

## Rievaulx Cartulary

## Bygone Bilsdale Review

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### Sources

1. Cartularium Abbathiar de Rievallie edited by Rev J C Atkinson for the Surtees Society 1889 see <http://www.archive.org/stream/cartulariumabbat00riev#page/n3/mode/2up>
2. *A History of the County of York North Riding Volume 1 1914 Parishes: Helmsley pages 485-505* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/north/vol1/pp485-505> footnote 13
3. Rievaulx Abbey and its Social Environment 2001 PhD thesis Emilia Maria Jamroziak in /aalibrary

### Rievaulx Cartulary

Cannon Atkinson's book copies all the Cartularies in latin and he provides a 113 page introduction plus footnotes in English throughout the book. Some of the main references to Bilsdale are mentioned below with the page number followed by the cartulary number:

Intro p9 he quotes the story of Walter Espec's son dies in riding accident at Frithby, from Abbeys and Castles of Yorkshire, Mackenzie and Whitaker

Intro p11 then dismisses it

Intro p 28 c368 refers to walter espec's grant of bilsdale

Intro p 37 bilsdale granted by walter espec in 1154, previously griff & tanton in 1131/2/3

Intro 43 bilsdale/helmsley at time of survey owned by the King or thane, Earl of Mortain

intro 45 Walter Espec is William Speck's son – based on Bedfordshire Domesday survey

Intro 47 bilsdale secondary grant, mostly unreclaimed

Intro62 4 caucates at griff, 5 at Tilston, followed by Bilsdale grant later

Intro 98 issue between William, abbot of Rievaulx & Robert of Teesdale re Bilsdale pasturage

2 *Rachesdale* – Henry III granted monks free warren here p362. Now Raysdale?

7 bilsdale is in birdforth wapentake

page16 Cartulary no 42 Walter Espec's charter foundation granting lands in Helmsley & Bilsdale

17 42 discussion of bilsdale rievaulx boundary, Steinton defined, (note 2)

20 42 John Engleram's sub fee, north of William beck, inland below the steep moor banks

25 46 confirmation by Robert de Ros of his ancestor's grants,

- 42 72 Stephen de Meinill grant of the vill of Steinton for payment of 1 mark
- 118 164 Grant by Stephen de Meinill and right of way mentions Bilsdale boundary and Haggsgata, Willwmo Engelram witness
- 226 322 Agreement between Abbot Adam and Simon de Vere re gift of Raisdale Magna and Parva
- 227 323 concord between Abbot and William de Tameton re a tenement in Bilsdale
- 254 362 convention between Rievaulx and Simon de Vere re Raisdale Magna & Parva, mineral rights retained note 8
- 260 368 mentions Walter Espec's grant of Bilsdale in 1145
- 265 371 list of charters 1640 mentions Raysdale, mentions Cyrograffum William Gray Simon de Vere
- 276 *quieta clamatio* W Moubray de Reythesdal et terris in Buskeby
- 279 Edward 2 list mentions raisdale magna and parva, Huhurst/huhirste, Staindallhenges, Kirkeslectes, + people's names
- 304 ...also here
- 315 list of names and tenements in Raysdale vocati Huhurste, Caldmore Cote, Ulthwaite, Vlwraye?, Yron Smethes (forge)
- 344 Iron Smythies
- 345 and our manor of Billesdale et Raysdale
- 346 et hamelettis de Ryvalx, Byllesdale, Raysdale, Helmesley, Hawnbye, North Allertone et Leke
- 404 Bilsdale mentioned in a disagreement
- 406 reference to various people & places in Bilsdale
- 408 another reference to Bilsdale people, mentions loco de Huehurst (p209)
- 461 raisdale index 2 266 269 279 314 315 345 346 394 401 magna&parva 226 254 279 304 397 398

**Walter Espec's grant to Rievaulx** – Cartulary no42, page 16 the commentary starts in footnote 3 and is summarised below. Some of the gaps can now be filled in such as Smiths Dale

Starting point via regia, king's highway gate means way gone sperragata, spergate crosses the rye at or near the current bridge at Rievaulx

It includes Griff and Stiltons run along the wood at foot of hill, now called Abbot's Hagg, through quarry bank wood, road from Griff farm to Sproxton mill, at some point turns north to the confluence of 2 streams, one through Deepdale, the other Littlebeck (old name)

In the west "*omnem aquam usque ad Fangadale*" so follow the Rye from the bridge to the Seph, along the Seph to "*aqua quae currit per Biledsala*" then west along or through Fangdale but along a definite line "*sicut divisae sunt inter me et Steinton*" Steinton is bounded on west by Laddale Beck on SW & S by Rye, on east by Seph & on north by Fangdale Widheris is Weather House/ it passes tumulus at 1326ft *how does he determine this? Green Howe above Trennett "monte qui vocatur Traneshof"?* then "*per vallem quae dicitur Landesmere*" just south of William Beck/Bilsdale Beck junction??

Eastern boundary continued – valley with Ouldray wood on east is Littlebeck, so valley on other side of wood is Depedale. Follow rievaulx boundary approx north, follow the road (viam magnam) leading north from Roppa (Raudpath), to a bifurcation, go right *along the current boundary, above smithsdale which he doesn't know* then “acervus” pile of heap of stones – Bachelor then turns back “retroductu” coming down above Tripsdale until it reaches a “magna via from Turchilesti. He suggests Badger stone is Bachelor The boundary between Bilsdale Kirkham and Bilsale Midcable runs from this stone to Tripsdale head thence along tripsdale beck to bilsdale beck then west with a direct lead for williamsbeck. Turchi;esti is the Kirby Moorside to Cleveland road

*Rievaulx\_Cartulary.doc*

2. *A History of the County of York North Riding Volume 1 1914 Parishes: Helmsley pages 485-505*  
<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/north/vol1/pp485-505> footnote 13

13. The bounds of these lands are set out in detail in *Rievaulx Chartul.* (Surt. Soc.), 16–21. They are briefly as follows: On the west side from Spergate (Sperragata) along the Rye to Fangdale, thence to 'Steinton' and so to the highway from Weather House (Wideris), thence towards Cleveland to 'Traneshop' Hill, thence by the valley called 'Landesmere' to Bilsdale Beck. On the east side from Spergate to the road from Griff to Sproxton Mill, thence by a road between [Abbot's] Hagg and another hagg (haia) to the assart, thence along the valley to 'Thilleston,' to a ditch opposite where Deepdale and Littlebec meet, along Littlebec Valley to Roppa (Raudepade), thence by the highway to the fork in the roads and thence over 'Smidhesdala' to the stone called 'Bachelor' and thence over Tripsdale (Thriplesdala) to the highway from 'Thurchilesti' and so towards Cleveland and by the stream called Williamsbeck (Willelmesbec) and so to Bilsdale Beck.

3. *Rievaulx Abbey and its Social Environment 2001 PhD thesis Emilia Maria Jamroziak in /aalibrary*

Pp 3 initially 2 vills Griff & Tileston, Walter espec donated Bilsdale in 1145

Pp 21 Walter Espec & King Henry

Pp27 Walter Espec founded Kirkham Priory c 1122

Pp28 career of Walter Espec

Pp29 Archbishop Thurstan of York supported the establishment of Rievaulx

Pp29 ref to William of Newburgh, chronicler WalterEspec wrote to Bernard

Pp30 Walter Espec founded Rievaulx in 1132,retired there in 1153,died 1155

Pp32 long term commitment

Pp33 Espec's 1<sup>st</sup> endowment 9 curucate Griff & Tileston and 2<sup>nd</sup> of Bilsdale

*Pp33 Walter Espec's grant excludes the manor of Stainton and the vill of Raisdale*

Pp34 endowments endorsed by kings

Pp 92 Stainton part of Hugh Malabisse's fee, granted to Rievaulx by Stephen de Meinil pp137

*Pp92 Hugh Malabisse, tenant and steward of Roger de Mowbray quitclaimed Stainton*

Pp107 Dispute between Simon de Ver, his tenant William de Mowbray and Rievaulx about Great and Little Raisdale

Pp 137 Stainton given to Rievaulx by Stephen I de Meinil

Pp3

It opens with an entry recording the

endowment of Rievaulx abbey consisting of two vills: Griff and Tileston and an early grant of Odo de Boltby, a neighbour of the abbey. The next donation was given, according to this list, in 1145 by Walter Espec, the founder and consisted of Bilsdale. The original body of the cartulary starts only on f. 24 [f. 28] with the compilation charter (containing information about two separate donation acts) of Walte Espec, the abbey's founder

Pp21

Walter Espec, the founder of the abbey, was advancing his career in the royal service and his pious foundations were a part of his attempts to assert his newly acquired social standing. The reign of King Henry I was a time of profound changes in the administration and governing of the country, which greatly influenced relationships between the King and the magnates. Walter Espec's name appeared frequently as a witness and this would clearly indicate his presence at the court. Walter Espec, certainly belonged to the group described as the 'new men' of Henry I. Importantly, they were a second generation of settlers in England. All the privileges, such as offices and land, were distributed carefully to keep the balance of power between the magnates and the king.

Pp27

The Augustinian canons were the first order to become fashionable in the beginning of the twelfth century and many noblemen, particularly new men and bishops became founders of priories, including Walter Espec who established Kirkham Priory c. 1122

Pp28

Before moving on to the particulars of the foundation of Rievaulx let us turn our attention to the career of its founder, Walter Espec. Walter Espec was a son or nephew of William de Spech who was a tenant-in-chief in Domesday. During his career Walter acquired three lordships: Old Warden in Bedfordshire which he inherited from his uncle, Wark in Northumberland and Helmsley in Yorkshire, which were granted to him by King Henry I (the honour of Helmsley was part of Robert Count of Mortain's estates in Domesday).<sup>47</sup> The latter became Espec's main residence. Walter Espec became the justice of forests and the itinerant justice of the north, a position held simultaneously with Eustace FitzJohn.<sup>48</sup> Janet Burton suspects that Espec as a frequent visitor to the royal court may well have met the Cistercian delegation sent by St Bernard. King Henry's personal interest in the Cistercian order and his subsequent generosity to Rievaulx monastery must have been an important factor in the negotiations and the foundation process.

Pp29

The coming of the white monks to Yorkshire was orchestrated by St Bernard himself and supported by King Henry I and Archbishop Thurstan of York. The group of Cistercian monks from Clairvaux led by William, an Englishman, brought a letter from St Bernard to King Henry in 1131.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Burton, 'Origins and development', pp. 150, 312; William of Newburgh stated in his chronicle that Walter Espec sent an invitation to Bernard of Clairvaux and promised a site for the new monastery; William of Newburgh, 'Historia Rerum Anglicarum', p. 50.

Pp30

According to the 'Iste sunt possessiones' list in the cartulary Walter Espec granted the abbey's site in 1131. The foundation of Rievaulx abbey was finalized, according to Leopold Janaushek, on the 5 March 1132, but the actual foundation process, erecting temporary lodgings for the monks and provisional church, was very likely to take longer than a year.<sup>58</sup> This task was usually financed and carried out by the founder.<sup>59</sup> The ceremony was attended by many noble neighbours, local aristocracy, knights, tenants, family, bishops and other officials. Rievaulx's foundation charter copied in the cartulary is a composite of two documents related to two different occasions.<sup>61</sup> The first grant consisted of the actual site for the monastic precinct and nine carucates of land. On the second occasion Walter Espec granted Bilsdale, located to the north from the abbey

According to the genealogy of the Ros family Espec retired to Rievaulx in 1153 and died on 15 March 1155 and was buried there.<sup>64</sup>

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This act united past and present generations of the family and promised patronage and further grants for the monastic community. This was an obligation not only for the people immediately involved in the foundation, but also binding future generations.

Pp33

The first endowment by Espec consisted of nine carucates of land of which four were located in Griff and five in Tileston (Stiltons Farm) with all the rights of pasture, collecting dead wood and timber, water and meadow and free from any secular services. These two properties lay between the east bank of the Rye river and Borobek which runs through the township of Helmsley. Parts of this land were still covered by a wood, the rest comprised of arable and pasture. On the plateau overlooking the river Rye there are remains of medieval earthworks, which may be the remains of the Griff vill depopulated by the Rievaulx abbey.<sup>69</sup> The second donation by Espec was made between 1145 and 1153 and then included in the compilation known as the foundation charter. It consisted of the southern part of Bilsdale, whose borders are described carefully in the charter: from Laskill to the confluence of William and Raisdale Becks except the manor of Stainton and the vill of Raisdale. The grant included also the right to gather wood and pasture pigs in his forest of Helmsley.

Pp34

These early grants of Walter Espec were confirmed by the highest authorities to ensure security of the abbey's property. In 1133 King Henry I confirmed the initial grant reconfirmed by King Stephen in 1135, the first year of his reign. The next royal confirmation of all Walter's grants in Griff, Tileston and Bilsdale was issued on 6 September 1189 by King Richard.<sup>75</sup> *75 Cartulary*, n<sup>o</sup> 174.

pp 107-8

Another branch of the family, the Mowbrays of Tameton who were tenants of the de Vere family had a rather complicated relationship with the abbey. Sibilla de Kyme, who was a wife of Simon de Vere, found herself after the death of her husband in 1213-14 under pressure from her neighbours who were encroaching on her dower. Among the aggressive neighbours were both lay people and heads of monastic houses—the abbots of Thornton, Bardney and Rievaulx. Conflict with Rievaulx abbey started in 1213 and the disputed property consisted of a half of carucate in Brocton. 157 In 1214 Sibilla sued Abbot Elias who failed to appear in the court and a new date was set. Finally the disputed property was taken into the King's hand and the next date for the plea appointed. 158 Unfortunately there is no indication how the conflict was resolved.

When Sibille's son Simon came of age in 1229 he continued his mother's disputes with the abbey, but by then the situation was more complicated. In 1251 Simon supported the side of his tenant William de Mowbray of Tameton in a plea by Adam abbot of Rievaulx. The object of conflict were the manors of Great Rythesdale and Little Rythesdale, a half carucate and three tofts in Little Busby which were held by the abbot for the term of his life from William and Agnes Grey. These properties were Agnes' dower, an inheritance from William Mowbray of the freehold of William of Taunton her former husband. 159 This dispute was resolved by the means of a complicated deal. The manors in Rythesdale should be returned to the abbot after the death of Agnes to be held from William Mowbray for half of carucate with forinsec service and another payment of eleven shillings and eight pence to Simon de Vere the lord. Another yearly payment of service of half

mark from the same manors was **due to William Malabisse**. The abbot quitclaimed to William de Mowbray the manors of Foxton in Cleveland.<sup>160</sup>

The dispute over the particular plot in Bilsdale between abbey and **William Mowbray of Tameton** which he held from **Simon** was officially **ended in 1257** by a formal charter between William and the abbey which was resolved by the arbitration of John, Abbot of Peterborough, and John de Wyville, an itinerant justice. William quitclaimed his rights to the said property in Bilsdale while **Abbot Adam de Tilletai** promised **to pay two shillings yearly** and dropped all the other claims against William. 161

The original conflict between Simon de Vere and the abbey, was finished formally in **1260**. He quitclaimed to the abbey the manor in **Great Rythesdale (including Crosslets and Staindale)** granted to the **abbey by Simon's tenant, William de Mowbray of Tameton**, and also the manor of **Little Raysdale**. Additionally Simon quitclaimed **pasture and mineral rights in Little Raysdale**. In turn, the monks promised **eleven shillings and eight pence yearly** of the service payment. 162 This agreement was also copied in to the Kirkham cartulary which had a large holding in Bilsdale, directly bordering with Raysdale. 163

163 Kirkham Cartulary, Bodl., MS Fairfax 7, f. 51v; published in *Cartulary*, pp. 254-5. For a discussion on this issue see pp. 176-7.

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**Stephen I de Meinil**... His gift to Rievaulx was made between 1145 and 1152 and consisted of the **vill of Stainton**. 299 This land was given with the consent of Sibil his wife and his sons Robert and Henry, but the donor reserved a right to take timber from Stainton and requested one mark yearly of service payment from the monks. 30 This grant was later confirmed by Roger de Mowbray. 301 The amount of service payment is interpreted by William Farrer in the following way: 'Possibly Meinil received little more from it than the chief rent of two marks which Hugh Malabisse the mesne lord paid to Roger de Mowbray, the chief lord.'<sup>302</sup>

The younger son of Stephen I, Henry de Meinil, did not add anything to his father's donation,... The next generation of the Meinil family represented by **Stephen II, (d. in 1188)** continued to support Rievaulx abbey. Stephen II was the grandson of Stephen I, and the son of Robert de Meinil, the older brother of Henry. He gave, between 1175 and 1185, a part of the woodland of Greenhove bordering on the east side with Great Broughton and on the west side with **Bilsdale**,... The Meinil charters are dispersed in the cartulary, Stephen I's charter is placed together with Malabisse documents because they were holding land within the Malet fee and the Malabisses also gave land in Stainton to Rievaulx abbey. Stephen I's charter is actually preceded by its confirmation issued by Roger de Mowbray. Henry Meinil's charter is placed with other charters related to the same vill and Stephen II's charter seems to be located without any special reason.

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