

WARDEN MANOR FARM

Margaret Roberts
Volunteer Historian
Warden Abbey Vineyard, Bedfordshire
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www.wardenvineyard.org.uk

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Abbreviations

BARS	Bedfordshire Archives
Beds	County of Bedfordshire
<i>BHRS</i>	Bedfordshire Historical Record Society publication
<i>Cal. Pat. R.</i>	<i>Calendar of the Patent Rolls</i> (London, 1903-)
Cambs	County of Cambridgeshire
HER	Historic Environment Record
<i>LP</i>	Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII (London, 1902-)
Northants	County of Northamptonshire
OS map	Ordnance Survey map
TNA	The National Archives
<i>VCH Beds</i>	<i>Victoria County History: A History of the County of Bedford</i>
Warwicks	County of Warwickshire

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Introduction

After the dissolution of Warden Abbey in 1537, the late monastery's properties in the parishes of Old Warden, Haynes, Houghton [Regis], and Maulden were brought together under the 'Lordship of Warden otherwise Old Warden', the sum total of charges levied by the Crown being £89 19s 0d.¹ Interestingly, the 5½-acre plot containing the abbey's guest house and fishponds in the north-west corner of the precinct, was attached to the 'lordship' rather than being leased in conjunction with the site of the late abbey and the two pieces of ground were only reunited under single ownership in 1786.

The plot was documented by the Court of Augmentations in 1538 as a messuage and appurtenances (fixtures and rights attached to the plot) formerly occupied by John Paxon, which had been let to new tenants with an associated close of pasture next to Park Leys. We might surmise that Paxon (transcribed elsewhere as 'Parson' (1542) and 'Pappu' (1629)) was the man responsible cultivating the monastic vegetable gardens (*custos curtillagii*), possibly even one of the monks, and that the area containing the guest house and curtilage was a discrete package with clearly defined, physical boundaries.² This invites speculation that it was leased to maximise income before the future of the abbey and its adjoining home farm, the Abbot's Garden Grange, was settled.

Warden Abbey's receiver-general

Aside from involvement with the site of the late monastery, brothers Edward and Robert Gostwick jointly acquired leases for other local assets, several of which had been held in demesne before the abbey closed. Edward had previously served as the abbot of Warden's receiver-general but unlike his younger sibling, he also benefitted from lucrative posts elsewhere. Appointed as one of ten auditors for the Court of Augmentations in 1536 with a salary of £20 a year 'and profits', he was put in charge of the dissolution of religious houses in North Wales and appears to have capitalized on their downfall.³

The abbot's bailiff

Robert Gostwick was serving as the abbot's bailiff for Southill by 1535 in return for £2 per annum, responsibilities that were extended in accordance with letters patent issued by Henry VIII on 27 January 1536 to cover Southill with Westend, Stanford and Broom for £3 yearly.⁴ He had been engaged as bailiff for the abbey's properties in Bedford with Goldington and Biddenham by 1538, although it is unclear whether he was appointed by the abbot or the Crown.⁵ He continued his role in Bedford until 1541-42 and submitted accounts for Southill etc until at least 1544-45.⁶ Aside from his duties as bailiff, Robert drew income from three messuages in Weedon (Northants), which he inherited from his unmarried sister Elizabeth after January 1547 and had acquired the parsonage of Weedon by 1558. He and his brother

¹ 'Court of Augmentations Accounts for Bedfordshire – I', ed. Y. Nicholls, *BHRS*, 63 (1984), 78-84 (104-111).

² 'Court of Augmentations Accounts for Bedfordshire – II', ed. Y. Nicholls, *BHRS*, 64 (1985), 148 (426); Bargain & Sale enrolled, 4 July 1629 [BARS, W2223]; The running of a Cistercian monastery is documented in *The Account Book of Beaulieu Abbey* [1269-1270], ed. S.F. Hockey, Camden Fourth Series, 16 (London, 1975).

³ D.H. Williams, *The Tudor Cistercians* (Gracewing, 2014), p. 167; H.P.R. Finberg, 'The Gostwicks of Willington', *BHRS*, 36 (1955), 46-138 (pp. 81-83).

⁴ *Valor ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII: autoritate regia institutus*, ed. J. Caley, 6 vols. (London, 1821), vol. 4, p. 194 and Sir William Dugdale, 'Warden Abbey, in Bedfordshire', in *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Caley, Sir Henry Ellis and the Reverend Bulkeley Bandinel, 8 vols. (London, 1846), vol. 5, pt. 052, p. 374; *BHRS*, 63, 90 (120).

⁵ *BHRS*, 63, 92 (123).

⁶ *Receivers' accounts for lordship or late monastery of Warden in Bedfordshire cum membris*, as in S.C.6 Henry VIII 22 [BARS, FAC1/SC6/HenryVIII/25] and [BARS, FAC1/SC6/Henry VIII/28].

Edward were residuary legatees of John their eldest brother who died at the close of 1557, but nothing survives to suggest the value of their inheritance.⁷

Edward and Robert Gostwick acquire former monastic lands

The Gostwick brothers' early intervention in procuring newly available monastic lands for themselves was very much on trend, yet there remains a sense that Robert saw himself more as a guardian in the event that the dissolution of the monasteries might yet stall. For annual rent of 26s 8d they acquired the [guest house] messuage and appurtenances, including at least one fishpond within the old precinct. The monks' reservoir, a 1¼-acre fishpond on the opposite side of the lane, would have been a valuable asset to any lessee and while never mentioned in any post-suppression charters, is likely to have been part of the package [TL 1183 4407]. Terms also included a close of pasture, possibly the 5-acre Long Close which ran northwards from the reservoir. Abutting the west side of Park Leys (40 acres of meadow belonging to Park Grange), it survived into the late nineteenth century [TL 1182 4408].⁸

For rent of 30s yearly, the men leased a messuage opposite the abbey gate near Chapel of St. Mary (formerly the abbey's 'chapel without the gate'). The dwelling had been home to William Trykett (one of the abbey's servants), but as part of their pension arrangements the Court of Augmentations rehoused him and his wife Dorothy rent free in a property just over 500m to the south on the west side of Rowney Lane. In contrast to their old lodgings on a reasonably well-drained site, the tenement (probably about 2 acres) occupied inhospitable ground on the north bank of the stream with little to recommend it other than a fishpond [TL 1192 4335].⁹

The abovementioned 30s also included a tenement or toft 'lately built' next to the messuage formerly occupied by John Skynner, possibly on the west side of the lane between the chapel and the reservoir. A one-acre close of pasture with a small pond in the south-east corner was also part of the deal. Thought to have contained a dovecote, this lay opposite the present-day entrance to Abbey Farm [TL 1207 4406]. Lastly the rent covered a close of pasture (once called Barkers Close or le Sellers Close) formerly occupied by Edward Moote [Motte].¹⁰ The 1794 enclosure map identifies Barkers Close (almost 12 acres on the Southill side of the parish boundary) abutting the east side of Warden Great Wood [TL 1139 4265]. The brothers extended their grip by paying 26s 8d annually for the pasture called 'Barkers greate close' (16½ acres) linking Barkers Close with Rowney Lane, again in Southill [TL 1186 4289].¹¹

In 1541/42 Edward Gostwick held a close called 'Daunslabore/Daimslabore' (a reference to cultivated land formerly associated with the deer park). Accounts show unpaid rent of 2s 4d, although an error may have occurred in year, for on 7 June 1542 Robert took over the claggy, flood-prone 'Little close of pasture called Dawneybower' (2 fiscal acres at 1s 2d the acre, 2½ acres on the ground) between the south side of Park Wood and the highway [TL 1284 4382].¹²

⁷ *BHRS*, 36, 76-87 (pp. 78, 81, 86).

⁸ Details of the close are given in the Assignment of lease, 18 January 1618 [BARS, W2247].

⁹ OS map. Bedfordshire XVII.SE, Surveyed: 1881 to 1882, Published: 1885; Bargain & Sale [BARS, W2223]; *BHRS*, 64, 149 (428); Held on 24 July 1605 by William Fische and then (or hitherto) occupied by Thomas Goody, the tenement including 'Barnards Pounce Close' is estimated as 2 acres in the Survey of the manor of Warden, p. 10 [BARS, W2593/2].

¹⁰ *BHRS*, 63 79-80 (106).

¹¹ Robert Gostwick bequeathed Barkers close 'next unto the great wood' to his daughter Anne in 1558. *BHRS*, 36, 85-86 (p. 86); Copy of Southill enclosure award and exchanges further to the 1797 act [BARS, SL1/9] with insert illustrating Old Warden 1794.

¹² Bargain & Sale enrolled 4 July 1629 [BARS, W2223]; Map of the Estate of Miss Katherine Davis Bovey situate in the Parishes of Old Warden and Northill in the County of Bedford c. 1750 [BARS, Z1125/1].

Gostwick family members settle in Southill and Old Warden

Edward Gostwick and his wife Dorothy purchased the late abbey's manor of Stanfordbury (Southill) in 1543. He died in 1558 and was buried on 9 August in Southill parish church.¹³ Edmund Gostwick, younger brother of Edward, was the permanent auditor at Warden Abbey, possibly from 1533 onwards. He was a lay official of the see of Lincoln, although it is unclear whether the appointments were held concurrently or consecutively; he became auditor of the Bishopric of Lincoln for life in 1540. At some point after 1538 Edmund took on the leases of the abbey's former holdings at Gastlyns Manor (adjoining Warden Warren) and Doys House (both in Southill) from John Gardener. He married Anne, daughter of Nicholas Harding of Northill, with whom he had six children, two of whom died in infancy. He was buried at Southill in December 1552.¹⁴ Documentary evidence proves that Robert Gostwick was living in the newly built Tudor house on the site of the monks' infirmary cloister by November 1558,¹⁵ but only circumstantial evidence remains to suggest that a red brick manor house was constructed on the site of the guest house at the same time.

The Wynche family

Whenever a parcel of land became vacant, it was soon granted to a new tenant and two years after the death of Robert Gostwick in 1561, Peter Graye, steward of the royal manor of 'Ouldwardon', rented the site of the guest house, close of pasture and appurtenances to John Wynche, a minor gentleman who owned about 100 acres in Cardington as well as property at Northill and Everton (Beds). The lease was to run for 21 years from 19 December 1563 and the annual rent of 42s 8d appears to have covered the guest house site and associated close (26s 8d) plus 16s-worth of rents from two other holdings. Wynche exchanged the lease for another on 29 November 1574, paying 56s 8d per annum.¹⁶ This seems to be for the guest house etc (26s 8d), and for the other parcel containing the messuage in Warden Street near the Chapel of St Mary, the newly-built tenement, Barkers Close, and the second close or pightle (30s).

On the death of John in 1582, his second son Humphrey Wynche inherited the lease. It is worth mentioning again the theory that Edward and Robert Gostwick had built a manor house on the site of the late abbey's guest house around thirty years earlier and it is suggested that this became home to Humphrey and his wife Cicely, daughter of Richard Onslow of the Inner Temple (solicitor-general to Elizabeth I from 1566 to 1569). Elizabeth Winche 'of the Street' was baptised at the parish church on 28 April 1581, followed by Ann Winch 'of the Street' on 26 April 1582. Son Onslow and daughter Helen were baptised on 7 December 1589 and 2 November 1590 respectively.¹⁷

It is possible that Humphrey Wynche and family shared the manor house or moved out to make way for Sigismund Barnardiston who married Mary Wynche, gentlewoman, on 12 June 1582 at Northill.¹⁸ Their four children were baptised in Old Warden (John on 5 December 1585; George, 28 December 1586; Elizabeth, 25 March 1588; and Katherine, 24 November 1588). The family relationships have not been established, but the parish register documents the

¹³ *LP*, vol. 18, pt. 1, p. 541 (92); *BHRS*, 36, 76-87 (pp. 82-83).

¹⁴ *BHRS*, 63, 90 (120); *BHRS*, 36, 84.

¹⁵ F.A. Blaydes (ed.), 'Gostwicke Wills', *Bedfordshire Notes and Queries*, vol. 2, pt. 18 (June 1888), 182-191 (pp. 187-88).

¹⁶ *Cal. Pat. R., Elizabeth I*, vol. 6 [1572-1575], p. 518 (3098); Cottage and adjoining garden held by Robert Doo, late in tenure of William Horrodon [Harrowden] (4s) and a tenement with one close of land held by Richard Thwayte, late in the tenure of John Daye (12s) are recorded in 1542, see *BHRS*, 64, 147 (426).

¹⁷ *Beds Parish Register*, vol. 10, pp. A2 also records the baptism of Dorothy Winch (13 December 1591) but does not give details of the father; 'WINCH, Humphrey (c.1555-1625), of Everton, Beds.'. *Hist. Parl. Online* documents two sons and three daughters of whom one son and two daughters died in the lifetime of their father.

¹⁸ *Beds Parish Register*, vol. 13.

wedding of Sigismund Barnardiston and Frances Wynch [sic] at Old Warden on 1 December 1597. There is no record of a baptism, but the burial at Warden on 3 April 1600 of Christopher Barnardiston 'of the Street' suggests that the only child from this second marriage died in infancy. Sigismund Barnardiston 'of Warden Street, gentleman,' is recorded on 6 October 1599, but later moved to Northill.¹⁹

A lawyer by profession, Humphrey Wynche was elected MP for Bedford four times between 1593 and 1604, actively promoting recusancy legislation in the 1604 session. In the wake of the Gunpowder plot (1605) he supported the proposal that husbands should be made liable for payment of the standard recusancy fine of £20 a month imposed upon their wives and moved that masters should similarly be made responsible for the fines incurred by their servants.

The situation at Old Warden in the early 17th century is confusing due to an earlier document being recited in the survey of 24 July 1605, which records that 'John Winche Gent Claims to Hold by Virtue of Letters Patent Dated [blank] certain Lands and Tenements with the aforesaid Manor' described as 'Two Dwelling Houses, One Stable, One Orchard, One Garden with the Yard containing by Estimation 2 Acres'. There was also one little pightle (2 acres), a 3-acre close of pasture and one other close of pasture (2 acres) bringing the whole to more than 9 acres (estimated rather than surveyed on the ground). The figure of £2 13s 4d has been inserted which appears to comprise the annual rent of £2 plus one mark 'Rent for Relief', a sum payable on taking up a new tenancy.²⁰ Humphrey Wynche was knighted by James I on 8 November 1606 and had surrendered the Old Warden property by 1610. He died in 1625.²¹

William Smythe of Warden Street

Commissioners were appointed as land agents towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth I and subsequent court records focus on strategic matters. The manor of Warden is not mentioned in the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* for the reign of James I (1603-25) and just two references occur shortly after the accession of Charles I in 1625.²² On 10 April 1610 a 60-year lease was granted to Crown agents John Eldred and William Whitmore for 'a) Tenement in Warden Street, sometime in the occupation of Humfrey Wynche, knight b) pightle of pasture (1 acre) between Parke Leyes, North, common lane, South c) Long Close (5 acres pasture) in Old Warden, between Willoe Ponde Close, West, & Parke Leyes, East'. The commissioners assigned the lease to William Fyshe of Stanford in Southill on 11 April 1611 and he retained the assets for almost eight years before handing them over to William Smythe of Warden Street in Old Warden on 18 January 1618.²³ By 1626 Sirs John Walter, James Fullerton, and Thomas Trevor held the manor of Old Warden in trust for Charles I and on 6 July that year William Smythe of Old Warden, gentleman, acquired an 80-year lease for lands in Old Warden at 30s per annum; the terms describe perfectly the package held by the Gostwick brothers in 1538.²⁴

¹⁹ Mortgage: £400 [BARS, SX176]; Conveyance [BARS, P10/25/4].

²⁰ Survey of the manor of Warden, p. 2 [BARS, W2593/2].

²¹ Will of John Wynche of Northill made 13 July 1582 and proved on 31 October 1582 [BARS, ABP/W1580-84/64]; 'WINCH, Humphrey (1554/5-1625), of Everton, Beds. and Lincoln's Inn, London; later of Serjeants' Inn, Chancery Lane, London'. <<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/>>.

²² *Cal. State Papers Domestic, Charles I. 1625, 1626* (London, 1897), pp. 197, 543.

²³ Assignment of lease: £100 [BARS, W2247].

²⁴ Lease for 80 years: £13 6s 8d: rent 30/- per annum [BARS, W2248].

Commissioners for the City of London (1628-29)

James I had granted a 99-year lease for the manor of Warden to Sir Francis Bacon (attorney general) and others on 10 January 1617, but this was revoked eleven years later as part of a major shake-up. Warden was among the numerous manors itemised in three patent rolls, each one running to one hundred feet or more in length. Held by Sir John Pickering, Lady Jane his wife, and their son Thomas, it was assigned on 10 June 1628 to trustees for the City of London, William Williams, Robert Michell, Walter Marks, and Robert Marsh 'by nomination of mayor, commonality & citizens of London' for £119 7s 8d in rent. It was calculated that Warden Manor and all the rest of the premises were worth £131 15s 11d and remained annexed to the Honour of Ampthill.²⁵ The lease was reassigned on 9 September 1628 to Edward Ditchfield (citizen and salter of London), John Highlord (citizen and skinner), Humphrey Clarke (citizen and dyer or printer), and Francis Mosse (citizen and scrivener) 'commissioners for the aldermen and common council of London dealing with manors etc'.²⁶

'Edward Ditchfield, of Lond., gent.' was admitted to Gray's Inn on 5 March 1629²⁷ and on 1 July 1629 he and others concluded the sale of [the leases for] a number of tenements to 'Anthony Abdy [alderman of London, died 1640], H. Wood, Henry Adrewes'. None of the surviving records provide details. Park Grange and the Abbey estates were assigned on the same day to Sir George Whitmore, Sir Nicholas Raynton and Sir Thomas Moulson.²⁸

On 4 July 1629 Ditchfield and his associates sold the lease for the manor of Warden with appurtenances in Haynes, Houghton Conquest, and Maulden to Robert Palmer of Hill, Bedfordshire and son, William Palmer (1605-83) for £2,350 and annual rent of £66 12s.²⁹ The manor comprised:

- Rents of assize worth £3 16s from the aforementioned parishes (amount unchanged since 1542), rents from customary [copyhold] tenants of 30s 4d annually, and income of £7 1s from fixed rents;
- Park Wood and Abbey Wood *alias* Warden Wood, previously occupied by John Wynche at 25s per annum. At that time Park Wood covered an estimated 180 acres, while Abbey Wood is given as 330 acres in 1636.³⁰ Lying in the west of the parish, the latter has been reduced to Warden Great Wood (208 acres) and Warden Little Wood (97 acres) with a 23-acre field separating them;
- Warden Warren (about 300 acres), the lodge, and right to take coneys from specified areas in Warden and Southill (held in 1628 by John Fish, gentleman, for £7 10s 16d including a 48s increment);

²⁵ Assignment: 'good considerations', 18 January 1640 [BARS, W2300] cites the transactions dated 10 January 1617 and 28 June 1628; Further details are available in *Documents concerning Old Warden and Southill transcribed by F. Emmison for Mrs Shuttleworth*, pp.146-48 [BARS, CRT100/5].

²⁶ 4 Chars 1, pt. xxxiv cited in *VCH Beds*, vol. 3, p. 253 (fn. 58); *Old Warden and Southill*, pp.146-48 [BARS, CRT100/5].

²⁷ *Register of entries to Gray's Inn, 1521-1889*, ed. J. Foster (London, 1889), p. 187; Professions of the aldermen are listed in the assignment of lease: good considerations [BARS, W2226].

²⁸ Bargain & Sale enrolled, 4 July 1629 [BARS, W2223] cites the transaction dated 1 July 1629; The assignment of the abbey and Park Grange is cited in Assignment: 'good considerations', 18 January 1640 [BARS, W2300].

²⁹ The so-called manor of Hill in the east of Old Warden parish emerged from lands held by the Harding family from the abbot of Warden at the time of the dissolution. Robert Palmer of London paid £1,000 to purchase the manor from Robert Plomer in 1627.

³⁰ Assignment of lease: 'good causes', 20 May 1636 [BARS, W2245].

- Five cottages in Warden Street near the old abbey gate which had been granted rent free to former servants as part of their pension or corrody;³¹
- Broom Close opposite the parish church; and
- Five copyhold properties in Old Warden.³²
- Profits of the court were deemed to be 15s 3d and the lessee would have the rights to tithes, Hundred Courts and view of frankpledge ‘as freely as King Charles under his Great Seal & under the Seal of the Duchy of Lancaster & the Seal of the County Palatine of Lancaster gave it on 9 September 1628’ to Edward Ditchfield etc in fee farm. The manor of Warden was to be held ‘at fee farm from King as of manor of East Greenwich in free and common socage & not in chief nor by military service’³³ – ultimately, it remained Crown property.

Park Grange and the Abbey estates had already been reassigned and six other tenements were specifically excluded.³⁴ Those tenements granted by Ditchfield to Abdy, Wood and Andrewes three days earlier were out of scope and likewise ‘forests, chases, parkes, woods, marriages, advowsons, etc., gold & silver found’. Separate arrangements had been made for the ‘messuage [rectory manse] in the occupation of John Marbury, wife Dorothy & son Thomas’, however, as in many cases, earlier documents were recited rather than new ones produced; in this instance John Marbury had died in 1615, followed by his widow in 1623.³⁵

The Palmer family

The Palmers were a scholarly family. William Palmer, eldest son of Robert, was admitted as a student to the Inner Temple in November 1621. On 28 January 1629 he was married at St Mary’s Aldermanbury to Dorothy Bramston, daughter of Sir John Bramston of Skreens, Essex (king’s serjeant and afterwards lord chief justice) and Dorothy soon gave birth to Mary, the first of eleven children (six sons and five daughters). Mr Robert Palmer of Hill had only been joint owner of the manor of Warden for twelve months when he died in 1630. He was buried at the parish church on 12 August. Having survived him by twenty-three years, Mistress Mary Palmer was laid to rest close by on 12 May 1654. Aged twenty-five, William was left in sole control of the two manors (Warden and Hill). Born in 1631 his son and heir John was admitted to the Inner Temple in November 1648 and showed much promise, but died unmarried. Dorothy, the third child was followed in 1635 by William who would eventually succeed his father. William Palmer, son of Robert, was knighted by Charles I on 18 April 1641.

³¹ Listed in *BHRS*, 63, 80-81 (107), the 1538 tenants at will were William Long, Agnes Whanhope, William Trykett, [blank] Patenson, and John Cowper.

³² No change to rents for premises late John Paxon, now site of Manor Farm (26s 8d), John Wright (10s 4d), William Harroden (4s), Downesborowe [*sic*] pightle held in 1628 by William Fish, gent. (2s 4d), and tenement held by John Bristowe [Brisco] (5s). *BHRS*, 64, 147-48 (426) refers.

³³ Bargain & Sale enrolled, 4 July 1629 [BARS, W2223]; *BHRS*, 64, 146-49 (425-28).

³⁴ Tenant and value in 1542 listed in *BHRS*, 64, 147-50 (426) and (429) as the complete farm held at fee-farm by Richard Cumberland (53s 4d), Barkers Great Close held by Edward and Robert Gostwick (26s 8d) and other copyhold properties by Richard Hawkins (38s 4d), Richard Sockling late John Sockling (57s 4d), William Hawkins late Selons (33s 4d), and by Leonard Baynlond [Beaumont] (14s).

³⁵ The messuage in occupation of John Marbury was documented in 1628 as the ‘messuage, two closes and 1 acre’ in Old Warden and has its roots in ‘le Orchardegrange otherwise Rectory of Warden’. Old Warden and Southill, p.146 [BARS, CRT100/5]; *BHRS*, 64, 149-50 (429); *Beds Parish Registers*, vol. 10, p. A37.

The Warwickshire branch of the family owned the manor of Ladbroke which had been purchased by Robert Palmer's elder brother William. When William of Ladbroke died in 1636 the Warwickshire manor passed to his son William (1615-71). On 1 April 1642 articles of agreement were concluded whereby the cousins exchanged properties, with William Palmer of Ladbroke, Esq. giving his manor, advowson, grange, and messuages in Warwickshire to Sir William Palmer of Hill in return for Hill plus £2,000.³⁶ Now ensconced in Bedfordshire, the new William Palmer, Esq, of Hill was knighted on 2 November 1642, possibly having distinguished himself fighting for Charles I at the battle of Edgehill. The transaction had no bearing on the descent of the manor of Warden, but almost certainly precipitated some house moves. Nevertheless, whether Sir William Palmer, son of Robert, ever lived at Ladbroke has not been established, but he unquestionably rented a property in Clerkenwell (London). Daughter Priscilla was baptised there on 1 February 1648 and son Francis buried on 29 December 1651.³⁷

The involvement of others in manorial business becomes clear in a lease of 1 August 1637 when the holders of the rectory of Warden, Henry Haselfoote (citizen and haberdasher of London), William Haselfoote of London, gentleman, (executors to Thomas Haselfoote, citizen and vintner of London, deceased) and Thomas Bridges of London (saddler) granted 'The Warren in Old Warden & lodge & appurtenances in Warden & Southill' to William Palmer of Hill (Warden), Esq..³⁸ The appurtenances included the right to take rabbits from the barton and Claypit Close on the demesne farm, Bushy Barton on Park Grange, and from Secottes (pasture formerly belonging to the abbey on the Southill side of the parish boundary between Warden Warren and Claypit Close). On 2 October 1654 John Smith of Radclive (Bucks) married Sarah Bridges of Old Warden, holder of the rectory of Warden since the death of Thomas Bridges in December 1651.³⁹ No relationship between William Smith of Warden Street and John Smith has been established.

Having been in the family for 38 years, William Smith of Warden Street, gentleman, assigned the lease for the manor house etc to Sir William Palmer of Clerkenwell on 12 May 1656 and likewise the other 30s-worth of properties in Warden Street that had been his for almost 30 years.⁴⁰ It is not clear whether the timing is coincidental or if it related to Sir William's heir reaching his majority and being groomed to step into his 51-year old father's shoes at Ladbroke. On the following day Sir William Palmer granted an annuity of £13 6s 8d to William Smith 'from tenement in Warden Street sometime in the occupation of Sir Humfrey Winch, knight, lately William Smith etc.'. The sum of £80, 'part of a greater summe' is mentioned, indicating that the transaction related to the marriage settlement between William Smythe junior, gentleman, to Mary Manley (eldest daughter of John and Mary Manley of Cardington).⁴¹

Commenting on the 'Manor of Old Warden. Warden Street', Hervey (1914) observed that in 1669 the Abbey farm was 'the seat of Sir Ralph Bovey' but seemed unaware that the Bovey family never lived there. Having no idea whether Manor Farm was relevant to his enquiries, Hervey took the unfortunate, if not bigoted view, that 'If there is any sense or meaning in the name, this farmhouse should represent the house of Sir William Palmer of Clerkenwell who owned the manor of Old Warden. But names, modern names, are sometimes given in such ignorance or stupidity that no reliance can be placed upon them.' He therefore concluded erroneously that the present-day Park Farm was the Palmers' seat. His misconceptions were compounded by the proximity of Palmer's wood, the popular local name used for Park Wood

³⁶ S.H.A. Hervey, *Ladbroke and its owners* (Bury St Edmunds, 1914), p. 18.

³⁷ *Ladbroke*, pp. 141, 152-54.

³⁸ Assignment of lease: £55: rent nil [BARS, W2246].

³⁹ *Beds Parish Register*, vol. 10, pp. A25, A39.

⁴⁰ Assignment of lease: £115 [BARS, W2250].

⁴¹ Grant of annuity for 50 years: for relinquishing his claim to both properties in Warden Street, 13 May 1656 [BARS, W2251]; (Copy) Marriage Settlement (feoffment), 16 January 1657 [H/DE374].

from the 1870s onwards. Park Wood occurs on maps into the early twentieth century, but the new name was eventually adopted.⁴²

It seems reasonable to propose that Sir William and Lady Palmer took the property on Warden Street as their primary residence after 1663 and in 1671 Sir William was taxed for sixteen hearths in his manor house.⁴³ According to the Old Warden parish register, 'Sir William Palmur, knite, departed this world March the first, and was buread the 7 day of March 1682.' [1683 by the modern calendar]. He was interred beside his parents, Robert and Mary, and his will proved by Dorothy his widow on 27 March 1683. The manor of Wardon, charged with a fee farm rent of £66 12s 6d to be paid out of the manor's profits, was to be conveyed to Sir William's eldest surviving son, William Palmer (1635-1720). To his son Thomas, he left 'several messuages and lands in Cardington alias Carrington'. Personal bequests included '£150, his damask bed and its furniture, his best suit of tapestry hangings, all her apparel, jewels and the velvet furniture for her horse, two of his best coach horses with their harness and his best coach to wife Dorothy'.⁴⁴

On 13 June 1663 a supplementary settlement was agreed by Sir William Palmer of Ladbroke/ Clerkenwell in anticipation of the marriage between his eldest son, William and 25-year old Elizabeth Clerke of London, widow of George Clerke of London, merchant. When the bridegroom took out a licence on 24 July 1663 for the couple to be married at St Margaret's, Lothbury (City of London), he was described as 'of Old Wardin, bachelor, aged 25', although the age appears to be an error. Writing in or about 1683, William's uncle deemed the young woman 'a very perverse unagreable wife. I will say noe more of her, they have noe child'. After Elizabeth's death, William took widow Mary Skrimsher of Stoney Thorpe in the parish of Long Itchington (Warwicks) to be his wife in 1687. Now more than fifty years old, William would have been desperate for a male heir, but the couple were blessed with daughters Dorothy (1689-1741) and Elizabeth (1690-1777), before son Charles was born (1692-1764).⁴⁵ The family appears to have made their home at Ladbroke (Warwicks) rather than in Bedfordshire.

To his younger son Thomas, Sir William Palmer had bequeathed properties in Cardington (alias Carrington), but either in the absence of suitable accommodation there or perhaps to keep his elderly mother company in the Old Warden manor house, Thomas Palmer 'Dr. in Phisic' (?-1689) is found at Warden Street in 1685. After his death on Christmas Day 1689, he was buried at the parish church the very next day.⁴⁶ Almost certainly the last family member to live in the manor house, Lady Palmer, widow of Sir William, was buried at Old Warden on 28 November 1690 near her daughter Mrs Mary Soames (buried 13 February 1658), 'which is near the body of my dear husband, Sir William Palmer, without any more charge than the carrying of my body downe'. Dorothy had a reputation for her charitable works and to the poor of Old Warden, she left £3.⁴⁷

The deaths of Sir William Palmer and son Thomas may have prompted his heir William of Ladbroke to alienate certain assets in Old Warden to Humphrey Fish of Ickwell (parish of Northill) and on 17 May 1695 the settlement for the marriage between Humphrey Fish junior and Anne Stillingfleet included 'Park wood (141 acres); 40 acres pasture, late part of Park

⁴² For details of the Palmer family, see *Ladbroke*, pp. 145-62 and Pedigree No. 4, p. 214; Hervey's erroneous conclusions are noted on pp. 158-59.

⁴³ L.M. Marshall, 'The rural population of Bedfordshire, 1671 to 1921', *BHRS*, 16 (1934), 2-160 (p. 159).

⁴⁴ *Ladbroke*, p. 154; Deaths are recorded in *Beds Parish Register*, vol. 10.

⁴⁵ Supplementary marriage settlement, 13 June 1663 [BARS, W2230]; *Ladbroke*, pp. 174-79.

⁴⁶ Conveyance (lease and Release) concerning a charitable trust, 8, 9 September 1685 [BARS, P105/25/2-3].

⁴⁷ *Ladbroke*, p. 154; Deaths are recorded in *Beds Parish Register*, vol. 10.

wood, lately grubbed up, 2 messuages, lately built thereon, and pightle of pasture called Dansybowers in the occupation of William Gilman'.⁴⁸

In the summer before Charles Palmer reached his eighteenth birthday it was time to better understand the Old Warden lands, so a perambulation took place on 18 and 19 May 1710.⁴⁹ His father William of Ladbroke died in 1720 and was buried in Warwickshire on 15 April. The first of the family to be buried there, a large mural monument in the chancel to him and his second wife describes William as lord of the manor of Old Warden.⁵⁰ He bequeathed to his daughters the 'fee farm rents issuing from divers lands, woods and tenements in Worden alias Woorden, Co. Beds, which I lately purchased from John Hassell and Orite [Dorothy?] his wife'. There was an option for Charles Palmer to pay his two sisters £400 to release their interest in their father's properties in Ladbroke and it is likely that similar arrangements were made concerning Old Warden.⁵¹ William's widow, Mary Palmer, died on 26 August 1729.

The marriage settlement for Charles Palmer and Mary Newdigate dated 5 October 1733 referenced the manor of Warden, the [capital] messuage formerly occupied by [Sir] William Palmer or assign, and two other farms, one occupied by Richard Taylor and the other by John Hancock, which appear to be the farm belonging to the manor house, and the messuage near the Chapel of St Mary and newly-built tenement, all once the domain of the Gostwick brothers. The settlement also included the tenements and lands occupied by Sir Samuel Ongley; Warden Warren; and 300 acres of woods and 'wood grounds'. Blank spaces on the estate map (1750) annotated 'The Lands of Charles Palmer Esquire' correspond with the site of the manor house, 5-acre Long Close, and woodland in the west of the parish of Old Warden. Park Wood was in the hands of Henry Fish Palmer Esq [of Ickwell].⁵²

After the death of Charles in 1764, his elder son and heir William Palmer (1735-1772) decided to sell up. Joseph Taylor had replaced tenant Richard Taylor as tenant by 22 April 1768 and on 22 June details of the property were listed as follows:

'3 messuages, 6 gardens, 60 acres land, 40 acres meadow, 120 acres pasture, 350 acres wood, 50 acres furze & heath, 20 acres marsh, 2 acres land covered with water, £18 16s rents, common of pasture, court leet, court Baron, View of Frankpledge, Perquisites & Profits of Courts, goods & chattels of felons & fugitives in Warden, Southill, Hill & Broome & tithes, $\frac{1}{3}$ annual rent £119 7s 8d for manor', the sum having remained unchanged since 1628.⁵³

By the time that the following advertisement was placed, the two farms held by Richard Taylor and John Hancock in 1733 had been amalgamated and it is likely that one of the farmhouses had been demolished:

To be sold. The Manor of Old Warden with Court Leet, Court Baron, Chief rents, Royalties and Privileges thereto belonging. Also the Capital messuage, a farmhouse and several inclosed grounds of arable, meadow and pasture containing 180 acres now in the occupation of Joseph Taylor, together with two large woods of 310 acres adjoining, the whole being a freehold estate, pays no tithes and lying within 5 miles of Bedford and 6 miles of Biggleswade.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Marriage Settlement: copy Lease and Release. £2,000, 17 May 1695 [BARS, HY525-6].

⁴⁹ Paper of possesshoning at Warden Street of my master Mr Charles Palmer, written with his own hand and pen by James Leeke of Ladbroke, 18, 19 May 1710 [BARS, W2262].

⁵⁰ *Ladbroke*, p. 177.

⁵¹ *Ladbroke*, p. 181.

⁵² *Ladbroke*, pp. 207, 219; Estate map [BARS, Z1125/1].

⁵³ Conveyance to make a tenant to the praecipe. (Lease & Release), 21, 22 April 1768 [BARS, W2232]; Exemplification of Recovery, 22 June 1768 [BARS, W2234].

⁵⁴ *Ladbroke*, pp. 160-61.

Another paper in the Ladbroke Deeds (undated) calculated the latest rental income from the 'Estate at Old Warden belonging to William Palmer Esq.' as £14,140 7s 9d, including 'Fines, alienations etc, privilege of planting upon an extensive waste, manor house etc' of £1,000; 'Two large spring woods in hand' (310 acres) at £240; and 'Two farms now in one tythe free' (179 acres) for £144 18s 0d.⁵⁵

Tenant Joseph Taylor had married Ann Preston, daughter of William Preston, on 18 June 1767 but he sadly died and was buried at Old Warden on 28 March 1770 leaving her widowed with a small daughter, Sarah. When tax liabilities were calculated less than three months later, William Palmer Esq. was called upon to pay £2 0s 6d for poor relief based on the value of his 'Farm & Woods'. Land tax was charged at £29 3s 10d, the most demanded of any of the twenty-six named payees in the parish, and £3 3s 0d in window tax (thirty windows) for the Warden Street manor house.⁵⁶

When William Palmer died unmarried in 1772 aged 37 years, his brother Charles Palmer (1738-1806) inherited the Old Warden property. Protracted negotiations to offload the site continued, but on 18 March 1773 Mr Francis Murcott of Funivall's Inn finally wrote to Charles, 'After a multiplicity of attendances I have at last put a finishing stroke to the long depending sale of your Bedfordshire estate.' A purchase price of £11,250 had been agreed with a further £150 allowed for 'the proportionable part of the next year's fall of underwood and poles', so that Charles would receive £11,400 from the buyer, brewer Samuel Whitbread of Cardington (1720-96), who would 'enter upon the estate' on 10 October 1773.⁵⁷

Warden Manor Farm

Although the old manor house was still standing in 1770, it may have been in a ruinous state and Samuel Whitbread probably oversaw its demolition shortly after purchasing the property in 1773. Materials were recycled in the new Warden Manor Farm complex and a crude inscription in one of the bricks dates the present house to 1776. A second brick bears two instances of a roughly incised double V, referencing Mary, Virgin of Virgins, Queen of Heaven. The Virgin was revered by the Cistercians so although the handiwork may be attributable to eighteenth-century craftsmen, the possibility that it harks back to the mid-sixteenth century cannot be ignored.

The Old Warden enclosure map (1794) illustrates the footprint of the farm complex with its farmhouse and an open U-shape series of outbuildings to the south just as they are today. Some 70m south-west of the farm, on the north side of the track that once led to the old abbey gatehouse, stood a small, square structure, possibly a new dovecote [TL 11866 43917]. It reoccurs on the second edition of the 6-inch Ordnance Survey map (1902), but there are no visible signs and the geophysical survey report (2017) observed, 'Nothing can be added as earth resistance survey proved inconclusive due to 'the abundant presence of bonfire debris on the ground surface (*pers obs*)'.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ *Ladbroke*, p. 160.

⁵⁶ Original poor-rate (with signatures of Churchwardens and Overseers) of parish of Warden, 10 July 1770 [BARS, PE194]; Land Tax Assessment of parish of Warden, 20 June 1770 [BARS, PE195]; Original Window-Tax Assessment - parish of Warden [BARS, PE196].

⁵⁷ *Ladbroke*, pp. 160-61; Conveyance. (Lease & Release), 4,5 October 1773 [BARS, W2235-2236]. See also [BARS, W2288]; M.M. Drummond, 'WHITBREAD, Samuel (1720-96), of Cardington, Beds.'. *The History of Parliament*, <<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/>>; For portraits of Samuel Whitbread, see <<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp60146/samuel-whitbread-the-elder>>.

⁵⁸ Old Warden Enclosure map (1794) [Central Beds HER, CRO W2/6/1-2]; J. Walford, *Archaeological geophysical survey on the site of Warden Abbey, Old Warden, Bedfordshire, March to April 2017* (MOLA Northampton, 2017) [Report], p. 6 and Fig. 4.



Inscribed bricks in Manor Farmhouse, 1776 (left), and VV (right) © M. Roberts

A pond (791m²) several metres north-west of the 'dovecote' is thought to have been part of the monastic water management system. It was not infilled until after the turn of the twentieth century.⁵⁹ Distinct indentations parallel to an earth bank north of the farmhouse point towards lost monastic fishponds formerly associated with the abbey's guesthouse and satellite images taken in very dry weather highlight the possible former site of another fishpond (391m²) parallel to the road [TL 1187 4398]. All had been infilled by 1794.

Site of Warden Abbey reunited with its guest house

Agreement was reached on 28 July 1785 between John Wasse junior of Stowe alias Long Stowe Hall (Cambs), Esq. and lawyers James Graham of Lincoln's Inn, gentleman, Charles Arnold of the Six Clerks Office, Chancery Lane, and James Atkins of St Ives, gentleman, for the sale of 'a messuage in Warden Street, Old Warden, known by the name of the Abbey, and closes adjoining, in the occupation of Samuel Sutton', together with Park Grange and all of the messuages held by Wasse on the former Farm of Demesne Lands. On 7 July 1786 a Covenant to produce the Title Deeds was established between brewer and MP Samuel Whitbread of Cardington (1720-1796) and John Wasse, and Mr Whitbread paid £19,600 to complete the purchase of the properties listed a year earlier.⁶⁰ This would be worth over £1.5m in today's money. Having already purchased the manor of Warden in 1773, more than 1,335 acres of former monastic lands were returned to single ownership almost 250 years after the abbey surrendered to Henry VIII.⁶¹

⁵⁹ OS map. Bedfordshire XVII.SE, Revised: 1900, Published: 1902.

⁶⁰ Covenant to produce Title Deeds, 7 July 1786 [Cambs Archives, R53/22/62]; Conveyance of the equity of redemption: (lease & release) dated 6, 7 July 1786 [BARS, W2350-W2351]; Conveyance in trust to sell (lease & release) dated 27, 28 July 1785 [BARS, W2346-W2347].

⁶¹ *Ladbroke*, pp. 160-61; Conveyance. (Lease & Release) [BARS, W2235-2236]. See also [BARS, W2288]; M.M. Drummond, 'WHITBREAD, Samuel (1720-96), of Cardington, Beds.'. *The History of Parliament*, <<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/>>; For portraits of Samuel Whitbread, see <<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp60146/samuel-whitbread-the-elder>>.

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