

TITHE BARNS

The earliest reference to Tithe Barns here in Eardisland of which I am aware comes within a document at National Archives reference E134.

This document is dated *33 Eliz/Hil 15 viz. 15th January 1591*. It is:

Interrogations ministered by Nicholas Deyes, Thomas Deyes and [...] Deyes plaintiffs for examination of their witnesses in a matter on her majesty's behalf depending at issue in her majesty's high court of Exchequer between them and one John Goughe and John Hunte defendants ¹

At Membrane 3 of this document is the testimony of:

John Kirwood the elder of Eardisland yeoman of the age of 70 years being sworn and examined on the plaintiffs' behalf.

At the start of the document is a schedule of the seven Interrogations. Item five is:

Declare by the oath you have taken whether Shooter's free lands within the parish of Eardisland were ever reputed or taken to be either part or parcel of the manor or lordship of Eardisland aforesaid.

John Kirwood's answer to this was:

I, being one or the tenants of the manor and lordship of Eardisland and also one of the tenants of the dissolved monastery of Ceene aforesaid, do very well know that the said four acres of free lands called Shooters Four Acres were never for all the time of my remembrance reputed to be either part or parcel (or to be held) from the lordship of Eardisland but always of the Prior of Cenne.

Item six is:

What lands, tenants, rent and other commodities had the Prior of Cenne within the parish of Eardisland and county of Hereford and do you know or have you heard that the said Prior did ever keep or hold as co?le within the said parish.

John Kirwood's answer to this was:

The Prior of Cenne was chief lord of all the parcels of the lands and commodities (hereafter recited) within the parish of Eardisland viz: The parsonage with all tithes, the gift of the vicarage at every avoidance [i.e. vacancy] or death of the parish priest, the monk court with the two tithing barns thereon built.

However, whilst the source document for these extracts dates to 1591, it should be pointed out that this mention of *two tithing barns* relates back to rather earlier than that.

When he gave his testimony to the court John Kirwood was *of the age of 70 years*. He was therefore born circa 1521. If his earliest detailed memories were from when he was about ten years old, not an unreasonable contention, then the year 1531 is reached, comfortably before the Dissolution of the Monasteries.²

¹ Transcribed by David Lovelace in 2012.

² Legislation passed between 1536-1541 (Wikipedia).

A further reference is to be found in a Glebe Terrier dated 1st June 1607.³ Here the wording is:

...a parcel of land adjoining to the barn in the north part of the same called the Munks Court stretching from a highway that leads from Ermland to Lyme on the east part to a ditch at the east end of the great tithe barn,...

It is possible, but not by any means certain, that the first barn mentioned in this extract was the other of the *two tithing barns* detailed by John Kirwood in his answer to item six in the first above discussed document.

The Tithe Barn at Monks Court survived into the 19th century. This is evidenced by page 51 of Eardisland WI Book:

Recollection of Eardisland Feast in 1826, communicated to the Revd. J. Barker by Mrs. Caldecott (aged 84), on Monday evening, August 29th, 1892:

"There was a performing Company which acted in the Tithe Barn at Monks' Court for 5 nights, and one of the pieces performed was "Blue Beard." In a caravan by the

But by 1842, whilst a rectangular building can be seen on the Tithe Map SE of Monks Court (meadow) as shown hereunder. The accompanying Apportionment Schedule describes it only as a building, not specifically as a barn:

548 *Monks Ct Building & plock. Owner Rev J.R.Smythes*

Smythes (Smythies) was Lord of the Manor of Eardisland, living at Lynch Court, but he was not Vicar of Eardisland. That was the Reverend Frederick Rudge.



There remains only one further documentary reference. This evidences that at some date between 1855 and January 1956 the Tithe Barn was demolished. The reference is that it, the Tithe Barn, is listed as one of several buildings *down since 1855* on an insert by page 26 of the WI Book.

..... *Finis*

³ HAS HD2/3/14.

