OPEN FIELDS AND VILLAGE PLANNING DURING THE LATE SAXON PERIOD: A CARLETON AND A CARLTON IN WEST YORKSHIRE

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In 1964, H.P.R. Finberg published a study of place-names formed by a compound of OE *ceorl* (gen.pl. *ceorla*) and *tūn*, giving rise to the modern place-names in the form Charl(e)ton, Carl(e)ton and similar. As can be seen on his accompanying map, redrawn as Fig. 1, the distribution of such names is widespread across England.

Though F.M. Stenton had defined *ceorl* as a free peasant, Finberg observed that settlements bearing this name were frequently located close to important estate centres – royal vills, or manors that had once been royal vills – and were often recorded as appendages of those centres. He put forward the hypothesis, later cautiously supported by Margaret Gelling (1997, 185), that at a time when *tūns* that formed part of royal estates were being granted away by the king to his younger sons, to noblemen and supporters, and to the Church, Charltons, 'husbandmen's villages', were retained to provide services for the estate centre (Finberg 1964, 145–149, 155–159).

A rather different emphasis has been placed on these names by Ros Faith. She sees the term *ceorl* as encompassing warland peasants who considered that they owned their own land, as well as being 'obliged to turn up at estate centres to do the occasional ploughing and harvest boons' (Faith 1997, 127–128). Though accepting that Charltons might in some cases represent settlements of inland estate workers, 'possibly deliberately planted and planned', she argues that others seem to have had much more tenuous connections with estate centres, and may simply have been 'lordless villages' (Faith 1997, 150–151).

David Parsons (2004, 22) has combined various aspects of both perspectives and suggests that communities of relatively free, co-operating farmers, were

> a familiar part of large, early estates. When the estate was later broken up, a small proportion of these communities may have survived to form the basis of separate manors, either by deliberate planning from the estate centre, as Finberg suggests, or by more haphazard processes, as Faith implies.

This article explores various attributes of two West Yorkshire settlements with *ceorla-tūn* place-names, attributes which may offer insights into the circumstances in which at least some villages bearing such names were created. It is important to stress at the outset, however, that these two case studies came to the writer's attention

fortuitously; they are not drawn from any wider or systematic research project.

The first is a Carleton which lies about 2km south of Pontefract (**CT** on Fig. 1; SE 466 203). Pontefract Castle, *caput* of the extensive honour of Pontefract, and its adjoining borough had developed by the end of the eleventh century within the territory of a vill called Tanshelf. Domesday Book does not use the name Pontefract, but it records Tanshelf (as *Tateshale* and variants) as a manorial centre with numerous appendant vills, formerly the king's but by 1086 in the hands of Ilbert de Lacy. The record evidently covers the borough later called Pontefract as it includes 60 petty burgesses (*DB Yorks*, 9W64; Smith 1961a, 75–76, 83–84).

Tanshelf's status as a pre-Conquest *villa regia* is implicitly confirmed by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which records that in 947 King Eadred came to the *villa* called *Taddenesscylfe*, where the Northumbrian *witan* pledged their loyalty to him (Faull and Moorhouse 1981, 190). This event perhaps took place on or near what
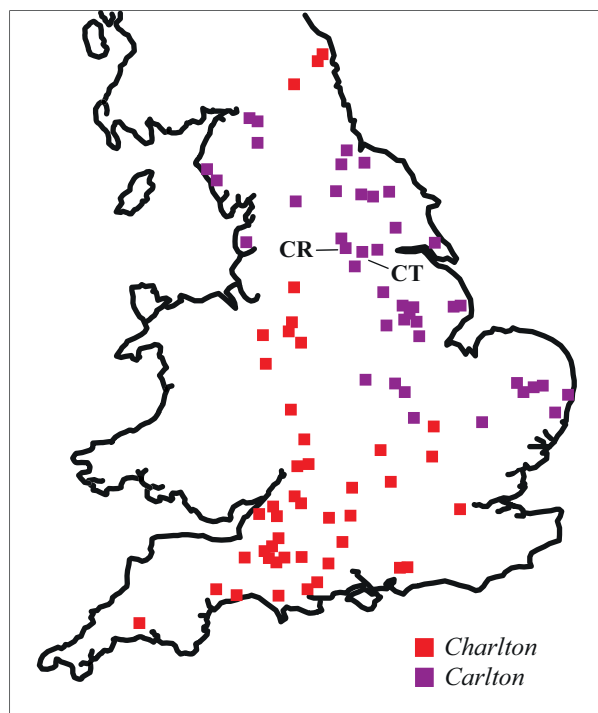

Figure 1   The distribution of Charlton and Carlton names in England (redrawn from Finberg 1964, 145); CT = Carleton near Tanshelf; CR = Carlton near Rothwell. Figure prepared by Jon Prudhoe.

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became the site of the Norman castle. Archaeological excavations in the 1980s uncovered parts of an extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery adjacent to and beneath the castle, with radiocarbon dates from human remains extending from the seventh to the tenth centuries. Other finds from under the Norman earthworks include a timber building and quantities of late Anglo-Saxon pottery and animal bone (Roberts and Whittick 2013, 71).

Carleton in Tanshelf is not named in Domesday Book; the earliest surviving record of the name dates to the mid-twelfth century (Smith 1961a, 71). This does not, however, mean that the settlement was a post-Conquest creation; rather, that in 1086 it was included within the 16 carucates, exempt from the geld, which were attributed to Tanshelf. Dependent vills of this kind were often subsumed within the Domesday record of their manorial centres: Finberg noted ten other *ceorla-tūn* place-names with earliest surviving records in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Finberg 1964, 156–157).

The second settlement, named Carlton, lies about 1km south-west of the site of the medieval manor house at Rothwell, itself about 15km north-west of Tanshelf (**CR** on Fig. 1; SE 337 273). Rothwell was also part of the honour of Pontefract, a demesne manor with a hunting park next to the manorial site (Wrathmell 2003, 1–5). It seems to have been regularly visited by the Lacy and subsequent Plantagenet lords of Pontefract on the evidence of charter dating clauses (Whitaker 1876, 218), and in the fourteenth century became the main administrative centre of the northern part of the honour

(Faull and Moorhouse 1981, 488). Carlton adjoined it, and probably formed part of its demesne (Faull and Moorhouse 1981, 439).

Domesday Book combines Rothwell and Carlton with several neighbouring vills in a group entry; but Rothwell was the chief manor of the group, as indicated by the use of upper-case letters for its name (see Roffe 2007, 42). The entry records that Rothwell, and Lofthouse, Carlton, Thorpe and Middleton contained 24 carucates and 1 bovate of geldable land. Previously there had been four manors in these five vills, held by four men who had halls there; but by 1086, all were in the hands of Ilbert de Lacy (*DB Yorks*, 9W119). It is possible that the four men with four halls had held from Ilbert's predecessor, and that the only reason for Carlton and the other appendages appearing in the text was to clarify that dues and services formerly rendered at each of the four halls were now rendered at Ilbert's hall in Rothwell (see Roffe 2007, 150, n.32).

In addition to their tenurial similarities, Carleton and Carlton also seem to have been broadly comparable in the forms of their settlements, the layouts of their field systems and the size of their township territories. These attributes were all mapped accurately for the first time in the mid-nineteenth century on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Six Inch maps (surveyed 1848–1851), parts of which are reproduced as Figs 2 and 3. Carleton near Tanshelf and Carlton near Rothwell had also been mapped previously, in 1800 and 1843 respectively, when the remaining parts of their open fields had been

Figure 2   The township boundary (red) between Carleton and Tanshelf-Pontefract, based on an extract of Sheets 249 and 250 of the First Edition Ordnance Survey Six Inch map (surveyed 1848-49). Figure prepared by Jon Prudhoe.
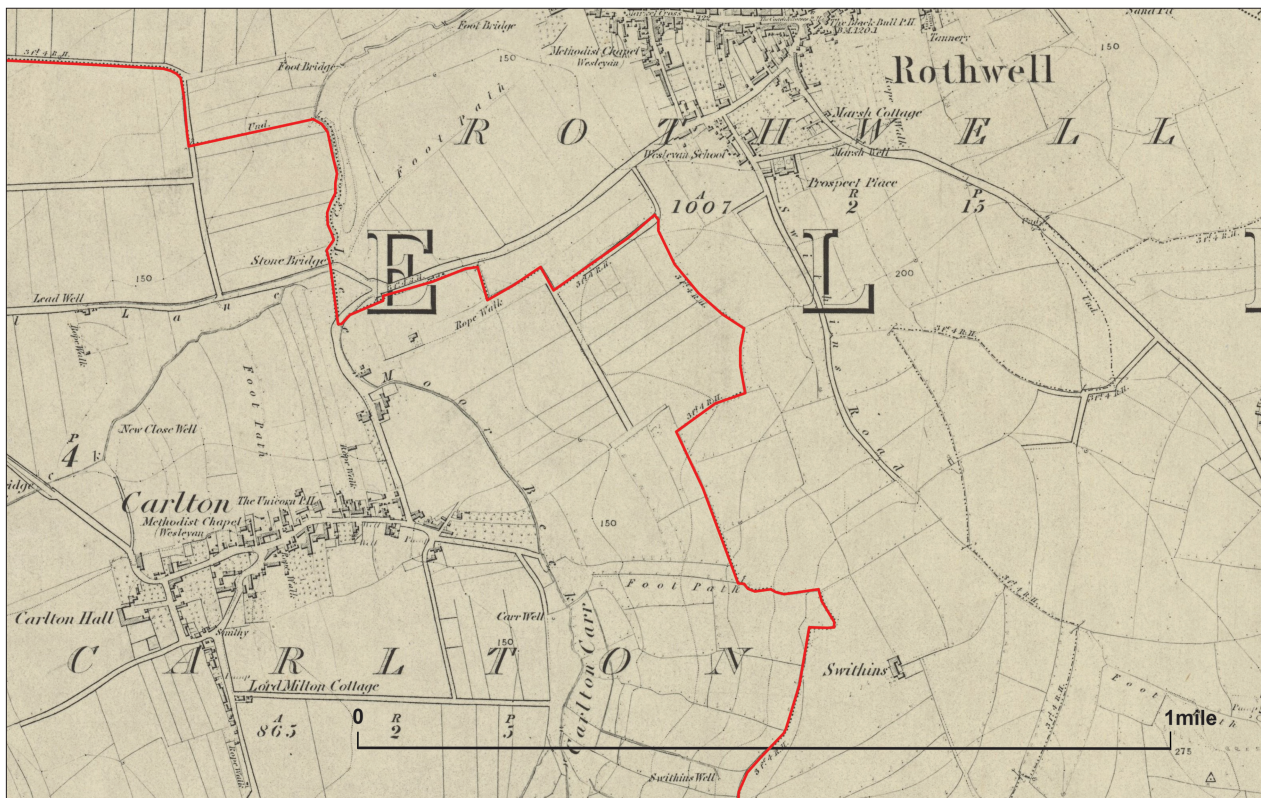
Figure 3   The township boundary (red) between Carlton and Rothwell, based on an extract of Sheet 233 of the First Edition Ordnance Survey Six Inch map (surveyed 1848–51). Figure prepared by Jon Prudhoe.

enclosed (West Yorkshire Archive Service: Wakefield WRRD B21, p.7 and map vol. 1/24; WRRD B45 p.247 and map vol. 3/4). Figs 4 and 5 show the two villages and the fields immediately around them as they are depicted on the enclosure maps (reoriented to fit the page).

Both settlements are, essentially, two-row street villages (Roberts 1987, 33–40), though the buildings forming Carleton's rows in 1800 were distinctly intermittent (Fig. 4). Their township territories were relatively small: Carleton just over 589 statute acres, and Carlton just over 865 acres. The field boundaries within the townships, as shown on the enclosure plans and on the Six Inch maps, indicate clearly that each had formerly contained extensive open fields, and that enclosure had been brought about by combining together blocks of former open-field strips to create severalty fields.

The external boundaries of both townships mainly followed the courses of routeways and streams; but their northern and eastern boundaries, those facing, respectively, the chief manors of Tanshelf and Rothwell, did not. As can be seen on Figs 2 and 3, these stretches were stepped around rectilinear field boundaries, indicating that the field boundaries – or rather the bundles of open-field strips which had been thrown together to create those field boundaries – existed before these parts of the township boundaries were laid out.

From this, it is possible to infer that these lengths of township boundary were set out across pre-existing open fields, along the edges of furlongs and along strips within the furlongs. Fig. 6 is part of the enclosure plan for Carlton, at the edge of the township, where the surveyor has recorded the ends of field strips in Rothwell, as well

as the strips in Carlton. It is quite clear that the township boundary has had no influence on the alignment of these strips.

Before exploring the circumstances that may have produced these patterns, it is necessary to consider a further issue in relation to the boundary on the north side of Carleton near Tanshelf. In the nineteenth century, as can be seen on Fig. 2, it separated Carleton not from Tanshelf, but from Pontefract township. By the mid-thirteenth century, Tanshelf vill had been reduced to a small residual 'hamlet', occupied by ten cottars, on the western fringe of Pontefract borough – though the name Tanshelf was still also used in administrative records to describe the wider manor (Roberts and Whittick 2013, 69, 81, 91).

Most of the territory of the pre-Conquest vill of Tanshelf had evidently been transferred to the expanding borough of Pontefract, probably during the twelfth century. It is proposed here that the stepped boundary through the former open fields between Carleton and Pontefract had originally been drawn between Carleton and Tanshelf, and that the transfer to the borough of the relevant open-field strips had no impact on the township boundary; but it could, alternatively, be argued that the character of the boundary resulted from the reallocation of these fields to the borough, after the Conquest. The same argument would not, of course, hold for Carlton and Rothwell.

By the time of the nineteenth-century enclosure awards, both Carleton and Carlton had already experienced extensive open-field enclosure, notably in the fields adjacent to the village settlements (on Fig. 5,

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Figure 4 Carleton near Tanshelf-Pontefract, as shown on an enclosure map of 1800 (West Yorkshire Archive Service: Wakefield WRRD B21, map vol. 1/24). North-west at the top.
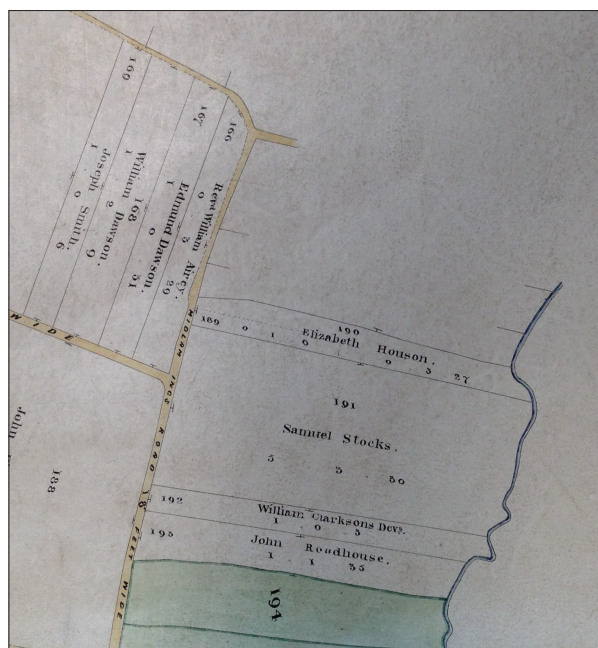

Figure 6 Carlton near Rothwell, allotments towards the boundary of the township, with lines indicating field strips in Rothwell beyond (West Yorkshire Archive Service: Wakefield WRRD B45, map vol. 3/4). East is at the top.

Figure 5 Carlton near Rothwell, as shown on an enclosure map of 1843 (West Yorkshire Archive Service: Wakefield WRRD B45, map vol. 3/4). West is at the top.

at Carlton near Rothwell, those shown in green). Some of the field boundaries at right-angles to the villages continue through to the streets as toft boundaries (Figs 4 and 5), and a few appear to align from one side of the street to the other.

This sort of pattern, found widely in open-field townships in Yorkshire (see *e.g.* Roberts 2008, 67, 99–101), suggests that a 'planned' village (or in some cases a 'planned' element of a village) may not have been laid out as a separate entity, but was instead established on a template provided by the plan of one or more open-field furlongs (see Silvester and Dyer 2016, 75). Numerous deserted villages in north-west Lincolnshire have also been found to overlie ridge-and-furrow, some 'fitted into pre-existing furlongs' (Everson *et al*. 1991, 13–14).

A final point of comparison between Carleton and Carlton relates to village greens. Only at Carleton near Tanshelf is a functioning green shown on the nineteenth-century mapping. It appears as a triangular parcel of ground at the north-west end of the village, labelled 'Carlton [*sic*] Green' (towards the top of Fig. 4), and the enclosure award records a pinfold on its north side. At Carlton near Rothwell there is a triangular area at the west end of the village demarcated by roads (towards the top of Fig. 5). This space was divided up into homesteads and closes by the time of the 1842–1843 survey, but the award records that the pinfold was on its south-east side, perhaps indicating that this, too, had once been a green.

The two townships of Carleton and Carlton therefore share a number of characteristics in addition to their names: the stepped boundaries through pre-existing open fields; the street row forms of the settlements; and the triangular greens (one certain, one putative) at one end of each village. It is possible that these shared

attributes were the result of acts of estate management: that the adjacent manorial centres originally had larger territories and more extensive open field systems; and that parts of those territories and open fields were abstracted to form new townships distinguished by *ceorla-tūn* place-names.

Furthermore, if those parent manorial centres were part of a single, larger estate in the late Saxon period – as they certainly were in the late eleventh century and beyond – then the two new townships might well have been created within a relatively short space of time, in response to changes which were taking place across that estate. Such developments would accord with recent thinking on *ceorla-tūn* place-names more generally, which sees them as having been coined 'in the context of late Anglo-Saxon processes of manorialization and settlement-nucleation' (Parsons 2013, 48).

The assumption underlying the hypothesis presented here is that these two *ceorla-tūn* place-names were coined specifically to describe the village settlements and (former) open fields which are still evident on the nineteenth-century maps, within the township boundaries that are also marked on those maps. They may, alternatively, have originally applied to a different type of entity which was subsequently transformed into an open-field township. Either scenario is possible: the writer has previously drawn attention to a Butterwick on the Yorkshire Wolds which seems, already by Domesday, to have lost the attributes for which it was named (Wrathmell 2012, 104).

In the present study, on the other hand, it is proposed that the entities which have been described above are those for which the *ceorla-tūn* names were coined. There can be no certainty, but at least two strands of evidence offer a credible context for the existence of open-field townships distinguished by *ceorla-tūn* names in the mid-tenth century. The first concerns the application of the generic *-tūn* to township territories; the second relates to the apparent documentation of open fields in a tenth-century *ceorla-tūn*.

The development of the meaning of OE *tūn* has been documented by A.H. Smith (1956, 188–193): from 'fence' or 'hedge', to 'enclosure', to 'an enclosure with a dwelling', a 'farmstead', a 'hamlet or village', and 'manor, estate'; but as he notes, it is hard to tie specific place-names to particular stages in this long evolution. Presumably there will have been both chronological and functional variation in the attributes it was intended to encompass when first applied to specific places.

More recent commentators have cautioned against assuming it must be seen (only) in the context of communities and their territories. Faith (1997, 174) has pointed out, specifically in relation to Charltons, that 'the word *tun* had quite a wide variety of uses, but they nearly all involve nothing more than the enclosure of a fairly small area with a building or buildings inside it.' Parsons (2013, 51) has also emphasised its use for enclosures, citing the *gærstūn*, the 'grass enclosure', referred to in the late seventh-century laws of king Ine. He has also noted that *cyninges tūn*, as in Kingston, could well simply refer to the king's compound or enclosure in seventh, eighth, and ninth-century sources (Parsons 2013, 55–56).

Nevertheless, there are grounds for suggesting not only that *-tūn* as a generic could, by the later tenth

century, signify a township, but also that it had by then – at least in Yorkshire – achieved a wider application. The archbishops of York held an extensive estate in the middle Wharfe valley centred on their palace at Otley, 35km to the north west of Pontefract. In the later tenth century, however, parts of the estate had been taken from them, as recorded in a memorandum of archbishop Oswald (972–992). The document lists what are described as the '*tūnas*' of which he had been dispossessed (Faull and Moorhouse 1981, 189). They included a *hām* (Addingham: Smith 1961d, 57), several *lēah* names (*e.g.* Burley and Guiseley: Smith 1961b, 197, 147), and topographical names (*e.g.* Chevin: Smith 1961b, 204) as well as *tūn* names (*e.g.* Menston and Middleton: Smith 1961b, 202, Smith 1961c, 65).

All these names except Chevin recur in Domesday Book as the names of vills containing lands assessed in carucates; and these townships continued to be identifiable down to the nineteenth century. As Margaret Faull observed, *tūn* had developed 'a secondary meaning of "estate, manor, vill", which is probably the interpretation here [in the memorandum] as individual settlements would have been of little value without their associated lands' (Faull and Moorhouse 1981, 189). By the later tenth century, therefore, and ignoring the contentious issue of 'manor', it appears that *tūn* might describe a township distinguished by any type of place-name, the territory of any rural community. If Carleton and Carlton were townships created in the late Saxon period, it seems reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the *tūn* element of their place-name refers to the township, rather than an enclosure, or even a village.

The present writer has put forward a detailed case for nineteenth-century township units in eastern Yorkshire having developed in the middle and late Saxon periods, often by a process of estate subdivision which could juxtapose relatively early settlement names with relatively late ones (Wrathmell 2012, 99–106). In the Rockingham Forest area of Northamptonshire, Glenn Foard and his colleagues have suggested that the mapped pattern of townships had largely been established in the middle Saxon period. They also made an observation of direct relevance to the Carleton and Carlton discussed here:

> However, some reorganisation probably occurred, because, where not following a stream or watershed, boundaries exist that zig-zag between furlongs. This implies that some townships were not fixed until after the open fields belonging to adjacent settlements had met (Foard, Hall and Patrida 2009, 14).

In the Royal Commission's survey of north-west Lincolnshire, Paul Everson and his colleagues were less specific about when the pattern of townships was created: 'certainly by the twelfth century, and probably for long before, the economic basis of settlement in West Lindsey was the township.' At the same time, they also emphasised how resistant these units were to change once established: 'whenever these townships were created and for whatever reason, once they were in being they tended to resist further change and become permanent fixtures in the landscape' (Everson *et al*. 1991, 9–10).

The second strand of evidence is a reference to what seem to be open fields, operated by a Charlton

community, in the mid-tenth century. This is the interpretation put forward by Parsons in his discussion of an Abingdon charter, dated to AD 956. It relates to a grant by King Eadwig of five hides at a Charlton in Berkshire, and the terms of the grant are followed by an admonition that anyone who infringed them would be subject to Divine judgement, because there were no fixed boundaries dividing up the land, the ploughlands being intermixed: '*Nam prefatum rus nullis certis terminis dirimitur sed iugera adiacent iugeribus*' (Parsons 2004, 19; Parsons 2013, 51, n.25; Kelly 2001, 290–291, no.69). The implication is that fixed and identifiable boundaries would have enabled a judgement on any alleged infringement to be delivered in this world rather than the next.

This unusually early documentary reference to open-field holdings may not be telling us that open fields were infrequent in the mid-tenth century; rather, that it was unusual for only part of a township – five hides out of a larger number – to be the subject of a grant. Had the grant involved the entire township, this would have allowed its boundaries to be described and subsequently identified in the landscape. It has been suggested that this Charlton is the one adjacent to the royal vill of Wantage (Finberg 1964, 150; Parsons 2004, 19).

Thus, it seems possible to construct a context in which Carleton and Carlton may have been established before the end of the tenth century as open-field townships, within the open fields previously cultivated from Tanshelf and Rothwell respectively. This in turn means that the open fields of Tanshelf and Rothwell could have originated at a significantly earlier date, perhaps in the middle Saxon period.

Furthermore, if much of the territory of Carleton and Carlton had previously been laid out in strips and furlongs, the laying out of each village on this template would probably be the easiest way of physically forming the new settlements. The triangular greens (if there were two) would equally be an intelligible solution to the needs of livestock management in a landscape already covered by the broadly rectilinear furlongs of open fields, given that a rectangular green would be a less efficient shape for funnelling livestock into and out of the village.

Returning to Faith's contrasts between those Charltons which might represent communities of estate workers, and those which might have been lordless villages, the two discussed here seem to have had features drawn from both concepts. As communities set up within the territories of vills which supported important manorial centres within a larger estate, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that these were the deliberate acts of those who controlled the estate. Yet their inhabitants, who apparently practised co-operative agriculture in vills subject to assessment for the geld (see Roffe 2007, 200, n.81), do not seem to qualify as inland estate workers.

As indicated earlier, this article is the result of a limited and fortuitous piece of research, rather than part of a wider project. It is therefore necessary to emphasise that there may be many townships bearing *ceorla-tūn* names, in Yorkshire and beyond, which have very different attributes from the ones described here, and which had very different relationships to estate centres.

Equally, there may be many other townships with similar attributes and, potentially, similar relationships to estate centres, which do not bear *ceorla-tūn* place-names.

The purpose of this discussion is not to claim any wider relevance for its observations than would be appropriate, but to encourage others to carry out and publish studies of a similar scope and scale. In this way, it may be possible to build a much more comprehensive understanding of the early history of places called Charl(e)ton and Carl(e)ton.

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