

## Inglewood Forest

Inglewood Forest stretched from the walls of Carlisle to the town of Penrith and included all that poorly drained area of land between the Rivers Eden and Petteril and west to the Cumbrian Fells. From the reign of Henry I the forest was reserved as a royal hunting ground. It was stocked with red deer, fallow deer, wild boar and other beasts of chase. Edward the First visited Inglewood in the eighth year of his reign. He hunted for four days, and on the first 'there were killed four hundred harts and hinds'.

Inglewood was subject to forest law. No man was allowed to hunt or take game or in any way abuse the forest. Except under licence, a man living within a forest might not 'assart' (take new land into cultivation), or enclose land, or build, hedge, ditch, drain, cut down trees or even collect firewood, except under the eye of the forester. He could not hunt deer, wolf, boar or even the smaller animals, or cut down a bush which might give food or shelter to a deer. Under Henry I it was forbidden to have dogs or bows and arrows in the forest without a warrant.

Rights were granted to graze pigs as at Mungrisdale or to feed cattle as at Stockdalewath, (as the names indicate) but there was little settlement. In 1391, after yet another great fire in Carlisle, Richard II gave 500 oak trees from the forest to rebuild the city. Otherwise, the king took payment for forest privileges. The Bishop of Carlisle paid half a mark a year to graze his cattle in the Wreay area: 'Ralph, bishop of Carlisle, has one vaccary in the wood at Byrskawe, situate by the water of the Peytrel, where his beasts have been kept for three years back; they graze the land of Barroksleghtes, Ellerton, Thowethueyt (Southwaite), Blakeberithueyt (Burthwaite) and Hescayth, to the wasting of the herbage of half a mark per annum.'

Every June 11th, people from the forest with a grievance met at the Court Thorn between High and Low Heskett to seek justice: 'a foristers-moot-court at Heskett Thorne every St Barnabie's day in the morning, where the chamberlin of Carlisle is foreman of a jury there & the rest of the jury are made up of the constables or turnmen of the 13 townships on the west & north parts of the forest, & of the free parkers.'

There were disputes over forest rights. At one time the Scots who had settled at Scotby were in conflict with Roger of Lancaster over their right to graze their beasts at Wreay: 'Item, that Roger de Lancastre made a perambulation at Peterelwra and Barrokmosse within the forest, and treats the land there as preserved, though the men of Scotby had common there with all their beasts without hindrance time out of mind.' At another time a notorious poacher from Wetheral was caught with his dogs in the forest at Wreay: 'Thomas, the brother of Robert de Warthewyk, was poaching at Peytrelwra, accompanied by Adam of the Cellar, who has been mentioned elsewhere, with three greyhounds. The names of two of them are preserved, Kel and Arthurk; they were from the priory. The third is said to be "unknown".'

Successive kings kept Inglewood Forest underdeveloped so that it served as a 'buffer zone' between the Scottish border and England. Carlisle was cut off economically from the rest of the country.

The sparsely populated forest was a place of legend and romance. John de Corbrig was a celebrated hermit who lived in the desolate area of Wragmire Moss. In the fifteenth-century *Oryginale Cronykil of Scotland* by Andrew of Wyntoun, Robin Hood belongs to Inglewood and not Sherwood Forest. Many other poems from the same date have King Arthur hunting in Inglewood Forest. In *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Watheleyne* the ghost of Guinevere's mother rises from the waters of Tarn Wadling by High Heskett to warn her daughter against committing adultery with Sir Gawain. In *The Weddyng of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnall* a giant lives at nearby Castle Hewin. In another medieval ballad, a band of forest outlaws, Adam Bell, William Cloudsley and Clym of the Clough escape hanging in Carlisle, seek shelter in Inglewood Forest and, eventually, secure a pardon from the king when William shoots an apple balanced on his son's head from sixty paces.

Before 1540, the time when the Arloshes would have come to Woodside, there were few enclosures in the forest. The whole area remained thinly settled and poorly utilised until the enclosure acts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the fields were drained and the land was farmed more productively.

The last 'gnarled and knotted' oak of Inglewood Forest, on Wragmire Moss, 'fell from sheer old age' on the 13th of June, 1823. In 1973, Cumberland County Council preserved the 44 acres of Wreay Woods as 'one of the last remaining ancient woodlands on the River Petteril'.