

LOCAL DISORDER IN THE HONOUR OF KNARESBOROUGH, c. 1438–1461 AND THE NATIONAL CONTEXT*

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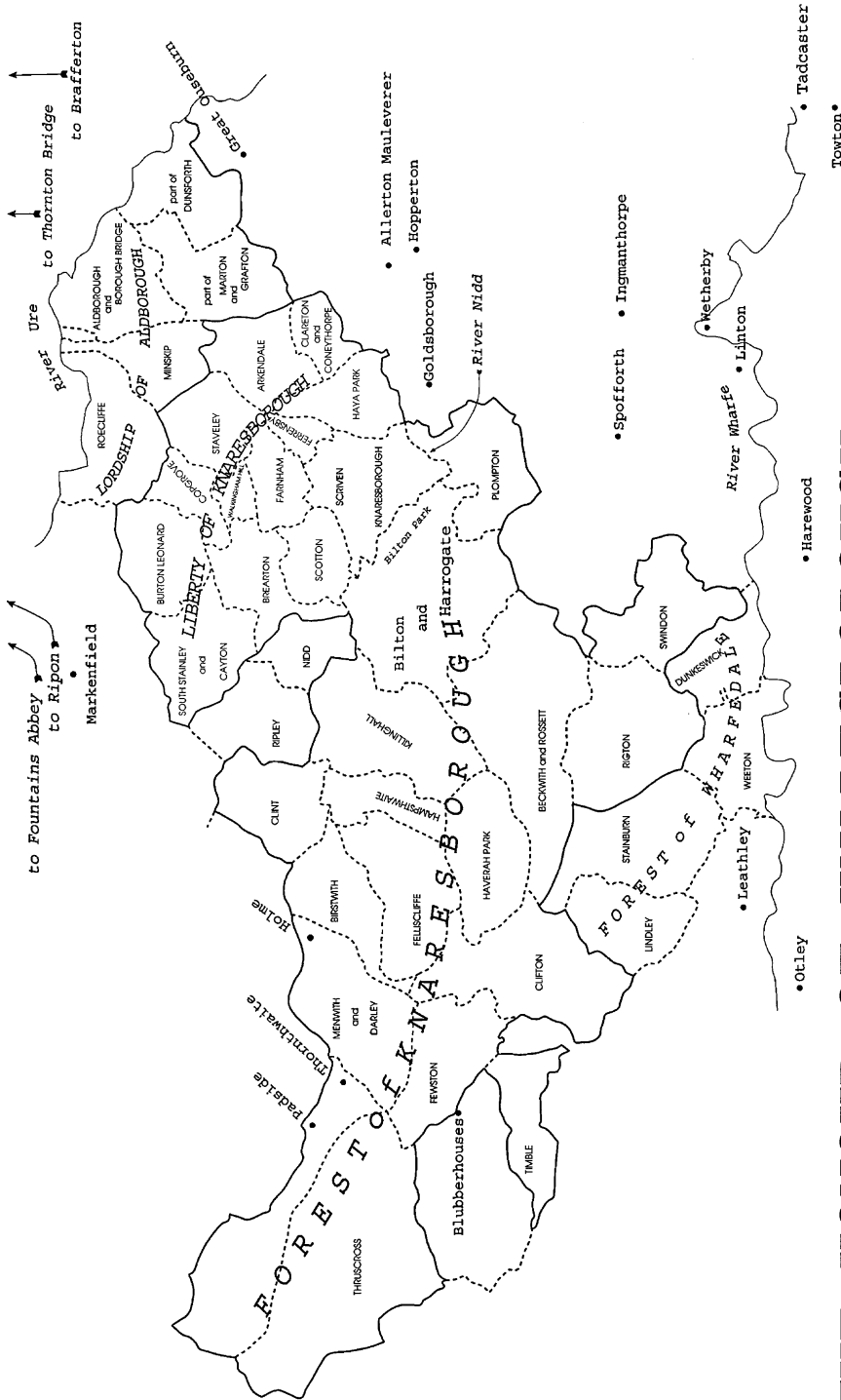
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THE HONOUR OF KNARESBOROUGH, part of the Duchy of Lancaster, is well served by good records, yet it has received little attention from historians in studies of the fifteenth century in general and of the reign of Henry VI in particular.¹ One series of incidents alone has been deemed worthy of close attention: those troubles in 1441 between the Archbishop of York's tenants at Otley and Ripon and the tenants of the Duchy of Lancaster in Knaresborough led by Sir William Plumpton, who had close links to the Percy family. The details were printed by Stapleton in 1839 from the Plumpton Coucher Book and have been quoted ever since.² This paper, the product of several years' detailed research, aims to redress the balance with much fresh evidence from local and national sources, ranging from Duchy central and local records, including the Knaresborough court rolls, to the Privy Council minutes, King's Bench and other material. The troubles will be set in a wider context. New light will be shed

* My warmest thanks are due to Dr Jennifer Ward, formerly of Goldsmiths College, London and Dr Sean Cunningham of the National Archives, Public Record Office, for their advice and comments on earlier versions of this paper.

¹ B. P. Wolffe, *Henry VI* (1981); K. B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford, 1972); S. B. Chrimes, C. D. Ross, and R. A. Griffiths, *Fifteenth Century England 1399–1509* (Manchester, 1972); R. L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster* (1966); J. Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge, 1996). Even local historians have little to say on events in Knaresborough in the fifteenth century: E. Hargrove, *A History of the Castle, Town and Forest of Knaresborough*, 7th edn (Knaresborough, 1832); M. Calvert, *The History of Knaresborough* (Knaresborough, 1844). See also fn. 2.

² *P(lumpton) C(orrespondence)*, ed. T. Stapleton, Camden Society, old series, CXLVIII (1839), liv–lxii for Ripon incidents; the correspondence, which has been well used for Knaresborough's history in later periods, has some letters 1460–1476/77, the majority from 1480; *The Plumpton Correspondence*, a new introduction was written to a reprint of Stapleton's edition in 1990, by Keith Dockray. Ripon incidents quoted by A. J. Pollard, *North-Eastern England during the Wars of the Roses* (Oxford, 1990), p. 247; R. A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI* (1981), pp. 408, 578. In local histories: A. Kellett, *Historic Knaresborough* (Otley, 1991), pp. 22–24 deals briefly with the century, mentioning the incident; B. Jennings, *A History of Harrogate and Knaresborough* (Huddersfield, 1970), p. 89 has a short account of the 1441 incident, but few references to the reign; W. Wheater, *Knaresburgh and its Rulers* (Leeds, 1907), like Jennings, made some use of the court rolls, describes part of the Ripon and other incidents which took place during the reign, but does not give any references; see Jennings' caveat, *Harrogate and Knaresborough*, p. 14. The Ripon events are recounted in W. Grainge, *A History and Topography of Harrogate, and the Forest of Knaresborough* (1871), pp. 68–76.



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THE HONOUR OF KNARESBOROUGH

on the periods of disorder in the area from *c.* 1438, which will be examined chronologically, emphasizing the focus of Knaresborough and the forest as an area of noble friction under the stewardship of Sir William Plumpton; and the influence and involvement of the Percies, the Nevilles, and their affinities over a long period will be examined.

Dominated by its castle and church, Knaresborough was a small town. The two extant poll taxes of the late fourteenth century for this area give some indication of population levels. In 1377 Knaresborough was home to some 153 taxpayers, married and single males and females over the age of fourteen; this does not include an unknown number of children and paupers. In 1379 taxable age was raised to sixteen and married women were excluded. The 1379 tax showed 131 taxpayers, with the same exceptions. In most vill in the area an indication is given whether men are married. Once deaths between the two years are subtracted the 1379 figures should in theory be slightly less than those for 1377. This was not the case in Knaresborough, as Appendix 1 shows, nor was it in some of the surrounding vill. Indeed, there are clear anomalies in several vill, some where the 1379 figures fall significantly, such as Killinghall and Roecliffe, and others where it rises noticeably such as Aldborough, Minskip, but most of all Clint and hamlets where perhaps there was under-collection in 1377 or more likely a greater number of exclusions because of changing circumstances; some people may have moved into the area between the taxes.³

Not all of these anomalies can be explained. Whilst Fenwick has found from extensive research into these taxes that there was probably some limited evasion and under-assessment, widespread evasion cannot be substantiated throughout the country as a whole. Only wage earners were taxable, so many single and even some married people in smaller vill working on family lands would be exempt. Fenwick has discovered from those nominative lists which exist for 1377 that few single people in small vill were taxed. She feels that this 'proves conclusively that not everyone of fourteen and over was taxed in 1377, and like the later taxes, most of those who were not included in the Detailed Rolls were single people'. Tempting as it might be to try to find some appropriate multiplier with these taxes, the disparity in figures in the Knaresborough area and their consequent interpretation shows how difficult and unreliable this would be. Indeed, Fenwick considers that the considerable number of exemptions, including the impoverished and beggars, makes any question of population estimation 'virtually impossible'.⁴

Knaresborough is fortunate that accounts survive showing the number of Duchy properties for which rents were paid for Michaelmas 1385–86, just a few years after these taxes were collected. In Knaresborough there were 105 houses, forty-four cottages, and five tofts, making a total of 154 dwellings, plus one empty house and twelve empty cottages.⁵ Even if one were to take the 1377 adult tax-paying population

³ National Archives: Public Record Office, Exchequer: King's Remembrancer, Particulars of Account and other records relating to Lay and Clerical Taxation, E 179/206/39,41,49; *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, vi (1879), 329–41 and vii (1882), 6–19.

⁴ C. C. Fenwick, *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381, Pt.1* (1998), xxiv, xii–xlvi, for a fuller discussion of the complex issues. My thanks to Carolyn Fenwick for discussing the question of population estimation with me, July 2003. Another factor affecting totals was seasonal employment: Apr./May 1377, Sept. 1379.

⁵ NA: PRO, Ministers' Accounts, DL 29/465/7604; *West Yorkshire: An Archaeological Survey to A. D. 1500*, ed. M. L. Faulk and S. A. Moorhouse (1981), p. 858, 'Toft: a house site, usually that of a peasant' with land.

of 153, there would appear to be an excess of properties, but this is not the case in nearby Scriven where there are twenty-four houses, one cottage and one toft for seventy-five taxpayers. It is impossible to compare the other places within the Liberty, as most had additional properties lying within separate manors, but within the forest in 1377 an adult tax-paying population of 458 in 1385 had 411½ houses and sixteen cottages. In Aldborough and Roecliffe population and dwelling figures correlate well, but in Minskip there are more dwellings than taxpayers, suggesting a large number of non-wage earning agricultural workers on family holdings, many below the poverty level, and perhaps some evasion. Yet again such anomalies render the estimation of population unreliable. At best such figures could only suggest a broad range for the population, for what is a realistic multiplier at a time of high mortality and when there might well have been more than two generations per dwelling?

The inhabitants of the Honour enjoyed legal and tenurial privileges; rents for ancient demesne land were not subject to the fluctuations seen in values elsewhere. Indeed, the level of income from rents throughout most of the fifteenth century was very similar to what it was 1385. It was not until 1474, 1476, and 1480 that repeated orders were given for revisions of rents at Knaresborough. Given the overall consistency of values and properties shown in accounts over the period it would be easy to suppose that holdings shown in the accounts were not up-dated from year to year, but close inspection shows sufficient variations to prove the contrary, as for example the figures for assarts and new rents between 1385 and 1438 (Appendix 1).⁶

The demesne land which lay across parts of Knaresborough, Scriven, Ferrensby, Aldborough, and Roecliffe was let out. During the fifteenth century people were paying for the right to bring waste land into use and in a town where cloth was an important part of the economy this was often described in ells or cloth measurements, though the more conventional ‘feet’ were used too. Jennings found that a bovate was ‘locally twelve acres’, but this cannot have been a consistent measurement, for at Arkendale it was eight acres, where it is stated that there were ‘six bovates containing forty-eight acres’.⁷

By 1438 the town still comprised some forty-four cottages, five tofts, and 106 houses, of which eighty-eight were burgage properties; the number of abandoned dwellings was the same as in 1385. The Priory of St Robert’s, whose advowson was held by the Duchy, attracted pilgrims. Knaresborough had a water mill for grinding corn and was a cloth-making centre with a fulling mill. Boroughbridge too was a market and cloth town, with the additional benefit of river access to York and beyond. The Forest of Knaresborough was a huge area of at least 4500 acres, with 458 houses, sixteen cottages, forty-six empty properties, and nine mills. The forest had five wards, Wyersdale or Wharfdale, Swindon, Okeden or Oakdale, Harlow, and Fulwith.⁸

Knaresborough, all the berewicks, and some of its soke lands had belonged to the Crown before the Norman Conquest. In 1372 Edward III granted much land to his

⁶ NA: PRO, Court of Duchy Chamber, DL 5/1, fols 26, 98; Duchy of Lancaster and Palatine of Chester Chanceries, Enrolments, DL 37/51/6.

⁷ Jennings, *Harrogate and Knaresborough*, p. 59; NA: PRO, DL 29/465/7613.

⁸ NA: PRO, DL 29/465/7613; R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1265–1603*, I (1953), 135, 220.

son, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, in exchange for the Honour of Richmond;⁹ this included the manors of Knaresborough, Scriven, Aldborough, Roecliffe, and Boroughbridge, the Castle of Knaresborough, the Forest of Knaresborough, the three great parks (Bilton, Haywra or Haverah, Hay, now Hay-a-Park), the hundred of Staincliffe, and the bailiwick of the Liberty of Knaresborough.¹⁰ After the death of Gaunt in February 1399 his son, who succeeded to the throne later that year, inherited his lands.¹¹ Henry IV was thus Duke of Lancaster by hereditary right, not by virtue of being King.

The steward of the Honour and Lordship of Knaresborough was Sir William Plumpton of Plumpton, near Spofforth, a staunch Percy supporter and retainer, like his father before him. His official appointment was recorded in January 1439, but he was described as steward on the court rolls when he inspected game on 4 October 1438; by virtue of this appointment he became a commissioner of the peace in November 1439. He was the only Justice of the Peace for the West Riding living in the area, M.P. for Nottinghamshire (1436–37), where he had lands through his wife, sheriff of Yorkshire (1447–48) and of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire in 1452. He was joint steward with John Feriby, who as controller of the household probably left the day-to-day running of the Honour to the local man. Feriby was dead by 1441, leaving Plumpton in charge, aided by a deputy. Like so many of his contemporaries he was concerned to preserve and enhance his family estate, which he endeavoured to do with an almost ruthless determination; he made good marriages for his children, extending links with many of the principal families of the area. His official duties ensured that he was well placed to maintain and enhance his privileges and social status.¹²

At this time several local sub-manors belonging to the Duchy were held by families who often played an influential role in events at this time. Several of the descents of these manors, which remained subject to the superior jurisdiction of the honour, have not been published previously. As might be expected some were under the control of Yorkshire gentry families, but two of these manors, Scotton and Brearton, were held by John, Earl of Somerset, inherited from his uncle, the powerful councillor Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter, son of John of Gaunt and the great-uncle of Henry VI. Margaret, the future mother of Henry VII, was only a child when her father, John Earl of Somerset died in 1444, so did not hold the lands in her own right until her

⁹ Somerville, *Duchy*, 1, 52–53. For the earlier history of Knaresborough see Jennings, *Harrogate and Knaresborough*, pp. 31–38.

¹⁰ NA: PRO, Miscellanea, DL 41/566. Within the Forest lay Killinghall, Beckwith and Rossett, Clint, Fellescliffe, Birstwith, Hampsthwaite, Thruscross, Hill, Bramley, Menwith, Holme, Padside, Thornthwaite, Darley, Timble, Clifton, and Fewston. Harrogate was a hamlet of Bilton, both being part of the civil township of Killinghall. The townships within the Liberty, or Forest Liberty, as it was also known, were Farnham, Staveley, Great Ouseburn, Burton Leonard, South Stainley with Cayton, Scriven, Brearton, Scotton, and Arkendale, all of which had inferior manors with their own courts but were subject to the overall jurisdiction of Knaresborough. See map.

¹¹ According to C. Arnold, 'The Commission of the Peace for the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1437–1509', in *Property and Politics in later Medieval English History*, ed. A. J. Pollard (1984), p. 119, a third of the West Riding, including the Honours of Pontefract and Tickhill, as well as the Lordship of Pickering in the North Riding, belonged to the Duchy. The Duchy remains in Crown hands, with some important, though much reduced, holdings in Harrogate and Knaresborough. Since the 1974 boundary changes Knaresborough lies in North Yorkshire.

¹² NA: PRO, DL 42/18, fol. 111; /30/485/4; Arnold, in Pollard, *Property and Politics*, p. 119; Somerville, *Duchy*, 1, 524; (*The Plumpton Letters and Papers*), ed. J. W. Kirby, Camden 5th ser., VIII (1996), 3–9; Stapleton, *PC*, l–liii, lxvi–lxx.

majority.¹³ Some Scotton men were in the forefront of local anti-Lancastrian and pro-Neville action in 1450s.

The FitzHughs of Ravensworth was another important family who had long had a toe-hold in the Honour of Knaresborough; the manors of Staveley and Farnham were held for one knight's fee and a quarter by Henry FitzHugh as early as 1301. John de Walkingham had the quarter fee from FitzHugh; Farnham manor then passed from the Walkinghams to the Cantilupes. The FitzHughs retained Staveley and its advowson.¹⁴ Henry Lord FitzHugh, who died in 1425, served as chamberlain to Henry V and Henry VI, and was a Duchy employee, being steward of Pickering from 1414; he acted as one of the feoffees for Sir Robert Plumpton's 1421 will. The family had estates in Wensleydale and the Neville-dominated Middleham area. FitzHugh's son William (died 1452) helped Salisbury in the Scottish Border hostilities in 1448. William's son Henry enjoyed even closer links with the Nevilles and was active in their cause against the Percies in 1453. Henry married Alice Neville, sister of Richard, Earl of Warwick and was retained by him 'for one year at least in 1466 as his deputy warden of the West March'.¹⁵

Sir William Gascoigne, Chief Justice, whose family seat was at Gawthorpe near Harewood where he was buried in 1419, had held the manor of Burton Leonard since at least 1416. His son, Sir William, was appointed constable and master forester of Knaresborough a month before his own death in 1422.¹⁶ Sir Ralph Graystock took over Burton Leonard in 1425, was followed by Henry Chamber in 1440 and in 1442 by Gascoigne's son, another Sir William, who was also sheriff of Yorkshire in the same year.¹⁷ He died about 1453. Another William, probably his son, would be deputy steward of Knaresborough to the fourth Earl of Northumberland, his brother-in-law, in the 1470s and 1480s, continuing the family's close links with the Percies.¹⁸

Sir Robert Roos of Ingmanthorpe, east of Spofforth, a descendant of Robert Roos of Hamlake,¹⁹ held the manor of Farnham from 1375.²⁰ His will was proved February

¹³ Scotton and Brearton represented one knight's fee; 40 *d.* per annum was paid. NA: PRO, Inquisitions Post Mortem, C 139/30/5; *ibid.*, DL 30/486/3. In October 1450 the Liberty jury stated that Margaret was nine years old. DL 30/487/11.

¹⁴ *The Survey of the County of York*, ed. R. H. Scaife, Surtees Society, XLIX (1867), 211. John de Walkingham had the quarter fee in Farnham from FitzHugh. NA: PRO, DL 30/478/1; *ibid.*, C 139/34.

¹⁵ Somerville, *Duchy*, 1, 533; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 54; *PLP*, 3. Sir Robert also served under FitzHugh in France in 1418. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, p. 124; Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 124.

¹⁶ *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 1, ed. J. Raine, SS, IV (1836), 402; NA: PRO, DL 30/483/7; *Yorkshire Hundred and Quo Warranto Rolls, 1274–1294*, ed. B. English, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, CLI (1996), 61. Burton Leonard was held by Sir Peter Becard in 1301, by 1332 by John Becard; Sir Peter's granddaughter Johanna and her husband John Mauduyt had it from 1340s to 1370s. Johanna or Joan being listed on 1379 poll tax; by 1386 it was in the hands of John de Barden (NA: PRO, DL 30/481/10) and by 1397 Henry Wyman or Veyman, the husband of a descendant of Peter Becard (DL 30/482/13); the manor came to Gascoigne by his marriage to Wyman's daughter Jane/Joan.

¹⁷ NA: PRO, DL 30/485/1,7; *ibid.*, Justices of Gaol Delivery, Rolls and Files, Just. 3/83/12.

¹⁸ NA: PRO, DL 37/51/6; he died 1487. For further details on this confusing family, see *The Parliamentary Representation of the County of York, 1258–1832*, 1, ed. A. Gooder, YASRS, XCI (1935), 186–88 and NA: PRO, C 1/410/63.

¹⁹ Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds, MS 599 shows Sir Robert's third great-grandfather as Robert Roos of Hamlake, but W. T. Lancaster, *The Early History of Ripley and the Ingilby family with some account of the Roos family of Ingmanthorpe* (Leeds, 1918), p. 44 shows him as his great-grandfather.

²⁰ NA: PRO, DL 30/480/15. Earlier it was held by Nicholas and then briefly William de Cantilupe (DL 30/478/1 to /30/480/13), Nicholas having acquired it through his mother's first husband, Alan de Walkingham. Sir Robert's grandfather, William, had been married to Eustacia (granddaughter of Hugh FitzRalph) widow of Nicholas de Cantilupe.

1392; Robert's son was Thomas who died in 1399 and was succeeded by his son Sir Robert, also of Ingmanthorpe, who died in 1451. His wife was Joan Gascoigne, a niece of Sir William Gascoigne, the chief justice. Sir Robert's brother, Richard, who was a Neville retainer, died in 1475. Sir Robert was succeeded by his son Robert.²¹

Walkingham manor was held in 1250 by John de Walkingham from Richard Earl of Cornwall.²² By 1333 Johanna, the widow of another John de Walkingham, was in possession of the land, but three years later it was in the hands of the Stapleton or Stapilton family of Carlton near Snaith.²³ When Sir Brian Stapleton died in 1394 his second son Miles took over his lands at Walkingham (his elder brother Brian was already dead) and after his death they passed to Sir Brian's grandson, another Sir Brian, who died in 1417. This Sir Brian's daughter Elizabeth was married to Sir William Plumpton in 1416 when an infant. Sir Brian's widow Agnes then held Walkingham until her death in 1448 when it passed to their son Sir Brian.²⁴ The Stapletons were supporters of the Percies. For much of fifteenth century Walkingham was probably sub-let to the Knaresburgh family, loyal Lancastrians.

The remaining gentry families of the area were the Ingilbys of Ripley, the Mauleverers of Allerton Mauleverer, the Middletons of Stockeld (near Spofforth), the Redmans of Harewood, the Markenfields of Markenfield, the Pigots of Clothholme, the Nevilles of Thornton Bridge, and the Goldsburghs of Goldsborough. In and around Knaresborough itself were minor gentry families such as the Beckwiths, the Slingsbys, the Pulleins (Pullans), and the Birnands (Brennands).²⁵ Their affinities will be discussed during the examination of events.

Whilst the local gentry enjoyed relative comfort, by contrast the peasants were suffering poverty, with debts being numerous at this time; this was in spite of the fact that inhabitants of the Honour enjoyed privileges such as fixed low rents because they lived on ancient demesne land and were taxed nationally at a fifteenth rather than a tenth. The Knaresborough court was where local people had their main recourse to justice, without the expense of attending distant courts in London.²⁶ The King's Duchy tenants were determined to preserve these privileges, especially that of being free from tolls throughout the realm; this is recorded in a grant in 1310 to Peter de Gaveston and his wife Margaret,

²¹ Raine, *Test. Ebor.*, i, 178–80, 251–53; he held Ingmanthorpe, which was two and a half knights' fees, from William Roos of Hamelak. Raine, *Test. Ebor.*, ii, 65. Lancaster, *The Early History of Ripley*, p. 48. In 1454 Thomas Roos, the young son of Robert, was contracted to marry Sir William Plumpton's daughter, Joan, but the marriage did not take place, perhaps because of the growing tensions in 1450s. W(est) Y(orkshire) A(rchive) S(ervice) L(eeds), Chambers MS 3, no. 482, Plumpton Coucher Book (CB).

²² *Yorkshire Inquisitions*, i, ed. W. Brown, YASRS, xii (1891), 22.

²³ NA: PRO, DL 30/478/1, 2; H. E. Chetwynd-Stapylton, *The Stapletons of Yorkshire* (1897), p. 67. Nicholas Stapleton was granted free warren in all his demesne lands in Walkingham in 1334. Hull University Manuscripts and Archives, Database (HUMAD) www.hull.ac.uk/lib/archives/humad2.html gives a short history of the family. The court rolls show Nicholas until his death in 1343, then the manor was in the hands of John de Kirkeby, who after the death of Nicholas' son, Miles, in 1372, was followed by Brian, son of Nicholas' brother Gilbert, until his death in 1394; then came Brian's son, Miles, who died in 1399.

²⁴ Stapleton, *PC*, p. xliii, 20 Jan. 1415/16; NA: PRO, DL 30/482/13, 15; /483/3 heirs of Milo; DL 30/483/8, heirs of Brian; C139/130/14, 1448, IPM of Agnes; DL 30/485/16; /486/1.

²⁵ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/2, gentry families acquired considerable properties and land for personal and investment/letting purposes; the court rolls show their exchanges of scattered strips of land with neighbours, to create more workable efficient units.

²⁶ DL 30/485/1, 2. Those with means could also pursue claims in the courts at Westminster, but most matters could be settled at Knaresborough.

they and their men of the said liberty and honour shall be quit of all fines and ameracements of the county and of suit to the county and wapentakes, and of toll, murage, pontage, passage, pavage, terrage, stallage, quayage, coinage, and tronage in the city of York and elsewhere throughout the realm.²⁷

Locally in 1438 three shops at Boroughbridge under the toll booth and a ‘hosier’ shop elsewhere were without tenants. There was also suffering caused by harsh weather conditions with harvest failure and accompanying rise in prices. Many people died as a result of famine and disease in Yorkshire and the North East, with a marked increase in the number of wills proved at York.²⁸ The Knaresborough area did not escape, but unfortunately there are only two extant wills between 1436 and 1442 relating to the Honour.²⁹ It is impossible to compile precise figures for deaths from the only available source, the court rolls, because some rolls are torn, have faded entries, or parts missing. The borough, the Forest, and the Liberty each had its own jurisdiction, but their courts met on the same day, every three weeks, with a twice yearly sheriff’s tourn. All the proceedings of these courts were recorded on rolls, one per year. Knaresborough had its own coroner. Not every exchange of land and/or property brought about by a death is recorded as such; sometimes a reference to a death is found through a later heriot payment or through a reference in a different entry for the same person, so the numbers of deaths are almost certainly understated in all years. The figures found therefore show the prevailing mortality pattern. The name of each person mentioned was noted so as to avoid counting twice or three times the few people for whom there was more than one transaction.³⁰ In addition to the named deaths found, transactions for property with land for individuals where no death is recorded (and not counted as such) were also noted, for many were clearly relating to people who had died, property being transferred to spouse, children, or even third party with no relationship shown.

From Michaelmas 1436 to 1437 there were six deaths recorded (with a further six combined property and land transfers), the following year seven (eight combined). Between Michaelmas 1438 and 1439 deaths rose to twenty-one (twenty-five combined), the subsequent two years falling back to eleven (twelve) and thirteen (eight) respectively.³¹ Given that twenty-one is essentially a minimum figure, with deaths

²⁷ *C(alendar of) Ch(arter) R(olls)*, III, 1300–26, 139–40; NA: PRO, DL 30/484/4, two Ripon yeomen extorted tolls from Knaresborough men in 1424; DL 42/17, 34, in 1415 some Knaresborough tenants were ordered not to answer a cause brought against them at the assize court by Sir Henry FitzHugh, the Duchy being keen to safeguard the rights of its tenants, as well as its own income from tolls and courts.

²⁸ NA: PRO, DL 30/465/7613 for 1438. There was a toll-booth (*aula placitorum*) at Knaresborough but no indication whether there were shops beneath it. A. J. Pollard, ‘The North-Eastern Economy and the Agrarian Crisis of 1438–1440’, *Northern History*, xxv (1989), 93; P. J. P. Goldberg, ‘Mortality and Economic Change in the Diocese of York, 1390–1514’, *NH*, xxiv (1988), 43.

²⁹ Local wills could be proved in the peculiar court of Knaresborough or in the Archdeaconry Court of Richmond (none survive for this period in either jurisdiction), as well as in the Courts at York. Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, Probate Register 2, fol. 675^v, John Hewik, glover of Boroughbridge 1440; Prerogative Court of Canterbury, NA: PRO, PROB 11/3, 33 Luffenham, Wm Babthorp of Clerkenwell and Boroughbridge, Baron of the Exchequer, 1443.

³⁰ NA: PRO, DL 30/485/2-7, for 1436 to 1441. Exceptions in 1438–39 were Thomas Barker at Killinghall; also John Dyconson at Clint, probably a death but not recorded or counted as such, and John Polayn (Pullein) of Thackra with five houses and over 41 acres at Padside and property at Fewston.

³¹ Land only transactions, where no indication of any deaths were shown, also show an upward trend, with nine in 1436–37, eight in 1437–38, twenty in 1438–39, twenty-eight in 1439–40, and thirteen in 1440–41. NA: PRO, C 139/90/9, also Sir William Ingilby, joint steward, died 21 August 1438.

of sub-tenants and landless peasants not recorded at all, it is likely that deaths were widespread both from plague and malnutrition in the area. At such times men became vulnerable and desperate, ripe for recruitment to any cause which involves the defence of their rights and livelihoods. The Archbishop of York was about to provoke such a reaction, which would affect the locality for years to come, involving men from the Knaresborough area in struggles with tenants from the Archbishop's local estates.

The manor and Liberty of Ripon was under the personal jurisdiction of the Archbishop of York.³² From 1425 this was John Kemp, 'the last great civil servant of the house of Lancaster', who for forty years held high office in both Church and State, being Chancellor of England from 1426 to 1432 and again from 1450 to 1454.³³ In 1431 Kemp became the first Archbishop to be appointed a commissioner of the peace for the West Riding. He had considerable influence over the young King and even when Henry came of age in 1437 and a new privy council was formed, Kemp still enjoyed much power and favour, a fact often resented. He was also determined to defend his spiritual and secular prerogatives to the utmost, bringing in outsiders to help with his household and diocesan administration.³⁴ None of this made him popular in the North.

Against a background of increasing national disorder, with feuds in Bedfordshire in 1437, riots in Norwich in 1437 and 1443, a private war being waged in the Duchy of Cornwall in 1441 and riots in Wales in 1442, troubles also affected the North, with disturbances at York in 1443 between the Mayor, the citizens and the Abbot of St Mary's, and Sir John Neville 'was implicated' in an attack on Fountains Abbey. Indeed 'the religious were fair game in an age which, however much respect it might show for individual piety, was still critical of the more obvious temporal aspects of the institutionalised church'.³⁵ Attacks occurred on the Archbishop's properties at Southwell, Ripon, and Bishopthorpe. In contrast there was no recorded animosity to the Trinitarian Priory of St Robert's at Knaresborough.

Resentment had been growing for years against the Archbishop and the franchises and liberties he enjoyed. Instead of having offenders dealt with locally he caused three Ripon cloth workers to be summoned to appear at the King's council in 1428 concerning alleged trespasses; men from other parts of Yorkshire had similar high-handed treatment, which, even if they were habitual offenders, would seem excessive. Even the clergy were to assist him in his task. One of his priests received a faculty in 1440 to hear reserved cases in confession and give absolution to all penitents, 'save violators of the privileges of the cathedral church of York, and of the collegiate churches of Beverley, Ripon, and Southwell, and those stealing game from parks

³² The archbishop also held land at Otley, Beverley, Cawood, Sherburn in Elmet, Southwell, Hexham, and Hexhamshire, as well as Churchdown in Gloucestershire. T. S. Gowland, 'The manors and liberties of Ripon', *YAJ*, xxxii (1938), 52–78 for Ripon and district.

³³ Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, p. 82; A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to AD 1500*, II (Oxford, 1958), 1031–32; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 87, 287.

³⁴ Arnold, in Pollard, *Property and Politics*, pp. 117, 134 fn. 7; M. Witchell, 'John Kempe (d. 1454), an ecclesiastic as statesman' (unpub. M.A. thesis, Swansea Univ. 1979), p. 248. My thanks to Ian Glen, Swansea University Library.

³⁵ J. H. Ramsay, *Lancaster and York* (Oxford, 1892), pp. 51–52; NA: PRO, Exchequer: Treasury of the Receipt: Council and Privy Seal Records, E 28/72/23, 30, 56; *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council*, ed. H. Nicolas, v (1835), cxxi, 241; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 568.

belonging to the archiepiscopal see'.³⁶ Kemp made his presence felt locally with a visitation in 1439 to Ripon. In 1440 he started his long-deferred primary visitation of the whole diocese, but within days had to leave the task to commissioners who visited several deaneries. In late summer 1442 Kemp himself visited the vacant archdeaconry of Richmond. He was already known in Knaresborough from his 1428 visitation.³⁷

Animosity against Kemp was also manifested in the highest levels of the county. Within eighteen months of being translated to York, Kemp had obtained an exemplification of a lost charter of 1415, confirming previous archiepiscopal grants, and in 1442 the wide-ranging rights held in the liberties of Ripon and Beverley were extended to all his estates; in addition he received the exceptional right to appoint justices of the peace at Ripon and Beverley and thus exclude royally appointed justices there.³⁸ In February 1444 the late sheriff of Yorkshire, Sir Thomas Metham, could not obtain his revenue from the usual sources such as fines and profits from courts because of the franchises and liberties which had been 'newly graunted' to the Archbishop and spoke of his 'grete losses costes damages and expenses that he hath had And sustened in the said office' from 1442 to 1443. He was pardoned by the council and released from paying £140. This has been seen as a direct result of the increase in franchises to Kemp in 1442. However, his determination to collect all his dues had caused difficulties for some years in the county, even before the granting of the additional franchises. Further council records show that Edmund Talbot, sheriff in 1443–44, requested to be discharged from paying £100 for the same reasons and cited the precedent set by the earlier pardons to Sir John Tempest and Sir Robert Waterton, sheriffs in 1439–40 and 1440–41 respectively.³⁹

All levels of Yorkshire society thus had reason to resent the Archbishop. Although Kemp was not popular with many people who lived in the Ripon area they resented the fact that Knaresborough men did not pay tolls at Ripon, and some gave their support to the Archbishop in his struggle against them. Even though Knaresborough had its own weekly market on a Wednesday and annual fair in July, the local population naturally would also trade at nearby places, such as Ripon and Boroughbridge. A weekly Monday market had been granted to Ripon in 1227, as well as a fair in July. By the fifteenth century the fair was held in May, bringing in useful additional revenue to the Archbishop.⁴⁰

It has been possible to build up a much fuller picture of the feuding between the Archbishop's Ripon tenants and the Duchy men led by Sir William Plumpton, the steward, by using unpublished accounts of the 1441 conflicts and the hitherto

³⁶ *C(alendar of) C(lose) R(olls)*, 1422–28, pp. 397, 461; *CCR*, 1429–35, pp. 65, 68; Stapleton, *PC*, xxxv, xxxvii, from Plumpton Coucher Book, Feb. 1440, faculty from Richard Arnall, Vicar-General of Kemp, to George Plumpton, priest, an uncle of Sir William.

³⁷ 'Documents Relating to Diocesan and Provincial Visitations', ed. A. H. Thompson, *Miscellanea*, II, SS, CXXVII (1916), 144, 147–51, 211–17, 276–77. Knaresborough was in the Boroughbridge deanery.

³⁸ J. A. Nigota, 'John Kempe: a political prelate of the fifteenth century' (unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Emory Univ. 1973), pp. 502–07; he cites inter alia, NA: PRO, Patent Rolls, C 66/454, mm.11–14. My thanks to Lloyd Busch of Emory.

³⁹ NA: PRO, E 28/72/9, 10; 128/75/7; Nigota, thesis, pp. 502–03.

⁴⁰ R. Wilcock, *The History of Arkendale*, in preparation, chapter 2; there was a market from at least 1206 and a fair in July from at least 1304, both confirmed 1310, as was a Monday market together with three fairs at Boroughbridge. Faull & Moorhouse, *West Yorkshire*, p. 482; Gowland, *YAJ*, xxxii, 76, for later markets and fairs.

unknown troubles in 1439 from the court rolls and other documents in the National Archives, together with fresh legal evidence from the Plumpton Coucher Book. The grievances and answers to them by the Archbishop and Plumpton, are undated, but probably gathered in 1442. In response, a letter had been sent under the royal signet ordering that the peace be kept. Such a letter addressed to Sir William Plumpton as constable of Knaresborough, and to the sheriff and justices of the North and West Ridings, the Earl of Salisbury, and Thomas Beckwith, Esq. of Clint, survives. It is dated 'Temp. Hen VI' and a note attached says 'possibly 21 Henry VI' (September 1442 to August 1443). It speaks of 'divers riots and assemblies within our forest of Knaresborough and other parts negh' and 'divers parties of our said people purpose to be at Ripon next feire day and other diverses places'.⁴¹

In his evidence in 1442 relating to the incidents of 1441 Plumpton states how the tenants of the Forest had pleaded in bills given to the King that tolls were being levied unjustly at Ripon since 'Michaelmas terme was three years', probably meaning 1439. He claimed that the Archbishop kept Ripon like a town of war at fair time, with hired soldiers, so that the tenants dare not go there for fear of being killed.⁴² The court rolls record that 1439 indeed saw the commencement of serious incidents between men of Ripon and Knaresborough. On 3 December 1439, a group of Ripon men led by William Frankish, a gentleman, John Tuppe a yeoman, Thomas Gilling and John Taillour, both tailors, together with 200 men who were dressed 'as if for war' in coats of mail, plate armour, swords, helmets and carrying staffs,

pulsaverunt comunem campanam dicti villi de Rypon super tenentes domini Regis de Knaresborough tribus vicibus Et insultum fecerunt unanimiter super dictos tenentes quemadmodum fuissent Scoti vel Gallici.⁴³

This was intimidation on a large scale. That the common bell was rung against men from a neighbouring town, who had a charter protecting them against tolls, was viewed as a scandal in Knaresborough. This is a rare reference to such a bell at Ripon being rung to raise the alarm. A bell was rung in Northampton during disturbances there in 1442.⁴⁴

Animosity between the parties increased. In March 1440 fourteen men from Knaresborough Forest, led by Stephen Parker of Hampsthwaite and John Pullein of Padside, beat Ripon tailor Robert Gilling, probably a relative of Thomas involved in the December incident, to within an inch of his life, simply because he lived or remained within the Liberty of Ripon ('*quod moram trahebat infra libertatem Rypon*'); Gilling had been found at Carthorpe, some nine miles north of Ripon.⁴⁵

⁴¹ WYASL, Chambers MS 3, CB, no. 455. They show that Kemp had, before this affray in 1441, informed the King 'in writing att his manor of Kennington' of his 'greate and grievous complaints' concerning the men of Knaresborough. NA: PRO, E 28/71/24.

⁴² Stapleton, *PC*, liv from CB 457. If the evidence were gathered late 1441, then the incidents would date back to the very time when Plumpton became steward in October 1438; however, 1442 seems more likely.

⁴³ NA: PRO, DL 30/485/5, court held day after Inventio sancte crucis, 4 May 1440, referring to Thursday before Conception of the BVM last. Four others named were all Ripon tradesmen. I am grateful to Dr S. O'Connor of PRO for checking this transcription.

⁴⁴ It may have been in a separate tower, as at St Albans, or public building such as a toll booth, market hall, or perhaps even a church. *Memorials of the Church of SS. Peter and Wilfrid, Ripon*, iv, ed. J. T. Fowler, SS, cxv (1908), 201, and vol. i, LXXIV (1882), 122, there was 'a town bellman' recorded in 1367 and in 1419, possibly with town crier duties. Nicolas, *Privy Council*, v, 191.

⁴⁵ NA: PRO, Court of King's Bench, Term Indictment Files, KB 9/232/1 and Chief Justices' Rolls, KB 27/717, mm. 114d, 125.

Further incidents occurred on 30 April 1440 when the Archbishop mobilized an alleged 500 men from other towns and areas where he had lands (Beverley, Otley, York, Wensleydale, Cawood, and other lordships together with 200 from Ripon itself) all ready, it was claimed in court at Knaresborough, to assault the King's tenants if they dared to venture to the fair at Ripon on 1 May. Even allowing for exaggeration it is clear that no mean force had been assembled. Given that even a hundred years earlier, in 1341, the toll of the markets and fairs was worth £40 year, it is clear that Kemp had every interest in maintaining such an income. It was also claimed that 'John Walleworth of Thornton Wood is a malefactor towards the said tenants of the King'. Walworth was Kemp's bailiff and coroner at Ripon and presumably orchestrating the events there.⁴⁶

Some of the Archbishop's tenants were not content with their show of force at Ripon, so about forty of them wearing warlike gear went to Boroughbridge and further disturbed the peace on 3 May 1440. Two days later the situation became more charged when John de Thwaytes, one of Plumpton's fellow justices of the peace, rode through the middle of the Knaresborough lordship with thirty armed men. Earlier, on 20 April, he was said to have maliciously indicted a hundred officials and tenants of the Honour of Knaresborough before the Justices of Peace of the West Riding without just cause and 'from day to day vexed' them. Law and order was breaking down and opportunists were exploiting the situation, not just creating mayhem but some literally cashing in by extorting tolls illegally.⁴⁷ The very men charged with upholding the law were breaking it.

It is at this point that the events described in the Coucher Book occur, with the report of Knaresborough men causing trouble at Otley on 22 July 1440. This was clearly an officially sanctioned confrontation. The leaders named were John Faukes or Fawkes, the receiver of Knaresborough since 1437, Thomas Beckwith of Clint (whose eldest son William would later marry Sir William's daughter Elizabeth), William Wakefield of Great Ouseburn, and John Beckwith of Killinghall⁴⁸ who assembled 'in ryotous wise' at Otley.⁴⁹ The 700 men from the Forest were said to be acting with the assent of Plumpton, going well armed to the fair, not to buy or sell goods but to be menacing, telling the officers of the Archbishop, who were fearful for their own safety, not to charge tolls to Forest men. Much revenue was lost because

⁴⁶ Gowland, *YAJ*, xxxii, 56, 60; NA: PRO, DL 30/485/5. The Knaresborough tenants claimed £100 damages.

⁴⁷ NA: PRO, DL 30/485/7, Thwaytes also trespassed on forest land and some of his tenants illegally pastured a hundred cattle there. The bailiff of the wapentake of Claro, who had no jurisdiction over the King's tenants, arrested John Slingsby without a warrant, so Slingsby claimed damages. On several occasions Henry Hertlyngton, Esq. and Richard Flint, a canon of Bolton, took tolls illegally.

⁴⁸ NA: PRO, DL 29/465/7612; WYASL, Chambers MS 3, no. 541 (CB), marriage agreement 1455; DL 29/465/7609; /29/466/7616; /30/485/14; there were two John Beckwiths, the other from Clint, who became bailiff of the Liberty; which one was forester of Swindon and Wharfedale is not known. Ralph Beckwith, deputy collector of rents for the castle and manor, was never involved.

⁴⁹ YAS, Leeds, DD 146, box 18 Baildon, MD 335, box 50 Burley-in-Wharfedale extracts, and DD 146/2/1/2 for Farnley, all in the parish of Otley, have no references to the Otley fair problems; Nigota, thesis, p. 509: nothing relevant to the Ripon/Otley/Knaresborough situation in Kemp's register. The manor of Ripon court rolls are not extant, and the Ripon canon fee records in the Brotherton Library, Leeds University do not cover these years; the extant material for 1448–49 contains nothing useful.

those who had gone to do business at the fair left in fear. Not surprisingly, these events are not recorded on the Knaresborough court rolls. However, Plumpton's answer to the charges, not printed by Stapleton, has survived.⁵⁰ Sir William did not deny the essence of the charges, but maintained that the numbers involved were nearer to 300; they had been merely 'arrayed after the guise of the country there as the said Cardinall tenants'. Plumpton claimed that they had done nothing more than notify the steward that they ought to be free from paying tolls and wished their merchandise to be exempt there. The numbers were justified by 'the great affray made upon them at the markt of Ripon'. Without this evidence and the details of the previous affrays from the court rolls, it might have been supposed that Knaresborough men had instigated the Otley incidents without just cause or provocation, but this was a continuing argument, where neither side was prepared to yield. The attacks continued. William Frankish, who had led the December 1439 hostilities, on 11 Aug 1440 tried to kill John Beckwith of Killinghall, John Pullein of Padside, Stephen Parker, and other Knaresborough tenants at Ripon, again, it was claimed, with the backing of 200 armed men.⁵¹

After the spring troubles the Knaresborough leaders still bore grudges against John Walworth, the Archbishop's bailiff of Ripon, who lived at Bishop Thornton, close to Clint, Birstwith, and other Knaresborough Forest towns. The Archbishop alleged that in August 1440 Thomas Beckwith, John Faukes, Ralph Pullein, and a large number of other men from the Forest, in manner of war, with the assent of Plumpton, assembled at Thornton Wood and lay in wait 'to beate and to fley' Walworth. They did not find him, so some destroyed his fruit, corn, grass, and hedges, drove off animals and attacked his servants.⁵² Plumpton denied that he, Beckwith or Faukes had been present or had knowledge of these events, claiming that only a small number of men had been involved, and that nobody had entered Walworth's land; he refuted all charges.

After the attack on Walworth's house and as a result of letters sent by the King, Archbishop Kemp sent John Marshall (one of his receivers and registrar of the court of York) and Richard Redman, Esq. of Harewood and Levens (Westmorland) to talk with Sir William Plumpton, Thomas Beckwith, and others, with the aim of agreeing that John Walworth and servants might have the king's peace.⁵³ Plumpton eventually agreed to permit Redman or third parties under his orders to gather Walworth's crops. More intimidation followed, but Plumpton denied the facts, in a less than convincing manner, claiming that Walworth had lost money from his crops through

⁵⁰ WYASL, Chambers MS 3, no. 456 (CB), articles 1–6.

⁵¹ NA: PRO, DL 30/485/7. The influential John Pullein had many properties in the forest area. Others named from Knaresborough were Robert Atkinson, William Bilton, John Mallome, Henry de Holme, Robert Lightfoot, and William Brown/Bronn. Attackers from Ripon included John Tuppe, a yeoman, Thomas Byrtby, barker, Richard Tone, barker, John Mytton, mason, Thomas Sclater, sclator, Thomas Gillyng, tailor, John Tailleur, tailor, and John Brennand, flesher.

⁵² Eighty oxen, kine, and bullocks and sixteen swine, grass, and corn worth twenty marks; crops not gathered for eighteen months. Walworth's haymakers were charged on pain of death not to do any more labour, some being imprisoned in the forest until they agreed to quit his service.

⁵³ Stapleton, *PC*, p. lii. Redman was a feoffee for Sir William in 1439, so would be perceived as an acceptable envoy.

his ‘lachesse and defaulte’.⁵⁴ On 2 September 1440 John Walworth made his presence felt by scaremongering at Boroughbridge with a band of armed men.⁵⁵

Across the winter months no trouble was reported. However, when it came to fair time the following year Archbishop Kemp was clearly determined to have the upper hand. As well as summoning one hundred men from Beverley, Cawood, and York to join his tenants from Ripon and Otley he went to the expense of hiring two hundred armed men from the Scottish Borders and kept Ripon ‘like a towne of warr’. In his evidence, Plumpton claimed that his Knaresborough men stayed away to avoid any confrontation. Determined to seek action before leaving on 4 May 1441 the Marchmen rode first to York, via Duchy territory at Boroughbridge, which was not on their route home. The full detail of the confrontation is narrated by Stapleton.⁵⁶ The Archbishop claimed that the Marchmen, who had been present only to supervise the good running of the fair, were obliged to go via Brafferton, as Plumpton and his men were lying in wait at Boroughbridge and nearby. Battle was eventually engaged at Helperby near Thornton Bridge, where several of Kemp’s servants and officers received horrific injuries and two were killed.⁵⁷

In his rejoinder, not published by Stapleton, Sir William Plumpton insisted that he had diligently and lawfully done all he could in his official capacity as a Duchy officer and Justice of the Peace, to ensure the safety of the King’s tenants who had been ‘assaulted and greivously wounded and maymed’ and to try to arrest the armed men from Hexhamshire and different parts of Yorkshire, who had caused all the harm.⁵⁸ Few, if any, of the men killed or injured were Kemp’s tenants or servants, but mercenaries. For the first time Kemp admitted that men from Tynedale were present, far fewer in number than claimed, solely there to protect the Ripon tenants. He denied that they were armed with spears and lancegays, except for one Thomas Hunter who was ‘unlawfully and horrible slain’. As Justice of Peace, Plumpton had no authority there to fall upon Kemp’s officers, servants and tenants, because Ripon was part of the franchises of the church of York.⁵⁹

Whose version of events rings more true? Both sides use emotive language and quote typically exaggerated numbers to reinforce the suffering and injustice they feel that they have suffered. If one relies solely on Stapleton’s printed account, one might suggest that Kemp had the high moral ground, that his version of events sounds more convincing.⁶⁰ However, taking into account the additional information from the court rolls and other sources cited above, it would seem that Kemp was the instigator of the

⁵⁵ NA: PRO, DL 30/485/5, they wore breastplates, wambraces, and rerebraces; many had been involved in earlier incidents.

⁵⁴ WYASL, Chambers MS, no. 455 (CB), articles 2–6, summarized very briefly by Stapleton, *PC*, p. lviii. It was said that Thomas Beckwith and others assaulted one of Walworth’s servants, but their response was feeble: ‘for as much as it was never published ne [sic] declared before this tyme that it please your lordship to respite the said matter, under reasonable tyme by dewe examination of persons now absent’. One Knaresborough man was said to have rents in the area and the band had been present to prevent third parties taking any profit from it.

⁵⁶ Stapleton, *PC*, pp. liv–lvii, from WYASL, Chambers MS 3, no. 457 (CB).

⁵⁷ Stapleton, *PC*, pp. lviii–lxii. Footnote z on p. lxii indicates that the account comes from ‘Cartulary (CB) 455 et seq’, but this account of events on 4 and 5 May 1441 is from no. 455 only. John Faukes and Ralph Pullein were also named as leaders. Prisoners were taken, and horses, equipment, gold, and silver stolen.

⁵⁸ WYASL, Chambers MS, no.3, no. 456 (CB), articles 7–12.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 458 (CB).

⁶⁰ Nigota, thesis, p. 509.

confrontations. Granted, the question of tolls had rankled with the tenants of Ripon and Knaresborough on and off for years, but this had not created any major difficulties until 1439 when Plumpton started his unsuccessful representations to the King. The troubles seem to have flared up just over a year after his appointment as steward of Knaresborough, and it could be claimed that he was organizing a campaign against the Archbishop's authority, given the prevalent anti-clericalism at this period and the North's dislike for Kemp. But equally, and more importantly, it coincided with the time that Kemp was raised to the cardinalate. Although often absent on council and State business,⁶¹ Kemp seems to have been determined to demonstrate his enhanced status;⁶² this view is reinforced by the fact that from Michaelmas 1439 onwards the sheriffs had a huge shortfall in their accustomed revenue caused by Kemp's resolve to enforce the collection of his additional dues and to defend his prerogatives ever more zealously throughout the county.⁶³

The first recorded major incident had been in December 1439, instigated by Kemp and his tenants of Ripon, followed by the major show of force in 1440 at Ripon fair and *then* at Otley. Moreover, Kemp appears to have been deliberately seeking armed confrontation at Ripon fair in 1441 by hiring an armed force from Tynedale with such a fearsome reputation. Plumpton and his men reacted in no uncertain terms to the provocation. They were not innocents, being intent on defending their long-held rights. Initially, at least, they were the injured parties. However, there is little doubt that Plumpton encouraged the rebellious Foresters to defend their rights. No doubt he was in turn encouraged by the Earl of Northumberland, for he, like others, resented the Archbishop's independent jurisdiction at Ripon and elsewhere. Hostilities reached a new and violent pitch. The deaths and severity of the injuries sustained by some of Kemp's men suggest that the Knaresborough men were well prepared and the instigators of the trouble at Helperby. By the end of the major incidents it had become impossible to apportion blame.

Both Kemp and Plumpton were Justices of the Peace, though the little evidence which survives suggests that Kemp did not exercise this function much, if at all. They definitely met when sitting at Westminster as commissioners of the peace and may have clashed defending their different interests.⁶⁴ Kemp certainly enjoyed Henry VI's favour and seems to have gained the support of the King and the council when an order was issued at Westminster in February 1444 for a proclamation to be made by

⁶¹ R. Virgoe, 'Composition of the King's Council, 1437-61', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, XLIII (1970), 157, shows that Kemp attended 157 out of a possible 412 council sessions, from Nov. 1437 to Aug. 1453 (dates include gaps and vacations); he died in 1454. He often travelled at home and abroad on government business.

⁶² *Calendars of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal letters*, ed. J. A. Twemlow, PRO Texts and Calendars, ix (1912), 46; *Calendar of P(otent) R(olls)*, 1436-41, p. 376, Jan. 1439; title of 'cardinal priest of St Balbina' Jan. 1440; received a licence from the Crown 'to assume the dignity of cardinal', Feb. 1440.

⁶³ NA: PRO, Chancery, Petty Bag office, C 244/22; for example, in Oct. 1438 he was suing tenants in Selby and Thorp.

⁶⁴ NA: PRO, King's Remembrancer, Accounts Various, E 101/598/42, payments to West Riding justices: Plumpton was paid for three attendances between Nov. 1429 and Aug. 1451, Kemp not at all; *ibid.*, Exchequer, Pipe Roll, E 372/284 Mich. 1438-Mich. 1439, neither man present; *CPR*, 1436-41, p. 594, Plumpton was present as a commissioner on two occasions, Kemp the full five sittings; *CPR*, 1446-52, p. 482, Plumpton three, Kemp four out of four.

the steward and the receiver in every place in the lordship of Knaresborough for keeping the peace: there were to be no assemblies or gatherings; any disobedience would be punished by law. Whilst neither Kemp nor Plumpton had conducted themselves in an exemplary manner during the disturbances, the King had been placed in a difficult position; he wanted and needed to support his councillor, but was obviously aware that Plumpton (even if he had hidden motives) had acted in the overall interests of the Forest tenants and the Duchy. Plumpton was given a minor public rap on the knuckles, but kept his position as steward, and the following month received a gift, ordered by the Duchy council, of twenty timber oaks from Haverah. A goodly compromise had been found.⁶⁵

Significantly, the intervention of the Archbishop and his tenants had far-reaching effects in the Knaresborough area. It had galvanized organized resistance, allowed men to gain practical experience and prove themselves in the defence of a cause, bringing to the fore not only already established leaders, who may even have fought with Plumpton's father in France, but more importantly permitting the emergence of an up-and-coming generation who gained useful experience and leadership skills. Ripon and Otley had been a valuable training ground for Knaresborough men who would be involved in the feuding and challenges to law and order and the monarchy in the 1450s.

During Henry VI's minority the enforcement of law and order, which had been relatively well maintained in his father's reign, deteriorated. The machinery of justice worked at a slow pace, beset with bribery and corruption at all levels; juries were frequently intimidated. Although some major disputes were settled by arbitration, others remained unsettled because of the inadequacies of the central courts. By 1429 crime and disorder, which was particularly bad in the North, was reported to be on the increase, with criminal bands committing robberies 'more than used to be in times past'. In 1422 the young King's councillors had taken an oath not to maintain or take into their service peace breakers or criminals of any sort; indeed illegal granting of livery became such a problem that in 1434 many members of the nobility and gentry, including Sir William Plumpton, made the same undertaking, but this seemed to have little effect on their general behaviour and the situation in the land.⁶⁶

When he came of age in 1437 Henry VI did not assert his leadership as effectively as he might, with his council still managing his government. Some already existing rivalries and jealousies were inflamed by the King using his power as an 'instrument of faction'. He was often imprudently generous and 'in the 1440's the royal powers of justice in localities could be manipulated with impunity by those who enjoyed Henry's access and favour', such as Archbishop Kemp. The number of pardons granted by Henry, even for the most serious crimes, increased dramatically after 1437, especially with the implementing of general pardons in 1437, 1446, and 1452; moreover he appeared to condone crime and the offenders, and thus 'admitted the powerlessness of his government'. The King was a remote figure, who only once would cross Yorkshire on a visit to Durham in 1448, during Border troubles with Scotland.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ NA: PRO, DL 37/11/120,126.

⁶⁶ J. G. Bellamy, *Crime and Public Order in England in the Later Middle Ages (1973)*, pp. 3–4, 8, citing the Close Rolls; CPR, 1426–36, pp. 378, 409.

⁶⁷ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 276–77, 562–63; B. Wolffe, *Henry VI* (New Haven, 2001), pp. 121, 123; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 56, 595 quoting Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, p. 215.

As the minority ended there were many changes in government and Duchy appointments. That has been seen as an extension of the influence of the Beauforts, Suffolk, and the royal household. Certainly the controller of the king's household, John Feriby, became steward at Knaresborough in 1437 and later the same year joint steward with Sir William Ingilby. However, it was not the ending of the minority that brought about Feriby's appointment, but the death of Queen Katherine and the return of her considerable dower lands to the Duchy in January 1437; Katherine's own officers were replaced with Duchy council nominees immediately. Sir William Plumpton became joint steward with Feriby in 1438 after Ingilby's death. As for other important regional appointments in the 'outlandish' North, Griffiths considers that they were not so sought after by the household because of the power exercised by the northern magnates. Was there, as Castor claims, a deliberate policy to change the administrative structure of the Duchy, since Henry did not manage his private inheritance, with important posts being granted, not to the leading Lancastrian gentry as previously, but to members of the nobility, such as Suffolk, Stafford, Cromwell, and Salisbury whose power bases in the regions were already strong? Magnate influence was growing, not least that of Salisbury. The King did not exercise much, if any, independent royal authority.⁶⁸

Another man who still wielded considerable power was Archbishop Kemp. The Percies, like other magnates, resented Archbishop Kemp's influence and favour with the King; they saw his ascendancy as a threat to their power in the North. Northumberland disliked his fellow councillor's closeness to Beaufort and Suffolk. But Percy may well have been further motivated by local difficulties where his and the Archbishop's lands were contiguous, as at Aismunderby and Markenfield, near Ripon. It is very likely that he gave encouragement to his retainer Plumpton in his dealings over the fairs and tolls. It is impossible to know at what point Northumberland became involved in the campaign against Kemp, but it must have been by 1441 at the latest. In February 1442, an enquiry was ordered and arrests demanded of the people who had been spreading false rumours about Kemp; a proclamation was issued against the slanderers, who were inciting riots against Kemp's officers and manors.⁶⁹ The extension of Kemp's franchise rights to all his archiepiscopal lands in Yorkshire in July 1442, which until then had only pertained to his liberties of Ripon and Beverley, was not well received. He was also given the right to appoint J.P.s at Beverley and Ripon.⁷⁰

In 1443 nine yeomen from Knaresborough Forest, including John Pullein of Padside, Thomas Pullein, John Nelson, and Stephen Parker, received livery, '*ceperunt*

⁶⁸ NA: PRO, DL 42/18, fol. 49^v; Plumpton as the local appointee would do the bulk of the work. Somerville, *Duchy*, I, 189, 524. In Henry VI's reign it became accepted practice to grant joint offices in this way, sometimes to father and son, sometimes to brothers. Feriby was also a J.P., sheriff of Surrey 1426–27, 1436–37, M.P. 1425, 1429, and 1433; he was dead by Oct. 1441. H. Castor, *The King, the Crown and the Duchy of Lancaster: Public Authority and Private Power, 1399–1461* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 44–50 citing Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 233, 342–43; NA: PRO, DL 37/12/44.

⁶⁹ Gowland, *YAJ*, xxxii, 73. John Markenfield of Markenfield supported the Neville cause in 1450s. *CPR*, 1441–46, pp. 77, 203.

⁷⁰ Nigota, thesis, pp. 502–07; the rights included return of writs, rights to chattels of fugitive tenants etc. The first commission of justices at Ripon did not take place until Nov. 1447 when eight men were empowered to act as J.P.s; they were led by Sir James Strangways and included the bailiff, John Walworth.

togas vocatas leveragownes, from Sir William Gascoigne of Gawthorpe and Thomas Beckwith against the king's statute. Beckwith had been one of the leading protagonists in the confrontations against Kemp's men, as were John Pullein and Stephen Parker, and thus may have been motivated by the possibility of personal vendettas against Kemp. Gascoigne was a Percy supporter, but perhaps he was acting independently. These illegal grants of livery in the Knaresborough area were part of a worryingly increasing country-wide trend, which would have serious consequences for public order. Here was a far from rare case of an officer breaking the law he was meant to uphold, for he had been sheriff the previous year. Gascoigne instigated trouble at Wetherby and 'warlike' gatherings at Harewood Castle with several other local worthies, Richard Redman, Esq. of Harewood, Richard Aske, Esq. of Aughton, and William Ryther, Esq. of Ryther; moreover, all were involved in murder in 1444.⁷¹

Several important tenants of the Earl of Northumberland, to whom he was paying substantial annuities, were summoned under pain of £1000 each to attend the King's council in 1443 to answer the complaints laid against them by Kemp.⁷² They included Sir William Plumpton and Sir Alexander Neville of Thornton Bridge.⁷³ It was clear that Northumberland and his men were being called to account for all the riots and attacks made on Kemp's estates, with Northumberland being seen as the instigator. The sheriff was charged with putting an end to the problem. The park and mill at Ripon were broken down, as were houses and enclosures at Ripon and Bishopthorpe. Elsewhere in Yorkshire, deer had been taken, servants and tenants set upon. The Earl had indeed stirred up resistance to the authority of Kemp's spiritual courts and was called to account for a circular issued to his officers which urged resistance. The matter was referred to arbitration and eventually the Earl was ordered to make good the damages. Such was the animosity between the two men that Northumberland avoided council meetings from about May onwards.⁷⁴ Kemp continued his drive for power, declaring in an undated proclamation, probably of 1445, dealing with the prerogatives and privileges of a cardinal, that anyone defaming a cardinal would be excommunicated and only absolved by the Pope. He was thus 'not above invoking the spiritual arm of his authority to invoke the secular'. He was pushing his powers to the limit. In May 1447 he ordered some of his officers to demand damages from Northumberland for his attacks on Kemp's estates in 1443. Shortly afterwards in 1447 Thomas and Richard Percy, sons of the Earl, led a skirmish at Stamford Bridge against some Beverley tenants. By bribing the jury and undersheriff, Kemp had the proceedings against his own tenants dropped and the Percies imprisoned. He was

⁷¹ Appendix 2; NA: PRO, DL 30/485/12; *ibid.*, KB 9/243/47; /9/246/52. Gooder, *Parl. Rep.*, i, 186–88; Gascoigne was pardoned.

⁷² CCR, 1441–1447, pp. 98–99, 143–46, also Sir John Salvin, Sir William Normanville and his son William, Christopher Spencer, Esq. and John Hotham, Esq. Sir John Penington of Muncaster in Cumberland had admitted his involvement in trouble there; Northumberland acted as surety for him. J. M. W. Bean, *The Estates of the Percy Family 1416–1537* (Oxford, 1958), p. 92, 'it seems probable that many of these fees continued until 1461'; in 1442–43 extraordinary fees were paid to Plumpton, Salvin and Normanville (£10 each); others paid were Walter Calverley, Sir John Hotham, Sir John Tempest, and Sir John Stapleton.

⁷³ YAS, MS 880, 1453 letters patent to Plumpton for life annuity of £10, £5 from the issues of Spofforth and Linton, £5 from Leathley; Raine, *Test. Ebor.*, II, 207; Alexander Neville was son of Sir Ralph Neville of Cundall; he was receiver of Knaresborough in the late 1420s. There were no specific charges mentioning Knaresborough.

⁷⁴ CCR, 1441–47, pp. 142–43. Southwell, Notts, was being threatened too. Nicolas, *Privy Council*, v, 268–69; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 281.

doing no more and no less than many another person at this time by perverting the cause of justice, but he had more influence and power than most; small wonder he was unpopular.⁷⁵ Whether any other skirmishes were instigated by Kemp in the area is not known, but there was certainly friction sometime in 1448 or 1449 (27 Henry VI) when Plumpton drove out ‘300 armatos milites Cardinalis Eboracum spoliantes Forrestarios sub pretextu itineris ad Ebor[ac]um’.⁷⁶

There were ever more incidents of general lawlessness and intimidation. In December 1443 William Fairbarn of Ripley, a yeoman, and others unknown ‘riotwysse’ assaulted Richard Louthier and William Whitehill. It may be that this was a partisan attack by Percy supporters, for Louthier was certainly a follower of the Nevilles in years to come, as was William Wakefield of Great Ouseburn, who in his turn was set upon by Richard Bank and George Willesthorp, both gentlemen from Whixley. Other attacks were probably not politically motivated, but more personal in nature. No one and nothing was sacred. In 1447 two York men dared to break into Knaresborough Castle by night, burned the treasury door without success, so set fire to the lock on the door and took a cable worth 20 shillings.⁷⁷

Although Kemp maintained his grip on his own lands until his translation to Canterbury in 1452, the Nevilles and the Percies were still the dominant magnate families in the North. At the start of the century the Percies had lost their northern supremacy and forfeited some of their lands for rebellion against Henry IV, but in 1416 Henry Percy had the earldom and some land restored. At that time the Nevilles and the Percies controlled the western and eastern Border Marches respectively and together defended the area against the Scots. The Nevilles had not been without their problems, with the struggle for domination of the family lands by Richard Earl of Salisbury over Ralph, Earl of Westmorland being finally settled by arbitration in 1443; also that year Salisbury became justice of the forests north of the Trent.⁷⁸

The Nevilles had the greater holdings of land in the northern counties and nearly fifty manors in Yorkshire, concentrated around Middleham, in Wensleydale, and York. They were not without some influence in the Knaresborough area, the FitzHughs of Ravensworth having long held Staveley manor. Sir Henry, who inherited in 1452, married the sister of Richard, Earl of Warwick. Another faithful Neville supporter and retainer, Richard Roos, lived at Ingmanthorpe. Although Scotton was held by the Crown in the 1440s and 1450s it was sublet to Ralph Pullein and became a hotbed for dissent and pro-Neville Yorkist activity.

With estates centred round Leconfield and Topcliffe in the East and North Ridings respectively and Healaugh in the West, the Percies’ lands were considerable, but not as great as those of the Nevilles, who also enjoyed more wealth in general and more

⁷⁵ Witchell, thesis, pp. 252–53. Kemp also made the dean of his chapel responsible for punishing people committing crimes against him in the city and diocese of York.

⁷⁶ B(ritish) L(ibrary), Additional MSS, 32113, fol.4^v.

⁷⁷ NA: PRO, DL 30/485/10, 12; /30/486/1, Robert Robynson of Clint in 1447 killed John Shaw of Clint with a dagger. DL 30/485/16; PRO, Court of Duchy Chamber, minutes of Duchy Council, DL 5/1, fol. 95^v, it was recorded in March 1476 that there was ‘littill lowe howse called the Tresorie, next to the dore of the grete vawte (vault) of the said dongeon’ or keep.

⁷⁸ Emden, *Biographical Register*, II, 1031; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 406; Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, pp. 113–14.

influence and favour from Court and Crown, Salisbury being related to Cardinal Beaufort and Somerset.⁷⁹ However, the Percies enjoyed more influence in the West Riding in general and the Knaresborough area in particular, with considerable holdings in their Spofforth lordship, which in fact was adjacent to the Honour.⁸⁰ In February 1442 Sir William Plumpton became steward of the Earl of Northumberland's Yorkshire manors and lands for life.⁸¹ As was seen above, some local manors within the Liberty of Knaresborough at Burton Leonard, Walkingham, and Brearton were held by Percy and Lancastrian sympathizers.

Although there had been no overt signs of trouble between the two families for many years, it was c. 1442 that open rivalry between the Nevilles and the Percies emerged in a precedence dispute, whose relevance is fundamental to understanding the later feuding between the parties. Richard Neville, already by far the more influential, had been granted his earldom in 1429 in right of his wife. In 1442 Salisbury and his wife claimed and were granted a further endowment to support their title, which was confirmed by the same charter as the grant. Percy, who had been Earl of Northumberland since 1416 (as a new creation, being the son and grandson of traitors), was outraged and objected by way of a legal challenge to Salisbury's precedence. Each defended his own claim with vigour; this was clearly a quarrel which had been simmering under the surface for some time, a feud which was restricted to verbal parrying for the immediate future. In the early 1440s the Percies regained personal control of the East March with the appointment of Henry the future Lord Poynings, Northumberland's eldest son. Salisbury held the West March and was joined later by his eldest son Richard. After the ending of the truce with Scotland in 1447 both Northumberland and Salisbury were amongst northern families involved in the fighting. With additional problems looming in France, a further truce with the Scots was drawn up in 1449.⁸²

The renewed rivalry between the families was exacerbated by the behaviour of Percy's turbulent younger son, Thomas, born in 1422, and that of his brothers, Ralph and Richard. Thomas, later Lord Egremont, who fought with Percy tenants in the war with Scotland, was an infamous troublemaker. On the Neville side Richard, the future Warwick the Kingmaker, was about six years younger than Egremont; with his brothers Thomas and John he was shortly to demonstrate his mettle.

Enmity between the families grew apace in the 1450s. In 1454, Salisbury's power was enhanced when he became Chancellor, during the protectorship of the Duke of York. The King was severely ill, the government was impotent, and the question of law and order in the country was not being addressed.⁸³ Other posts held by Salisbury

⁷⁹ M. Weiss, 'A power in the north? The Percies in the fifteenth century', *Historical Journal*, 19 (1976), 501–09.

⁸⁰ Bean, *Percy Family*, pp.38–40. Other Yorkshire manors included Tadcaster, Healaugh, Kirk Levington, Asenby, Grifthwaite, Catton, Pocklington, Nafferton, Hunmanby, and Seamer.

⁸¹ WYASL, Chambers MS 3, no. 524 (CB) with £10 a year; no. 533. he was granted an additional £10 a year in 1447.

⁸² A. Rose, *Kings in the North: the House of Percy in British History* (2002), p. 393; M. W. Warner and K. Lacey, 'Neville vs. Percy: a Precedence Dispute circa 1442', *Historical Research*, LXIX (1996), 69, 211–17; a judgment is not recorded. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 404–05; M. Hicks, 'The Neville Earldom of Salisbury, 1429–87', in *Richard III and his Rivals: Magnates and their Motives in the Wars of the Roses*, ed. M. Hicks, pp. 354–57.

⁸³ Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 301–04; Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, pp. 245–65.

for many years were the stewardship of Tickhill from 1432 and that of the strategically important Honour of Pontefract from 1425, with a life grant of the latter from 1437. He also coveted Knaresborough, no doubt wishing to temper Percy influence there, for in 1445 he and his sons Richard and Thomas were granted Knaresborough in reversion, effective from the end of William Plumpton's tenure; in the event, Salisbury's bid for personal influence at Knaresborough was thwarted as the Neville family did not gain the stewardship of Knaresborough until 1461, with the appointment of Richard, Earl of Warwick, some months after Salisbury's death.⁸⁴

Much has been written about the fighting before the marriage in 1453 of Sir Thomas Neville, son of the Earl of Salisbury, and Lady Willoughby (a niece of Lord Cromwell, who held the post of Chief Steward of the North and South Parts of the Duchy), at the latter's seat at Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire.⁸⁵ Thomas, Lord Egremont and Henry Holand, Duke of Exeter, formed an alliance, for both had grievances against the Nevilles and Lord Cromwell. The Percies resented the fact that Cromwell had been granted two Percy manors by the King. Holand had designs on the Duchy, through his Beaufort family connections. Together with a huge force of tenants from Percy estates (mainly those in Yorkshire) and some from Holand's estates in Bedfordshire, plus numerous retainers and motley supporters, they planned to attack the bridal party, which included the Earl of Salisbury and his son Sir John Neville, at Heworth Moor, near York.⁸⁶ A few men from the Knaresborough area including John Gollen from Boroughbridge, John Hopperton and John Fetherstone from Hopperton, all yeomen, were amongst the armed throng, but it is not recorded whether they were some of the many who had accepted livery from Thomas Percy in the months leading up to August 1453. In the event the bridal party arrived safely, but much alarm was caused, and the citizens of nearby York feared for their safety.

The violence between the Nevilles and the Percies continued, with several attacks by both sides; John Fetherstone of Hopperton was involved again in the Percy assault on the vicar of Aughton under the leadership of Sir John Salvin. More serious incidents at Topcliffe and Sand Hutton in October 1453, when the leading members of each family were present, saw the personal involvement in the Neville camp of Sir Henry FitzHugh, who held the manor of Staveley from the Duchy.⁸⁷ Although men from the Forest were not involved in the main Percy/Neville confrontations, some nonetheless showed where their allegiance lay, for in August 1453 members of the Smith family of Beckwithshaw and the Malloms of Hampsthwaite and others went to Kirkby Overblow, where they took animals being tended there for the Earl of Salisbury. The Knaresborough court rolls do not record this attack, for it doubtless

⁸⁴ NA: PRO, DL 37/12/44. Although Plumpton was steward for life, the Nevilles were granted Knaresborough from when Plumpton gave up or retired/resigned (*relinquere/cessare*) and Pickering at the end of Ralph, Lord Cromwell's tenure; both were granted to Warwick in 1461. NA: PRO, Justice of Gaol Delivery: Gaol Delivery Rolls and Files, Just 3/211: amongst local men recruited to serve the Nevilles, Thomas Walton, a groom from Arkendale, was hanged in 1444 for taking silver belonging to Richard, Earl of Salisbury at Sheriff Hutton and Stamford.

⁸⁵ Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, pp. 130–32, 142–49; R. A. Griffiths, 'Local Rivalries and National Politics: the Percies, the Nevilles, and the Duke of Exeter, 1452–5', *Speculum*, XLII (1968), 589–632. Somerville, *Duchy*, I, 492.

⁸⁶ NA: PRO, KB 9/149/4/17; 15/2, 16/8 and 11/16; Griffiths, *Speculum*, XLII, pp. 598–99, found that 94 per cent were from Yorkshire and 310 out of the 710 involved were yeomen. PRO, KB 9/279/111.

⁸⁷ NA: PRO, KB 9/149/12/24 and 11/3. There were incidents at Gargrave and Catton too.

had the blessing of Sir William Plumpton. However, when reprisals occurred with an attack on John Smith by John Mauleverer, Constantine Hanson, and others, Neville supporters, this was duly noted; local Neville support was growing. Law and order collapsed as many such acts and incidents of lawlessness took place locally. Respect for authority was waning too; oats and barley were stolen from steward Sir William Plumpton, who was increasingly a target for discontent.⁸⁸

There were still problems between Ripon and Knaresborough men, but perhaps now their motivation was different, supporting the Neville cause, with frequent attacks taking place (Appendix 2), including one on Robert Tippling, an ardent Percy supporter involved in the Spofforth uprising and other Percy troubles. They may well have been encouraged by Strangways, the Ripon steward since 1446, a well-known Neville supporter, who would later be one of the executors and a beneficiary of the Earl of Salisbury's will. Indeed Strangways himself was attacked in his own home by several Percy men from Topcliffe in 1454.⁸⁹

With the Duke of York as Protector in 1454 wishing to establish authority in the North, resistance came from Percy and Holand supporters who gathered in large numbers in May at the Percy manor of Spofforth. Among them were Richard Aldburgh, Esq. junior of a leading Aldborough family, John Rande and others of Boroughbridge. Both John Gollen and John Fetherstone who had taken part in the Heworth incident remained true to the Percy cause. A notable absentee from those later charged was the steward of Knaresborough and Spofforth, Sir William Plumpton. Egremont's supporters caused mayhem in the area, with troubles reported at many places including York, where they imprisoned town officials in the chapter house, Wetherby, Skipton, and Swindon in the Forest of Knaresborough. They even contemplated murdering the Duke of York. He was not harmed and presided over the proceedings at York in June to hear charges and pass sentences. Although the commission was weighted against the Percies and their supporters, some of whom had their possessions seized, they clearly merited condemnation for their behaviour.⁹⁰ Henry Holand was captured in July but Egremont remained at liberty. By mid-September he was at Spofforth with his brothers Lord Poynings and Richard Percy. Spofforth accounts show the expenses of the party and their followers from 15 September until 14 October 'for the safekeeping and defence of the township and lordship at the time of the quarrel between the lord and the Earl of Salisbury and his son as appears by the roll of the said expenses included in this amount £30 14s. 2d.'. John Fetherstone of Hopperton was obviously still supporting the Percy cause for he took horses and swords from John Mauleverer, a Neville supporter, on 20 October 1454; like many others in his situation, he later managed to buy himself a pardon for all his previous misdeeds, including several robberies with John Fosse of Knaresborough.⁹¹

⁸⁸ NA: PRO, KB 9/149/2/7; /11/12; /11/21; /12/22; DL 30/486/7, 8; animals as well as crops and wood were taken at various times from Sir William; a sample only has been noted on Appendix 2.

⁸⁹ NA: PRO, DL 30 486/7, 8, 9; Raine, *Test. Ebor.*, II, 244–45; PRO, KB 9/149/11/11.

⁹⁰ NA: PRO, KB 9/148/1/10; /149/4/27; /15/3 and /9/8. Further troubles, see KB 9/149/6/3, 6/7 and murder plot 9/7; Arnold, in Pollard, *Property and Politics*, p. 120.

⁹¹ YAS, MS 880. There are not any extant Spofforth court rolls for the period. Fetherstone and Fosse also took many animals in various places and Fetherstone and others stole twenty carts of timber at Selby in 1451. NA: PRO, Just. 3/213; KB 9/274/34.

After a further fracas at Stamford Bridge later in 1454 and the Battle of St Albans in May 1455 Thomas, Lord Egremont and Richard Percy were captured and imprisoned, unable to pay Salisbury the huge damages awarded against them; they managed to escape in late 1456. Holand was finally freed from custody early 1456. King Henry recovered his sanity and took control, but after St Albans (and the death of Northumberland) York and the Nevilles were in control for a few months. By the end of 1456 the Court began stripping Yorkist lords of authority and money in an attempt to lessen their influence. In March 1457 the Lancastrian, Henry Percy, the new Earl of Northumberland, took over his lands, but the Nevilles maintained overall power in the North.⁹² These violent incidents of Percy/Neville feuding in themselves did not directly cause the outbreak of war, but the tensions in Yorkshire had long-term implications; they became bound up with the national situation. The violence seen at a local and regional level was symptomatic of the lack of good lordship from the King and council and the breakdown of public order.

In the early 1450s Knaresborough itself witnessed a noticeable increase in affrays and more serious attacks. Authority was being challenged directly and indirectly. People did not fulfil their obligations to the community in road repairs. On an ever increasing scale men flouted the law, took over land to which they were not entitled, did not pay rents due, enclosed or encroached on land without permission (John Smith even took some from the castle butts area), let their animals trample neighbours' crops, helped themselves to all the wood and turves they wanted and withdrew their suit from the mill. Tenants and officials alike were involved with ever increasing hunting in the Forest and parks.⁹³ Fish too were being taken in large numbers, to feed hungry families, or to barter or sell to acquire necessities.⁹⁴ Although harvests must have been good in the mid 1450s permitting a few local men to sell considerable amounts of grain direct to the officers at Fountains Abbey, most families needed their crops for personal use.⁹⁵ Many market offences were recorded including the selling of inferior goods, such as shoes, leather goods, and horn. Thefts increased. Public order was in peril, as the authorities struggled to keep any semblance of law and order.

It was inevitable that the lordship of Knaresborough would not remain untouched by the Neville/Percy confrontations. Now men dared openly to show their support for the Neville cause. In 1455 four local men rode with Richard, Earl of Salisbury several times in warlike gear, an act which had been forbidden by a proclamation. The events of 1454 at Spofforth had shown that there was already local support for the Nevilles, and their power and influence in the area were growing ever stronger. Even more significantly, Salisbury's appointment as Chief Steward of the Duchy in the North

⁹² NA: PRO, KB 9/279/111; Griffiths, *Speculum*, XLII, 589–632; Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, pp. 267–69.

⁹³ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/2; /486/6, the minister of St Robert's was ordered to mend the high road near Grimbalbridge, and the tenants in Arkendale and Ferrensby were to repair the dangerous King's highway between those places. DL 30/485/8; /485/16; /486/1, 3, 6, 8–9, 11.

⁹⁴ *CPR*, 1441–46, p. 369; NA: PRO, DL 30/486/2: John Gare, borough bailiff 1443–52, took salmon during the close season. He was also charged with releasing men from the stocks.

⁹⁵ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/4, 6, 12; *Memorials of Fountains Abbey*, III, ed. J. T. Fowler, SS, CXXX (1918), 36–37, 76–77. In 1456–57 William Stable of Arkendale sold grain worth £6 10s.; overall the Abbey bought corn and barley worth almost £70, a considerable investment in the area's economy.

Parts was ratified in February 1456, thus strengthening his northern power base further.⁹⁶ Although he had not managed to obtain the Knaresborough stewardship, as he had hoped, his presence there was legitimised; he had overall control. The steward and Percy retainer, Sir William Plumpton, who was liable to be summoned on occasions to serve in the Earl of Northumberland's forces (as in 1456 when he rode north to take part in a Border incursion), was powerless to stop Salisbury and Sir John Neville from riding ever more frequently in Knaresborough with armed supporters. They were no doubt trying to rally more men to the Neville cause, as well as making it clear that men who supported their cause would receive their protection. William Whitecroft was one who accepted a livery gown from Thomas Neville. Men were badly injured in a Neville show of force in January 1456.⁹⁷

Sir William Plumpton was rapidly losing the struggle to keep some semblance of law and order not only with the local populace but also with some Duchy employees, though several officers appear to have stayed loyal to him and the Lancastrian cause.⁹⁸ Large numbers of bows were being prepared, possibly as part of Knaresborough's contribution to re-arm the King's forces. Indeed, bows were acquired from many sources, for 500 had been purchased by the King's bowyer for £50 in the south of England, 'at oure last going to Saint Albones'.⁹⁹ An inquiry, held by Sir William's brother Godfrey Plumpton together with Thomas Knaresburgh, found that in March 1456 Robert Waryn and his servant had stolen five cartloads of oak bows at 'Rugheferlyngton (Rudfarlington) hegge infra forest'.¹⁰⁰ In July 1456 Waryn sold two wagon loads of oak bows to John Coghill without permission or anyone's authority and one wagon load of oak bows to Elizabeth Fysshe. He had cut 200 'green hesylles' (hazels) and thorns and carried them off. It is clear that there was a continuing programme of bow making in the forest, for in October one cart load of green oak bows was sold to a certain Scales; Waryn also sold two maples from Fulwith Bank and cut down a great timber oak in the Forest for his own use. Robert Waryn and William Water hid 400 oak saplings cut in Bilton Banks. The Waryns had long been Duchy employees with Henry a parker in 1399 and his son Thomas, forester of Fulwith from 1432 until his death in 1454, when William Water took over. Waryn and Water also enjoyed illegal hunting trips; amongst their companions were John Birnand and Richard Louthier, Neville supporters. Even if Water and Waryn were opportunists making some money for themselves, they were certainly supporting the Yorkist cause too and were rewarded with positions as foresters at Knaresborough

⁹⁶ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/8; Somerville, *Duchy*, I, 421, 492; Salisbury had a separate appointment as Chief Steward of Lancashire and Cheshire at the same time.

⁹⁷ Stapleton, *PC*, p. lxvi; NA: PRO, DL 30/486/9.

⁹⁸ NA: PRO, DL 29/481/7758: John Faukes, the receiver, Thomas Knaresburgh, parker of Hay-a-Park, John Verty, parker of Bilton, Henry Langton, forester of Haywra, Richard Raskyll, forester of Okedale and Richard Kyldale, collector of Aldborough.

⁹⁹ NA: PRO, Writs and warrants for issues, E 404/70/3, no. 22; *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France*, ed. J. Stevenson, II, ii, Rolls Series, XXI (1864), 511; large numbers of bows were required, as later in May 1459, before Blore Heath, when the King ordered 3000 bow staves and 3000 sheaves of arrows to be provided.

¹⁰⁰ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/9, also for Fewston raid below. Godfrey was bailiff of the borough 1453–54; Knaresburgh was parker of Hay-a-Park from 1440 until his death in 1461.

under Warwick in 1461.¹⁰¹ Perhaps they were acting under direct orders from Salisbury, shortly after his appointment as Chief Steward in the North.

Further politically motivated crimes occurred, as when a Fewston house was raided in February 1456 by five Markenfield men and other armed locals, with the encouragement of local gentry known for their support of the Neville cause: John de Markenfield, together with his cousin John Mauleverer, junior, Thomas Fullbaron and Constantine Hanson, all of Allerton Mauleverer. Poaching and hunting offences, especially those carried out by the gentry, continued to increase in the mid to late 1450s, much game being taken for personal use as well as for supplying meat to both sides in the warring factions.¹⁰²

Other incidents were a direct result of hatred of Sir William Plumpton, as in 1457 when John Birnand attacked John Croft and Thomas Williamson, the sub-bailiff of the Liberty, with a long lance. Plumpton had just deprived him of his late brother's property and lands, and taken it for his own son. In theory the process was legal, as it was recorded on the court rolls that no heir had come forward to claim the land, but given Plumpton's devious nature and land-grabbing tendencies one wonders whether the details were made public in court; Birnand later claimed that attempts to pay an entry fine had been rebuffed by Plumpton.¹⁰³ Small wonder that the Birnands were implacable enemies of Plumpton and had been recruited to the Neville cause.

Plumpton was already embroiled in another dispute over land with the Pierpoints in Nottinghamshire.¹⁰⁴ Back in 1434 the Pierpoints had been in murderous conflict with Thomas Foljambe; as Sir William's mother was daughter of Sir Godfrey Foljambe, the two land disputes may well have been connected. In 1457 John Grene, Plumpton's brother-in-law and steward of his estates, was said to have killed Henry Pierpoint in Sherwood Forest, with the help of Plumpton's men, Simon Croft, Gilbert Croft, and Roger Jackson, all yeomen of Plumpton village. Grene himself was later killed in retaliation. Plumpton sat with fellow justices at Selby for an initial hearing and then doubtless tried to influence the local jury at a second hearing at Wetherby. Local antipathy towards Sir William and his men was increased further.¹⁰⁵ Indeed,

¹⁰¹ NA: PRO, DL 29/481/7749 and 7760. There are accounts for 1453–54 and 1460–61. Wilcock, *Arkendale* (forthcoming), chapter 7. Waryn and Water enjoyed illegal hunting trips; amongst their companions were Neville supporters, John Birnand and Richard Louther.

¹⁰² BL, Add. MSS, 23752; NA: PRO, DL 30/486/8, 9, 11. Amongst those who hunted were John Paslowe, Ralph Pullein, Esq., Sir William Gascoigne and his son William, Henry Gascoigne, Esq., William Aldburgh, gent, Thomas Tankard, gent. Sir William Plumpton himself took a doe without permission. WYASL, Chambers MS 3 (CB) nos 114, 115 *et al.*, show what appear to be grants (no indication of payments) of deer, usually one each, to local clergy and worthies, including Plumpton.

¹⁰³ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/9; KB 27/790, m 46; /791 m.46; /792 m.44; /793, m. 2d; in 1458 and 1459 Plumpton's son even sued Birnand at Westminster (Appendix 2).

¹⁰⁴ S. J. Payling, *Political Society in Lancastrian England* (Oxford 1991), pp. 200–02; he cites NA: PRO, KB 9/289/19, 20 and KB 9/290/10, which have been checked along with KB 9/288/19–21 for detail on the Plumptons and supporters; Plumpton had land and interests at Kinoulton, Nottinghamshire. In 1453 he had raided Henry Pierpont's land at Mansfield Woodhouse. Pierpoint appealed to the courts, a first hearing took place in Feb. 1457; the parties then took matters into their own hands.

¹⁰⁵ Plumpton's son William was present but did not participate. At Selby it was alleged that Grene was pursued and killed at Pannal (at the Wetherby hearing said to be at Kirkby Overblow!) by Henry's brother John Pierpoint, accompanied by twenty-five others. Arbitration was tried and the matter seemed settled by a judgment made in 1462. See fn. 103. But in 1474, the Plumpton men were being sought to answer the Crown for the murder in Notts. NA: PRO, KB 27/848, m. 102.

in May 1459 Thomas Beckwith, Esq., and John Paslow, gentleman, headed a band of men in the parish of Pannal who attacked Simon Croft, Roger Jackson, and two others, who had come with a warrant from Sir William Plumpton, in his capacity as a West Riding J.P., and arrested Richard Haxby. The prisoner was rescued by Beckwith and his gang, and in turn they imprisoned Croft and Jackson; it was no accident that these two were taken, for they would be known as Plumpton's henchmen, resented and hated like their master.¹⁰⁶ This arrest must have caused outrage, since it had provoked Thomas Beckwith, a Lancastrian, to act against Plumpton.

Time and again hitherto unpublished evidence from the court rolls bears witness to a downward spiral to anarchy reflected in the turmoil of local events. John and Henry Manfield, both smiths of Clint, were responsible for several incidents listed (Appendix 2), amongst them a vicious ambush on Robert Riplay in 1458. The Manfields had earlier taken livery from Thomas Percy, Lord Egremont and were probably attacking Neville sympathizers. Along with many other offenders they were distrained to appear in court by the steward, Sir William Plumpton, who found such orders being repeatedly ignored from the mid 1450s onwards. Since he was no longer able to control such men in the normal fashion through the courts at Knaresborough, in his desperation to assert his will and show his determination to maintain order, Plumpton took the almost unprecedented step of suing them in the King's Bench court at Westminster from Michaelmas 1458.¹⁰⁷

Sir William also made use of the Court of Common Pleas. Amongst the suits he was pursuing in Michaelmas term 1458, were three where he claimed that groups of men, locally from Flaxby and Clareton, but also from other parts of the county, had stolen grass, trees, wood, and animals from his lands at Knaresborough, Plumpton, and Nessfield. They were not deterred by the fact that Plumpton was a J.P. It may have encouraged them to target him; perhaps his reputation and political allegiance prompted their choice of victim. Plumpton was not the only local person using the Common Pleas that term, for Ralph Pullein and Thomas Beckwith were doing so, doubtless having lost hope of obtaining reparation in court locally in the normal way. Even though much less business was done in the Court of Common Pleas in the second half of the fifteenth century than previously, Plumpton may well have made use of it both before and after 1458, though not normally for cases involving people from Knaresborough, who were properly dealt with in the Honour court. However, the extent of his business is not known, for, whilst it would be instructive to discover whether he normally initiated so many suits at any one time or whether he felt impelled to use the court because of the situation then pertaining, the great bulk of the records renders a systematic search over several years impracticable.¹⁰⁸

Another reflection of the difficult conditions prevailing is that there are no accounts for the Honour from Michaelmas 1454 until 1460; perhaps some were prepared

¹⁰⁶ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/13, in their turn, Croft and Jackson did not sue their attackers at Knaresborough, but at Westminster, no doubt urged on by Plumpton (Appendix 2).

¹⁰⁷ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/12; *ibid.*, KB 27/790 m. 46; he sued another man from Knaresborough. He also initiated three other suits against people from outside the Honour jurisdiction. Plumpton's son sued John Birmand, doubtless over their land dispute.

¹⁰⁸ NA: PRO, CP 40/791, mm. 94, 173, 174d, 94d, 463. Clareton lay partially within the Honour, partially without. Margaret Hastings, *The Court of Common Pleas* (New York, 1947), pp. 24–25.

but have not survived, but more likely it was impossible to gather the necessary information and monies from all the office holders involved.

At this time Queen Margaret, growing ever more influential, had convinced Henry VI that the Duke of York was plotting to take the throne; and at a strongly pro-Lancastrian council meeting it was decided to destroy the Yorkists by force. York himself was in the Welsh Marches, where it was planned that the Nevilles would join him. Salisbury moved south with his forces from Middleham. His supporters in the Knaresborough area joined him at Boroughbridge '*vi et armis insurrexerunt*' on 18 September 1459. Ralph Pullein, Esq. of Scotton, John Birnand, Esq., George and William Birnand, gentlemen, all of Knaresborough, Richard Louthier recently of Knaresborough, yeoman, Robert Percy, Esq. of Scotton, Richard Pullein, yeoman and others all 'rode with Richard Earl of Salisbury and Sir John Neville'. Probably Ralph Pullein and Robert Percy had been recruiting well for the cause, for there were several other men from Scotton present too; of these Richard and John Holme, together with William Parker, had already shown their loyalty to the Nevilles back in 1455. They were joined by three members of the Wakefield family of Ouseburn and others.¹⁰⁹ No doubt other pro-Neville and Yorkist members of the gentry recruited men for the cause; men such as John Mauleverer and John Markenfield had already shown that they could call on tenants and friends in times of trouble.¹¹⁰

The Neville forces were intercepted on 23 September at Blore Heath, near Market Drayton, where heavy fighting ensued. The Yorkists did not accept Henry's offer of pardons after a stand-off at Ludford and eventually their leaders were attainted, their lands forfeited, and they were sentenced to death. It is possible that Ralph Pullein was killed in the engagement or died shortly afterwards because on 4 December Johanna his widow was veiled at Fountains Abbey. Ralph had been a man of influence and status in the area, with many tenants, holding the manor of Scotton from the Crown during the minority of Margaret Beaufort, yet he was not afraid to support the Yorkists.¹¹¹ He was the sole person who rode with Salisbury from Boroughbridge listed in an account which is considered to date from the accounting years 1456–59, as a retainer of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, receiving £1 6s. 8d. The other person on the list who lived locally was Richard Roos, Esq. He was so highly regarded by Salisbury that in his will he was bequeathed £10 and his maintenance '*ad terminum vitae suae honestae*'.¹¹² Although he is never named as taking part in military

¹⁰⁹ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/13; also from Scotton were John and William Couper, Thomas Holme, a yeoman, Robert Holme, a tailor. William Wakefield was joined by his son William, John Wakefield, gentleman, and John Cuke, a yeoman of Hampsthwaite. Others named were James Willestrop, gentleman, William son of Stephen Parker, yeoman, John Yamson, a sawyer from Brearton, and Richard Mallom of Hampsthwaite, yeoman.

¹¹⁰ Both men lived just outside the Honour of Knaresborough. Mauleverer seems to have been the driving force behind a group of men from Allerton Mauleverer, including Constantine Hanson and his sons, and Thomas Fullbaron, together with William Wakefield and Christopher Willesthorpe from nearby Great Ouseburn.

¹¹¹ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 817–26, for Blore Heath and Ludford; C. Pullein, *The Pulleyns of Yorkshire* (Leeds, 1915), pp. 45–46; NA: PRO, DL 30/487/1; Ralph also had thirteen houses, including five at Timble, two at Clint, and four at Thruscross. DL 30/486/13, Pullein '*nuper tenuit manerium de Scotton*'; his son John inherited his lands.

¹¹² Lancaster, *The Early History of Ripley*, p. 48. Richard Roos was the brother of Sir Robert Roos of Ingmanthorpe, who died in 1451 and was succeeded by his son Robert, Esq. (Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 307, the Sir Robert Roos who served in Henry VI's household died in 1448–49); A. J. Pollard, 'The Northern Retainers of Richard Nevill, Earl of Salisbury', *NH*, xi (1976 for 1975), 57–58; Raine, *Test. Ebor.*, II, 244.

operations, it was no doubt the intelligence that he could gather on the Percies and on Lancastrian activities locally that was so valuable, living as he did at Ingmanthorpe, which lay conveniently close to Spofforth and Knaresborough.

Just two days after Blore Heath, on 25 September 1459, another incident of civil disorder occurred when an armed attack led by John Markenfield, Esq. was made on Godfrey Plumpton, the steward's brother. He was accompanied by John Todd, yeoman of Ripon and John Fulbargh of Markenfield, both of whom had been allowed to escape from the castle earlier in the month by the deputy-doorkeeper, Thomas Winteringham, who was related by marriage to Sir William Plumpton.¹¹³ According to the indictments in the court rolls Ralph Pullein, Thomas and Robert Holme of Scotton and others who had ridden with Salisbury were amongst the fourteen men involved in the assault. Had their armed appearance at Boroughbridge on 18 September represented nothing more than a show of support for Salisbury, for surely it would have been impossible for them to have returned from the Midlands so quickly? Perhaps they did go to Blore Heath but the scribe made an error in the dates; or perhaps Plumpton, the fervent Lancastrian, wanted to indict as many of these men as possible who had repeatedly challenged his authority, and so he paid little heed to the setting down of the dates.

By the end of October some of these men had re-considered their position and decided that, whatever their feelings towards Plumpton, they wished to make it clear where their allegiance lay. The tide was turning against the Yorkists, and it was probably keenness to ensure their own safety that caused Thomas and Robert Holme, who had ridden with Salisbury the previous month, to come to Sir William and swear their loyalty to the King. They were joined by others whose loyalty does not seem to have been in question earlier: William Bickerdike and three other men from Farnham in the Liberty. At the same time another group of men, including Thomas Been of Hampsthwaite, Robert and William Beckwith of Clint, declared that they wished to ride with Sir William Plumpton, steward and constable, to do the King's service because this was permitted by precept of the King. Just a few months previously Thomas Been had been involved in anti-Plumpton activity and the allegiance of certain members of the Beckwith family, essentially good Lancastrians, was sometimes in question.¹¹⁴ They were putting their antipathy towards Sir William behind them. As other men throughout the land were realizing that the Lancastrian cause still had momentum, they worked out their own insurance policies. At Knaresborough, during the tourn of April 1460, Richard Louthier decided to put himself at the King's mercy because he had ridden with Richard, Earl of Salisbury and Sir John Neville against the King's proclamation and had been involved in an armed attack on William Wood and Dionis Crosly in 1456. Louthier, like so many others at the time, had acted with self-preservation in mind, for Salisbury had been replaced as Chief

¹¹³ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/13; Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 271, quotes Wheeler, *Knaresburgh*, pp. 158–59 (actually p. 189); Wheeler says they attacked Godfrey on 26 Sept., but the court roll shows Tuesday 25 Sept. (*'insultum et affraiam fecerunt'*). It is difficult to see how Pollard interprets this as Knaresborough being 'occupied on behalf of the earl'.

¹¹⁴ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/13, Robert Monkton also swore loyalty to the King. This is probably the William Beckwith who would marry Plumpton's daughter.

Steward for the North Parts and as Steward of Pontefract just before his execution at Wakefield in December 1460. However, his earlier undoubted loyalty to the Yorkist cause would be recognized when Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick became Steward of Knaresborough in 1461.¹¹⁵

Sir William Plumpton had many distrains issued against the Birnands, William Water and William Smith, with whom Louthier had been involved in the 1450s, but they were noticeable by their absence in court and remained totally loyal to Salisbury. Thomas Slingsby was charged in June 1460 with John Slingsby and an armed gang for taking a total of sixty-three animals from four men, of whom at least one, William Bickerdike, was an avowed Lancastrian supporter. One of the raiders was Henry Manfield, who, although he had no liking for Sir William Plumpton, had earlier taken livery from Thomas Percy, so it is strange that they seized animals from Bickerdike; they admitted the charges but denied using force and were not fined; perhaps this was a semi-official raid by the Lancastrians, to oblige people who had not contributed adequately to the cause to do so.¹¹⁶ Another armed foraging raid was led by William Aldburgh, a gentleman, and seven others from Aldborough. In September 1460 they took six thraves of corn at Coneythorpe and on another raid barley and oats. The Aldburghs were known for their pro-Percy and pro-Lancastrian views.¹¹⁷

The turmoil of the civil war continued, no doubt involving more men called to fight from the Knaresborough area. The battle of Northampton on 10 July 1460 was won by the Yorkists, on account of the treachery of Lord Grey of Ruthin; amongst those who died was Thomas, Lord Egremont. An Act of Accord recognised Henry as King for life, but disinherited Prince Edward and gave the succession to York and his heirs. Salisbury and Warwick controlled the offices of central government, so when the commission of the peace was renewed in August 1460 Sir William Plumpton, commissioner since 1439, was ejected because of his hostility to the Yorkists.¹¹⁸ The battle of Wakefield on 30 December 1460 was disastrous for the Yorkists — York was killed, and Salisbury was taken prisoner and executed. His death was seen by his widow as an act of vengeance for that of the Earl of Northumberland at St Albans in 1455; she named many Northumberland supporters, including Sir William Plumpton and Sir Richard Aldburgh, as being involved in his death. Plumpton was also accused by Robert Percy of Scotton of wishing to have him beheaded at Wakefield; Percy survived to recount how Plumpton, implacable as ever against his enemies, had sent armed men to his house at Scotton, to take meat, horses, sheep, and goods ‘of great value’ on several occasions in 1459 and 1460, but he claimed that he dared not return home for fear of being killed.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/13; *ibid.*, C 139/162/23; Richard Louthier was born c. 1395. Somerville, *Duchy*, I, 421, 514.

¹¹⁶ Sir William Plumpton’s sister Joan was married to Sir William Slingsby. NA: PRO, DL 30/486/8, the Slingsbys quarrelled with neighbours and undoubtedly made enemies amongst their sub-tenants, as in 1455 Robert and Thomas Slingsby and others attacked the house of Richard Clerk and took goods. There is no evidence elsewhere to suggest that the Slingsbys might have changed sides.

¹¹⁷ NA: PRO, DL 30/487/1; J. O. Halliwell, *A Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial words* (1847), p. 867: a thrave was twelve or twenty-four trusses or sheaves; Stapleton, *PC*, p. lxxxiii. Sir William Aldburgh became Sir William Plumpton’s son-in-law in 1463.

¹¹⁸ Arnold, in Pollard, *Property and Politics*, pp. 117–25; Sir William Gascoigne and Sir John Tempest were also ejected. Stapleton, *PC*, p. lxxvi for 1 May 1460 commission; *CPR*, 1467–77, p. 638. Plumpton was not to be a commissioner for the West Riding again until February 1472.

¹¹⁹ NA: PRO, KB 27/804, m.67; *ibid.*, Court of Chancery, Early Proceedings, C1/31/485.

York's son, Edward, Earl of March, won the battle of Mortimer's Cross but soon afterwards the Lancastrians won the second battle of St Albans on 17 February 1461. The Yorkists now aimed to depose Henry and Margaret; Edward was proclaimed King on 4 March. On 13 March the deposed Henry wrote to Plumpton from York urging him 'to summon all liege men of the forest or demesne of Knaresburgh, to set out with them to meet the enemy'. Doubtless many local men fought on both sides at the bloody battle of Towton, where the 3rd Earl of Northumberland was killed; his title and lands were not restored to his son until 1470.¹²⁰ In spite of strong Lancastrian sympathy in Yorkshire, Edward did not meet any resistance after Towton and started to establish his authority, as well as trying to achieve reconciliation and peace.

Naturally, many of those faithful to the Yorkist cause were rewarded with annuities and offices by Edward IV. Warwick was made the Duchy's Chief Steward of both the North and South Parts from March 1461. Amongst his many other posts were the stewardships of Pontefract and Knaresborough. Far fewer men were attainted than might have been expected, and many offices and gifts were given in hope of securing future service.¹²¹ In turn, Warwick rewarded local supporters with office. Richard Louthur became bailiff or keeper of the franchises of the Liberty and also bailiff of the borough. Robert Birnand received annuities, and from 1470 until 1483 was bailiff of the borough. A long-term Neville supporter, John Mauleverer, was constable of Knaresborough for a short time.¹²² William Wakefield of Ouseburn was made supervisor of the king's works, responsible for the repairs and maintenance of the castle and its buildings, as well as some of the mills.¹²³ Robert Percy became forester of Haverah Park, William Water and Robert Waryn foresters of Fulwith and Harlow.¹²⁴ Although the loyal retainer Ralph Pullein had died in 1460, his son John was appointed parker of Bilton in 1461. Another member of the old guard, Constantine Hanson, became collector of rents and farms at Aldborough in 1471 and deputy bailiff of the Liberty from 1472 to 1476.¹²⁵ Several embarked on careers which would

¹²⁰ Stapleton, *PC*, p. 1, letter 13 March, p. lxxvii. *Blood Red Roses: The Archaeology of a mass grave from the Battle of Towton, AD 1461*, ed. V. Fiorati, A. Boylston, and C. Knüsel (Oxford, 2000), pp. 24, 170.

¹²¹ Somerville, *Duchy*, i, 231–32, 255. NA: PRO, DL 29/481/7762; C. Ross, *Edward IV* (1983), pp. 64–65, 70 and appendix for details of Edward's grants to Warwick.

¹²² NA: PRO, DL 37/30/112, warrant dated Dec. 1461, but court roll in DL 30/487/1 names Louthur as bailiff of borough in Aug. 1461, yet another instance of where the Duchy confirms a post officially well after a person has taken up the job; he was bailiff of the borough for five years (and the Liberty for eight), followed by Birnand until 1483 (DL 37/54/146 and DL 29/481/7762–7777); Birnand also had the farm of Knaresborough mill, 1470–72. DL 37/42/36, Louthur died in 1473.

¹²³ NA: PRO, DL 37/32/107; 37/47B/5, Wakefield was also granted the rental of the mills at Boroughbridge, for his good and faithful service and great 'hurtes and losses' that he had borne for Richard, Duke of York being noted.

¹²⁴ NA: PRO, DL 37/30/224; 30/487/10, a Robert Percy became Forester of Haverah Park in 1461 and is last shown as such in 1471, but Robert Percy, senior, died in 1469, so whether the Forester post was held by Robert, senior or junior, or by the two at different times is not clear. DL 37/30/101.

¹²⁵ NA: PRO, DL 37/29/8; DL 29/481/7761; Pullein had become janitor or castle door-keeper in November 1460. DL 37/30/101; 37/4A/34; DL 29/481/7769–70, DL 30/488/2. It is not clear if this was the Constantine involved in the troubles of the 1450s or his son of the same name. Constantine the elder may have died in 1453, when an unusual entry in the court rolls recorded Richard Louthur presenting a copy of a charter of Hanson's, in which he gave all his goods to Sir John Neville. Similar gifts of chattels were made to the Earl of Warwick in 1464 by Thomas Middleton of Middleham and Thomas Scarborough of Knaresborough, 'most likely a means for escaping liability for debt'. Hanson acted as deputy to various office holders over the years in the reign Edward IV. M. Hicks, *Warwick the Kingmaker* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 222–23.

continue to flourish under Richard III.¹²⁶ Knaresborough was in safe hands, and Warwick could devote himself to subduing other parts of the North.

Percy lands were forfeited and divided amongst Warwick, his brother John, Lord Montagu and George, Duke of Clarence, the King's own brother. The future 4th Earl of Northumberland was imprisoned in the Tower, and did not secure his title and lands which were not restored until 1470. As for William Plumpton, he was obliged to enter into a recognisance of £2000 for good behaviour and was granted a writ ensuring his safety. Unable to redeem his bond, he surrendered and was kept in the Tower. He was granted a general pardon in February 1462, and released from his bond the following September, but obliged to stay in London. He was granted further letters of pardon in August 1463, charged yet again with treason and finally acquitted in January 1464.¹²⁷ There was to be no immediate post for a Percy supporter in this new regime.

During the years 1438 to 1460 the Honour of Knaresborough witnessed great upheavals, starting with many deaths from disease and famine and ending with a period of civil disorder and strife in the 1450s. The first troubles started in 1439 and a re-examination of these events pitting Knaresborough tenants against Archbishop Kemp's tenants and mercenaries now reveals that it was Kemp who instigated the troubles at Ripon, Otley and Knaresborough. Protestations and a petition by Sir William Plumpton, as steward, to the King achieved nothing, so the Duchy men defended their privileges, supported and led in their cause against a common enemy by Plumpton, whom they were only too ready to follow at this period. Many gained valuable experience for the future of setting ambushes and learning guerrilla style tactics. So often, when incidents of lawlessness are examined for the 1430s and 1440s it is found that they did not degenerate past the stage of intimidation, but in the confrontation at Helperby in 1441 events spiralled out of control, and two of Kemp's men were killed and several badly injured. Kemp's grasping high-handedness was resented by men of all classes, including Plumpton's patron, Northumberland, who saw the local power base being disturbed, and who thus had his own motives for perhaps encouraging Plumpton to continue the fight against Kemp.

The precedence dispute between Northumberland and Salisbury *c.* 1442 was symptomatic of a hierarchical society where social standing and local power were fiercely defended. Such disputes occurred elsewhere, for example in East Anglia from 1422 to 1442, between Sir John Cornewall and Sir Reginald Grey, where both arrived with armed retinues at court: violence, law and authority were finely balanced. There was an escalation of private feuds in the 1450s, with disturbances between the Blounts and Longfords in 1453–54 at Elvaston in Derbyshire, and in 1451 and 1455 there was armed conflict between the Earl of Devon and Lord Bonville.¹²⁸ Although the Nevilles were in the ascendancy in the North, the rivalry between the families grew ever stronger, and the Percies with a force of several hundred 'attacked' the Nevilles at Heworth in 1453; no fatalities were recorded, but the implications of the resulting tensions

¹²⁶ NA: PRO, DL 42/20, fols 17, 20^v, 21^v, 44^v. Robert Percy was controller of the household, Robert and Ralph Birnand were esquires of the household, John Pullein was a sergeant of the seler, 'serviens selar'.

¹²⁷ Stapleton, *PC*, pp. lxxvii–lxx; *CPR*, 1461–67, p. 285.

¹²⁸ P. Maddern, *Violence and the Social Order. East Anglia 1422–42* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 229–35; Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster*, pp. 84–92, 142–58.

in the area, which witnessed violent partisan raids and pillaging, left the York civic authorities alarmed, though their attempts to restore public order through mediation failed. Whilst arbitration and mediation were much used in gentry and aristocratic disputes, there was little room for such methods at this time. Indeed, although incidents of posturing and scaremongering still occurred, disorder and violence became commonplace in the area from this period, fuelled by the feuding of the two factions. Although there was an already solid but small core of men in Knaresborough and district who had supported the Nevilles for years, the Percies and their representatives the Plumptons had been accepted by most local people for decades as the local leading families, but many clearly became antagonized by them and felt the need for change. The Percies and the Nevilles were more interested in their own power than that of the King, but their local feuds, like those in Devon and elsewhere, became inextricably linked with those of the nation, as the lack of good assertive kingship, the increase in the strength of the nobility, and to some extent the system of bastard feudalism involving the maintenance of retainers to defend private interests, caused society to be disrupted and the nation to lurch towards civil strife. Personal quarrels could not be forgotten; reconciliation was unlikely, especially where family members had died at the hands of other nobles.

As his stewardship at Knaresborough proceeded Sir William Plumpton himself caused men to shift their allegiance owing to his blatant self-promotion, land-grabbing, unfair wielding of authority, and the violence of his men. For those who were anti-Plumpton, though not necessarily anti-Lancastrian, he rendered the choice difficult. There is no doubt, however, that Sir William did cause traditional Lancastrian loyalties in the Knaresborough area to be undermined.

The alliance between Salisbury and the Protector York resulted in Salisbury becoming Chancellor. As well having national power, his strong local influence in Yorkshire, greater after the death of Northumberland at St Albans, was further augmented by his appointment as Chief Steward of the Duchy in the North Parts. That was an impetus for men to demonstrate their pro-Neville tendencies. There was an increasing polarization of the gentry in the Knaresborough area, who were neither Percy nor Neville tenants. Whilst some stayed loyal to the Percy and Lancastrian cause, recruiting to the Neville and, in most cases, to the Yorkist cause continued apace; such men, some doubtless driven on by the general desire generated by their more politically astute lords for a new regime and perhaps personal gain, organized resistance to Plumpton, the Percies, and the Lancastrians.¹²⁹ They were aided and abetted on the whole by yeomen and artisans mainly from Forest areas. As Griffiths found with the events of 1454 at Heworth, Spofforth, and elsewhere, yeomen were an important element amongst those committed to action. Eleven minor freeholders and most of the freeholders at Boroughbridge and Aldborough are not named as being involved in anti-Lancastrian or pro-Yorkist activities and probably stayed loyal.¹³⁰ As for labourers and peasants, many it seems, especially in the Liberty, whether out of natural inclination, lack of conviction one way or the other, or dependence on the

¹²⁹ NA: PRO, DL 30/486/8. It is not clear what influence, if any, Sir Henry FitzHugh had on his Staveley tenants; he was still reluctantly supporting the Lancastrians in 1460.

¹³⁰ Griffiths, *Speculum*, XLII, 598–99, 616; NA: PRO, DL 30/486/8. It is not impossible that these freeholders gave tacit support to the Yorkists, but it seems likely that the majority supported the Lancastrians.

Duchy and ultimately the King for their homes and livelihoods, stayed loyal and fought for the Lancastrian cause.¹³¹

With his decisive victory at Towton, Edward broke the traditional power base of the northern lords, especially the Percies and their allies, though the Percies remained a force to be reckoned with in Northumberland. Their day would come in Yorkshire and at Knaresborough, but not for another decade.¹³² As for Warwick, he received the stewardship of Knaresborough amongst many offices and in turn rewarded those local followers who had served the Neville cause so well.

The Plumpton correspondence reveals very little about the troubles of the 1450s, the first extant letters being from 1461. Most information comes from legal records, which by their very nature throw violence into high relief, giving the authorities' or lawyers' versions of events, often in formulaic language; they have their limitations and need to be used with caution. In the court rolls in particular there is a one-sided picture because Plumpton was so unjust and partisan; doubtless many incidents of scaremongering and actual violence by men under his command were never reported in court, and it is difficult to assess how little or how much he exaggerated incidents against the Lancastrians. Whilst a certain amount of 'official' violence was necessary in maintaining law and order in the Honour it is clear that Plumpton was often over zealous in carrying out his duties.¹³³ Nonetheless, the court rolls reveal an undoubted increase in violent crimes, much above the usual level of affrays, personal quarrels, and unofficial hunting. The King's Bench records too perforce give a partial picture of events, yet the entries concerning Knaresborough and district in 1450s confirm the high levels of violence and intimidation; families in the area had much to fear. Appendix 2 concentrates on exceptional incidents only, with the perpetrators drawn mainly, though not exclusively, from the gentry and yeomanry alike. Many people with grievances were unable to obtain justice locally and had not the means to try to obtain it at Westminster. Sir William Plumpton himself took the unusual step of suing Honour tenants in King's Bench from Michaelmas term 1458 onwards. Although he used the court previously to sue people from outside the Honour, he had not used it at all for at least the four preceding years, and it is indicative of the prevailing crisis in which he had lost control of court and law enforcement in the area in general.¹³⁴ Studies in recent years have tended to show that violence and lawlessness were less widespread in the fifteenth century than had been previously thought,¹³⁵ but the Honour of Knaresborough in the 1450s was a violent place, where disorder, danger, and lawlessness were even more persistent and endemic than in earlier decades.

¹³¹ Only those actively disloyal are named in the court proceedings. As seen, some who had been anti-Lancastrian felt the need to swear their loyalty to the King in court in October 1459; others, whose loyalty had not been in question, came to affirm openly their support of the King's cause.

¹³² NA: PRO, DL 37/40/21. The fourth Earl of Northumberland became steward, constable, and master forester at Knaresborough in 1471.

¹³³ C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society 1401–1499* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 705–09 and P. Tucker, 'Historians' Expectations of the Medieval Legal Records', in *Expectations of the Law in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Musson (2001), pp. 191–202; Maddern, *Violence and the Social Order*, pp. 226–35, for official and 'right' violence.

¹³⁴ NA: PRO, KB 27/ 774-805 have been checked for Knaresborough, which includes Mich.1454-Trin.1458; KB 9/270-301, indictment files, searched Easter 1453-Hilary 1463; PROCAT, NA: PRO catalogue shows that although Plumpton himself was sued in Chancery, he does not appear to have initiated suits in this court.

¹³⁵ M. Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism* (1995), pp. 116–19.

APPENDIX 1
Continued

Place	April/May 1377 tax payers: male & female 14 & over. TOTAL	September 1379 taxpayers: all men & single women 16 & over. TOTAL	Duchy houses 1385-86	Duchy tofts & cottages 1385-86	Duchy empty properties 1385-86	Duchy houses 1438	Duchy tofts & cottages 1438	Duchy empty properties 1438	New rents 1386-1438 new assarts vills. Items 1386-1438 mentioned in accounts.	Rents 1386-1438 new assarts vills. Items 1386-1438 mentioned in accounts.	Notes on Duchy	
Farnham	68	68	none			none						
Copgrove	46	40	none			none						
Sub-total	240	228										
Aldborough	78	103	*** 42½	1t and 12	0	*** 42½	1t and 12	4 shops	0	14	Bov/Ald	0
Boroughbridge	111	103										
Roccliffe	80	48	22	4t and 11	0	22	4t and 11	0				water & fulling mills; fishery fishery (to be rebuilt 1438); few rents up, few down 1438
Minskip	33	48	52¾	4t and 3	0	52¾	4t and 2					
Outlying not within Honour**			12	2	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-total	302	302	129¼	9t & 28	0	127¼	9t & 26	4 shops	14	0	0	0
Forest Killinghall	97	59	49½	2	2	48	2	2	4	4	4	4 water mill; 1 oven kiln - malt?
Beckwith & Rossett			49	0	0	49½	0	0	4	4	4	9 water mill
Bilton			38	10	0	38	10	0	1	1	1	4 water mill
Clint and hamlets	150	212	52½	1	0	52½	1	0	1	1	1	10 Angrum mill a ruin
Fellescliffe			35	0	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	1
Birsteth			30	0	4	30	0	4	0	0	0	2
Hampsthwaite			15	2	0	15	2	0	2	0	2	6 water mill
Thruscross	73	74	8	0	5	8	0	5	3	3	3	8 mill (water)
Hill			9	0	6½	9	0	6½	0	0	0	0
Bramlay			7	0	3	7	0	3	0	0	0	1
Menwith			10	0	1	10	0	1	1	1	1	4

APPENDIX I
Continued

Place	April/May 1377 tax payers: male & female 14 & over. TOTAL	September 1379 taxpayers: all men & single women 16 & over. TOTAL	Duchy houses 1385-86	Duchy tofts & cottages 1385-86	Duchy empty properties 1385-86	Duchy houses 1438	Duchy tofts & cottages 1438	Duchy empty properties 1438	New rents 1386-1438 new assarts vills. Items 1386- mentioned in 1438 accounts.	Notes on Duchy assarts vills. Items mentioned in 1438 accounts.
Holme			10	0	0	10	0	0	2	4
Padside			5	0	6	5	0	6	0	0
Thornthwaite			11	0	4	11	0	4	0	3
Darley			15	0	0	15	0	0	0	2
Timble with hamlets	138	72 no wives shown plus 10*	17½	0	5½	17½	0	5½	6	11
Clifton			12	0	2	12	0	2	7	4
Fewston			38	1	7	38	1	7	4	0
(Sub)total forest from all known data	458	427 (plus Timble wives)	411½	16	46	410½	16	46	35	73
OVERALL TOTAL	1655	1615	707¾	15t & 101	1h & 56c	703¾	15t & 99	1h, 57c, 4 shops	62	77

* Timble total 1379, *YAL*, vii, 16; vi, 341; part Timble 10 people

** each with land: Dunsforth 1 house; Brampton 3h; Grafton 3h, 2c; Milby 3h (5h in 1385); Humburton land only.

*** Some Boroughbridge but mostly Aldborough. Boroughbridge town, mills, fishery, tolls etc farmed out, so may well be more houses there.

Sources: NA; PRO, Duchy of Lancaster (DL), 29

APPENDIX 2
Disturbances in and around the Honour of Knaresborough from 1440

Date or start	Place	Parties involved	Detail	Reference
March 1440	Carthorpe, near Ripon	S Parker, J Pullein & Wm Ingilsant, yeo, & 11 others, mostly labs & 1 vagabond	attacked et almost killed Rob Gilling, tailor, of Ripon	KB 9/232/1/2
1443	Knaresborough forest	Rob Cuke & Rob Rande yeo, Stainley	took livery from Robert Laton	DL 30/485/12
1443		Wm Wade, yeoman, of Knaresborough	plotted to kill Robert Cuke	DL 30/485/12
1443		Rd Bank & G Willesthorpe, gents et al	attacked Wm Wakefield of Gt Ouseburn	DL 30/485/12
Dec 1443		Wm Fairburn, yeoman of Ripley et al	assaulted Rd Louthet & Wm Whitehill	DL 30/485/12
March 1444	Grafton	Five men from Arkendale	armed attack & murder Richard Taillour	DL 30/485/12
1444		John & Rd Nelson, Stephen Parker, Th Pullein, John Pullein & 3 others, yeomen	received livery from Sir Wm Gascoigne & Thomas Beckwith	DL 30/485/12
1444	Fewston, Thruscross	Sir Wm Gascoigne, Rd Redman & Wm Ryther, gents, Rd Aske, esq et al	three assaults by armed men	DL 30/485/12
1444	Tadcaster	Sir Wm Gascoigne, Henry Gascoigne, Rd Redman, Rd Aske & Wm Ryther, esq, et al	armed attack & murder of Thos Dawson	KB 9/246/52
1444	Harwood Castle etc	Sir Wm Gascoigne, Ralph Percy, esq & others	general charges of disturbances, attacking, wounding and murdering	C 255/3/9
May/June 1444	unnamed northern places	Sir Thomas Percy & others	disturbances, riots, attacking people	C 255/3/9
May/June 1444	Knaresborough	Rob Saxton, saddler, & Rob Philipot, bowyer, of York	disturbed peace	C 255/3/9
1448 or 1449	Castle Knaresborough Forest	Sir William Plumpton	broke into treasury and took cable	DL 30/485/16
August 1450	Pontefract Honour	John Fosse, yeo, Knaresborough, et al, aided by J Fetherstone, yeo, Hopperton	expelled 300 armed soldiers of Archbishop Kemp	British Library, Add, MSS 32113, fol. 4d
			stole 6 oxen, 2 cows, 3 horses, 48 sheep; several other thefts of animals elsewhere	KB 9/274/33 & 34

APPENDIX 2
Continued

Date or start	Place	Parties involved	Detail	Reference
31 Mar 1451	Oakdale Walk	Ralph Beckwith & Rd Haxby, yeomen, John Parker, lab, & 2 other labs	armed attack on Wm son Rob Tilleson	DL 30/486/3
June 1451	Knaresborough forest	William Pullein, yeoman of Leathley	stole 4 horses from Sir Wm Plumpton	DL 30/486/13
1452	Knaresborough forest Knaresborough forest	Th Pullein, J Wood, 20 or so others Wm Thorp, Rd Deconson, Wm Shephird Jun, J Shephird, 14 or so others	'riotwise' causing affrays 'riotwise' causing affrays	DL 30/486/5 DL 30/486/5
14 Sept 1452	Farnhill	Sir Wm Plumpton, Wm Rede & Thomas Mallom, husbandmen	armed attack, took 6 beasts, 4 cows from Richard Mallom, junior	KB 9/149/1/75
1452		J Markenfield, esq & others unknown	affray against Gilbert Lee, gent, et al	DL 30/486/5
April 1453	Hampsthwaite parish	12 Spofforth men, inc. 2 yeo, 3 labs, parker, walker, tailor, smith	stole 8 cows, 2 horses from John Mallom	DL 30/486/6
1453	Brokkerholme	Rob & Brian Atkinson et al of Clint	attacked and wounded Robert Beckwith	DL 30/486/6
July 1453		J Mauleverer, J Cundall, T Turner, Constantine Hanson, yeomen, et al	well armed attack on John Smyth of Beckwithshaw	DL 30/486/7
August 1453	Kirkby Overblow	Smith & Mallom families, smiths, yeomen & labs	took animals being tended for Earl of Salisbury	KB 9/149/2/7, 11/12, 11/21
May 1454	Spofforth, Wetherby etc	Thomas Percy, Sir Hen Holand et al	creating trouble several places inc forest area	KB 9/149/4/27, 5/3, 9/8
Sept. 1454	Knaresborough	John Harbron	stole barley and oats from Sir Wm Plumpton	DL 30/486/8
Oct 1454	Allerton Mauleverer	John Fetherstone, yeoman	took 2 horses, 2 swords from J Mauleverer; other robberies with John Fosse, footnote 92.	Just 3/213/7
1454		Th Birtby, yeoman, & other Ripon men	took 14 beasts from Robt Tipping	DL 30/486/9
1454 & 1455	Knaresborough	Wm & Brian Water, yeomen, Thomas Walworth, gent, et al of Ripon	attacked Robert Wynpenny in his home	DL 30/486/7 & 8

APPENDIX 2
Continued

Date or start	Place	Parties involved	Detail	Reference
1455		John & Rd sons of Henry Holme, Rd Mallom, Wm son Steph Parker	rode with Earl of Salisbury & Sir John Neville in warlike gear several times	DL 30/486/8
1455 or 1456		Th Pullein, J & Rob Holmes, St & Wm Parker, Rd Mallom, Rd son J Beckwith	rode with Earl of Salisbury, Sir John & Sir Thomas Neville several times	DL 30/486/9
January 1456		J Birmand, esq, Rd Louthier, Wm Smith, Wm Watir, Rob Waring, all yeomen	rode with Earl of Salisbury & John Neville several times	DL 30/486/9
1456	Knaresborough	J Birmand, esq, Wm Birmand & Th Slingsby, gents, J Slingsby, esq, Wm Smith, R Louthier & Wm Watir, all yeo	against proclamation regularly carried bills, clubs, carleaxes	DL 30/486/9
21 Jan 1456		J Birmand, esq, Geo Birmand, gent, Wm Smith, R Waring, R Louthier, all yeo	Badly injured Wm Wood & Dionis Crosloy	DL 30/486/9
Feb. 1456	Fewston	8 men, mostly yeo, inc J Todd & J Fulbargh of Markenfield, with support of J Markenfield, J Mauleverer, jun, Th Fullbaron, all esq, Const. Hanson yeo Wm Whitecroft	raid - barley & horse trusses from W Taylor	DL 30/486/9
1456		Robert Waring, yeoman & his servant Robert Waring	took livery from Thomas Neville stole 5 cartloads oak bows sold 2 wagon loads oak bows to John Coghill	DL 30/486/9 DL 30/486/9 DL 30/486/9
July 1456	Knaresborough forest	Robert Waring	sold bows to Scales; sold maples, hid 400 oak saplings at Bilton	DL 30/486/9
July 1456	Knaresborough forest	Robert Waring & Wm Water, yeomen	Banks; allowed much hunting - J Markenfield, J Mauleverer, jun, & Th Fullbaron, esq, Wm Calverley, et al, gents	DL 30/486/9
23 Feb 1457	Knaresborough	John Birmand, esq	attack with lance on J Croft & Thomas Williamson, liberty sub-bailiff	DL 30/486/9

APPENDIX 2
Continued

Date or start	Place	Parties involved	Detail	Reference
1457 May 1457	Pannal	J Markenfield, J Mauleverer John Slater, yeoman	riots, extortion, oppression stole 3 animals from Sir Wm Plumpton	C 255/3/10 DL 30/486/11
July 1457	York	J Markenfield & J Mauleverer	charges of riot, extortion, oppression etc killed Henry Pierpoint	C 255/3/10 KB 9/289/19 & 20; KB 9/290/10
21 July 1457	Papplewick, Sherwood Forest, Motts.	J Grene, R Grene, S & G Croft, R Jackson et al; Wm Plumpton, jun. present	killed John Grene, bro-in-law Sir Wm Plumpton, then sued by John's nephew Richard Grene	KB 9/288/19-21 KB 27/789 m.124d KB 27/790 mm. 62d,182 798 mm.9,110; 805 m.62d DL 30/486/12; 486/13 DL 30/486/12
1457	Pannal, nr Knaresborough <i>or</i> Kirkby Overblow	Henry Pierpoint, gent & Henry Pierpoint esq, Henry Geenwood, esq & 25 others		
1458		John & Henry Manfield, smiths	take livery from Thomas Lord Egremont	
1458		John & Henry Manfield	attacked Richard Sharp & stole horse	DL 30/486/12
6 July 1458	Clint	John & Henry Manfield	attack on Robert Ripplay with 'clubstaffe' etc	DL 30/486/12
6 July 1458	Clint	John & Henry Manfield	struck William Ripplay's servant & animals	DL 30/486/12
6 July 1458		John & Henry Manfield	1459 charged with Robert Ripplay's death; also fought R Henryson, broke into Alice Day's house took timber from Rd Tymball; destroyed a house in 1455 or 1456 (34 Hen VI) & hedges	DL 30/486/13
1458	Clint	John Manfield, smith	sues Th Fullbaron for stealing goods 10 marks	DL 30/486/12
Mich 1458	Knaresborough	Sir William Plumpton	sues men from Flaxby & Clareton, Ripon & Ilkley, York; 3 incidents; wood & grass stolen	CP 40/791 m.94
Mich 1458	Knaresborough, Nesfield, Plumpton	Sir William Plumpton		CP 40/791 m.174d

APPENDIX 2
Continued

Date or start	Place	Parties involved	Detail	Reference
Mich 1458	Hampsthwaite	Thomas Beckwith, esq	sues Stephen Parker, Hampsthwaite; trees, grass	CP 40/791 m 94d, 463
Mich 1458		Sir William Plumpton	sues John Allerton, Knaresborough, yeom	KB 27/790 m.46d, 791 m.46d
Mich 1458		Sir William Plumpton	3 other suits, not Knaresborough area	KB 27/790 m.46d
Mich 1458		Sir William Plumpton	sues John & Henry Manfield	KB 27/790, m. 46; 791 m. 46
				KB 27/792, m.11d; 793 m. 2d
Mich 1458		William Plumpton, esq	sues John Birnard	KB 27/790 m.46; 791 m. 46
4 Oct. 1458	Knaresborough	Rd Beckwith, yeo et al Kirkby Malzeard, Masham, Tanfield inc 4 yeo & 2 lab	came armed against proclamation	KB 27/792 m.44; 793 m. 2d
18 May 1459	Pannal parish	Thos Beckwith, esq, John Paslow gent, 3 yeo inc Th Been, 2 servants	attack Simon Croft, Roger Jackson et al to rescue Rd Haxby & take own prisoners	DL 30/486/12
Tr 1459 & 1460		Simon Croft sues for attack by	J Markenfield, Todde, Falbergh, Rd Haxby	DL 30/486/13
Tr 1459 & 1460		Simon Croft sues for attack by	T Beckwith esq, T Lofthous, yeo, J Paslow gent, T Been, yeo, 3 Haxbys (yeo, tailor, lab) etc	KB 27/793 m.62, 796 m. 57; KB 27/797mm. 32 & 32d
Tr 1459 & 1460		Roger Jackson sues for attack by	J Atkinson, T Lofthous, T Beckwith, J Paslow, T Been etc	KB 27/793 m.62, 796 m. 57; KB 27/797mm. 32 & 32d
Trinity 1459	Clint	Rd Tymball, trees, grass stolen	by J Manfield, H Manfield, Wm Parker etc	KB 27/793 m. 62 & 797 m 32

APPENDIX 2
Continued

Date or start	Place	Parties involved	Detail	Reference
Hilary 1460		Sir Henry Bromflete	sues Sir Wm Plumpton for contempt & trespass against statute of maintaining plaints/quarrels	KB 27/795 m. 77, KB 27/797 m. 12d
Hilary 1460	Clint	J Manfield & H Manfield, smiths	stole grass £5 from Sir Wm Plumpton	KB 27/795 m. 77d
Hilary 1460		Sir William Plumpton	sues Wm Kydde taking rabbits, pheasants, partridges from his warren in Grassington	KB 27/795 m. 77d
1459 & 1460	Scotton	Robert Percy	accuses Sir Wm Plumpton of sending armed men to take meat, animals, goods	C1/31/485
7 Sept 1458	Knaresborough Castle	J Winteringham (deputy door-keeper) & J Lounde, lab	allowed J Falbargh & J Todd escape	DL 30/486/13
3 Sept 1459	Coneythorpe	J Bickerdike	took corn from Wm Colthorp, Chr Lion	DL 30/486/13
18 Sept 1459	Boroughbridge	Ralph Pullein & J Birnand, esq, Geo & Wm Birnand, gents, Rd Louthar & Rd Pullein, yeomen, Rob Percy, esq et al	vi et armis insurrexerunt with Earl of Salisbury (Blorheath 23 Sept)	DL 30/486/13
25 Sept 1459	Knaresborough	J Markenfield esq, J Todd, J Fulbargh, Ralph Pullein etc	assaulted Godfrey Plumpton, Sir William's brother	DL 30/486/13
8 June 1460	Susacre	John & Thos Slingsby, gents & 5 others from Scriven inc Rd Hoggesson, H Manfield & 3 others	took 63 animals from Rob. Isaacson, Wm Bickerdike & 2 others (JS & RH admit took animals but deny armed)	DL 30/487/1
Sept 1460	Coneythorpe	Wm Aldburgh, gent. & 7 men	on 2 foraging raids - corn, oats, barley from Christian Lion	DL 30/487/1
Trinity 1460		Rob. Bolton, minister St. Roberts	sues Th. Fullbaron of Allerton [Mauleverer]	KB 27/797 m. 12

Sources: NA: PRO, Duchy of Lancaster (DL), 30; King's Bench (KB), 9, 27; Justices of Gaol Delivery (Just), 3; Common Pleas (CP), 40; Chancery (C) 1, 255.