



THE LORDS OF THE MANOR OF FLAMSTEAD

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England still has more than 13,400 manorial titles, more or less the same number that can be found listed in Domesday Book. All are freely tradeable and about 400 are put on the market each year. The average price of one of them in 1996 was £7,500, which is surprising because most of them nowadays carry very little in the way of benefits other than that of status in a very local community.

Today, the civil Parish of Flamstead, the ecclesiastical Parish of Flamstead and the Manor of Flamstead all refer to more or less the same area of land, but it was not always so. As mentioned elsewhere, the civil parish was created in 1894 and the ecclesiastical one in 1223. The manor is much earlier in origin and whereas the other two authorities have had a steady progression over the years, the manor has developed in fits and starts in a rather odd way....

There is no indication today of where the manor house might have been, but if there was one, and it is very much open to doubt, the likely place for it would be Flamsteadbury, as 'Bury' in any name usually indicates the home of the Lord of the Manor or a fortified house. The present house at Flamsteadbury is modern, the earlier one is said to have been destroyed by fire last century, but even that, though said to have been ancient, is unlikely to have shown any Norman traces, nor indeed to have been grand enough to be called a manor house. The lack of evidence as to the site of a Flamstead manor house compels the proposition that there may never have been one. The only early evidence that there may have been one is a mention in Paget/Dugdale...*Flamstead where he Ralph de Tony afterward made his chief residence...*" which would relate to the immediate Conquest period, but no subsequent indication has been found until Richard Pearce appears on the scene in 1753. In any case manor houses are usually to be found close to a parish church and Flamsteadbury is two miles away from St Leonard's! It has to be admitted however, that Harpendenbury and Redbournbury are exceptions to this rule as well.

The Manor of Flamstead did not equate to the parish though the lord of the manor essentially controlled everything that went on in it and was often through history by far the largest land owner. He controlled law and order and his Court Leet dealt with misdemeanours. His Court Baron dealt with estate business, conveyancing of copyhold and other titles and things of that sort. The courts were meetings of tenants from whose number a Homage was selected which acted as a jury, usually presided over by a representative or steward. Proceedings were recorded on court rolls, so called because they were made of pieces of parchment stitched together and rolled up to provide a continuous record.

Tenants' rents were low, but they had obligations to their Lord which had a much bigger impact on their lives. These obligations varied from place to place and were recorded in the custumal, which appeared from time to time in the court rolls. Typical were, the tithings which meant, in theory at least, that a tenth of everything produced was due to the lord of the manor. He controlled the flour mills and so demanded a tenth of everything processed by them. Then there were a number of days a year that a tenant had to spend ploughing for him, or mending the roads, or weeding his fields and in times of strife there was a duty to take arms and fight.

From the Conquest the de Tonys (sometimes de Toni or de Toden) were Lords of the Manor of Flamstead, but when they created the Little Nunnery of St Giles-in-the-Wood and Flamstead Rectory, they effectively created two small separate manors and the same thing happened again later on when leases over Holtsmere End and Pepsal End Farms were granted, each called a manor in its own right. Then again, when the Little Nunnery of St Giles-in-the-Wood was demolished and Beechwood was built roughly on the same site, the lands of the nunnery were part of the title and were added to as time progressed so that quite early on Beechwood swamped Flamstead and this was equally true of the relative importance of their Lords of the Manor. Over a period of three hundred years or more, Beechwood assumed manorial control of the ecclesiastical parish and from the seventeenth century on, the Courts Leet and Courts Baron were Beechwood ones not Flamstead ones, though perhaps that is an over-simplification as there was much overlapping and Beechwood seems to have undertaken legal work on behalf of Flamstead. It also has to be admitted that the Beechwood records are very well preserved whereas there is much less to be found about Flamstead and this may distort the picture.

The purchase of land in Flamstead in about 1000AD by Abbots Aelfric and Leofstan of St Albans represents the dawn of time for the parish and the manor and there are few earlier references. There are a goodly number of descriptions of the creation of the manor which only differ in minor detail. The Rev'd Mr Peter Newcombe's version of 1795 is perhaps the most informative:

“As all parts of the Chilterns, being covered with thick woods and groves, was become the refuge of divers sorts of wild beasts such as wolves, wild boars, stags and wild bulls and was also a harbour of thieves and robbers, outlaws and fugitives, to the annoyance and dangers of all passengers.

On which Leofstan granted the Manor of Flamstead to a very valiant Knight named Thurnot and his two fellow soldiers for which Thurnot gave privately to the Abbot five ounces of gold, a very beautiful palfrey or nag for his own riding, and a very choice greyhound, on condition that Thurnot should guard and defend by himself and his retinue all the said highway and all the western parts of the Chilterns, and that he should be answerable for any losses that might happen therein by his neglect and in case any general war should arise in the Kingdom, that Thurnot should strenuously guard and protect the Church of St Alban.

These conditions were punctually complied with and fulfilled by Thurnot and his companions until the time of the Conqueror, when the manor was taken from them because they disdained being subject to the Norman. Frequent skirmishes happened between these defenders and the invaders, several houses were burned, and many on both sides were slain.”

A whole new world emerged from the Conquest in 1066 and so far as Flamstead is concerned this revolved around the victorious Ralph de Tony who, as standard bearer to William of Normandy at the Battle of Hastings, was awarded lands appropriated from the defeated natives. He made Flamstead his principal place of residence, as did many of his descendants, though many later and more powerful Lords of the Manor hardly set foot in the place.

For these two reasons, and because a lot of conflicting material has been published about the de Tony family there follows an edited version of the appropriate entry from the unpublished *New and Revised Edition of Dugdale's Baronage of England* by the late Gerald Paget of Welwyn Garden City.

DE TONY

NOTE: -All spellings at this period are suspect and alternatives often quoted are de Toni and de Todeny. The next family in Paget is de Tosney, and the two should not be confused. Robert de Tosney also came to this country at the Conquest, fought well, was a standard bearer and was rewarded with much land. His descendants built Belvoir Castle in Rutland and may have been cousins of the de Tonys.

It should be noted that in places Paget describes the original Dugdale work as inaccurate and incomplete and it is perhaps pertinent to say here that those who have taken it as the definitive source for material on the de Tony family are recommended to heed his words. I claim no scholarship for these notes, but feel obliged to say that I believe them to be the definitive reference point on the subject. Those interested may consult Paget's work which he donated to the British Library. The following account is quoted verbatim:-

*The first of this family of whom anything memorable can be found is **Roger de Tony (I)** Lord of Conches, standard bearer of Normandy, who founded the Abbey of Chatillon (otherwise called Conches) but, rebelling against William, Duke of Normandy (afterwards King William I) then in his minority, was slain by Roger de Beaumont at Val-es-Dunes in 1047 with two of his sons, Albert and Elinance. Adela his wife surviving, took her second husband, Richard Earl of Evreux to whom succeeded **Ralph**, [another of her sons by Roger de Tony] This **Ralph (I)**, being a great baron in Normandy, through the malicious suggestion of some who bore a grudge towards him, was expelled thence by Duke William, but afterwards, by the intercession of friends, being restored to his paternal inheritance; as also to that office of standard bearer, was with him in that memorable battle against King Harold (whereby, being conqueror, he thenceforth enjoyed the crown of this realm) and for his eminent service in that fight, became a sharer in those large possessions which were after that signal conquest disposed of to his friends and followers, having at the time of the General Survey, one lordship in Berkshire, two in Hertfordshire, whereof Flamstead (where he afterwards made his chief residence) was one, seven in Gloucestershire, eight in Herefordshire, besides the castle of Clifford (which William Fitz Osbern had newly built upon a piece of waste ground), nineteen in Norfolk, and ten in Worcestershire.*

*In 1090, a quarrel arising betwixt Isabel the Wife of this **Ralph** and Hawise, the wife of William Earl of Evreux, the men of Evreux invaded the lands of this, burning his property and carrying off much booty. Whereupon he betook himself to the court of Robert Duke of Normandy, relating to him what had occurred, and demanding the aid which he had a right to expect from his Liege Lord, but the Duke, turning a deaf ear to his entreaties, he was compelled to seek a protector where he could and accordingly made application to the King of England, promising him fealty if he would afford him succour. Whereat the King being highly pleased, gave orders to Stephen Earl of Aumale and Gerard de Gournay, with other officers who were in command of his retainers in Normandy, that they should render every assistance to this **Ralph** and throw supplies of all kinds into his castles.*

*In the month of November, William Earl of Evreux, with his two Nephews, William de Breteuil and Richard de Montfort laid siege to Conches, but the said Richard, whilst taking possession of the Abbey of Saint Peter at Chatillon, regardless of the respect due to the monks, died the same day to the grief of both parties for he was twin brother of Isabel, the wife of this **Ralph** and Nephew of William Earl of Evreux by the Sister.*

*Shortly after which, the people of Evreux, making another incursion into the territory of Conches, this **Ralph de Tony**, having in his castle a very strong force of his own and the King's adherents, when the young Knights were eager to sally forth said to them "Arm yourselves and stand ready, but do not leave the fortress until I give the order. Permit the enemy to encumber himself with booty and we will fall upon him as he is retiring". Whereupon, taking heed of his words, they waited till the people of Evreux were loaded with spoil, but then charging them with great fury, put them to flight and recovered what had been taken, taking also many prisoners, amongst whom was William de Breteuil. After this war had continued for three years the people of Evreux had suffered so many losses that they were glad to make peace on the following terms: Viz, That William de Breteuil should pay the said **Ralph** (his uncle) three thousand livres for his ransom, and make his Cousin **Roger (II)** (Son of **Ralph**) heir to his whole lordship. The Earl of Evreux also appointing this **Roger** his successor in that county, but this **Roger** lived not to enjoy them for he died on the 15th May the same year 1093.*

*This **Ralph** being a devout man, gave the monks of S. Evroult (“Utica”) in Normandy, two Lordships lying in England, viz, Alton (Alwinton) in Worcestershire and Caldecote in Norfolk and to the monks of Bec, his Manor of Wrotham in that County.*

*But upon the death of King William the Conqueror, this **Ralph** joining with other rebellious barons in Normandy, expelled the Royal Garrisons from their castles and ravaged the country with their own retainers and shortly after joined with Robert Curthose against Robert de Belesme, when the Castle of Ballon was besieged.*

*This **Ralph (I)** married two wives as it seems; the first of whom was named Godeheld, by whom he had issue **Ralph (II)** and Godeheld (first married to Robert Earl of Meulan (Mellent) and afterwards to Baldwin Son of Eustace Earl of Boulogne (Bolein)), and the second, Elizabeth (or Isabel as some call her) the Daughter of Simon de Montfort (Who surviving him became a nun in the Abbey of Haute Bruyere (Alta Brueria).*

*And having gained great glory in the wars, and reckoned among the first of the Norman nobles for honours and wealth, serving bravely in the armies of King William and Duke Robert his Son for nearly sixty years, this **Ralph de Tony (I)** departed this life 9th April 1102 and was buried with his ancestors in the Abbey of Conches.*

*To whom succeeded **Ralph (II)**, his son and heir who, with Godeheld his Mother, gave to the monks of Conches his Manor of Leve with tithes of his demesne lands throughout all his other lordships, and to the monks of West-Acre in Norfolk (a cell to Lewes in Sussex), with the consent of Alice his Wife, and **Roger and Ralph**, his sons gave all those lands which Oliver the Priest held of him.*

*Upon the death of William de Breteuil in 1102, when great disputes arose betwixt William de Guader, Raynold de Cracci and Eustace de Pacy, touching his inheritance, this **Ralph** took part with Raynold and gathering forces on his behalf, did much mischief upon his neighbours by hostile inroads.*

*After which, the next ensuing year, he crossed the sea, and was graciously received by King Henry who confirmed to him all his English honours and estates, whereupon he took to Wife Alice the Daughter of Earl Waltheof (by Judith the King’s Cousin) Sister of Maud the Wife of Simon de St. Liz Earl of Huntingdon. With which Alice had the lordships of Walthamstow (Welcomstow) in Essex and Kirtling (Kertling) in Cambridgeshire and some other lands. By whom he had issue **Roger (III)**, **Hugh** and **Ralph** and divers Daughters, of whom one was named Isabel and another Margaret the wife of Walter de Clifford. For certain it is that this Walter first seated himself at Clifford and enjoyed that castle which **Ralph de Tony**, Father of this **Ralph**, held at the time of the Great Survey. By which it would appear that he had it in frank marriage with Margaret his wife.*

*This **Ralph (II)**, in 1106, upon those hostilities betwixt King Henry I and his Brother Robert Curthose stoutly adhered to the King and was with him at the Battle of Tenchebrai, where the Duke and his adherents had total defeat. He remained faithful to King Henry both in prosperity and adversity. In 1126, he departed this life leaving **Roger (III)** his Son and heir and was buried in the Abbey of Conches with his ancestors.*

*Which **Roger** gave to the monks of Conches his lordship of Wrotham (Weretham) in England as also the Church and tithes of that Manor with the mill and moors thereto adjoining, likewise forty acres of land in Ostenton and whatever else he had in that township. He likewise founded that little Monastery of nuns dedicated to **Saint Giles in the Wood** near Flamstead in Hertfordshire.*

And having divers sharp skirmishes with Robert Earl of Leicester and Gualeran Earl of Meulan (Mellent) about the beginning of King Stephen’s reign, was at length by them taken prisoner, but those quarrels being afterwards put to an end, by a peaceable composure, he had his liberty and about two years after was brought by them to King Stephen and honourably reconciled unto him.

*With Ida his Wife, Daughter of Baldwin Earl of Hainault (Henaulte), this **Roger (III)** had in marriage twenty pounds lands in Bergholt (Bercolt) of the gift of King Henry I and left issue **Ralph (III)** his Son and Heir.*

Of which **Ralph** little is recorded save that he departed this life in 1162 leaving by **Margaret** his Wife (Daughter of **Robert Earl of Leicester**) **Roger (IV)** his Son and heir, then of tender years. **Margaret** his Wife surviving, who in 1163 accounted to the King for the surplusage of the revenue of **Walthamstow** (**Welcomstow**) which she then held in dower. So likewise until 1173 and in 1184, was found to be sixty years of age.

Which **Roger** in 1190 with **Gilbert Crispin de Tillieres** demised to the monks of **St Evroult** the Church of **Garnville** with tithes and lands and freedom from pannage for their swine in the Forest of **Conches**, for which the Abbot and monks gave to each of them an hundred shillings and an horse worth that sum. This **Roger** in 1194, upon levying the scutage for that King's redemption accounted forty shillings for his lands in **Sussex**, and in 1199, obtained a charter to himself and **Constance** his Wife, the Daughter of **Richard Viscount Beaumont** (A kinswoman of the King) and their heirs, of the Lordship of **Alrichescote** (Which King **Henry I** gave unto **Constance** his Daughter, Grandmother to the before specified **Constance**) in confirmation of that grant thereof, which had been made unto them, the said **Roger** and **Constance**, before he attained the Crown of this Realm. So likewise of lands to the value of forty pounds per annum which had been due to him from King **John** from the time he was Earl of **Mortain** (**Moreton**) and then obtained the Manor of **Saham** in **Norfolk** by the gift of that King.

Moreover in 1203, he obtained a grant for a market every week upon the Tuesday at his Manor of **South Tawton** in **Devon** and in 1205, had the Castle of **Boskeret** committed to his charge, but departed this life in 1208, as it seems, for then were all his lands committed to the custody of **Robert Pevel**.

To him succeeded **Ralph (IV)** his Son and heir who in 1210, was in that expedition then made into **Ireland**, but in 1216, he was in arms against King **John** with the rest of the rebellious Barons of that time, as it seems, for I find that the King granted unto **Waleran the Teuton** the Manor of **Flamstead** (Which was his chief seat) towards the charge of defending the Castle of **Berkhamsted**, and unto **Robert de Mortimer** this **Ralph's** Manor of **Abberley**. Howbeit, in 1217, making his peace with the King, command was given to the Sheriffs of **Worcestershire**, **Devonshire**, **Warwickshire**, **Norfolk**, **Suffolk**, **Cambridge** and **Essex** to restore his lands to him which had been taken into the King's hands by reason of his rebellion.

In 1229, this **Ralph (IV)** was in that expedition then made into **France** and in 1232, upon the loss which the King's Army, then in **Herefordshire**, received, by the power and strength of **Richard Earl Marshall**, and his complices, the King constituted this **Ralph** with **John de Monmouth** his Generals of all those forces which were at that time in the confines of **Wales**, and gave him **Maud Castle** (or **Painscastle**) in **Herefordshire** (which was his own before by right). Moreover, in 1237, he sent his Precept to him, thereby requiring his personal attendance at **Oxford** with the rest of the Barons Marchers on the Tuesday next ensuing the Quinzime of **Easter**. There to confer touching those dangers which were then impending from the **Welsh**. And the next ensuing year came to an agreement with **Humphrey de Bohun Earl of Essex**, that **Roger (V)** his eldest Son should marry **Alice**, the Daughter of that Earl, but the same year, 1239, being signed with the cross, as divers other nobles (especially of **France**) then were, **Ralph (IV)** took a journey to the Holy Land and about **Michaelmas** following died on the Sea.

After which, viz, in 1239, the Manors of **Saham** and **Necton** in **Norfolk** were assigned to **Pernell** his Widow, for her support, so likewise the Manors of **Flamstead**, **Kirtling** and **South Tawton**, in 1240, and took for her second husband **William de St. Omer**

In 1246, the King committed the custody of **Painscastle** to her, but in 1250, she had command to deliver it to **Humphrey de Bohun Earl of Essex** and **Hereford** by reason of his wardship of the lands and heir of the said **Ralph de Tony (IV)** her husband to hold during the minority of **Roger de Tony (V)** his son and heir.

Which **Roger** arriving at his full age in 1255, and then doing his Homage, command was given to **Pernell** his Mother and **William de St. Omer**, then her Husband, to restore to him all the lands of his inheritance which had been in their keeping. **Humphrey de Bohun** Earl of Hereford and Essex having the like command in respect of the Lordship of Paincastle.

After which, the next ensuing year, he obtained licence from the King to hunt with his own dogs the Hare, Fox, Cat, and Badger throughout the forests in the Counties of Hants, Somerset, Dorset and Wilts and the same year was in the wars in Wales.

This **Roger (V)**, in 1262, had also summons, amongst other of the Barons Marchers to be at Hereford upon Monday next after Candlemas day to oppose the hostile attempts of the Welsh, and in 1263, adhered firmly to the King when the rebellious Barons gave him battle at Lewes and took him prisoner. But before that battle, this **Roger (V)** departed this life for on 12th May the same year the wardship of his castles and lands was committed to **Edmund** the King's Son, and the marriage of **Ralph (V)** his Son and heir to **Alice** daughter of **Humphrey de Bohun** Earl of Hereford and Essex saving to **Isabel** the second Wife of this **Roger**, her dower, her marriage being likewise granted to the said **Edmund**.

But the rebellious Barons prevailing against the King in that battle which then followed, they seized the Castle of Kirtling which belonged to this **Roger (V)** in July following and committed it to the custody of **Henry de Hastings**, one of the most active men of their party. But the next ensuing year, the power of those rebellious spirits being utterly overthrown at the battle of Evesham, the wardship of the lands and heir of this **Roger** was granted to **Richard de Brus**.

To whom succeeded **Ralph de Tony (V)** his Son and heir, who in 1276, was found to be twenty two years of age and his Knights fees, by an inquisition then taken, certified into the Chancery. Whereupon, command was given to **Roger de Clifford** to deliver to him the Lordship of **Elfaev-is-Mynnydd** in Wales to hold as freely as **Roger de Tony** his Father held it.

This **Ralph (V)**, the same year, was in that great expedition then made against **Llewellyn** Prince of Wales, and in 1282, received command to be at **Rhuddlan** on Sunday, the morrow of **St. Peter ad Vincula**, well fitted with horse and arms, thence to proceed against the Welsh. In 1283, he was again in those wars and the same year had summons, with the rest of the nobility, to attend that great council then held at **Shrewsbury** on the morrow of **St. Michael**, which passed sentence of death upon **David** Prince of Wales. After which, upon that insurrection then raised by **Rhys ap Meredith**, this **Ralph** received command to reside in his lordships in the Marches of Wales for the defence thereof until that rising should be subdued.

In 1293, this **Ralph (V)** was in that expedition then made into Gascony and in 1294 obtained licence to assign to **Robert** the Son of **Robert de Tibetot** and his Daughter, as her marriage portion, lands to the value of an hundred pounds per annum in **Newton** and **Stratford** in Wiltshire.

But the same year he died and in consideration of his laudable service in Gascony and elsewhere, his Executors obtained all the profits of his lands from the time that they were seized into the King's hands until the day of his death, leaving issue by **Maria** his Wife, **Robert**, his Son and heir.

Which **Robert**, in 1296, making proof of his age, had livery of the lands of his inheritance and was the same year in that expedition then made into Gascony, likewise in that of Scotland the next year ensuing. And in 1298, obtained a charter from the King for a market weekly, every Monday, at his Manor of **Saham** in Norfolk, as also two fairs yearly, one on the eve, day and morrow after the feast of **St Martin** the Bishop, and five days following, and the other on the eve, day and morrow after the feast of **St George** the Martyr, and five days ensuing

Likewise a weekly market on the Saturday at his Manor of Colwyn in Elfael (Colwent in Elvell), and a fair yearly on the eve, day and morrow after the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. Also a weekly market on the Thursday at his **Manor of Flamstead**, and a fair yearly on the eve, day and morrow of the feast of **St Leonard** and five days following. Moreover a weekly market on Thursday at his Manor of Painscastle (Maud Castle), and a fair yearly on the eve, day and morrow after the feast of **St Barnabas the Apostle** and five days ensuing. And lastly, a weekly market on the Thursday at his Manor of **Zeal-Tony (Zell)** in Devon, and two fairs on the eve, day and morrow after the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and five days after and the other on the eve, day and morrow after the feast of **St Kalixt the Pope** and five days following.

Moreover, the same year, he had command to be at York on the morrow of **St. Martin**, well furnished with horse and arms, there to proceed against the Scots, and in 1300, was one of those Barons who, in the Parliament then held at Lincoln, subscribed that famous letter to the Pope, touching the supremacy of King Edward I in the Realm of Scotland. After which, the same year, he marched again into those parts.

In 1305, this **Robert** being in that expedition then made into Scotland and one of the retinue of **Humphrey de Bohun Earl of Hereford and Essex** (where the King himself was also then in person), departed thence without leave, for which cause, command was sent to the Sheriffs in the Counties of Worcester, Essex, Hertford, Cambridge, Norfolk and Hereford to seize his lands.

This **Robert** had summons of Parliament amongst the Barons of this Realm from 1298 till 1310, but it appears that in 1309, he departed this life being then seized of the Manors of **Walthamstow (Welcomstow)**, **Stratford (Stretford)** and **Newton Abberley (Abbodeley)**, **Flamstead**, **Painscastle** with divers lands in **Colwyn (Colwent)** in the Marches of Wales, **Saham** with the Hundreds of **Wayland (Weyland)** and **Grimshoe (Grimehow)**, **Kirtling**, **South Tawton** as also of **Carnanton (Carneton)** and **Blisland (Bliston)**. Moreover, that **Maud** his Wife (Daughter of **Malise Earl of Strathearn**) was together with himself enfeoffed of the Manors of **Necton (Neketon)**, **Parva-Cressingham** and certain lands in **Writham**, and that **Alice** the Widow of **Thomas de Leybourn** was found to be his sister and heir and at that time twenty six years of age. Which **Alice** soon after married to **Guy de Beauchamp Earl of Warwick** and surviving him had the Manor of **Hanslope**, **Lighthorne**, **Beausale**, **Haseley**, **Claverdon**, **Berkswell**, with the third part of the Templars Manor in **Warwick** and **Sherbourn (Shireburne)**, as also divers Knights fees in that County assigned to her for her dowry. Likewise that in 1316, she gave a fine of five hundred marks for licence to marry **William la Zouche of Ashby**, whom she accordingly had to her husband.

The astonishing thing about the de Tony family, in very troublesome times, is that they were Lords of the Manor of Flamstead for two hundred and forty-four years which is the longest span of any of the noble families that have held the title.

Upon the death of **Robert de Tony** in 1310 the manor passed to his sister **Alice**, wife of **Thomas de Leybourn**. She married secondly **Guy Beauchamp**, 2nd Earl of Warwick, and thirdly **William**, 1st Lord Zouche of Mortimer, leaving issue by all three husbands. From this point on the County Histories wax eloquent about the **Beauchamp** and **Neville** Earls of Warwick, two of the most important families in England in the Middle Ages. They are not really part of the history of Flamstead though, because it is unlikely that they ever came here; Flamstead was just one of a vast portfolio of lands and titles that they held and a steward would have been employed to manage it.

The manor passed by descent to **Edward Plantagenet**, Earl of Warwick, and for those interested, the succession may be followed on the table opposite. Cussans is in error, however, when he states that

“In 1487 Isabel and Anne [Neville] both being dead without surviving issue, the inheritance was restored to their mother [Anne, Countess of Warwick]”

One of the first actions of Henry VII, upon seizing the Throne after the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, was to imprison in the Tower of London, Isabel's ten year old son, Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick, the heir to the House of York. He was held in the Tower until 1499 when the rebellion by Perkin Warbeck gave the King the opportunity to have him beheaded on a trumped-up charge of treason.

During his imprisonment, the manor appears to have reverted to his grandmother, Anne Countess of Warwick, but this was probably simply a device, as Cussans says, to give a semblance of legality since in 1488, doubtless as a result of pressure, she conveyed the manor to the King. It remained vested in the Crown for the next 64 years.

In 1520 a twenty one year lease was granted to one of the 'new men' of the Tudor era, **Sir John Cutts** of Horsham Hall, Essex and Shenley, Herts, Treasurer of the Household to Henry VIII. Sir John died, however, the following year and his widow, Elizabeth, conveyed her interest to Nicholas Draybull of Flamstead. In 1534 Nicholas obtained a renewal from the Crown and in 1544 Henry VIII granted the manor for life to **Sir Richard Page** who also held the Manor of Beechwood. He died in 1548 after which the manor remained with the Crown until 1552 when Edward VI granted it to **George Ferrers** in part perhaps for his huge success as Master of the King's Pastimes at Christmas 1551. He was a very interesting man, described by Clutterbuck as being '*of sprightly parts*'.

He was born in about 1510, the son of Thomas Ferrers of St Albans and nephew of Elzius, a monk of the abbey, who later became Abbot of Wymondham and Archdeacon of Suffolk. He was educated at Cambridge where he took a degree of Bachelor of Law in 1531. Admitted to Lincoln's Inn, he gained a reputation for oratory at the bar, but according to *The History of Parliament* he never followed a legal career though he became a frequent litigant!

He entered the service of Thomas Cromwell and after his fall, Ferrers was taken into the service of the King being present at the reception of Anne of Cleves upon her arrival in England. He also attended Henry VIII during the war with France in 1544. Early in the reign of Edward VI he was in the Duke of Somerset's expedition to Scotland and was charged by a contemporary historian with cruelly smothering some Scots who were hiding in a cave near Leith.

He was first elected to Parliament in 1542 for Plymouth, and again in 1545, then for Cirencester in 1547, but he was returned again for Plymouth in 1553 for Barnstaple in 1554 and Bradley in 1555 until Mary Tudor's death in 1558. There was then a gap of thirteen years before he was finally elected for his native Borough of St Albans in 1571, but this short-lived Parliament sat for less than two months. His career is most noteworthy for his arrest in 1542 concerning a debt for which he stood surety. Ferrers was imprisoned, but the Sergeant-at-Arms was ordered by the Commons to demand his release. A dispute arose as to the privilege of members of Parliament and their exemption from arrest and his release established one of the precedents for Parliamentary Privilege which Members of Parliament enjoy to this day.

George Ferrers married three times. His first wife was Elizabeth, the widow of Humphrey Bouchier of Markyate who had been a member of the King's household for twenty one years. Through her he secured the rights to the lease of Markyate Priory, obtaining the freehold on reversion in 1548. He was a writer and a poet and in his twenties he published an English translation of the Magna Carta and other important statutes. He wrote a number of plays and masques for the Court and he is believed to have written the greater part of the account of the reign of Mary Tudor which appears in *Grafton's Chronicle*.

In spite of the impression of geniality that his huge success as Lord of Misrule at the twelve day Christmas festivities at Greenwich in 1551 creates, he does not seem to have been very popular with neighbours or tenants, one of whom called him "*a covetous man and ill to deal withal*", a sentiment, no doubt, reinforced by his reputation as an encloser.

**The Inheritance
of the Manor of Flamstead
1294-1488**

Roger de Toni (V) = Isabel
1235-1263/4

Ralph de Toni (V) = Mary
1255-1295

Robert de Toni
Summoned to Parliament
as Baron Toni 10.4.1289
b. 4.4.1276
d. ca 28.11.1309 s.p.

Guy Beauchamp (2) =
2nd Earl of Warwick
d. 12.8.1315

Alice de Toni = (1) Thomas Leybourne
d. 1324/5
d. bef. 30.5.1307
(3) William 1st Lord Zouche
of Mortimer
d. 28.2.1338/7

Thomas Beauchamp = Lady Catherine Mortimer
3rd Earl of Warwick
dau. of Roger 1st Earl of March
b. 14.2.1313/4
d. 13.11.1369
d. btw. 4.8 & 6.9.1369

Thomas Beauchamp = Margaret Ferrers
4th Earl of Warwick
dau. of William 3rd Lord Ferrers of Groby
b. bef. 16.3.1338/9
d. 8.4.1401
d. 22.1.1406/7

Richard Beauchamp = (2) Lady Isabel le Despencer
5th Earl of Warwick
dau. of Thomas 1st Earl of Gloucester
b. 25 or 28.1.1381/2
d. 30.4.1439
b. 26.7.1400
d. 27.12.1439

Henry Beauchamp = Lady Cecily Neville
6th Earl & 1st Duke
of Warwick
dau. of Richard
1st Earl of Salisbury
b. 22.3.1424/5
d. 11.6.1446
d. 28.7.1450

Lady Anne Beauchamp = Richard Neville
suo jure Countess
of Warwick
2nd Earl of Salisbury
& 1st Ear of Warwick
b. ca 1426
d. bef. 20.9.1492
b. 22.11.1428
k. Barnet 14.4.1471

Lady Anne Beauchamp
suo jure Countess of Warwick
b. 2.1443/4
d.3.1.1448/9

Lady Isabel Neville = George Plantagenet
b. 5.9.1451
d. 22.12.1476
Duke of Clarence
cr. 1472 Earl of Warwick &
Earl of Salisbury
b. 21.10.1449
Murdered Tower of London
18.2.147718

Edward Plantagenet - styled from his baptism Earl of Warwick
b. 21 or 25.2.1474/5 heir to Richard III
Imprisoned in Tower of London 1485. Beheaded on Tower Hill 28.11.1499

He died at Flamstead in June 1579 and was buried at St Leonard's on 11th of that month. Over twenty years before he had created a settlement trust in 1558 over the Manor of Flamstead by conveyance to Sir Ralph Rowlett of Holywell House, St Albans, and Anthony Stibbynge. He created another in 1575, undoubtedly a marriage settlement for his son Julius, as this time one of the trustees was Sir John Boteler.

He was succeeded by his son **Julius Ferrers** of Markyate, the only child of his second marriage to Jane Southcote of St Albans. Julius was born in about 1547 and married Cicely, daughter of Sir John Boteler of Hatfield Woodhall, Herts. and aunt of Mary Conynsby, the mother of Thomas Saunders of Beechwood. Nothing has come down about Julius' life. He was buried at St Leonard's on 30th September 1596 leaving three daughters and two sons.

His eldest son, **John Ferrers**, was born in about 1575 and succeeded his father as Lord of the Manor of Flamstead. He was knighted by King James VI & I on 7th May 1603, less than two months after he became King. Not that this should be thought to be any mark of special merit or favour; between his succession on 24th March 1603 and the end of December King James created no fewer than 932 Knights Bachelor compared with 874 created by Queen Elizabeth I in the whole of her forty year reign!

Sir John first married at Bayford on 9th June 1604, Anne, daughter of Sir George Knighton of Bayford, by whom he had four children all of whom predeceased him. Anne, his wife, died in 1630 and was buried at Bayford. He subsequently married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Edmund Lucy of Broxbourne, but he chose to be buried at Bayford with his first wife on 25th September 1640.

Earlier, Sir John had bought the manor and estate of St. Agnell's, most of which lay in the Parish of Redbourn. Cussans mentions in 1880 that it was then of inconsiderable extent, comprising only fourteen and a half acres of land, but the estate purchased by Sir John included 192 acres, seven of which were in the Parish of Flamstead. The property had been possessed at a very early period by the family of Aignel, but whether the family gave their name to it or it took their name from them is not recorded. Title was granted by William of Normandy to the Aignels in 1066 and in 1455 it was sold to the Abbot of St Albans for £18. Following the *Fryer v Fryer* case in 1878, the manor and estate were sold together with the Manor of Flamstead.

Sir John was certainly a rich man as according to the Inquisition taken at Chipping Barnet upon his death not only was he seized of the Manors of Flamstead, Markyate and St. Agnell's, but also the Manor of Bayfordbury and land at Bayford, Broxbourne, Hertford, Little Berkhamsted, the Manors of Parkbury and Leggatts at Kimpton and the Manor of Roxford at Hertingfordbury.

Knighton Ferrers his eldest son was baptised at Bayford on 6th October 1607 and died just four months before his father, being buried there on 21st April 1640. He married Katherine, daughter and co-heir of Sir William Walter by whom he had an only child, **Katherine**, to whom the Manor of Flamstead passed. Significantly, his widow remarried Sir Simon Fanshawe, the uncle of her future son-in-law, which perhaps explains how her daughter's marriage came about.

Katherine Ferrers was born on 4th May 1634 and brought the Manor of Flamstead, amongst others, to her husband when she married in April 1648 **Thomas Fanshawe**, later to become 2nd Viscount Fanshawe of Dromore, who lived at Ware Park. She was then aged thirteen and he was aged sixteen and it was clearly an arranged match. Katharine never became Lady Fanshawe; she died aged only twenty six and was buried at Ware on 14th June 1660, ten months before Thomas was made a Knight of the Bath at the coronation of Charles II and five years before her husband succeeded his father. Sir Thomas was MP for Hertford from 1661 to 1674 and King's Rembrancer of the Exchequer from 1665 to 1674.

I hesitate to repeat the legend of the Wicked Lady of Markyate Cell here because the story, in spite of having had much written about it and a feature film made of it, seems to have little substance in fact. Certainly she is the Katharine Ferrers that the legend refers to, and some of what is said about her may be true; the Hertfordshire stretch of Watling Street in her time was notorious for highway robberies, many of them being of a very ruthless nature. She would have been in her early twenties at the time, young and adventurous, and the legend has it that, influenced by her lover, also a highwayman, she dressed up as a man, mounted a particularly fine horse and at night terrorised the district. Her exploits are legion and must have gone on for some years until her final escapade when she waylaid a loaded wagon on Nomansland Common near Wheathampstead, found more than she bargained for and was shot by the guard. She was able to return home, but died shortly after. Her ill-gotten gains were never found and are said still to be buried at Markyate Cell.

Fortunately Flamstead is never mentioned in the story, so does not have to live it down, but she had been Lord of the Manor until six years before her death and the connection is strong. Strangely the legend refers to Lady Katharine Ferrers of Markyate Cell, whereas, at the time of her supposed infamy, she was married to plain Mr. Thomas Fanshawe and had sold Markyate Cell in 1655, five years before she died.

Title to the Manor of Flamstead had remained with the Ferrers family for 102 years until Katherine, the great-granddaughter of George Ferrers and her husband, Thomas, conveyed it to **Thomas Saunders** of Beechwood and **Joshua Lomax** of Childwickbury on 21st June 1655 together with the Manor of St Agnell's. A covenant executed at the same time provided for the Manor of St Agnell's to go to Joshua Lomax and for the rest of the property to be divided between Lomax and Saunders. The *Victoria History* claims that half of the Manor of Flamstead was sold off again to Thomas Lee and Nathan Tilson in 1657 which could well have been the Lomax portion, but the manor court rolls show that the transaction was only a lease for a year. From then on we have a problem because Chauncey and Clutterbuck claim that the Fanshawes sold the manor, which had "*Court Leet and Court Baron and consisted of about six or seven hundred acres of demesne with divers copyholds finable at the will of the lord, and an ancient farmhouse*", possibly Flamsteadbury, directly to **Edward Peck**.

It is likely that all these sources were in fact partly correct and that the title machinations of the 1650s had something to do with the creation of settlements, trusts or mortgages, so that title to the lordship passed from the Fanshawes to Peck upon the reversion. The following, dated 23rd ,m mmDecember 1657, may be significant in this context:

"Edward Peck of Inner Temple, Thomas Lee of Middle Temple and Nathan Tilson of London, the latter two being Lords of the Manor of Flamstead, appointed Thomas Saunders the younger of Lincoln's Inn, steward of the Manor of Flamstead."

The inference is that as three of the four parties were legal men, some sort of trust was involved, which may have been determined by Katharine Fanshawe's death in 1660.

Whatever the truth of it this was the start of the Peck family connection with Flamstead. The Pecks appear to have originated around Norwich and to have married well. Edward Peck was a lawyer, a younger son of William Peck of Methwold in Norfolk. The *Statutes of the Inner Temple 1547-1660* (1887) describes him as "*very eminent in his calling and particularly experienced in Chancery practice*", but it also states that he was born in 1642 which cannot be true as we know that he married in 1649. He was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple in 1660, became a Serjeant-at-Law on 19th January 1674 and was made King's Serjeant on 12th April 1675, but he died only five months after this appointment.

A lawyer on the make, he seems to have prospered after the Restoration. He purchased the Lordship of the Manor of Flamstead in 1661 and also the Lordship of the Manor of Hinxworth, which passed to his younger son, Edward. At the same time he also purchased the Lordship of the Manor of St Agnell's as well because he hired Matthew Moreton as his bailiff to collect the rents of the Manors of Flamstead and St Agnell's. In about 1670 he purchased the Lordship of the Manor of Little Sampford, Essex, where the family settled. On 25th September 1649 he married Grace, daughter and heiress of William Greene of East Barnet by whom he had three children, William, Grace and Edward. He died on 24th July 1675 and is buried at East Barnet. Clearly, however, he must have lived beyond his means as the estates were heavily mortgaged and on his death he left debts of £4,000 - a considerable sum for the times.

Upon his death, his eldest son, **William Peck** of Little Sampford, who had been baptised at East Barnet on 24th June 1650, inherited. He was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple on 9th July 1671 and appears to have held property at Melhardle in Yorkshire. His wife, Gertrude, was the daughter of Sir William Green 1st Bart. of Mitcham who was described as "*a wealthy brewer in Westminster*".

Now here is an unusual and familiar phrase. Could it be that Sir William or his wife, also Gertrude, were cousins of the Pearces who follow (*wealthy brewers of Westminster*), to whom the Manor of Flamstead was eventually sold? If they were then the 'wealthy brewer' comment becomes significant; the business and the manor may have stayed 'in the family'. There were five surviving children of the marriage, William, Philip, Gertrude, Catherine and Grace. William Peck senior died on 27th June 1694 and was buried at Little Sampford.

The Lordship of the Manor of Flamstead then passed to his eldest son, **William Peck**, again of Little Sampford, who was baptised on 27th July 1678 at East Barnet. He married Bridget, daughter of Morgan Randyll of Chilworth on 11th June 1700 at Grays Inn Chapel which suggests that William, like his father and grandfather before him, practised at the Bar. He was High Sheriff of Essex in 1705. Bridget died on 14th June 1712 aged only 31 and there is a fine monument, showing her reclining, in the church at Little Sampford. There were nine children of the marriage, William, Randyll, Bridget, Anne, Gertrude, Jane, Mary, Grace and Frances. William Peck was High Sheriff for Essex in 1705. He died on 1st May 1727. On this occasion, the eldest son did not inherit the Manor of Flamstead; he was left the Manor of Little Sampford and the second son, **Randyll** inherited the Manor of Flamstead.

Little is known of **Randyll Peck**. He was called to the Bar of Grays Inn on 13th May 1726 and like the other Pecks, never lived at Flamstead. Whether he practised at the Bar is not clear. He was a bachelor and maybe lived at Little Sampford Hall until his brother died or his sister-in-law remarried, but he died on 25th May 1775 at Great Cressingham in Norfolk, having sold the Manor of Flamstead some twenty years earlier.

Judged by his will Randyll appears to have been a kindly man as not only did he leave money to the poor of Little Sampford and Great Cressingham, but he also left his servant, William Curtis, £100 together with a public house and orchard at Great Cressingham. To John Cressel, his agent at Little Sampford, he left all the household furniture at Little Sampford, any horse of his and all his setting dogs, all his vessels and liquors (except wine), but all his raisin wine in bottles, the empty bottles and five dozen of the last bottles of Port plus ten guineas and an annuity of £20 per annum!

Richard Pearce acquired Flamsteadbury in 1753 from Randyll Peck and with it the title of Lord of the Manor of Flamstead. The Pearces were of yeoman stock and had been settled at Aldbourne in Wiltshire from at least the 1660s. Richard was baptised there on 31st December 1721 and was the third son of Robert Pearce. The fame and fortune of the family was established by Robert's elder brother Thomas, who went to London and, according to *The Dictionary of National Biography*, '*made a fortune as a distiller*'.

He had three sons, Thomas who took up the law, Zachary who became Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster and merited an entry in the *DNB* and William who followed into his father's business.'

As a younger son of a younger son, Richard Pearce had few prospects in Wiltshire and was sent to work for his uncle Thomas. As brewers of Westminster the family became rich and sufficiently important for William, Richard's cousin, and his daughter and two of his grandchildren to be buried in Westminster Abbey. William became Master of the Worshipful Company of Brewers for two years from 1740 to 1742 and in 1757, after he had purchased Flamsteadbury, Richard was admitted to the Livery of the Company. Richard appears, however, not to have been a very clubbable man, or at least to have been averse to committees, because although he was elected assistant in 1762, steward in 1763, renter warden in 1770, middle warden in 1773 and upper warden in 1774, in each instance he declined to serve preferring to pay the fine. In 1773 he claimed indifferent health, but this did not prevent his election in 1775 as master. Again he refused to serve, paying instead the fine of £20.

William, his cousin, lived to be ninety, not dying until 1782. His son, Thomas, however, had predeceased him leaving an only son, William, not born until 1761, who died young and it is clear that Richard carried on the business. By now Richard had become a wealthy man in his own right, trading as Pearce & Son from a house and brewhouse in Millbank Street East, Westminster, which he acquired from his cousin William Pearce in about 1760. The site had a rateable value of £75 in the Westminster Poor Rate ledgers in 1780 suggesting sizeable premises; indeed it was the second largest rate levied in St John's Parish at that time. He also owned a variety of premises in Wood Street described as stables, storehouse, coach house and basement. Then there were cellars at Strutton Ground, a mill in Cowley Street, and by 1790, a storehouse in Little Grosvenor Street and a private coach house in Wood Street South with vat yard and cellar.

With so much property and brewing interests he may well have purchased the lands and title in Flamstead to achieve elevation from 'trade' to 'gentry' status, which was a popular move at the time. Having acquired the title of Lord of the Manor of Flamstead he might have been expected to move into the manor house at Flamsteadbury, but this was already occupied by a sitting tenant. By good fortune, however, he was able to take a lease on a much more elegant and fashionable residence close by, just over the parish border in Redbourn and rather less than a mile from Flamsteadbury, though it is by no means certain yet which acquisition came first. Cumberland House was built by William Duke of Cumberland as a hunting lodge in 1743 which date can be found inscribed on one of the chimneys. The Duke was a military man, second son of George II; he was in fact wounded at Dettingen in the year 1743 so that the building of Cumberland House may have been a diversion to occupy his convalescence. Three years later of course he was in the thick of it again earning his infamous sobriquet of 'Butcher of Culloden'.

The house inspires more than a passing glance, a worthy residence indeed for our 'Brewer of Westminster'. When he took it over, the first floor is said to have been in use as a banqueting hall and the fabric of the building is said to include massive timbers taken from broken up Naval vessels. It is perhaps significant that the Duke's responsibilities included control of the Royal Dockyards.

When he was thirty Richard married on 30th March 1751, at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Mary Hotchkis, the daughter of the Rev'd Mr Thomas Hotchkis and it is possible that Mary's dowry aided the expansion of her husband's empire. They had four children, a daughter, Mary, and three sons, **Thomas, Richard** and Zachary between 1752 and 1765.

They had been married some 35 years when Mary died and she was buried at Flamstead on 13th December 1786. Richard survived her thirteen years and died on 24th January 1800, aged 79, and although there is no record of Richard Pearce ever living in Flamstead parish, indeed Flamsteadbury was let to Joseph Osman at the time of his death, he is buried in the family tomb in St Leonard's Churchyard and there is an elaborate memorial to him in the south aisle of the church inscribed:"

"To the memory of Richard Pearce, late of Millbank Street, Westminster and Lord of the Manor of Flamstead, who lieth buried in the family vault in this church-yard. Died 16th January 1800 aged 79 years, having the character, which he well deserved, of a tender husband, a good father, a true Christian, and a sincere friend."

In his will made in 1795 Richard left the brewery, his houses in Middlesex and Westminster, the Manor of Flamstead and Martin's Farm, Redbourn to his eldest son, Thomas. To his daughter, Mary, who by then was married to her cousin, John Hotchkis, he left Cumberland House at Redbourn with lands, jewels, a coach and horses and Redbourn Church Farm. To his son, Richard, he left the advowson of Husbands Bosworth and the Manor of Stanwick in Northamptonshire and to his youngest son, Zachary, he left all his properties in Westminster and a quarter of the brewery business. He also left his nephew, Richard, his lands and houses at Aldbourne, £200 to his nephew, Thomas Pearce (both of whom later inherited the Manor of Flamstead) and £100 each to the three sons of his brother William. A codicil, however, made just six months before his death, revoked the bequest to Zachary, who probably had either gone abroad or had died by then so that all his trade and property passed to the eldest son Thomas.

Thomas Pearce, Richard's eldest son, thus inherited the Lordship of the Manor of Flamstead and the lands that went with it. He was baptised at St John's, Smith Square on 18th October 1752, but he was not to enjoy his inheritance very long, for he died only two years after his father, on 16th November 1802, and he too is buried in the family tomb in St Leonard's Churchyard. Shortly before he died he acquired the Lordship of the Manor of St Agnell's and in his will made on 16th January 1801 he left everything to his two natural children by Sarah Baly, otherwise Poole, of Vine Street, Westminster, Thomas Pearce and Mary Pearce. They did not in the event, however, inherit everything because a clause in his father's will stipulated that if no child was born in wedlock the Manor of Flamstead and the lands that went with it together with Martin's Farm, Redbourn were to go to Thomas' brother, Richard, Rector of Husbands Bosworth.

Richard Pearce (II) inherited the Lordship upon the death of his brother. He was baptised at St John's, Smith Square on 27th May 1758 and was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford. He took Holy Orders and became Rector of Husbands Bosworth in Leicestershire in 1790, the advowson of which he inherited from his father. He died a bachelor on 3rd January 1815, aged 55. Apart from £200 left to Mary Laygate, a spinster from Husbands Bosworth, he left his entire estate, including the advowson of Husbands Bosworth, property in Rushden, and Westminster, and the Manors of Flamstead, St Agnell's and Stanwick to his cousin, **Thomas Pearce (II)** of Newgate Street, London, born on 5th December 1746, the son of his late uncle Robert. At this point some of the interests were sold off to meet the monetary bequest and settle debts. This Thomas lived at St Agnell's, Redbourn for a time and he also died a bachelor on 15 May 1827 aged 80 and is buried in the family tomb in St Leonard's Churchyard. In his will of 1826 he left everything to one **Fanny Rosier**, but the manors and property were to be upon trust for the benefit of her children, Thomas, Ann and Eliza Rosier.

The problem is, who was **Fanny Rosier**? In his will Thomas Pearce simply describes her as "who now resides with me at Redbourn". The county histories call her a cousin, but her relationship to Thomas is far from clear. According to the census she was born at Cambridge and her age at death indicates her year of birth as 1791.

There is, however, a letter at the County Record Office at Hertford, dated 2nd April 1880, from Mr W.T. White, the tenant at Cumberland House, then still owned by the Hotchkis family, in which he states that Fanny Rosier was illegitimate; her father he says was a brother of Thomas Pearce who brought her up. It has not been possible to trace any brother of Thomas, but it is equally possible that she was in fact Thomas' own illegitimate daughter, the story of the brother being put about as a blind to lend a cloak of respectability. According to Mr White the Hotchkis family disputed Fanny's title and William Pearce of Epsom, Thomas' nearest male relative instituted proceedings in Chancery, but the case was found in favour of Fanny.

On 6th February 1812 Fanny Pearce married Daniel Rosier at Langley, Bucks, when she was described as '*of this parish*' and the couple raised a family at Camden House in the Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, though later they were at Marlowes Villa, which may be one and the same. Daniel Rosier was born in 1788 and died on 2nd August 1839. Fanny died at Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead on 29th August 1876 aged 84 outliving all but three of her eight children, four of whom died in their infancy. She was buried in the Rosier family tomb in St Leonard's Churchyard, as were her husband and three of their children, Fanny, Ann and Thomas. In her will she left the Marlowes property to her son, Richard, and her diamond ring that had formerly belonged to Dr Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, to her daughter, Eliza, but apart from relatively minor bequests did not leave anything to her other children "*because she had already given them their share*".

Two daughters, Anne and Eliza married two brothers, Samuel and Edwin Fryer in a joint wedding at St Mary's, Hemel Hempstead on 28th May 1851. Anne Fryer died before her mother in 1859 and on Fanny Rosier's death Samuel and Edwin Fryer succeeded to the Manor of Flamstead in right of their wives. The Fryers were a litigious family of farmers from Chatteris in Cambridgeshire and as a result of some dispute between the brothers concerning the late Fanny Rosier's assets, lengthy proceedings were instituted in the Chancery Division which led to the Flamstead and St Agnell's Lordships and estates being put up for sale in 1880. The case was brought by Samuel and his children against his brother Edwin, wife Eliza and their daughter, Fanny.

Judgement directed that the manors of Flamstead and St. Agnell's and 1242 acres of land in the parishes of Flamstead and Redbourn were to be sold. The Manor of St. Agnell's fetched £7,450. The Manor of Flamstead, as distinct from Flamsteadbury, was sold for £5,850 to **Sir John Saunders Sebright**, and Flamsteadbury itself with two adjoining properties, Heavens Gate and Greenlane Farms, were sold to William Bunce Greenfield F.R.G.S, the tenant of Beechwood, for £28,000. Title of Lord of the Manor of Flamstead then remained with the **Saunders Sebright** family for 86 years.

Lady Lyell purchased the Lordship of the Manor of Flamstead together with a few acres of land from the Public Trustee, representing the Saunders Sebright family, on 5th August 1966, at which point it represented the disposal of the last remaining assets of the Beechwood Estates. Although not specifically mentioned, the purchase can probably be taken to include the Lordship of Beechwood as well; the two having been effectively combined in the 1880 sale to the Saunders Sebrights, and not quoted separately from then on.

Lady Lyell was born Katharine Runciman in Northumberland on 4th December 1909, the third daughter of Walter, 1st Viscount Runciman of Doxford. Her father was educated at Trinity College Cambridge and became a prominent Liberal politician, being elected an MP firstly for Oldham in 1899, when he achieved the rare distinction of beating Winston Churchill at the polls. His many successive Government appointments included: Financial Secretary to the Treasury 1907-1908, President of the Board of Education 1908-1911, President of the Board of Agriculture 1911-1914 and President of the Board of Trade from 1914 until the collapse of Asquith's wartime Government.

His Parliamentary wilderness years from 1916 to 1922 arose because he could not get on with Lloyd George. He was a member of the National Government in 1931 and in 1938 he was sent by Neville Chamberlain on a failed mission to Prague to mediate between the Czechs and Sudeten Germans before the Munich crisis. In October 1938 he became Lord President of the Council until the Second World War broke out. By one of life's little coincidences, it turns out that Spencer Maurice's father was at one time his private secretary. Spencer lived in River Hill and was a prominent Flamstead resident for many years.

Viscount Runciman married Hilda, Lady Lyell's mother, on 23rd August 1898. She was the 5th daughter of James Cochran Stevenson, MP for Westoe, South Shields and was to become an MP herself, being elected for St Ives, Cornwall, in 1928 which for fourteen months provided the somewhat unusual spectacle of a husband and wife combination in the House of Commons.

There were five children of the marriage. The eldest was Walter Leslie, born in 1900 who became the 2nd Viscount Runciman on the death of his father in 1949 and held many influential posts including Director-General of BOAC from 1940-43. Their second son is Sir Steven Runciman, the great Byzantine scholar and historian of the Crusades. The other daughters were Margaret, born in 1901, who sadly died on active service in the Second World War, of which more later, and Ruth, born in 1907 who had two children by her first husband, George Holmden. She remarried in 1950, Elliott Bovill, having bought Flamsteadbury in about 1941. Later on she sold the farm and moved to the West country.

To return to Lady Lyell, when she was sixteen she spent half of her summer holidays flying aircraft with her elder brother, who was mad on the sport at the time, but her father refused to sign her application to fly solo and she went to Germany to study the piano for two years. Eventually she had to accept that she was not good enough to become a concert pianist, so went to Girton College to read history, graduating in 1931. Shortly afterwards, on 23rd October 1931, she married Oliver 4th Lord Farrer and started married life in India where her husband had a P & O assignment. Unfortunately, her husband became ill and they had to return to England after two years. By chance they noticed in a copy of *Country Life* that Puddephats Farm was on the market and bought it in Michaelmas 1936. She was to live there for the rest of her life, 62 years.

During the Second World War, she hoped to fly for the RAF, but failed the eyesight test and so took a commission with the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), becoming Adjutant to Pauline Gower at Hatfield Aerodrome before moving to White Waltham. Her sister, Margaret, did get her pilots certificate and became a Captain in the ATA. She was the first woman to fly a Spitfire, which she described as '*a doddle*'.

On 4th August 1944, Margaret was piloting an RAF Percival Proctor on a run from Heston to Speke with her sister Katharine and a chap from the Ministry of Aircraft Production as passengers. The ground crew had failed to fill the reserve tank on the aircraft and when an attempt was made to change-over tanks over Chester, just a few miles short of the destination, fuel ran out and the inevitable crash followed. Sadly, Margaret was killed, Katharine survived, but received serious injuries to her left leg which put her in hospital for three years. The Ministry chap broke his thumb, but was otherwise unhurt. Lord Farrer was in Cairo with the RAF at the time.

Returning to Puddephats, after the war Lady Lyell (then Lady Farrer) interested herself in country matters, particularly hunting and point-to-point racing. In 1947 came acquisitions from Sir Giles Saunders Sebright's estates that consolidated her position as one of the principal landowners in Flamstead. Prominent in a portfolio of about a dozen holdings came:

Valley Farm	191 acres
Hill Farm	241 acres
Home Farm	262 acres

Meanwhile her husband had acquired, and she later inherited:

Grove Farm	212 acres.
Woodend Farm	205 acres,
Pound Farm	110 acres
Greenlane farm	90 acres

She was joint master of Aldenham Harriers, with Geoff Hartop from 1952 to 1956 and master from 1958 to 1983. Thirty years at the top is probably some sort of record and a very considerable achievement. Until her death in 1998 she remained a trustee of Aldenham Harriers and the hounds were, and still are, kennelled on her land. These were however by no means her only achievements, she was a JP on the Dacorum Bench for twenty five years from 1954, latterly chairman, a member of Hemel Hempstead Rural District Council, president of Flamstead Womens Institute and a member of Hemel Hempstead Development Corporation. A very busy life indeed and well up to the traditions of the family.

On 24th January 1954 another major tragedy occurred in her life when her husband sadly lost his life in a shooting accident.

On 24th September 1955 she married Sir Maurice Legat Lyell (Hon. Mr Justice Lyell), a Judge of the Queen's Bench Division from 1962 to 1971, 7th son of Alexander Lyell of Gardyne Castle, Angus, who had been Director of Press Censorship at the Ministry of Information in the Second World War. He had two children, Nicholas Walter, later Sir Nicholas Lyell the Attorney General in John Major's Government, and Prudence Elizabeth, who married Nigel Tully and sadly died in 1997. Sir Maurice died in 1975. Lady Lyell died on 19th July 1998 at Puddephats. At her Service of Thanksgiving at St Leonard's Church on 24th July 1998, her niece, the Rev'd. Ann Shukman gave the address; she was the daughter of Lady Lyell's sister Margaret who had been killed in the Chester aircraft crash.

The farm manager for the late Lady Lyell's 1000 acre estate is James Dickson who is based at Grove Farm.

Thus we have remarkably few families involved in the lordship of the manor and out of a history of 930 years since the Conquest, seven families account for 899 years of it:-

de Tony family	244 years
Earls of Warwic	178 years
The Crown	64 years
Ferrers family	108 years
Peck family	92 years
Pearce family	127 years
Saunders Sebright family	86 years

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