Buying a Piece of History

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From about the 13th century there were three manors in Wymeswold and each has been sold on a number of occasions. In addition to land and property, the lordship included various rights and responsibilities such as holding the manorial courts. These regulated many aspects of village life, especially the organisation of the common land in which many villagers had a share.

In some cases the deeds for the sale of the Lordship can be traced. The earliest known deed for the Lordships in Wymeswold is dated 1331 when Richard de Willoughby and his wife Isabel bought from Samuel de Joz '2 messuages, a toft, a carucate and 6½ bovates (about 200 acres of crop land), 27 acres of meadow,and 13s. 2½d. of rents in Wymeswold and Hoton.' In 1338 Richard was granted a charter by the King to hold a market and fair, though how often they were held is unknown. The Willoughby family remained in Wymeswold, extending their holding until about 1591 when Sir Francis sold the lordship to William and Edward Ballard and included '7 messuages, 350 acres of land, 40 acres of meadow, 60 acres of pasture, 8 acres of wood, 200 acres of heath.' The price or 'consideration' was given as £850. Sir Francis Willoughby was building Wollaton Hall at this time and so probably needed the money.

The Ballard family had control of both lay manors, Willoughby (or Wymeswold) and Crackhole (Crowhill) Manors. From about 1600 they were treated as one, though the two names persisted until 1919. The third manor was that held by Beauchief Abbey until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536. In 1546 Henry VIII gave the Advowson of Wymeswold together with the Rectorial rights and land to Trinity College, Cambridge, who held land in the parish until 1956.

The Ballards sold the lordship of both manors in 1632 to William Leake for £650. This included '6 messuages, 7 cottages, a windmill, 13 gardens, 13 orchards, 500 acres of land 200 acres of heath etc.' By 1705 the manor passed by marriage to the Okeover family and in particular to Leake Okeover who was responsible for the demolition of Wymeswold Hall on Hall Field about 1745. He was rebuilding Okeover Hall (near Ashbourne, Derbyshire) and was much in debt. Presumably by sale the manor passed to Thomas Allsop and John Davys about 1752. They were prime movers in the Enclosure Act for the parish land in 1757. In 1784 William Fisher became Lord of the Manor and then, by the marriage of his daughter, the title passed to the Ella family who held it until 1872 when William Fisher Ella's trustees sold it to Wm. Byerley Paget of Nanpantan. The land only amounted to 160

acres but the sale did include the title and rights. By then the manorial courts were held every three years, dealing mostly with property repairs. The final court was called for 10th Decmber 1919 but there is no record of business transacted.

By this time manors had ceased to be functioning units and remained only in name with the owner having the right to the title of 'Lord of the Manor'. The heiress of the Paget estate sold this title in 1994. The new owner wishes to remain anonymous.

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