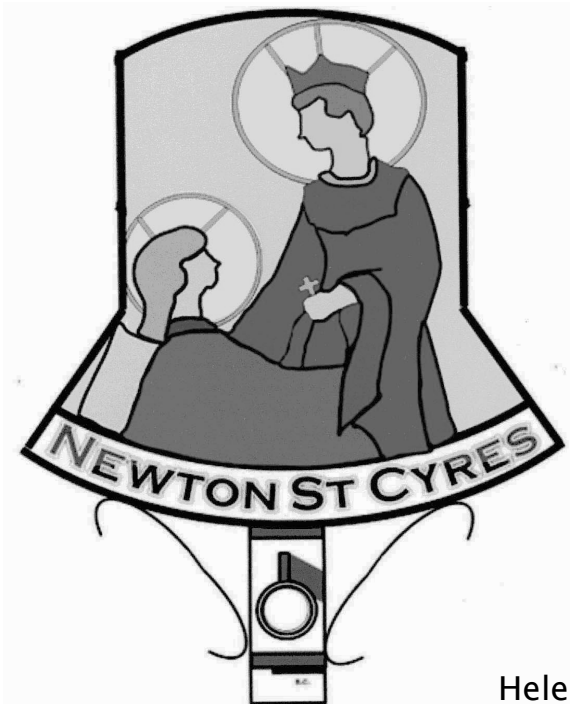


# Newton St Cyres History Group



In September we were pleased to welcome as our speaker Helen Turnbull from Chudleigh who has worked with the records of the Clifford family of Ugbrooke House. She tackled a difficult subject namely:

## THE ECLIPSE OF THE MANOR

Helen began by outlining the position at the time of the Norman Conquest and by showing a chart of the system of Courts which gave a very good picture of the administrative structure. All land belonged to the King. At the local level the system of government was the Shire divided into Hundreds and then Manors. Taxes were collected locally and paid via the sheriff to the King.

Although some small amount of land was retained by Saxon owners, land was in the grant of King William. Some of his knights returned to their estates in France, but many remained, some protecting the Welsh and Scottish borders. For their service to the King, many of these knights were granted large areas of land. The King had to be careful to control the knights so they did not threaten him. It was perhaps for this reason that a knight might be granted land in widespread pockets, rather than a large grant in a single area.

The manor of Cannington in Somerset was discussed. It had been held by Henry Marquis of Exeter but he was beheaded. In 1539 it was granted to Edmond Rogers Esq for life and then reverted back to the Crown. Charles II granted it to Lord Clifford. Thomas Clifford was Lord High Treasurer of England.

The Church had massive areas of land. Many bishops were also manorial lords. Vicars were usually granted tithes for their services of a spiritual nature.

At the local level, the organisational structure was the Manor. A knight often held many Manors at a fee from the king and in turn could sublet these to lesser ranking individuals for a fee and so grew up a system of sub tenancies. The Lord of the Manor held land and had the Manorial rights. The Hundred comprised many Manors and also had rights, customs and services but each manor and hundred had its own individual

customs, rights and services.

The Lord of the Manor had demesne land that he farmed and he also had control over all Manor land, the parks, woods, mills, warrens and fisheries. He controlled markets and fairs and held the mineral rights. At a practical level a Steward managed the manor or manors. A Bailiff organised day to day work which was supervised by a Reeve. There were free and bonded peasants. Both had obligations. Free peasants would be required only to work for the lord at critical times like harvest, whilst bonded peasants worked much more although they may be 'given' a small strip of land and have rights on common land.

The Lord of the Manor was an instrument of government. There were both Manorial and Hundred courts. Free tenants had access to the royal courts to settle land disputes. The manor courts were very concerned with changes in land tenure and the collection of fees. When land was transferred a fee must be paid. Land may be Copyhold or leasehold, often for the period of three lives. A heriot (a form of inheritance tax) must be paid on a father's death and a fee before the son could resume the lease. Initially the heriot was the best beast but then commonly became a capon. Fines were imposed if a heriot was not paid

Copyhold documents were in two halves, one copy being upside down. They were then separated by a zig zag cut so that the two halves may in the future be fitted back together to prove ownership. Thus the modern survival of the term 'indenture'

The common fines were collected by the tytheing man. He was like a constable with some responsibility for law and order also. He was appointed for a year and in the case of the Cannington Hundred was granted an acre of land for that year. It was an unpopular job as he was fined if he failed to collect all the dues.

The Lord of the Manor had other responsibilities and some continued for many centuries. One lord was still appointing supervisors for weights and measures in 1896!

The land the Cliffords held in Cannington included the river bank and the seashore. They were still letting fishing rights in 1916. The lessees had rights on the seashore and this included the collection of seaweed. There were disputes on the rights to wrecks which continued into the 1700's on whether they were the property of the Lord of the Manor or the Lord of the Hundred.

The manor was responsible for organising a range of fiscal and policing duties. During hard times folks wouldn't or couldn't pay their dues.

The practical organisation of the manor was eroded during the Black death of the 1400's when so many of the population died in all levels of society. Labour was at a premium and many bonded peasants became free. It was further eroded during the Tudor period and the upheaval caused by the dissolution of the monasteries. This was

the time at which many big estates and 'landed' families came into being as they were 'granted' land now held again by the Crown. They continued to hold the land rights of the Lords of the Manor. An example is when the Bishop of Exeter was granted a licence to alienate his land in Chudleigh to a squire. A number of Acts of Parliament followed which affected the power of the manors. Many of the duties and privileges of the manor went to the Church Vestry. The vestry, however, evolved to Parish Councils in 1894, with the Church losing its influence over secular matters.

Erosion of the inherited rights of the big estates came with WW1 and the deaths of so many young men. Also the increase in death duties further accelerated this. Copyhold land was abolished in 1922.

Some manorial rights still exist, for example the Lord can claim certain mineral rights. These now need to be registered to be retained. Land to which there are no legal heirs still reverts to the Crown.

The meeting concluded with questions and we learnt more about the history of the Cliffords. They held/hold land in Devon, Somerset and Lincolnshire with houses too and used to move between these houses taking their furniture. Some staff would be left, whilst others would accompany them. They were Catholics but kept 'their heads down'. Ugbrooke House went into decline during and after the war. At one time some of the main rooms were used to dry grain, but with the pictures still on the walls. Renovation was a lengthy business.

## **THE MANORS OF NEWTON AND NORTON**

I should like to add a short rider about the local situation. It seems that the manors of Newton and Norton were part of the large land grant to endow the monastery in Crediton. When the see transferred to Exeter they transferred also. This can be traced for Norton but there is some possibility that Newton was already in the possession of St Peters in Exeter. However the circumstances, the monastery at Exeter had obtained possession of Newton and Norton, it had lost them again before 1050 and then regained them by 1072.

By the time of Domesday there was a dispute over whether the Bishop held Newton or the King's thane Dunn did so. The Bishop showed his charters and the Court seems to have decided in his favour. However, Dunn appeared in possession and the Bishop seems to have awaited his death. In contrast to Norton, some of which still remains in the possession of the Church, Newton does not seem to have been regained but was given later to Robert de Pont-Arche, King Stephen's chamberlain, whose sister Emma granted it to the Priory of Plympton. We know from excellent Cathedral building records that wood was seasoned in a pond at Norton. However the Cathedral stables appeared to be in Newton which is perhaps surprising.

After the dissolution of the monasteries and Newton had reverted to the Crown, there

is evidence that in 1550 the farm of the manor was leased to one Sir James Granado for 30 years or life. In 1557 John Northcote purchased the manor of Newton St Cyres together with the advowson of the vicarage for the sum of £827 8s 9d. The Northcotes were rich woollen merchants from Crediton who lived in a mansion at Hayne Barton later moving to Pynes. They have a very large monument in Newton Church.

The Quicke family seem to have come into the village through marriage and to have lived firstly at Bidwell and possibly later at Lower Creedy. They were successful farmers and probably profited from the dissolution of the monasteries but so far I have found no direct evidence for this. They were certainly present in the village very soon after. They did seem to be very able at making advantageous marriages. It was after one of these to an heiress in 1759 that they were able to buy much more of the village from the Northcotes.

This is a work in progress and maybe there are many mistakes. If you are able to help please do get in touch.

Jean Wilkins

### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

NOVEMBER 14<sup>th</sup> 'Fun with History in Shobrooke' Shobrooke Local History Group will come and Entertain us in a variety of ways.

DECEMBER 12<sup>th</sup> Christmas meeting; 'A Clergyman's Journey'

## Newton St Cyres 200 Club

The October draw took place at the Arboretum coffee morning in the Village Hall on 5th October 2013 and the winners are:

No	121	Nick Down	£100
No	147	A P Patrick	£10
No	2	Jackie Enright	£10
No	100	Mrs Pearce	£10
No	105	Christopher Lee	£10

Congratulations all,  
Daphne 01392 851639