

MANORIAL HERITAGE REGISTRY HISTORICAL RECORD EXTRACT

MHR-M-0003150 • MANOR
ABBAS HALL MANOR

Evidence status: Unverified
Generated: 15 October 2026 09:52 UTC

Location: Great Cornard, Suffolk
Associated places: Great Cornard, Suffolk

LORDSHIP / TITLE ASSOCIATIONS

ABOUT THE MANOR

Abbas Hall Manor was the manor known historically as Cornard Magna or Great Cornard Manor in Great Cornard, Suffolk. The medieval manor had an assessment of three carucates in Domesday-era descriptions. Abbas Hall itself is a late-thirteenth-century aisled timber hall, dendrochronologically dated to approximately 1289-1290. During the ownership of the nunnery of West Malling in Kent, Abbas Hall was the residence of the manor's steward. The manor should not be confused with the distinct Great Cornard sub-manor later known as Greys Hall, although the two estates were historically connected and the Greys Hall sub-manor was eventually absorbed into the main manor in the sixteenth century.

OWNERSHIP / HOLDER ACCOUNT

The earliest reported medieval holder of the Great Cornard manor was Serlo de Cornerthe, recorded in a twelfth-century tradition. The manor subsequently came to Thomas de Grey through his marriage, probably to Alice, daughter and heir of Sir Richard de Cornard, by about 1304. A direct source states that Thomas de Grey was lord of Abbas Hall before 1316 and that the Abbess of Malling held the manor in 1316 by purchase from him. Another near-contemporary record creates an evidential complication: a 1362 rental for Great Cornard describes Roger de Grey as owner and mentions Fulk de Grey and the Abbess of Malling. The surviving evidence therefore does not establish a simple uninterrupted descent between the de Grey family and West Malling, although the manor was certainly associated with West Malling before the Dissolution. After the Dissolution, the manor was recorded in the hands of Thomas Danyell in 1539/40, but the conveyance from West Malling is not established.

in the sources consulted. A 1612 grant named William Whitmore and John Verdon, while John Brand was lord by 1624. The manor then passed to the Eldred family, with John Eldred and his successors recorded through manorial court activity from the later seventeenth century until 1738. It was evidently sold to John Wall junior, who held courts from 1739; John Wall and his wife Anne held courts jointly from 1751, and Anne continued to hold courts as widow after his death before 1761. In 1770 the manor passed to a group including James Sparrow and Margaret Sparrow, the Reverend John Harrison and Ann Harrison, John Goodeal and Elizabeth Goodeal, and Bridget Bernard. James Sparrow became the principal recorded holder and died in 1777. The manor seems to have vested in his son James Goodeve Sparrow after the deaths of James Sparrow's elder sons in 1786 and 1793. James Goodeve Sparrow died in 1838, after which the manor passed to his son Henry Weare Sparrow and then to Henry's brother Basil Sparrow. On Basil Sparrow's death in 1880 it vested in his son, the Reverend Basil James Harrold Sparrow-Beridge, who was recorded as lord in 1896. The sources also refer to trustees under settlements in favour of Sparrow-Beridge, but do not provide a complete later conveyance or identify all trustees.

CONVEYANCE / DESCENT

- c. 12th century - before about 1304 | Serlo de Cornerthe | Earliest reported holder in the Cornard family sequence; the source does not preserve the immediate conveyance to the next holder. | | Suffolk County Council, Great Cornard parish summary, Manorial section: Cornard Magna/Abbas Hall; W. A. Copinger, *The Manors of Suffolk*, vol. 1, p. 86.
- about 1304 - before 1316 | Thomas de Grey | Acquired through marriage to Alice de Cornard, daughter and heir of Sir Richard de Cornard, according to the published de Grey study; he was lord before 1316. | | G. Crabbe, 'The de Greys of Little Cornard', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, vol. 6, part 1, 1888, pp. 17 18.
- 1316 - c. 1545 | Abbess and Convent of West Malling | Held by purchase from Thomas de Grey in 1316; the later termination corresponds broadly with the Dissolution, but the precise surrender date for this manor is not established here. | | G. Crabbe, 'The de Greys of Little Cornard', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, vol. 6, part 1, 1888, p. 18; *Historic England Research Report 4947*, Tree-ring analysis of timbers from Abbas Hall, Great Cornard.
- 1362 - unknown | Roger de Grey | Recorded as owner in a 1362 rental of Great Cornard; the source does not establish whether this was a reversion, a retained interest, a temporary holding, or a reference to a different portion of the estate. | | G. Crabbe, 'The de Greys of Little Cornard', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, vol. 6, part 1, 1888, p. 17, quoting the 1362 rental preserved at Merton, Norfolk.

- 1539/40 - before 1612 | Thomas Danyell | Recorded as owning the manor after the Dissolution; the means and date of acquisition are uncertain. | | Suffolk County Council, Great Cornard parish summary, Manorial section; W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 86.
- 1612 - unknown | William Whitmore and John Verdon | Received a grant of the manor in 1612; the source does not identify the grantor or establish the subsequent legal disposition. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 86, as reproduced in the Abbas Hall Manor title summary.
- 1624 - after 1624 | John Brand | Documented as lord in 1624; the exact date and instrument by which he obtained the manor are not stated. | | Suffolk County Council, Great Cornard parish summary, Manorial section; W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 86.
- shortly after 1624 - before 1687 | Eldred family | The manor passed from John Brand to the Eldred family at an uncertain date; no conveyance instrument is identified. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 86, and the associated account of Abbas Hall Manor court books.
- after 1694 - before 1733 | John Eldred junior | Succeeded another John Eldred as lord; the precise legal transfer is not stated. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, court-roll summary for Abbas Hall Manor.
- 1733 - 1737 | Mary Eldred | Held courts as the widow of the last Eldred lord; this evidence demonstrates exercise of manorial lordship or court authority but does not by itself establish the nature of her beneficial title. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, court-roll summary for Abbas Hall Manor.
- 1738 - 1738 | Anne Eldred | Held one recorded court before the manor was evidently sold to John Wall junior. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, court-roll summary for Abbas Hall Manor.
- 1739 - before 1751 | John Wall junior | The manor was evidently sold to him after the Eldred family's last recorded court in November 1738. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, court-roll summary for Abbas Hall Manor.
- 1751 - before 1761 | John Wall and Anne Wall | John Wall and Anne his wife jointly held the courts; the source does not state whether Anne held a beneficial share, dower, or joint legal title. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, court-roll summary for Abbas Hall Manor.
- before 1761 - 1770 | Anne Wall | Continued to hold the courts as John Wall's widow after his death; the source then records the manor as passing to James Sparrow and associated co-holders in 1770. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, court-roll summary for Abbas Hall Manor.
- 1770 - 1773 | James Sparrow, Margaret Sparrow, Rev. John Harrison, Ann Harrison, John Goodeal, Elizabeth Goodeal and Bridget Bernard | The manor passed from Anne Wall to this group, which held the first court in April 1770; the source does not identify the conveyance instrument or the shares of the several parties. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, court-roll summary for Abbas Hall Manor.
- 1773 - 1777 | James Sparrow | The later court entries were held by James Sparrow and the Reverend John Harrison; after James Sparrow's death in 1777 the manor ultimately vested in his third son, according to the source's cautious succession account. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, court-roll summary for Abbas Hall Manor.
- after 1793 - 2 October 1838 | James Goodeve Sparrow | The manor seems to have vested in him after the deaths of his elder brothers, the Reverend John Sparrow in 1786 and Thomas Bernard Sparrow in 1793; the source does not cite the vesting instrument. | | W. A.

Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, court-roll and succession summary for Abbas Hall Manor.

- 2 October 1838 - unknown | Henry Weare Sparrow | Inherited or otherwise received the manor as the son and heir of James Goodeve Sparrow; the source does not give his date of death or a separate conveyance. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, succession summary for Abbas Hall Manor.

- unknown - 1880 | Basil Sparrow | Received the manor from his brother Henry Weare Sparrow; the exact date and legal instrument are not stated. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88, succession summary for Abbas Hall Manor.

- 1880 - at least 1896 | Rev. Basil James Harrold Sparrow-Beridge | Inherited or otherwise received the manor on the death of his father Basil Sparrow in 1880; by 1896 the manor had vested in him as lord. | | W. A. Copinger, The Manors of Suffolk, vol. 1, p. 88; Abbas Hall Manor title summary citing the 1896 lordship position and later court books.

RECORDED RIGHTS

- Holding manorial courts: The registry records repeated courts held by successive holders, including the Eldred, Wall, Sparrow and later interests, supporting the existence of historic manorial court rights or court authority.

DISCLAIMER

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