Extenta Manerii de Veteri Stratford;
facta anno quinto-decimo pontificatus Domini Walteri de Cantilupo

A Survey of the Manors of Old Stratford;
Made in the fifteenth year of the rule of Lord Bishop Walter de Cantilupe

Notes

The Diocese of Worcester, founded in 679–680, bore the title *Episcopus Hwicciorum*. Its boundaries were those of the ancient Kingdom of the Hwicce, which included Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, western Oxfordshire and south-western Warwickshire. The boundary in Warwickshire with the neighbouring Kingdom of Mercia followed approximately the road from Warmington through Warwick to Solihull. Everything to the west of that line, including Stratford-on-Avon, was within the diocese.

Walter de Cantilupe was Bishop of Worcester from 1236 to 1266 and was widely respected as an ecclesiastical reformer. He is remembered in Stratford for obtaining from the king, Henry III, in 1239 permission to hold an annual fair on the eve and feast of the Exaltation of the Cross and the two following days (13–16 September). The Bishop was not only governor of the church but also Lord of the Manor.

The survey of manors and burgages, carried out in the years 1251–1252, contains:

- Details of the Bishop's demesne lands, including arable (about 220 acres), meadows, woodland, pasture, mills and fisheries.
- Lists of various classes of tenants, including those holding by knight service, free tenants, customary tenants and cottars (peasant farmers).
- District sub-headings for Shottery and Welcombe, as well as Lapworth, documenting forest clearances.

In the 19th century a copy of the original manuscript (now lost) came into the possession of the prolific collector Sir Thomas Phillipps. He privately printed the Latin transcript at his Middle Hill Press in Broadway, pages 1-4 in 1847 and pages 5-8 in 1852 (catalogue reference Holzenberg 293). It is a rare document and a valuable source of historical information.

For context, at the time of the survey the new town of Stratford-on-Avon was developing along the street plan specified in 1196 by Bishop John de Coutances, who had obtained from Richard I the grant of a weekly market and laid out burgages (building plots). The survey shows that by 1252 there were about 240 burgage or half-burgage tenements in the borough, mostly held at the annual rent of 12d. If each building held one family, this implies a town population of around 1,200. The new town lay outside the manorial land of Old Stratford, where the manor house, church and mill were located.

Each burgage plot typically measured 50 feet wide by 200 feet deep. In many cases the plot was divided into two, each with a frontage of 25 feet. Houses were built flush against the street edge and for artisans and tradesmen the front room functioned as a shop or workshop. Builders typically laid low walls of local Lias limestone on which rested the timber frame of oak or elm. Construction used a box-frame method, with vertical wall posts supporting horizontal tie-beams and roof trusses. Spaces between the timbers were filled with woven hazel plastered with clay-and-straw ('wattle and daub') then sealed with white or cream limewash. Most houses consisted of single-story open halls, thatched with thick straw or river-reed. Behind the front shop was the main living space, open up to the roof rafters. A fire on a central stone or

tile hearth heated the room, with smoke venting through the thatch. Wealthier merchants along High Street and Bridge Street were already building two-story structures, in some cases roofed with clay tiles.

By 1210 Holy Trinity church had already been rebuilt in stone in Norman style, having a nave (without side aisles), transepts, a low tower and rounded apse. As the new town grew, the Guild of the Holy Cross was steadily gathering members and influence in the town's affairs. In 1269 it was granted a license by Bishop Cantilupe's successor, Godfrey Giffard, to build an oratory and to establish a hospital for the care of needy members which later became the Guild Chapel. The Manor house was most likely on Avon Bank, near to the river and the church.

Lindsay MacDonald
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