



The Friends of Markenfield

(Parish, Park and Hall) Limited Issue 17. Christmas 2019

Message from the Chairman

By the time you read this it will be nearly Christmas, and the end of another year.

Christmas at Markenfield, held on Monday 9 December, was organised by The Friends in aid of the Venice in Peril fund; in memory of our late President, John Julius Norwich, who was the fund's first chairman.

Our other events this year have all been well attended, and have also raised a profit which will be used to support the Hall. The events programme for next year is included in this mailing, and we hope you will enjoy the talks we have arranged. We thought a Study Day would be an interesting addition to our programme, and have arranged for Dr Cristina Figueredo, who spoke earlier this year on the Bayeux Tapestry, to lead it. A light lunch will be provided. As we are restricting this to a maximum of 25 people, please book early to avoid disappointment (see the events flyer for details).



Coach Turning

This year, the bulk of The Friends' financial contribution to work at the Hall has funded the coach turning area to the south of the farm buildings. In 2019 more than 50 groups came to the Hall, and over the years their coaches have been getting bigger - meaning that the space to manoeuvre was getting tighter. After consulting a number of the drivers, the decision was made to remove a section of the drive-side wall - allowing each coach to push out further, so ensuring that the rear end will not be so perilously close to the farm buildings.

As you can imagine - being Markenfield - this wasn't a straight forward process. First of all Historic England had to be consulted. They agreed in principle, and so the application for Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent was submitted. This went to the Secretary of State, and so took a while. Once we had the Consent we needed Planning Permission. Once we had that we needed to agree a Schedule of Works. Once we had done that, we could finally start work - which Giles and Rob did, only to discover that our 'historic fabric' was made up of modern concrete, rubble in-fill and (most memorably) half a dozen house bricks!



The Consent stated that the wall had to be rebuilt as it was - using the same historic stone and lime mortar (ahem...) - beyond the line of the new fence; but as you can see, its removal has opened up the historic vista towards the horizon - and the Black Walnut tree planted by The Friends last year. We feel another application coming on...

Archive & Research Group

The work of the A&R group continues apace, and this year it resulted in an exhibition on the life of 6th Lord Grantley. Those who have read our publication *The Silver Teaspoon* will know him as an exuberant raconteur, and perhaps the purveyor of a tall tale or two. The exhibition cast him in a new light however - yes he was involved in the burgeoning film industry, and yes his social life was prodigious (as was his ability

to lose money); but by making public the letters he wrote to his sister during WWII, it showed a more human and more relatable side to his character and may well explain why he felt he had to live his life in the fast lane.

Markenfields of Markenfield Hall

Janet Senior quite literally wrote the book about Markenfield Hall - first published in 2009, hers is the book on the Markenfield family. What has constantly puzzled her however, is where the family came from in the first instance. Janet takes up the story:

“When I began research into the Markenfield family I relied on works from respected C19th historians. Over subsequent years I have carried out my own research into the family’s origins and believe I have at last made a break through.

“Whilst visiting family in Rayleigh Essex, I noticed the name of the eldest child’s school: Fitzwimarc. This immediately rang bells, as the first name on the Markenfield family tree is Wimarc. After a morning of research at the Rayleigh Town Museum, I am convinced that there is a connection - and that the origins of the Markenfield family are within reach.

“C19th research saw the Markenfield family tree thus (right). By way of background: Edward the Confessor, son of Aethelred the Unready and Edith of Normandy, was born around 1004 AD into a troubled kingdom. In 1013 Emma and Edward were forced to flee to Normandy when the throne was seized by Sweyn the Forkbeard and later his son Cnut.

Wimarc the Steward
|
Roger the Steward
|
3 x Le Bret
de Markenfield

“Emma was a daughter of Richard I of Normandy, and aunt of Robert I who was the father of William the Conqueror. It is through this marriage that William felt entitled to the throne when his “cousin” Edward the Confessor died. Sometime In 1017, after Aethelred’s death, Emma married Cnut who was now King of England. Cnut began to rid himself of English claimants to the throne, so Edward stayed in Normandy with Robert I and it wasn’t until 1042 that he became King of England.

William de Markenfield
|
John de Markenfield

“At Robert’s court Edward met a Breton, from Wiomarch, called Robert Fitzwimarc who is thought to have been a distant relation of Emma and Robert I. Edward recognised Fitzwimarc’s abilities and the Breton was a vital member of the his household. Fitzwimarc was given vast lands in Essex where he began to build Rayleigh Castle, he was made sheriff and appointed the King’s Standard bearer. Fitzwimarc was one of the four councillors present at Edward the Confessor’s death and is shown on the Bayeux Tapestry. The following family tree is taken from National Trust guidebook on Rayleigh Castle.

Ansfrid = Wimarc

Using family ties Fitzwimarc tried to persuade William it would be pointless the Normans trying to invade England but to no avail.

Robert Fitzwimarc

However William did not bear a grudge and Fitzwimarc was the only pre-invasion landowner in Essex to retain his lands.

Swein Fitzwimarc

So what has all this to do with Markenfield Hall? Is it just a coincidence that the first name on the family tree is Wimarc? The answer appears to come in this sentence by W R Powell in “Essex in the Domesday Book” 1990:

Robert Fitzswain

“The Essex estate of Count Alan of Britany was part of the Honour or Lordship of Richmond in Yorkshire.”

“I believe that the Wimarc, steward of Richmond Castle, who first owned Markenfield, was a relation of Robert Fitzwimarc of Essex and came to England with Count Alan. Interestingly, if Robert Fitzwimarc was in some way related to Edward the Confessor and William Conqueror then the Markenfield Wimarc would also have had high born connections.