

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and the Purchase and Sale of Hooton Pagnell, Yorkshire, 1475–1480

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IN 1831 THE REVEREND JOSEPH HUNTER, writing his history of South Yorkshire, commented on the descent of the manor of Hooton Pagnell, near Doncaster:

The Hiltons were in possession of Hooton in 12 Edw IV, 1471, and I have sought in vain for authentic information how this ancient inheritance became separated from the line with which it was connected ... I have seen it stated in some collections respecting this place, that it was bought in 1486 by king Richard III, and given to Richard Wortley for good services performed.¹

All in all, this is not a distinguished example of the antiquarian historian's art. Aside from the spectacular dating error (Hunter may have seen it elsewhere, but repeating without correction was reprehensible), and the inaccurate use of the regnal year, it is not clear what sources Hunter searched in vain for the alienation of the manor from the Hilton line. Feet of Fines had long been a major source for antiquarians to trace the descent of estates,² and amongst the Yorkshire Fines in 1475 was the information he sought. A final concord was made in the court of Common Pleas at Westminster in the Trinity and Michaelmas terms of that year, by which Richard, Duke of Gloucester, acquired from John Burne, Margery his wife (formerly the wife of Godfrey Hilton, d. 1472) and Godfrey Hilton, her son (d. 1476), the manor of Hooton Pagnell ('Hotton Panell') and 200 acres of land, eighty acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, twenty acres of wood and £6 of rent in Hooton Pagnell, for which, according to the fine, the duke gave them 500 marks.³

This sum was not what actually changed hands, but as C.A.F. Meekings has shown these 'considerations' represented twenty times the sworn annual value of the property, and were a guide to a purchase price on the open market.⁴ Godfrey Hilton's inquisition *post mortem* of 1472 assessed the manor at £20 per annum, which would make the purchase price of the manor, at twenty times the annual

¹ J. Hunter, *South Yorkshire. The History and Topography of the Deanery of Doncaster*, 2 vols, London 1831, vol. 2, pp. 141–42.

² The Essex historian, Philip Morant, used them in his work as early as 1768: *History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, 2 vols, London 1768.

³ The National Archives, Public Record Office [hereafter TNA], CP 25/1/281/164, number 19, calendared at <http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/fines/abstracts/CP_25_1_281_164.shtml>. This excellent site, containing numerous other useful resources, has filled in many of the gaps in the published Feet of Fines for the late medieval period.

⁴ *Abstracts of Surrey Feet of Fines, 1509–1558*, ed C.A.F. Meekings, Surrey Record Society, vol. 19 (1946), pp. xxii–iii

value, £400, slightly more than the 500 marks of the final concord.⁵ Hilton's inquisition also rehearsed his enfeoffment of the manor on 2 April 1453 to the joint tenure of himself and Margery his wife, and it was as jointure that Margery and her second husband John Burne sold the manor to Duke Richard, though it was also prudent for him to associate in the sale the heir to the estate, another Godfrey, then aged 18, as it gave the duke a more secure title to the manor. As it happened, Godfrey died the following year, leaving two sisters as co-heirs.⁶ It is nowhere stated in the documentation whether the initiative for the transaction emanated from John and Margery or the duke and his advisors; the latter case seems more likely, given Gloucester's territorial consolidation in the north in the mid-1470s.

It might have been expected that the recently purchased manor would remain in Richard's possession and thus have become part of the crown estate on his accession. Certainly, on 8 November 1484 Richard III granted the office of bailiff of Hooton Pagnell to his servant Richard Lilly for life at the wages of 2d a day.⁷ But Richard III actually re-acquired the manor when he took the crown in June 1483. Recorded in two unusual places, that Joseph Hunter had little chance of finding, are notes of the surprising sale of the manor by Richard to his brother, King Edward, in 1478. The sale appears in an item amongst the council and privy seal records (E 28) in the National Archives. The item is one of four in the two files covering the last years of Edward's reign that list 'parcelles and somes of money paid and delyuered by the king's high commaundment by John Fitzherbert and other the king's tellers in his receipt of the king's tresoury remaynyng in ther keeping'.⁸ The sums recorded are of a very miscellaneous nature, including payments for works on royal residences, the purchase of ships, gunpowder and other items of a military nature, and expenses for ambassadors. The first list of payments has the royal sign manual appended to it, and there is an attached warrant dated 26 May 1480.⁹ At the bottom of the May 1480 list, faded but legible, is an entry that states:

Also paid to Richard duc of Gloucestr' in parte of payment of D li to hym due for the Mano' and lordship of Hoton Paynell in the countie of Yorke of hym bought by the king ouer CC li paid to hym afore this tyme by thande of John Fitzherbert and

⁵ TNA, C 140/41/30. The inquisition taken in 1485 (TNA, E 159/262, Hilary term *Recorda*, m. 23, see below) valued it at £10 p.a., which would make the purchase price on the open market £200. The higher valuation seems more likely.

⁶ TNA, C 140/55/1b, the co-heirs being Elizabeth, wife of Richard Thymolby, esquire, and Hawise, wife of Laurence Breurn, gentleman, aged 22 and 20 respectively.

⁷ *CPR*, 1476–85, p. 539; *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433*, ed. R. Horrox and P.W. Hammond, 4 vols, Gloucester 1979–83, vol. 1, p. 227.

⁸ TNA, E28/92, no. 15. There are three other lists: E 28/92, nos. 24 and 26, dated 29 September 1480 and 19 February 1481, the third, which can only be dated to 18 Edward IV, is E 28/91 (unnumbered within file).

⁹ The warrant was explicitly for the discharge of the treasurer and chamberlains of the Exchequer for the sums contained, but this method of warrant means that these payments do not appear amongst the Exchequer Warrants for Issue (TNA series E 404), which are one of the few sources now surviving that detail Yorkist royal expenditure: *List and Index of Warrants for Issues, 1399–1485*, List and Index Society, Supplementary Series 9, reprinted New York 1964.

ouer XX li to hym paid by Nicholas Leventhorp generall receyuo^r of the duchie of Lancastir – CCXL li.¹⁰

These varied sums account for £460 of the £500 due to Richard of Gloucester for the manor.

Another source contains the text of the charter by which Richard transferred seisin. Referenced by Michael Hicks, the only modern historian to note the sale (though not the purchase) of the manor,¹¹ the *Recorda* section of the Hilary term of the King's Remembrancer's memoranda roll for the first year of the reign of Henry VII rehearses the charter, and then details an investigation of who had occupied the manor since its purchase by Edward IV. The text of Richard's charter (in translation from the Latin) is as follows:

To all faithful Christians to whom this present writing shall come Richard, duke of Gloucester, John Pilkington, Thomas Baro[w], clerk, and Thomas Witham give eternal greetings in the Lord. Know that we, the aforesaid duke, John, Thomas and Thomas have delivered, demised and by this our present writing confirmed to Master Robert Bothe, clerk, dean of the cathedral church of York, Richard Pygot and William Husee, serjeants at law of the Lord King, our manor and lordship of Hoton Pannell otherwise called Hoton on the Hill ['Hoton super montem'] with all and singular appurtenances in Yorkshire and 200 acres of land, 80 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 20 acres of woodland and £6 of rent with appurtenances in Hoton Pannell in the aforesaid county. To have and to hold the aforesaid manor and lordship and other premises with appurtenances to the aforesaid Robert, Richard and William, their heirs and assigns, of the chief lords of the fee by the services due thereof and by customary right. And we the aforesaid duke and our heirs will warrant and defend in perpetuity the aforesaid manor and lordship and other premises with appurtenances to the aforesaid Robert, Richard and William against all men for ever. And further know that we the aforesaid duke, John, Thomas and Thomas have appointed and put in our place our beloved in Christ Nicholas Leventhorp, John Kendale and John Hunter as our true and legitimate attorneys jointly and severally to deliver for us and in our names full and peaceful seisin of and in the manor, lordship, lands and tenements aforesaid with appurtenances to the aforesaid Robert, Richard and William, their heirs and assigns according to the force, form and effect of our present writing. And we hold and shall hold good and acceptable whatsoever our aforesaid attorneys will do or any one of them will do in our place and in our names in these premises. In witness whereof we have affixed our seal to this present writing. Witnesses: James Haryngton, John Savile, Richard FitzWilliam, Hugh Hastings, knights, John Woderoue, esquire and others. Dated the 24th day of the month of October the eighteenth year of the reign of Edward the fourth after the conquest of England [1478].¹²

¹⁰ TNA, E28/92, no. 15.

¹¹ M. Hicks, 'Richard III as Duke of Gloucester' in his *Richard III and his Rivals*, London 1991, p. 270, n. 43.

¹² TNA, E 159/262, Hilary term *Recorda*, m. 23 and unnumbered membrane following. Editorial insertions in square brackets.

The proceedings in the Exchequer clearly state that Bothe, Pigot and Huse were receiving the lands to the use of King Edward. An inquisition taken at York on 1 September 1486 stated that the manor was in the king's hands until his death, after which Richard Lilly entered the manor and occupied it from the day of Edward's death until 1 September 1485. The jurors claimed ignorance as to the title by which he had occupied the manor, either unaware of the grant by Richard III or wilfully ignoring it. Predictably Lilly was summoned to appear in order to render an account for the profits for those years.

The charter, standard in form, shows Richard acting with several of his regular servants and associates. The John Pilkington mentioned was probably the wealthy Yorkshire knight and Yorkist loyalist Sir John Pilkington – although the knightly title was omitted in the copy of the charter in the memoranda rolls, his position in being named before a clerk would indicate a higher social status, and there is no other obvious candidate with this name.¹³ Pilkington was clearly high in favour with Gloucester, being admitted to the office of chamberlain of the Exchequer by letters patent of Gloucester in 1477 and Sir William Plumpton was advised to 'labour to Sir John Pilkinton to labor to my lord of Glocester or to the king' in the same year.¹⁴ Thomas Barowe, made Master of the Rolls by Richard in 1483, received a grant of a benefice from the duke in October 1471, was the duke's chancellor in 1483 if not before, and in a grant of arms in 1477 his service was praised: he 'hath many yerys vertuously and truly continued in the service of the high and mighty prince Richard'.¹⁵ Witham came from Cornborough, located a few miles from Richard's castle of Sheriff Hutton, and was one of the duke's councillors; he was presumably the same Thomas Witham who was made chancellor of the Exchequer in 1461.¹⁶ Richard's attorneys also, unsurprisingly, had connections with him. Kendall was his secretary as duke (by 1474) and king, and, according to the Crowland Chronicle, died with Richard at Bosworth.¹⁷ Leventhorpe was the

¹³ R. Horrox, 'Pilkington family (per. c.1325–c.1500)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; there is a short biography of Pilkington in *The Plumpton Letters and Papers*, ed. J. Kirby, Camden Society, 5th series, 8 (1996), pp. 329–30; R. Horrox, *Richard III. A Study of Service*, Cambridge 1989, pp. 45, 47; C.D. Ross, *Edward IV*, London 1974, p. 328. Pilkington died before March 1479, leaving a legitimate son Edward and an illegitimate son Robert, and appointing Gloucester an executor of his will: J.C. Wedgwood, *The History of Parliament, 1439–1509*, 2 vols, London 1936, vol. 2, pp. 684–5.

¹⁴ TNA, SP 46/139, fo. 166; *Plumpton Letters and Papers*, ed. Kirby, p. 51.

¹⁵ Barowe was made rector of Castle Camps (Cambridgeshire), forfeited by the earl of Oxford and granted to Gloucester formally the following December: Horrox, *Richard III*, pp. 72–3. Chancellor: *Grace Book A, Containing the Proctors' Accounts and other records of the University of Cambridge for the years 1454–1488*, ed. S.M. Leathes, Cambridge Antiquarian Society 1897, p. 172, noted in *Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge*, ed. A.B. Emden, Cambridge 1963, pp. 40–1. Grant of arms: British Library, Add. Ms. 17687C. See also *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433*, vol. 1, pp. 88, 220; C.D. Ross, *Richard III*, London 1981, pp. 58, 134.

¹⁶ *CPR, 1461–7*, pp. 6, 47 (for the creation of his chantry at Cornborough); *CPR, 1476–85*, p. 275 (he had died by 1481); Horrox, *Richard III*, pp. 50–1.

¹⁷ A. F. Sutton, 'John Kendale: a search for Richard III's secretary', *Richard III, Crown and People*, ed. J. Petre, Gloucester 1985, pp. 224–38, esp. pp. 231–33; *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations: 1459–1486*,

receiver-general of the duchy of Lancaster, the stewardship of which, north of the Trent, was held by Gloucester.¹⁸ John Hunter, described as a yeoman of Middleham when pardoned in 1470, and as of Hatfield (Yorks.) in 1474, when granted the office of bailiff of Doncaster, seems to have been drawn into Gloucester's circle as a result of the Neville of Middleham connection.¹⁹

Richard bought and sold manors on a regular basis – a couple of years later, for example, he agreed to sell Wivenhoe in Essex to John, Lord Howard, for 1,100 marks²⁰ – but the sale of Hooton Pagnell is surprising as almost all his other land transactions suggest a policy of territorial consolidation and concentration in the north of England, with expansion in the region funded by the selling of southern estates after 1475. As Michael Hicks has pointed out, to 'obtain the castles and lordships of Scarborough, Richmond, Skipton and Helmsley, Richard had to abandon his lordship of Chirk in the Welsh Marches to the Stanleys and his town of Chesterfield, his West County castles of Sudeley, Corfe and Farleigh Hungerford, and two Hertfordshire manors to the king'.²¹ To sell a recently acquired manor in Yorkshire was at variance with this policy, particularly as Hooton Pagnell was in south Yorkshire, an area where Gloucester held little land and where he was keen to expand his influence in the mid-1470s.²²

Richard's financial position is one of the most problematic areas for the research of his career, due to the near-complete absence of surviving documentation. However it seems certain that he was, or should have been, the greatest lay landowner in England, aside from the king, after 1478. Charles Ross has commented that 'at the height of his power Clarence enjoyed an income of some £7,000 yearly from land. Gloucester could scarcely have enjoyed less in the later years of Edward's reign'.²³ Such a vast landed estate would have been supplemented by the salaries of his numerous royal offices, profits from his feudal rights, and occasional royal grants, such as wardships.²⁴ It seems almost inconceivable that Gloucester could have been short of money, but that is what Michael Hicks has argued was the case. He emphasised the exceptional scale of Richard's building, land-purchases and religious foundations: 'when account is taken of those properties resumed by the king, others lost for unrecorded reasons, and the large

eds. N. Pronay and J. Cox, London 1986, pp. 182–83; *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433*, eds. Horrox and Hammond, vol. 1, p. 172; Ross, *Richard III*, pp. 156.

¹⁸ R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster*, 2 vols, London 1953, vol. 1, pp. 400–1.

¹⁹ CPR, 1467–77, pp. 215, 441; CPR, 1476–85, p. 325.

²⁰ *The Household Books of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk, 1462–1471, 1481–1483*, ed. J.P. Collier, with an introduction by A. Crawford, Stroud 1992, vol. 2, p. 18; A. Crawford, *Yorkist Lord. John Howard, Duke of Norfolk, c. 1425–1485*, London 2010, p. 91.

²¹ Hicks, *Richard III and his Rivals*, pp. 263–4; Horrox, *Richard III*, pp. 54–7.

²² Horrox, *Richard III*, pp. 58–59.

²³ Ross, *Richard III*, p. 26.

²⁴ For the advantageous exploitation of one such grant (or potential grant) of a wardship which gave Gloucester an income of 200 marks a year, see M.K. Jones, 'Richard Duke of Gloucester and the Scropes of Masham', *The Ricardian*, vol. 10, no. 134 (1996), pp. 454–60.

number alienated in mortmain, it is clear that the duke lost far more than he bought and that both the number of his estates and his income from them must have been declining'. Acknowledging the caveat of the lamentable lack of evidence, Hicks also postulated that his retaining and household expenditure was high: 'taken together, there is reason to suppose that the duke was spending above his income and may therefore have been running into debt'.²⁵

The sale, three years after its purchase, of the manor of Hooton Pagnell provides a little supporting evidence for Hicks's argument. Between the purchase of the estate in 1475 and its sale in 1478, Gloucester had seen a substantial amount of land resumed by the king in 1475 and having acquired licence to found two new colleges in February 1478, was beginning to endow one, Middleham, with a number of manors to the value of 200 marks per annum, and was expecting to endow the other collegiate foundation at Barnard Castle with lands worth 400 marks per annum.²⁶ Such a decrease in his landed endowment, both that which had already occurred and that which was expected in the future, might well have changed his position towards the minor new addition to his estate, Hooton Pagnell. That he chose to sell it, rather than use it to endow one of his new foundations, actually reinforces the argument that he needed the cash.

Conversely, there are few possible alternative explanations as to why he sold the manor. Richard's title to Hooton Pagnell seems secure: not only was it purchased formally by perhaps the most secure means of land conveyance, the final concord, but the involvement of both widow and heir male in the sale seemed conclusive, especially when the heir male died shortly thereafter. Even had the title not been secure, there was, in practice, almost no possible challenge to Gloucester's ownership. Edward IV indicated as much in connection with another estate which Gloucester had acquired from the countess of Oxford, to which his title was less secure. When Gloucester offered to sell it to Sir John Risley, the latter asked the advice of the king, who replied: 'though the title of the place be good in my brother of Gloucester's hands or in another man's hands of like might, it will be dangerous to thee to buy it and also to keep it and defend it'.²⁷ While it is possible the estate at Hooton was less productive than the duke would have hoped, there is no evidence for this, and besides a minor differential between expected and actual cash revenue seems unlikely to have necessitated its immediate sale.

It seems most likely, then, that it was a financial imperative that made Duke Richard sell his newly acquired manor, despite it being at variance with his general policy of territorial consolidation in the north. Perhaps he felt that in selling it to the king as opposed to another northern lord, he would still be able to draw royal servants or tenants from the manor into his affinity, given the close integration of

²⁵ Hicks, *Richard III and his Rivals*, pp. 270–1.

²⁶ *CPR*, 1467–77, p. 560 (for the reduced grant of de Vere estates compared to that of 1471, for which see *ibid.*, p. 297); *CPR*, 1476–85, p. 67; *Documents relating to the Foundation and Antiquities of the Collegiate Church of Middleham in the County of York*, ed. W. Atthill, Camden Society, 38 (1847), pp. 61–63, 84–85.

²⁷ TNA, C 263/2/1/6, quoted in Horrox, *Richard III*, p. 75.

royal and ducal circles in the north.²⁸ Gloucester would have made a profit from his transactions over the manor; if he paid around 500 marks as the fine suggests, he certainly sold it for £500, so a profit in the region of £167 was not bad business. However, the entire sum was not collected immediately. At some point between October 1478 and May 1480 £220 of the £500 had been handed over to Gloucester, but it was not until that May that most of the balance was actually paid. As a solution to a cash flow problem, such a long delay was not ideal. Nonetheless, the sale of the manor is explicable in financial terms, but remains a little surprising in the context of Gloucester's other territorial acquisitions in the 1470s.

²⁸ Horrox, *Richard III*, pp. 45–8.

²⁹ His papal provision in the see of Ely was dated 1 February 1461 and he was married to the archbishopric of York on 13 March 1461. E. B. Fryde, D. E. Greenway, J. P. Howard and J. R. St. John, *Handbook of Dates* (Chichester, 1986), London 1986, p. 247.

³⁰ The most detailed study of Neville's ecclesiastical career, which contains some earlier errors, remains unpublished. G. J. Kee, 'The Ecclesiastical Career of George Neville, 1450–75', D. Litt. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1979. For published biographies, see, for example, S. Lee, ed., 'Neville, George (1457–1475)', *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 40, London 1952, pp. 231–7; A. R. Hudson, 'Neville, George', *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to AD 1500*, 3 vols. (Oxford 1957–60), pp. 182–183; R. Wiles, *Humanism in England during the 15th Century* (Oxford 1967), chapter 3; 'George Neville and his circle', M. P. P. P., 'Neville, George (1457–1475)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004 (online edn, Jan. 2005). For studies of the middle years of his ecclesiastical career, see, for example, C. L. Seefeld, *The life and times of Edward the Fourth*, 2 vols., London 1970; C. Ross, *Edward IV*, London 1972; M. A. Hicks, *Public feeling, private Clarence: George, Duke of Clarence, 1450–66*, rev. edn, Basingstoke 1982; R. A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI*, 2nd edn, Oxford 1988.

³¹ H. Pollock, 'The More: Archbishop George Neville's Palace in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire', *The Architect*, vol. 9 (1901–02), pp. 290–302, esp. pp. 292–94. A subsequent article revised some of the earlier findings and added further information from recently discovered documents, but this article was not directly concerned with the period covered by Neville's tenure. H. Pollock, 'The More revisited', *The Architect*, vol. 26 (1908), pp. 51–59.

³² W. W. R. Roper, *Humanism in England*, p. 249, emphasis added.

³³ H. Kitchin and S. J. Hindland, eds, *The Dean and Household Accounts of William Worley, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral 1479–1480*; Richard III and Yorkist Henry VIII, Doungton 1902. The ecclesiastical jurisdiction about the life and career of Worley and biographical details of individuals mentioned in the accounts.