

TIMELINE FOR TORPEL MANOR FIELD

3000 years ago Stone Age people were living in the Welland Valley

A Neolithic arrowhead was found in the field north of Torpel. Aerial photographs and excavations at Maxey, Northborough and Etton provide evidence of pre-historic field boundaries, settlements, religious and burial sites.

AD 43 The Romans began their conquest of Britain

The road alongside Torpel Manor Field, now known as King Street, was built by the Romans to link Durobrivae near Castor with Ancaster and on to Lincoln. Roman pottery found close to the road suggests that there may have been a staging post on the dry land at Torpel ahead of the crossing of the River Welland.

5th century Arrival of the Saxons from North Germany

The names of all the local villages - Helpston, Ashton, Bainton, Barnack, Ufford, perhaps also Torpel - were Saxon in origin.

787 Arrival of the Danes

They sailed up the rivers, burning down villages and stealing cattle. They settled mainly north of the River Welland. Alfred defeated the Danes and his successors reclaimed most of the country to bring in under Saxon rule.

1066 The Norman Conquest

England was ruled by King William 1. Most of the land was taken from the previous owners and all taxes had to be paid to the new king. His first task was to prevent Danish attacks and bring an end to Saxon opposition to Norman rule. Peterborough Abbey was a key part of his new defence system.

1070 Tuold, a Norman soldier was made abbot of Peterborough Abbey

The Abbey had to provide the king with 60 armed knights when he needed them and in return they were given some land.

Roger Infans, another Norman soldier, was one of the largest land holders in the Soke of Peterborough and had to provide 6 knights.

Roger's land was scattered across 14 villages between Helpston and Oundle. He took the title Roger de Torpel, which was where he built a wooden tower on a mound and surrounded by a ditch.

Five generations of the Torpel family lived at the manor, four of the lords being called Roger. It was inherited by Robert de Torpel about 1130 but he had leprosy and had to hand the manor to his brother, another Roger.

1198 Roger de Torpel created a deer park for himself and his heirs

He had to pay 100 shillings into the Exchequer for the right to enclose some of his woods. By the 14th century the deer park extended as far east as the walls of Torpel Field and King Street. The deer park survived for 350 years.

1242 Death of William, the last of the Torpels, without a male heir

William's sister, Ascelina, inherited the manor. She was married to Ralph Camoys, who became the next lord of Torpel manor.

1259 Ralph Camoys died and was succeeded by his son, also called Ralph

In 1264 he was granted the right to hold a weekly market and an annual three-day fair at Torpel. He also re-stocked the deer park.

In 1276 there was the first reference to a "capital messuage" (main residence). This was a manor house made of locally dug Lincolnshire Limestone with a roof of local stone slate, and with plastered walls and wooden floors inside. **THIS TIME PERIOD WAS THE HEIGHT OF TORPEL MANOR'S PROSPERITY**

1277 Ralph died and was succeeded by his son, John, as lord of Torpel

1280 John was in debt and Torpel was returned to the king, Edward 1.

His Queen, Eleanor, held it until her death in 1290. She loved hunting and may have stayed at the Lodge, a stone tower in the deer park, built at about this time.

1290 Torpel was rented by Peterborough Abbey until the accession of King Edward 11 in 1307

1309 Edward 11 made a gift of Torpel to his favourite companion Peter (Piers) Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, and a controversial character at court.

1320 After Gaveston's death, Edward 11 gave Torpel to his half brother Edmund of Woodstock as a reward for loyal service.

1348-9 The Black Death reached Northamptonshire; a quarter to a third of the population died.

1400-1687 Torpel Manor had many famous owners, all absentee landlords.

They included: Margaret, mother of Henry V11

King Richard 111

Henry V111

Henry, Earl of Richmond

King Edward V1

Queen Elizabeth 1

James 1

Charles 1

They all received rents from tenants. Meanwhile the Manor buildings became derelict. A contemporary wrote "The manor house built of stone and slate is much decayed and almost ruins. There is also a stable and a stone and wooden barn with a thatched roof, which is out of repair". Some of the stone was taken away and used in buildings in Ashton and Helpston.

1687 Torpel Manor land in Ufford, including the former deer park were bought by Sir Thomas Trollope of Casewick near Uffington

Torpel Manor Field with its ruined buildings and its banks and ditches, surrounded by the wall of the former deer park appears to have been used for grazing animals.

1799 Ufford is subjected to Enclosure

Torpel Field was called Barn Close on the Ufford Enclosure Map. A few years later John Clare called it Baron`s Park. He refers to "several ruins of roman and saxon castles". His dating was not quite right but the ruins were still visible.

1979 Torpel Manor Field was designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument

2009 It was acquired by the Langdyke Countryside Trust