Mary Fisher's History of the Parish Newbold Verdon

During the 1970s, local amateur historian Mary Fisher wrote a series of articles in the St James's Church Parish Magazine, recounting the history of the parish of Newbold Verdon.

The length of each article was about 400 words, and it took up one of the A5 sized pages, sometimes spilling over into the next page but only by a paragraph. Mary would link together two or three articles so that she could expand on a theme. This document attempts to put together as many of those articles as possible using the chronology of the various historic periods from Roman to Victorian Newbold Verdon.

The reader should be aware that this document does not contain every one of the articles Mrs Fisher wrote. Over the past twelve years or so I have been collecting copies of her articles from various sources, few of which provide the dates when articles were published. The best I can say is that she did write them roughly in a historically correct chronology and so I have tried to present them that way.

This should not detract from the quality of her writing and the depth of her research. Writing at a time prior to computers and the internet, Mrs Fisher undertook her research by visiting the Leicester Records Office where she found primary sources that informed her writing. She also used county history books such as Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire Vol IV part II. Her extensive local knowledge is also drawn upon in several articles.

The reader may wish to tackle this document by starting from the beginning and reading to the end, but do not expect to have a great sense of continuity as each article follows another. Rather see it as a compendium of articles describing certain aspects of the history of the parish as the writer moves from Roman times to the late Victorian period.

To help with this, I have numbered each page and added a contents section at the beginning which gives a brief description of each of the individual articles. This may be helpful if the reader is looking for specific subject matter such as a period in history, place in the parish or particular events.

The parish owes much to Mrs Fisher for her contribution to our understanding of its history.

Contents

1	The Domesday Book: First evidence of a village
2	Danes and Vikings: Evidence of occupation within Newbold's name
3	Sparkenhoe: The Saxon Hundred name for our area
4	Domesday Book: Extracts
5	Domesday Book: Information on Newbold and Brocardescote
6	Normans: The first Lords of the manor made up of – Newbold, Brascote and Naneby
7	Marriage and Wardship in Medieval Times- control of the Lord of the Manor
8	Agriculture at the time of the Conquest and afterwards
9	Interesting customs used in pre-conquest days and afterwards
10	Parish Boundaries and how they have changed
11	Bertram De Verdun- 12th C owner of the manor and crusader
12	Lady Rohesia de Verdun – Lady of the manor and founder of Gracedieu Nunnery
13	More about Lady Rohesia and the list of rectors in the church
14	Leicester Abbey and Newbold its ownership, its tenants and their land
15	Historical evidence of Newbold de Verdun in the 12th and 13th century
16	The list of rectors: dating from 1296
17	More interesting items from the list of Rectors and the connection with Naneby
18	The Descendants of the De Verdun's: in the 14th century
19	The Procurations: 14th C payments made to pay for hospitality when church dignitaries visit
20	The Black Death 1349: General description of how it devastated the country
21	A Brave Martyr: The link between villager Roland Statham and John Huss burnt at the stake
22	The end of the De Verdun family in Newbold: also, significant dates from 1356 - 1574
23	People who lived in the parish 500 years ago.
24	Early Enclosure 1490: Enclosing the land around Brascote and parts of Newbold and Naneby
25	The Wool Trade: Enclosure led to an increase in the wool trade leading to huge fortunes being made.
26	The Beginning of the Parish Registers:
27	The beginning of the Parish Register 1538: The beginning of the BMD registers in England
28	More Information from the early Parish Register for Newbold Verdon and other church matters
29	Bishop Hugh Latimer: A village connection with the man burned at the stake.
30	Change of Ownership and Partition of Lordship: The Mountney Family
31	Change of Ownership Continued: To the Crewe family, also significant dates 1564-1670
32	More Information From the List of Rectors: 1626-1693, also Lord Crewe Bishop of Durham
33	The Bells in the Tower: History of the church bells
34	The Family of Lord Crewe: A correction for page 31 and more about Lord Crewe
35	The Will of Lord Crewe1721: leaving £30 to build a new Free School. Estate to James Montagu
36	Lord Crewe Close: More information on Lord Crewe and his family
37	The Free School of Newbold Verdon: History of the school and some of its headmasters
38	The Montague at NV: James Montagu inherits the manor from Lord Crewe
39	James Montague 1721-1748: More information on L. Crewe's legacy
40	Death of James Montague 1748: His bequest of £100 or the poor of the parish
41	Montague Charity Continued: The purchase of land to rent by the charity
42	Pares and Bunney, new lords of the manor: Background information on the two men
43	Early inhabitants of Newbold: Names of inhabitants from 1719 onwards
44	The earliest Poll 1719: Lists of some of the people living in the parish up until 1776
45	More Information concerning early electors and church wardens
46	Newbold Verdon 1719: Electors for the parish and where they came from.
47	Public Houses of NV and their occupants and those who offered sureties: 1759-1767
48	Public Houses of NV and their occupants and those who offered sureties: 1776-1781
49	Public Houses of NV and their occupants and those who offered sureties: 1788-1803
50	Public Houses of NV and their occupants and those who offered sureties: 1805-1816
51	Public Houses of NV and their occupants and those who offered sureties: 1817-1827

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher (contd.)

Romans

Notes

The Roman rule lasted for 350 years and the Britons came to look upon the Romans as their protectors and guardians. When the legions were withdrawn, they, the Britons, were helpless against the invaders from the north of Britain, the Picts, and from over the North Sea, the Angles and Saxons. In due course, these latter arrived in the Midlands driving the Britons into Charnwood Forest and further, into Wales and Cornwall. After the Britons had fled, the newcomers burned down the settlements and established their own dwellings nearby, but not on the same spot. It was easier to cultivate the land which had once been tilled, than to break fresh ground.

Coming now to Newbold Verdon; there is no written evidence until 1087 A.D., when the Domesday Book was compiled, but its very name sheds light on Anglo-Saxon times. 'Newbold' is an Anglo-Saxon name, de Verdon, the name of a Norman Baron, being added more than a century after the Conquest. 'Bold','bolt','bould','boldt' = a house = a chief's house, built of wood, resembling a huge barn.

'Newbold' = a new house; therefore it is reasonable to suppose there was an old house. Was this destroyed by the Angles? A field on the Hall Farm is named,'The Old Piece'. The Victoria County says there are ancient earthworks in a field near the church. One can only speculate as to the origin of the New House.

M.D.Anderson, in 'History by the Highway' writes thus,"Even fields which remained derelict from the sixth century, when large numbers of their Celtic owners migrated to Brittany, until the twelfth or thirteenth centuries were so recognised by the medieval peasants who re-occupied them and were referred to as 'Ye old land', a term which has persisted in such Devon farms as Yelland, Yellaton, or Yellomead". (to be contd.)

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher (Contd)

From 800 A.D., England was invaded by the Danes or Northmen or Vikings, who came from Norway, Sweden and Denmark. As the Angles and Saxons before them, at first they came only for loot and plunder, but by the middle of the century, they came to conquer and settle. They were pagans and hated Christianity and their route was marked by blazing villages, churches, abbeys and monasteries. But a deliverer came in king Alfred the Great. Every one has heard of the king who let the cakes burn and was scolded by the house-wife. This took place while Alfred was hiding in the marshes round about Glastonbury. He gathered his army and won a great victory at Ethandune, in 878 A.D. By a treaty between Alfred and the Danish leader, Guthrum, known as the Peace of Wedmore, the Danes were allowed to settle to the north and east of the Watling Street, which district was known as the Danelaw. Guthrum was baptised, Alfred himself being his god-father. Thirty other Danish chiefs received baptism, and the Vikings settled down in the lands allotted to them and before long became absorbed in the Christian population.

Newbold was in the Danelaw and under Danish jurisdiction. Note the names of places in the vicinity ending in 'by': Cadeby, Naneby, Enderby, Kirkby, Ratby, Groby, Blaby, etc., meaning 'a Danish village'. When the Danes were victorious and confiscated the English soil, the land was given to their warriors, who were known as 'soke-men' = freemen. The word 'soke' has come down to us through the ages, as in the 'Soke of Peterborough'.

To be continued.

SPARKENHOE

Note

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher (Contd.)

SPARKENHOE - How the name arose Early in the tenth century, the counties or shires took shape. No exact details are available but they appear to have been formed during the Danish incursions, probably created for military and financial reasons, or, alternatively, to enforce the law and to organise resources to resist the Danes. Very early, they came under two chief officers, the king's financial representative, the shire-reeve or sheriff, and the military leader, the earl. The shire was responsible for keeping roads, bridges and walls in good order. The bishop, whose diocese often co-incided with the shire, also had a share in the administration of the region.

In the reign of Edgar the Peaceful,(958-975) we hear of a division into hundreds or wopentakes, as the Danes called them, for the trial and punishment of evil-doers. Edgar is described as the king who 'upreared God's glory and loved God's law and bettered the public peace more than the kings that were before him'.

What the name 'hundred' meant is not clear; a collection of a hundred homesteads? or a hundred heads of families?

In Leicestershire, there were originally four 'hundreds', Guthlaxton, Gartree, Goscote and Framland. Later, Guthlaxton was divided into two hundreds, the new hundred being called Sparkenhoe.

The rural deaneries of the Church were often similar in area and name but did not coincide exactly with the hundreds.

This information is derived from various sources,

Short History of the English People, J.R.Green,
Oxford County Histories,Leicestershire, Charles E.Kelsey,
A History of Lincolnshire, Alan Rogers,
Provincial England, Dr. Hoskins.

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher(contd.)

Domesday. Extract relating to Newbold.

The first written evidence concerned with Newbold is found in the Domesday Book. Nothing is known of happenings in Newbold throughout the reigns of the Danish kings; ~~Canute (of the well known story of rebuking the waves) and his successors;~~ or through the time of Edward the Confessor. Danes and Saxons were now living side by side, more or less peaceably. Canute was a Christian and had visited Rome. He divided his land into four great earldoms. Newbold, being in Leicestershire, was included in the earldom of Leofric of Mercia. Earl Leofric was probably the husband of Lady Godiva famous for her ride through the streets of Coventry.

Another powerful Noble was Godwin Earl of Wessex. His daughter Edith married Edward the Confessor. Godwin's son was Harold who was acclaimed king upon the death of the Confessor and who was subsequently killed at the battle of Hastings.

Leofric Earl of Coventry and Leicester, with his wife Lady Godiva, were at Leicester Castle at Whitsuntide 1051 for the purpose of witnessing the grant of a charter for building and endowing the monastery of Spalding. Their grandson Edwin was the last Saxon Earl of Leicester and Algitha his sister was married to King Harold.

Domesday tells us that "2 ploughlands of the Queen's fee in Newbold and Brocardescote which were valued at 5/- were worth 20/- at the general survey. The land was equal to 3 ploughs and 3 villeins had one plough each."

The queen referred to was Edith, the queen of Edward the Confessor, ~~daughter of Godwin~~ and sister of King Harold.

To be continued....

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher (contd.)

Domesday continued.. A further extract from Domesday concerning Newbold states:

"Two ploughlands in Newbold, part of the lands of Hugo de Grentismaisnell were held at the general survey by Huard. The land was equal to two ploughs, and one was in the demesne, with two bordars."

By carefully considering the two entries we have an interesting picture of life in Newbold one thousand years ago. A ploughland = 120 acres, therefore 480 acres approximately were under the plough. In addition there would have been meadow and grazing land, surrounded by rough uncultivated common land, known as heath or waste, the latter word meaning wild or untilled, not useless.

Before the Conquest the land at Brocardescote and near was in the Queen's fee and we are told that this land was equal to 3 ploughs and 3 villains had one plough each; while the other part, i.e. at Newbold, was equal to 2 ploughs and one in the demesne with two bordars, making 6 ploughs altogether. A villain was a farmer and a bordar, a much lesser person possibly a cottager who had his cot and holding by working on the demesne, or the lord's land. The name of the Saxon lord from whom the land was confiscated is not stated.

Both areas were given to Hugo de Grentismaisnell, a mighty baron and intimate friend of the Conqueror. He sublet to Huardus. It is evident that in this locality there was no opposition to William as the value of the land increased from 5/- in the time of King Edward to 20/- at the time of the Domesday survey, this showing that no burning or devastation had taken place, such as there was in Yorkshire and Staffordshire.

The Conquest

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher(contd.)

After the Conquest. William shared out the land of the defeated English to his victorious barons; each parcel of land being known as a manor. To Hugh de Grantmesnil went the greatest share of the spoil in Leicestershire; sixty-seven townships scattered in different parts of the county, some of which were Newbold, Bosworth, Barlestone, Cadeby, Naneby, Kirkby etc. Another part of Bosworth was given to Robert Beaumont, Earl of Mellent, or Meulan.

De Grantmesnil restored Leicester Castle and the Church of St. Mary de Castro. He sublet the land at Newbold to Huardus; at Cadeby to Ivo; at Barlestone to Ernald and Ralph; at Bosworth to Hugh.

Grantmesnil = a town in Normandy from which Hugh came. Hugh de Grantmesnil also built castles at Groby, Whitwick and Earl Shilton.

Next to the king in rank came the barons and their vassals, those whom the barons put in charge of their estates. Next came the tenant farmers who rented lands from their lords. They were the conquered English landowners. Next came the villeins. These were farmers who were tied to vill or township and held their lands by tilling the lord's land or reaping the harvest as well as grinding the corn. There were also cottars and bordars who had very small holdings. The lowest classes were the slaves or bondmen mainly the descendants of ancient conquered races. They wore round their necks an iron collar with their owner's name. They could be bought or sold in a market like cattle; but their owners were not allowed to kill them.

In Domesday no bondmen are recorded for Newbold, Barlestone or Cadeby. At Bosworth four are recorded, two in each manor. At Thornton there is still a farm called "Bondman Hays", and a field at Desford was known as "Bondman Piece".

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

Marriage and Wardship in Mediaeval times.

The villeins (i.e. farmers) who held their strips in the common fields, and grazed their animals in the pastures and on the commons, were tied to the manor and could not sell their holdings or go elsewhere. The same applied to the farmer's children, who could not marry without their lord's consent, as if they left, the lord would lose their labour. The following extract mentions Newbold Verdon. From Farnham's mediaeval notes. Coleorton.

De Banco Roll 661, Easter 4 Henry VI 1426.

'Thomas Hall and Henry Hall both of Overton Saucey were attached to answer John Merbury esq. and Agnes his wife in a plea of taking away from Hemyngton William, the son and heir of John Ireland of Hertshorn, (under age being) whose marriage belongs to John and Agnes as of their manor of Newbold Verdon, because John Ireland held six messuages seven daracutes of land etc. in Hertshorn, county Derby, of them by homage, fealty and scutage and doing suit of court from three weeks to three weeks at the court of John and Agnes of Newbold Verdon.'