

# TANSOR

*A SHORT HISTORY COMPILED*

*BY*

*MAURICE NEWNES*

## A SHORT HISTORY OF TANSOR

### IN THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Compiled by Maurice Newnes of Jasmine Cottage, Tansor.

Autumn 1985

Information in this history of the village, from 1066 until the start of the 19th Century, is taken, in the main, from 'Bridge's History of the County of Northamptonshire, Vol. II' dated 1791, and from 'Victoria County History, 1906'. (For the opportunity to study these volumes the writer is grateful to the Librarian at Oundle School.)

Tansor is mentioned in the survey by the archaeologist C.C. Taylor of Cambridge University, made for the Royal Commission of Ancient Monuments in North East Northamptonshire, this book is available from the County Library.

Aerial surveys, made by Dr. Stephen Upex of Warmington, show field boundaries and crop marks and confirm that there was a pre-Roman and Roman settlement near Tansor Grange, also by the Tansor gravel pit.

### VARIATIONS ON THE NAME OF THE VILLAGE

Reference: EPNS Vol X Cambridge University Press, 1933, pages 208 and 209.

1086	TANESOVRE	(Domesday Book)
1151	TANESOUERA	(Dean and Chapter, Lincoln Records)
1205	TANESORES	(Curia Regis Rolls)
1206	TANESOUR	(Curia Regis Rolls)
1224	THANESOVRE	(Hugo of Wells Rolls - Lincolnshire Record Office)
1314	TANNESHORE	(Calendar of Close Rolls and Inquisitions Post Mortem, Public Record Office)
1320	TANSHORE	(Calendar of Charter Rolls)
1346	TANSORE	(Feudal Aids 1899-1920)
1386	TAUNESORE	(Calendar of Close Rolls)

1392	TANSORE	(Calendar of Close Rolls)
1401	TAUNEESOVER	(Calendar of Close Rolls)
1428	TANSORE	(Feudal Aids 1899-1920)
16thC	TANSWORTH	(Brudenell Records, probably at Northants Record Office)

The name Tansor should be considered in conjunction with Tansley in Derbyshire (Domesday entry - Taneslege or Teneslege) and also, recorded in 1040, Birch-Cartularium, Saxonikum 1885-931, Tanes Baece in Hertfordshire. As suggested by Dr. Ritter in 'Forstemann Personennamen 1387', published 1901-16, these names point to an Old English personal name TAN, this would be parallel to Old High German ZEINO - hence TAN'S BANK.

Of Field names only one is noted, BOTHOLME 1788, this is from the Enclosure Acts and was known earlier as BATHOLME 1381 (Inquisitions Post Mortem).

### **DOMESDAY BOOK**

The entry in the Domesday Book is:

'The King holds TANESOVRE. There are six hides. There is land for eighteen ploughs. In demesne there are two ploughs: and four borders with fourteen ploughs. There (is) a mill rendering ten shillings and twelve acres of meadow. Wood one league in length, and half a league in breadth. In King Edward's time it rendered twenty pounds by tale.'

'Bridge's History', which covers the period 1066 - 1900, states that in the Lordship on the old records, reference was to Les Cheynes de Tansover. By 1086 Tansor was held by the king, later by the Earls of Gloucester and, later again, became part of the Honour of Clare. It then descended to the Manor of Apethorpe and, through marriage, to the Earls of Westmorland.

It is recorded in the Northants Survey (12th Century) that during the reign of Edward II there was a considerable holding of 5½ hides on Tansor Manor of Crown Desmense to Haceneil de St. James. The Earl of Warwick, supporter of Henry I, secured part of Tansor.

In 1130, at the time of Henry II James de St. Hilary's daughter Maud, married Earl Roger de Clare - so Tansor came to form part of the Honour of Clare.

During the reign of Henry III, Roall Fitzalan and Ralph de Camoys held one Knight's Fee in Tansor of the Honour of Clare, which was then in the hands of the Crown.

From Ralph de Camoys the title passed to Thomas Camoys and, one, Giffard. About 1490 Tansor descended to the Manor of Apethorpe.

Mary, daughter of Sir Anthony Mildmay of Apethorpe, married Sir Francis Fane, later created the Earl of Westmorland.

The Brudenells of Deene had an estate in Tansor - the view of Frankpledge (this may be to do with tithes) in Tansor followed the same descent as that of Cotterstock and, in 1575 it was sold by Sir Thomas Brudenell to Sir Walter Mildmay and so passed with the rest of the Mildmay possessions to the Earls of Westmorland.

### **THE PARISH CHURCH. ST. MARY'S**

Details of the architecture of the Church can be found in Pevsner's book on Northamptonshire, which is in Oundle Public Library. Part of the building goes back to Saxon times and, in the Church, there is a board recording the names of the Rectors from the 13th Century. The County History draws attention to the 15th Century open benches with carving at the West End of the Church, the remains of a 15th Century screen and the two sets of three stalls with carved misericord seats. In addition to the two sets of stalls there is another single stall. These were formerly in Fotheringhay College. Originally there were twelve and it is known that two went to Benefield and two more to Warmington. Of the set on the South side of the Altar, two have carvings of the Falcon and Fetterlock (the emblem of the House of York and Richard III), another, similar stall on the North side of the Altar, has three feathers carved on its seat. Bridge, in his History of 1791, said some of the stalls had a rose or knot and fetterlock. The misericords are of particular interest to visitors to the Church.

The Church Plate consists of 2 silver cups and patens and two pewter plates. The original silver was stolen in the first decade of the 20th Century. Inscribed on the base of one cup is 'In Loving Memory Christobel Muntz 1904-1953', on the other 'The Property of Tansor, Northamptonshire 1840. In mem. F.E.C. Remodelled 1912'. The present cross and candlesticks, small lectern and collection plate are of brass and copper and were presented to the Church in memory of William Richardson, Churchwarden, 1888-1900. There is a further set of brass candlesticks, cross and small vases for the side altar.

The Church Bells are described in 'Church Bells of Northamptonshire, 1878' of which Oundle School Library has a copy. It is known that there were three bells in 1552, a Saint Bell, a Fire bell and a handbell. At a death there were three tolls for a male and two for a female. On Sunday the bells were chimed and a sermon

bell was rung. At the present time there are three bells. The first is a late 16th Century treble cast at Newcombe's foundry in Leicester; the second is from the foundry of Tobie Norris in Stamford and cast in 1611, this bell is reported to be cracked; the third bell is a tenor or medieval bell made by a London foundry.

The Parish Registers dating from 1629 to 1812 are deposited at Delapre Abbey, Northampton. Baptisms and Burials - 1629 to 1812; Marriages - 1639 to 1768 and 1769 to 1812.

### **THE LIVING AND THE GLEBE**

Henry II gave the Church Lands, Tithes and Customs to Nassington Prebend in the Church of Lincoln. In 1309 the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln were seised of the sole right of Presentation to the Living and, in 1535, Henry VIII gave Procuration and Synodals to the Prebendary of Nassington.

In 1791 the Rector was paying five marks yearly to Nassington Prebendary. There were 40 acres of Glebe Land, 30 of arable and 10 of pasture.

At the same time the Bellamy Charity, named after the donor, was in existence. It consisted of an annual gift of £20 for Tansor, Oundle, Cotterstock and Glapthorn to place two scholars at University, the residue to place out two children apprentices and, if the whole of the money was not used, the rest was given for the benefit of the poor.

The Glebe Land has disappeared. It was shown on the Enclosure Award for Tansor about 1796.

The Wake was held on the Sunday following the 8th September.

### **THE RECTORY**

The old rectory stood on the site of Tansor Court and, in 1860-1 before it was pulled down in about 1870, a set of watercolour paintings were made of it and the church by M.K. Liveing. These were given to the church by E.H. Liveing in 1944 and hang in the Vestry, as do portraits of a number of incumbants. The new Rectory, built by a wealthy rector, is now Tansor Court and the Arms of Peterborough Cathedral can be seen over the entrance.

Yet another Rectory was built by the Diocese about 1906, the former Rectory being sold by the Diocese to the Mills family, the bankers. Their burial place is in the churchyard, alongside the gate which is opposite to the small gate into the Court grounds. The most recent Rectory stands near the railway bridge

over the disused railway cutting and is now called The Lindens because the Diocese, when it sold the building in 1984, refused the use of the name Rectory or anything similar.

The parish is without an incumbent, the last Rector the Rev. Vernon Scott, having been moved to Barsby and Kilsby, at the other end of the County, in 1982; his three parishes of Tansor, Cotterstock and Fotheringhay were divided, Tansor and Fotheringhay being linked in a Benefice with Warmington (Cotterstock joining Oundle with Ashton) and coming under the care of a priest in charge, the Rev. Jeremy Reeves. Since the death of Rev. Reeves in 1985 these three parishes are linked with Cotterstock again under a new Benefice and, at the time of writing await the appointment of an incumbent at Warmington who will become the Priest in Charge of the three smaller parishes.

The patronage of the living lies with the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln. If Lincoln cannot find an incumbent the choice falls on the Diocese of Peterborough.

### **THE LAND AND SMALL BUILDINGS**

At the time of the Domesday Book, Tansor was in the Hundred of Wilebroc, spelt also as Wylebroke and Wilibroe. Today the Willow Brook flows into the River Nene at Elton.

The Enclosure Award with the map for Tansor, dated 1777 is at Delapre Abbey. At that time the Lord of the Manor, the Earl of Westmorland, held land in the parish and the Common Land was the first field on the river side of the road to Cotterstock from Tansor.

There was a stone pit for the parishioners use in making up the road, this is the site now of two houses built next to the school. It became the property of the Tansor Charities (Town and Cave) and, for some time, it was used as five village allotments. In the 1970's the land was sold by public auction.

On the road leading to Tansor Wold there was another pit used by the villagers to extract material to make mortar. This site is now part of the land owned by the Charities and let for agricultural use.

Before the Enclosure Award there was strip farming in open fields and, at Delapre Abbey, there are documents relating to Tansor Town Lands or Poor Lands. These comprised seven or eight open strips and were held upon trust "for the common profit and benefit of the inhabitants of Tansor, the rents and profits to be disposed of to such charitable uses as the same were given or intended to be given". Nothing is known of the origins of the Town Lands and the earliest document referring to them is dated 24th April 1693. In an early Conveyance to new Trustees of the Town Lands the property comprised a cottage on the east side of

the churchyard called Smith's Forge, another cottage on the west side called Kiln Cottage and a cottage with land (1 acre, no roods, 4 perches) where the last rectory, now The Lindens, stands; its land lay between the cottage and the railway bridge. It was upon this land that the Parish Room, demolished in 1960, stood. Also, there were eight acres of land dispersed in the open fields of Tansor. In lieu of the lands in the open fields the Trustees of the Poor Lands were allotted 12 acres, this is the land on the road to Tansor Wold mentioned earlier.

In a document of 1766 it was stated that "the rents from the Poor Lands was to be paid to the Rector and to be distributed to the industrious poor inhabitants of the Parish and, if the rents should not be wholly required by them, the residue should be paid for the education of one or more poor children at the Rector's discretion".

A Deed of 1739 refers to a tenement adjoining the churchyard which had long been used as a Parish Workhouse.

The Award shows a Village Pound. The site of this was against the road leading out of the village towards the A605, in the corner of the garden of The Lindens nearest to the main road. It was demolished in the 1950's. There was a dovecot, also destroyed relatively recently and this stood on the land now known as Riverside.

At the time of the Enclosure Award, Tansor Manor was known as Park Farm. The present windmill, standing in Tansor Court grounds, was in existence and, of course working.

From the Award, the Parish Registers and Parish Minutes it appears that the inhabitants were mostly agricultural labourers and, apart from the Rector there is no mention of landed gentry or large farmers.

### **THE CAVE CHARITY**

On 17th September, 1819 John Cave, a farmer, conveyed land (2 acres, 3 roods and 16 perches) to Trustees, the rents to be used for the relief of poverty in Tansor. It was to be used for "clothing, meat, blankets, coal or other necessaries at the discretion of the Rector and Churchwardens on Christmas Day for ever." This land, also on the road leading to Tansor Wold, is still owned by the Charities and let for agricultural use. The Cave Charity gift is recorded on a stone plaque in the Church and, nearby, there is a memorial stone to members of the Cave family. On 7th November, 1911 the Trustees for the Cave and Town Estates applied to the Charity Commissioners for a scheme to unite the two charities, this was granted.

At that time the rents were - Charity Land, £5.11s.6d.; Town Estates £22.8s.0d. and Allotments, £3.1s.4d. The income was to be applied, in Dickensian terms "for the relief of poverty in Tansor".

As Tansor and the needs of its residents has changed the present Trustees applied again to the Charity Commissioners for a scheme to enlarge the objects of the charity to become "for general charitable purposes for the people of Tansor". This has been approved (1985) and will give scope for the income to be used more widely, but still for charitable purposes.

The Charity is controlled by Trustees, five of whom are appointed by the Parish Meeting to serve for a term of three years, those Trustees co-opt three more Trustees who serve for a term of five years. The income comes from the rents of the land owned by the Charity and from Government Stock which was purchased following the sale of the allotments.

The Bellamy Charity, mentioned before, has capital of only £100 and is moribund.

### **19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES**

The 19th Century saw the advent of the railway, with a line running through Tansor from Peterborough to Northampton. The source of employment remained, however, the land with the Church as a focal point of village life. It was the coming of the motor car in the present century which started the decline of the village sense of community, here as elsewhere. People ceased to walk to neighbouring villages and public footpaths and bridleways fell into disuse and are now impassable. Agriculture became mechanised and only a small number of people living in the village are involved now. In this century the population of Tansor has dropped approximately 70. The present total of residents is 157 (39 below 18 years of age.)

The Parochial Church Council records show that up till 1935 there was a very active church in Tansor, with regular services, a choir and organist, bell ringers, a Sunday School and Sunday School outings. Most of this continued into the 60's and early 70's but with declining numbers and enthusiasm. The ancient Church, though in relatively good structural condition, has a doubtful future and services are held just twice a month, with additional services for special occasions in the church's year. A choir was reformed during the time of the last Rector, when services were held every Sunday, but it then transferred to Cotterstock when the Tansor organists, members of the Rector's family, left the village.

## **THE SCHOOL**

In 1866 the Charity gave land to the Church for a Church School. It was, like so many small villages schools, closed as pupil numbers reduced and this happened in Tansor in 1970. It is ironic that the number of young children in the village now is greater than for some long time, however, the building, which belongs to the Diocese, is used for a flourishing Play School, formed in 1971, and is attended by children from a number of nearby villages. The building is leased to the Play School but if, for any reason, it ceased to function the property is likely to be sold and another amenity will be lost to the village. The building is used as a polling station and for the Annual Parish Meeting.

## **PARISH ROOM**

The Parish Room stood just on the A605 side of the railway bridge before reaching the grounds of the Rectory (now The Lindens). This room was used for parish functions but was said to have a crack in it and was pulled down in the late 1960's.

## **OUNCLE SCHOOL BOATHOUSE**

In 1906, the Diocese sold a piece of land to Oundle School for a boathouse and with river frontage. Residents of the village, who had been used to going to the river to bathe and fish, protested at losing these facilities and Oundle School agreed they should continue. Up until 1984 a notice board was exhibited confirming the right of Tansor Residents to enter the boathouse grounds. Although this board has disappeared, and the School has been asked to replace it, residents should know that they may still go through the gate and down the steps to the river bank. In past years the river was not polluted as it is today, when swimming cannot be recommended.

## **TRADE AND ACTIVITIES**

There are people still living in Tansor today who have known two public houses in the village, The White Horse and The Black Horse. Both, now, are private residences. There were two bakehouses, one at the rear of The Old Post Office, where bake ovens can still be seen. In the last century this baker kept The White Horse. Milling was carried out at the windmill, still standing but without sails or any other working parts. Another bakehouse stood against Elm House, also in Main Street. A blacksmith's forge was situated at the thatched cottage next to Greystones and Tansor had a Post Office, originally at Church Cottage and then,

across the road at the house now known as The Old Post Office. A carpenter's shop and brew house have also been mentioned as purposes to which the garage at Jasmine Cottage has been put.

It is understood that Tansor had a cricket field on the right hand side of the road at its junction with the A605. Garden Fetes and Harvest Suppers were annual events.

### **PARISH MEETING**

Tansor does not have a Council, just a Parish Meeting. The present Minute Book starts in 1894, earlier minutes appear to have been lost but, according to other records, every year the Parish Meeting elected a Village Constable and two Overseers of the Poor. No Parish Rate is levied.

### **MODERN DEVELOPMENT**

Building has taken place with four houses built by the Council at Bridgeside, all now purchased by their tenants. Nine more houses were built running from Bridgeside towards the Church. On the other side of the road there are two more on the site of the allotments, two more on the Church side of the bridge and 'new' Poplars Farm has been built next to The Cedars, previously Poplars Farm. Along by the river there is one further modern home. Latterly there has been much alteration and upgrading of older properties.

Since 1974 there has been a rapid turnover of the inhabitants. Of around 50 houses in the village only one third are occupied now by the same residents, this includes properties which lie outside the village envelope, as several do - three at Tansor Wold; Tansor Lodge and Tansor Lodge Cottage; Crossing Cottage, and Tansor Grange,

Under the County Structure Plan, Tansor is not to be allowed any development and there is no chance of, for instance, main drainage in the near future. There may, however, be exceptions allowed but building activity will not be great.

### **AMENITIES**

The village has a slightly improved but still infrequent bus service, no street lighting and no speed limit.

Tansor Gravel Pit is nearing exhaustion and under the County Plan it is scheduled for fishing.

The usable rights of way are almost nil. There is a footpath from the Crossing Cottage over the old railway line to the A605 but the writer believes this to be unused. There is a Carriage Road which crosses the lane leading up to Tansor Wold, on the left it goes through to Warmington and, on the right, to Ashton Village past the Oundle School Rifle Range. The remaining right of way is at the top of Tansor Wold and this is a bridleway, starting opposite the turning to Elton and going through the Ashton Estate woods to the Polebrook to Oundle road.

The County Library sends a Library van to the village once a fortnight and there are a number of tradesmen who do call.

### **FURTHER DOCUMENTS**

The writer, who is Clerk to the Parish Meeting, has enquired of the Record Office at Delapre Abbey, Northampton, and has been told there is deposited a mass of documents, photographs and information regarding Tansor. Copies of two Manorial Rolls of Tansor (in Latin) have been supplied. These are being transcribed. Also received was information about Tansor Common. Church Minute books and other historical items related to the Church are in the possession of the Parochial Church Council.

In conclusion, the writer wishes to say that he hopes these notes, which are bound to omit much and may include unintentional errors, will prove of interest and may be a guide to anyone wishing to research further into the history of Tansor.