

THE MANOR AND PREBENDAL LANDS OF LITTLE CHESTER, DERBY

By JOAN D'ARCY

INTRODUCTION

This article is a cautionary tale about mistaken identity and the inclination to accept often repeated facts without checking their origins. It is appropriate that it appears in this *Journal* as the mistake first appeared in its pages, in two articles written by George Bailey and published in the *Derbyshire Archaeological Journals* for 1889 and 1890. It concerns the identity of three farm houses, one now demolished, in Little Chester, Derby. Some time before 1889, Bailey visited Little Chester, saw and sketched these 'old' properties, falsely assumed that all three were former prebendal farms, and subsequently wrote two articles entitled the 'The Stone House Prebend, Little Chester, Derby', and 'Prebendal Houses at Little Chester'.¹ This assumption has been repeated in all later *Journals* and many other works. This article will show that while two, Stone House Prebend and Manor Farm, had indeed been prebendal farmhouses, the third, now called Derwent House, had not. It stood on manorial lands and was, in all probability, the site of the Manor House of Little Chester.



Fig. 1: Stone House Prebend, south front. As drawn by G Bailey with Derwent House in the background.



Fig. 2: Manor Farm, rear view. As drawn by G Bailey.

SECTION A: EARLY HISTORY

Little Chester is now known as Chester Green and is a suburb of the City of Derby, situated on the east bank of the River Derwent and about a mile north of the city centre. It owes its origin and the name of Little Chester to the Roman auxiliary camp and *vicus* of 'Derventio', which once stood there and about which many articles have been written.² Later occupiers of the site adopted the *Via Principia*, the east-west axis of the Roman camp, as their main street, calling it Town Street in the nineteenth century and now Old

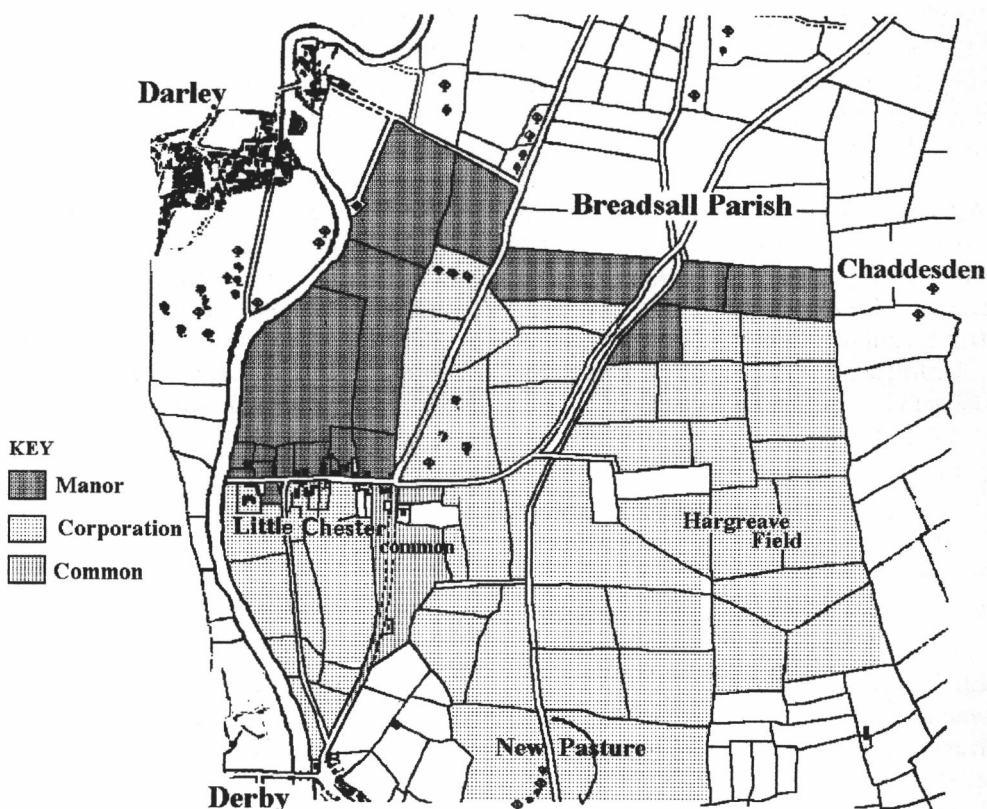
Chester Road. The *Via* also became the rough dividing line between the lands of the manor of Little Chester to the north and the prebendal lands to the south.

By the time of the Norman Conquest, the land at Little Chester was held, under the King, by the church. Domesday Book (1086) records, under Derby, that *Cestre*, otherwise (Little) Chester, lay within the king's demesne and states that in the time of Edward the Confessor,

*In this Borough one church was in the King's lordship, with seven clergy, who held two carucates of land freely in (Little) Chester. There was also a second church, likewise the King's, in which six clergy held nine bovates of land in Quarndon and (Little) Eaton, likewise free.*³

The churches are not named but it is accepted that they were All Saints (now Derby Cathedral) and St. Alkmunds. The parish boundaries of All Saints incorporated Quarndon while Little Chester and Little Eaton were contained within the boundaries of St. Alkmunds. These churches, which were probably Saxon minster foundations, were geographically close and served by seven and six clergy respectively.

Early in the reign of Henry I (1100–1135), the king granted the churches and their lands to the Dean of Lincoln in perpetuity.⁴ Either then or sometime later, but before an entry in the Hundred Rolls in 1276, the number of priests was reduced, a single secular collegiate body of seven priests being created to serve both.⁵ The Dean either inherited



Map 1: The Little Chester Estate and its divisions c.1755.⁶

or carved out for himself, a 'grange' or manorial demesne which he held directly, while reserving some part, the prebendal lands, to the churches for their continuing support. His 'grange' comprised land at Little Chester lying to the north of Old Chester Road and estates at Little Eaton and Quarndon. The majority of the land at Little Chester was, however, attached to the joint collegiate churches as support for their clergy and was divided, in proportion to rank, between a sub dean, who governed the college, and six canons, or prebendaries.

The boundaries of the estate and its division, outlined on Map 1, are taken from two maps drawn at the time of enclosure in 1755.⁷ The River Derwent formed the western boundary, to the south was the Borough of Derby and the eastern and northern boundaries ran beside Chaddesden, Breadsall and Darley Abbey. In 1755 there were 104. 1. 8 acres of land on the manor and 343. 1. 20 acres of prebendal land, by then in Corporation hands.⁸

SECTION B: THE MANOR OF LITTLE CHESTER

The manor, though called Little Chester, also comprised much land and property in Little Eaton and Quarndon but in this article only the Little Chester lands will be considered. The earliest reference to the Dean of Lincoln having established a grange at Little Chester comes in an indenture of 1316, drawn up between Dean Henry de Mansfield (1315–1328) and William de Claxton, who was granted one messuage with its appurtenances there, bounded by the site of the grange of the said Dean and the messuage of Sir John de Cave, prebend, to be held for two years at an annual rent of four silver shillings.⁹

Evidence for the operation of a manorial court comes in 1328 when Margery, wife of William 'at the Fountain', sometimes called 'William atte Walle', appeared at the Manor Court of Little Chester to confirm to Stephen Wildgos of Breadsall, 'one rood of arable land. . . lying between the bushes between the open fields of Little Chester and Breadsall'. Her son, Geoffrey, appeared two years later to acknowledge the grant. The name 'atte Walle' conjures up the thought that they lived within, or close to, the Roman walls.¹⁰

Unfortunately there are few records for the estates held by the Deans of Lincoln and the trail has only been picked up two hundred years later, in 1520. The grange is now called a 'manor' when leased to Edward Beresford of Barnburgh, Yorkshire. He was granted,

*the site of the manor or demesne in Little Chester, with all demesne lands and houses, closes, meadows, pastures etc., formerly occupied by William Frannecs (tenant), without any waste to be made thereunto. Also the Fishery in the water of Derwent, opposite the site of his manor, lately in the tenure of the Abbot of Darley. Value £3 12d.*¹¹

The lease was for 45 years, extended in 1527 for a further 59 years, and the Dean was to pay for and undertake all repairs of the manor, the straw thatch, walls, leats and dykes of the manor and the buildings. After Edward Beresford's death, a new covenant was drawn up in 1545 between his son, Denis Beresford of Gray's Inn, London and Dean John Taylor. The new terms gave Beresford the right to buy trees and wood from the Dean for which he was to carry out all repairs to the property. This appears not to have been implemented.¹² In 1549, Sir Thomas Smith, at that time one of Edward VI's two

principal secretaries, negotiated an 80 year lease of the manorial demesne from Dean Taylor, agreeing to pay £21. 13. 4 annually for five years and £23 thereafter. Smith was granted

*all that the manor of Lityll Chester, co. Derby, with the appurtenaunces in Lityll Chester, Quarendon and Lyttyll Eyton, co. Derby, with all and singular rents, reversions, services, courte barons, leets, view of franckpledge. . . all royalties, wayfs, straies and felons goods, releefs, harryottes, perquesites of courte, fynes and amerciements, assise and assaye of breade, beare and all balywicks and stewardships, with the custody of keyping of parke and parkes . . .*¹³

All woods were reserved to the Dean, who was to provide great timber for building. Smith was to pay for all other repairs, respect all existing tenancies, whether by copy of court roll or otherwise, and pay the fees of the steward of the manor and his clerk and all the customary costs of the dinner of the homagers or jurors when they attended court.

An analysis of the manorial court rolls, carried out by H E Currey in 1893, suggests that this lease was not of long duration, perhaps for reasons explained later (see Section C). Francis Curzon was Lord of the Manor between 1562–1566 and John Bullock of Norton, who purchased Darley Abbey in 1574, held the title in 1590. It was later held by his son John who died in 1641, leaving the estate in the hands of four trustees, Sir John Fitzherbert, Robert Holt (his son-in-law), Elijah Woodroffe and Godfrey Froggatt. During the Civil War his young successor, also John, joined the ardently royalist Sir John Harpur of Swarkestone but in 1645 submitted to parliament at Derby.¹⁴

Although the evidence is fragmentary and insufficient, it appears that the manorial estate was sequestered by the borough of Derby, through powers under an Order of Parliament of 1643.¹⁵ In 1646 the Mayor (Gervase Bennett) and Burgesses granted a 21 year lease to Anthony Halsey, a Derby butcher, at an annual rent of 10 shillings and comprising,

*a messuage in Little Chester called the Manor House with the croft adjoining called the Castle yard (egress and regress to the same being reserved to the Mayor or his Steward, to hold his courts there and for homagers and other persons to attend the same).*¹⁶

Two years later, in the Mayoralty of Robert Mellor, the same property was leased to Robert Hope, on the same terms and with Halsey in present occupation. These documents, now only known in a summative form, refer to a house called the ‘*Manor House*’ and indicate that the manor court was held there or in its vicinity, while ‘*Castle yard*’, the name of the adjoining croft, suggests that this lay within the walls of the former Roman fort. William Woolley, who lived at Darley Abbey, noted, about 1712, ‘*. . . there is still some remains of the old walls and foundations of strong stone buildings which some still by tradition call Chester Castle*’.¹⁷

Robert Hope was a captain in the parliamentary army, serving under Major John Gell in Derby. Mayors Bennet and Mellor were Commissioners for Sequestrations for Derbyshire and Mellor was also a captain in Gell’s army, which may have some bearing on events.¹⁸ An entry in a ‘*Book of Abstracts of Corporation Deeds, 1483–1857*’ (the original is lost) provides further evidence of sequestration. In September 1650, after the death of Anthony Topham, Dean of Lincoln,

Trustees were appointed by Act of Parliament for the sale of the estates of the then late Deans Sub Deans Chapters to two of the Aldermen of the Corporation of Derby. In consideration of £756 the

*said Trustees convey to said Aldermen The Manor of Little Chester Quarndon and Eaton with all rents etc & other premises in the said Townships of Little Chester Quarndon & Eaton etc.*¹⁹

This Act is confirmed in a deed of May 1651, also lost but recorded by J C Cox, by which Robert Mellor and Thomas Sleigh, Aldermen, and John Donaye and John Gisborne, brethren of the borough of Derby, assigned the manor to the Mayor and burgesses,

*in discharge of a trust of the manor of Little Chester, Quarndon and Eaton, with the rights, members, and appurtenances thereof in the county of Derby; and all quit rents, rents of assize, chief rents, old rents, free rents, copyhold and customary rents to the said manor belonging, and all that messuage or tenement with the appurtenances called the Manor House of Little Chester aforesaid, and a close of pasture and several parcels of arable, meadow, and pasture ground in Little Chester aforesaid . . .*²⁰

The deed, which also details the various parcels of land at Little Eaton, describes the manor as '*lately parcel of the possessions of the late Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lincoln*'. The manor court was operating during this time as records survive from 1642 to give an insight into its proceedings and business.²¹

After the restoration of Charles II to the throne, the manor was restored to the Dean of Lincoln and by 1668 the lease was held by Simon Degge although Robert Hope retained occupancy, Hearth Tax returns for 1670 assessing '*Mr. Hope*' on eleven hearths.²² Degge was from Stramshall, Staffordshire, a lawyer who arrived in Derby about 1650 and was appointed Recorder of the Borough in 1661. Other posts followed; he was knighted in 1669 and became Sheriff of Derbyshire in 1675. On his death in 1703, he was succeeded by his grandson, another Simon. William Woolley wrote that Little Chester was '*Now part divided - half belonging to the Corporation, and the rest to the heirs of Simon Degge*'.²³

It was soon after this (1721) that William Stukeley, another acquaintance of Simon Degge, visited Little Chester and drew a plan of the main street and the houses which lay within the Roman defences. This, the first known delineation of Little Chester, shows a large house on the north side of the street and set within the outlined Roman walls, which fits the profile of the '*Manor House*' and is the site of present day Derwent House. (see Map 2)

Elizabeth Hay, Simon Degge's daughter, next held the manor briefly. before it came to yet a third Simon Degge, the great grandson of the first. During this time the estate was sub tenanted.²⁵ In the Chatsworth archive there is '*A particular of the Estate late of Elizabeth Hay and now of Simon Degge Esq. held by Leases from the Dean of Lincoln for three lives one aged about 70 another about 52 and the third about 18.*' This document, dated 1751, shows that the estate was occupied by Mr. (Ralph) Melland who was still there in 1762 when '*A particular of the Estate of Simon Degge Esq.*' was drawn up. The latter gives a list of manorial field names, names which continue in use thereafter into the twentieth century. It also lists a number of holders of cottages and minor tenants. In 1752, Melland held 97 acres, 3 roods and 36 perches and was paying an annual rent of £128. 19. 0 which increased to £192. 0. 0 in 1762. In between, there had been a rationalisation of land as the estate, in an agreement with Derby Borough, substituted enclosure for an open field system of farming.²⁶

Tax Assessments show that Thomas Haslam was succeeded by William Haslam but from 1837, as appears from a note in a '*Survey and Valuation of Estates*' drawn up in 1853, it was held by John Bromley, a Derby based land agent and surveyor.

*This farm is leasehold to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The present tenant (Bromley) entered on his farm in 1837 and shortly after laid out in the erection of New farm Buildings and improvements of the farm House £1347. 18. 4. In 1849 £559 (being part of His Grace's Interest in the value of his Lease of 7a. 3r. 16p of land at Little Eaton sold to the Rev. J. E Carr) was allowed the tenant in part of the said outlay, and at the same time 5 per cent upon this sum viz. £28 a year was added to his rent.*³⁰

The Survey describes the '*house, outbuildings, yards, gardens, orchard, croft and road on the east side*', and a further croft and footpath, also on the east side. The house was close to the river as it refers to Bromley repairing the river bank with stone from a disused quarry at Little Eaton and using the '*sand in the river opposite his farm*'. Only Derwent House fits this position. In 1833 a detailed map of Little Chester was drawn by Robert Bromley, also land agent and surveyor. On a much used copy of this map in the Chatsworth archive, the outbuildings to Derwent House, as drawn in 1833, have been crossed through by a later hand and the proposed '*New farm buildings*' are hatched in red. The outbuildings now standing immediately to the east of Derwent House, conform to the hatched proposals and their brickwork could certainly date to the 1830s.³¹

The manor was transferred from the Dean to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1845, under a Parliamentary Act of 1836, and in 1851 an agreement was reached to replace the tithe with a rent payment of £20 to the Duke. At this time John Bromley held 99 acres 3 roods and 25 perches of land.³² The Devonshire lease came to an end in 1865 and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners began to sell the estate. In 1875 a narrow strip went to the Great Northern Railway Company (see Section C).³³ At the same time, Walter Evans of Darley Abbey, who already held cottages and other land at Little Chester, purchased 76 acres of the estate with buildings and crofts, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners reserving a church glebe and the land on which St. Paul's Vicarage had been built.³⁴

Under Evans' ownership, Derwent House was occupied by succession of farming tenants. The house did not appear to have a name when visited in the 1880s by George Bailey but from the 1890s it was called Derwent Farm. Walter Evans died in 1903, leaving his estate in Trust for the use of his wife, Ada. In 1925, even before Ada's death, the Evans' estate at Little Chester was transferred to Derby Borough. This included Derwent Farm, properties called 'Manor House' and 'Manor Cottage' and eighteen smaller cottages. 'Manor House' was a nineteenth century building set back from Old Chester Road, from map evidence built between 1852 and 1881 and demolished in the 1960s. 'Manor Cottage' was drawn on Stukeley's map of 1721 and, in a modified Victorian form, still stands. (see Map 2) Between 1926 and 1927 the fields were converted from pasture into Darley Playing Fields, in the course of which several hundred yards of Roman Ryknield Street were uncovered and excavated. In 1928, notices to quit were issued to the tenants of Derwent Farm and Manor House.³⁵

It may be that twentieth century historians have been confused by the knowledge that Derwent Farm was Corporation property, into wrongly identifying it as a prebendal farm.



Fig. 3: Derwent Farm, now Derwent House, in 1994. (photo by Elwyn Kitchen). George Bailey drew only the cellar. Since 1987 it has been a private residence.

SECTION C: THE PREBENDAL OR CORPORATION LANDS

When Henry I granted Little Chester to the Dean of Lincoln, some part of the decanal estate was set aside as emoluments to the priests or canons who served the churches of All Saints and St. Alkmund. They were formed into a collegiate body, headed by a subdean who, with six prebendaries (canons to whose positions a piece of land is attached), received an income from allotted properties. The first direct reference to this is in 1267 when Henry III, while visiting Derby, filled a vacancy in the college with full possession of the prebendal farm attached to it.³⁶ In 1316, as aforementioned, a property leased to William de Claxton by Dean Henry de Mansfield was described as '*bounded not only by the site of the grange of the said Dean but also by the messuage of Sir John de Cave, prebend*'. One prebend was named '*Stoneprovyn dyr*' in 1391, when Pope Boniface IX,

*made provision to John Benyngton, of the prebend and canonry of 'Stoneprovyn dyr' in All Saints, Derby, worth 15 marks, void and reserved to the pope by the death of Thomas Palmer at the apostolic see, 'notwithstanding that he holds a perpetual benefice called a chantry, worth 8 marks, in the said church.'*³⁷

In 1535, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* valued the subdean's prebend, then vacant, at £3. 6. 8. The other prebends were variously valued at lesser sums.³⁸ The Henrician Reformation led to the dissolution of monastic institutions but secular colleges such as All Saints were not directly affected. In 1547 however, soon after Edward VI ascended the throne, the college was disbanded and its clergy pensioned into early retirement under an Act for the

Dissolution of Chantries. The prebendal lands passed to the Crown and, in 1549, were sold to Sir Thomas Smith, or Smythe, clerk to the Privy Council and soon to become the King's principal secretary. He not only acquired the prebendal farms as part of a package costing £346. 13. 4. but also agreed an 80 year lease with the Dean of Lincoln for the manor of Little Chester (see Section B). The tenants then were Oliver Thacker, who held two prebends, including '*le subdeane's prebende, alias Stone Prebende*', Richard Lister (lately deceased), Richard Scattergood and Thomas Newton. However, on the fall of the Duke of Somerset, Smith was accused of treason and placed in the Tower and the prebendal lands were returned to the Crown in part payment for a pardon, priced at £3,000.³⁹

In 1554 the lands were granted by Royal Charter of Mary I to the bailiffs and burgesses of Derby as part of a large endowment for the support of the clergy of the churches of All Saints and St. Alkmund and the masters of Derby Grammar School. That part of the Charter which describes the Little Chester estate, '*lately held by Sir Thomas Smythe*', is summarized below. It comprised,

- a messuage and tenement called '*le Stonehouse prebend*' with lands, meadows, feedings and hereditaments, in the tenure of Oliver Thacker
- tithes in the tenure of Oliver Thacker
- a barn and all lands, meadows and pastures in the tenure of Henry Cockayne
- lands and hereditaments called '*le two small prebends*', in the tenure of Anthony Lister
- a messuage and tenement and a close, in the tenure of William Scattergood
- all other lands in '*Parya Chester*' late parcel of the possessions of the said Smythe.⁴⁰

By 1581, the year of the first extant post-dissolution borough rental, the estate was divided into three farms and various smaller parcels of land. The farmhouses, of which only Stone House Prebend still survives, were ranged along the south side of Old Chester Road. The land included open fields stretching away to the east, the largest of which was Highgreave (Hargrave or Haygrave) field now known as the Racecourse Playing Fields. (see Maps 1 and 3) George Bailey visited two of the farmhouses, Stone House Prebend and Manor Farm. The third farmhouse, which he did not see as it had been demolished, is called Lister's Farm in this article. In the rental for 1581 the occupants of the three farms were Mr Lister, John Scattergood and Mr Haughton who had been replaced by Anthony Bate in 1591. Few rentals survive and none give names to the farms but simply state tenant name and rental value, viz. '*Anthony Lyster for his farme in Little Chester by yr. xxxxl.*'⁴¹

The Listers had lived at Little Chester since at least the early fifteenth century. In 1611 they were able to trace their family back eight generations and claimed gentry status. Their monuments, which once stood in the parish church of St. Alkmund, testified to their important local status. The two small prebends they held in 1554 had been amalgamated into one farm by 1591. Anthony Lister died in this year and an inventory of his goods also recorded the rooms in the house. These show a two storey building with medieval origins; there was a hall with buttery, parlour and kitchen, to which had been added a '*new*' chamber, a chamber over the hall, a great chamber and a nether chamber. The barns and service rooms around a yard supported a mixed farm. Rentals show that the farm passed from Anthony to his descendants, until the death of Richard Lister in 1672.⁴²

Of lesser status and wealth, the Scattergoods called themselves husbandmen. In the lay subsidy roll of 1544 Henry Scattergood was assessed at £2 in comparison to Richard Lister's £9 assessment. William held the farm in 1554 but it was John who, in 1572, renewed the lease for 21 years, paying an annual rent of £10. 6. 8. He was still in occupation at his death and his will, written in February 1603/4, states, '*touching my farme and all the lands thereunto belonging in Little Chester aforesayd which I have of the demyse and grant of the Bailiffs and burgesses of Derby*', one half was to go to his son Richard and the other to his wife Jane provided that she did not marry but kept house for Richard. Otherwise Jane was to have 40 shillings a year. Richard died in 1623 at which time an inventory was taken which again shows a house of medieval origins with a more recent extension: a hall, the chimney of the hall, a kitchen, a buttery, an old parlour, a new parlour, a chamber over the parlour, a corn chamber over the hall, a new chamber and, in common with Lister's farm, a boulting house (a place for sifting flour) and a sheep house.⁴³

In contrast to these long time residents, the Bates were an upwardly mobile family, climbing towards gentry status through the sons of Thomas Bate, a Derby mercer. By a process of elimination, in 1591 Anthony Bate held the farm occupied in 1554 by Oliver Thacker, brother of Robert, the last subdean of Derby. Bate was a member of the London Clothworker's Company with property in Foster Lane, London though at his death in 1598 he requested burial in St. Alkmund's church. In 1596 the lease was held by his brother Robert, a merchant of considerable wealth with property in London, Leicestershire, Warwickshire and elsewhere in Derbyshire. On Robert's death it went to Nathaniel Bate senior and finally, after Nathaniel's death in 1645, his son Nathaniel inherited the leasehold.⁴⁴

Stone House Prebend, which is outwardly little changed since George Bailey's sketch, stands close to the River Derwent and childhood graffiti provide good evidence for the placement of the Bate family there. Nathaniel senior married twice and the children of the second marriage left evidence of their occupancy in the house; their initials are carved into the wall plaster at the top of the stairs. (see Figure 4) This was done some time after the birth of John, Nathaniel's 21st child, in 1635. John was also responsible for other, royalist, graffiti inside the adjacent room, signed IB and dated Sept VIII 1646.

There are no inventories for this time, but there is surviving evidence of the house's medieval origins in its stone chimney stacks while the prosperity of its early seventeenth century occupants is attested in its oak panelled room with an inlaid wooden fireplace overmantel. A stone in the south facing house wall, bearing a Derby Borough Coat of Arms and the date 1594, probably records a renovation of the house at the start of the Bate tenancy.

Using chiefly Derby borough rentals and tax assessments, it is possible to trace the later occupants of the farms and to place them in their respective houses. At the time of the Hearth Tax in 1670 the Scattergoods had been replaced by 'Mr Davis', who was assessed on six hearths, 'Mr Lister' on five and 'Mr Bate' on six.⁴⁶ By the end of the seventeenth century the Listers and the Bates had also departed and the farms changed hands more than once until the Cleator, Lord and Ward families took possession. In 1693 Luke Alsopp of Wirksworth, yeoman, held '*Bate's farm, late in the tenure of William Lord*', for six years at an annual rent of 40 shillings.⁴⁷ In 1707 the lease was held by '*Mr. Ward for his farm, late Luke Alsop's, commonly called Bate's farm*'. The rental for 1694

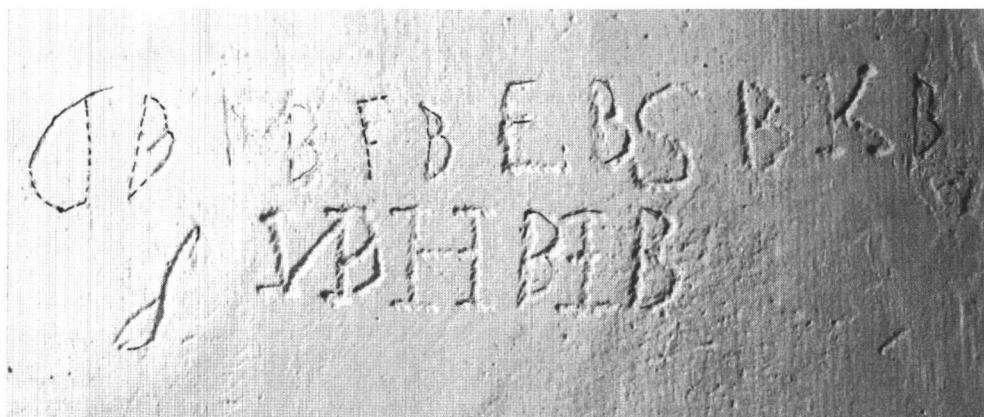


Fig. 4: Bate family graffiti: children's initials.⁴⁵ Top row, DB MB(rubbed out) FB EB SB KB. Bottom row, S (sons?) NB HB JB.

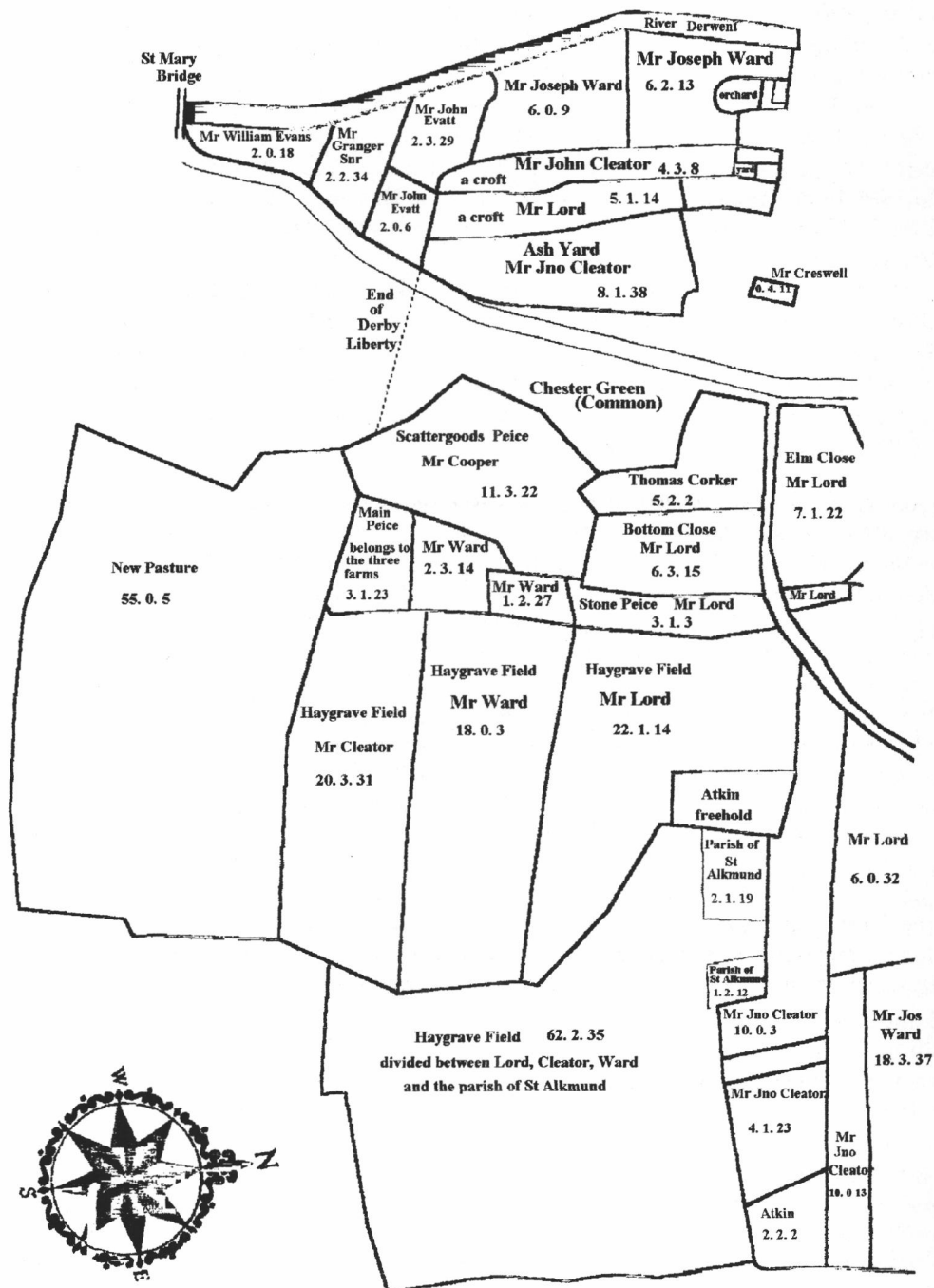
records for 'Mr. Bate's farm of Robert Clater' but this was an error as 'Robert Clayter', usually found as 'Cleator', had taken out a lease of a farm, 'known as Lister's Farm, late in the tenure of Thomas Ingleson'. Robert Cleator died in 1727 and an inventory gives a description of Lister's Farm at that time: house, kitchen, parlour, little parlour, pantry, back kitchen, yellow chamber, blue chamber, chamber over the house, cheese chamber, garrett, cellar, passage and yard.⁴⁸

Firm evidence that Ward, Cleator and Lord now occupied, respectively, Stone House Prebend, Lister's Farm and Manor Farm, comes from an enclosure map drawn up in 1755 (see Map 3), supported by leasehold agreements, rentals and correspondence concerning the enclosure of, in particular, Hargreave field. Enclosure was only achieved in 1757, after some argument and the issue of Forcible Quit Notices.⁴⁹ After enclosure, Thomas Haslam senior, already a tenant of manorial lands, took over Lister's (latterly Cleator's) Farm. A letter dated 1757 refers to the several farms which are to pay 'the same Rent that Thomas Haslam pays for . . . late Cleator's Farm'.⁵⁰ Borough rentals from 1760–1773 also record 'Thomas Haslam for his farm, late Cleator's'.

The Wards and Lords intermarried and when Thomas Ward died intestate in 1775 the heiress to both farms was his sister Susanna.⁵¹ Susanna married John Meynell of Meynell Langley and he inherited, through her, the leaseholds of both Ward and Lord. In the library of Meynell Langley Hall hangs a portrait of Susanna Ward and its shelves hold a small manuscript book entitled *Archaeology* by Godfrey Meynell. The frontispiece is an annotated map of Little Chester, based on Dr. Stukeley's drawing of 1721. Meynell commenced writing it in 1804.

In the village and in the house now occupied by Mr Soar I first drew the vital air, June 19th 1779. The proprietors of the village are the Duke of Devonshire the Corporation of Derby and myself. My mother [nee Susanna Ward] held this [land] as did her ancestors under a long lease from the Corporation of Derby: the lease expired in 1781 and my father did not think it right to renew it. It then consisted of two farms, one held by her uncle Mr. Lord, the other by her father [Joseph Ward]. Mine is the only land in the village freehold.

Meynell also wrote 'In Mr. Lord's cellar are the remains of a Roman wall'. A hundred years earlier William Stukeley had written, 'Mr Lord's cellar is built on one side of the wall



Map 3: Old Chester Road and part of the Corporation lands from a 'Survey of the Corporation Lands in the Liberty of Little Chester', 1755.

three yards thick'. This helps to confirm that Lord occupied Manor Farm, which archaeology has shown to have stood on the line of the defensive wall (see Map 2 on which Meynell's freehold is also marked).

Land Tax Assessments support Meynell's account. In 1781 one farm was held by Thomas Haslam and two by John Meynell. In the following year Thomas Haslam, junior was in occupation of two farms while William Soar held the third, Lord's former tenancy. In 1793 John Haslam was admitted to one of the Haslam farms. He took out a 14 year lease in 1799 and renewed it in 1813, his rent increasing from £142 to £270 a year. Soar likewise renewed his lease in 1813, paying £264.⁵²

However, the first inroads were being made into the estate. A strip of land running through Hargreave field was sold to accommodate a branch of the Derby Canal to Little Eaton which was opened in 1795. In 1815 two crofts close to St. Mary's Bridge were sold by public auction.⁵³ When the farm leases next expired in 1827, at which time they were occupied by John and William Haslam and William Soar, the properties were surveyed by Robert Bromley, who stated,

*The three farm houses with the outbuildings are very old, and can be kept in even poor repair only at a considerable annual expense to the tenants; this expense would be almost entirely saved were the land parceled (sic) out in accommodation quantities. The estate too would be improved by this mode of letting, as the land now in tillage must in that case be cleaned and laid down in grass.*⁵⁴

This report ushered in changes. Two new tenants, William Presbury and William Prince, took out 14 year leases of two of the farms in 1828, the first for £331 and the second for £223 in annual rent. Field names, together with future continuance in occupation, help place Presbury at Stone House Prebend and Prince at Manor Farm.⁵⁵

Who, if anyone, now occupied Lister's farm cannot be determined, as it is not possible to carry its occupation forward. No lease can be attached to the farm in 1828 and Land Tax Assessments, which place Presbury and Prince at Little Chester, are void of a third farm tenancy. Yet Robert Bromley's survey map of 1833 still records the footprint of the farmhouse and its outbuildings. For this period of time, Derby Corporation records fail: the Town Hall was burnt out on October 21st 1841 and the fire destroyed many of the town's on going records, including Minute Books and rentals.⁵⁶ The 1841 census returns, in which Presbury and Prince are described as '*agriculturalist*', do not adequately fill the void because of the erratic route of the enumerator. However, the 1852 Board of Health Map shows only an empty space where Lister's farm buildings had stood. Between 1828 and 1850, when records are again clear cut, the farmhouse and its outbuildings had been demolished.⁵⁷

By the time George Bailey visited Little Chester, the site of Lister's Farm had been built over and a row of terraced 'cottages' erected in its place by Sir Alfred Seale Haslam. During their construction in 1886, workmen found Roman pottery, coins and quern stones, which inspired Haslam to place there a cast iron plaque, stating 'Roman Camp'.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, although it had disappeared within the life time of many local inhabitants, George Bailey was seemingly not aware that Haslam's brand new terrace had been erected on the site of an old farmhouse.

By degrees the remaining two farms became less viable. In 1836, a corridor of land running through Hargreave field, parallel to the canal, was sold to the North Midland

Railway Company and in 1846 a 21 year lease was granted to sponsors of Derby Racecourse. This was laid out over several closes and pasture within Hargreave field.⁵⁹ The viability of the farms was not only diminished by this alienation of land but also by flooding. In November 1842, after a major flood in Derby and at Little Chester, the North Midland Railway was held to account by the Corporation for the damage, '*occasioned by the increase of flood waters created by the Embankments and other works*'.⁶⁰ Prince and Presbury, who had tried to obtain compensation, did not renew their leases and in 1849 the farms were advertised in the *Derby Mercury*. The new agreements taken out by Alexander Britton and Joseph Parker in 1850, were for seven years.⁶¹

Britton, described in the 1851 census returns as a '*teacher of languages from Bristol*', leased Manor Farm and about 20 acres of land for £108, but was not there long. In 1857 William Fowkes, a coal merchant, was the tenant from '*year to year*'. His lease included '*Site of Old Homestead*'. Fowkes was served with a notice to quit in September 1859 and by 1861 the farm was occupied by Joseph Bennett.⁶² In 1871 Elizabeth Bennett, widow, was still farming 20 acres but this acreage was to be further reduced by the construction of a branch of the Great Northern Railway line through Little Chester.

In 1872, the Great Northern Railway (Derbyshire and Staffordshire) Act was passed for the construction of a line from Burton, through Derby to Nottingham. The route, once land sales were agreed, ran through Little Chester on an embankment, bisecting Old Chester Road which was bridged.⁶³ Once the trains began to steam past its back door in 1878 and the new Chester Green Recreation Ground had been laid out in 1886, with the land encircling it sold between 1885 and 1895 for housing development, Manor Farm was left with less than an acre.⁶⁴ The 1881 census return records Charles Shore of Ashbourne in residence but this proved to be the last of short term occupancies. By 1883 George Dicken had taken over the property and was initiating repairs. In 1885 he purchased the farmhouse and 4120 yards of land for £950.⁶⁵ The name Manor Farm first appears about this time and it was so called when George Bailey met Mr. Dicken there. Occupancy by the Dicken family ended in 1964 and the house stood empty for a short time. Although Listed Grade 2, this did not appear to justify its repair and retention and in 1965 it was drawn in plan, photographically recorded and pulled down.⁶⁶

Of the three farms, Stone House Prebend, Listed Grade 2*, is the only one still standing.⁶⁷ On the Board of Health Map of 1852, as in contemporary directories, it is named City House.⁶⁸ When Joseph Parker took out the lease in 1850, at an annual rent of £276, he held just over 72 acres of land, 18½ acres of which still lay in Hargreave field. By the 1871 census this holding had been reduced to 26 acres as the result of a sale to the Midland Railway Company for the creation of St. Mary's Goods Wharf. After the further sale of land to the Great Northern Railway Company, Parker was left with only a meadow between the house and the river and 'Parker's Piece', a field immediately to the south of the house. During this time too, there had been further flooding over the area. In November 1866 '*the river overflowed its banks onto Parker's land*' leading to a recommendation, not implemented, that the river be embanked.⁶⁹ In 1881, the farm had demised to Henry, Joseph's eldest son, who was described as a coal merchant and farmer of seven acres. He relinquished the lease and by the time of George Bailey's visit it had been put to use as a Masters' house for Derby School. When sketched by S H Parkin in 1895 it was called School Farm.⁷⁰

Date	Derby	Corporation	Properties
	Farm A Stone House Prebend	Farm B Lister's Farm	Farm C Manor Farm
End of 16th cent.	Bate	Lister	Scattergood
17th cent.	Bate	Lister	Scattergood
1670	Bate	Lister	Davis
	Alsop	Cleator	Lord
18th cent.	Ward	Cleator	Lord
	Meynell	Haslam	Meynell
	Haslam	Haslam	Soar
19th cent.	Haslam	Haslam	Soar
	Presbury		Prince
	Parker		Britton
			Fowkes
	Parker		Bennett
	Parker		Shore
	Derby School		Dicken

Table 1: Sequence of Corporation tenants at Little Chester 1600–1900

SECTION D: CONCLUSION

In pursuing the main theme of establishing the identities of the Little Chester prebendal farms, the many complexities of tenure in Little Chester have not been included, but it was never a simple division of land. ‘*Books of Surrenders*’, recording the surrender and renewal of leases in Little Chester Manor Court, show that Corporation tenants sometimes held manorial leaseholds and Land Tax Assessments show the reverse. The acreage of land held could also vary from lease to lease, while many tenants held other lands in Derby and further afield. Moreover, all tenants, whether holding manorial or corporation land, were customary tenants of the manor.

And while it generally holds that the dividing line between manorial and prebendal properties was Old Chester Road, there were minor variations. The most notable of these was the Crown Ale House, later renamed the Coach and Horses, which, although on the south side of the road, was held by the Dukes of Devonshire as Lords of the Manor. The ‘*Survey of Corporation Lands*’ of 1755 (see Map 2) shows two other exceptions to the general rule: a small intake of manorial land lying between Ward and Cleator on the south side and a quarter of an acre on the north side held by the Corporation on which George Creswell built a blacksmithy in the early seventeenth century. It was still occupied by a Creswell when the map was drawn.⁷¹ In the nineteenth century an agreement drawn up between the Corporation and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners also led to the Corporation holding a plot of land to the north east of the road in exchange for 1788 square yards of land on which St. Paul’s Church was built in 1849–1850.⁷²

The main aim of this article has been to firmly establish the historical identity of the houses visited by George Bailey. Taking all the evidence together, there is no doubt that the prebendal farms acquired by Derby Borough in 1554 lay to the south of Old Chester Road. The three farmhouses, with their outbuildings, stood in a row alongside the road, within the Roman defensive walls, and were so delineated by William Stukeley and by

later cartographers until 1852, by which time the middle farmhouse and its outbuildings had been demolished. Although only Stone House Prebend, since 1977 a private residence, stands as living proof of its age, there is sufficient documentary evidence to show that each farmhouse contained a medieval core and can be identified as a prebendal farm.

There is no doubt that the manorial demesne lay to the north of the road and little doubt that Derwent House stands upon the foundations of its Manor House. The survey carried out by the Derby Buildings Record supports this conclusion.

*There can be no doubt that the southern block is the oldest part of the present building, but it is not a complete house and the irregular jointing on the north side of the eastern end makes it clear that there was an earlier building to which it was added. This was probably a medieval open hall with eaves to the level of the first floor window sills, very likely timber framed. The southern block would then be a parlour wing to this hall, which is indeed what it looks like.*⁷³

George Bailey saw three 'old' houses standing in Little Chester and, knowing that there had been three prebendal farms, made an understandable error. Unfortunately he left a legacy of misinterpretation that has been continuously repeated down the years. Hopefully, this article will begin to establish a more accurate understanding of Little Chester after the Romans.

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