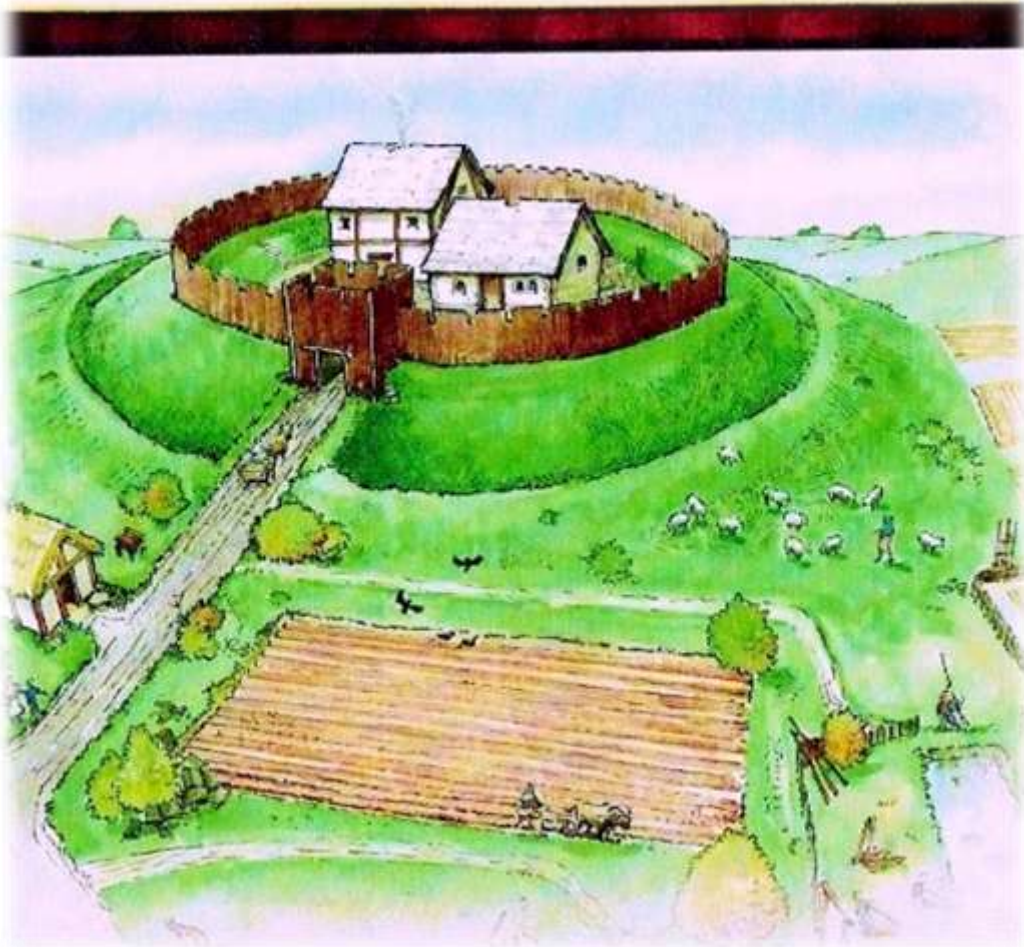


History in our Parish



History in all its forms has never been more popular or as well presented as it is today. Whether you visit National Trust or English Heritage properties, or read and watch excellent presentations on television, or even look up your ancestry you are taking part in the thirst for history.

This year is 800 years since Magna Carta, the first small step in the road to the freedoms and liberties which we now all too much take for granted.

After briefly watching the new interment of Richard III and following the carpark to Cathedral revelations of his life and death, not forgetting the recent television adaptation of Wolf Hall, I started to think of more prosaic history nearer to home. Whether you think history is made up of the good, bad or great the second, third and fourth tier of participants all play their part.

I am fortunate to be life tenant of Jordan Castle and because we all tend to disregard what is to hand, I thought it might be of interest to tell of what is known of this small part of our local history.

The name Jordan Castle has only been documented since 1826 but this farm was built around 1796 so the name was probably colloquially used before that date. But what was "Jordan Castle" and who was it named after?

When the archaeological department at Notts County Council did a geophysical survey here in 2005 they were almost certain that Saxon remains were on the site. It is after all, a

prominent position. But there is little or no documentation of its existence until the Domesday reference of the village of Grimston.

Grimston was either side of the present A616 between Wellow and Ompton probably both sides of the hill. What became known as Jordan Castle was the manor house of the Lord of Grimston. I am indebted to David Crook a retired archivist from Leicester for the research he did into the family who came to give Jordan Castle its heyday.

Jordan Foliot inherited the Grimston estate in 1225. He already had two manors in South Yorkshire but immediately spent much time at Grimston. Jordan Foliot was the third of that name and he was a knight who did military service for King John and indeed was a Yorkshire Commissioner for him in 1213. He was paid by the king and provided horses and other men for this service. It is not known which side he took in 1215 in the dispute with the king that led to Magna Carta, but it is likely that he followed John de Lacy, his Lord (and the owner of the neighbouring estate at Kneesall) in supporting the barons.

After King John's death in 1216 (at Newark) the crown passed to his son Henry III who was nine. The new king did not assume royal control until 1227 by which time Jordan Foliot had inherited Grimston. This happened at the same time as the Charter of the Forest, which in effect meant what we now know of as Sherwood Forest, was no longer a royal forest.

Jordan must have kept close royal ties because in 1227 Henry III stayed with him here in November and again the following January. He could have stayed at Laxton (far grander, which his father did several times) or at Clipstone. This was not available because the agent commissioned by the King had not completed the renovations. Nothing changes; government contracts are invariably late and above budget!

The king must have been satisfied with his welcome because he granted Jordan a stay on Jewish debts he had at that time. Furthermore when the king stayed again in January 1229 he granted Jordan a buck and eight fallow does to stock his newly created Grimston Forest (Wellow Wood). You can of course still see the deer park around the wood. (No JCBs all hand work!) By now Jordan Foliot and his family spent a good deal of their time at Grimston.

Jordan died in 1236 but his son Richard was not of majority but Jordan must have remained well connected because the king granted him the right to ownership and Lord of Grimston. By 1250 Richard was Lord of the manor of Wellow too and in 1252 took up the right to have free warren here. This meant he could take rabbit, hares etc. This was a money raising device of Henry III. In effect no different from the present chancellor selling off Lloyds bank shares to balance the books!

By now Richard Foliot was a knight in the King's service probably from 1247 to 1260. But at this point Foliot took up the cause of the rebel barons led by Simon de Montford. By 1263 he was back on the King's side, however. In fact he was granted 6 bucks and 4 does to stock Grimston Park but of greater importance the King granted Richard a licence to fortify and crenellate his manor house in February and March 1264. This was to keep out local thieves but more especially his former allies at Bothamsall Castle (another motte and bailey castle like Egmanton and Laxton) and at Caunton.

It was at this point that the stone structures to replace the timber ones were put in place. These were still visible during the survey of 2005.

Richard fought with the King at the battle of Eversham in 1265 when the rebels were defeated. Richard was further rewarded with payment for services and the grant of a market and fair in Wellow. The fair was around St. Swithins Day in July. Richard continued in the

service of Edward I after Henry's death and continued to receive deer as payment. He must have been very well connected and a man of great influence not just in Nottinghamshire, but in South Yorkshire with his two other estates. He died in 1299 having held the estate since 1236. His son (another Jordan) only held the estate briefly. He was over 50 when he inherited having been also a knight of the realm. He had many debts having spent heavily on military duties. He died five weeks after his father.

So there were many Foliots (several before these mentioned) alternating between Richard and Jordan. They were both exceptionally politically aware. But the Jordan who worked for King John and Henry III was the prominent Jordan who almost certainly gave his name to Jordan Castle.

So although there have been a few brief royal visits in the last few hundred years here, it is nearly 800 years since one stayed here for several nights.

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