

**PETER HOPKINS has been investigating**

## **LANDHOLDING IN MORDEN AROUND THE YEAR 1200**

One of the many puzzles that have exercised my mind as I have pursued my studies of Medieval Morden has been the fact that the Westminster Abbey estate at Morden paid out each year, from at least 1283 until at least 1450, the sum of 4s to members of the Kennardesle or Kynnersley family.<sup>1</sup>

The Kynnersleys held a 'manor' in Carshalton, and another in Horley. The Carshalton possessions included a block of 64 acres of land in the northwest corner of the ancient parish of Carshalton (but in the 20<sup>th</sup> century incorporated into Morden parish). This block of land lies on the south-western side of Green Lane between Rosehill and Love Lane, Morden. In the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century it was known as 'Oldfeld',<sup>2</sup> in 1496 as 'Kynwardesley Field'<sup>3</sup> and in 1733, rather long-windedly, as 'eight several fields, pieces or parcels of inclosed grounds ... in the several fields there called Oldfields'.<sup>4</sup>

Until 1817 a detached piece of land within Morden parish was in the same ownership as the 64 acres in Carshalton. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, this piece of land was said to be 'land at Gildenehelde' or 'Gilleneheld';<sup>5</sup> in the 15<sup>th</sup> century 'land at Gildonehill',<sup>6</sup> in the 16<sup>th</sup> century 'Mr Scott's mede upon the gilden hille' containing 9 acres,<sup>7</sup> in the 18<sup>th</sup> century '8 acres called Huntley's Meadow alias Gilton Hills';<sup>8</sup> in the 19<sup>th</sup> century '8 acres formerly Huntleys Meadow alias Gilton Hills, now called Gillmore Hill';<sup>9</sup> and in the 1838 Morden Tithe Apportionment 'Buckles Meadow' of 9 acres 3 roods 30 perches.<sup>10</sup> (Scott and Huntley were successive lords of the manor of Kynnersley, and William Buckland (rather than Buckle) of Mitcham bought the Morden plot in 1817).<sup>11</sup>

How had this small plot of land in Morden come to be part of a Carshalton manor? And why did the Westminster Abbey estate at Morden pay 4s a year to make use of it?

Among various land charters copied into the great cartulary at Westminster Abbey known as the Westminster Domesday are two charters relating to a one-virgate freeholding in Morden. Around the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup>, Robert Morin granted this virgate to Robert de Claygate at 4s a year. The holding seems to have been a compact unit, and is described in the charter as:

*one virgate of land with pertinents in Morden – namely that virgate which Agmund held, which lies between the land of John son of Peter and the old croft.*<sup>12</sup>

A few years later Robert de Claygate in turn granted this virgate to Westminster Abbey, charging the 4s a year payable to Robert Morin, plus an additional 2d a year payable to Robert de Claygate.<sup>13</sup>

So we have the Abbey holding a property within Morden at 4s a year payable to Robert Morin, some 60 years before the first recorded payment of 4s to the Kennardesle or Kynnersley family. There are no other extant records of the Abbey making annual payments for lands within Morden. Could this be the same property? Was Robert Morin a predecessor of the Kynnersleys in the ownership of this land?

Another clue can be found among the *Records of Merton Priory* collected by Alfred Heales. Merton Priory also had dealings with a member of the Morin family. On 2 February 1196, an agreement was made in the Curia Regis:-

*between the Prior of Merton plaintiff and Gilbert Morin defendant, concerning the whole land which is between first Poeclose and land which Sedmar de Lathorn held between Morden and Walton {?Awlton} ... Namely that the same Gilbert grants to the aforesaid Prior and the convent at the same place all that part of the aforesaid land that is below the road towards the north, which road proceeds from Morden towards Awlton, to hold to the same Prior and the aforesaid convent of the same Gilbert and of his heirs in perpetual alms free and quit from all secular exaction. And the same Prior quitclaims his whole right and claim that he has in all the other part and of the aforesaid land above the aforesaid road towards the south to the same Gilbert and his heirs in perpetuity.*<sup>14</sup>

Here we have Gilbert Morin owning land alongside a road leading from Morden to Carshalton. When I drive to Carshalton I usually go along Middleton Road to avoid the Rose Hill roundabout. But before Middleton Road was created in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the way from Morden to Carshalton would have been along Green Lane directly into Wrythe Lane (or possibly from Green Lane via Bishopsford Road into Green Wrythe Lane).

What properties did Merton Priory possess in Carshalton? Apart from the parish church, the only properties mentioned in Merton Priory's records at this time are small properties, the large estate known as Mareslond apparently being given to them in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> But it did possess two large estates within Morden during the medieval period. Hobalds, with 100 acres in Morden and a further 30 acres in each of Merton and Malden, was given to Merton Priory in the 1230s.<sup>16</sup> The North East Surrey Crematorium occupies much of this estate. It is not known when Merton Priory received its other estate in Morden, the 150-acre Spital estate, which occupied the area between Central Road, Green Lane, Farm Road, and Bishopsford Road.

If it was already in possession of the Spital estate in 1196, Merton Priory may well have wanted to add the adjoining 11 acres in Carshalton between the Morden parish boundary and Green Lane to round off the estate. And Gilbert Morin may well have been happy to increase his standing with God by granting them an odd bit of land separated from his other properties by the main road. It was certainly shown as part of the ‘Spital Farm alias The Lodge’ estate in 19<sup>th</sup>-century estate maps and in the tithe map.<sup>17</sup>

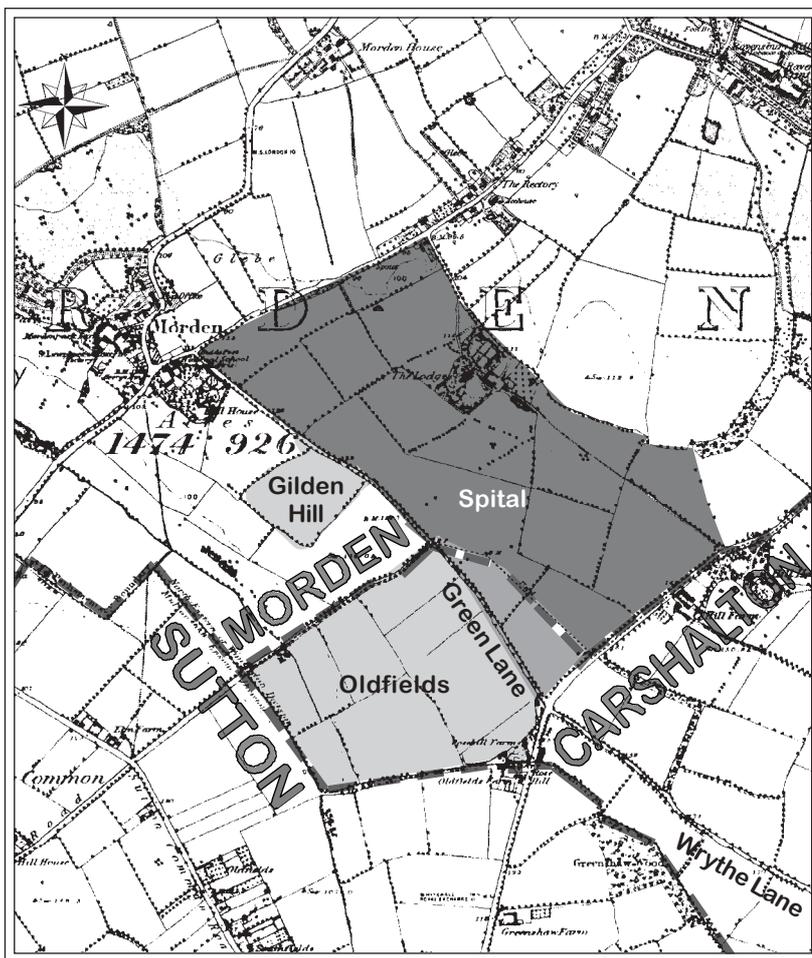
Even the physical geography works. The piece of land released to Merton Priory is described as being ‘below the road towards the north’, and the remainder of the Oldfields as being ‘above the aforesaid road towards the south’. Green Lane runs SE from Love Lane to Rose Hill, so the Spital land would have been to the NE of the road and the Oldfields to the SW. At this point the houses on the NE side of Green Lane *are* slightly below the level of the road, and Canterbury Road slopes down from Green Lane.

However, the suggestion that Merton Priory already held the Spital estate by 1196 wrecks havoc with an earlier theory I held! Around 1220 Westminster Abbey had three large independent freehold estates in Morden. William de Wattune paid 2s a year for 1 virgate, John Ducet paid 3s for 1½ virgates, and Richard de Winnelondune paid 6s 4d for 2½ virgates.<sup>18</sup> William de Wattune’s 1-virgate estate was given to Merton Priory in the 1230s and became the 100-acre Hobalds estate, mentioned above. John Ducet had bought 2¼ virgates from Richard Sakespeye, but Richard’s widow claimed one-third as dower, which she sold to the prior of Westminster in 1220, leaving John Ducet with just 1½ virgates.<sup>19</sup>

I had wondered whether Ducet’s 1½ virgates had become the 150-acre Spital estate, and Richard de Winnelondune’s 2½ virgates had become the 250 acres in Morden that formed part of the Ravensbury estate. The ratios match, and one reference to Hobalds comprising a carucate of land, rather than a virgate, adds support to John Blair’s view that compact freehold estates, though assessed in virgates, were much larger than the villein virgate of 20 acres.<sup>20</sup>

However, if Ducet owned this estate in 1220 and Merton Priory held the Spital estate from 1195, it seems unlikely to have been the same estate. Unless, of course, Ducet had granted the estate to the priory while retaining ownership for the term of his life. Such arrangements are not unknown, but we have no evidence to support such a view in this instance!

- 1 Westminster Abbey Muniments 27285-27375
- 2 *Court Rolls of the Manor of Carshalton* – Surrey Record Society Vol II 51, 53
- 3 *Chertsey Abbey Cartularies* – Surrey Record Society Vol XII 131
- 4 Surrey History Centre K85/2/49
- 5 Westminster Abbey Muniments 27306-19
- 6 Westminster Abbey Muniments 27373-5
- 7 Surrey History Centre K85/3/5
- 8 Surrey History Centre K85/2/49
- 9 Surrey History Centre K80/5/23-4
- 10 *Morden in 1838: The Tithe Apportionment Map* – MHS Local History Notes – 13
- 11 Surrey History Centre K80/5/23-32
- 12 Westminster Abbey Muniments Book 11, fo 170a
- 13 *ibid*
- 14 A Heales *The Records of Merton Priory* App XXX (translation PJ Hopkins)\*
- 15 *Victoria County History: Surrey* IV, 233
- 16 British Library Add Ch 8139; Westminster Abbey Muniments 9287; CAF Meekings *The 1235 Surrey Eyre* Surrey Record Society Vol XXXII, 481-2, note 188; Westminster Abbey Muniments 1915\*; Westminster Abbey Muniments Book 11 fo 169b; Heales *op cit* 101
- 17 eg London Borough of Sutton Archive 2361/2/2 Sales Particulars and map of Henry Hoare’s estates in Mitcham, Carshalton and Morden 1828; Morden Tithe Map 1838 see note 10 above
- 18 British Library Add Ch 8139; Westminster Abbey Muniments 9287
- 19 Westminster Abbey Muniments Book 11, fo 170b-171a
- 20 CAF Meekings *op cit* 481-2, note 188 (a carucate was an alternative term for a hide, normally considered equivalent to 4 virgates); J Blair *Early Medieval Surrey* 71-4



50% reduced extract from the First Edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey Map, with annotations and shading to identify locations mentioned in the text. The suggested location for the land ‘north of the road from Morden to Awlton’ is the mid-grey area between Green Lane and Spital.

\* For a corrected translation of this document, based on a more accurate transcription than Heales's, see TNA CP 25/1/225/1 on this web page