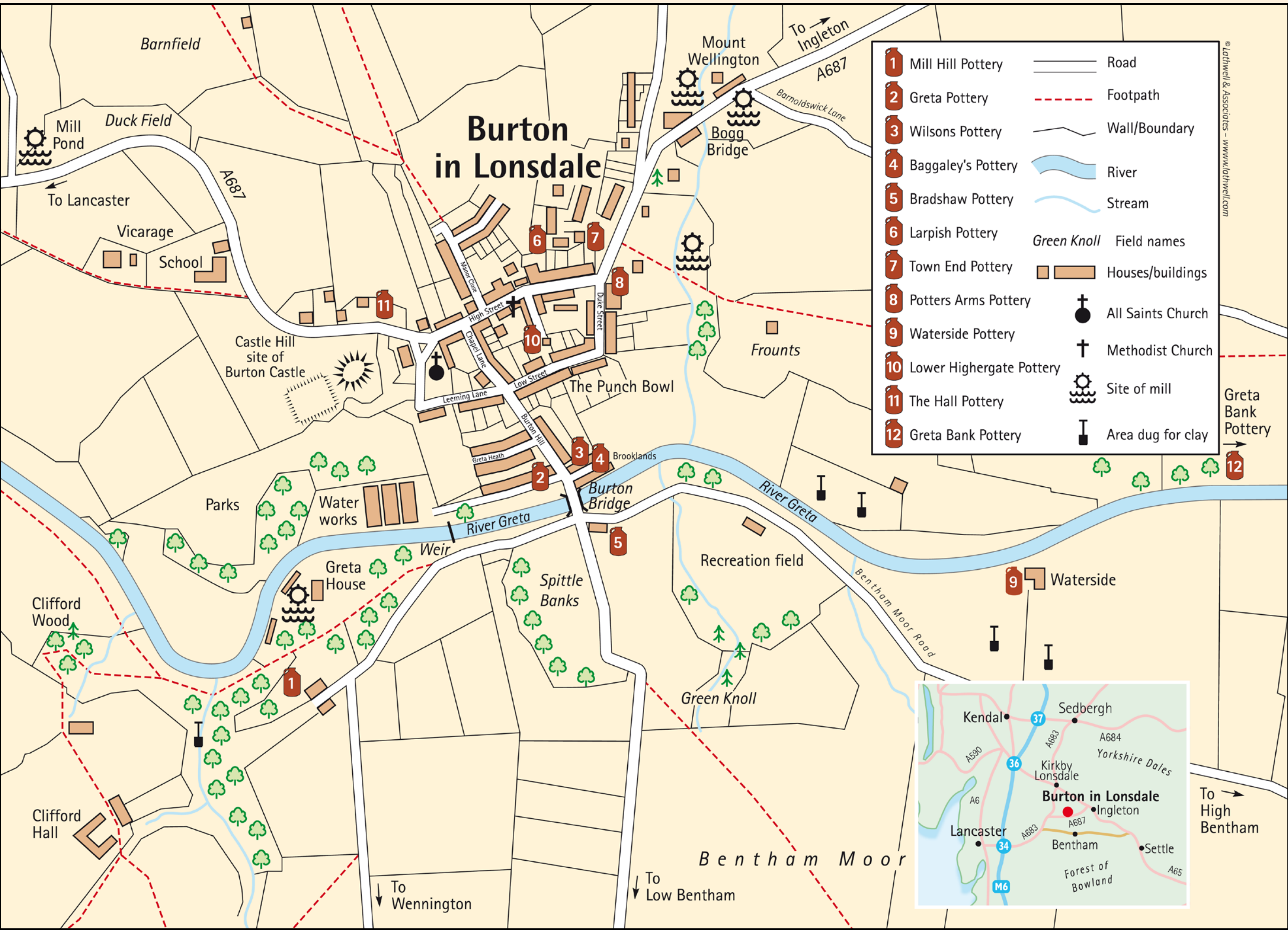


A Community Skill

The combination of a thin coal seam, clay drifts and a plentiful water supply at Burton-in-Lonsdale gave rise to a thriving pottery industry.

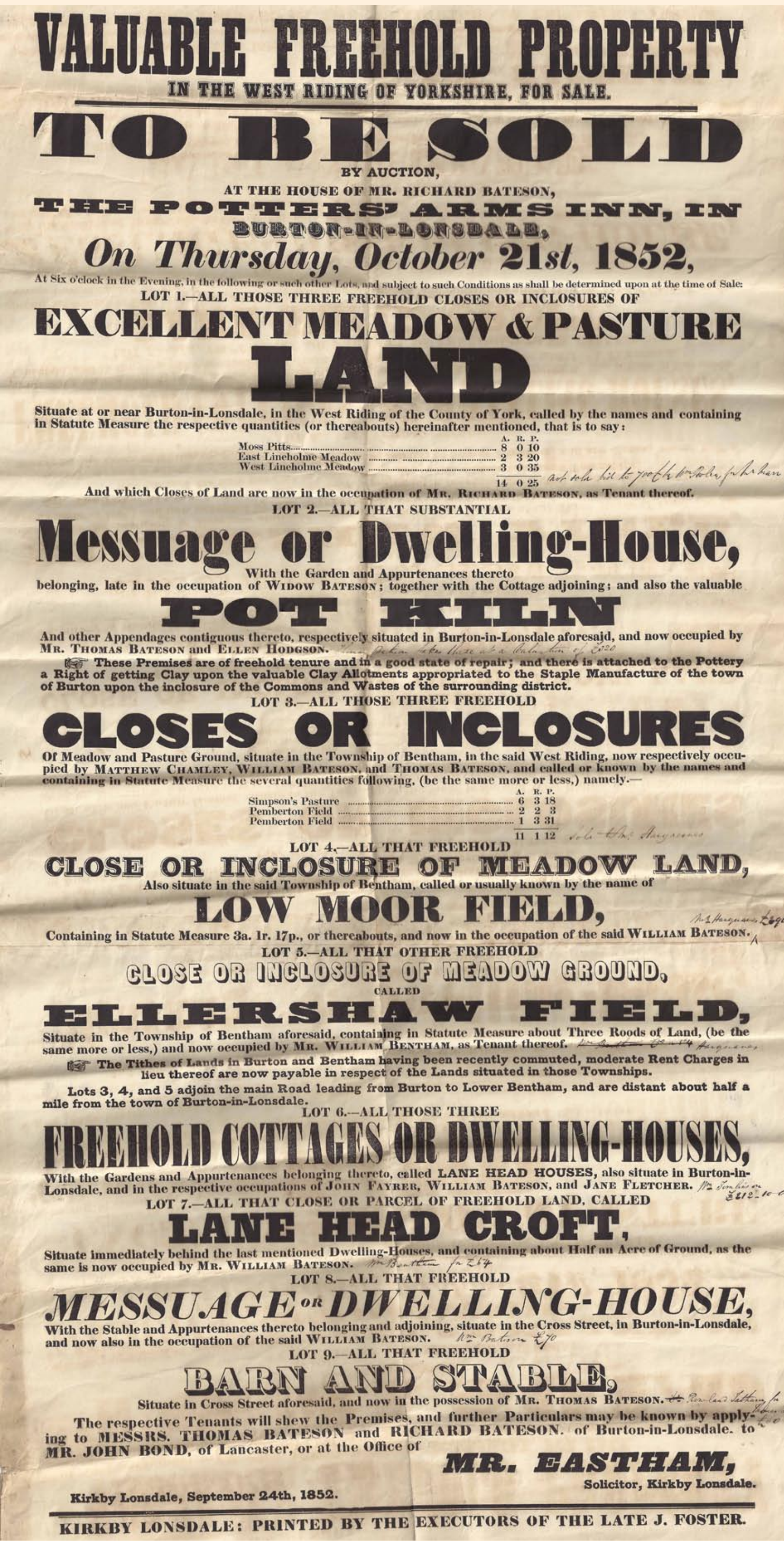


▲ The potteries, c.1850 Copyright and courtesy of Andrew Lathwell Design

Most of the potters were farmers as well and nearly the whole community was involved in the production. To this day, the householders of Burton have the right to dig clay in the parish. The potteries opened in the middle of the 18th century and the first potters may have arrived from Staffordshire in search of new opportunities.

To begin with, the potteries produced earthenware and turned out large quantities of cream pots, bread-making bowls (panchions), jugs and bottles of all shapes and sizes. The pots were sold locally but also sent to Ireland and the Isle of Man. After the discovery of fireclay, it was possible to produce stoneware, fired at a higher temperature. Wand weavers wove individual baskets to protect large jars and bottles in transit. Some of the pottery, such as puzzle jugs, tobacco jars and money boxes, was decorative and produced by the potters in their spare time.

By the late 19th century, the industry began to decline as local coal supplies were exhausted and improved transport meant that mass-produced Staffordshire pottery was easily available. Only two potteries continued to operate in the 20th century and the last one closed in 1944.



▲ Advertisement of sale, 1852



▲ Bottles and jars were regularly supplied to Knowles, grocers in Benthams
David Johnson Collection



▲ Barrowing clay from the drift, Waterside Pottery
Courtesy of Susan Gregory

