

MANORIAL HERITAGE REGISTRY HISTORICAL RECORD EXTRACT

MHR-M-0003138 • MANOR
Wolverhampton (aka Stowheath)

Evidence status: Unverified
Generated: 16 October 2026 09:45 UTC

Location: Staffordshire
Associated places: Staffordshire

LORDSHIP / TITLE ASSOCIATIONS

ABOUT THE MANOR

(Held in chief and formerly known as Heantune, Wulfrun-Hanton and Wlurenehampton)
In the year 985 the Anglo Saxon King, Aethelred II, Ethelred the Unready, made a grant of 10 hides of land in Heantune to Lady Wulfrun in perpetuity with freedom to dispose of the succession to it as she pleased. The name Heantune is Anglo Saxon for High Town, not so much due to this being the highest point in the area but rather that it straddled a long undulating range of hills running from Rowley and Dudley in the south to Bushbury in the north. Whilst Lady Wulfrun's origins are a little obscure it is clear that she was a person of considerable importance and probably a member of the Wessex Royal House and a descendant of Ethelfleda, Lady of the Mercians and a sister of Edward the Elder.
By a charter of 994 King Aethelred II confirmed to the Lady Wulfrun the lands of Bilsatena (Bilston), Seeges League (Sedgley) and Tresel (Trysull) for the purpose of consolidating the College of Priests that she had established some time after the original grant of 985. The Church at Heantune was dedicated to St Mary up to 1135 then to St Peter and St Paul from about 1258 to 1504 and thereafter to St Peter. By 996 it had become a college accommodating a Dean and several prebendaries or secular canons at which time it took the name of Wulfrun's Hamton from 996 until the conquest in 1066 though two charters confirm continuity of the ecclesiastical holding. Of these the charter of King Edward the Confessor is held to belong to the period 1053-1057 possibly addressed to Bishop Leofwine and Earl Leofric. Therein the King pledges his troth to his priests at Hamton and decrees that they and their monastery shall be free (from taxation) as well as their possession "even as he first had it and he grants them from whatever was rightly

granted to
them".

The Domesday book describes the Lordship of Wolverhampton as formerly comprising 8 ploughs
but then

comprised of 10 ploughs, 14 slaves, 6 villagers and 30 smallholders with 9 ploughs, meadow
for 2

acres. The survey also noted that "the canons hold 1 hide of church lands from Sanson
as tenant

in chief and not as formerly direct from the crown".

In 1078 Sanson of Bayeux, in his youth a protégé of Bishop Odo but then Chaplain to
William the

Conqueror, subsequently also a member of the household of King William II, received Heantune
or

Hantune as a reward for his loyalty. More specifically the charter grants to Sampson the
Church of

St Mary of Wlureheampton with its land and other things and customs as in the time of King
Edward.

Sanson also known as Samson in the 12th Century is known today as Sampson was later Bishop
of

Worcester 1096-1112 until he died on 5 May in that year. Some authorities consider that he
was

probably the compiler, writer and editor of the Domesday book when Hemming, using
contemporary

returns wrote at Worcester when Sampson was its Bishop.

The following century saw various administrations of the church of St Peter and latterly
there was a

move by Archbishop Hubert Walter to elevate the church now re-dedicated to St Peter and St
Paul to

be re-built and extended to an Abbey. The project was supported by charter of King John in
1205,

however on the death of Archbishop Hubert Walter it was rescinded the Abbey left uncompleted
and its

possessions including the manor reclaimed by the King.

Precisely when Wolverhampton was divided into separate manors is not clear, however by the
time of

King Henry III, early in the 13th century, the Manor of Stowheath was formed from the Royal
Manors

of Bilston, Willenhall and one half of Wolverhampton since an extant showing its composition
was

made about 1249. By 1274 the manor had been granted to Robert Burnell, Lord Chancellor and
Bishop of

Bath and Wells held until his death in 1292 when it passed to his nephew, Philip Burnell.

From him

and on marriage to Philip Burnell's daughter Maud it passed to John 2nd Lord Lovel of
Titchmarsh, then through Maud's second marriage to John de Haudlo Kt, to their
daughters

Catherine and Margaret Burnell. The manor then reverted to John 2nd Lord Lovel's line
by his

posthumous child, John 3rd Lord Lovel, however on the death of his son, the 4th Lord Lovel unmarried and a minor it passed to John 5th Lord Lovel, 1408 and to his grandson, William 7th Lord Lovel, 1414 who became, the 'de jure' Lord Holand on the death in 1423 of his grandmother, daughter and heiress of her grandfather Lord Holand, 1373. His son, John 8th Lord Lovel and Holand succeeded 1455 and on his death passed to his son, Francis, Lord Lovel and Holand who in 1464-5 was created Viscount Lovel and being a close associate of King Richard III, appointed a Knight of the Garter in 1483. He had succeeded to his grandmother's Baronies of Deincourt and of Grey in 1474 but was attainted in 1485 following the Battle of Bosworth when all his honours were forfeit to the crown. The manor of Wolverhampton or Stowheath however does not appear to have descended directly to Francis, 8th Lord Lovel and Holand since in 1470 William Braunston and others are found administering the Manor Court, perhaps as trustees and later John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk as Guardian of Henry Lovel, Lord Morley, son-in-law fulfilled the same office until Henry Lovel died childless at Dixmude in 1489. By the Inquisition following his death he was found to have held a moiety of the Manor of Wolverhampton of the King, in chief by knight service and it records that the estate was held in tail male meaning that his cousins could have succeeded had he not been attainted. Following reverter on 18 December 1489, King Henry VII appointed Thomas Tailour, a Yeoman of the Crown, as bailiff of the Lordship of Wolverhampton and later on 18th June 1512, Henry VIII appointed Sir John Gifford, Gentleman Usher of the Crown as joint bailiff. It was re-granted by King Henry VIII to Thomas, 2nd Duke of Norfolk and though Thomas suffered attainder in 1485 he succeeded in re-gaining the Kings favour over time resulting in his honours but not the Dukedom being restored to him; however following his Leadership of the English army at Flodden, the Dukedom was restored to him in 1514 with several grants of land including Wolverhampton. His son, Thomas 3rd Duke of Norfolk, 1473-1554 sold the manor of Wolverhampton or Stowheath to James Leveson, Merchant Of The Staple in 1532 for the sum of 800 marks (£533.6s.4d). In 1533 James Leveson sold half of the manor to Sir John Giffard of Chillington and his son, Thomas Giffard, the two halves of the manor were

later reunited by James Leveson's successors. James Leveson married firstly Alice Wrottesley producing three sons, Richard, Walter and Edward and two daughters, secondly Margey Mitchell widow of William Mitchell and by whom he had two daughters the younger of whom (Joyce) married the grandson of Sir John Giffard (also John), referred to above. In the absence of male heirs, Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Leveson, great grandson of James Leveson left his estate to his 3rd cousin, a great nephew of James Leveson, however Richard being only 7 in 1605, his father Sir John was named as Sir Richard's executor and became obliged at great cost to settle the debts and charges on the estate of both Sir Walter and Sir Richard. His son Richard's marriage to Lady Katherine Dudley was childless and Sir John's first son predeceased him thus on the death of Sir Richard in 1661 he was succeeded by a great nephew, Francis Fowler who married Anne Venables. Francis Fowler died 1667 with his son only surviving him to 1668 the Fowler line became extinct and succession passed to William Gower, later Sir William Gower of Stittenham, 4th Baronet, son of Sir Thomas Gower, 2nd Baronet who had married as his second wife, Frances Leveson, the younger daughter of Sir John Leveson's elder son. Sir Thomas Gower, 2nd Baronet was M.P. for Malton and twice Sheriff of York. He was knighted by King Charles I in 1630 for his allegiance for which he later suffered greatly. His son, Sir Thomas Gower, 3rd Baronet died of fever at Dundalk without issue in 1689. Sir William Gower of Stittenham, 4th Baronet took the name of Leveson-Gower and following the restoration was one of the Duke of Monmouth's bail representing Newcastle under Lyme in four parliaments under King Charles II and in the Convention Parliament of 1688. Sir William Leveson-Gower married 1669, Lady Jane Granville, daughter of the 1st Earl of Bath but died in 1691 and was succeeded by Sir John Leveson-Gower, 5th Baronet created Baron Gower of Stittenham in 1703. He had married Lady Katherine Manners daughter of the 1st Duke of Rutland, there being four sons and three daughters. His son John became 2nd Baron Gower married Lady Evelyn Pierrepont 1712 and was created Viscount Trentham and 1st Earl of Gower in 1746. He is succeeded by his son Granville who became 1st Marquess of Stafford in 1786 and in turn also by his son, Sir George Granville Sutherland-Leveson-Gower who had married 1785, Elizabeth

Countess of Sutherland and Baroness of Strathnaver. He was created the first Duke of Sutherland in 1833 and their son, George Granville the 2nd Duke of Sutherland and 20th Earl of Sutherland inherited one title from each of his parents. Four Successive Dukes of Sutherland were in turn Lords of the Manor of Wolverhampton to be succeeded by their direct descendent and heiress of the 5th Duke, Elizabeth Millicent, Countess of Sutherland In Her Own Right. Rights, customs and incidents Four Successive Dukes of Sutherland were in turn Lords of the Manor of Wolverhampton to be succeeded by their direct descendent and heiress of the 5th Duke, Elizabeth Millicent, Countess of Sutherland In Her Own Right. Catalogue source Lot #41 of Strutt & Parker Auction November 2003 Associated manorial documents / archive references Courts Rolls From c. 1300 Staffordshire Record Office Great and Little Courts 1397 -1399 Staffordshire Record Office Great and Little Courts 1424-25, 1433-34 Staffordshire Record Office Extracts of Fine 1566, 1618

Staffordshire Record Office Extracts of view of Frankpledge 1573 Staffordshire Record Office Enfranchisement Books 1854-1932 Staffordshire Record Office

OWNERSHIP / HOLDER ACCOUNT

Historical holder / succession information Robert Burnell, Lord Chancellor and Bishop of Bath and Wells held until his death [source claim requiring identity review] 1274 | 1292 • granted_to

• historical_holder_or_transferee Source wording: By 1274 the manor had been granted to Robert Burnell, Lord Chancellor and Bishop of Bath and Wells held until his death in 1292 when it passed to his nephew, Philip Burnell.

CONVEYANCE / DESCENT

- 1532 - 1533 | James Leveson | sale | Manor Property |
- 1533 | Sir John Giffard and Thomas Giffard | sale | Manor Property |
- 1274 - 1292 | Robert Burnell, Bishop of Bath and Wells | grant | Manor Property |
- 1292 | Philip Burnell | descent | Manor Property |
- 1514 - 1532 | Thomas Howard, 2nd Duke of Norfolk | royal grant | Manor Property |

RECORDED RIGHTS

- Manorial courts, including Great and Little Courts: The registry records court rolls from about 1300 and Great and Little Court records for 1397 1399 and 1424 1425/1433 1434.
- View of frankpledge: The registry records extracts of view of frankpledge for 1573, indicating the exercise or documentation of this manorial jurisdiction.

DISCLAIMER

This is a historical registry extract generated from the Manorial Heritage Registry. It records the registry's documented research and assertions; it is not a Land Registry title document, legal certificate, or guarantee of ownership, lordship, rights, boundaries, or enforceability.