



Not all women inherited their husband's holding, some became dependent on their adult sons. For example, John fitz William Attelane, promised to provide his widowed mother Beatrice, with a house, a third of a curtilage, and a yearly render of one and a half quarters of mixtil (mixed rye and other grains), one and a half quarters of drage (barley and oats mixed) and a quantity of peat, when he took over a messuage and 24 acres of land that his father had held. Mathilda Brite who died in 1332 was also a land holder. When she died her two sons, Walter and Nicholas, went to court to secure possession of her 31/2 acres and paid 16 shillings each to do so. Sadly, Nicholas died two later and his wife again paid 16s to take over her husband's share in the land until their three sons came of age.

Other land transactions are recorded in documents called Feet of Fines. From these we learn that in January 1284 William of Francis, who was a chaplain in Langtoft entered an agreement with six other people from outside the village for 6 acres of land at Greatford, for which he gave the other parties "one sore sparrowhawk" meaning one that was under 1 year old. In July 1286, Reynold de la Celer of Langtoft entered an agreement with the representative of the Abbot of Crowland concerning 1 acre of land and 6 acres and 1 rood of meadow in Croylaunde and Langtoft. Reynold acknowledged the tenements to be the right of the abbot and his church. For this, the abbot granted Reynold the tenements, "to hold to Reynold and his heirs, of the abbot and his successors and their church for ever, rendering yearly 18 pence at 3 terms, to wit, at Christmas 6 pence, at the feast of St Guthlac in April 6 pence and at the feast of St Bartholomew the Apostle 6 pence."

In August 1309, Master Thomas Huet agreed to pay Walter de Thurlby and Cecily, his wife £10 for 1 messuage (a dwelling house with outbuildings), 9 and a half acres of land and 2 and a half acres of meadow in Baston.

When it came to the law, husbands were responsible for their wives' behaviour. In a court held at Langtoft in 1291, for example, Robert fitzAndrew complained that the wife of Alan of Fen had called his wife a thief and a robber. When an inquisition was held, it was found that both women had called each other insulting names. The argument had presumably erupted in a public place, in front of witnesses, prompting one husband to bring a case to defend the slur cast on his wife's character, and by implication on that of his household. It might also have allowed him to pursue his wife's vendetta.

A few years later, in the court held at Langtoft in July 1299, William Oter was amerced (fined) six pence for his wife's trespass (offence) of beating Cecily of Alanthorpe's boy and had to give the victim's mother twelve pence for his wife's offence. Another woman in trouble with the law was Matilda Poubel who was held liable by the court at Langtoft in November 1265, when she admitted a stranger, Reginald the weaver, into her house.

In 1316, Gregory Roland and his mother, Margery broke into the house of Robert Pepper and stole a bushel of corn. When the case came to court, the jury found that Gregory should be sent to Lincoln gaol rather than being hung as he was underage. The fate of Margery is not recorded.