

Account of Purley on Thames

Sir Reginald Malyns

R200698 14/7/2019

An article by John Titterton in the series From my History Notebook article 62 published in PPN June 1986

62. Sir Reginald Malyns : a medieval knight

Few people today have ever heard of Sir Reginald Malyns but he was a leading figure in Oxfordshire county society and known at the Court of the King (Edward III). Few landowners of Purley will have been more renowned in their day than he. He was the grandson of Henry Buscre de Malyns (see last month) and was born about 1313 with the proverbial 'silver spoon'. His grandfather was the equivalent of a millionaire and his mother's family were the Hampdens of Great Hampden. His uncle was a Gerald Braybrook who was distantly, but significantly, connected with the Royal Family.

Few records survive about Reginald before he inherited his father's lands but most refer to his military career. Our first reference to him is as a witness to a deed at Horsenden, Buckingham in 1330 when although still a teenager he is already a knight. Horsenden was a manor of his uncle, Gerald Braybrook and he would seem to be in his service. In July 1348 he sailed for France with King Edward III's army to fight at the Battle of Crecy and the subsequent siege of Calais which lasted nearly twelve months. He was fighting in Gascony in 1362 and was the Steward of the Black Prince at his Court in France in 1364.

His military career ended with the death of his father

about 1367. Reginald returned home to look after the family estates including Purley and became involved in Oxfordshire politics. He was once sheriff of Oxford, MP for the County on three occasions and undertook many law enforcement commissions. He was involved in the suppression of The Peasants Revolt in Oxfordshire in 1381 which was the consequence of the imposition of a poll tax of 1 shilling per head in 1280.

One of Reginald's close friends who later married his sister, was John Kentwood who came from Tilehurst and took his name from Kentwood Hill. John also had a military career and was a fellow witness at Horsenden with Reginald in 1330. He did not have Reginald's wealthy background but in 1356 John was at the Battle of Poitiers where he captured a younger son of King John of France (who was also captured). For this achievement the Black Prince paid him £1333 6s 8d by instalments.

Purley was used by the Malyns family to provide a source of income to younger members. Reginald had been granted half of Purley in 1339 by his father, with the other half going to his uncle, Edmund Hampden. The reason for this division is not known but Reginald had regained control by his death in 1384. In the will of his son, Edmund who died in 1385, Purley was granted to a younger son but reverted to the then head of the family Reginald II in 1398. With this Reginald's death in 1431 without any children, the family estates were gradually dispersed. A lasting memorial to the family is the group of fine brasses in Chinnor church (Oxon) for Reginald, his two wives, his son and grandson. There are well worth a visit and can be rubbed.

John Titterton