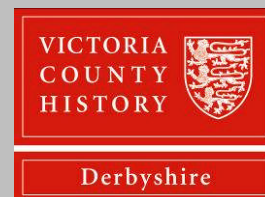


**VCH Derbyshire**  
**On-line Texts in Progress**  
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## INTRODUCTION

### Location and boundaries

The ancient parish of Elmtun occupied 2,830 acres<sup>1</sup> towards the north-eastern corner of Scarsdale hundred. On the east it abuts in part on the county boundary and in part on Whitwell; in the south and to some extent the west it adjoins Bolsover ancient parish; to the north-west it adjoins Clowne and to the north Whitwell. The parish formed a single constabulary<sup>2</sup> and poor law township, and thus became a civil parish in 1894; the only change to the civil parish boundary occurred in 1935, when there was an exchange of land with Whitwell intended to place the whole of the village of Creswell in Elmtun parish.<sup>3</sup> The civil parish was placed in Worksop poor law union under the 1834 Act and thus in 1894 became part of Clowne rural district, which in turn became a constituent of Bolsover district in 1974.<sup>4</sup>

### Geology and geography

The parish lies on the dip slope of the magnesian limestone plateau of north-east Scarsdale. Except where valleys have been created by streams the land is

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<sup>1</sup> *Derb. Pop. Stat.*

<sup>2</sup> *Scarsdale Miscellany*, 21.

<sup>3</sup> Youngs, *Admin. Units*, ii. 74; *P.N. Derb.*, 256.

<sup>4</sup> Below, local govt.

generally flat, falling gently from about 500 ft above sea level in the south-west corner to around 250 ft on the eastern parish boundary near Creswell. The village of Elmtun lies at just over 400 ft. In the north of the parish the stream later known as the river Wollen which forms the boundary with Whitwell has created a deep valley in the limestone known as Hollinhill Grips. Midway along this section the stream is joined at an acute angle by another, which has cut a similar valley, named Markland Grips. The promontory formed by the confluence of the two streams is the site of an Iron Age hillfort.<sup>1</sup> The river then turns south before changing direction to flow east once more through the deep gorge known as Creswell Crag, the Derbyshire portion of which in fact lies in Whitwell parish.<sup>2</sup> The Wollen flows through the older part of the village of Creswell; Elmtun village appears to have been entirely dependent on well-water until modern times.

### **Population**

A total of 46 households were either charged to the hearth tax in 1664 or discharged by reason of poverty. A similar number (43) was returned in 1751, which suggests that the figure of 94 given in the Compton Census is the total of adults, rather than either families or the whole population. In 1772 only 32 families were counted and in the early 1780s 52. In 1801 there were 58 houses in the parish, occupied by 261 people. The total grew steadily to 673 in 1891, immediately before the opening of Creswell colliery and the building of the model village there.<sup>1</sup> The population immediately leapt to 2,575 in 1901 and 5,361 ten years later. It remained around

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<sup>1</sup> Below, this section.

<sup>2</sup> Below, Whitwell.

<sup>1</sup> Below, this section; econ. hist., coalmining.

5,300 between the two World Wars, before increasing again to a maximum of 6,788 in 1961. A decline then set in, to 5,924 in 1981, before the closure of the colliery led to a further fall to 5,016 in 1991 and only 4,755 in 2001.<sup>2</sup>

### Communications

The main south–north road across the magnesian limestone skirts the parish on the west, where for about half a mile it marks the boundary with Bolsover. The principal road then diverges to run to Clowne and continue to Rotherham, but what appears to be another early route into Yorkshire, here called Boundary Lane, branches off to the north-east towards Harthill, and forms the boundary with Clowne as far as the stream which marks the northern edge of Elmtun parish. An early 13th-century charter refers to an acre of land in Elmtun which lay between the park and 'the street',<sup>3</sup> presumably meaning one of these early roads.

The Pleasley–Rotherham section of the main road was turnpiked in 1764.<sup>4</sup> Minor roads run east from this road to Elmtun village, which is also served by two roads from Clowne to the north-west, Whitwell to the north-east, and Whaley to the south-east. Another road runs east from Elmtun village to Creswell, where it joins a road from Clowne which continues south and east to Budby (Notts.).<sup>1</sup> This route was

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<sup>2</sup> *Derb. Pop. Stats.*

<sup>3</sup> *Thurgarton*, no. 164; below, landscape and buildings, for the park at Elmtun.

<sup>4</sup> Scott, 'Turnpike roads', 199, 207.

<sup>1</sup> Burdett, *Map*.

turnpiked under an Act of 1810,<sup>2</sup> when a new section was built between the southern end of Creswell village and Bonbusk.<sup>3</sup>

The Mansfield–Worksop branch of the Midland Railway, opened in 1875, runs for about 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> miles from south to north through the eastern edge of the parish. A station originally named Cresswell (renamed Elmtun & Cresswell in 1886 and changed again to Elmtun & Creswell in 1887)<sup>4</sup> was opened at the point at which the line crossed Elmtun Road. In 1888 the same company built a branch from the North Midland main line at Staveley through Clowne to a junction with the Mansfield–Worksop line to the north of Elmtun & Creswell station, from which it now became possible to travel to Chesterfield. Finally, in 1897 the Beighton branch of the Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast Railway was opened. This ran parallel and slightly to the west of the Midland line from Langwith Junction to Creswell, where a station named Creswell & Welbeck (or for a few months simply ‘Creswell’) was opened,<sup>5</sup> and then struck off north-east towards Clowne. Connections were made from both the Midland and the LD&EC (later Great Central) lines to Creswell colliery.

The former Great Central station was closed in 1939, although the line remained open for freight (chiefly coal) for some years afterwards. The former Midland station was closed in 1964<sup>1</sup> but reopened in 1998 with the restoration of passenger services between Nottingham and Worksop.

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<sup>2</sup> Scott, ‘Turnpike Roads’, 199, 208.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Burdett, *Map*; Sanderson, *Map*.

<sup>4</sup> Butt, *Railway Stations*, 71, 90.

<sup>5</sup> Butt, *Railway Stations*, 71.

<sup>1</sup> Butt, *Railway Stations*, 71, 90.

### Settlement and building

The internationally important palaeolithic sites at Creswell Crags, although well known by that name, in fact lie in the parishes of Whitwell and Cuckney (Notts.).<sup>2</sup> Small mesolithic occupation sites, represented by about 30 flints found on the surface, have been identified at Creswell.<sup>3</sup> A cave shelter on the south-west side of Oxpasture Lane near Whaley Hall was occupied in mesolithic and neolithic times.<sup>4</sup> Near the east end of the Iron Age fort at Markland Grips four Neolithic burials have been found in a cave.<sup>5</sup>

A Middle Bronze Age spearhead has been found in plough-soil half a mile south-west of the fort at Markland Grips.<sup>6</sup>

Markland Grips itself is a triangular-shaped Iron Age promontory fort, flanked by cliffs cut by two streams into the limestone and protected at its western end by triple ramparts and ditches enclosing about 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> acres. The main entrance appears to have been in the centre of the line of defences, and there were others at the northern and southern ends of the ramparts. The interior, as well as the two outer ramparts, has been destroyed by modern ploughing and only limited excavation has taken place, making it impossible to suggest phases of construction.<sup>1</sup> The site was also occupied in

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<sup>2</sup> Below, Whitwell, intro.

<sup>3</sup> *N. Derby. Archaeol. Survey*, 26.

<sup>4</sup> J. Radley, 'Excavations at a rock shelter at Whaley, Derbyshire', *DAJ*, lxxxvi (197), 3–16.

<sup>5</sup> Pevsner, *Derb.*, 208.

<sup>6</sup> *N. Derby. Archaeol. Survey*, 68.

<sup>1</sup> *VCH Derby.*, i. 364–7; E. Tristram, 'The promontory forts of Derbyshire', *DAJ*, xxxiii (1911), 14–18; H.C. Lane, 'Markland Grips Iron Age promontory fort', *DAJ*, lxxxix (1969), 59–67; *N. Derby. Archaeol. Survey*, 75.

the 2nd and 3rd centuries,<sup>2</sup> and the 'ditch of the castle' at 'Martinland' (i.e. Markland) is a landmark in a charter of c.1200.<sup>3</sup>

Camp Hill, immediately to the north of The Oaks, has traditionally been identified as a Roman settlement. When the common waste in this part of the parish was enclosed under an Act of 1847 'several ancient spearheads, some of flint, were found here, also several old coins'.<sup>4</sup> All the finds were in the possession of John Brown of Elmtun Park in 1857.<sup>5</sup> In 1895 a 'blackened space, as if caused by fire,' was said to be visible at Camp Hill.<sup>6</sup> A reference to the discovery of 'several ancient coins' on the adjoining farm (i.e. The Oaks) may simply repeat the information published in 1857, but at some date closer to 1895 a silver coin was discovered at Camp Hill. This had a bust and the word 'Caesar' on one side, but the obverse was much worn and difficult to decipher.<sup>1</sup> A Romano-British settlement occupied from the late 1st century until the 3rd century has also been found near the rock shelter on Oxpasture Lane. The finds suggested a rather poor, mainly pastoral economy, with little use of imported pottery. Coal as well as wood had been used as fuel.<sup>2</sup>

'Human Remains, Coins &c.' of unspecified date were found near Elmtun Lodge in the south-west corner of the parish in 1873.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Lane, 'Markland Grips', 63, 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Thurgarton*, no. 161; below, landscape and buildings, for the apparent identity of 'Martinland' and Markland.

<sup>4</sup> *White's Dir. Derby.* (1857), 752; OS map, 1:10,560, Derby. ooo (1920 edn).

<sup>5</sup> *White's Dir. Derby.* (1857), 752.

<sup>6</sup> *Bulmer's Dir. Derby.* (1895), 245.

<sup>1</sup> *Bulmer's Dir. Derby.* (1895), 245.

<sup>2</sup> Radley, 'Rock shelter', 14–17.

<sup>3</sup> OS Map, 1:10,560 (1920 edn), Derby. ooo.

In the 18th century, and presumably for some time before, settlement in the parish was largely confined to the two villages of Elmtun in the west and Creswell in the east.<sup>4</sup> Elmtun seems to have grown up around a junction of several minor lanes about a mile east of the main Rotherham road. In the 18th century the village extended from the church (which was already in existence in 1086)<sup>5</sup> in the north-west as far as a large area of common waste in the south-east. In the 1830s there were some cottages on the edge of the waste. The village appears to have shrunk in the late Middle Ages or early modern period,<sup>1</sup> leaving gaps in the main street in the 18th century. Creswell, on the eastern edge of the parish, developed as a straggling village extending over about half a mile on either side of the Clowne road and on both banks of the river Wollen. Until the boundary change of 1935 some of the houses were in Whitwell parish. Creswell had a chapel of ease, apparently founded in the early 13th century.<sup>2</sup> The position of the village on the boundary between two parishes, and the presence in 1722 of seven freeholders in Creswell (whereas there were none in Elmtun)<sup>3</sup> suggests that it was a secondary settlement that came into existence after Elmtun.

Each village had its own open fields in the Middle Ages, remnants of which survived in the early 18th century. Even after enclosure was complete their position can be inferred from the field boundaries mapped a century later.

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<sup>4</sup> The following is based on an estate survey made for Sir John Rodes of Barlborough in 1722 (Nichols, *Local Maps*, no. 172 (original in private hands; copy in DRO, D2742/M/Z/1/1); Burdett, *Map*; Sanderson, *Map*; the tithe map and OS maps.

<sup>5</sup> Below, religious life.

<sup>1</sup> *N. Derb. Archaeol. Survey*, 128.

<sup>2</sup> Below, religious life.

<sup>3</sup> Nichols, *Local Maps*, no. 172.

At Elmtun the arable appears to have lain to the north-west, south and south-east of the village. To the south-west of the village there was a park in the Middle Ages, probably bounded by the main Rotherham road on the west, Oxcroft Lane in the north and Spring Lane on the east.<sup>4</sup> The park appears to have been created c.1227, when Robert of Tattershall was ordered to give Oliver Deincourt two oaks from the woods on the royal estate in Bolsover of the king's gift for enclosing his park at Elmtun.<sup>1</sup> It appears as a landmark in a grant to Thurgarton priory dating from the early or mid 13th century.<sup>2</sup> In 1327 Edmund Lord Deincourt's park at Elmtun was broken into by a gang of local men.<sup>3</sup> William Lord Deincourt defended his claim to free warren and a park with a deer-leap at Elmtun in 1330.<sup>4</sup> When the last Lord Deincourt died in 1422 the park at Elmtun was said to be of no value beyond the parker's fees and pasturage of beasts.<sup>5</sup> The land had been disparked by 1722.

In the north a large area of common waste extended from the parish boundary at Markland Grips as far as the northern edge of the arable to the east of Elmtun village; a thin strip of common extended up to the southern end of the village street. To the east of the common Creswell's fields occupied an extensive area between the river Wollen in the north and, it appears, Frith Wood Lane in the south. In 1618 there were three fields at Creswell, named as either South Field, Town Field and Nether

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<sup>4</sup> Bounds suggested by Mrs M. Wiltshire.

<sup>1</sup> *Rot. Lit. Claus.* (Rec. Com.), ii. 196.

<sup>2</sup> *Thurgarton*, no. 164.

<sup>3</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1317–21, 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Plac. de Quo Warr.* (Rec. Com.), 143.

<sup>5</sup> TNA, C 139/1/24.



Field, or Upper Field, Middle Field and Nether Field, as well as a number of closes and meadow.<sup>6</sup>

Before the park in the south-west and the common in the north were converted to arable there appear to have been only two or three farmsteads in the parish outside the two villages. The two which can be identified with confidence are Frithwood, whose lands lay in the south-eastern corner of the parish, to the south of the open fields of Creswell, and Whaley Hall, evidently named from its proximity to the hamlet of Whaley in the parish of Bolsover, which stood to the south of Elmtun's open fields.<sup>1</sup> A third appears to have stood near the hillfort in the north-western corner of the parish, but not on the site of either of the modern farms on Markland Lane named Markland Farm, both of which were established after 1835.<sup>2</sup> In a charter of c.1200 Ralph son of Walter gave Thurgarton priory two bovates of land in Martinland with pasture for 160 sheep and all the easements of his land in Martinland. The land extended to 62 acres, one of which lay to the east of Ralph's house, another 16 next to the way from Clowne in the western part of Martinland, and the remaining 45 between the ditch of the 'castle' and his house.<sup>3</sup> The road referred to can only be Markland Lane, and Ralph's house must have been close to the ramparts of the fort at Markland Grips. The deed also implies that the name 'Markland' is identical with the medieval 'Martinland'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Senior Survey*, 148–9.

<sup>1</sup> Below, manors and other estates, for the tenorial history of Whaley Hall. Nothing has been found of the history of Frithwood farm.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. it does not appear on Sanderson's *Map*.

<sup>3</sup> *Thurgarton*, nos. 161–162; p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *P.N. Derby*, 256–8.

The wood from which Frithwood Farm takes its name was the only woodland in the parish in the 18th or early 19th centuries.<sup>5</sup> Frith Wood was the subject of an agreement made in 1231–2 between Oliver Lord Deincourt and Thurgarton under which the priory was to have pasture there for 12 beasts of all kind and eight pigs at all times, and 12 cartloads of wood each year, with a penalty of one cask of wine or 40s. payable by Oliver if he failed to keep the agreement.<sup>1</sup>

In the north of the parish, on the river Wollen, there were two water cornmills in the 18th century, the Upper Mill, near Markland Grips fort, and the Lower Mill, about a quarter of a mile downstream, just inside Whitwell. There was a third mill, also in Whitwell, near the western end of Creswell Crag, known as Crag mill.<sup>2</sup> References to these mills can be found from the 13th century.<sup>3</sup> There was a windmill to the south of the Upper Mill in the 19th century, which was in ruins by the 1890s.<sup>4</sup>

By the early 19th century two farmsteads established in the south-western corner of the parish, within or just outside the medieval park, Elmton Park and Elmton Lodge. The common waste, reckoned to extend to 300 acres in the mid 17th century,<sup>5</sup> was not enclosed until 1850, when an award was made under an Act obtained three years earlier. The area was then stated to be 264 acres.<sup>6</sup> Under the award several roads across the common was straightened or realigned, and two new farmsteads were

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<sup>5</sup> Burdett, *Map*; Sanderson, *Map*.

<sup>1</sup> *Thurgarton*, no. 987.

<sup>2</sup> Burdett, *Map*.

<sup>3</sup> Below, econ. hist., mills.

<sup>4</sup> OS Map, 1:10,560 Derby. XIX.SE (1899 edn).

<sup>5</sup> *Scarsdale Miscellany*, 61.

<sup>6</sup> Tate, 'Enclosure Acts', 50.

established on the enclosures, Hazlemere Farm and The Oaks. Two holdings named Markland Farm were also built in the mid 19th century, both on Markland Lane, together with Grange Farm on Ringer Lane, all in the north-west of the parish.<sup>1</sup>

There were few other changes in the topography of the parish in the 19th century until the sinking of Creswell colliery alongside the Midland Railway's Mansfield–Worksop branch by the Bolsover Colliery Company in the mid 1890s.<sup>2</sup> To the north of the pit and the south of Elmtun Road the company built a large model village, with the cottages arranged in a double row forming an oval around a central green. In the middle of the long side of the oval opposite the entrance from Elmtun Road stood a large clubhouse. Creswell Model Village, designed by Percy B. Houfton of Chesterfield,<sup>3</sup> was similar in concept, but rather different in design and on a larger scale, to the same company's slightly earlier village at New Bolsover.<sup>4</sup> Between the cottages and the colliery there were allotments and a cricket ground, together with Yorke House, built for the colliery manager.

The Bolsover Company appear to have done no further building at Creswell after the completion of the model village, but over the following twenty years private enterprise led to the development of more conventional terraced housing on the opposite side of Elmtun Road from the Model Village, and there was piecemeal building on the same side of the road between the Midland Railway line and the junction with Sheffield Road. To the south of Elmtun Road between the railway and Mansfield Road a quadrangle of more traditional terraced cottages (Church Street,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sanderson, *Map*, and later OS maps.

<sup>2</sup> Below, econ. hist., coal mining.

<sup>3</sup> Pevsner, *Derb.*, 156.

<sup>4</sup> Above, Bolsover, settlement and building.

Duke Street, Morven Street and Welbeck Street) enclosed a recreation ground. Other allotments were laid out in various parts of the village, and there was a football ground near the Midland station. Several public buildings were erected on Elmton Road, including two groups of schools,<sup>1</sup> a church (with a vicarage) dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, chapels for the Wesleyans, Primitive Methodists and Baptists (the United Methodists built a chapel on Mansfield Road),<sup>2</sup> and a drill hall. This rapid expansion was more or less complete by 1914, when the growth of population levelled off,<sup>3</sup> leaving a village bounded by the Great Central Railway in the west and the parish boundary in the east.

A memorial by a sculptor named Borrowdale of Worksop (Notts.), incorporating a life-size figure of a soldier, was erected on the south side of Elmton Road in Creswell after the First World War, listing men of the parish who died in the war. Those who died in the Second World War were added after 1945, together with one man who died in Korea in 1953.<sup>4</sup>

Between the two World Wars an estate of local authority houses was built on the north side of Elmton Road to the east and west of the former Great Central Railway, and other houses were built further north between Skinner Street and the Clowne branch line. There was limited private house-building in the village, mainly on Sheffield Road and Mansfield Road. Two more public buildings were erected:

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<sup>1</sup> Below, social hist., educ.

<sup>2</sup> Below, religious life.

<sup>3</sup> Above, this section, population.

<sup>4</sup> DoE List.

swimming baths on Duke Street in 1924,<sup>1</sup> and quite an ambitious cinema on Elmton Road in 1937.<sup>2</sup>

There was further private building in the village in the second half of the 20th century and some local authority schemes. The Church of England schools vacated the extensive late 19th-century buildings on Elmton Road in favour of a new building on Gypsy Lane, which became a nursery and infant school. After the colliery was closed all the surface structures were demolished (although the upcast shaft was retained for pumping)<sup>3</sup> and the site was restored and landscaped. The Model Village was extensively refurbished in the 2000s and efforts were made to improve the appearance of the rest of the built-up area. In the north of the parish, on Sheffield Road, a site occupied for a short time by a special needs school was released for private house-building after the school closed.<sup>4</sup>

Elmton saw little new building in either the 19th or 20th centuries. Towards the end of this period some farmhouses were converted into private residences and there was a general upgrading of the older housing stock. The attractive appearance of the village was also enhanced by the large green at the southern end of the main street, where the circular pinfold, an unusual survival, remains intact.

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<sup>1</sup> Datestone.

<sup>2</sup> Below, econ. hist.

<sup>3</sup> Local inf.

<sup>4</sup> Local inf.