

The Honour of Clitheroe (also spelled Honor) is an ancient grouping of manors and royal forests centred on Clitheroe Castle in Lancashire, England; an honour traditionally being the grant of a large landholding complex, not all of whose parts are contiguous. In the case of Clitheroe, this complex was loosely based around the ancient wapentake of Blackburnshire.

Before the Norman Conquest, the lands of Blackburnshire were held by Edward the Confessor. By Domesday the land had been given by Roger de Poitou to Roger of Bully and Albert Gresley. Gresley apparently resigned his fee in the Blackburnshire hundred in about 1086.

In 1092, Roger de Poitou acquired a large part of what is now Lancashire, including the hundred of Blackburnshire.

In 1102, Henry I granted the fee of Blackburnshire and further holdings in Hornby, and the vill of Chipping, Aighton and Dutton in Amounderness to Robert de Lacy, while confirming his possession of Bowland. These lands formed the basis of what became known as the Honour of Clitheroe.

The Honour passed by marriage from the De Lacys to Thomas, Earl of Lancaster in 1311 and subsequently, was incorporated into the Duchy of Lancaster. The honour had been among the lands acquired by Queen Isabella in 1327, after she deposed Edward II.

In 1507, King Henry VII's Act of Disafforestation was a response to growing encroachment on the Royal Forests and paved the way for increased settlement within the Forests of Accrington, Bowland, Pendle, Rossendale and Trawden. The Manor of Accrington New Hold was formed from the forests of Accrington and Rossendale after deforestation.

In 1661, King Charles II granted the Honour to General George Monck, 1st Duke of Albemarle, in recognition of his support during the Restoration. It then followed the inheritance of the Dukes of Albemarle, Dukes of Montagu and finally, the Dukes of Buccleuch. In 1827, the 5th Duke of Buccleuch inherited the Honour through his grandmother, the 3rd Duchess, but this was entailed upon his uncle, Henry James Montagu-Scott, 2nd Baron Montagu of Boughton. Lord Henry Douglas-Scott-Montagu, great-nephew of the 2nd Baron Montagu of Boughton, and second son of the 5th Duke of Buccleuch, inherited the Honour in 1845.

In 1896, he set up the Clitheroe Estate Company as a vehicle for the exploitation of coal and other mineral wealth, within the lands of the Honour. The 1938 Coal Act and subsequent nationalisation of the British coal industry led to the voluntary winding-up of the Company in 1945.

In April that year, Tory MP Ralph Assheton, later 1st Baron Clitheroe, bought the residue of the land holdings from the Company for £12,500. Since 1945, the Barons Clitheroe have styled themselves Lords of the Honour of Clitheroe; more

formally, their legal style of address being "Lords of the Various Manors and Forests within the Honour of Clitheroe".

In recent years, the Steward of the Honour has been a partner at Clitheroe-based land agent Ingham & Yorke.

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