



Account of Purley on Thames

Chronicles 1000-1099

1006

In Midsummer the Danish fleet had landed at Sandwich and even though the kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia had been mobilised to oppose them they still went pretty well as they wished, living off the land and signalling with beacons. At Christmas they came up through Hampshire to Reading and then went to Wallingford camping at Cholsey on the way. One might speculate that they passed through Purley either along the river or by road.

1051

All lands held by Godwine and his sons were forfeited and the manors handed out by king Edward to the people who had supported him in his struggles with Godwine (ref 91-566)

1052

Godwine staged a comeback and all his lands were restored to him and his son Swein, who included Berkshire in his Earldom Godwine had made Stigand archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop Robert was deposed (ref 91-568)

1053

Godwine died on April 5th and as Swein had died earlier, Harold became Earl of Wessex, including Berkshire (ref 91-568)

1066 (*1 Will I*)

William, Duke of Normandy, invaded England and seized the crown from Harold. His armies landed near Hastings and headed across Sussex, Surrey, Northern Hampshire and Berks.

As a result of the Domesday Survey conducted in 1086 we learn something of life in Berkshire and Purley before the Conquest.

In Purley half a hide was held by Edward and four and a half hides by Bricward, both for King Edward. In addition there were three small holdings of land which are recorded as being in Burley but which are believed to form part of Purley. (ref 29)

In the time of King Edward it was the custom in this part of Berkshire for each hide to give a geld of 3½ d to the king every Christmas and Pentecost. If the king was sending out an army then one soldier was due for every 5 hides. If the soldier failed to appear then lands could be forfeit. It was for this reason that most villages were assessed in multiples of 5 hides and then this assessment divided between the landowners who were liable. (ref 19-ii-866, 29B)

The manors owned by King Edward formed 'The ancient demesne of the crown' and the peasants had to pay rents at the nearest king's town (in Purley's case this was Reading. but were generally exempt from Danegeld and National Taxation. It was perhaps for this reason that many claimed their land had been held direct of the king instead, for example, via the Earl of Wessex who had undoubtedly been the principal landowner. (ref 91-482)

Domesday refers to 15 acres of crown land in Wallingford where 'Housecarles used to live' It is likely that the Huscarles, who were later Lords of the Manor of Purley Magna derived their names from this source (ref 91-582)

1078 (12/13 Will I)

The bishops were ordered to live in towns rather than on their manors in the country as had been their custom. The bishop of Ramsbury had moved between his principal manors of Wilton, Ramsbury and Sonning, and recently also Sherborne as Hereman was also bishop of Sherborne. As a result the See was moved to Old Sarum and hence Purley became part of the new Diocese of Sarum (which later became Salisbury) (ref 17-6)

1086 (20/21 Will I)

Domesday records three entries for Purley. There was half a hide held by Roger, son of Siegfried with one lord, one villager, three smallholders and five acres of meadow with a value of 40s. (Purley Parva?): There were four hides held by Theodoric the Goldsmith containing two lords, 9 villagers, 3 small holders and sixteen acres of meadow with a value of 100s (Purley Magna?): and there was also land held as part of the manor of Pangbourne which included parts in Purley (La Hyde). Only one of the odd parcels remained from 1066 in Burley. It would seem that the total hideage remained the same but was distributed in a different way with the holder of La Hyde taking responsibility for a half hide's share of Purley's assessment.

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