

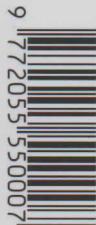
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★ The Duchy of Lancaster explained ★
Unbreakable Bonds

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The Duchy of Lancaster Explained

By Andrew Harris

The word 'unique' is used and abused too often. Uniqueness is rare and absolute so nothing can be almost or very unique.

The Duchy of Lancaster, for example, is truly unique. It is a private estate owned by Her Majesty the Queen as Duke of Lancaster – and other British monarchs before and after Queen Elizabeth II – and has 753 years of history. Comprising more than 45,000 acres of rural land with 215 farm lettings, 233 dwellings, commercial properties, nearly 90,000 acres of foreshore and 10 historic castles nationwide it part funds the British Monarchy to the tune of £20 million a year thus greatly reducing the cost of this institution to the taxpayer. It is a big business but what do you know about it?

The Duchy has three distinct ownerships in our region –

LANCASTER CASTLE – Dating back to the 11th Century the Castle was developed as a defence against marauding Scots who invaded England in 1322 and 1389 but this need became redundant from 1707 when England and Scotland became the United Kingdom. From as early as 1196 the Castle was also used as a prison and this continued until 2011. Courts within the Castle saw many tried and more than 200 executed such as the Pendle Witches but the last execution was not until the wife-murderer Thomas Rawcliffe in 1910. Lancaster Castle fulfilled many roles until fully returned to the Duchy's ownership in 2011 since when Court use continues but it mainly has increasing appeal to local people and tourists who can book a one-hour tour for £8 with concessions for the young and old and families. Guide

David is excellent. For details call 01524 64998.

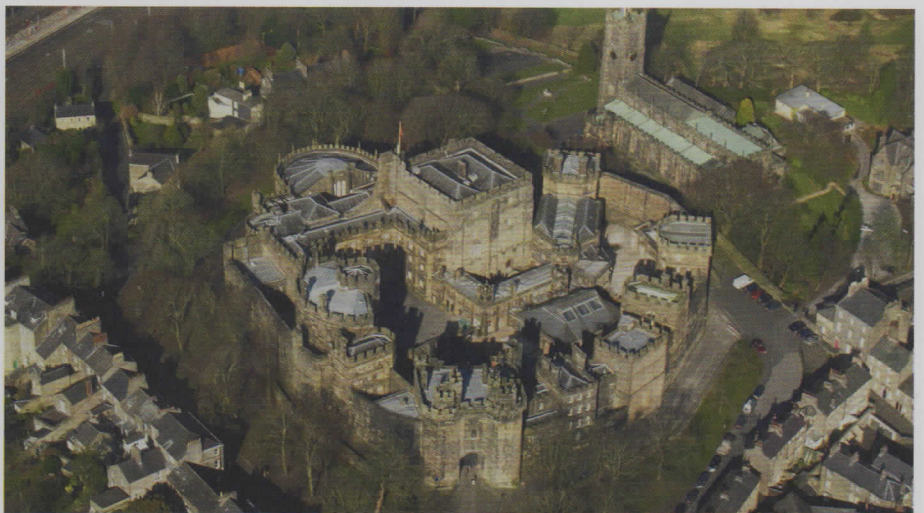
THE SURVEYS – There are five Duchy rural landholdings in our region which total 12,670 acres or nearly 30% of the Duchy's rural ownership. At nearly 6,000 acres the largest is the Whitewell rural estate which was only acquired by the Duchy in 1937. It lies within what is now the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and includes 9 main farms and many let buildings including the well known 17th- Century INN AT WHITEWELL which is a delightful old-fashioned pub and hotel with 23 bedrooms – a favourite for weddings and parties. There are lesser estates at Crewe in the Cheshire Survey plus Lancashire's Salwick, Wyreside and Myerscough which dates back to the 13th century and includes more than 7



acres of the rural Myerscough College.

THE FORESHORE – The UK is unusual in that 55% of the foreshore is owned by the Crown Estate with a further 90,000 acres of it being owned by the Duchy of Lancaster. In our region that accounts for the foreshore between the Mersey and Barrow-in-Furness.

The rest of the Duchy's rural property portfolio is held in surveys or landholdings in Yorkshire, Staffordshire and the Southern Survey which clusters 8,780 acres or thereabouts of land owned in Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and South Wales. The Duchy also has an Urban Survey or landholding which includes an increasing number of industrial and office buildings in London, Birmingham and the here in the north west. Commercial property of one sort or another now provides about two-thirds



of the income of the Duchy!

The Duchy of Lancaster deserves credit for providing many community benefits as well as achieving a financial benefit for the monarch. One of the objectives of the Duchy is to encourage



LEFT: A symbol of ownership: HM the Queen, Duke of Lancaster, is presented with the keys of Lancaster Castle by the Constable of the Castle Mrs Pamela Barker watched by Lord Shuttleworth, the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire.

TOP: The John O'Gaunt Gate of Lancaster Castle. Picture by your columnist.

ABOVE: Lancaster Castle from the air.

RIGHT: Three Coats of Arms displayed in Lancaster Castle span 656 years.



ABOVE: The Shire Hall of Lancaster Castle which is home to one of Europe's finest displays of heraldry. LEFT: The Crown Court in Lancaster Castle has a long history and is still used. TOP RIGHT: The prison in Lancaster Castle: preserved but no longer used.



the next generation of farmers to examine and learn from best practice gleaned from new and innovative farming methods around the world. Limestone Downs in New Zealand has 12,000 breeding sheep, 2,000 beef cattle and 1,000 dairy cattle on about 7,730 acres and has long been recognised as being a pioneer and leader in developing and applying new

technologies to improve traditional farming methods. It offers placements for overseas students and hosts a wide range of research programmes. Supported by the Duchy, 19-year old Tom Gardiner from one of their farms travelled to Limestone Downs to benefit from their research and practices. In Tom's words "The trip was a great opportunity to see what others are doing

and then apply what is appropriate to our farming practices back home."

The Duchy's Head of Rural Christopher Sparrow explains "We are all learning from each other all the time and in a practical occupation like farming what could be better than seeing how things work in practice. I am sure that Tom thoroughly enjoyed his experience and we were pleased to hear about what he learned and how he thinks he can apply it to his family's business."

The Duchy provides bursaries to support students during their studies and help them develop their skills. 20-year old Emma Benson from Catforth in Lancashire was awarded a bursary of £2,500. Emma explained "I'd like to

thank the Duchy for supporting me with my studies. My ambition at the end of my degree is to become an agricultural consultant advising farmers on how to ensure their businesses are as profitable and efficient as possible – whatever challenges they face.”

A second bursary scheme was created by the Duchy last year with the aim of helping students on the Rural Estate and Land Management course at the Harper Adams University in Shropshire. This runs alongside existing Duchy Scholarships which have been offered to students on agricultural courses since 2014.

The guiding principle of the Duchy of Lancaster is ‘Preserving the past and investing in the future.’ Despite 753 years of history the Duchy insists it has a keen eye on the future. It aims to ensure an appropriate balance between long-term commitments to their tenants and the communities in which they operate and the long-term sustainability of the Duchy’s land and property assets. Their three objectives are to act responsibly, invest prudently and deliver on clear commercial returns. So how is this achieved?

Management of the Duchy of Lancaster is a strange but effective blend of tradition and modern thinking. The ultimate boss is Her Majesty the Queen aka the Duke of Lancaster and the latter title transfers automatically to successive monarchs whether King or Queen. A Queen cannot be the Duchess of Lancaster as a Duchess is subordinate to a Duke hence the toast ‘The Queen, the Duke of Lancaster’ which mystifies many guests at functions in Lancashire. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has a role to play but, by tradition, this cabinet post is a sinecure within the Cabinet Office which enables the incumbent to undertake whatever government tasks are most needed at the time. Such Chancellors usually have a short tenure of between 6 months and 2 years at most. It is usually a political stepping stone and Chancellors are appointed by the Sovereign on the advice of the Prime Minister. It all started in 1361 and has been a useful device ever since as the Duchy duties are reckoned to take one day a week at most leaving the incumbent free to do the Prime Minister’s bidding. The current Chancellor is David Lidington who was appointed on the 8th January 2018



so he is about half way through his tenure! By tradition most responsibilities of the Chancellor are delegated leaving the office holder to effectively be a cabinet minister without a portfolio which is useful.

The Duchy Council is responsible to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Chancellor is responsible to the Sovereign for the Duchy’s affairs. The Council currently has nine members including Chief Executive Nathan Thompson – a chartered surveyor who heads a Management Board of six which includes a solicitor and heads of finance, rural, commercial and project management. The main office of the Duchy is in London’s Lancaster Place but we in Lancashire think its historic and symbolic home is in Lancaster Castle where it all began.

The 753-year history of the Duchy of Lancaster is stunning. The ancient Lancaster inheritance which became known as the Duchy began in 1265 when Henry III gifted the baronial lands of Simon de Montfort to his son Edmund. A year later Henry added the estate of Robert Ferrers – the Earl of Derby – and then conferred the ‘Honour, County, Town and Castle of Lancaster’ and gave Edmund the new title of the Early of Lancaster.

In 1267 Henry gave his son the manor of Newcastle-under-Lyme together with lands and estates in Lancashire and Yorkshire. In 1284 Edmund’s mother Eleanor of Provence

bestowed the manor of Savoy in London upon him.

When Edmund died the inheritance passed to his eldest son who was less lucky; he was beheaded on 1322. It then passed to the second son who became the 3rd Earl of Lancaster.

In 1351 Edward III conferred the title of Duke of Lancaster on a distinguished soldier and diplomat Henry Grosmont who was the son of the late Henry, the 3rd Earl of Lancaster. Edward III also raised Lancaster to a County Palatine which involved devolving royal powers such as the control of law courts and the appointment of the sheriffs, judges, justices of the peace – now magistrates - and other senior officials.

When the 3rd Earl died in 1361 the inheritance became part of the dowry for his daughter Blanche. Two years earlier Blanche had married John O’Gaunt - one of Edward III’s sons – who became the 2nd Duke of Lancaster in 1362 as only a male could inherit and he persuaded his father to grant the Palatinate powers to him permanently.

When John O’Gaunt died in 1399 his nephew King Richard III confiscated the Lancaster inheritance and banished John’s son Henry Bolingbroke from England for life. Within months Henry B returned from exile , raised an army and forced Richard to abdicate. He then ascended the throne as Henry IV in October 1399.



ABOVE: Views don't come more scenic. The Inn At Whitwell seen from the River Hodder which it overlooks. LEFT: The Duchy owns and lets more than 215 farms. This is New Laund Farm on the Whitewell Estate. BOTTOM LEFT: The Inn At Whitwell. Picture by your columnist.

One of Henry IV's first acts as King was to stipulate that the Lancaster inheritance should be held separately from all other Crown possessions and should descend through the monarchy as a private estate. Thus each sovereign is the Duke of Lancaster.

About 300 years later the Crown Lands Act 1702 decreed that the Sovereign should only receive income but not capital from the Duchy. This safeguard protects the Duchy's inheritance and remains to this day.

Your columnist hopes that the Duchy of Lancaster is now explained!

Andrew Harris – www.andrewharris.co.uk - gratefully acknowledges the extensive help



provided by the Duchy's Communications Manager Debbie Garritty in the preparation of this article. All images are courtesy of the Duchy of Lancaster except where stated.