

# Coin from Burgage Plot at Burton-in-Lonsdale

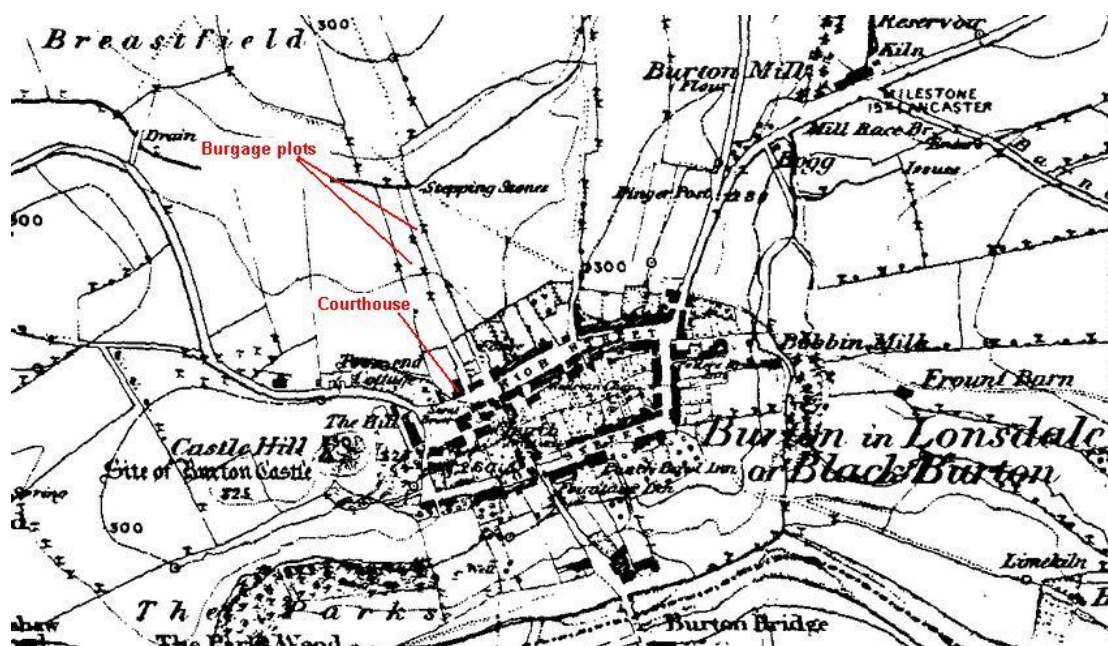
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The above coin was found during the spring of 2003 in field 0734, owned by A. Ross of Bull Farm House. It is copper, 2cm in diameter badly pitted on the reverse and identified by Dr A.J. White as a Scottish *bawbee* (sixpence) or more likely a *turner* or *bodle* (twopence). Such coins appear from the 17<sup>th</sup> century from James I/VI through to William and Mary. Just to add to the information, we have collected some details concerning the field in which it was found, it being one of two surviving burgage plots at Burton.

## Burgage plots at Burton

Grenville defines a burgage plot as a long narrow plot of land running at right angles from the street frontage in a town (Ref [1] p198). Two fields of such characteristically long rectangular shape, perpendicular to High Street, are still clearly visible, both bounded to the north by the beck at the foot of Breastfield Hill. One is to the north of The Manor House/The Cross (originally a single building believed to be that referred to as the Earl of Derby's Courthouse at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century *cf.* [2], [3], [15]) and the other to the north of Bull Farm House. These are, respectively, field 0734 (about 30 metres wide, area 1 acre) in which the coin was found, and field 0934 (about 18 metres wide, area 2/3 acre), as shown on the 1:25000 OS SD67 map and the current Conservation Area map. Both fields have persisting old hedges, apparently marking precisely the width of the original two properties in line with the persisting old walls of the present gardens. On the 1952 1:25000 SD67 Ordnance Survey map these fields are clearly indicated, and the original track of the footpath can be seen to have been just to the east of field 0934 before being moved to lie in Manor Close.





At the time of allocation of burgage plots it is likely that there were more in Burton but now most traces seem to have been lost to later developments with some possible exceptions on the north side of High Street. These are field 0132 (4.5 acres) behind the old barn of Castle Hill Farm and associated presumably with the old Burton Hall which is believed to have stood there, and two strips of land visible on the 1952 OS map and on the 1896 OS map, behind what is now 51 to 57 High Street and encompassing The Croft and Twine Walk developments. As with the other fields mentioned above, these latter two strips seem in 1896 to have been of simple rational sizes, about 2/3 acre and 1 acre, respectively. Finally, field 9034 (6 acres) to the west of field 0132 but with the same northern boundary line as 0132, 0734 and 0934, would seem to be part of the same delineation of fields.

### Historical background

Higham (p 300) found [7] that in a document dated 8 Edward II (1314/15) we have mention of the existence of a burgage when a: *'feoffment by John de Burton to Thomas de Thornton and Isabel his wife and heirs, of two burgages in Burton in Lonsdale'*. Evidence of location of burgages is given in [8]: *'feoffment by John de Holm, of his whole burgage in the town of Burton, between the highway and the ditch of Briseselmyre'* and this latter is presumed to be Breastfield on present maps. Higham and Stephens are of the view that one of the present fields 0734 and 0934 behind The Manor House/The Cross and Bull Farm House is the burgage plot transferred to John de Holm in 1316. It seems therefore, that these two burgage plots may be one of the oldest remaining signs of medieval Burton, apart from Castle Hill itself.

Further mention is made in Tudor records of *'a burgage and a half'*, and 3 separate *'burgages and land'* at Burton are noted from [9] by Higham (p 301). The parcels of ground mentioned in the survey of 1652 [10] seem possibly to have included the burgage plots. This view is reinforced by evidence found by Gregory [12] in the Lawpage family history, which gives their family tree in Burton from 1451 to 1651. In particular, it traces Edward, yeoman in 1638 who then held a *'messuage and Tenemt of John Canfield Esq...'* back to Richard of 1461, through Christopher of 1501 and Easter of 1537 who held a burgage. Since Edward's son left Burton during the Civil War, the property must thereafter have been taken over by someone else, which we know had happened in the person of George Overend who held his house as part of the freehold of Mr Cansfield by 1682.

### Burgage Plots Elsewhere

In Richmond, the earliest burgage plots were probably those laid out around the outer bailey, according to Fieldhouse and Jennings [13] p14 et seq; between 1136 and 1145 for an annual rent of £29 the occupiers of burgage houses were free of interference from their overlord and virtually free of feudal obligations. Indeed, in Richmond only the owners of the ancient burgage houses were included in the electorate right through until 1832 ([10] p412). Grenville [1] defines a burgage plot as a long narrow plot of land running at right angles from the street frontage in a town (p198). She reports on p161 that there is archaeological evidence from excavations in Chester of the existence of such plots in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries but not the 10<sup>th</sup>, while some plots in Coppergate at York and at Worcester were laid out in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Post conquest town charters specified the dimensions of burgage plots as 3 or

3.5 perches (16 or 18 metres) by 12 perches (60 metres) which amounts to about one quarter of an acre and until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, at least, this was the primary unit of rentable property though subdivision of these units for subletting was becoming commonplace. The capacity to build parallel to the road in a town indicated access to an undivided burgage plot or perhaps acquisition of more than one ([1] p165). The Bishop of Salisbury in 1225 laid out the new town of Salisbury with uniform burgage plots of size 3 perches by 7 perches whereas at Sherborne in Dorset three burgage plot sizes were used in 1227-28: 4 by 20 perches, 4 by 24 perches and 2 by 4 perches, according to the size of tenement, from Hoskins [14] p90.

## References

- [1] J. Grenville. **Medieval Housing**. Leicester University Press, London 1997.
- [2] T. Stephens. The Earl of Derby's Manor, *Yorkshire History Quarterly*, 6, 1 (2000) 42-51.
- [3] L. Reynolds. The Cross, *Yorkshire Buildings*, 28 (2000) 94-97.
- [4] M.C. Higham. **The effects of the Norman Conquest on north west England with particular reference to the honors of Hornby and Burton-in-Lonsdale**, PhD, Lancaster University 1992.
- [5] Preston Records Office Cal. Charter Rolls, Vol. 3, 1300-1326 (1908) 84.
- [6] Craven District Council Appraisal of Burton-in-Lonsdale Conservation Area, 1998.
- [7] Lancashire Records Office A 7685, **Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds**, Vol. 4 (1902) 200.
- [8] Lancashire Records Office A 11157, **Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds**, Vol. 5 (1906) 101.
- [9] Lancashire Records Office A 12803, **Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds**, Vol. 5 (1906) 307.
- [10] Lancashire Records Office DDK 1461 1, **Survey of Burton in Lonsdale, for sale**, 1652.
- [11] Lancashire Records Office DDK 1541 7a, **The Earl of Derby's survey of Burton in Lonsdale**, 1682.
- [12] S. Gregory. Comments on **Lapage Family Roots and Regions**, Peter Lapage, 1995.
- [13] R. Fieldhouse and B. Jennings. **History of Richmond and Swaledale**. Phillimore, London 1978.
- [14] W.G. Hoskins. **Local History in England**. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Longman, London 1972.
- [15] C.T.J. Dodson. The Earl of Derby's Courthouse at Burton in Lonsdale, *Hudson History*, Settle 2007.