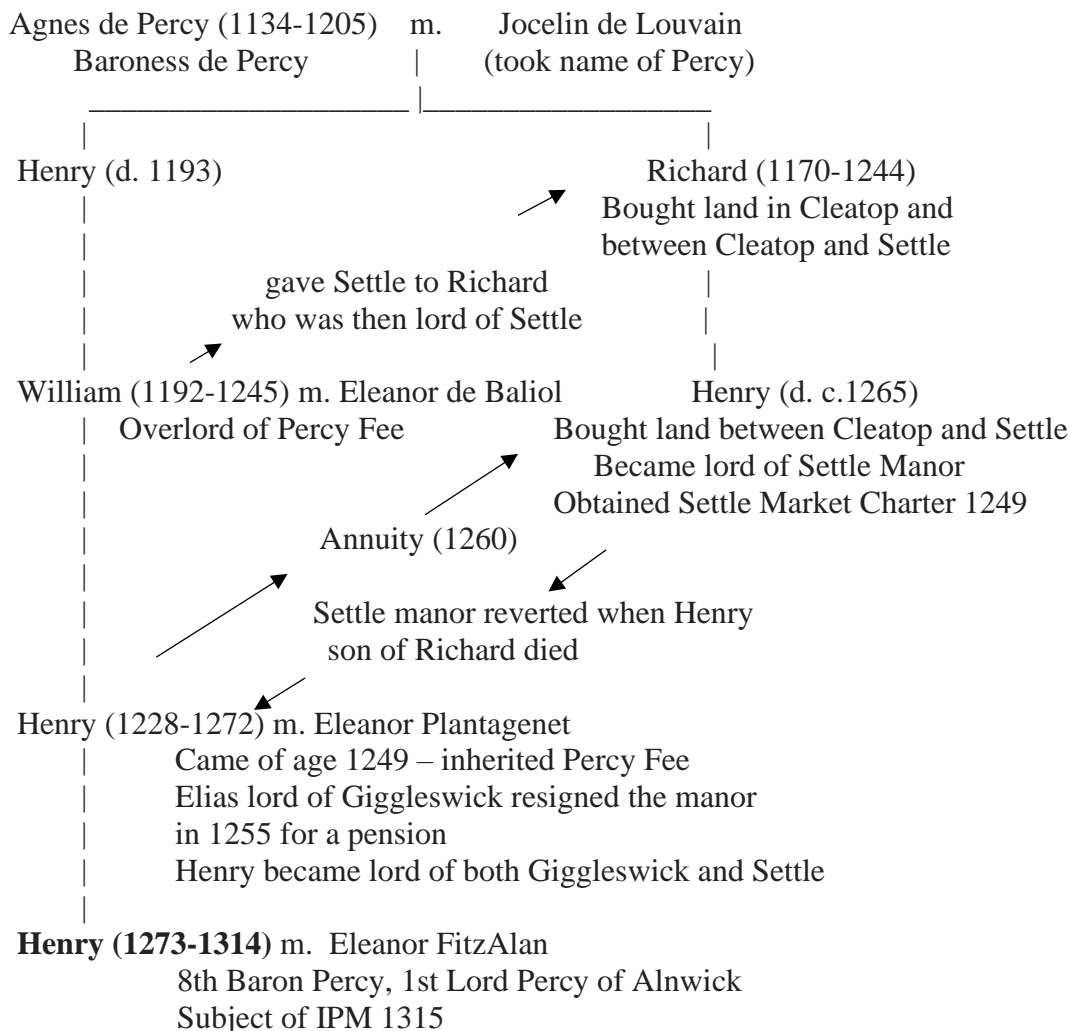


The Inquisition Post Mortem of Henry de Percy, 1315

Michael Slater

Henry de Percy (1273-1314) was one of a line of Percys descended from Agnes de Percy and her husband Jocelin de Louvain, via their direct descendants Henry (died 1193), William (died 1245), and Henry (who died in 1272, the father of the posthumous Henry de Percy of this account, born 1273). Agnes had inherited Settle manor, and over succeeding generations a complex series of property transactions took place (involving also another son of Agnes, Richard, and his son). Henry, the subject of this Inquisition Post Mortem, rebelled against King Edward II over the issue of Piers Gaveston and was imprisoned for a few months. After his release, he declined to fight under Edward at the Battle of Bannockburn (June 1314), remaining at his castle in Alnwick, where he died in his bed a few months later, aged 41.

The Percy family and the Manors of Settle and Giggleswick



The Inquisition Post Mortem

The Inquisition Post Mortem dated 1315 is a substantial document held in The National Archives (TNA C 134/41/1/7). The transcription of the Inquisition in abbreviated Latin was carried out by Dr Jonathan Mackman and can be seen at www.dalescommunityarchives.org.uk, item CTP/015.

One section is entitled Cleatop, but it is clear from the content of the Inquisition and history of Settle manor that Cleatop includes Settle manor, its market and water-powered mill (considered to be at Runley).

Cleatop is said to have a capital messuage – a high status dwelling house, often the manor house, with its outbuildings and land. This is where Henry and his family had been quartered when resident. There were 80 acres of land in demesne, valued for rental at 10d per acre. Demesne pasture land (38 acres) was valued at 2s per acre. This was the land farmed by the lord of the manor, not sublet to tenants but operated typically by servile labour subject in many ways to the lord's will. Some pasture land was subject to agistment rules in which the number of grazing animals allowed on specified land was determined by what area of land tenants held elsewhere in the manor. Assarted land is also mentioned, valued at 2s.

Income of 16s from the halmote court is listed: there were three types of manorial court - the court of the honour, the court baron, and the court customary, also known as the halmote court dealing with the farming regulation of manors and bye-laws. The tolls due from Settle market brought in 63s a year. The communal oven brought in 10s a year. Turbary was valued at 3s 4d and the water-powered mill 53s 4d per year.

Then follows a list of free tenants ('liberi tenentes', freeholders) who were subject to some non-servile services and taxes imposed by the lord including military service when called for. There were eight free tenants in Cleatop/Settle, five of whom owed military service, typically holding a toft and up to two bovates of land. In one case also a croft and in one case a piece of pasture ground were rented. The bovate is a measure of land area also known as an oxgang in northern England and is one eighth of a carucate. Unfortunately the carucate area is uncertain, perhaps of the order of 120 acres, approximating the area a plough team of eight oxen could till in a single season. One bovate might be just enough to support one family.

There then follows the statement that there were various tenants at-will ('ad voluntatem') resulting in a rental income to the lord of £4 18s 3d.

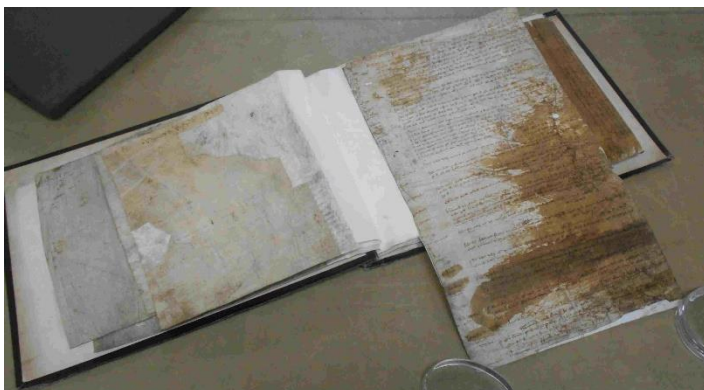
Finally in the Cleatop/Settle section there were ten bonded tenants holding ten tofts and bovates for £5 (10s each). The word 'nativi' is used, denoting tenants of villein status. There were also eight cottagers paying 39s 11/2d rent, i.e. 5s each.

The next section of the Inquisition is for Giggleswick. There was a capital messuage valued at 5s, 15 acres of land in demesne at 8d per acre, 12 acres of pasture in demesne at 20d per acre. A water-powered mill was rented at 66s 8d. Then follow five free tenants holding tofts, a croft, bovates, and assarts, two of the freeholders paying rents of one pound of pepper and one pound of cumin respectively, the rest paying cash.

Tenants at-will are given next as simply 'several' tenants who held nine tofts and eleven bovates valued at 6s each bovate, total 66s. In addition there were three bonded tenants

(‘nativi’) who held three tofts and three bovates, each charged 6s. Finally in Giggleswick several cottagers paid a total of 60s, presumably also 5s each, making twelve tenants.

Rathmell has only two items. Various tenants held five tofts, three bovates and two acres for 5s total. The third part of the mill was valued at 15s. The Flemings were mesne (subsidiary) lords of the manor of Rathmell paying Henry de Percy 104s 6d per year under conditions of ‘forinsec’ service - payable to some person other than the tenant’s immediate lord, usually the king.



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