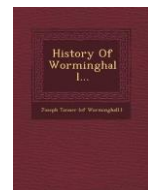


History of Worminghall

Joseph Tanner, 1884



WORMINGHALL FROM A.D. 1066 TO 1836

THE parish or manor of Worminghall is situated in the county of Bucks, on the borders of Oxfordshire, from which it is divided on the S.E. by the river Thame, a tributary of the Thames, into which it flows at Dorchester. Worminghall is five miles from Thame, and ten from Oxford ; the nearest station to it is Tiddington, on the Wycombe branch of the G.W.R. It is in the union and county court district of Thame, the hundred of Ashendon, the rural deanery of Waddesdon, the archdeaconry of Buckingham, and the diocese of Oxford.

The derivation of the name Worminghall is very uncertain; it is variously spelt in old documents, being sometimes written Wermalle, Wrmehale, Wormehalle, Womenhall, and Worminghall. Colloquially speaking, however, it is more often Wornall than Worminghall. With the adjoining hamlet of Thomley, it forms a compact estate, and, unlike many old manors in the country, seems never to have been cut up and divided into separate and distinct properties, but has remained for many centuries one united whole.

By admeasurement it contains 1483 acres ; its gross estimated rental is £1770 2s. 4d., and its rateable value £1560 4s. 2d. The number of its inhabitants, almost wholly farmers and labourers, amounts to about three hundred. The whole manor is in a high state of cultivation, and yields abundant crops of grain and grass. The soil is loam and clay, with clay subsoil ; the chief crops are wheat, beans, and roots; and the land is about one-half pasture. Its situation is low, and the climate somewhat damp and moist, but by no means unhealthy, and has of late years been remarkably free from fever, and epidemics of every kind.

The village, with its ornamental cottages, scattered irregularly among the trees, its well-built and respectable farmsteads, its parish church standing a little apart, its handsome new school, and its substantial almshouse in the centre, has on the whole a pleasing and agreeable aspect. The manor lays claim to a considerable antiquity. Its history can be traced back in ancient documents to the early part of the eleventh century.

A.D. 1066. In the reign of Edward the Confessor, this manor was held under Edith, Queen Consort, by Eddeva, wife of Winuard, who had the power of selling it. (Domesday survey, f. 155.)

A.D. 1084. (18 William I.) At this time Wermelle was held by the Bishop of Constance, and always taxed at five hides. Here were five ploughs, four servants, pasture for two plough-teams, wood for two hundred hogs, worth altogether £6, afterwards raised to 27. (Lit. Censual., vol. i. f, 155.)

A.D. 1100. After the forfeiture of the lands of the Bishop of Constance, this estate is said to have been given by Henry I. to his natural son Robert Mellant, who likewise held Great Marlow and other lands in Bucks. (Rev. Ed. Cooke's MS. ap Lips-comb's, Bucks.)

A.D. 1272. (1 Edward I.) In the Hundred Rolls is the following notice : " Dominus de Doniton de villa de Wrmehale habet placita de visu franciplegii et dominus filius Helye in eodem modo in eadem villa."

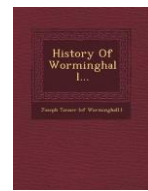
The lord of Doniton of the town of Wrmehale affirms the view of frankpledge, as does the lord's son, Helye, in the same manner in the same town

A.D. 1292. (21 Edward I.) Robert Fitz-Elys recovered seisin against Robert de Boyton in the King's Court at Aylesbury, of a garden with its appurtenances adjoining the Churchyard in Wornenhall. (Rot. Orig., No. 28.)

A.D. 1315. (8 Edward II.) The manor of Wormehall was held by John de la Rivere, who obtained a charter for a weekly market on Thursday, and annually on the feast of St. Peter, June 29th, a fair and free warren. (Inquis post mortem, vol. i. p. 133.) The market has been discontinued for very many years, but the village feast is still held on St. Peter's day, old reckoning.

History of Worminghall

Joseph Tanner, 1884



A.D. 1341. (15 Edward III.) In the assessment of Bucks this parish was taxed at seven marks, and the assessors returned that the value did not exceed that sum, that there was one carucate of arable land lying uncultivated, which had been commonly ploughed and sowed, and that there were neither merchants nor cattle dealers. (Inquis. Nona's., p. 339.)

A.D. 1363. (37 Edward III.) The abbot of Abyngdon and others were seized of the manor of Wormenhall, with other lands in Oxfordshire, in right of the warden and scholars of Canterbury Hall. In the same year Sir William Tracy, Kt., had a writ of entry of two parts of the manor of Wormenhall with appurtenances. These rights did not operate to the exclusion of the Fitz-Elys' family, although their interests were more or less affected by them. (Each. 37, Edward III.)

A.D. 1367, 1375, and 1408, the Tracy family purchased the greater part of Wormenhall and Thomley, and the estate appears to have been vested in his descendants through seven generations in lineal succession. In 1455 it was transferred by fine to William Browne and Richard Bedford (Rot. Fin., Bucks, 34 Hen. VI.). The family of Tracy derived its descent from Sir William Tracy, one of the knights who murdered Archbishop Becket.

A.D. 1470. (9 Edward IV.) The manors of Wormenhall, Waterperry, and Oakley passed into the family of the Ingletons of Thornton, near Buckingham, by the marriage of Sibilla, sole heiress of Robert Fitz. Elys, Esq., of Waterperry, to George Ingleton, Esq. (Each. in the Tower of London, 9 Edward IV.)

A.D. 1519. (10 Henry VIII.) Jane, sole heiress of Robert Ingleton, Esq., was married to Humphrey Tyrell, Esq., son of William Tyrell of Ockington, Essex, who had livery of the lands of his wife's inheritance, and took up his residence at Thornton, Bucks.

The above-mentioned William Tyrell, who owned Wormenhall and Thomley, was descended from Sir Walter Tyrell who shot William Rufus. The manor of Wormenhall, however, and other Fitz-Elys' possessions were for some time held in dower, by Sibilla, widow of George Ingleton, Esq. (Guide to Archit. Antiquities, part iii. p. 260.)

A.D. 1598. Wormenhall was assessed to the Provision money for beeves and muttuns (cattle and sheep) for the Queen's household at £1 48. 9d. (Rot. 42 Eliz.)

From Sir George Tyrell, sole heir of Humphrey and Jane Tyrell, the estate passed to Thomas Tipping, Esq., of Shabbington (to whose memory a monument is erected in Ickford Church), and in 1720 to Edward Rage, Esq., of Wheatfield, Oxon, who about 1772 sold his estate of Worminghall to Samuel Horne, Esq., from which family it passed by purchase, in A.D. 1827, to the Right Honourable Henry Lord Clifden, Baron Mendip. From him the property descended to his grandson, the late Viscount Clifden, son of Lord and Lady Dover. Lord Dover died during his son's minority, and consequently the management of the estate devolved in a great measure upon Lady Dover.

At this time the property was divided into a number of small holdings, it lay open and unenclosed, and was in a wretched state of cultivation from want of drainage. There were no regularly constructed roads from one end of the parish to the other ; there was no resident clergyman, and no school for the education of the children. The labouring population were, generally speaking, ignorant and poor. Lady Dover, however, with the characteristic benevolence of her family, inaugurated a new condition of things. The small farms were added to the larger ones, the whole manor was fenced and drained, and new roads were made in different directions. The sequestered vicarial tithes were voluntarily restored, and a vicarage provided for a resident vicar ; a farmhouse was converted into a school, and a master appointed.

This was the first great lever in raising the people to a better condition, and her Ladyship's memory will long be revered by the inhabitants of Worminghall. The only religious service was on Sunday afternoons, by the vicar of Shabbington, and in those days was performed in a somewhat hasty and apathetic manner. The new vicar and schoolmaster had much uphill work to do, but they went earnestly to work, and by their united teaching they improved the tone of the village.