

The Landowners Of Moorden

Moorden Farm is located within the parishes of Leigh, Penshurst & Chiddingstone on the B2176. Before Moorden was named as such it lay within a great forest called Andreaswald, known today as the Weald. Mesolithic hunters & then later, Iron Age people used the forest making track ways within it.



These trackways & roads were followed by the Jutes, a group of Germanic people that arrived in Kent towards the end of the 5th century. They used the forest & named the features they found within it. They created dens, areas about half a mile square for grazing pigs Moorden was in all probability one of these dens.

It is likely that by late Saxon times, Moorden would have been claimed as part of a Royal Manor or another great noble's manor, possibly the Manor of Otford, which was given to the Archbishop of Canterbury by the Saxon King of Mercia, Ceowulf.

During Norman times, Moorden would most likely have been included in the ownership disputes between the Clares of Tonbridge & Archbishop Stigand that resulted in the perambulations of the Lowy of Tonbridge in 1258 & subsequently 1279. This was because of its location on the western boundary of Leigh parish; it's valuable worth from grazing & timber meant it's ownership was worth fighting for.

From 1272 onwards, perhaps not owners, but references to specific individuals from Moorden start to appear. These include 'Geoffrey de Mordenne' who is a witness on various local property deeds, often alongside 'Ralph & William de Mordenne'. By 1403 a Thomas 'Mordenne', is recorded, but little is known about any of these individuals.

It is not until the next century that we start to learn, not much, but a little more about the individuals that own Moorden. In several cases however it still remains unclear how Moorden was passed from one individual to the next.

THOMAS PIGGOTT (PIGOT)

In 1514 records show a Thomas Piggott, citizen & goldsmith of London was seized of Moorden due to bad debts. Moorden was described as:

'a messuage, called Mordens, and 184 acres of land, 35 acres of meadow, 41 acres of pasture, and 13 acres of woodland in Ligh next to Tunbridge, Penshurst, and Chiddingstone (in Somerden Hundred) in Kent, worth £7 a year after expenses'

Even after this, the area was still sometimes referred to as Pigots.

WILLIAM REED (REDE)

It is likely Moorden was passed to one of Thomas Piggott's creditors, William Reed. He was a goldsmith & citizen of London.

RICHARD CARYLL (CARILL) (1506-1576)

By 1574 Moorden was the dwelling place of Richard Caryll, mercer of London & his wife Clemence, whose family; the Bartletts, also had land in Leigh.

The Caryll's main residence was in Broad Street, St. Martins, Outwich, London. Richard also inherited Great Tangley Manor in Wonsarsh, Surrey, but it was his son John who lived there, making considerable alterations in 1582 to improve it's status as a manor houses.

On Richard's death Moorden was most likely sold to it's next owner, Christopher Willoughby who had been left land in the surrounding area by his Fathers.

CHRISTOPHER WILLOUGHBY (1513-1586)

In 1579 the churchwardens of Leigh made an inventory of all the landowners in the parish that needed to contribute to the upkeep of the church boundary. Individual's contributions were based on the size of each of their holdings so the larger the holding the more they would contribute. Christopher Willoughby is listed as Moorden's owner & it's acreage equated to the upkeep of 28 feet of the church boundary.

'Christopher Willoby gent. for his tentes and landes called Morden sometymes Pigots and for Fueskes next him in length XXVIII footes'

Christopher was the second son of Sir Thomas Willoughby & Bridget Rede of Boreplace in Chiddingstone. He married Margaret Tottishursts.

JOHN CATCHER I

By 1585 Moorden had been inherited by John Catcher & his wife Ellens. They lived within the Broad Street ward in London, one of the twenty five ancient wards of the city. John was a pewterer, serving as master of his Company in 1585, & was pewterer to the Crown from around 1586 until his deaths.

That same year John issues a bill to the tenants at Moorden, John and George Stage for dumping waste in the woods there.

On his death John Catcher leaves Moorden to his wife Ellen¹⁰ who in turn leaves it to their son John.

SIR JOHN CATCHER II (1568 -1638)

John Catcher II never joined his father's Company, as he was probably intended to make the transition to country gentleman. His father's will described him as *'already advanced'*. In addition to London properties, he also had an estate at Binfield, where he was living by 1600.

After a term as sheriff of London in 1587-8 he became a City alderman, but by 1621 he was in financial difficulties & trying to raise funds by selling off property in London and Kent & taking out loans. Sadly this was to no avail because by mid 1622 he was in King's Bench prison for debts.

Records show by 1623 Moorden was in the hands of John's brother in law William Swayne who was in dispute with him over the property¹¹.

Catcher was still in prison in 1624 & when he was released he continued to try a regain financial security, unsuccessfully, right up until his deaths.

WILLIAM SWAYNE (1581-unknown)

By 1637 William Swayne & his wife Anne lived at Moorden, perhaps taking it just as a country residence because they had strong links with London too. William had come from a family of skinner's & his uncle, also William, had been a prominent figure within the Middlesex area, as an alderman & MP of Hackney¹³.

In 1632 William & Anne's daughter Bridget had married Henry Monger¹⁴, a master draper's son also from the Middlesex areas. The date is carved into the wainscoting above the fireplace in the drawing room in the Farmhouse at Moorden, along with the initials W A S & H B M denoting William & Anne Swayne, Henry & Bridget Monger.

Moorden was eventually passed to Richard Saltonstall who was a descendant of Bridget Monger.

RICHARD SALTONSTALL IV (1634 - 1688)



Richard Saltonstall IV of Chipping Warden, Northamptonshire is the eldest child seen in David des Granges' painting above. He is featured in this posthumous image with his father & deceased mother along with his father's second wife & child.

The Saltonstalls family were Master Skinners, international merchants & wealthy landowners originating from Yorkshire & South Ockenden in Essex. The red hangings surrounding the bed in the depiction above are a sign of wealth & high status¹⁶.

Richard's Great Grandfather Sir Richard had been mayor of London in 1597¹⁷ & his Great Uncle, also Sir Richard, was the colonist who led a group of Englishmen up the Charles River to settle in what is now Watertown, Massachusetts & become the founder of the Massachusetts Saltonstalls of later fame & fortune¹⁸.

The family seat of the Manor of Chipping Warden had been bought in 1569 by Richard's Grandfather.

RICHARD SALTONSTALL V (1664 - 1688)



Richard Saltonstall VI inherited Moorden from his father in 1688, but died that same year. He had married Silence Parkhurst, but she died the following year & in turn Moorden was left to their young daughter Ricarda with the rest of her parent's estates¹⁹.

RICARDA SALTONSTALL (1689 - 1711)



The family's seat was Horton House, Horton, Northamptonshire, which was in the vicinity of the Saltonstall's seat the Manor of Chipping Warden.

After just 5 years of marriage Ricarda died at the age of 22 leaving the Saltonstall family estates including Moorden to an only surviving daughter & heiress, Lucy²¹.

They had two children including British Prime Minister Frederick North.

LUCY MONTAGUE (1709 - 1734)



Lady Lucy Montague, depicted above by John Vanderbank, was born in Yorkshire in 1709.

She married Sir Francis North, on the 16th June, 1728 & in so doing, she became Baroness Guilford²².

They had two children including British Prime Minister Frederick North.

Like her mother Lucy died young at the age of 25 leaving her estate to her husband.

1734 1ST EARL OF GUILFORD (1704 -1790)



On his wife Lucy's death Lord Guilford inherited much of the land & property she had inherited from her mother, including Moorden. This was however promptly sold off in the same year by Lord Guilford²⁴, perhaps as it was a distance from his main estates in Oxfordshire.