

## MANOR OF BURTON.

### *INTRODUCTION.*

The Papers which follows have been written solely from the point of view of documented history. Nothing from other scholastic disciplines, in particular Archaeology, has been included. It is intended that this Introduction should be a brief summary of such material of this other nature as I know to be available.

The geographical extent of the Manor is described in one of the Papers which follow and it is this area which is envisaged when writing this introduction.

First to clear away what some would be very dismissive about. I myself have no knowledge whatsoever of the period in question and so will refrain from an opinion. But whether or not one agrees with his theories and conclusions, it would be wrong to ignore in these pages the work of Alfred Watkins, part of which is included in his “Old Straight Track”, first published in 1925. “Ley Line” or not, there is no denying that an ancient (probably); straight (undeniably), track way leaves Eardisland in an almost due southerly direction and appears to continue through the very large (nowadays) open field area immediately east of Burton Court.

And so to safer ground. In the year 2000 a metal-detectorist found in Admarsh Meadow, Burton, what turned out to be, according to expert advice<sup>1</sup>, a Middle Bronze Age Dirk/Dagger dating from the period c.1400 to c.1140 BC. Several shards of pottery were also found which were thought not...”to be medieval, but more likely late prehistoric, iron age or Bronze Age.”<sup>2</sup> Dr Barber goes on to comment that “during the Bronze Age a small but significant proportion of objects were not finally deposited until some considerable time after they were made.” The Dirk/Dagger is therefore not necessarily evidence of human activity in that part of what later became the Manor of Burton at such very early dates.

All this does give a little more definition to the possible earliest date of human habitation in the immediate area.

Evidence for the Roman period [*Say* 55BC to 410 AD] is of an archaeological nature. However, other than very sparse recent finds of Roman pottery shards in territory later to be in the Manor of Burton, the only item I can quote at present is the Roman road running approximately north to south forming much of the eastern boundary both of the Manor of Burton and of the Parish of Eardisland in which Burton is situated. The Roman period is not a topic on which I have intentionally spent any time. A very small amount of non-specific comment is known to me; there may well be much more to be gleaned over a period of time and I shall make a compilation of such information as comes my way.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Martyn Barber, English Heritage Swindon. His Paper, “A Middle Bronze Age Dirk/Dagger from Windmill Hill, Eardisland, Herefordshire” is to be found as Appendix 2 at page 124 of White,P “The Arrow Valley, Herefordshire: Archaeology, Landscape Change and Conservation”, Orphans Press, Leominster, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> White,P., as in footnote 1. page 126, via Selfe,P. in “A Case Study of Burton Court” Saxon Press 2006, page 86.

Much the same can be said of the period 410 AD to 1066, but to a lesser extent in that, at least for the last two or three hundred years of the period, comment/surmise has been published, much more of which I have noted than has been the case with the Roman era. A few instances give a hazy outline of what may have been the sequence of events and this must suffice until I have spent considerably more time on the period:

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|--------|--|
| AD.410 | Emperor Honorius withdrew Roman forces from Britain. <sup>3</sup>  |
| c.600  | “Leon Valley” area subject to Anglian Occupation, in particular the Mercian Prince Merewalh. <sup>4</sup>  |
| c.650  | “...Rowe Ditch probably dates from the earliest arrival of the English in numbers in the Arrow Valley.” <sup>5</sup>   |
| c.675  | “Anglian boundary at the Lugg; first settlement made in the Leon, on the site of what became Leominster.” <sup>6</sup>   |
| c.700  | “Occupation of the Kingsland, Eardisland and Monkland area, and first Dyke dug.....Possibly there was an earthwork at Burton, at the east end of a wooded ridge.” <sup>7</sup> |
| 775    | “775AD. Lyonshall dyke dug.” <sup>8</sup>  |
| 787    | “787AD. Offa’s Dyke made.” <sup>9</sup>  |

The comment in this sequence about there possibly having been an earthwork at Burton c.700 may perhaps be an indirect reference to the fact that a “Camp” near Burton Court is marked on some maps of the eighteenth century<sup>10</sup> and indeed of the very early nineteenth century<sup>11</sup>, although not always on the same side of the road.

Also worthy of comment is Perryditch farm, later to be found just within or very close to the southern boundary of the manor of Burton when first the extent of the manor is identifiable. Both “ditch” and “dyke” stem from the same linguistic root “*OE dic*, whence also *DIKE*”.<sup>12</sup>

Both “Perryditch” and “Camp” will be covered in separate Papers.

The year 1042 saw Edward “The Confessor” being chosen as King by the Witan;<sup>13</sup> the start of “Tempore regis Edwardi” [1042-1066] which is one of the reference contexts of Domesday Book, compiled in 1086.

Mention of Domesday Book brings us beyond the end of the period of time to be covered by this Preface. That subject, and everything subsequent, is covered in the various Papers which follow.

<sup>3</sup> The Sphere Illustrated History of Britain, page 257. Sphere Books Ltd. 1985.

<sup>4</sup> Reeves N. “...Leon Valley...”, pages 1 and 128.

<sup>5</sup> White P. et al “The Arrow Valley, Herefordshire: Archaeology, Landscape Change and Conservation” (2003), page 47.

<sup>6</sup> Whitehead, J.G.O. “Early Anglian Defense Works in the Arrow Valley.” WFC 1936, page 56.

<sup>7</sup> Whitehead, J.G.O. “Early Anglian Defense Works in the Arrow Valley.” WFC 1936, pages 53 and 56.

<sup>8</sup> Whitehead, as 5 and 6 above.

<sup>9</sup> Whitehead, as 5,6 and 7 above.

<sup>10</sup> For example Isaac Taylor. 1754.

<sup>11</sup> For example C. Smith. 1801.

<sup>12</sup> “Ditch” in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, 4th Edition 1950, page 334.

<sup>13</sup> Thompson, J.V.P. “A Concise Outline of English History” A. Wheaton & Co., Ltd., Exeter. Sixth Impression, 1954.

