

Village Echoes

Manors of Goudhurst (part 2)

A previous Village Echo (September 2018) looked at the various ancient manors in the southern part of the parish of Goudhurst. These included the manors of Bedgebury, Chingley, and Combwell. However, there were also manors in the northern part. The Manor of Finchcocks is probably the one most recognisable to us today owing to the house of that name. The Manor had originally belonged to one Edward Horden, who at one time owned both Great Horden and Finchcocks, but, on his death, it had been inherited by his daughter Elizabeth. It came into the Bathurst family through Elizabeth's marriage to Paul, the son of Robert of Horsmonden.

Moving north from Finchcocks, the next was the Manor of Bockingfold, or Bokinfold as it was then called. The Manor must have been of some considerable size because we are told that, at one time, it had extended into the parishes of Brenchley, Horsmonden, Marden, and Yalding. It came into the hands of Sir Alexander Culpeper during the reign of Elizabeth I. It then went through a number of hands until, during the Commonwealth, it was sold to Stephen Stringer of Triggs. Stephen's daughter, Elizabeth, who was married to Edward Bathurst of Finchcocks, inherited the Manor and it thereby passed into the Bathurst family. In the late 18th century a Court Baron was regularly held, its business being the resolution of disputes involving the Lord's tenants and the enforcement of feudal services owed by them to the Lord.

At the northernmost part of the Parish it was said that the manors of Marden and Maidstone extended into the Parish, although there is little information available to support this. Nevertheless we do know that the Manor of East Farleigh (near Maidstone) included the areas of Pattenden, Hilsden, and Highamden. Hilsden appears to be a variation of Lilsden (see earlier Village Echo) but there is no longer a place called Highamden. Pattenden and Lilsden were, at one point, thought perhaps to be manors in their own right. However, they were more likely to have been Boroughs, i.e. areas carved out of a manor but still being subservient to the Lord of the Manor. Although it might seem odd, at first sight, that East Farleigh Manor extended to Goudhurst, the explanation probably lies in the fact that the Culpeper family of Bedgebury had property in East Farleigh.

At the very tip of the Parish, the area of Winchet Hill was in the Manor of Gillingham. Turning south, we know that Little Horden came within the Manor of Hartridge, Hatridge Manor House being located in Cranbrook Parish. Lastly we come to Glassenbury Manor, which, although the house is in Cranbrook Parish, the manor belonging to it extended over a significant part of Goudhurst Parish.

Although the above manors covered a considerable area of the Parish, the other major landowner was the Church. Much property in Goudhurst had belonged to Leeds Abbey in Kent, the property of which had been taken by the Crown upon the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. However, by a Dotation Charter of 1541, Henry gave all the Abbey properties in Goudhurst to the Dean and Chapter of Rochester. Rochester Cathedral archives contain details of two leases, dated 1661, of property in the Manor of Goudhurst, which comprised the parsonage house and 51 acres. The Cathedral archives contain a wealth of material on Goudhurst, which allows us to trace the history of properties in the Parish and the people to whom they were, over time, sold.

Local History Society
Email: help@goudhurstlocalhistorysociety.org
Website: www.goudhurstlocalhistorysociety.org