

MANORIAL HERITAGE REGISTRY HISTORICAL RECORD EXTRACT

MHR-M-0003127 • MANOR

Whiteoxen

Evidence status: Unverified

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Location: Devon

Associated places: Devon

LORDSHIP / TITLE ASSOCIATIONS

ABOUT THE MANOR

THE LORDSHIP OF White Oxen lies in the parish of Dean Prior in the area of Devon known as the South

Hams.

The earliest mention of this Lordship appears in 1242 when it is recorded as Wittekesdeon.

In 1285

it is referred to as Wittekesdon and again in 1303 it [is] noted under the name of Whyttokesdon. The

name originates from the Saxon for Hwituc s Hill and has since been corrupted into White

Oxen. Very little is known of the early history of this Lordship which seems to have followed very

closely the descent of the Lordship of Rattery rather than Dean Prior.

At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 it formed part of the Lordship of Rattery, which was held

by William de Falaise. The entry reads:

Roger holds this of William in 1086.

Of it Roger has half a demesne for 1% a plough.

There Roger has 2 bordars and 1 serf and 100 sheep and

3 acres of meadow and one length of pasture.

By the mid 12th century it was a possession of the Abbey of St Dogmaels in Pembrokeshire, Wales,

after being gifted to that house by Robert FitzMartin, in 1115. After the Dissolution of the monasteries during the Tudor period, the Lordship was granted out by the Crown, though to whom is

rather obscure. By the 17th century the Lordship was in the hands of the Palk family who can be

traced to Henry Palk, who was the Lord of the Manor of Ambrooke during the reign of Henry VII

(1485 1509). The most illustrious member of the family was Sir Robert Palk, after whom, the Palk

Straight, which separates India from Sri Lanka, is named. He was born at Haldon House in Devon in

1717 and, after taking deacon s orders, entered the Royal Navy as a chaplain, before joining the

East India Company in 1751. In 1753 he was appointed as envoy to the Rajah of Tanjore during the dispute over the Carnatic (Indian east coast). Palk was given the task of securing the Rajah's allegiance to England, as opposed to the French and Dutch, a feat he achieved in 1755. After a string of further positions within the Company's administration in India, Palk succeeded as Governor of Madras in 1763. He served successfully in this post for five years before returning to England, having amassed a fortune. In 1772 he was created a baronet and although a life-long Tory, he disputed the regulation of the East India Company enacted by Lord North's Tory ministry in 1773.

On the marriage of Elizabeth, daughter of Walter Palk, a kinsman of Sir Robert, to Sir Henry Carew, the Lordship of White Oxen passed to that family. The Carews are of ancient extraction and originated with Walter Fitz Other, Castellan of Windsor. Fitz Other's son, William Fitz Walter,

moved to Pembroke during the reign of Henry I (1154-1189) and his son William lived at Carru castle in Pembroke, from where the family derived its surname. Instrumental in the Carews move to

Devon was Sir John Carew, whose father had come into possession of the estates in that county on his

marriage to the daughter and heir of Sir William Mohun. When Sir John came of age, in 1332, he was

summoned to Ireland to defend his estates there. In 1349 he became King Edward III's (1327-1377)

escheator in Ireland. Sir John accompanied Prince Lionel's (afterwards, the Duke of Clarence)

expedition to Ireland in 1362.

During the fifteenth century, the Carew family lost most of their lands in Ireland, but consolidated

their estate in Devon at Hacombe, which came into the possession of Sir Nicholas Carew on his

marriage to Elizabeth Croker in the mid-fifteenth century.

Perhaps the most exotic member of the Devonshire Carews was Bamfylde Moore Carew. Born in 1693, his

father was the rector of Bickleigh. When he reached 12 years of age, Bamfylde was sent to school in

Tiverton, where he fell into bad ways. One day he and two schoolmates, who had a small pack of

hounds, hunted a deer over several miles of farmland. They caused so much damage that the farmers

came to Bamfylde's father to complain. He was so scared of being punished that he ran away and

joined the gypsies and entered a life of swindling and deceit. He travelled to Newfoundland and returned to marry the daughter of an apothecary in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. On the death of Clause Patch, the King of the Gypsies, Bamfylde was elected to be his successor. This did not prevent him from being convicted of vagrancy and being transported to Maryland. With the help of some native Americans he escaped, and, posing as a Quaker, he worked his way back to England and continued his criminal life until his death in 1770.

The present Lord of the Manor of White Oxen is Sir Rivers Carew, Bart whose descent is found on pages 12 and 13 in this catalogue.

The Manor of Whiteoxen straddles the parishes of Dean Prior and Rattery, lying a mile north of the Great Western Railway which runs between London and Penzance. It formed part of the Marley Estate which was a property of the Carew Baronets until broken up in the 1920s. Whiteoxen or Whiteoaken as it was also known, was one of a number of manors held by the Carews in the area.

At the time of Domesday Book in 1086 Whiteoxen was part of the Manor of Rattery, which was held by

William de Falaise. The entry reads:

Roger holds this of William (de Falaise) of it

Roger has a demesne for half a plough.

There Roger has two bordars and one serf and

a hundred sheep and three acres

of meadow and one length of pasture.

The descent from this period is rather obscure but in the following century the Manor was granted or

gifted to the Abbey of St Dogmaels in Pembrokeshire, Wales by Robert FitzMartin. In 1242 it is

recorded as Whittekesdean , in 1285 as Wittekesdon and in 1305 as

Whyttokesdon .

These variations of a spelling are entirely normal in the Medieval period when there was no standard

form of written English. The name itself derives from the Anglo-Saxon for Hwitiuc s Hill.

During

the 13th century the Abbey is recorded as holding a fourth part of a knight s fee in

Wittokesdone,

of Nicholas Fitzmartin, of his Barony of Dartington.

The Manor remained as a possession of St Dogmael s Abbey until its Dissolution in 1536.

The Abbey

had been founded between 1113 and 1115 by Ralph FitzMartin, and followed the Tironesian Order whose

founding abbey was at Tiron in France.

It is likely that that the Crown held onto the Manor for some time after the Dissolution as

there is little evidence that it was disposed of in the immediate aftermath of the seizure. By the 17th century it had passed to the Palk family. The Palks were local gentry and first recorded in the person of Henry, who was Lord of the Manor of Ambroke during the reign of Henry VII (1485-1509). On the marriage of Elizabeth Palk, heiress of her father, Walter, to Sir Henry Carew, the Manor of Whiteen, with the rest of the Marley Estate, passed to this ancient family who could claim to trace their ancestry back to the Anglo-Saxon, Ortho, a thegn of Edward the Confessor. The family were established at Ottery Mohun, in Devon by the time of the birth of Sir Peter Carew in 1514. Sir Peter was an independently minded man. He was educated at Exeter Grammar school, but angered his tutors through frequent truancy. On one occasion he escaped lessons by climbing a turret of the city wall and threatening to jump down if his master followed. For this he was punished by being led back to the school on a leash like a dog. At sixteen his prowess in riding and other exercises led him to be noticed by Henry VIII and he was taken to Hampden to be a gentleman on the court. He spent time travelling with the King, and was sent by him to fetch Anne of Cleves, the King's fourth wife from Germany in 1539. In the war with France, which began in 1544, he joined Henry's forces with one hundred foot soldiers dressed in black, at his own expense. A year later his brother, Sir George Carew was captain of the Mary Rose, Henry's flag ship, which floundered in Portsmouth harbour on its way to attack the French fleet. In the last year of Henry's reign, 1547, Sir Peter was made sheriff of Devonshire, and on the death of Henry's son, Edward in 1553 was publicly opposed to the installation of Lady Jane Grey as monarch, instead proclaiming Mary, as Queen. His loyalty was vexed with Mary's proposed marriage to Philip of Spain and he conspired to stop it. His intrigue was discovered and he fled to Italy, before being arrested and returned to England to be confined in the Tower. On the accession of Elizabeth in 1558, he returned to royal favour and retired to his Irish estates. Later members of the family included Sir Thomas Carew, who was made a baronet in 1661 and Sir Henry Carew, Bart, who was Lord of the Manor in 1822. The last member of the family to

hold

Whiteoxen was Sir Rivers Carew.

Whiteoxen remained a part of the Marley Estate until 1925 when the farm was sold with the rest of

the freehold land but the manorial titles were retained. The manor house of Whiteoxen, still stands

today and although not included in this sale can be visited as a bed and breakfast destination. It

had a number of tenant occupiers but the Palk family themselves did not live there but instead

shared their time between their main residence at Haccombe and nearby Marley House. In 1839 it is

noted in an estate terrier that the occupier was James Easterbrook. At the end of the 19th century

it was tenanted by Richard Andrews.

Catalogue sourceLot #14 of Manorial Auctioneers - Undated but Post-2002Lot #5 of Manorial Services

Auction - Winter 2021 - Stephen Johnson

Source notesCatalogue gifted & transcribed for the archive by the Lord of Finchingfield - a

friend to learning | ((Winter 2021 Catalogue Begins))

OWNERSHIP / HOLDER ACCOUNT

Historical holder / succession informationcentury the Lordship was in the hands of the Palk family

[source claim requiring identity review]1485|1509 • lord_of_manor •

historical_holder_or_transfereeSource wording: By the 17th century the Lordship was in the hands of

the Palk family who can be traced to Henry Palk, who was the Lord of the Manor of Ambrooke during

the reign of Henry VII (1485 1509).that family [source claim requiring identity review]passed_to

• historical_holder_or_transfereeSource wording: On the marriage of Elizabeth, daughter of Walter

Palk, a kinsman of Sir Robert, to Sir Henry Carew, the Lordship of White Oxen passed to that family.Sir Nicholas Carew on his marriage to Elizabeth Croker in the mid-fifteenth century

[source claim requiring identity review]passed_to • historical_holder_or_transfereeSource wording: During

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estate in Devon at Haccombe, which came into the possession of Sir Nicholas Carew on his marriage to

Elizabeth Croker in the mid-fifteenth century.Sir Rivers Carew, Bartcurrent_holder_statement

• catalogue_stated_current_holderSource wording: The present Lord of the Manor of White Oxen is Sir

Rivers Carew, Bart whose descent is found on pages 12 and 13 in this catalogue.Palks were

local

gentry and first recorded in the person of Henry [source claim requiring identity review]1485|1509

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Carew [source claim requiring identity review]1661|1822 • lord_of_manor •

historical_holder_or_transfereeSource wording: Later members of the family included Sir Thomas

Carew, who was made a baronet in 1661 and Sir Henry Carew, Bart, who was Lord of the Manor in 1822.

CONVEYANCE / DESCENT

- | Sir Rivers Carew, Bart | current_holder_statement | | Lot #14 of Manorial Auctioneers -

Undated but Post-2002 | Lot #5 of Manorial Services Auction - Winter 2021 - Stephen Johnson

- 1115 - 1536 | Abbey of St Dogmaels | gift or grant | Manor Property |

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