

## EARLY COALMINING AT WEST HALLAM

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The two documents printed below are to be found among the deeds and estate papers of the Copley family of Sprotborough (South Yorkshire), which are now in the Archives Division of Sheffield City Libraries. The estate archive includes a number of charters of the Cromwell family, lords of Tattershall, county Lincolnshire, Lambley and Cromwell, county Nottinghamshire, and West Hallam, county Derbyshire. The pits at West Hallam were leased by Ralph Cromwell, father and son, in 1379 and 1398, to a 'mining consortium', which comprised Robert de Midolwod, Thomas Milner of Horsley, Thomas de Stonesby of Horsley Woodhouse, and Henry Quarndon of Quarndon. The documents provide some idea of the technology and workforce involved in medieval mining. The return from the mine, however, must have been reasonable, as the annual rent for a lease was 20 marks (£13 6s. 8d.), and the penal sum in the bond of 1398 was £100. The workforce consisted of four pickmen and a waterpickman, who was presumably responsible for the drainage sough. By limiting the size of the workforce in the lease, Cromwell was probably also controlling the extraction of coal to suit his own interest. The pit was situated in *Halumwod*, and the lease of 1398 permitted its extension to *Symundfeld*.

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Hec indentura testatur quod ego Radulphus de Cromwell miles concessi tradidi et ad firman dimisi Roberto de Midelwode et Thome Milner de Horsley mineram meam carbonum marinorum infra dominicum meum de Westhalum comitatu Derb' in quodam loco vocatur Halumwod et communi pastura eiusdem ville quam quidem mineram loco predicto Thomas Pargar de Shipley et Johannes Poutroll antea tenuerunt de Domino Radulpho de Cromwell patre meo milite. Ita quod ipsi possunt facere proficuum suum infra mineram predictam habendo duos puteos continue locis eisdem magis necessariis in loco predicto ubi prefati Thomas Pargar et Johannes ultimo desinuerunt sic transeundo cum puteis faciendis versus occidentali usque ad quemdam locum vocatum symundfeld excepto spacio quadraginta pedum quod erit dimissum fine termini inter operationem minere predictae et campum predictum non operatum et continue operando in duobus puteis predictis cum quatuor pikkares et uno waterpikkar sub terra et supra terram cum servantibus predictis operariis necessariis ad valenciam firmariorum cum liberi introitu et exitu as puteos predictos pro carbonibus asportandis et abducendis atque cariandis sine impedimento mei heredum vel assignatorum meorum sicut prefati Thomas Pargar et Johannes antea habuerunt semper salvando et custodiendo the soughes the level and le culme tam pro proficuo meo heredum sive assignorum meorum quam pro proficuo eorundem Roberti et Thome Milner heredum sive assignatorum eorum. Et ego predictus Radulphus volo et concedo quod nulla minera carbonum neque culme sic facta infra dominium predictum durante termino predicto. Habendum et tenendum mineram predictam continue cum duobus puteis in forma superius dicta predictis Roberto et Thome Milner heredibus suis et assignatis eorum de me heredibus sive assignatis meis a festo Natalis domini Anno regni regis Ricardi secundi xxii<sup>o</sup> quovisque parvenire poterunt cum minera predicta ad campum de symundfeld predictum spacio xl pedum ut supra dum taxat excepto. Reddendo inde annuatim michi heredibus seu assignatis meis apud Westhalum ad festa Pentecosti et sancti martini in yeme viginti marcas sterling' per equales portiones excepto primo reddito qui erit solum ad festum Natalis sancti Johannis Baptiste nunc proxime sequentem. Et ego vero dictus Radulphus heres sive assignati mei maeremium sufficientem et competentem infra dominium meum de Westhalum dictis Roberto et Thome Milner heredibus sive assignatis eorum durante termino predicto pro operatione et salvacione minere puteorum sic faciendis tam sub terra quam supra terram sumptibus nostris propriis vel de proprio nostro maeremio per liberacionem nostram ibidem seu tenentium nostrorum quociens et in fore contigit opportunum liberabimus seu faciemus liberari. In cuius rei testimonium presentis indenture partes predictae alternatim sigilla sua apposuerunt. Dat' apud Lamley die sabbati in festo sancti Thome Apostolici ante Natalem domini Anno Regni Regis Ricardi secundipost conquestum Anglie xxii<sup>o</sup>.

### Abstract

Lease by Ralph de Cromwell, knight, to Robert de Midelwode and Thomas Miln[er] of Horsley of his coal mine in his lordship of West Hallam, county Derbyshire, in a certain place called Halumwod and the common pasture of the vill, the mine having previously been leased to Thomas Parker of Shipley and John Poutrell by Sir Ralph de

Cromwell, father of the present lessor. The lessees to have two pits which Thomas Parker and John Poutrell made, and to work in these two pits with four pickmen and a waterpickman underground, and to have above ground workmen (or servants) necessary for the work at the wish of the lessees, with free ingress and egress to (and from) the pits to carry away coal. The lessees to look after the sough, the level and the culme for the profit of Sir Ralph, his heirs, etc., as well as for the profit of the lessees (i.e. to maintain them). Sir Ralph covenants that no other mine or culme will be made in his lordship during the term of this lease. The term of the lease to run from Christmas 22 Richard II (1398), paying an annual rent of 20 marks in equal parts at West Hallam at Pentecost (Whit-Sunday) and the Feast of St. Martin in Winter (Martinmas, 11 November), except that the first rent is to be paid at the Feast of the Birth of St. John the Baptist (24 June) ensuing. Sir Ralph to provide timber from his lordship for the mines at his own cost. Given at Lambley, Saturday in the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle before Christmas, 22 Richard II (21 December 1398).

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Hec indentura testatur quod licet (quod) Robertus de Midolwod Thomas Milner de Horsley Thomas de Stonesby de Horsley Wodhous et Henricus Quarredon' de Quarredon' teneantur per quoddam scriptum eorum obligatorem obligantur et quilibet eorum per se teneatur et obligatur Domino Radulpho de Cromwell militi in centum libris bone et usuali monete. Solvendo eidem Domino heredibus suis sive executoribus suis apud Westhalum in festo Pasche proxime sequenti die confeccionis presentis sine ulteriori dilacione prout in quodam scripto obligatori inde confecto plenius continetur. Predictus Dominus Radulphus vult et concedit pro se heredibus et executoribus suis quod si predicti Robertus de Midelwod Thomas Milner teneant sibi conventionem inter ipsos factam de tenura duorum puteorum carbonum marinarum infra mineram suam apud Westhalum prout in quibusdam indenturis inter ipsos confectis plenius continetur quod ex tunc dictum scriptum obligatorem centum librarum pro nullo habeatur sive autem in suo robore stet et virtute. In cuius rei testimonium hiis presentibus indenturis partes predictae alternatim sigilla sua apposuerunt. Dat 'apud Lamley die iovis in festo sancte Batild' virginis Anno regni regis Ricardi secundi post conquestum Anglie secundo.

*Abstract*

Bond. Robert de Midelwod, Thomas Miln[er] of Horsley, Thomas de Stonesby of Horsley Woodhouse, and Henry Quarredon of Quarndon are bound to Sir Ralph de Cromwell, knight, in £100, to be paid to Sir Ralph, his heirs etc. at West Hallam at Easter ensuing, to keep a covenant concerning a lease of two coal pits in his (Sir Ralph's) mine at West Hallam made in a deed between the same parties. Given at Lambley on Thursday in the Feast of St. Batilda Virgin, 2 Richard II (1379).