

MANORIAL HERITAGE REGISTRY HISTORICAL RECORD EXTRACT

MHR-M-0002822 • MANOR
Hanbury

Evidence status: Unverified
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Location: Worcestershire
Associated places: Worcestershire

LORDSHIP / TITLE ASSOCIATIONS

- Lordship of Hanbury | Associated | medieval period - unknown | Provisional

ABOUT THE MANOR

(Commonly known as Ambridge in BBC Radio 4's "The Archers")
HANBURY derives its modern-day fame from the BBC Radio Programme, the Archers, which renames the village Ambridge. The Archers was first broadcast on New Years Day 1951 and is the longest running serial in the world. The Lordship of Hanbury predates that by not a little. It is thought that there was a monastery here in the 7th century, when Wulfhere, King of Mercia, who died in 675, granted 50 manes at Hanbury to Abbot Colmannus, who was possibly Abbot of Hanbury. The only record specifically mentioning this monastery seems to be a grant preserved in a contemporary text in the reign of Wiglaf, King of Mercia circa 836. Soon after it was merged with the church of Worcester. However, there is an early reference to Hanbury in the reign of King Offa of Mercia between 757 and 775, when Abbot Ceolfrith gave the church of Worcester 20 manes (dwellings) at Hanbury which had descended to him from his father Cynebert; the latter had received an estate at Ismere nearby from King Ethelbald of Mercia. At the time of the Domesday Survey, the church of Worcester held Hanbury, where there were 14 hides that paid geld, two of which were waste. Attached to the Manor were salt pits in Droitwich which rendered 105 mits (an indeterminate, but small, quantity) of salt yearly. In the 12th century survey of the hundred of Oswaldslow, the church still held these 14 hides. In 1237-8 the Bishop increased his holding by a purchase from Henry son of Geoffrey de Hanbury and in 1291 the Manor was worth £24 a year. The Bishop had a park at Hanbury and obtained a grant of free warren from Henry III in 1255. In 1315, Bishop Maidstone ordered that certain

presumptuous sons, who had impeded and molested the Bishop's peaceful possession of his wood in Hanbury, should be denounced as excommunicate within the diocese of Worcester . It remained with the successive Bishops of Worcester until the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558. Under an Act of Parliament passed in 1559, Elizabeth I retained the Manor compensating the see of Worcester with a number of small rectories. Perhaps the most famous Lord of Hanbury was Bishop Wolfston of Worcester, who was charged with editing Domesday book in 1086. In 1590 at the request of Sir Francis Knollys, (whose wife was a cousin of the Queen) his daughter Elizabeth, and her husband Sir Thomas Leighton, the Queen granted the Manor in fee farm to Robert Cecil, Sir Francis Knollys, junior, and Henry Killigrew to the use of Sir Francis, Treasurer of the Household, with the condition that if Sir Thomas and Elizabeth paid Sir Francis £941 within seven years the Manor would be theirs. Eventually Sir Thomas did inherit the Manor and he settled it on his son Thomas on the occasion of his marriage in 1609. Thomas's son Edward inherited Hanbury in 1617 and the latter had livery of it in 1631 only to sell it in the same year to Edward Vernon, the eldest son of Richard Vernon, Rector of Hanbury. Edward Vernon who suffered at the hands of Parliament and the King for his support of Charles I in the Civil War died in 1666 and was succeeded by his son Richard. On Richard's death in 1678, the Lordship passed to his son Thomas Vernon, who was a celebrated lawyer and added much to the estates of the family. When he died without issue in 1721 he left Hanbury to his cousin Bowater Vernon, son of William Vernon of Caldwell, near Kidderminster, who died in 1735. Bowater was succeeded by his son Thomas Vernon, the latter dying in 1771 leaving an only daughter Emma, who married Henry Cecil, first Marquess of Exeter. On her death in 1818, the estates passed to her cousin, Thomas Shirley Vernon, who died in 1825. His eldest son, Thomas Taylor Vernon died in 1835 and Hanbury passed to his son Thomas Bowater Vernon who died unmarried in 1859. He was succeeded by his brother Harry Foley Vernon, who was created a Baronet in 1885 and the Lordship remained in the possession of his descendants until the 1940s.

Rights, customs and incidentsThe Bishop had a park at Hanbury and obtained a grant of free warren

from Henry III in 1255.

Catalogue sourceLot #16 Manorial Auctioneers Partnership June 1991

Associated manorial documents / archive referencesComputus rolls 1378 - 1680 Hereford & Worcs

ROCourt Rolls Rentals, 17th - 18th centuryMap 1731 - ?Extracts of Court Rolls 19th centuryValor

& Computus Rolls 1449 - 59 British LibraryEstreats 1560 - 66 PROCourt Roll 1659, 1666 Birmingham

Ref LibraryA Note on Ambridge:BBC Radio 4 describes Ambridge as a typical Dorsetshire village

nestling in a valley below Lakey Hill. From the top, you can see across the Vale of Am as far as the

Malvern Hills. Six miles to the north is the town of Boreham and 17 miles to the east lies

Felpersham with its shops, theatre, and majestic cathedral. Ambridge itself has a post office, pub,

and church to serve its 360 inhabitants. Perhaps Boreham represents Bromsgrove and Felpersham

represents Stratford Upon Avon. Possible the Bull Inn, run by Sid and Kathy Perks in the radio show,

is the Vernon Arms. (I knew Jack Archer, played by Dennis Folwell, who died in 1972. Just as he was

a stalwart of the Bull, so he was in real life a stalwart of the Old Horse, Stonegate, Leicester,

when I knew and drank with him occasionally in the late 1960s. He was as much a character at the Old

Horse, or Leicestershire County Cricket Club as he was at the Bull - RS) An information pack is

available from the BBC on 021 414 8888. Tours of the Archer Country are also organized.

OWNERSHIP / HOLDER ACCOUNT

Historical holder / succession informationhis son Thomas Vernon [source claim requiring identity

review]1678 • passed_to • historical_holder_or_transfereeSource wording: On Richard's death

in 1678, the Lordship passed to his son Thomas Vernon, who was a celebrated lawyer and added much to

the estates of the family.

CONVEYANCE / DESCENT

- 1237 - 1238 | Bishop of Worcester | purchase | Manor Property |

- 1559 - 1590 | Elizabeth I | statutory transfer or retention | Manor Property |

- 1590 - 1590 | Robert Cecil; Sir Francis Knollys junior; Henry Killigrew | grant in fee farm | Manor Property |

- 1590 - 1609 | Thomas Leighton and Elizabeth Leighton | inheritance and settlement | Manor Property |

- 1609 - 1617 | Thomas Leighton junior | marriage settlement | Manor Property |

- 1617 - 1631 | Edward Leighton | inheritance and livery | Manor Property |

- 1631 - 1666 | Edward Vernon | sale | Manor Property |
- 1666 - 1678 | Richard Vernon | inheritance | Manor Property |

RECORDED RIGHTS

- Free warren: Henry III granted the Bishop of Worcester free warren at Hanbury in 1255.
- Park: The Bishop of Worcester maintained a park at Hanbury.
- Salt-pit renders at Droitwich: At Domesday, salt pits in Droitwich were attached to Hanbury and rendered 105 mits of salt yearly.

RESEARCH GAPS / WANTED EVIDENCE

- [OPEN] The specific historical form or forms of the manor name beyond Hanbury are not established. | Wanted: Source-backed evidence resolving this point
- [OPEN] The date and legal status of any surviving Lordship of Hanbury are unknown. | Wanted: Source-backed evidence resolving this point
- [OPEN] The identity of any current title holder is unknown. | Wanted: Source-backed evidence resolving this point
- [OPEN] The post-1678 succession and the precise date when the Vernon descendants ceased possession require verification. | Wanted: Source-backed evidence resolving this point

DISCLAIMER

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