

History of Purley on Thames

Section EC0001

Biographies

Miles Crispin

Introduction

Miles Crispin is notable for being one of the major landholders in Domesday. His connection with Purley is interesting as he was listed as having a holding in Pangbourne which has been identified with Purley La Hyde. There is also a connection with the Huscarles who became lords of Purley Magna as well as Beddington Huscarle in Surrey from which our link with Purley Surrey came about.

Friend of the Conqueror

Miles was the third son of Gilbert Crispin, baron of Bec and came across with William on his conquest of England. As a result he was awarded considerable land holdings.

Marriage

Under King Edward the Confessor the lord of Wallingford, named Wigot, held very extensive lands in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. He held the positions of Sherriff of Oxford and cup-bearer to the king and, although not related by blood, seemed to have been treated as a kinsman by the king. Wigot was also a close confidant of William Duke of Normandy and when the latter had been victorious over the Saxons at Hastings, he came to Wallingford where Wigot received him in great style and ceremoniously delivered the town to William.

William stayed in Wallingford several days and at the conclusion of the feasting there was a marriage between Aldith, the only daughter of Wigot to Robert D'Oily. Robert was the son of Seigneur de Oyley near Liseux in Normandy, one of William's most eminent chieftains.

Wigot had had a son Tokig who was one of King William's officers and died at the Battle of Archenbrai. Thus Aldith became Wigot's heir and on his death she inherited all his holdings which had not been confiscated by William as had happened to the majority of Saxon Thegns.

Her only child was a daughter, Maud who was married to Miles Crispin around 1084, certainly before Domesday was compiled in 1086. Thus she would have been around 18 at the time, considerably younger than Miles who must have been at least 35. [b i p219]

After Miles' death she remarried Brien Fitzcount and played an active role in the politics of the period.

Domesday Holdings

Miles' Domesday holdings can be placed in two groups, first those that at the time of King Edward were held by Wigot and thus acquired by his marriage to Maude and second those which had been held by other Saxon lords and which we may assume he had acquired as his reward for his part in the conquest. It is interesting to note how many of Miles's holdings had a reduced assessment in 1086

over what they had been in 1066. We may add a further group of Robert D'Oily's holdings.

For many of Miles' holdings no holder in 1066 is shown and it may be assumed that these were all held by Wigot. In the case of Chessington in Surrey it is stated specifically that Wigot did not hold it.

Former holdings of Wigot now Miles

Bedfordshire

Clapham (Brictric 5h)

Milton Ernest (2 Freemen 16 acres)

Thurleigh (Brictric 1v)

Oakley (Earl Harold 1h)

Berkshire

NONE

Gloucestershire

Brawn (3v)

Alderley (1h)

Hampshire

Not stated in Kingsclere Hundred (2h) half hide

Oxfordshire

Gatehampton (5 hides)

Chesterton (12h)

Cuxham (5h)

Wiltshire

Rodbourne (5h)

Manton (3h)

Former holdings of other Lords now Miles

Bedfordshire

Berkshire

Pangbourne (King Edward 6h 1v) 5 hides

Sulham (King Edward 1 hide) 1 hide

Clapcot (Wulfnoth 7h) 1 hide 1 virgate

Clapcot (Saxfrid 7h) 1h 1v)

Betterton (Leofric 10 hides) 5h

Appleton (Haldane 5 hides) 2 and half hides

Eaton (King Edward 5h) 5 hides

Eaton (King Edward 5h) 5 hides

Langley (Leofward 1 h) 1 hide

Wallingford (King Edward 15 acres) 15 acres

Gloucestershire

Cherington (King Edward 2h)

Oxfordshire

Great Haseley (Queen Edith 16h)

Aston Rowant (Wulfstan 20h)

Kingston Blount (? 7h)

Nethercote (? 2h)

Chalgrove (Thorkell 10h)

Rotherfield Peppard (Wulfric 5h)

Mapledurham (? 3h)

Whitchurch (Leofric & Alwin 10h)

North Stoke (Edwin 10h)

Newnham Murren (Engelric 10h)

Wainhill (Brictric 1h)

Cowley (Toli 1.5 hides & one third virgate)

Somerton (Brictric 1h)

Thomley (half hide)

Draycot (2h 1v)

Marsh Baldon (Azor 10h)

Heyford (Besi 5h)

Henton (Leofnoth 8h 1v)

Adwell (Wulfstan 3h)

Britwell Salome (Wulfstan 5h)

Britwell Salome (1h)

Berrick Salome (4h)

Gangsdown (Ordgar 1h)

Harpsden (5h)

Kingston Blount (5h)

Nethercote (2h)

Garsington (1h)

Watcombe (2h)

Alkerton (6h)

Swyncombe (2.5h)

Somerton (Ketel 1h)

Surrey

Beddington (King Edward 25h) 3 hides

Chessington (Magnus Swarthy 5h) 1 hide

Wiltshire

Wootton Bassett (Leofnoth 12 h)

Chilton Foliat (Earl Harold 10 h)

Clyffe Pypard (Harold 5h)

Clyffe Pypard (? 1h)

Littlecote (Godric 1h 1v)

Walcot (Alnoth 2 and half h)

Walcot (Leofnoth 3v)

Draycot Foliat (Leofnoth 10h)

Brinkworth (Toki 5h)

Chedglow (2 Thanes 1h 1.5v)

Ogbourne (Earl Harold 10h)

Hazelbury (Leofnoth 5h)

Swindon (Thorbert) 2 hides - disputed

Ashley (Aldred) 1 virgate claimed by one of Miles' men-at-arms

*Holdings of Robert d'Oily***Berkshire**

Chaddleworth (King Edward 4 h) 4 hides

Letcombe (Wigot from King Edward 10 h) 7 hides

Great Shefford (King Edward) 1.5 h) 1 and half hides

Ardington (Edwin 5h) 2hides and 1 virgate

Ardington (Saewin 9 h) 4hides 3 virgates

Ardington (Azor 1h) 1 hide

Ashbury (Abbot of Glastonbury 40 hides in all) 4.5 out of 16 now held by Robert

Steventon (Harold) 13 sites in Oxford now held by Robert

Wallingford 4 dwellings

Aldermaston 1 site

unstated 2 sites

Watlington 2 houses

Waterperry 1 house

The Honor of Wallingford

After the death of Robert D'Oily all his holdings came to Miles and became the Honor of Wallingford. He had made Wallingford Castle his seat and had become known as Miles of Wallingford. In 1084 the future King Henry I who was then 15 years old, was sent by his father to Abingdon Abbey for tutoring and Miles and Robert were invited, together with Osmund, Bishop of Sarum, to sit at the Royal high table at Easter. Miles granted the church of All Hallows in Wallingford to the 'Capel of St Nicholas in Wallingford Castel' just prior to 1101.

The concept of an Honor is an odd one. It comprised a group of manors and seems to have derived from the Saxon concept of a burgh which provided shelter to an area of up to 15-20 miles around in time of danger. In return each manor had to contribute a number of men to defend the burgh and so there had been established an obligation which was not quite the same as that between an earl and his underlords whereby the earl could call men to the fyrd (Militia) and demand dues from his manors, and quite different from the relationship between a thegn or other holder of a manor and his undertenants.

In many cases an honor simply became part of the holding of an earl and for practical purposes the differences ceased to exist, but while the holdings of a given individual could and often were taken into the king's hands and re-distributed, the set of manors which made up an honor remained fairly constant up the 16th century even though the ownerships were in different hands.

Thus, while within a matter of a hundred years or so there was scarcely any common ownership between any of the manors which had once been held by Miles, the honor remained as an entity until it was merged with that of Ewelme in 1540 and sold in 1817.

The honor was taken into the king's hands on his accession in 1154 and for many years thereafter was granted to the sovereign's eldest son and so became tied to the Earldom, later the Duchy of Cornwall.

Gift of the Inn

In 1106 Miles gave an Inn and its adjacent lands to the Abbey of Abingdon. He had fallen ill and had been nursed at the Abbey by the monks. He was particularly grateful to Abbot Faricus for his skill as a physician and in recognition granted the Inn at Colnbrook to the abbey. The Inn had been kept by Aegelward of Sutton and was roughly half way between Abingdon and London and thus would serve as a very convenient staging post for travellers between the abbey and London. Miles sent his steward to Abingdon to lay the title deeds of the hospice on the high altar of the Abbey.

Miles finally succumbed to his illness and died in 1107.

A few years later on 16th September 1115 King Henry I confirmed the gift in perpetuity which was noted as having been given 'in alms' by Miles and his wife Matilda.

Bibliography

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