



Abinger Manor

From the Abinger & Coldharbour Parish News 1998

After the Norman Conquest the manors of Abinger and Paddington were held by William Fitz-Ansculf, a baron whose seat was Dudley Castle. He held many manors throughout the country, at least five others in Surrey, in the Croydon area. It was he, or his son, who built the motte and bailey on the Manor House site, and built the Norman parts of the Church. There are no records of a Norman church in Paddington, and no records of an earlier Anglo-Saxon church or chapel, therefore there was probably no separate parish, and later, when the manors were separated, the Rectors were usually appointed alternately by the Lords of the two manors.

The manor of Paddington was twice forfeited to the Crown for misdemeanors of the holder, and was divided into two, Paddington Pembroke, and Paddington Bray. It was almost depopulated by the Black Death.

When the Evelyn family came to Wotton they held the Manor of Wotton, and later acquired the manors of Abinger in 1595, Paddington Bray in 1624, and Paddington Pembroke in 1629. Since 1685 the Evelyns have been sole patrons of the parish, until the union of Abinger with Coldharbour, when alternate patronage was renewed.

In 1904, Mr J H C Evelyn beat the bounds of Paddington Pembroke. Many of his landmarks - a damson tree, gatepost, large rock by the stream, are no longer recognisable, but the rough outline of the manor can be identified.

Mr John Gibbs, who wrote the history of Abinger Church, believed that the western boundary of Abinger Parish, i.e. Between Abinger and Shere, (also the western boundary of the Hundred of Wotton) was the ancient boundary between the Kingdom of Kent and the Kingdom of Wessex, but does not give his reasons.

Abinger parish is said to be the longest in the country - twelve miles from Dunley Hill on the top of the Downs to the Sussex county border. There is only one record of the Beating of the Bounds - this took two days. How about a sponsored twenty five mile walk on Rogation Sunday (mid May)? Rogation Days used to be called Gang Days, from the custom of ganging round the country parishes to beat the bounds at this time. Similarly the weed milkwort is called Rogation or Gang/lower from the custom of decorating the pole carried on such occasions with these flowers.

Terence O'Kelly from Abinger & Coldharbour Parish News, March 1998