

COPYHOLDS OF THE OLD HOLD AND THE NEW HOLD OF THE MANOR OF ACCRINGTON

‘The distinction between copyholds of the old hold and those of the new hold is a point of some difficulty. It is natural to suppose that copyholds which are ancient customary land, that is, those which have been so ‘time out of mind of man’, would be classed as old holds, and that all those which have been created within the memory of man (which, according to the legal definition, means since the first year of Richard I) would be new holds. Such a classification, however, does not obtain in the manor of Accrington; for while none of those copyholds which are now termed new holds are of immemorial antiquity, many copyholds of recent origin are included in the old hold. For example, the approvments of 1557 and the later enclosures of 1619-23 from the commons of Haslingden have been regarded as old hold tenures. Indeed, approvments of so late a date as c 1779 have been held to be old hold, for in a surrender of that year certain plots of land in Deardengate, in the centre of the modern town of Haslingden, were described as ‘part of the waste ground lately granted’ by copy by the lord and lady and copyholders of the manor of Accrington Old Hold. The distinction which has been adopted seems to have been made by the stewards for administrative convenience and is a matter of situation rather than date of origin. It is possibly a recognition of the fact that the manor of Accrington consisted of two parts: (a) the old townships of Accrington, Haslingden and Huncoat, and part of the township of Oswaldtwistle, which comprised the lands and vils held in severality and certain areas over which the tenants exercised rights of common, and (b) the rest of the manor, the Forest lands, on which the vaccaries had been established. The former is regarded as the Manor of Accrington Old Hold and all copyholds in it, whether of ancient enclosure or not, are considered old holds; whilst the vaccarial and waste lands of the Forest are designated the Manor of Accrington New Hold and all copyholds created therein are said to be new holds.’

Tupling p.234