordnance Survey (OS) 1st Edition 6" 1849 Lancashire Sheet 115

St Helens Local History and Archives Library (St Helens L.H.A.)

Copies of all maps and plans exist as above, with the exception of Great Sankey. There is also no schedule for the Bold Tithe Map. Please note that the Burtonhead Estate Map is a manuscript copy, not a replica, and it is kept in the map cabinet with no reference number. A replica copy of the original in the L.R.O. has been donated to St Helens L.H.A. by the author. It is likely to be stored in the same place.