

From the Archives

THE MANOR OF BOSHAM 1040-2009 (PART ONE)

The first thing to establish when talking about 'The Manor of Bosham' is that the word 'Manor' in this context comprised very large areas of land containing significant buildings, very often widely spread over different parts of the country, and was not confined to just a large house in the village called 'The Manor'. It is also important to know that there were two 'Manors of Bosham'. One was an ecclesiastical Manor, that in Domesday Book specifically included Bosham Church, which Edward the Confessor, who reigned from 1042-1066, had given to Osbern, one of his Norman chaplains. Later, when Osbern became Bishop of Exeter, he was able to unite his Bosham estates to his bishopric and was responsible for a community of Benedictine monks in Bosham. In 1121, a later Bishop of Exeter founded a College in Bosham, which continued as a royal free chapel. The college was disbanded in 1548. It is impossible to separate the holdings of the two Domesday Manors, but around the time of the dissolution of the monasteries the ecclesiastical Manor formed quite a large area around the church and extended to other villages.

The other 'Manor of Bosham' was vast and extremely valuable, covering large areas of the south of England as well as land and property in other parts of England. It was this large 'Manor' that Earl Godwin, Harold Godwinson's father, obtained, possibly fraudulently, from the Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of King Cnut, and was one of the main reasons that he became so wealthy, and rose to become the most powerful Earl in the country during the reign of Cnut, his two sons, and Edward the Confessor. Harold inherited 'The Manor of Bosham' at the death of his father, and when he was killed at the Battle of Hastings the Manor passed to William. Any lands recorded in Domesday as being held in Demesne, meaning retained for the Lord's own use, carried Royal privilege over the centuries, and Bosham was the only 'Ancient Demesne' in West Sussex. It is the Lordship of this Ancient Demesne Manor that is up for sale in 2019. It comprises the freehold land which extends to include the foreshore and bed of Chichester Harbour up to the mean high-water mark from the Emsworth Channel to the west of Thorney Island, across to the Bosham Channel. The freehold estate includes Bosham Quay and the Old Mill, now used by Bosham Sailing Club, the dinghy park and other property leased to the Sailing Club.

After the Conquest of 1066, William continued to hold the Manor for a number of years and then gave it to various Earls, Marshalls and Dukes during which time the Manor of Bosham was often used to raise loans and titles, and at one time Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire was taken away by Royal Command but later returned. Over the next 900 years the estates of the Manor came and went as the fortunes of the Lords rose and fell. By the end of the 14th century the Manor passed to THOMAS MOWBRAY, Earl Marshall, Duke of Norfolk. Although Mowbray was banished by Richard II when accused of being a traitor by Henry Bolingbroke in 1397, the Manor continued in the Mowbray line through three more Mowbrays, until JOHN MOWBRAY, 4th Duke (1444-1476). He and his wife Elizabeth Talbot had one daughter, Anne, who had been married in 1478 at a very young age to Prince Richard Plantagenet, the younger of the 'Princes in the Tower'. Anne died in 1481, aged nine, *Continued*⇒

and her death ended the Mowbray line and the family estates were divided between the heirs of Thomas Mowbray through his two daughters, Margaret and Isobel. Unfortunately, perhaps, for The Manor of Bosham, Margaret had married Sir Robert Howard and their son was the first of a new line of Dukes of Norfolk. Isobel had married James Berkeley, and in 1483 their son William Berkeley's share included the Manor of Bosham, and he became the First Lord Berkeley. There was considerable strife between the Howards and the Berkeleys, and William Berkeley also spent most of his life bartering his many estates to obtain titles and discharge large debts; he died in 1491 without issue and with most of his Sussex estates belonging to the crown. Like most dynasties there were good Lords of the Manor and bad Lords of the Manor, and luckily William's brother Maurice managed to retrieve some of the many Sussex estates that had been lost by William, but not Berkeley Castle. It was not until the accession of Queen Mary in 1553 that it was restored to Henry, the 7th Baron Berkeley. At his death in 1613 his daughter-in-law the Dowager Elizabeth Lady Berkeley, whose husband had pre-deceased her, took over the Lordship for over 20 years. She proved to be an excellent and efficient manager of the Estates and at her death the Manor passed to her grandson, GEORGE BERKELEY. It was this George Berkeley who presented Bosham church with a silver communion cup in 1675. The cup and a small paten, which was a later gift from Dr Henry Edes in 1693, are now on permanent display in Chichester Cathedral Treasury.

Joan Langhorne

To be concluded...

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THE MANOR OF BOSHAM 1040-2009 (PART TWO)

The Manor passed through three more sons until in 1755 it passed to FREDERICK AGUSTUS 13th BARON AND 5th EARL BERKELEY. He came into his inheritance aged ten and guardians looked after his affairs while he was under-age. Frederick Berkeley was educated at Eton and lived a somewhat profligate life and by the time he was 49 he had had six illegitimate children by Mary Cole, daughter of a Gloucester butcher. When the question of succession arose in 1796, he married her and went on to have six more children, although only 3 survived. He did try to claim that he had married her secretly in 1785 but this was not proven. Only the children born after his marriage were legitimised and were entitled to the titles although Thomas the oldest legitimate son did not assume the title denied to his older brother. Those born before the marriage adopted the old family name of FitzHardinge and on the death of their father, Frederick Augustus Berkeley in 1810 William, the oldest son inherited Berkeley Castle and Maurice, the second son, inherited the Manor of Bosham becoming MAURICE FREDERICK FITZHARDINGE. He did not become 1st Baron Fitzhardinge until 1861 in recognition of his distinguished Naval career and also his long parliamentary record as member for Gloucester. No Berkeley had as yet lived at Bosham, leaving their stewards look after their interests. There are no records of the original Manor House in the village by the church and the existing Manor House building dates from about the mid 17th century although there are some remains of a small stone structure in the grounds of the existing building with 12th or 13th C rubble walling. However, when Maurice Berkeley succeeded to Bosham Manor he moved to Bosham and married Lady Charlotte Lennox, the sixth daughter of Charles 4th Duke of Richmond at Goodwood. Lady Charlotte died of cholera at the age of 28 and it is her large wall memorial that is on the north wall of the north aisle in Bosham church. Her illustrious husband, Admiral The Right Honourable Maurice FitzHardinge Berkeley, Baron FitzHardinge G.C.B. is remembered on the same memorial. Old Park in Fishbourne belonged to the Manor of Bosham and it was here that Maurice set up home and where the last three Berkeley Lords of the Manor also lived. Maurice married again after his first wife's death - another Charlotte, who was Lady Charlotte Moreton, third daughter of the Earl of Ducie. Maurice died in 1867, his wife outlived him dying in 1881. Maurice had four children by his first Charlotte and it was his third son Lord CHARLES PAGET FITZHARDINGE BERKELEY that became the 3RD Baron Fitzhardinge.

His father's will granted him a life interest in Bosham and he spent 29 years as Lord of the Manor living at Old Park. However, when his older brother Francis died Charles succeeded to Berkeley and he left Bosham to live at Berkeley. Two years later he sold his life interest in Bosham Manor to his nephew, Edric Frederick Gifford, his sister Fredericia Charlotte's elder son and grandson of the 1st Lord FitzHardinge. His sister had married Robert Francis, 2nd Baron Gifford in 1845 and had many children including three sons, Edric and Edgar who were the next and the last Lords of the Manor of Bosham by inheritance. The third son, Edward Gifford was a Naval Officer and was drowned when HMS Eurydice sank in a gale off Dunnose, Isle

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of Wight in 1878 aged 23 His memorial is also in Bosham church..

Lord Edric Gifford had joined the army in 1869 and took part in the Zulu War and as a result of his 'gallantry and bravery' was awarded the VC during the taking of Becquah in 1879. At his father's death in 1872 he became 3rd Baron Gifford of St Leonards, Devon and after his army career he became Colonial Secretary for Western Australia and later Gibraltar. In 1898 having bought life interest in the Bosham estates for £7,500 which included the house, Old Park, he settled there with his wife Sophie Catherine Street and took up the role of Lord of the Manor. He proved to be a very conscientious Lord and was very involved in village life and in 1902 when the churchyard closed he gave an acre of land to the east of the village for use as the new burial ground. In 1908 there was a dispute over the ownership of the beds of the creek and it was taken to court in the name of Lord Fitzhardinge v Purcell. That the seabed belongs to the manor has since been confirmed under the Commons Registration Act 1965. Edric Frederick Gifford died in 1911 with full military honours. Having no heir his wife Sophie took over the Manor until 1916 and then she handed over to Lord Gifford's brother, Edgar Berkeley Gifford who continued until 1919. The Manor of Bosham was then bought by Albert Ede, a bicycle manufacturer from the midlands and the inventor of the back-peddling brake. He was still Lord of the Manor in 1923 when trying to sell land to the Bowling Club and the WI. (ref. History of the WI) but then sold the Manorship to Lord Iveagh in 1924.

In writing this piece I have drawn on the excellent book, 'Bosham and its Berkeley Barons' written by Maurice Hall.

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