

LANDOWNERSHIP

The dominant estate was Norton manor but there were also many small estates including Wooney rectorial manor and lands of Taunton priory and St Mary Magdalene in Taunton.¹

There is no conclusive evidence for a postulated separate manor of Norton Veel, which was an alternative name for the main manor.²

By 1086 Norton Fitzwarren was part of the outfaring of Taunton Deane manor, held indirectly of the bishop of Winchester.³ Dues and services were rendered to him until 1342–3 but thereafter payment apparently lapsed.⁴ Norton was probably alienated like Bradford on Tone to the count of Mortain before 1086.⁵

NORTON MANOR

Norton was possibly among the Somerset lands granted in 882 by king Alfred to his thegn Æthelstan.⁶ In 1066 it was held by Osmund, paying, but by 1086 was held by Alvred under the count of Mortain.⁷ Alvred, also called Alured or Alfred the Butler, was the wealthiest Mortain tenant.⁸ His Norton presumably descended with Chiselborough to his great-grandson John de Montague (de Monte Acuto, d. 1228).⁹ In 1210 John held Norton of the king for £7 4s. 1d. as one knight's fee of the honour of Mortain in 1212.¹⁰ After 1228 his estates descended through his daughter Katherine (d. 1242) and brother William de Montague (d.

¹ *Cal. Pat.* 1549-51, 53; 1580-2, 258.

² Collinson, *Hist. Som.*, III, 271-2; E. Jeboult, 'The Valley of the Tone', *A General Account of West Somerset* (1873), 67.

³ *Domesday*, 234; Gathercole, *Archaeological Assessment of Taunton*, 2; *VCH Som.* I. 406.

⁴ *Placit. in Domo Capit. Abbrev.* 4; *Feudal Aids*, IV, 335; Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest Som.*, 78; Glos. Archives, MF1418 (Berkeley Castle Muniments BCM/A/3/14/1 (GAR386)).

⁵ T. Hunt, *The Medieval Customs of Taunton Manor*, xi; Gathercole, *Archaeological Assessment of Taunton*, 2-3.

⁶ H. P. R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of Wessex* (Leicester, 1964), 127; G. B. Grundy, 'The Saxon charters of Somerset', *PSAS* 77, appendix 142-9.

⁷ *Domesday*, 251.

⁸ K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People: A Prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents 1066-1166: I. Domesday Book* (Woodbridge, 1999), 143.

⁹ I. J. Sanders, *English Baronies* (Oxford, 1960), 34.

¹⁰ *Pipe R* 1210 (PRS n.s. 26), 56; *Pipe R* 1212 (PRS n.s. 30), 120; *Book of Fees*, I, 84.

1246) to William's daughters Margery (d. 1257) and Isabel (d. 1285), who inherited the whole estate on Margery's death. Isabel married firstly, Ralph de la Haye (d. 1254), secondly Thomas de Audeham (d. 1276) and thirdly Richard de Pevensey.¹¹

John de Gatesden (d. 1258), possibly a grantee of Katherine de Montague, agreed with Thomas de Audeham and Isabel c.1254-8 for Norton but left an infant daughter Margaret.¹² In 1262 Henry III granted to Peter de Chauvent custody of 50 librates of John de Gatesden's land in Norton and Bradford on Tone until John's heirs were of age.¹³ The manor was still in the hands of Peter de Chauvent and Thomas de Audeham in 1265.¹⁴ It was later alleged that John de Gatesden's daughter and heir Margaret and her husband John de Camoys had not adhered to her father's agreement with Isabel and Thomas. In 1279 John and Margaret acknowledged Isabel's right to Norton, which she with Richard de Pevensey granted to John and Margaret and the heirs of Margaret to hold of them and Isabel's heirs.¹⁵

Isabel (d. 1285) leaving a son Baldwin de Audeham (d. 1291) whose honor of Chiselborough, to which Norton was subject by service of a fee of Mortain, descended to his son Francis (d. 1327), Francis' nephew, John de St Clair (d. c.1335) and John's son Sir Philip.¹⁶ The mesne lordship continued in the St Clair family and in 1419 was valued at £60 a year. After Thomas St Clair's death in 1435 leaving three infant daughters, his manors were taken into the king's hands and the Chiselborough mesne lordship over Norton apparently lapsed.¹⁷

¹¹ Sanders, *Eng. Baronies*, 34.

¹² *Cal. Inq Misc.*, I, p. 406; *Cur. Reg. R.*, 1243-5, p. 6; Green, *Feet of Fines 1196-1307*, 383-4; *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, I, p. 126.

¹³ *Cal. Pat.* 1258-66, 220-1; http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_059.html (accessed 28 June 2017). A librate was a piece of land worth £1 a year. *OED*.

¹⁴ T. S. Holmes (ed.), *The Registers of Walter Gifford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1265-6, and of Henry Bowett, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1401-7*, 10.

¹⁵ Green, *Feet of Fines 1196-1307*, 383-4.

¹⁶ Sanders, *Eng. Baronies*, 34; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* VII, pp. 471, 773; XVI, p. 175.

¹⁷ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXI, p. 96; XXIII, p. 299; XXIV, pp. 182-3; XXV, p. 457; *Cal. Pat.* 1441-1446, 443; J. Gage, *The History and Antiquities of Hengrave in Suffolk* (1822), 226-7.

It is not known how Robert le Veel came to hold the Norton fee of the honour of Mortain, which was held of the king, in 1284-5.¹⁸ Although he had two sons by her, John de Camoys (d. c.1300) assigned his wife Margaret with her goods and estate to Sir William Paynel, with whom she was living and who married her immediately after John's death.¹⁹ In 1302 William acknowledged the right of Hawysia, widow of Robert le Veel, to Norton manor, which she granted to William and Margaret and Margaret's heirs.²⁰ Margaret died in 1311²¹ and in 1314 William Paynel sold Norton manor for £100 to Walter Stapeldon, bishop of Exeter, and his brother Richard of north Devon and Richard's heirs, who were granted free warren in all their Norton demesne lands. Bishop Walter held the park and in 1324 the manor and advowson were settled on Richard and Walter.²² In 1327 Richard Stapeldon was assessed at 10s., the highest amount in Norton.²³ Sir Richard (fl. 1329—31) reputedly gave Norton manor, excepting two messuages, 20 a. of land and 3 r. of meadow, to his brother Thomas, a canon of Exeter cathedral, for life.²⁴ After Thomas's death his estate should have passed to Richard's son, also Richard, described as of Norton when he married Eleanor Stawell at Cothelstone in 1333.²⁵

Peter le Veel, son of Bogo, son of Robert le Veel and Hawysia, disputed Stapeldon ownership of Norton manor. In 1331 he brought a case against Richard Stapeldon and in 1333 sued his brother Thomas de Stapeldon. Peter claimed that Walter de la Hyde, probably father

¹⁸ *Feudal Aids*, IV, 284; Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest*, 20.

¹⁹ G.E.C. *Complete Peerage*, II, 506; undated deed transcr. in Burke, *Extinct Peerage*, 106; Cal. Close, 1296-1302, 494.

²⁰ Green, *Feet of Fines 1196-1307*, 319.

²¹ *Complete Peerage*, II, 506.

²² E. Green, *Feet of Fines 1307-1346*, 51, 93; *Cal. Chart.* 1300-26, 239; below, econ. hist. The brothers founded Stapeldon Hall, later Exeter College, Oxford. Walter was murdered 15 Oct. 1326: *ODNB* Walter Stapeldon, accessed 3 July 2108.

²³ Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest*, 144-5.

²⁴ There is no truth in the story (J. Prince, *The Worthies of Devon* (1810), 726) that Richard was also murdered in 1326: TNA, SC 8/159/7942; C. Worthy, 'A Memoir of Bishop Stapledon', *Trans. Devonshire Assocn* VIII, 1876), 451; *Cornwall Feet of Fines I* (Devon and Cornw. Rec. Soc. 1914), 432; A. Watkin, *Glastonbury Cart. II.*, p. 388; *Cal. Pat.* 1391-1396, 359.

²⁵ T. S. Holmes, *Register of Bishop Ralph of Shrewsbury*, 156.

of Hawise, had given the manor of Norton to his grandparents.²⁶ Peter apparently succeeded but in 1343 he drowned leaving his son Peter a minor in the king's ward as the lord of Chiselborough was also a minor.²⁷ His widow Katherine, daughter of Sir John de Clevedon, claimed a third of the manor as dower.²⁸ Despite the earlier judgment Sir Richard Stapeldon attempted, apparently unsuccessfully, to obtain possession of the manor in 1343, carrying away trees and other property.²⁹ In 1384, her son John le Veel having died childless, Katherine (d.1386), who had married Thomas, Lord Berkeley (d. 1361), exchanged her dower for other land with her stepson Sir Peter le Veel and his son Thomas.³⁰ In 1385 trustees settled the manor on Peter, his wife Eleanor and four others in trust for them and Eleanor's heirs. In 1386 Peter and Eleanor sold 1 a. in 'Wiklonde' in Norton to the prior and convent of Charterhouse, London but its later descent is unknown.³¹

Sir Peter (d. 1391) was succeeded by his son Sir Thomas but under the 1385 settlement Norton should have passed to Henry, his son by Eleanor.³² Possibly taking advantage of the situation Richard Stapeldon gained possession of the manor but in 1393 his men and servants were forcibly expelled by John le Veel, presumably brother of Thomas, with some companions.³³ Enquiries were still ongoing in 1397–8 and Richard, son of Richard Stapeldon apparently seized Norton before 1401 when his men were thrust out and iron bars fixed before the gates.³⁴ However, the Stapledon's regained the manor and Richard (d. c.1396) was followed by his widow Margaret (d. by 1404) and daughter Thomasine wife of

²⁶ 'Berkeley Castle Muniments: The Veel Estate': discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk: accessed 24 Jan. 2018. Peter's mother was Joan Fitzwarren. TNA, CP 40/284, m. 134d; CP 40/296, m. 301d; G. Wrottesley, *Pedigrees from the Plea Rolls* (c.1905), 20.

²⁷ *Cal. Pat.* 1391-1396, 359; *Cal. Close* 1343-6, 174; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* VIII, pp. 311-12; *Cal. Pat.* 1343-5, 14, 20, 99; Green, *Feet of Fines 1196-1307*, 383-4.

²⁸ 'Berkeley Castle Muniments: The Veel Estate'.

²⁹ *Cal. Pat.* 1343-45, 14, 99; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* VIII, pp. 311-12.

³⁰ 'Berkeley Castle Muniments: The Veel Estate'.

³¹ B. Wells-Furby, *The Berkeley Estate 1281-1417: its economy and development* (Bristol, 2012), 33; E. Green (ed.), *Feet of Fines 1347-99*, 129, 132; *Cal. Pat.* 1381-5, 308; *Cal. Close* 1385-9, 155, 252.

³² 'Berkeley Castle Muniments: The Veel Estate'; *Cal. Pat.* 1391-6, 245.

³³ *Cal. Pat.* 1391-1396, 359.

³⁴ *Cal. Close* 1396-1399, 198, 301, 311; 1399-1402, 287-8.

Sir Richard Hankeford (d. 1419) of Annery, Devon, son of Sir William, Chief Justice of the King's Bench.³⁵

In 1412 Richard Hankeford held lands in Norton valued at £40, which after Thomasine's death he held for life.³⁶ In 1419 he was succeeded by his son Richard (d. 1431) who married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Fulk, Lord Fitzwarren, whose son Fulk died a minor and childless.³⁷ Sir Richard Hankeford (d. 1431) was followed by his second wife Anne (d. 1457), who remarried twice, and Thomasine (d. 1453), his only surviving child by Elizabeth Fitzwarren, who married, before 3 August 1437, William Bouchier, styled 'de fitz Waryn' by 1449.³⁸ Their son and heir Fulk Bouchier, Lord Fitzwarren (1445–79) inherited his mother's lands upon his father's death in 1469. He married Elizabeth (d. 1516), sister and co-heir of John, Lord Dinham, and in 1472 settled the manor on his wife and her heirs.³⁹ After Fulk Bouchier's death Elizabeth (d. 1516) married secondly John Sapcott (d. 1501) and thirdly Sir Thomas Brandon (d. 1510). Elizabeth's heir was her son John Bouchier, Lord Fitzwarren (d. 1539), created Earl of Bath in 1536.⁴⁰ The manor descended with the Earls of Bath like Huntspill.⁴¹ Edward Bouchier, fourth Earl of Bath (d. 1637), was succeeded as earl by his cousin Henry but the Fitzwarren barony became extinct. Norton descended to Edward's three daughters Elizabeth, Dorothy and Anne Bouchier, minors.⁴² Elizabeth married Basil Feilding, Earl of Denbigh, but died without issue. Dorothy married Sir Thomas Grey, heir apparent of Henry, Earl of Stamford and their son Thomas (d. 1720) inherited the

³⁵ *Cal. Pat.* 1396-1399, 30, *Complete Peerage*, V (1926), 504-5; Holmes, *Registers of Gifford and Bowett*, 52; Prince, *Worthies of Devon*, 462, 726.

³⁶ *Feudal Aids*, VI, 514; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXI, p. 96.

³⁷ ODNB, Sir Wm Hankeford [Hankford]: accessed 24 Jan. 2018; *Complete Peerage*, V, 504-5; E. H. Bates, *Gerard's Survey of Somerset, 1633*, 45-6; Prince, *Worthies of Devon*, 462.

³⁸ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXII, 299; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XXIV, 182-3; *Cal. Close* 1429-1435, 87; 1461-1468, 4; *Complete Peerage*, V, 507-8.

³⁹ *Complete Peerage*, V, 508-9; *Cal. Close* 1468-1476, 253-4.

⁴⁰ H. Maxwell-Lyte (ed.), *Registers of Robert Stillington and Richard Fox*, 60, 65, 117-18, 134, 148, 193; *Complete Peerage*, V, 510.

⁴¹ H. Maxwell-Lyte (ed.), *Registers of Oliver King 1496-1503 and Hadrian de Castello 1503-1518*, 140; Maxwell-Lyte (ed.), *Registers of Wolsey, Clerke, Knyght and Bourne*, 9, 70, 97; *VCH Som.* VIII, 97-8.

⁴² M. J. Hawkins, (ed.), *Sales of Wards in Somerset, 1603-1641*, 161-4; *Complete Peerage*, V, 511-12.

Stamford earldom. Anne married firstly James Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, who died without surviving male issue, and secondly Sir Chichester Wrey, by whom she had a son, Bouchier (c. 1653–96).⁴³ By 1684 Sir Bouchier Wrey and Thomas, Earl of Stamford, held as tenants in common various manors, which they agreed to divide between them, Stamford taking Norton Fitzwarren.⁴⁴ He heavily mortgaged his estates and under a Chancery decree of 1693–4 Norton manor was sold to James Grove, husband of his sister Anne, who had possession of the manor by 1697.⁴⁵

In 1705 Grove, or his trustees, sold the manor, which by 1702 included land in Staplegrove, to Simon Welman (d. 1707) of London, doctor of physic.⁴⁶ Welman (d. 1708) left all his manors to his brother Isaac (d. 1715) of Poundisford Park, Pitminster who left Norton manor to his sons Simon (1683–1716) and Thomas (1693–1757). Simon's son and heir Isaac (1710–83), on attaining his majority in 1730, shared the manor with his uncle Thomas.⁴⁷ In 1755 Elizabeth, Thomas Welman's only child, married William Hawker of Luppit, Devon, and her father's moiety was settled on her and William for their lives and then on their children.⁴⁸ Isaac Welman was succeeded by his son Thomas (1746–1829).⁴⁹ Leases were no longer renewed as lives dropped and when William Hawker (d. 1806) left his moiety of the manor and lands he had purchased in Norton Fitzwarren to his daughter Ann he desired her not to issue long leases.⁵⁰

In 1808 William Hawker's estates, including Norton, were partitioned between his three daughters: Mary, wife of Revd James Camplin of Crowcombe, Elizabeth, wife of William Helyar of East Coker, and Ann Hawker (d. c. 1834), who retained the moiety of the

⁴³ *Complete Peerage*, V, 512; *ODNB*, Wrey, Sir Bouchier, fourth baronet, accessed 26 Jan. 2018.

⁴⁴ TNA, C 8/271/74.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* C 8/375/54; C 8/449/4; C 8/357/175; *VCH Som.* VIII. 97-8; *Complete Peerage*, V, 512.

⁴⁶ TNA, C 8/360/65; SHC, DD/X/KIT/1; SHC, DD/WN/3/4; *Burke's Land. Gent.* (1894), 2170.

⁴⁷ TNA, PROB 11/501/179; SHC, DD/WN/3/1; *Burke's Land. Gent.* (1894), 2170.

⁴⁸ SHC, DD/WN/3/1; SHC, DD/HLM/8, cases for opinion 1790

⁴⁹ Collinson, *Hist. Som.*, III, 272; SHC, Q/REL/35/14; *Burke's Land. Gent.* (1894), 2170.

⁵⁰ M. McDermott and S. Berry (eds), *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, 277; TNA, PROB 11/1444/205; SHC, DD/HLM/10, will Wm Hawker.

manor, which she left with all her other property in Norton Fitzwarren to her surviving sister Mary Bernard, formerly Camplin, for life and then to Mary's son William and three of his sisters.⁵¹

Thomas Welman (d. 1829) was followed by his second wife, the Hon. Charlotte Margaretta Noel (d. 1869), who in 1839 married Thomas Thompson.⁵² In 1842 her son Charles Noel Welman and Mary Bernard's son William Bernard drew lots to divide the manor. Welman drew the lordship of the manor and 271 a. in the northern part of the estate and Bernard received 223 a. in the southern part of the estate.⁵³ In 1849 Bernard sold 74 a. of his share to Sir John Slade.⁵⁴ Charlotte retained her life interest and she and her son Charles were jointly lords of the manor.⁵⁵ In 1861 the manor comprised 466 a. 1 r. 29 p. of land in Norton Fitzwarren, with further holdings in Bishops Lydeard, Seavington St Mary, Ilton and Meare.⁵⁶ Welman augmented his estate with further acquisitions before 1871 when he exchanged c.101 a. in Norton Fitzwarren, held in fee simple, for c.89 a. of land held in trust for him as tenant for life in Seavington St Mary.⁵⁷ In 1883 he offered to sell c.26 a. of land near the railway line to Wyndham Slade.⁵⁸

The Norton Manor estate was offered for sale by auction in 1885 including the manor house and six farms covering 941 a. in Norton Fitzwarren, Bishop's Lydeard, Kingston, Staplegrove and the detached portion of Taunton St James. The estate rental was valued at over £2,250 but the manorial rents were only £4 1s. 10d. per annum. Of the six farms, Fitzroy, Ford and Yard were wholly or partly in Norton Fitzwarren and all were worked on

⁵¹ SHC, DD/HLM/10, deed of partition 1808, will and codicils Ann Hawker; TNA, PROB 11/1840/120.

⁵² SHC, Q/RDD/34; D/D/Rt/A/141; *Burke's Land. Gent.* (1894), 2170; J. J. Howard, *Visitation of England and Wales*, 3 (1895), 33.

⁵³ SHC, A/CXP/1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* DD/SLM/6, abstract of title, 1849; accts, 1849-50.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Q/RUP/255.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* DD/CA/99.

⁵⁷ TNA, MAF 11/840; SHC, A/CXP/1; DD/CH/125/13.

⁵⁸ SHC, DD/SLM/15, envelope 'Morse's Farm' letter 3 Oct. 1883 Welman to Slade.

yearly tenancies.⁵⁹ In 1889 the estate was sold for £38,000, far below its value, foreclosure on a mortgage having force the sale.⁶⁰ It was bought by Wilfred Marshall (d. 1904) who resided and in 1893 purchased the Norton Camp hill from the 212-a. estate of the late Revd J. P. Hewett.⁶¹ He financed the building of the Village Club in 1896–7.⁶² His widow married Capt. William Hartley Maud of the Somerset Light Infantry in 1906 and in 1907 the estate comprising the manor house, 17 cottages, and c.600 a., two-thirds of its extent of the estate in the 1880s, was offered for sale unsuccessfully.⁶³ It was subsequently bought with the hillfort by the Hon. Francis Bowes Lyon but sold in 1911 as a freehold manorial estate of 360 a. with the lordship to Henry King Sturdee (d. 1922) an American, who became a naturalised British citizen in 1914.⁶⁴ His widow's executors sold the manor house and a farm totalling 405 a to T. S. Penny of Taunton, and his son Alderman F. W. Penny.⁶⁵

In 1939 the Norton Manor estate was acquired by the War Office for military use including as a training camp although other land was apparently sold. The house and grounds remained in military hands and since 1983 have been home to 40 Commando Royal Marines.⁶⁶

Manor house

Norton Court, near the church, was reputedly the original manor house.⁶⁷ Norton Manor, a country residence a mile north of the village, was built by Henry Roberts for Charles Noel Welman in 1841–3 in 'unexciting Tudor style' of local buff brick with diaper patterning,

⁵⁹ SHC, DD/X/DEV/1; SHC, DD/MK/101/20.

⁶⁰ *Taunton Courier*, 25 Dec. 1889, 6, 17 Sept. 1890, 5.

⁶¹ *Nat. Probate Cal.* W. G. Marshall (1904): accessed 26 Jan. 2018; *Taunton Courier*, 17 Sept. 1890, 5, 6 Sept. 1893, 1; 27 Sept. 1893, 5. Below, this section, Wooney.

⁶² SHC, A/BLZ/1/1.

⁶³ *Shepton Mallet Jnl*, 20 Jul. 1906, 8; SHC, DD/X/COS/6.

⁶⁴ *Taunton Courier*, 21 Aug. 1907, 30 Oct. 1907, 2 Apr. 1913; *Western Daily Press*, 29 Aug. 1908, *Western Morning News*, 24 Jun. 1911; H. K. Sturdee (1922), *Nat. Probate Cal.* H. K. Sturdee (1922): accessed 27 Feb. 2018; TNA, HO 144/1154/211880; HO 334/75/207.

⁶⁵ *Taunton Courier*, 22 May, 11 Sept. 1929.

⁶⁶ *Western Daily Press*, 22 May 1939; SHC, A/DQO/303/31; D/PC/n.fitz/4/1/1; D/PC/n.fitz/4/2/7: King.

⁶⁷ Below, this section.

shallow gables and mullion-and-transom windows.⁶⁸ In 1890-1 it was renovated and a stable wing added for Wilfred Marshall.⁶⁹ In 1929 it had 17 bed and dressing rooms and five bathrooms and in 1939 became the officers' mess.⁷⁰

NORTON COURT ESTATE

In 1588 Robert Clevehanger conveyed Court Place to James Clarke (d. 1612) of the Middle Temple, London, the tenant, with 60 a. called Norton Park, presumably the former deer park.⁷¹ His son James (d. 1621) married Jane Broughton of Wembdon in 1604 and had a son Robert (d. c.1658).⁷² In 1653 Robert and Frances Clarke of Sandford in Wembdon sold Court Place with land in Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove for £2,250 to James Prowse of Stoke St Mary (d. 1661) and his wife Philippa who left an only son James.⁷³ The younger James (d. 1672) was followed by his eldest son James a minor.⁷⁴ In 1690 Court Place and 132 a. of land and freehold and leasehold tenements in Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove, were part of the marriage settlement of James Prowse with Mary Aysh of South Petherton, but remained liable to a rent of £2 15s. payable to the manor in 1705.⁷⁵

James (d. 1711) left his estate to his nephew James Francis (d. 1714), a minor, son of his sister Philippa, provided he took the name Prowse, with successive remainders to James son of John Prowse of Yeovil and the son [Amos] of Amos Prowse of South Petherton.⁷⁶ James Prowse the nephew died childless in 1714 and the estate passed to James Prowse of Yeovil (d. s.p.1729) and his widow Elizabeth.⁷⁷ She was alive in 1744 when some land was

⁶⁸ Orbach, *S. and W. Som* 500; *Taunton Courier*, 18 Sept. 1929, 10.

⁶⁹ *Taunton Courier*, 17 Sept. 1890, 5; Somerset HER, 40573.

⁷⁰ *Devon and Exeter Gaz.*, 3 May 1929, 2.; SHC, A/DQO/303/31; *Western Daily Press*, 22 May 1939, 6.

⁷¹ SHC, A/EIK/18; D/P/n.fitz/2/1/1; A. J. Webb (ed.), *Two Tudor Subsidy Assessments*, 122; below, econ. hist.

⁷² SHC, D/P/n.fitz/2/1/1; *VCH Som.* VI. 328.

⁷³ SHC, DD/V/TAR/18/7; Hants. RO, 7M54/196/10; TNA, PROB 11/305/309.

⁷⁴ TNA, PROB 11/349/317. Reference to John Prowse of Court Place (d. 1684) is possibly an error for James (d. 1661): *5th Rep. Com. Char.*, 475; D/P/n.fitz/9/1/1.

⁷⁵ SHC, DD/DP/35/2; DD/WN/3/4.

⁷⁶ TNA, PROB 11/519/415; SHC, D/P/n.fitz/2/1/1.

⁷⁷ SHC, D/P/co.fl/2/1/1; TNA, PROB 11/628/83.

sold in reversion but Court Place passed to the younger Amos Prowse (d. 1758) and his son John, a minor.⁷⁸ John (d. 1811) left a large family but his estate was administered by his daughter Mary Margareta (d. 1823) who lived at Norton. She shared the estate with her sister Elizabeth and left her property to her daughter Mary.⁷⁹

In 1824 Mary Prowse married William Hewett and in 1828 Court farm was reputedly held by William Hewett, Elizabeth Prowse and Ann Hawker, though not part of Ann's manorial holdings.⁸⁰ Mary's son William Henry Hewett (d. 1881), who presumably inherited the shares of his mother and great aunt, apparently sold the house but left the land to his wife Frances Mary (d. 1916) for life.⁸¹ Their son Herbert (d. 1921) was succeeded by his sister Florence Ethel Hewett of London who in 1928 sold the farmhouse, four cottages and 188 a., including building land along the Minehead road.⁸²

Norton Court

Norton Court, previously Court Place or the Barton, was built c.1600 and a contemporary plaster ceiling survives in the parlour.⁸³ There is no trace of an earlier house or evidence it was occupied as a manor house. In 1633 it was leased out and 'hardly tenantable' and in the 1780s was an 'ancient farm house'.⁸⁴ It was probably built as a two-storeyed T-shaped house. When the front façade was altered and the building extended c.1840 and later much early work was lost but some window features and parts of the roof date to c.1600.⁸⁵

William Hewett (d. 1853) and his widow lived in the house but by 1871 their son William Henry had moved to Burns or Burnshill House and in 1887 a military school

⁷⁸ *Lond. Gaz.* 5 May 1744; TNA, PROB 11/836/203.

⁷⁹ TNA, PROB 11/1524/134, 11/1679/210.

⁸⁰ SHC, D/P/n.fitz/2/1/4, 5 May 1824; Q/REL/35/14 (1828).

⁸¹ *Ibid.* DD/CH/106/4; *Nat. Probate Cal.* F. M. Hewett, 1916: accessed 27 Feb. 2018.

⁸² SHC, D/R/ta/14/13/1; DD/BRO/4/7; *Nat. Probate Cal.* H. T. Hewett, 1921: accessed 20 Jan. 2026.

⁸³ SHC, Q/REL/35/14; DD/V/TAR/18/7; Orbach, *S. and W. Som* 500.

⁸⁴ Bates, *Gerard's Survey Som. 1633.*, 45-6; McDermott and Berry, *Rack's Survey*, 277.

⁸⁵ SHC, DD/V/TAR/18/7.

operated from Norton Court.⁸⁶ By 1889 Norton Court was the residence of the head brewer of Norton brewery and in 1933 of Stephen Arnold, its director.⁸⁷ It was requisitioned during the Second World War.⁸⁸ In 1946 Somerset County Council bought it for conversion into staff flats despite the parish council's complaints that villagers needed accommodation.⁸⁹ By 2000 the property was again in private hands as a single dwelling.⁹⁰

WOONEY MANOR

By 1626 the rector was lord of a manor of Wooney comprising ten tenements totalling 76 a., situated at Langford, and six cottages lying along the street near the church. In 1717 James Minifie of Staplegrove, merchant, paid the Hon. George Doddington £400 for the advowson, parsonage house, glebe and other houses, lands and tenements, which in 1722 he left to his son, also James. The younger James, from 1742 rector of Norton Fitzwarren, died in 1768. In 1772 his surviving children conveyed Wooney manor to William Hawker (d. 1806).⁹¹

Wooney manor, the advowson, parsonage house and c.7 ½ a. of glebe were advertised for sale in 1840 and 1841 apparently without success. In 1847 Mary Bernard and other devisees of William Hawker sold their rights in Wooney to Thomas Arbuthnot Whitter for £4,500, in trust for the Revd Arthur Anstey.⁹² The following year Whitter and Anstey conveyed the advowson, to William Hewett of Norton Fitzwarren but in 1851 the Revd Joseph Guerin, rector, claimed Wooney manor with 74 a. and 18 tenements belonged to the rector and he exercised lordship.⁹³ However, in 1864 following Guerin's death John Prowse Hewett was presented to the rectory by his mother Mary (d. 1875), widow of William Hewett, who left

⁸⁶ TNA, HO 107/1923; PROB 11/2178/477; RG 10/2375; SHC, D/D/ra/27; DD/CH/106/4; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1887), 237; *Morning Post*, 13 May 1887, 1.

⁸⁷ *Taunton Courier*, 7 Aug. 1889, 5, 8 Feb. 1933, 10.

⁸⁸ SHC, A/BVF/1/2.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* D/PC/n.fitz/4/2/7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* DD/V/TAR/18/7.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* D/P/n.fitz/3/1/3, 3/4/1; D/D/rg/387/2; below, rel. hist.

⁹² *Dorset Co. Chron. and Som. Gaz.*, 23 Apr. 1840, 1; *Taunton Courier*, 27 Jan. 1841; SHC, D/P/n.fitz/3/4/1.

⁹³ TNA, HO 129/315, 55; SHC, D/D/ra/27; DD/KIT/12/1.

Wooney to John.⁹⁴ In 1882 Hewett exchanged c.3 a. of land in the manor for a similar acreage in the parish with Charles Noel Welman.⁹⁵

John Prowse Hewett (d. 1891) left Wooney with lands purchased by him and held of the manor to his wife Elizabeth for life, if she remained unmarried, then one of his sons as she should appoint, if ordained a Church of England minister. However, houses and 212 a. of land were sold by his trustees in 1893.⁹⁶ Their son William Prowse Hewett (d. 1923) succeeded as rector of Norton Fitzwarren.⁹⁷ By 1918 the glebe and any remaining manorial property were intermixed and were sold at auction in 1919 and lordship apparently ceased.⁹⁸

MONTYS COURT

The estate in the west of the parish consisted of Montys, formerly Muntys, Court and farm and Way or Wey or farm, now Wey House. Johanne atte Wey was a taxpayer in 1327.⁹⁹ In 1705 Wey farm, in the possession of John Butson or his undertenants, was excluded from the sale of the manor in that year.¹⁰⁰ By 1766 it had been acquired by the Revd James Minifie and passed through many hands including the Revd Willis (fl. 1782), Thomas Slape (fl. 1810-13) and Abraham Turner. In 1834 Turner sold the farm with c.187 a. in Norton and Hillfarrance, to General Sir John Slade, Bart., of Maunsel, a veteran of the Peninsular War, for £9,000.¹⁰¹

Muntys or Muntis, was a c.22-a. farm in 1736.¹⁰² By 1766 it belonged to Thomas Hancock (d. c.1802) who was followed by Thomas Tytherleigh (d. 1834) who left it to his brother John who also died in 1834 leaving Muntys to his daughter Margaretta Thomas

⁹⁴ SHC, D/D/breg/38; DD/CH/28.

⁹⁵ TNA, MAF 11/141/5651.

⁹⁶ *Taunton Courier*, 6 Sept. 1893, 1; SHC, DD/CH/28.

⁹⁷ SHC, D/D/breg/41; D/D/ra/27.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* D/P/n.fitz/3/1/2; *Taunton Courier*, 22 Jan. 1919, 4.

⁹⁹ Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest Som.*, 144-5.

¹⁰⁰ SHC, DD/WN/3/4.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* DD/SLM/6, 1834; *ODNB*, Slade, Sir John, 1st Bart: accessed 26 Feb. 2018.

¹⁰² SHC, DD/SLM/6, abstr. of title of Margaretta Thomas Gardner, 1835.

Gardner.¹⁰³ In 1835 Margaretta sold it to Sir John Slade for £1,560.¹⁰⁴ There were two smaller estates called Muntys and Muntys Ham, possibly among the additional lands that Sir John Slade made including 74 a. in 1849–50 from William Bernard for £3,545.¹⁰⁵ By 1856 Slade was one of the major landowners in the parish.¹⁰⁶

Sir John (d. 1859) was succeeded by his son Wyndham Slade (d. 1910). The latter's son Wyndham Neave Slade died childless in 1941 without issue having sold Wey (c.125 a.) before 1919 when it was owned by James Tazwell. Wyndham left Montys to his nephew Major Cecil Mitford (d. 1986) provided he changed his name to Mitford-Slade.¹⁰⁷ The estate was inherited by his son, Major Anthony Mitford-Slade (d. 2017).¹⁰⁸

Montys Court was built in Tudor style with mullioned windows and am stone dressings, probably by Richard Carver, for General Sir John Slade shortly after 1840 on Great Verdens field a mile west of the village. The stables are dated 1838. The house has a two and a half storey, six-bay front and castellated porch.¹⁰⁹ The property was sold in 2009 and became Mitford-Slade Court flats for the elderly.¹¹⁰

FORD

Theodric held Ford in 966 but in 1086 Alvred held it of the count of Mortain. It paid dues to the bishop of Winchester at Taunton.¹¹¹ William, count of Mortain, granted land at 'Melebire, Widecumbe, Ford and Denewoldesham' to the Cluniac priory of Montacute between 1091–

¹⁰³ Ibid. Q/REI/35/14; TNA PROB 11/1830/375, 11/1836/398

¹⁰⁴ SHC, DD/SLM/6, 11-12, 4 Apr. 1835.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. Q/REI/35/14; DD/SLM/6, abstr. of title, 1849; account, 1849-50.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. Q/RUP/255.

¹⁰⁷ *Burke's Peerage* (1868), 1013; *Nat. Probate Cal.* W. Slade 1910, C. T. Mitford-Slade 1986: accessed 4 Mar. 2018; *The Times*, 17 Feb. 1941, 7.

¹⁰⁸ SHC, D/R/ta/14/13/1; *Lond. Gaz.*, 9 Nov. 2017, 20828.

¹⁰⁹ *Taunton Courier*, 14 Aug. 1844, 4; Orbach, *S. and W. Som.*, 500. Despite the datestone no buildings are shown on the title map.

¹¹⁰ *Daily Telegraph*, 20 May 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/period-property/5330134/Period-property-Time-catches-up-with-Montys.html>: accessed 5 Dec. 2017.

¹¹¹ *Domesday*, 234, 251; *VCH Som.* I. 406.

1106, confirmed by the king in 1135–7 and 1152–8.¹¹² The lands was apparently lost before 1535.¹¹³ In 1242–3 ‘Wudeton et Forde’ were held of the king as two fees of Mortain.¹¹⁴ Adam atte Ford was a taxpayer in 1327.¹¹⁵ The estate presumably descended with Norton manor until the later was sold in 1889.¹¹⁶ The farm, held by the Shattock family in the early 19th century, covered 95 a. in 1919 when it was owned by Charles Saunders.¹¹⁷ The large L-shaped thatched farmhouse, with a massive gable end chimney stack, was demolished in the early 20th century.¹¹⁸

VENHAMPTON

In 1326 Alice, wife of William de Stapeldon, and John, son of William, gave £20 to William Wyioun and his wife Cristiana for a messuage, 40 a. of land and 5 a. of meadow in Venhampton (Fenhampton) to hold to them and the heirs of Alice. She presumably remarried as in 1331 John de Stapeldon and Cecilia his wife gave Robert de Pavely and his wife Alice twenty marcs (£7 6s. 8d.) for a messuage, 50 a. of land and 5 a. of meadow, in Venhampton to revert to Alice’s heirs if John and Cecilia left no issue.¹¹⁹

John de Stapeldon died before 1342 leaving Cecilia and a son Robert, a minor holding Venhampton of Walter de Meriet for 20s. 1d. yearly and suit at the bishop of Winchester’s court at Taunton.¹²⁰ In 1378 it was settled on the marriage of Robert de Orchard and Mary Manyngford.¹²¹ In c.1413 Venhampton passed to William (d. c.1422), son of Robert de Orchard.¹²² William’s widow Joan held the land in 1422 when it was granted to William’s

¹¹² *Cartularies of Bruton and Montacute*, 19-20, 122, 123-6.

¹¹³ *Valor Eccl.* I, 172.

¹¹⁴ *Book of Fees*, II, 752.

¹¹⁵ Dickinson, *Kirby’s Quest*, 144-5.

¹¹⁶ SHC, DD/MK/101/20; *Taunton Courier*, 25 Dec. 1889, 6.

¹¹⁷ SHC, Q/REI/35/14; DD/CH/110/7; tithe award; D/R/ta/14/13/1.

¹¹⁸ N. Chipchase, *Taunton Past and Present* (Stroud, 2000), 310.

¹¹⁹ Green, *Feet of Fines 1307-1346*, 106, 157.

¹²⁰ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* VIII, pp. 239-62, 251-2.

¹²¹ SHC, DD/PM/5/2/5.

¹²² *Cal. Inq. p.m.* XX, pp. 28-9.

daughter Christine and her husband Philip Cary and his wife Christine. In 1428 Philip Cary and his wife Christine granted to John Mulys various parcels of land, including Venhampton, possibly in trust as in 1447 John Gambon and William Northlegh quitclaimed to Christine and her second husband Walter Portman and her heirs land at Venhampton.¹²³ In 1472 Christine's Venhampton land passed to her son John Portman.¹²⁴ John Portman died in 1486, his son and heir John then being a minor.¹²⁵ John Portman (d. 1521) was followed in the direct male line by Sir William (d. 1557), Sir Henry (d. 1591) and Sir John (cr. Bt and d. 1612) who still held Venhampton.¹²⁶ It probably passed in succession to his sons Sir Henry (d. 1621) and his brothers John (d. 1624), Hugh (d. 1629) and William (d. 1645) but its descent has not been traced further until it was held by Mary Barnard in 1840.¹²⁷

CHURCH ESTATES

Taunton priory had demesne land in Norton Fitzwarren, which were granted to Thomas More and his heirs.¹²⁸ In 1582 a grant of concealed lands was made to Theophilus Adams and James Woodshawe of London including Norton land given for lamps in Taunton St Mary Magdalen church.¹²⁹ Neither estate has been traced further.

¹²³ SHC, DD/PM/5/2/6-7, 12; 5/3/4.

¹²⁴ *Cal. Close* 1468-76, pp. 235-6.

¹²⁵ *Cal. Inq. p.m. Hen. VII*, I., pp. 89-90.

¹²⁶ SHC, DD/PM/1/6; 7/2/18, 20-4, 28.

¹²⁷ TNA, C 142/406/67; C 142/461/30; *VCH Som.* VI. 288; Hawkins, *Sales of Wards*, pp. 137-43; SHC, tithe award.

¹²⁸ *Cal. Pat.* 1549-51, 53.

¹²⁹ *Cal. Pat.* 1580-2, 258.