



## MANORS AND OTHER ESTATES

Before the Norman Conquest, Leofric son of Leofwine had held the lordship of the settlement then known as Kirby.<sup>1</sup> Although he died in 1057, this may have been Leofric, Earl of Mercia, whose lands in Shropshire and Warwickshire are still recorded under his name in Domesday Book.<sup>2</sup>

In the Domesday Book of 1086 Kirby and seven other 'parishes' were part of the overall Manor of Melton held by Geoffrey de Wirce.<sup>3</sup> There were 24 carucates (c. 3000a.) in Kirby and Geoffrey held 17 of these directly, sub-letting the other seven to Ralph.<sup>4</sup>

When Geoffrey de Wirce died his estate was divided between Robert de Mowbray and Nigel de Albini.<sup>5</sup> Robert was imprisoned for many years for taking part in a revolt against William II, and ended his life as a monk. Nigel de Albini became the sole lord of Melton and its manor of eight attached 'parishes'. He had two sons: the elder, Roger, took the surname Mowbray, as he was connected with that family on his

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<sup>1</sup> A. Williams and G.H. Martin (eds.), *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation* (London, 2002), 643, 644.

<sup>2</sup> Ann Williams, 'Leofric, earl of Mercia (d. 1057)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2005 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16470 accessed 30 Sept 2013]; New Minster Winchester, Charter S. 1420; R. R. Darlington, P. McGurk & J. Bray, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester* (1995.) 582-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Domesday*, 643, 644.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> D. Greenway (ed.), *Charters of the Honour of Mowbray 1107-1191* (1972).

mother's side, and the younger son, Hamo(n), took the surname Beler.<sup>6</sup> The Mowbrays were to continue as overlords of Melton and most of the surrounding area through much of the rest of the medieval period, although there was an interruption between 1322 and 1327, when they forfeited their estates to the Despensers.<sup>7</sup> A branch of the Belers became dominant at Kirby.

The *Nomina Villarum* of 1316 lists five main landholders in Kirby: Robert Rampayn, Roger Beler, John of Houby, Roger Zouche and the prior of Kirk(e)by i.e. Monks Kirby in Warwickshire.<sup>8</sup> The latter manor had also been held by Geoffrey in 1086.<sup>9</sup> Some members of this list may have been tenants of others, for example, in 1323 Beler and the Prior of Monks Kirby both held messuages (houses with land) of Robert Rampayn, who held of the master of the leper hospital at Burton Lazars, who in turn held directly of the king, as the Mowbrays had forfeited their holdings at this time.<sup>10</sup>

Archaeological evidence suggests that there could have been two manors in the thirteenth century, as indicated by the presence of two moated sites close to the present village.<sup>11</sup>

### ***The northern manor***

The moated site to the north of the church possibly stems from a gift by Nigel de Albini, the overlord of Kirby, to Robert D'Ayville. Although documentary evidence for this gift has not been found, Nigel de Albini gave land in Egmanton (Notts.) to

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<sup>6</sup> British Library, Cotton Ms, Nero cxii.

<sup>7</sup> TNA, SC 8/36/1763: petition, 1322-6?; *Cal. Close* 1327-1330, 52.

<sup>8</sup> *Feudal Aids*, 5, 186.

<sup>9</sup> *Domesday*, 668.

<sup>10</sup> TNA, C143/152/9: *Inquisition ad quod damnum*, 1323.

<sup>11</sup> Hartley, *Medieval Earthwork*, 30.

Robert D'Ayvill.<sup>12</sup> In 1199, Juliana d'Ayvill, widow of (a later) Robert d'Ayvill,<sup>13</sup> granted to three sisters and their husbands a half-share of five carucates 'towards the shade' (i.e. to the north) in Kirby for the service of 1/4 of a knight's fee.<sup>14</sup> She also granted a capital messuage (manor house) there as well as a half-share of the advowson of the parish church, keeping the other half-share of the land to herself as well as the other half-share of the advowson, and the mills and meadows. In 1242-3 Robert de Deyvill held 3/4 of a knight's fee in Kirby of Roger de Mowbray, who was the superior lord and tenant-in-chief (i.e. he held directly of the king).<sup>15</sup>

The three couples in the above agreement were William de Verdun and his wife Alice, Philip de Wasteneis and his wife Amphilisa, and Simon de Sancto Mauro and his wife Yseuda. The sisters claimed the d'Ayvill tenancy had been held by their parents Robert and Dina de Morley. The holding had come to Dina from her father Robert, son of Hardulph of Osgathorpe. A charter, from shortly after 1199, shared out all the tenancies between the three couples and the Kirby holding was given to Philip and Amphilisa de Wasteneis.<sup>16</sup> The Sancto Mauro family reappears in Kirby in 1228 when Almaric de St Amando was granted a holding of William de Ovill (D'Ayvill) that had escheated.<sup>17</sup>

This capital messuage (manor house) was almost certainly located within the square moated site immediately north of the churchyard. Modern Ordnance Survey maps name this as the location of Kirby Priory,<sup>18</sup> but this site does not accord with 14th

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<sup>12</sup> J. Throsby, *Thoroton's History of Nottinghamshire: Republished with Large Additions by John Throsby*, 3 (1796), 216-19.

<sup>13</sup> *Cur. Reg.* IX, 291.

<sup>14</sup> TNA, CP 25/1/121/2-3: feet of fines, 1 John 1199.

<sup>15</sup> *Book of Fees*, II, 291.

<sup>16</sup> BL, Add. Ch. 5235; I.H. Jeayes, *Descriptive Catalogue of Derbyshire Charters* (1906), 215.

<sup>17</sup> *Cal. Chart.* 1226-57, 67.

<sup>18</sup> OS map 1:25000, sheet 246 (2000 edn).

century descriptions of the location of the collegiate chapel (see below). In 1302, William de Kirby died seised of a messuage, 2.5 virgates and rents held of John de Wasteneys for 1/4 of a knight's fee.<sup>19</sup> He had inherited this tenancy in 1302, on the death of his brother John of Kirby.<sup>20</sup>

As both John and his brother William of Kirby died without issue their estate came to Sir Gilbert of Hoby (Hoby), the husband of their sister Maud.<sup>21</sup> Their son John of Hoby was one of the five landholders named in the *Nomina Villarum* of 1316. By 1319, this land appears to have come into the hands of Roger Beler, as it was given by him that year to his chantry foundation to create a collegiate chapel. The donations included the former capital messuage (manor house) and adjacent croft, which had been held by John of Hoby, in the area 'called Bromhull' on the north side of the church.<sup>22</sup> This field is called Brummels today.<sup>23</sup> Another grant to the chapel from Beler was the croft called Wasteneyscroft, perhaps once held by the de Wasteneis family, but which Beler said in 1319 'I had of the gift and feoffment of John of Hoby', which lay immediately on the south side of the church yard.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the rest of the fourteenth century the Hoby family tried to recover their holdings from the Beler family but without success.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* IV, 54.

<sup>20</sup> W. Stubbs, *Registrum Sacrum Anglicanum* (2nd edn, 1897), 67.

<sup>21</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* IV, 54.

<sup>22</sup> LA, Linc. Reg. III, 1319, 345; A. Hamilton Thompson, 'Chapel of St Peter at Kirby upon Wreake', *Trans. LAHS* 16 (1929-31), 166.

<sup>23</sup> ROLLR, FNS, Frisby and Kirby Women's Institute Field-name survey 1974.

<sup>24</sup> LA, Linc. Reg. III, 1319, 345; Hamilton Thompson, 'Chapel', 166-7.

<sup>25</sup> *Cal. Close* 1354-60, 75.



Moated site north of church: the capital messuage of John of Kirby in the 13th century

The lordship of Kirby was soon after 1204 probably in the possession of the Rampaine family.<sup>26</sup> This family donated several parcels of land to religious foundations, especially the Leper Hospital at Burton Lazars.<sup>27</sup> They also gave, some time after 1216, seven bovates and a capital messuage to the Prior of Monks Kirby in Warwickshire.<sup>28</sup> Both the Prior and Robert Rampayn are in the list of landholders in 1316.<sup>29</sup>

### ***The southern manor***

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<sup>26</sup> J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, II, (1795, reprinted 1971), 222.

<sup>27</sup> D. Greenaway, *Charters of the Honour of Mowbray*, xxxiv, n. 1; British Library, Cotton Ms, Nero cxii, f.45.

<sup>28</sup> TNA, C143/152/9: *Inq. ad quod damnum*, 1323.

<sup>29</sup> Feudal Aids, 5, 186.

In 1318 the prior of Monks Kirby, one of Beler's overlords, declared that Beler held Kirby (Bellars) manor and there was further confirmation in 1324.<sup>30</sup> From this time there appears to have been only one manor in the parish.<sup>31</sup> Beler had been involved with the rebellion of Thomas Earl of Lancaster's party against King Edward II, but in 1318 he managed to obtain pardons for the Earl and his co-conspirators, and then went over to the king's side.<sup>32</sup> He was awarded Framland Hundred in November 1318.<sup>33</sup> He also became a justice, a baron of the national exchequer in 1322 and acting treasurer in 1325, and used his position to confiscate the lands of other rebels. He became a favourite of the Despensers who deposed the Mowbrays for a time.<sup>34</sup> It seems likely that he used his powerful position to become the sole lord of Kirby, his main residence.

Roger Beler would not have been popular with many of his former co-conspirators, or perhaps with other landholders in Kirby. In 1326 he was murdered at Brooksby or near Rearsby by the notorious gang of Eustace de Folville of Ashby Folville,<sup>35</sup> while on his way from Kirby to Leicester with a retinue of fifty in order to dine with Henry, earl of Leicester.<sup>36</sup> It is not clear who struck the fatal blow, but Eustace de Folville and members of the Zouche family of Lubbesthorpe were implicated.<sup>37</sup> Roger Zouche is the name of one of the five lords of Kirby in the 1316 return.<sup>38</sup> Orders went out for

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<sup>30</sup> TNA, C143/134/14: *Inq. ad quod damnum*, 1318; *Cal. Pat.* 1321-4, 412.

<sup>31</sup> TNA, C143/134/14: *Inq. ad quod damnum*, 1318.

<sup>32</sup> Jens Röhrkasten, 'Belser, Sir Roger (d. 1326)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1985>, accessed 12 Oct 2013].

<sup>33</sup> TNA, C143/135/5: *Inq. ad quod damnum*, 1318.

<sup>34</sup> Röhrkasten, 'Belser, Sir Roger'.

<sup>35</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1324-7, 238, 283-4.; G. Farnham and A. Hamilton Thompson, 'The manors of Allexton, Appleby and Ashby Folville', *Trans LAHS*, 11 (1913-20), 460, citing Assize Roll 1411B; Nichols, *History*, II, 225.

<sup>36</sup> L. Stephen, ed., *DNB*, IV (1885), 145.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 144.

<sup>38</sup> *Feudal Aids*, 5, 186.

the arrest of sixteen suspects, but most managed to escape into Wales or France.<sup>39</sup>

Following the death of Edward II, the perpetrators were pardoned in 1327.<sup>40</sup>

When Roger Beler was killed in 1326, although he was lord of Kirby manor, he held his land of various overlords, including the master of the Leper Hospital at Burton Lazars, the prior of Monks Kirby in Warwickshire, the abbot of La Dale in Derbyshire, the warden of the chapel of Kirby (Bellars), William Wiseman of Kirby (Bellars) and the abbot of Leicester.<sup>41</sup>



*Effigy believed to be of Sir Roger Beler, died 1326,  
in the south aisle of the parish church*

The southern of the two moated sites was almost certainly the location of the residence of the Belers.<sup>42</sup> The foundation deed for the 1316 chantry states that it was ‘in the high road’ and at ‘no small distance from the parish church, so that it is with difficulty that on ordinary days [those living near the chapel] are able to hear their masses in the same church. Other contemporary documents state it was where ‘many

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<sup>39</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1327-30, 238, 283-4.

<sup>40</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1327-30, 10.

<sup>41</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* VI, 443.

<sup>42</sup> OS map 1:25000, sheet 246 (2000 edn).

strangers pass by' and 'on the southern side of the town'.<sup>43</sup> Its proximity to Beler's residence is indicated by the chapel warden's application for a licence to block off and divert a way between Beler's house and the collegiate chapel in 1319.<sup>44</sup> Thus the chantry, later the collegiate chapel and priory, was not on the northern moated site close to the parish church, but on or near the site of the present seventeenth-century mansion house called Park Farm, which is over half a mile in a straight line from the parish church.

The manor of Kirby Bellars had been settled in 1325 on Roger Beler and his wife Alice and the heirs of their body, with reversion to the wardens of the chapel.<sup>45</sup> On the death of Roger Beler his elder son, also called Roger, was a minor and so the widow Alice Beler was allowed to assume the lordship.<sup>46</sup> Alice appears to have continued in that role until her death in 1368, when she held the capital messuage and one carucate of the master of the leper hospital at Burton Lazars by service of 7s. per annum, and another carucate with 20 a. of meadow and 100s. of rent of the prior of Monks Kirby by service of just 100s. per annum.<sup>47</sup> A Kirby priory rental of 1428, which is a copy of an undated one from the 14th century, shows that Lady Alice Beler also rented nearly an acre of pasture and approximately 35a. of arable in the three open fields of the parish, making payments of 98s. 6d. per annum.<sup>48</sup>

Roger and Alice had two children, Roger and Avice.<sup>49</sup> On the death of Alice Beler the manor was inherited by her son Roger.<sup>50</sup> Despite marrying four times Roger had no

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* LA, Linc. Reg. III, 1316, 211-13.

<sup>44</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1317-21, 321.

<sup>45</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXIII, 215, citing TNA, CP 25/1/124/54 no. 253.

<sup>46</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* VI, 443.

<sup>47</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XII, 191 (TNA, C 135/199/7: Inq. p. m. 1368).

<sup>48</sup> TNA, SC 12/10/8: rental.

<sup>49</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXIII, 215.

<sup>50</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XII, 191 (TNA, C 135/199/7: Inq. p. m. 1368).



male heirs when he died in October 1380.<sup>51</sup> He had been Sherriff of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and held the advowson of the Kirby Priory. He held Kirby manor of seven lords: the Master of Burton Lazars leper hospital, the Prior of Monks Kirby, prior of Kirby [Bellars] Priory, the Abbott of Leicester, the Prior of Laund, the Lord of Se(a)grave and the Abbott of Dale in Derbyshire.<sup>52</sup> In his will, he asked to be buried in the choir of ‘Kyrkeby Belers Priory church’,<sup>53</sup> the first time this place name appears in a document, having been just Kyrkeby or Kirkby upon Wreake (super Wrethek) until this time. The Beler suffix is regularly used from the 1390s.<sup>54</sup>

Roger had two daughters and co-heirs, Margaret, who married Sir Robert de Swyllington, and Thomasia.<sup>55</sup> His manors and lands were divided between them. Thomasia received Kirby Bellars manor with the exception of some lands within the manor, which went to Margaret. Thomasia died before attaining her majority. Her sister Margaret was her heir, thus reuniting Kirby Bellars manor with all its lands.<sup>56</sup> Robert de Swyllington (Swillington) died in 1391, when the land was held of the same seven overlords as in 1381.<sup>57</sup> His widow married John de Eyllsford/Ayllsford.<sup>58</sup>

Margaret Eyllsford (née Beler) died in 1418 at Eynsford in Kent, holding Framland Hundred and Kirby Bellars manor. Her son Roger had died in 1417, so the inheritance went to her 22-year old grandson, Sir Robert de Swillington.<sup>59</sup> On his death in 1420,

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<sup>51</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XV, no. 319.

<sup>52</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XV, no. 323 (TNA, C 136/13/1: Inq. p. m. 1381); A.W. Gibbons, *Early Lincoln Wills* (1888), 32.

<sup>53</sup> Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, III, 123, citing *Gibbons' Early Lincoln Wills*, 32.

<sup>54</sup> For example, TNA, CP 25/1/290/57 (1393).

<sup>55</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XV, no. 321.

<sup>56</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXIII, 215; *Cal. Close* 1381–5, 48; *Cal. Fine* 1377–83, 245–6.

<sup>57</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XVII, no. 124 (TNA, C 136/73/8: inq. p. m. 1391).

<sup>58</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XVI, no. 1082 (TNA, C 136/69/6: inq. p. m. 1392).

<sup>59</sup> TNA, C 138/32: inq. p. m. 1418.

the substantial manor house with its hall, 14 chambers and outbuildings were held of the master of Burton Lazars leper hospital by service of 7s.<sup>60</sup>

Neither Robert nor his brother John had any heirs, so the manor passed to Robert's sister Margaret, the wife of Sir John Gra of Ingleby, Lincolnshire.<sup>61</sup> There was again a lack of male heirs when Margaret died in 1429,<sup>62</sup> and the inheritance went to Ralph Cromwell, a descendant of Avice, daughter of the Roger Beler who was murdered in 1326.<sup>63</sup> Ralph was the third Lord Cromwell, and he reached high office as Chamberlain to King Henry VI and Treasurer of England.<sup>64</sup> He died without issue and was buried at Tattershall, his main residence, in 1455/6.<sup>65</sup> The Kirby lordship then passed to his niece Maud Stanhope, who was married to Gervase Clifton in her third marriage.<sup>66</sup>

In 1484 the manor was acquired by Sir William Catesby.<sup>67</sup> He was one of King Richard III's councillors, serving as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Speaker of the House of Commons.<sup>68</sup> He fought at the Battle of Bosworth on Richard's side, was captured and executed at Leicester three days later. His estates were attainted and several of his properties, including Kirby Manor were given by Henry VII to David Philip of Thornhaugh (Northants.),<sup>69</sup> who had fought for Henry at Bosworth. He

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<sup>60</sup> TNA, C 138/48/71: inq. p. m. 1420.

<sup>61</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XV, no. 323

<sup>62</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXIII, 215.(TNA ,C 139/46/40: inq. p. m. 1429).

<sup>63</sup> *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XV, no. 323

<sup>64</sup> A. C. Reeves, 'Cromwell, Ralph, third Baron Cromwell (1393?–1456)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6767, accessed 12 Oct 2013]

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> TNA, CP 40/887 m. 206.

<sup>67</sup> *Cal. Close* 1476-85, 1209, 1211.

<sup>68</sup> Rosemary Horrox, 'Catesby, William (*b.* in or before 1446, *d.* 1485)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2010 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4884, accessed 12 Oct 2013]

<sup>69</sup> *Rot. Parl.* VI, 276a.

became MP for Northamptonshire from 1491 to c. 1504 and was knighted in 1503.<sup>70</sup> He died in 1506 and left his main bequests to his son Hugh, but whether Hugh inherited Kirby Manor is not clear.<sup>71</sup>

Sir William Catesby's mother-in-law was half-sister to the mother of King Henry VII, but this relationship did not seem to have helped in quickly restoring Sir William's estates to his heirs. His widow, Margaret Catesby, died in 1494 one year before the attainder was reversed.<sup>72</sup> The heir was the eldest surviving son, George Catesby, whose main residence was Ashby St Ledgers in Northamptonshire, which was restored to him.<sup>73</sup> The manor of Kirby Bellars may have been excluded from the restoration. Many restrictions were placed on the reversal of attainder and there appears to be only one Leicestershire manor (Houghton-on-the-Hill) in his possession at his death in 1507.<sup>74</sup>

Sir John Grey was granted the former priory property by the king in 1548, and the rectory and advowson of the parish church was added two years later.<sup>75</sup> The ex-priory estate had closes of land and pasture, including Overbromehill and Netherbromehill, which are surely the same as Bromhull of 1319. So 12 years after the dissolution the Bromhull site was farmland. Grey was probably also granted the manor itself, which formed part of his widow Mary's property in 1573.<sup>76</sup> John (later Lord Grey) was the brother of Henry, 1st Duke of Suffolk, and his estates were forfeited under Queen Mary I for his part in Wyatt's Rebellion, although he escaped execution. His lands

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<sup>70</sup> J.C. Wedgwood, *History of Parliament, 1439-1509* (1936), 680-1.

<sup>71</sup> TNA, PROB 11/15/338L.

<sup>72</sup> TNA, C142/10/144: inq .p. m. 1494.

<sup>73</sup> *Rot. Parl.* VI, 490-2.

<sup>74</sup> *Rot. Parl.* VI, 490-2; TNA, C142/19/59,60: i.p.m. 1507.

<sup>75</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1547-53, 277.

<sup>76</sup> TNA, CP 25/2/166/2605/15/16ELIZMICH: feet of fines, 1573.

were eventually restored in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.<sup>77</sup> Following his death in 1564, his widow Mary continued to hold the manor until 1573, when she and her sons conveyed this and other properties to Thomas Markham esquire.<sup>78</sup> After acquiring the manor, Thomas Markham spent much of his time there.<sup>79</sup> His daughter Elizabeth married Edward Sheldon of Beoley, Worcestershire and in 1603 Markham transferred Kirby manor and other property to his son-in-law. The document features a similar list to that of the 1573 transfer.<sup>80</sup> Also in about 1603, Markham transferred the former priory and its lands to Erasmus de la Fontaine,<sup>81</sup> a Huguenot merchant who had escaped religious persecution in France. In 1612 Erasmus died, leaving a widow, Elisabeth, and a son, also Erasmus.<sup>82</sup> The lay subsidy of 1628 suggests that the priory and lands were then owned by the son.<sup>83</sup>

In 1622 Kirby manor and the office of lay rector was transferred from Edward Sheldon and his wife Elizabeth to Erasmus de la Fontaine (II), esquire, and the property listed is fairly similar to 1573 and 1603.<sup>84</sup> He made Kirby Bellars his seat. His children were baptised at Kirby church and he is included in the lay subsidy lists of 1628 and 1642, in both of which he is 'Sir Erasmus'.<sup>85</sup> In 1628 his subsidy payment amounted to 31 per cent of the total tax for the parish on lands that he owned, whilst a further 54 per cent was paid by his widowed mother, Elisabeth, on

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<sup>77</sup> Stanford Lehmborg, 'Grey, Lord John (d. 1564)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11548>, accessed 12 Oct 2013]

<sup>78</sup> TNA, PROB 11/40, ff. 11-12; TNA, CP 25/2/166/2605/15/16ELIZMICH: feet of fines, 1573.

<sup>79</sup> TNA, PROB 11/40, ff. 11-12; TNA, CP 25/2/166/2605/15/16ELIZMICH: feet of fines, 1573; TNA:PRO CP 25/2/166/2605/15/16ELIZMICH: feet of fines, 1573.

<sup>80</sup> TNA,CP25/2/313/1JASIMICH: feet of fines.

<sup>81</sup> MS on de la Fontaine 1603 purchase of ex-priory land was in possession of Wm Herrick Esq. of Beaumanor in 1794: Nichols, *History*, II, 231; TNA,CP25/2/315/20JASITRIN: feet of fines 1622.

<sup>82</sup> TNA, PROB 11/119/626: will 1612.

<sup>83</sup> TNA, E179/134/303: lay subsidy 1628

<sup>84</sup> TNA, CP25/2/315/20JAS1TRIN: feet of fines 1622.

<sup>85</sup> ROLLR, 1D41/3, bishops' transcripts; TNA, E179/134/303: lay subsidy 1628; E179/134/307: lay subsidy 1642.

goods but not lands. As Erasmus was the only person in Kirby paying tax on lands this suggests that he owned both the manor and ex-priory lands at this date. Elisabeth died in 1632.<sup>86</sup> In 1642 Sir Erasmus paid 48 per cent of the parish total of £10 10s. 0d.<sup>87</sup>

The proportionate increase in Erasmus de la Fontaine's tax contribution from 1628 to 1642 may have been the result of the devastating population loss brought about by the building of his mansion and the surrounding Kirby Park.<sup>88</sup> The park was created by the demolition of the daughter settlements of Easthorpe and Westhorpe, in the vicinity of the former priory and old manor house. De la Fontaine was fined £500 in 1636 for depopulation and conversion of land from arable to pasture.<sup>89</sup>

During the Civil War, about 50 Parliamentary soldiers, under Captain Hacker, occupied the mansion house of Sir Erasmus, who was a Royalist sympathiser.<sup>90</sup> Nichols states that the house was an object of vengeance for the Parliamentarians, because of De la Fontaine's affiliation, but the depopulation of Kirby would also have made him unpopular. In February 1644/5 there was a severe skirmish when the Parliamentary garrison was attacked by a Royalist detachment under Sir Marmaduke Langdale. According to Royalist reports the Parliamentarian troops were defeated and deliberately set the fire before they fled to Leicester.<sup>91</sup> Much of the property was destroyed. The house was rebuilt, and a stable block added and these buildings still stand today as Kirby Park Farm, although the porch and dormer windows of the house

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<sup>86</sup> ROLLR, 1D41/3, bishops' transcripts.

<sup>87</sup> TNA, E179/134/307: lay subsidy 1642

<sup>88</sup> Nichols, *History*, II, 231.

<sup>89</sup> Nichols, *History and Antiquities*, II, 231.

<sup>90</sup> TNA, C 3/453/16: Chancery Proceedings, Series ii, 1648; BL, Harl. MS., 911; Nichols, *History*, II, 232.

<sup>91</sup> TNA, C 3/453/16: Chancery Proceedings, Series ii, 1648; BL, Harl. MS., 911; Nichols, *History*, II, 232.

are nineteenth-century additions.<sup>92</sup> Recently the present owner has renamed the property 'The Manor', although the 'Manor House' in Main Street still retains that name.

In the hearth tax list of 1666 Sir Erasmus owned 30 out of a total of 58 hearths in the parish.<sup>93</sup> The present dwelling named Manor House (in Main Street) has three hearths dating from this period. As there was no other person taxed on more than two hearths, it appears that the present Manor House was part of the manorial property in the seventeenth century.

Sir Erasmus married Mary, the daughter of Edward Noel, Viscount Camden. They had seven children, a son called John and six daughters.<sup>94</sup> In 1671, the year of his death, Sir Erasmus settled the manor and the advowson partly on his son and partly on his son-in-law Sir Thomas Meres, who had married his daughter Anne and had already produced a male heir.<sup>95</sup> On the death of John de la Fontaine in 1708, the whole manor and advowson was bequeathed to Sir Thomas Meres (1634-1715), of Kirton in Lindsey, Lincolnshire.<sup>96</sup> Meres was knighted in 1660, probably as a reward for his Royalist sympathies during the Civil War and Commonwealth. He was MP for Lincoln at various dates between 1681 and 1710. He probably spent much of his time at Kirton in Lindsey, Lincoln and London, but was buried in the church at Kirby Bellars in 1715.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland* (1992 edn), 192.

<sup>93</sup> TNA, CP 25/2/677/14 CHASII/TRIN: hearth tax 1666.

<sup>94</sup> Nichols, *History*, II, 232; ROLLR, 1D41/3, bishops' transcripts.

<sup>95</sup> LA, REEVE/1/13/1/11 and 12: will and draft settlement 1671-2.

<sup>96</sup> TNA, PROB 11/552/124: will 1708.

<sup>97</sup> Stuart Handley, 'Meres, Sir Thomas (*bap.* 1634, *d.* 1715)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18583>, accessed 12 Oct 2013]; TNA, PROB 11/552/124: will 1715.

The manorial property and advowson was inherited by his son, Sir John Meres, a Fellow of the Royal Society. He died without issue in 1736 and was buried in the vault beneath the nave in Kirby Bellars church.<sup>98</sup> His only surviving sister, Dame Elizabeth Pettus, wife of Sir Thomas Pettus of Rackheath in Norfolk, inherited the Kirby manor.<sup>99</sup>

In 1740 Dame Elizabeth Pettus conveyed the manorial estate to the widow, Susannah, and niece, Mrs Anna Maria Sanderson, of James Sherard, who had left instructions in his will for the purchase after his death.<sup>100</sup> James Sherard had been born, as James Sherwood, in fairly humble circumstances at Bushby in Leicestershire in 1666. He became an apothecary, botanist and amateur musician and had amassed a fortune worth £150,000 at his death in 1738.<sup>101</sup> He had purchased properties in Leicestershire and at his home parish of Eltham in Kent. He had also arranged for the allocation of his widow's portion of Kirby Manor at her death. This was to be split between Anna Maria Sanderson, on the one hand, and her five children on the other.<sup>102</sup> It was during the Sanderson ownership, according to Nichols, that the old manor house (on the moated site) was dismantled and the materials sold for the building of Baggrave Hall.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Handley, 'Meres, Sir Thomas; ROLLR, DE2317/39/76: partition of estates of Sir John Meres 1737; Parish chest, plan of coffins with inscriptions of de la Fontaines and Meres by John Seagrave, constable and churchwarden 1783.

<sup>99</sup> Nottingham University, Portland Collection, P1 F7/2/1/13: agreement by coheirs to divide estates 1737: P1 F7/2/2/1 deed of partition of estates 1737: P1 F7/2/2/2 final concord 1738.

<sup>100</sup> Nottingham University, Portland Collection, P1 F7/2/1/3: conveyance of manor to Susannah Sherard and Anna Maria Sanderson.

<sup>101</sup> W. W. Webb, 'Sherard, James (1666–1738)', rev. Scott Mandelbrote, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2013 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25354>, accessed 12 Oct 2013].

<sup>102</sup> Nottingham University, Portland Collection, P1 F7/2/1/3: allocation of manor to Anna Maria Sanderson's children.

<sup>103</sup> Nichols, *History*, II, 232.

In 1768 an agreement was made between the Sandersons and Sir Charles Sedley to exchange the Kirby manor with estates in the south of England, including the manors of Southfleet and Scadbury in Kent.<sup>104</sup> The Kirby Manor and land, but not the Park Farm mansion or the advowson, were purchased in 1778 by Edward Manners, the illegitimate son of John Manners, 3rd Duke of Rutland, and Elizabeth Drake, who lived with the Duke following the death of the Duchess. Edward benefitted from the Duke's will,<sup>105</sup> due to the early deaths of his father's legitimate heirs.<sup>106</sup> Park Farm and the advowson went to Sir Charles's great nephew, Sedley or Sidley Burdett, of Foremark in Derbyshire.<sup>107</sup> This meant that there was no manor house attached to the manorial property, and it may have been at this point that the present building in Main Street called Manor House was so designated; the first documentary evidence for this name appears to be in the Poor Rate book for 1844.<sup>108</sup>

Captain Edward Manners of the 21st Light Dragoons lived at Goadby Marwood with his mistress Ann Stafford, with whom he had ten children.<sup>109</sup> He was owner of the manor at Kirby until his death in 1811.<sup>110</sup> His tomb is in the nave of the parish church at Goadby Marwood, and features the Manners coat of arms, despite the illegitimacy.

Ann Stafford inherited the manor of Kirby Bellars and other property at the death of Captain Manners.<sup>111</sup> In the 1812 land tax document she is referred to as 'Lady Stafford',<sup>112</sup> but thereafter as 'Mrs (Ann) Stafford', although there is no evidence that

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<sup>104</sup> LA, REEVE 1/16/1/1: manorial title to Sir Charles Sedley c1768; ROLLR, QS 62/170, land tax..

<sup>105</sup> Derbys RO, D665B/T4: title deed 1778.

<sup>106</sup> Derbys RO, D665 B/T4: grant of manor from Sir Charles Sedley to Edward Manners 1778.

<sup>107</sup> Nichols, *History*, II, 232.

<sup>108</sup> ROLLR, DE 801/21: poor rate book 1844.

<sup>109</sup> University of Nottingham, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Biography of John Manners, 3rd Duke of Rutland (1696-1779) and his descendants.

<sup>110</sup> ROLLR, DE 1217/1-4: Goadby Marwood parish registers.

<sup>111</sup> TNA, PROB 11/1524/202: will of Capt. Edward Manners 1811; ROLLR, QS 62/170, land tax.

<sup>112</sup> ROLLR, QS 62/170, land tax.



she was married. In a paper concerning the appointment of a gamekeeper at Goadby Marwood she is named as ‘Ann Stafford spinster’ in 1815.<sup>113</sup> She continued as lord of the manor at Kirby until her death, in 1827.<sup>114</sup>

Kirby manor was inherited by her son Reverend Edward Manners M.A., rector of Goadby Marwood. However there was a challenge to the disposal of all Ann Stafford’s estates, referring back to the wills of Captain Manners and the 3rd Duke of Rutland. The opposition came from a faction of the Reverend Manners’ brothers and sisters. There followed an extremely expensive court case, carried out intermittently in the Court of Chancery for several years.<sup>115</sup> As a result, at some date between a Chancery hearing in 1833 and Poor Rate book entry of 1836, Reverend Manners lost the lordship of Kirby to his brother-in-law, Stephen John Charlesworth of the Manor House at North Witham in Lincolnshire.<sup>116</sup> Charlesworth had married Edward’s sister, Laura Manners.<sup>117</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth century there were usually tenant farmers residing at the Manor House in Kirby.<sup>118</sup> It may have been during Reverend Manners’ lordship that the newer south-facing part of the present Manor House, in Main Street, was constructed. It is possible that Reverend Manners also lived there for a short time in the 1850s, long after he had lost the ownership of the manor. Despite being rector at

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<sup>113</sup> ROLLR, QS 46/1/6: gamekeepers’ deputations 1815.

<sup>114</sup> TNA, PROB 11/1524/102: will of Ann Stafford; J. Greenacombe (ed.), *Survey of London: Vol. 45: Knightsbridge* (2000), 143-4.

<sup>115</sup> J.W. Mylne and B. Kenn, *Reports of Cases argued in the High Court of Chancery during the Lifetime of Lord Chancellor Brougham and Sir John Leach, Master of Rolls*, I (1834), 330; *Morning Post*, 3 June 1833.

<sup>116</sup> J.W. Mylne and B. Kenn, *Reports of Cases argued in the High Court of Chancery during the Lifetime of Lord Chancellor Brougham and Sir John Leach, Master of Rolls*, I (1834), 330; *Morning Post*, 3 June 1833; ROLLR, QS 62/170, land tax; ROLLR, DE 801/21: poor rate book 1836.

<sup>117</sup> ROLLR, DE 1217/1-4: Goadby Marwood parish reg. 1808.

<sup>118</sup> TNA, PRO HO 107/209, 62.

Goadby Marwood for 31 years, when he died in 1856, he was buried at Kirby Bellars.<sup>119</sup> The chest tomb, commissioned by his daughter Ann, is arguably the most ornate monument in Kirby churchyard. Ann also organised a memorial window to her father, at the western end of the south aisle of the church.<sup>120</sup> One of the panes shows the peacock crest from the Manners coat of arms. Ann, as Mrs Ann Johnson, was also buried at the site of her father's tomb after her death in North Wales in 1866.<sup>121</sup>

Meanwhile, from c. 1836, Stephen John Charlesworth of North Witham was lord of Kirby. He and his wife Laura (born Manners) had no sons but two daughters. The elder one, Laura, married George Killick, who bought Kirby Hall in 1847, probably in anticipation of inheriting the lordship from his father-in-law.<sup>122</sup> However Killick's wife Laura died in 1850 before her father, so the inheritance went to the husband of the second daughter, Mary Anne, in 1853.<sup>123</sup> He was Reverend William Seddon, rector of Anstey in Leicestershire.<sup>124</sup> Mary Anne, who died in 1874, is buried in Kirby Churchyard.

When Reverend William Seddon died in 1879, Kirby Manor was inherited by his only son, also called William Seddon.<sup>125</sup> He died without issue in 1918 and the whole manorial estate was split into lots and sold.<sup>126</sup> The properties included the Manor

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<sup>119</sup> LA, Linc. Reg. XL (Act Book): induction at Goadby Marwood 1825; Kirby Bellars parish burials register still in use.

<sup>120</sup> Minutes of committee meeting, *Trans. LAHS*, I, 156, 31 Aug 1857: design for window.

<sup>121</sup> Kirby Bellars parish burials register still in use; inscription on the tomb of her father, Rev. Edward Manners.

<sup>122</sup> *Morning Post London*, 9 Sep 1845, marriage announcement of Laura Manners Charlesworth and George Killick; ROLLR 10D47/3/18, 20-22: sale of Kirby Hall to Killick 1847; TNA, PRO HO 107/209, 62: Census 1851.

<sup>123</sup> *Morning Post*, 9 February 1853, death announcement of Stephen John Charlesworth; stained glass window in North Witham parish church, Lincs.

<sup>124</sup> *Leicester Chronicle*, 7 July 1849: marriage announcement of Mary Anne Charlesworth and William Seddon; W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. Leicestershire and Rutland*, (Sheffield, 1863), 356.

<sup>125</sup> *Leicester Chronicle*, 9 August 1879: announcement of death of Rev. William Seddon.

<sup>126</sup> ROLLR, DE3177/102: Sale announcement of manorial property 1918.

House in Main Street and the land now occupied by the tree nursery, several houses in Main Street, Kirby Lodge Farm off Dalby Road and Highfields Farm on the Thorpe Satchville Road. The old Flying Childers Inn had already been sold in 1900 and in 1913 it was converted into three cottages to house the servants of the adjacent Kirby Hall.<sup>127</sup>

## **Other Estates**

### *The Priory*

During the middle ages, the main estate other than the manor was that of the chantry, later collegiate chapel, then priory, endowed by Roger Beler.<sup>128</sup> In 1548, after the dissolution of the Priory, the estate was acquired by Sir John Grey of Pirgo.<sup>129</sup> It had 312 acres in the three open fields; closes of land and pasture amounting to 28 acres and 3 roods; another close of pasture of undisclosed size; and three meadows totalling 39 acres. It appears that this former Priory estate and the manorial property were then often in one ownership until 1778.

In 1778 the manor was acquired by Captain Edward Manners, but the mansion on the ex-priory site and the surrounding park were separated again and they became the property of the Burdett family of Foremark in Derbyshire.<sup>130</sup> The area of the latter estate amounted to approximately 110 acres in a 1908 valuation list.<sup>131</sup> The mansion house, now called Park Farm, was occupied by tenant farmers, but the Burdetts used it

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<sup>127</sup> Nthts RO, FS 52/5: auction of Flying Childers 1900; ROLLR DE 682/25: poor rate book 1913.

<sup>128</sup> LA, Linc. Reg. III, 1316, 211-13. See also below, 'Economic History' and 'Religious History'.

<sup>129</sup>, *Cal. Pat.* 1548, 277; *ibid.* 1550.

<sup>130</sup> Derbys RO, D665B/T4: title deed 1778.

<sup>131</sup> W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. Leicestershire and Rutland*, (Sheffield, 1863), 356; ROLLR, DE 558: valuation list for Melton Mowbray Poor law Union 1908.

as a hunting box each year in the winter months.<sup>132</sup> In the 1970s tenant farmer Stanley Green bought the property from the Burdetts.<sup>133</sup> Also connected with the site was the advowson of the parish church and the Burdetts were therefore patrons throughout much of their ownership.<sup>134</sup>

### ***Further Estates***

In the will of Erasmus de la Fontaine junior in 1671, bequests of land were made to his daughters.<sup>135</sup> His only male heir, John de la Fontaine, was childless so an arrangement was made for his daughter Dame Anne Meres and her husband Sir Thomas Meres, to inherit Kirby Manor and the capital mansion on the death of John. However, there was other property in Kirby and elsewhere, and the main beneficiary of Kirby land was another daughter, Dame Penelope Tyrwhit, who was married to Sir Phillip Tyrwhit, a baronet, of Stainfield (Lincs.). The estate then passed to her son Sir John Tyrwhit, 5th baronet, at her death in 1709.<sup>136</sup> The estate consisted of a number of closes rather than farms, but as most of the names have since changed it is difficult to identify them today. ‘Sanham Hill’ would have been near present-day Sanham Farm and ‘Hardwicks’ was in Middlefield in the medieval period; ‘Howbecks Goss’ may have been the former Holbeck in Westfield.<sup>137</sup>

When Sir John died in 1641 the Kirby property and the baronetcy were inherited by his son Sir John de la Fontaine Tyrwhit, 6th baronet.<sup>138</sup> In 1760 the baronetcy became

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<sup>132</sup> W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. Leicestershire and Rutland*, (Sheffield, 1863), 356.

<sup>133</sup> As told to this author by the late Stanley Green.

<sup>134</sup> W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. Leicestershire and Rutland*, (Sheffield, 1863), 356.

<sup>135</sup> LA, REEVE/1/13/1/11 and 12: will and draft settlement 1671-2.

<sup>136</sup> ROLLR, 15D/32/30: settlement 1708; TNA,PROB 11/508/95: will 1709.

<sup>137</sup> ROLLR, FNS, Frisby and Kirby Women’s Institute Field-name survey 1974; TNA,SC6/908/23, 24 and 27: Min. Account Roll, 1395-6, 1399-1400, 1406-7.

<sup>138</sup> ROLLR, 15D/32/32: deed 1741; TNA,PROB 11/1717/114: will 1741.

extinct on the death of Sir John, who had not married.<sup>139</sup> The Kirby land of about 600 acres was then acquired by Mary Jolliffe, wife of John Jolliffe, Member of Parliament for Petersfield in Hampshire.<sup>140</sup> She lived at Bradfield House in Berkshire. In 1773, the earliest extant land tax document shows that she paid nearly 28 per cent of the tax total for Kirby parish. It was the same percentage in 1780.<sup>141</sup> This compared with 53 per cent paid by the lord of the manor and was the second largest amount. The land was in several closes, pastures and meadows and there were nine tenants in 1780. By 1790 the estate seems to have been divided and sold to a number of proprietors.<sup>142</sup>

In 1715, there was a release of lands in Kirby from Tyrwhit to Smith.<sup>143</sup> In 1773 Sir George Smith, baronet, paid just over six per cent of the land tax total for the parish.<sup>144</sup> In 1784 he changed his name to Bromley, at the request of an unmarried cousin on his mother's side.<sup>145</sup> The estate of Sir Henry Bromley, baronet, was put up for sale in 1864 and comprised three farms in Kirby Bellars, totalling nearly 630 a.<sup>146</sup> They were Garlands Lodge (now Hillcrest Farm), Cream Lodge Farm on Gaddesby Lane and Pick's Lodge (now Windmill Farm) on the Thorpe Satchville Road, the total rent being £811 8s per annum in 1858.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> G. E. Cockayne, *Complete Baronetage, 1611-1880*, I (1900), 58.

<sup>140</sup> ROLLR, 15D/32/39; TNA, PROB 11/964/84: will of John Jolliffe 1772.

<sup>141</sup> ROLLR, QS 62/170, land tax.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* 1790.

<sup>143</sup> Nottingham University, Dept of MSS and Special Collections, Sm 1040.

<sup>144</sup> ROLLR, QS 62/170, land tax.

<sup>145</sup> C. Mosley (ed.), *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage*, 107th edn, I (2003), 519.

<sup>146</sup> Nottingham University, Dept of MSS and Special Collections, Sm 673/1/1 sale catalogue and Sm 673/3 map 1864.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, Sm 1008 rental 1858.

VCH DRAFT