

The Deed

He is weary. He has worked since dawn, following the lumbering oxen, head bent as the plough cuts into the heavy clay. At mid-day there is a piece of dark bread and water from the brook – not a lot, but then there isn't a lot. Later he will come back to net linnets along the hedgerow. And lapwing are already swooping and mewing above the field. Soon there should be eggs to collect. But he knows it is not enough to feed a family.

Times have always been hard but the last few years even harder : poor harvests so all have gone hungry; the plague that took both men and beasts. He looks across towards the castle and remembers the fear when for 4 days and nights the town burned and raiders from the north country trampled the crops beneath their horses' hooves.

Later he walks to the town and conscious of his rough clothes and grimy hands climbs the stairs to where before three witnesses he seals the deed. It is done, the strip of land that he worked with his father and expected to hand on to his son is sold. The coins will serve to feed his family for a while. But the land is poor and not worth much

And so it was that in 1324 “Thomas son of William of Aldcliffe gives and makes over to William of Slyne and to his heirs, a small part of land along with the pertinences which belong to the same, lying in the area of Lancaster called Sowerholm between the land of His Majesty the King and that of William of Baldestron.”

We have no knowledge of what happened to Thomas, son of William of Aldcliffe. William of Slyne however continued to prosper

2 Carta pferentes & pced. p Ego Thom fil Willm de Alderens dedit concess Willmo de Oene & heredib suis
una parva terra cu pto eoru pmerice cu pmerijs in Lancast pferentes in campo qui vocat Doullholm una
terra dno Regis & terra Willm de Caldreston. Tenend & hinc terra una pto cu pmerijs de Willm
& heredib suis de capitali dno feodi p servicia que ad ea tenentia pvenit impetum Et Ego vero dno
Thom & hered meo dnam terra & pto cu pmerijs de Willmo & heredib suis omnes omnes generes varietabil
mus impetum. In cui rei testimoniu p hinc carta sigilla meo apposui. Hinc testib Robert de Oerton Ro
ber de Oobram tuc Willm Land. Johne Bau. Rob fil Simon. Alan fil Robert & alij. Dat apud Lan
de Sabati in Sigilla pasci. Anno regni Regis Edwardi fil Regi Edmardi Septimo decimo