

## FOPH 1e Richard Higgin's response to PAG newsletters:

1. In the April 2020 newsletter, David Taylor outlined the geography of the medieval cow farm or vaccary of Barley Booth. To avoid confusion, it is worth mentioning that Barley Booth had 3 vaccaries called Barley Booth, Wheatley Booth and Whitehough Booth. David's article dealt only with the former.

I agree with David on all the points he makes about the Barley vaccary. The SE-facing aspect, the present field boundaries and the watercourses, all point to Ing End Farm being the most likely spot for the vaccary farmstead, as it had a good supply of water and, being tucked under Pendle Hill, it is sheltered from both west- and easterly winds. Nestling in its natural bowl, it is a top-coat warmer than other nearby vaccaries. The Barley Booth vaccary is higher in altitude, but it has a warmer climate than the vaccaries at both Roughlee and Goldshaw Booths. The latter lie in the SW-NE aligned Sabden Valley, which is exposed to the prevailing winds.

David mentioned '*murrain*', which is not recognised as a modern farming ailment. It is not one illness, but a general medieval term covering many ailments, such as 'foot and mouth', 'anthrax', 'skitts' and many others.

2. In Ian Rowley's April 2020 article on 'The Usage of Calf Hill Ditch', he is to be congratulated on making an excellent contribution to the discussion on the origin of the 'Ditch and Bank'. He makes many profound observations and includes many very valuable maps, relevant illustrations and photographs.

I agree with what he is saying, so long as it is recognised that Ian's discussion is limited to the 18-20 centuries. Map analysis covers only the 19C. After the 16C division of Pendleton Common, the higher stretches of moorland were divided up into 'Doles' with portions of land belonging to individual farms. Sabden Hall Farm today can put a maximum of 33 sheep on their allocation of Pendle Moor dole-land. Ian correctly links 'sheep funnels' and 'sheep-folds or sheep-washes' to this modern movement of sheep to and from their home farm.

However, the 'Ditch and Bank' is likely to be much older than the 18C. There is no mention of changes in earlier climatic periods or land-use on Pendle in the pre-16C landscape, such as the Forest of Pendle being a 'Hunting Chase'. Sheep would not have appeared on Pendle until after 1507 and the 'Removal of Pendle Forest's Special Hunting Chase Privileges'.

In the past and effecting the Pendle landscape, there have been variations in the climate caused by periods of (a) drier or wetter weather and (b) colder or warmer weather. In the 1140's, bad weather forced the move of Kirkstall Abbey from Barnoldswick to the abbey's present site. In contrast, warmer weather in the 14-15C allowed crops to be grown between Craggs and Deerstones, as evidenced by early field walls. In the 1540's, the area had 2 years of drought, followed by heavy rain and floods, caused by the huge eruption of Mt St Helens.

The number of sheep per acre has therefore varied slightly over the centuries, but the figures that Ian quotes from the internet are a little way out. The rule of thumb over the last 100 years has not been 'sheep to the acre', but 'acres to the sheep'. Local upland farms did not fatten their lambs, but sold them on to be fattened in the richer summer pastures of Cheshire and West Lancashire. In the summertime, ewes would be turned out onto the moor, while the valley pastures were used for hay. Some lambs would be kept on to next year and then sold as 'hoggs'.

Bobby Gill of Cockshuts Farm, Heyhouses suggests the following stocking-levels in and around Pendle Moor:

<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Summer</u>	<u>Winter</u>
Low ground	Nil, due to hay-making	2 per acre
High ground	1 per 2 acres	Nil; sheep at farm

The problem we face with the 'Ditch and Bank' is one of potentially multiple uses over at least 8 centuries. I would suggest that there needs to be clear aims and objectives for the future, more articles like the one here and far more focused archaeological and historical research.

This is an excellent article from Ian and is a suitable template for other members to follow, perhaps on other aspects of this fascinating 'Ditch and Bank' topic.

Richard Higgins 05 June 2020