

MANORIAL HERITAGE REGISTRY HISTORICAL RECORD EXTRACT

MHR-M-0003187 • MANOR
ABBOTSLEY MANOR

Evidence status: Unverified
Generated: 14 October 2026 18:13 UTC

Location: Abbotsley, Huntingdonshire
Associated places: Abbotsley, Huntingdonshire

LORDSHIP / TITLE ASSOCIATIONS

ABOUT THE MANOR

Abbotsley was an ancient manor in Toseland Hundred, Huntingdonshire, held originally as one knight's fee. Medieval sources and the Victoria County History associate it with the Ridel family and later with the Tilly, Tame, Semark, Sapcote, Russell and Luke families. By the later fifteenth century the estate had become divided into moieties or related portions. One portion, identified as the manor and estate known as Scot's Manor or Albottesley called Scottesmaner, was acquired for Queens' College, Cambridge in 1470/1 through intermediaries and was subsequently part of the college's Abbotsley estate. The other moiety descended through the Semark and Sapcote families to Anne Sapcote, wife of John Russell, first Earl of Bedford, and was sold by their son Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, to Nicholas Luke in 1561. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Master and Fellows of Queens' College were publicly described as lords of the manor of Abbotsley. Queens' College sold 250 acres at Abbotsley in 1927, but the available source does not establish that this sale transferred the manorial lordship itself; the later descent of the manor or any remaining manorial rights therefore remains unresolved.

OWNERSHIP / HOLDER ACCOUNT

The earliest securely contextualised history is feudal rather than a continuous documentary conveyance sequence. The manor was probably granted by David I of Scotland to Gervase Ridel, who later became a canon of Jedburgh; it apparently passed to his brother Ralph Ridel. A later Ridel, probably Ralph, held the manor about 1230 and in 1244, and John Ridel held it in 1279, 1286 and 1303 before dying in 1312. The manor then passed to Maud, daughter and heir of Thomas Faldingworth, and

her husband Henry Tilly. Before 1334 Maud settled it on her son John Tilly and his wife Elizabeth.

After John Tilly's death about 1362 the manor was divided between his daughters and heirs Margaret and Maud, creating two moieties. The precise marriages and transfers of the two moieties are not fully documented. One moiety is followed through a later pedigree to Sir John Tame, then through his daughter and heir Elizabeth to Nicholas Semark and probably John Browe, and subsequently through Thomas Semark to Anne Sapcote and John Russell, first Earl of Bedford. Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, sold that moiety to Nicholas Luke in 1561. The other portion, known as Scot's Manor, was held in the mid-fifteenth century by William Yorke, his wife Elizabeth and John Tapton as deforciants or feoffees; a fine dated 20 January 1471 recorded the manor's transfer to Thomas Boleyn, Thomas Lacy and Robert Bardsey. The Queens' College History Archive identifies this transaction as the acquisition of Scot's Manor for Queens' College, Cambridge. The subsequent legal history of the Luke moiety and the date on which Queens' College became lord of the whole manor are not established by the sources located.

CONVEYANCE / DESCENT

- probably c.1130 - probably before or about 1158 | Gervase Ridel | Probably granted by David I of Scotland; the source expressly treats this as probable rather than certain. | | Victoria County History, A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2 (1932), 'Parishes: Abbotsley', pp. 257-260, as reproduced in the cited historical summary.
- about 1230 - 1244 | Ralph Ridel | Probably succeeded an earlier Hugh Ridel, who had died seised of lands in Abbotsley before 1224; the exact succession to the manor is not certain. | | Victoria County History, A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2 (1932), 'Parishes: Abbotsley', pp. 257-260, as reproduced in the cited historical summary.
- 1258 - 1312 | John Ridel | Probably succeeded Ralph Ridel as son and heir; the source says that in 1258 it seemed probable that John was in the wardship of John Balliol, and records his holding in 1279, 1286 and 1303. | | Victoria County History, A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2 (1932), 'Parishes: Abbotsley', pp. 257-260, as reproduced in the cited historical summary.
- 1312 - before 1334 | Maud Faldingworth and Henry Tilly | After John Ridel's death in 1312, the manor passed to Maud Faldingworth, daughter and heir of Thomas Faldingworth, and her husband Henry Tilly. | | Victoria County History, A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2 (1932), 'Parishes: Abbotsley', pp. 257-260, as reproduced in the cited historical summary.
- before 1334 - about 1362 | John Tilly and Elizabeth | Maud Faldingworth and Henry Tilly settled the manor on their son John Tilly and his wife Elizabeth before 1334. | | Victoria County History, A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2 (1932), 'Parishes: Abbotsley', pp. 257-260, as reproduced in the cited historical summary.

- about 1362 - after 1366 | Margaret Tilly and Maud Tilly | Inherited as the two daughters and heirs of John Tilly after his death about 1362. | | Victoria County History, A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2 (1932), 'Parishes: Abbotsley', pp. 257-260, as reproduced in the cited historical summary.
- 1448 - after 1448 | Elizabeth and John Browe | Elizabeth, probably after the death of Nicholas Semark, married John Browe; together they levied a fine of a moiety of Abbotsley manor in 1448. | | Victoria County History, A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2 (1932), 'Parishes: Abbotsley', pp. 257-260, as reproduced in the cited historical summary.
- after Thomas Semark; before 1561 - 1561 | Anne Sapcote and John Russell, first Earl of Bedford | The moiety descended to Anne Sapcote, wife of John Russell, first Earl of Bedford, through the Semark line. | | Victoria County History, A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2 (1932), 'Parishes: Abbotsley', pp. 257-260, as reproduced in the cited historical summary.
- 1561 - after 1561 | Nicholas Luke | Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, sold his moiety of Abbotsley to Nicholas Luke in 1561. | | Victoria County History, A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2 (1932), 'Parishes: Abbotsley', pp. 257-260, as reproduced in the cited historical summary.
- 1470/1 - after 1470/1 | Queens' College, Cambridge, represented in the 1471 fine by Thomas Boleyn, Thomas Lacy and Robert Bardsey | Queens' College acquired the manor and estate known as Scot's Manor in Abbotsley through intermediaries. The underlying fine dated one week from St Hilary, 49 Henry VI, equivalent to 20 January 1471, records William Yorke, Elizabeth Yorke and John Tapton acknowledging the manor of Albottesley called Scottesmaner to be the right of Thomas Boleyn, Thomas Lacy and Robert Bardsey, who held it of their gift. | | Feet of Fines, CP 25/1/294/75 no. 20, dated 20 January 1471; Queens' College History Archive, Estate Plans 1825, section 'Estate in the Parish of Abbotsley in the County of Huntingdon'.
- 1898 - 1901 | Queens' College, Cambridge | The college was publicly described as lord of the manor of Abbotsley in late Victorian and Edwardian directories. The source located does not identify the conveyance by which any additional moiety or manorial rights came into the college's hands. | | Kelly's Directory of Huntingdonshire, 1898 and 1901, parish entry for Abbotsley, stating that the Master and Fellows of Queens' College, Cambridge were lords of the manor.
- 1927 - after 1927 | Queens' College, Cambridge | Queens' College sold 250 acres at Abbotsley in 1927. | | Queens' College History Archive, Estate Plans 1825, section 'Estate in the Parish of Abbotsley in the County of Huntingdon', citing A History of the County of Huntingdon: Volume 2 (1932), pp. 257-260.

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