

LANDOWNERSHIP: KIRBY-LE-SOKEN

INTRODUCTION

In 1066 Kirby, together with Walton and Thorpe, formed part of St. Paul's Cathedral's great estate or soke of Naze (Edulvesness) then assessed at 27 hides.¹ Leases suggest that the three subdivisions of the estate, later the manors of Kirby-le-Soken, Thorpe-le-Soken, and Walton-le-Soken, existed by c. 1150, although Kirby was first recorded as a separate unit in 1222.² There were two other manors in Kirby-le-Soken. The first, at Birch Hall in the north of the parish, had been created before 1066, apparently by taking 3 hides from the St. Paul's estate.³ The second, in the west of the parish and probably in existence by the late 11th century, formed the endowment of a prebendary stall in St. Paul's Cathedral. It was later known as Sneating Hall manor and was rated at 2½ hides in 1222.⁴ As both Birch Hall and Sneating Hall were small in size, the dean and chapter's manor comprised the greater part of Kirby parish.

Ecclesiastical ownership was important in the Middle Ages. The principal manor, with the rest of the lordship of the Sokens, descended with the dean and chapter of St. Paul's until exchanged with the crown in 1544. Sneating Hall continued as a St. Paul's prebend until 1862, while Birch Hall was granted to St. Osyth's abbey in the early 13th century and remained with the abbey until the Dissolution.⁵

The principal manor of Kirby-le-Soken, otherwise Kirby Hall, was granted by the crown together with Walton Hall and Thorpe Hall to Lord Darcy of Chiche in 1551 and thereafter ownership continued to descend with the rest of the Sokens.⁶ However, the lands of the manor had been alienated in the mid 17th century, probably to pay the debts of Elizabeth, Countess Rivers (d. 1651). It descended in the Honeywood family of Marks Hall (Markshall) from the late 17th until the early 20th century.

¹ *VCH Essex*, i. 443.

² They all had separate churches by 1181. *The Domesday of St. Paul's of the year M.CC.XXII*, ed. W.H. Hale (Camden Soc., 1858), pp. xliv, xcvi, 126, 129–32, 148–9; R. Faith, 'The topography and structure of a small soke in the Middle Ages: the Sokens, Essex', *EAT*, 3rd ser., xxvii (1996), 211; above, The Sokens, Introduction.

³ Thus probably reducing Edulvesness from 30 to 27 hides: *VCH Essex*, i. 470; P.B. Boyden, 'Nemus de Edulvesnasa', *EAT*, 3rd ser., iv (1972), 146 n.3; below, Walton-on-the-Naze, Landownership (Introduction).

⁴ John le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066–1300, I St. Paul's London*, compiled by D.E. Greenway (1968), 77; *Domesday of St. Paul's*, 38.

⁵ For the detailed descents: below, this section.

⁶ Below, Walton-on-the-Naze, Landownership (Introduction).

Most manorial lords, lay and ecclesiastical, were non-resident, having their principal residences and estates elsewhere. However, there was an important local connection with St. Osyth abbey, both through the abbey's ownership of Birch Hall in the Middle Ages, and later because the site of the former abbey became the seat of the barons Darcy of Chiche and earls of Rochford. All three manors and estates in the parish, Kirby Hall, Birch Hall and Sneating Hall, were typically leased in the Middle Ages and afterwards; many of the St. Paul's lessees were canons or other clerics, but substantial local tenant farmers predominated in later centuries. In the mid to late 19th century both Birch Hall and Sneating Hall were temporarily held by members of the Foaker family, prominent in the administration of the Soken manors, who may have lived on their estates.⁷ None of the manorial houses is very large and all were rebuilt in brick between the 18th and 20th centuries.

Kirby-le-Soken manor, later Kirby Hall, part of St. Paul's Cathedral's great estate of the Naze, was first recorded as a separate unit in 1222.⁸ At that date there was no demesne farm at Kirby, but the tenants called hidesmen (*hydarii*) held 10 hides, perhaps *c.* 1200 a., and others 187½ a. for money rents.⁹ The separately enumerated hidesmen of Kirby and Horlock held another 8 hides (*c.* 960 a.) and there were also 2½ hides of free land. While much of Horlock, which perhaps lay north and north-east of Kirby and Walton, was apparently later lost to the incursions of the sea it seems probable that a remainder was absorbed into Kirby manor and parish.¹⁰ By 1297 a demesne farm of 128 a. had been established, probably composed of a single hide of land. Together with the 10 hides of land still held by tenants and three hides of freehold land the manor comprised at least *c.* 1700 a., about half of the later parish.¹¹

After the demesne was alienated from the manorial rights in the mid 17th century the lords held no land in the parish. In 1840 the former manorial estate of Kirby Hall comprised *c.* 192 a. in several blocks in the centre of the parish, the largest being immediately south-west of Kirby Hall and the church, presumably reflecting the location of the medieval demesne. Tenanted land covered much of the rest of the centre and south of the parish, around Upper and Lower Kirby Streets. About 1900

⁷ Below, this parish, Local Government.

⁸ *Domesday of St. Paul's*, 43; Faith, 'Topography and structure of a small soke', 211.

⁹ Faith, 'Topography and structure', 208, 211; *Domesday of St. Paul's*, ed. Hale, 43–5.

¹⁰ *Domesday of St. Pauls*, ed. Hale, 45–7; ERO D/DHw M1; J.H. Round, 'Horlock', *EAT*, new ser., xviii (1926), 296; Faith, 'Topography and structure', 207–8; above, this parish, Introduction.

¹¹ ERO, D/DHw M1; above, this parish, Introduction.

the manorial lords still retained rights over 900 a. of land divided between 80 tenements and 76 copyhold tenants, and therefore retained some significance for the local community.¹²

As at the other Soken manors of Walton Hall and Thorpe Hall, neither the lords of the manor nor the new owners of the landed estate after it had been sold were resident. The dean and chapter of St. Paul's leased their estates in the Middle Ages, a policy probably continued by Lord Darcy of Chiche in 1581.¹³ The Honeywood family of Marks Hall, new owners of the landed estate in the later 17th century, also leased the manorial demesne. The tenant farmers, such as Robert Mumford in 1840, typically occupied a central position in the social and political life of the community.¹⁴ The house, Kirby Hall, was occupied by the lord of the manor, C.J. Honeywood, Bt., between 1906 and 1908, but it was afterwards leased again to private residents.¹⁵

No manor house was recorded at Kirby in 1222 or 1297 despite the creation of a demesne farm in the intervening period; presumably there was no need for one as the land was typically leased with other parts of the Naze estate.¹⁶ Neither does there appear to have been a domestic residence in the mid 15th century, although by 1457 there were agricultural buildings, a kitchen and a small house with a solar in which the court of the Soken (*curia del Sokne*) was held.¹⁷ The existing red brick house of c. 1700, located south of Lower Kirby Street immediately behind and south west of the church and vicarage, was presumably a rebuilding by J.L. or Robert Honeywood on an earlier site.¹⁸

Descent

The manor descended with Walton Hall and Thorpe Hall as part of the lordship of the Sokens, passing from the dean and chapter of St. Paul's to the barons Darcy of Chiche, the earls of Rochford, and their successors including Richard Rigby, Charles Pearson, and Benjamin and Edward Chapman.¹⁹ Emma Elizabeth Freeman of Chertsey (Surrey) and Clara Freeman of Canterbury (Kent), 'ladies of the manor' in 1928, were the last owners to exercise manorial rights.²⁰

¹² ERO, B5109, sale cat.

¹³ *Domesday of St. Paul's*, ed. Hale, 125–6, 129–32; *Essex Life. Wills of Essex Gentry and Merchants*, ed. F.G. Emmison (Chelmsford, 1978), 8–9, 59; J. Button, *The World of Alice Horlefronsche. An Impression of Walton-on-the-Naze in the Year 1297* (priv. print., Frinton and Walton Heritage Trust, 2002), 40–7.

¹⁴ ERO, D/DHt T442, T455; below, this parish, Social History; Political History.

¹⁵ J.H. Round, 'Change of ownership of Essex estates', *ER*, xxvii (1918), 150–1; *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1906–33).

¹⁶ *Domesday of St. Paul's*, ed. Hale, 43–5; ERO, D/DHw M1.

¹⁷ Guildhall MS. 25122/1027.

¹⁸ Dept. of Env., Buildings List; below, this parish, Buildings.

¹⁹ Above, Walton-on-the-Naze, Landownership.

²⁰ ERO, D/DBm M216, p. 452.

As at Walton Hall and Thorpe Hall, J.L. Beaumont of Coggeshall served as the last steward of the manor, and the firm of Beaumont and Sansom sold it to Leslie Maddock of Mettingham Castle (Suff.) c. 1963, presumably on behalf of the Freemans' heirs.²¹

The manor house and demesne lands were apparently alienated from the manor in the 17th century, probably because of the debts of Elizabeth, Countess Rivers (d. 1651). Morant believed that she had sold them to John la Motte, a wealthy merchant and alderman of London of Flemish origin. He purportedly gave them to his daughter Hester, wife of Sir Thomas Honeywood (d. 1666) of Marks Hall, Marks Tey.²² The lands presumably then descended in the Honeywood family, first to their son J.L. Honeywood who died childless in 1693 and then to a distant relative Robert Honeywood (d. 1735). The estate then passed to his son Richard, a minor (d. 1758) who was succeeded by his uncle General Phillip Honeywood (d. 1785). The General's son Filmer died unmarried in 1809 and the estate then passed to his nephew William Honeywood (d. 1818).²³ William was succeeded by his son W.P. Honeywood, who was dead by 1831 when his executors were in possession.²⁴ His son another W.P. Honeywood died in 1859, his widow retaining a life interest until 1895. The estate then passed to the second son of a distant cousin, Philip Courteny, in order to avoid succession by W.P. Honeywood's brother Robert, a notorious gambler. The estate was put up for sale in 1897, but evidently failed to find a purchaser and remained in the Honeywood family.²⁵ In 1918 the estate was sold by Sir C.J. Honeywood to Messrs. Race and Scott, farmers and contractors of Frinton and Kirby. They were recorded among the principal landowners 1922–37.²⁶

Birch Hall manor, otherwise Birch Hoo or Hoe, was apparently created before 1066 by taking 3 hides of land out of St. Paul's great estate of the Naze. In 1066 it was held of the dean and chapter by Ingelric, but by 1086 it had passed to Eustace of Boulogne and the dean and chapter lost their

²¹ HMC, MDR (Kirby Hall, Thorpe Hall, Walton Hall).

²² Morant, *Essex*, i. 483; Wright, *Hist. Essex*, ii. 798; *Complete Peerage*, xi. 26; P.M. Ryan, *A History of Marks Hall* (Marks Hall, 1994), 11; ERO, T/P 195/8, no. 24, p. 25.

²³ Round, 'Changes of ownership', 150–1; *Hist. Essex by Gent.* vi. 71; Ryan, *History of Marks Hall*, 11–14; ERO, D/DU 288/1.

²⁴ Wright, *Hist. Essex*, ii. 798.

²⁵ *White's Dir. Essex* (1848), 459; Ryan, *History of Marks Hall*, 14–17.

²⁶ Round, 'Changes of ownership', 150–1.

rights in the estate permanently.²⁷ The overlordship of the honor of Boulogne was recorded until 1345.²⁸

The manor's 3 hides, perhaps *c.* 360 a., were probably concentrated in the north-west of the parish abutting Hamford water. However, the topography of that area may have changed considerably since the 11th century because of periods of both inundation and reclamation.²⁹ By 1687 the Birch Hall home farm comprised 60 a., with another 60 a. of marsh on Horsey Island and 200 a. of salt marsh, suggesting contraction.³⁰ However, by the mid 19th century the estate had been transformed into a much larger concern (*c.* 667 a.) concentrated in a block covering the north-west of the parish. It then no longer included Horsey Island, sold to the Blanshard family by 1840.³¹ Birch Hall remained an important landholding, comprising 408 a. when sold in 1917.³²

When under the ownership of St. Osyth abbey and the Fanshawe family in the 15th and 16th centuries the Birch Hall demesne was apparently leased and it seems that few, if any, later owners were resident.³³ In 1840 the greater part of the estate was let to Samuel Baker, wealthy tenant farmer, churchwarden and dominant personality in mid 19th century Kirby.³⁴ The manor house was located north of Lower Kirby on a track way towards Hamford Water and Horsey Island. In 1692 it comprised a hall, great and little parlours, butteries in the great parlour and the entry, 'above stairs', a dairy and a kitchen. Its replacement, an earlier 19th-century brick farmhouse, still stands.³⁵

Descent

The demesne tenant in 1086 was Robert. Afterwards the manor passed to Walter Maskerell and his wife Ermengard who apparently gave it to St. Osyth's abbey.³⁶ The donors probably retained a life interest because between *c.* 1200 and 1217–18 a knight's fee in Birch Hall and Horsey Island was

²⁷ *VCH Essex*, i. 470; J.H. Round, 'Birch 'Hall' in Kirby', *EAT*, new ser., xiv (1918), 363–4; Boyden, '*Nemus de Eduluesnasa*', 146–7; P.B. Boyden, 'A study in the structure of land-holding and administration in Essex in the late Anglo-Saxon period' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1986), 129, 131, 369–70. Ingelric continued to hold a small manor in Frinton from Eustace after the conquest: above, Frinton, Landownership.

²⁸ *Cal. Close*, 1343–46, 600.

²⁹ Above, this parish, Introduction.

³⁰ ERO, D/DB T1135–6.

³¹ *Ibid.* D/CT 198, 198A.

³² Round, 'Birch Hall', 364.

³³ R.C. Fowler, 'A balance sheet of St. Osyth Abbey', *EAT*, new ser., xix (1930), 189; *Cal. Pat.* 1563–66, 100; 1557–58, 294; *Cal. Close*, 1435–41, 188.

³⁴ ERO D/CT 198, 198A; I. Johnson, *Turning Point: The Story of Kirby le Soken, Essex 1823 to 1862* (1982), 19, 21; below, this parish, Social History; Religious History.

³⁵ ERO, D/DMn 12A; below, this parish, Buildings.

³⁶ Round, 'Birch Hall', 364; J.H. Round, 'The manor of Colne Engaine', *EAT*, new ser., viii (1903), 195–7; *Red Bk. Exch.* (Rolls Ser.), ii. 579.

held by Ermengard Maskerell of the abbot of St. Osyth.³⁷ In the first half of the 14th century the abbot apparently held the manor in demesne as one knight's fee.³⁸ It remained in the abbey's ownership until the Dissolution, being granted by the crown to Thomas, Lord Cromwell, in 1540.³⁹ It presumably reverted to the crown on Cromwell's attainder, and after first being assigned to Anne of Cleves was finally granted to Henry Fanshawe and Dorothy his wife in 1564.⁴⁰ Henry Fanshawe died in 1617 and was succeeded by his son Thomas, 1st Viscount Fanshawe of Dromore. Although direct evidence is lacking the manor was probably brought by Thomas's daughter Mary to Sir Thomas Campbell (d. 1665) in marriage.⁴¹ In 1687 the manor was held by their son Sir Thomas Campbell Bt., who had been succeeded by his brother Sir Henry Campbell Bt. by 1692.⁴² Henry was alive in 1697, but by 1716 the manor had passed to Lady Catherine Campbell who was still held in 1723.⁴³

The manor was soon afterwards purchased by John Blatch, a Colchester merchant, whose daughter Sarah may have brought it by marriage to John Edwards, physician, by 1739. He was apparently dead by the following year when his widow, who held in jointure, was lady of the manor. She apparently died after 1776, but ownership had already passed to Revd. Erasmus Warren two years earlier.⁴⁴ It had passed to Valentine Warren by 1809, to Revd. Joseph Turner by 1816, to Leonard Foaker by 1837 and Jeremiah Foaker by 1840.⁴⁵ The descent after that date is uncertain. Col. (later Maj.-Gen.) H.F. Williams appears to have held it from 1878 to 1898, followed by trustees of his will until 1917, presumably holding for his widow Jessie S.E. Williams recorded as lord in 1903.⁴⁶ The estate remained an important local farm with owner-occupier farmers in the 20th century, including two generations of the Fleming family from 1937 to 1994.⁴⁷

Sneating Hall manor, otherwise Sneddon or Sniting Hall, was the endowment of the 14th prebendal stall on the right hand side of the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral. The names of

³⁷ *Bk. of Fees*, i. 237, 241; ii. 1430.

³⁸ *Feud. Aids*, ii. 130, 154; *Cal. Close*, 1343–46, 600.

³⁹ *L. & P. Hen. VIII*, xv. 284–5.

⁴⁰ *Cal. Pat.* 1563–66, 100.

⁴¹ PRO, C 142/359, no. 111; Morant, *Essex*, i. 484; *Complete Peerage*, v. 255; See also: PRO, C 105/39/1; 110/23; H.C. Fanshawe, *The History of the Fanshawe Family* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1927), 127–30.

⁴² ERO, D/DB T1135–6; D/DU 271/32.

⁴³ *Ibid.* D/DMn 10; D/DHt T151/1, 5; D/DC 41/176.

⁴⁴ Wright, *Hist. Essex*, ii. 799; *Hist. Essex by Gent.* vi. 73; A.F.J. Brown, *Essex at Work 1700–1815* (Chelmsford, 1969), 156; ERO, D/DU 526; D/DC 12/1, pp. 1, 8; 12. Morant, *Essex*, i. 484, states that John Edwards died in 1757.

⁴⁵ ERO, D/DC 12/1, pp. 41, 44, 51; *ibid.* D/CT 198A.

⁴⁶ HMC, MDR (Kirby-le-Soken, Birch Hall); PRO, HMC 5/6, p. 38; *ibid.* MAF 9/58; *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1878–1917).

⁴⁷ L.P. Lonsdale, *Changes in a Rural English Village. A Pictorial View of Thorpe-le-Soken & Landermere 1880–1990* (Lavenham, 1994), 42; *Kirby's Dir. Essex* (1937).

prebendaries survive from the early 12th century, but the manor was first recorded in 1181. It comprised 2½ hides (c. 300 a.) of land in 1222.⁴⁸ The manor remained in the hands of canons of St. Paul's until it was sold by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1862.⁴⁹

Sneating Hall was located on the western boundary of the parish, on a minor road to Thorpe-le-Soken. In 1649 it had 126 a. in demesne and 11 small tenancies, and thus probably covered less than 200 a. in total.⁵⁰ The home farm had increased in size by 1840 to c. 146 a., mainly in a block surrounding the house.⁵¹ The manor was leased in the 1640s, and it is probable that it had always provided a rental income for the prebendary.⁵² The house recently built in brick in 1649, comprising a hall, parlour, two butteries, and three chambers above, with a separate kitchen, a milkhouse, flour (boulting) house and cheese loft, was suitable for a substantial tenant farmer.⁵³ It had either been entirely rebuilt or perhaps refronted in brick by the earlier 19th century, and was apparently demolished and rebuilt again in the later 19th or earlier 20th century.⁵⁴ Although the material value of the manor must always have been relatively small, lay owners in the later 19th century may have gained some social distinction through possession of a court and copyholders.⁵⁵ The house and lands apparently remained with the manor until the early 20th century, but were probably then separated. In 1994 the house was a residential home for the handicapped called Peterhouse.⁵⁶

Descent

The names of the prebendaries holding the manor are known from the earlier 12th through to the mid 19th centuries.⁵⁷ The last canon and prebendary to hold Sneating before the dissolution of the chapter in 1651 was John Montford.⁵⁸ The fate of the estate during the Interregnum remains unclear, but at the Restoration it was returned to the dean and chapter.⁵⁹ After the Ecclesiastical Commissioners took control of the Cathedral's prebends in 1840 the right of the serving prebendary

⁴⁸ *Domesday of St. Paul's*, ed. Hale, pp. civ, 38; Morant, *Essex*, i. 483; Neve, *Fasti 1066–1300*, 77.

⁴⁹ 'Third Auction of Lordships of Manors' (sale cat., 1964: copy in ECL, Chelm.), 12.

⁵⁰ Guildhall MS. 25,6342, ff. 125, 128.

⁵¹ ERO, D/CT 198, 198A.

⁵² Guildhall MS. 25,6342, ff. 126–7.

⁵³ Ibid. MS. 25,6342, f. 125.

⁵⁴ Lonsdale, *Rural English Village*, 46, 48; below, this parish, Buildings.

⁵⁵ ERO, D/DEI T160.

⁵⁶ Lonsdale, *Rural English Village*, 48.

⁵⁷ Neve, *Fasti, 1066–1300*, 77–8; John le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300–1541, V St. Paul's London*, compiled by J.M. Horn (1963), 60–2; John le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1541–1857, I St. Paul's London*, compiled by J.M. Horn (1969), 57–8.

⁵⁸ Guildhall MS. 25,632, f. 124; Neve, *Fasti, 1541–1857, 1066–1300*, 57.

⁵⁹ ERO, D/DEI T161; 'Third Auction of Lordships of Manors' (sale cat., 1964: copy in ECL, Chelm.), 12.

was protected until his death in 1862.⁶⁰ The Commissioners then sold the manor to Frederic Foaker, lessee of Thorpe Hall, presumably a relative of Jeremiah Foaker who earlier had been owner of Birch Hall and lessee of Sneating Hall. Ten years later Frederic sold it to John Salmon his own former tenant at Sneating Hall.⁶¹ Salmon let the farm to J.T. Salmon, perhaps his son, who also took on the lease at Birch Hall.⁶² The elder John Salmon died before 1898 but his widow continued to live at the Hall until c. 1906.⁶³ Three years later the trustees of his will sold it to H.E. Paine, lord of the Soken manors. In the 1920s and 1930s the house and farm were occupied by Capt. R.J. Woodgett, but it is not known whether he owned the land. The estate passed into the hands of the Coggeshall solicitor J.L. Beaumont, who sold it in 1964 to D.T. Allen of Sneating Hall. It is not known whether the manorial rights and ownership of the land remained united in the 20th century.⁶⁴

OTHER ESTATES

Grovehouse was first recorded in 1332 when John of Welnetham sold an estate of 188 a. in Kirby to John of Broxbourne and Margery his wife.⁶⁵ It probably never grew much larger; in 1571, when it was styled a manor, it comprised a house, 200 a. of land and 20s. rent. in Kirby and Walton.⁶⁶ By 1630 the estate had apparently contracted to 126 a. and remained that size in 1753.⁶⁷ The reputed ‘manor’ was therefore probably of little significance, and there is no evidence that it had a substantial body of tenants and no evidence of a manorial court. In the Middle Ages it was held of the dean and chapter of St. Paul’s, whose overlordship was recorded up to 1409.⁶⁸ The location of the house and estate is unknown, but it probably lay in the east of the parish.

Although a continuous descent cannot be traced, the limited information that survives indicates that no one family retained ownership for more than a century. John of Broxbourne died in 1342 and

⁶⁰ *White’s Dir. Essex* (1848), p. 459; ‘Third Auction of Lordships of Manors’, 11; Neve, *Fasti, 1541–1857, 1066–1300*, 58.

⁶¹ ERO, D/CT 198, 198A; ‘Third Auction of Lordships of Manors’, 12.; below, Thorpe-le-Soken, Landownership.

⁶² *Kelly’s Dir. Essex* (1890–1912).

⁶³ *Ibid.* (1878–1906).

⁶⁴ ‘Third Auction of Lordships of Manors’, 12; HMC, MDR (Kirby-le-Soken, Sneating Hall); *Kelly’s Dir. Essex* (1926–37). Manorial records 1588–1935, formerly in the ERO but reclaimed by the depositor in 1966, would probably throw further light on the fate of the estate: ERO, D/DU 581/1–24 (catalogue); below, this parish, Local Government.

⁶⁵ *Feet of F. Essex*, iii. 26. See also: below, this parish, Religious History.

⁶⁶ *Feet of F. Essex*, v. 163; BL, Add. Ch. 74450; ERO, T/A 68.

⁶⁷ PRO, C 142/742, no. 186; ERO, D/DHt T151/8.

⁶⁸ *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, viii. 257–8; xix. 227–8.

was succeeded by his son Robert.⁶⁹ Thereafter the estate descended in the Broxbourne family until Edmund Broxbourne sold it to Bartholomew Bouchier and his wife Idonea, possibly about 1395. Bartholomew died in 1409 and was succeeded by Elizabeth his daughter, then a minor.⁷⁰ By 1412 Robert Morley held a tenement called Grovehouse ‘in Walton’, probably the same estate, which he had presumably obtained by purchase from Elizabeth Bouchier.⁷¹

The estate was apparently next recorded in 1503 when Margaret, lady Shaa, widow of Sir John Shaa, brought lands called Grovehouse in Tendring Hundred to Sir John Raynsford or Rainsford in marriage.⁷² He was succeeded before 1540 by his son of the same name who died without issue in 1560. His heirs, Christopher Edmonds, John Goodwin and Anne wife of John Josselyn, who were descended from his father’s first wife’s sister, Elizabeth Starkey, apparently sold the manor.⁷³ In 1571 William Waldegrave and Elizabeth his wife sold it to Thomas Bussard, and six years later Bussard and his wife Elizabeth sold it to William Thymble.⁷⁴ Robert Alefounder held the estate on his death in 1630 when he was succeeded by his son also called Robert.⁷⁵ In 1753 the reputed manor of Grovehouse was owned by Mary Stebbing who apparently sold it to Lott Knight of Ipswich.⁷⁶ At some time later in the 18th century it apparently passed to Revd. Shaw King and was combined with his copyhold estate called Mereland.

Mereland was an estate in Kirby and Walton, held by Sir John Shaw, Colchester MP and Recorder in the later 17th century. The estate descended to his grandson Gabriel Shaw in the 18th century, whose daughter Elizabeth married John King. He was succeeded by his son Revd. Shaw King of Comarques, Thorpe-le-Soken. In 1752 Shaw King’s estate of Mereland comprised 229 a.⁷⁷

Horsey Island formed part of Birch Hall manor until it was sold, before 1840, to Henry Blanshard. He had been succeeded by Richard Blanshard of Lymington (Hants.) by 1848, who owned 929 a. of grazing on the Island in 1863 and was a major benefactor of Kirby church.⁷⁸ He died in 1894 and was succeeded by his nephew Col. R.P. Davis of New House farm, Walton-on-the-Naze, who

⁶⁹ Ibid. viii. 257–8.

⁷⁰ Ibid. xix. 227–8.

⁷¹ *Feud. Aids*, vi. 440.

⁷² *Cal. Close*, 1500–09, 134–5.

⁷³ PRO, C 142/127, no. 3; Morant, *Essex*, i. 461–2, 483.

⁷⁴ *Feet of F. Essex*, v. 163, 211; BL, Add. Ch. 74450; ERO, T/A 68.

⁷⁵ PRO, C 142/742, no. 186; Morant, *Essex*, i. 483.

⁷⁶ ERO, D/DHt T151/8.

⁷⁷ Ibid. D/DEI T2/41; D/DHt T111/4; ERO, T/P 195/8, no. 24, p. 28; Wright, *Hist. Essex*, ii. 798; Morant, *Essex*, i. 483.

⁷⁸ ERO, D/CT 198, 198A; *White’s Dir. Essex* (1848), 459; (1863), 497; *Kelly’s Dir. Essex* (1890), 214; below, this parish, Religious History.

remained a major landowner in the parish until his death in 1915.⁷⁹ It was sold to J.W. Eagle of Walton Hall before 1917, and when added to Eagle's other landholdings in Kirby at Marsh House and Brick Barn farms made him the most important landowner and farmer in the Kirby and Walton district.⁸⁰

The Improprate Rectory of Kirby descended with the manor of Kirby Hall until the mid 18th century when the tithes were alienated, probably by Elizabeth, Countess Rivers, eventually passing like the house and landed estate to the Honeywood family. The lay impropiator when the tithes were commuted in 1840 was W.P. Honeywood.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1894–1914); P.B. Boyden, *Joint Stock Resort* (2003), 5–6.

⁸⁰ *Kelly's Dir. Essex* (1917–37).

⁸¹ *L. & P. Hen. VIII*, xix (1), p. 495; *Cal. Pat.* 1550–53, 136–7; *Hist. Essex by Gent.* vi. 74; ERO, D/DHt T439; T455; *ibid.* D/CT 198A.