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## Hartshorne Manor

### The descent of the manor

The early history of Hartshorne is obscure. By 1066 there were already two long established manors of Hartshorne, both held by Alvríc or Aluric. The first assessed in the geld at four carucates had enough arable land cleared to support four ploughs, and was worth £4. The second "in another Hartshorne" assessed at two carucates, had arable for two ploughs, and was worth £2. Now the geld was a fossilised tax assessment of the late ninth or early tenth century, and a carucate was as much land as could be tilled in a normal year by a plough team of eight oxen, usually reckoned about 120 acres. So the two Hartshorne settlements were of some age and had grown little if at all since the geld assessment.

Domesday in 1086 records the manors as waste, a clear indication that their lord and his men had joined the Saxon resistance to the Norman conquerors in or soon after 1066, and that their homes and fields had been laid waste in reprisal. Recolonisation after the Norman harrying had already started in some areas by 1086, but not in the two Hartshornes. They were still waste, worth only 10s. each, and held by Henry de Ferrers as part of his barony.

The location of the larger manor "in Hartshorne" and the smaller manor "in another Hartshorne" is not readily identifiable. The larger is almost certainly the settlement which was the later church village in which lies Upperhall or the house now called Hartshorne Manor. The smaller could have been either Nethertown where Netherhall lies or that detached part of Hartshorne lying between Smisby and the Ashby/Ticknall road which was incorporated in Smisby in 1883. The probable explanation of this detached part is that the men of the Mercian or pre-Danish village of Hartshorne pastured the woods south of Hartshorne to the edge of Ashby Wolds, and may well have worked iron on the later Smisby site. The Danish invaders who settled the district after the division of the kingdom of Mercia in 878 would not want an iron working site so near the border of their newly conquered territory to remain in hostile hands, and themselves planted Smisby, the smith's farm, on the southern edge of those woods, cutting across in all likelihood between the main village of Hartshorne and a tiny daughter settlement, the later detached part of Hartshorne. The phrase "in another Hartshorne" seems a strange description for a settlement as near the mother settlement as Nethertown.

The main village must have been re-settled and its lands reclaimed within a couple of generations of Domesday. About the same time the holder of the Ferrers family must have granted the manor to one of his followers as mesne lord to hold by knight service. This sub-infeudation must have been within a couple of generations of Domesday because before 1160 at the latest there had been at least three generations of mesne lords of Hartshorne. No baronial overlord would have enfeoffed a woman to hold by knight service, yet Henry de Hertishorn, son of the Lady Agnes de Hertishorn, gave the canons of Calke three acres of his arable land at Hertishorn. This gift was made before the new priory of Repton at its foundation absorbed its mother foundation of Calke. This foundation is dated by Dom David Knowles between 1153 and 1160 at the latest. The grant of mesne lordship of Hartshorne must have been made to the father or grandfather of Lady Agnes, pushing the grant and therefore the reclamation of the manor back to probably the early twelfth if not the late eleventh century.

The lords of Hartshorne must have regularly lacked male heirs and lands and rights been divided between co-heiresses. According to J C Cox the Testa de Neville in the reign of Henry III, 1216-1272, records Henry de Hartshorn and Richard de Hartshorn each holding half a knights fee in Hartshorne under Robert de Ferrers. The advowson which should originally have been appurtenant to the manor had been split off before 1317 and was held separately by Robert de la Ward of Roxton, Lincolnshire, at the time of his death in that year. Joan, his daughter and heiress,

inherited as well as the advowson of Hartshorne the manors of Newhall, Stanton Ward and Heathcote Woodall in the neighbouring parish of Stapenhill. She took them in marriage to the Meynell family whose heiress in turn took them to the Dethick family who held Newhall and the advowson until the early seventeenth century. There were then several failures of the male line and the advowson was split, probably in the late seventeenth century, between four co-heiresses whose heirs took it in turn to present to the living. Two of these turns were bought by the Earl of Chesterfield, a purchase which later resulted in much litigation.

The advowson therefore can be discounted as a guide to the descent of the manor or part manor. In 1317 Theobald de Verdon, a great magnate with lands scattered through England, died, possessed according to his inquisition post mortem of a knight's fee at Hartshorne and half a fee at Newhall. How he came by these, whether by marriage, inheritance or purchase is not known, nor is it known what happened to them after his death. At some time after Verdon's death the manor of Hartshorne was again divided into two manors, the manors of Upper Hall and Netherhall, each forming part of different baronies. By 1504 the two manors were held by John Ireland, Netherhall from the Earl of Shrewsbury and Upper Hall from William Abell. John's co-heirs were the three children of his two sisters, Thomas Mollet, and Margaret and Johanna Sayer. It is not known how the co-heirs divided John's property but it is likely that John was the last man to hold the two new manors of Upper Hall and Nether Hall together.

After John's death the ownership of the manor of Upper Hall is untraced until 1712 when it was in the hands of John Cantrell the elder of Hartshorne, gentleman. John Cantrell wanted to provide a portion of £1000 for his younger son Robert Cantrell, formerly of the City of London but then of Hartshorne, a haberdasher of hats. With the consent of his elder son, John Cantrell, late of Hartshorne and then of Cirencester, gentleman, John Cantrell the elder and his trustees leased to Robert Cantrell and his trustees for 500 years the manor of Hartshorne with its appurtenances including the Upper Hall manor house or capital messuage with the backside called the Barley Orchard or Chirry Orchard in two parts divided in the tenure of John Cantrell the elder of his assigns, ten cottages in named tenures, and the inclosures or enclosed grounds of arable land, meadow or pasture called the Wheat Flatt meadow, Wheat Flatt Top Broad Meadow, Pool Bottom, Elbow Wood, the meadow at Carbrooke in Hornsfield with the Ley Baulke and part of the pool, the Dovehouse field, the close at Middlepool head, the Baulkes on the outside Dovehouse field, Middle Flatt and Overflatts, the Middle Flatts, Over Flatts and Lane, and part of the Horne Hill and the Horne Hill Spring, and the Riddings Close now divided into two parts, all now in the several tenures of John Cantrell the elder and Nicholas How, with all buildings, outhouses, tofts, crofts, ways, streams, fishing, mines, quarries and various recited manorial rights and dues. John Cantrell the elder was to hold the manor and land until his death without impeachment of waste. It was then to pass to Robert Cantrell and his trustees for the remainder of the term of 500 years unless John Cantrell the younger paid them £1000 within 6 months of his father's death. If the payment was made the lease was to be null and void. In other words it was simply a means of securing that the younger son received his portion of £1000.

John Cantrell the elder was still living in 1716 when he and his sons jointly mortgaged a cottage for £250. He and his elder son were living in Hartshorne, and his younger son at Thatcham in Berkshire. The date of the death of John Cantrell the elder is not known but John Cantrell the younger died in the winter of 1722/3. His will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on 24 April 1723, his executors having produced a probate inventory of his goods. This inventory may still survive in the Public Record Office and if it does will probably list his goods room by room. John Cantrell the younger left his lands to trustees to hold in trust to allow £30 yearly for the maintenance of his daughter Anne until she came of age or married, and then to pay her a portion of £1000. His son John Cantrell was to receive the remainder of the rents and profits not needed for these payments and

was to hold his father's lands in tail general with reversion in tail general to his sister Anne if he himself had no surviving children, with further reversion to his uncle Robert, the testator's younger brother. Reference was made in the will to the impending division and enclosure of the waste grounds and commons of the manor of Hartshorne which if properly handled should benefit the testator's heirs.

In 1726 John Cantrell and his father's executors mortgaged the manor of Hartshorne and lands there. Robert Cantrell received his £1000 and released his interests under the lease of 1712. On 15 February 1729/30 John Cantrell of Broughton, Leicestershire, gentleman, son of John Cantrell the younger, mortgaged to his brother-in-law, William Cant of Broughton, gentleman, his manor of Hartshorne with the Upper Hall manor house, lands, buildings and various rights as security for his sister's portion of £1000. The estate according to several county historians later passed into the hands of the Cant family but whether by foreclosure, inheritance or purchase is not known.

The ownership of the Upper Hall or as it is now known Hartshorne Manor is therefore not known for the period 1504 to 1712, the period in which the present house was built. It is however possible to trace its tenants for most of this period.

#### The occupancy of Upper Hall manor

In 1547/8 there was no landowner living in Hartshorne for the Repton and Gresley tax list for that year shows no one in Hartshorne assessed on land. There were however a number of prosperous farmers described as husbandmen and assessed on goods. These were headed by Ralph Benskyn, yeoman, assessed at £20 in goods, worth twice as much as his nearest rival, Robert Dakyn assessed at £10 in goods. A marginal annotation of £15 scribbled against Benskyn's name suggests a possible later emendation or appeal but even £15 for a tenant's goods indicates an unusually solidly prosperous man. The implication of so large an assessment is that Benskin was farming the desmesne lands of the manor, which would normally be much the largest holding in the village. This is clinched by the description of Benskyn as a yeoman. This is a term normally reserved for substantial landowners in the lower ranks of country gentry, and applied most sparingly to only the very largest tenants.

The surviving churchwardens accounts for Hartshorne begin in 1612, and the first church rate is dated 1619. John Benskin was again much the most heavily rated, paying 8s.10d. as opposed to the two next biggest James Royle paying 4s.4d. and Hugh Royle paying 4s. The Royles held the manor of Short Hazels, formerly a monastic grange, in the south of the parish. One man paid 2s.4d., another 2s.3d., 16 others between 1s. and 1s.10d. and 15 paid less than 1s. John Cantrell was rated at 1s.

In succeeding church rates John Benskin remained much the largest payer with the Royles the next biggest. In 1620 when the basis of the rate was a penny a beast for cattle and 4d. a score for sheep John Benskin was rated at 9s.4d. In 1627 Mr Benskin senior was valued at 10s.6d. in the May levy, 10s.5d. in the December one. Mr Royle, the runner up at 6s.8d. and 5s.6d., and this out of totals for the parish of £2.19s.3d., and 53s.2d. Mr Benskyn junior appeared tucked in his father's train rated at 5d. in the May levy and not at all in the December levy. Samuel Benskin also appeared well down the list in 1628 rated at 2d.

In 1629 under a rate by livings  $\overline{7}$  farms  $\overline{7}$  Mr Benskin was rated first at 16s. and then for his new house at 8s. Benskin junior did not appear, but Samuel Benskin well down the list was rated at 12s. One other person paid 12s. and no one else more than 9s.4d. Royle only paid 2s. John Cantrell, whose payments had been creeping up, paid 2s. Under that year's rate on beasts and sheep Mr Benskin paid £1.10s.1d., Royle 18s., one man 10s.8d. and no one else more than 7s.8d. Samuel Benskin paid 7s.2d. and John Cantrell 5s.6d. In 1630 John Benskin junior reappeared paying a few pence only. His father was still the heaviest payer at 8s.10d. with

Royle at 6s. and Samuel Benskin the next largest at 3s.2d. No one else paid more than 2s.11d. In 1635 the larger holdings were identified. John Benskin senior for the Upper hall paid 4s. on his living and 10s.4d. on his goods or beasts and sheep. Mr Thomas Royle paid 2s.6d. for the Short hazels, 3s. for his tenant's house at the Towne sometime Townes, and 4s.3d. for goods. Thomas Mellor paid 16d. for part of the tenements called Halls and Roes and John Benskin the younger 8d. for the residue of them. They paid jointly 16d. for goods. Samuel Benskin for the Neather Hall paid 3s. and a further 3s.3d. on his goods.

The entries for 1636 and 1637 are incomplete and there may be pages missing. Samuel Benskin and the Nethertown farmers appear but not the Short hazels or church town farmers. 1638 is back to normal with one John Benskin paying 4s.8d. on his living and 9s.4d. on goods, Royle paying 4s. on his living and 6s. on goods, John Cantrell 6d. and 1s.8d., and Samuel Benskin 3s. and 4s.6d. John Benskin the elder had apparently died or retired and his son taken over.

John Benskin continues to dominate the church town and Samuel Benskin Nethertown until 1655 when John Benskin paid 7s.7d. and Samuel Benskin 4s.3d. Only one other person paid over 3s. The entries from 1655 to 1663 are missing. In 1663 Mr John Benskin and his sons still head the church rate paying 8s.10d. Five places lower in the list comes Mr Coulson, outstripping them with a payment of 9s., and then Samuel Benskin heads the Nethertown farmers paying 7s.10d. By 1665 Mr Ouldershaw heads the list paying 5s.8d.; then Richard Benskin paying 2s.8d., Mr John Benskin 4s.10d. for the Coppies, Mr Thomas Coulson 8s.8d., and Mr Samuel Benskin 7s.10d. It would seem likely that Mr Benskin had died and his sons had not taken over his holding. In 1666 Mr Ouldershaw was rated at 2.10d. on the ould hall, Coulson was rated at 4s.3d. but his lands were not identified. Ouldershaw was replaced by Mr Thomas Greene paying 7s.8d. for the ould hall in 1668, with the occupant of the hall not merely heading the list but paying far more than anyone else. In December 1671 Thomas Greene was still at the Old Hall heading the list, but in 1672 the old hall had been partitioned and only one of the tenants was named. John Beighton, paying 5s. for part of the ould Hall. An unnamed person was paying 5s.8d. for the Coppy Hall. Samuel Benskin was still at Netherhall paying 7s.10d. After that reference was made to the Old Hall land only until 1679 when The Upper Hall was rated at 7s.7d. The Upper Hall lands then continued to head the list but no occupant was named. Thomas Benskin was at Netherhall from 1678 to 1680, and John Cantrell was in the Nethertown part of the rate from at least 1663 onwards.

In 1681 John Cantrell junior headed the list for Hartshorne rated at 7s.7d. There was no reference to Old Hall or Upper Hall. John Cantrell was rated in Nethertown for Lea Wood, and the Netherhall entry appeared immediately below with no tenant given. He was rated again apparently for the Nethertown holding he had held for some years. By 1688 Upper Hall and Leawood were rated together, Netherhall land was separately rated. No Cantrell was mentioned in the list of occupiers but John Cantrell headed the list of persons approving the accounts. The poor rate of 1690 rated John Cantrell at 17s., the next highest occupier at 9s.6d., and Netherhall, not attributed to any occupier at 7s.10d.

It seems likely that John Cantrell occupied the Upper Hall lands in 1681, and that his father in the same year took over Lea Wood and possibly also the Netherhall lands. Everything points to the family buying the Upper Hall manor in the 1680's, although it is not mentioned in John Cantrell's marriage settlement of 1694. This carefully limits his wife's right to dower to certain named other properties.

#### Upper Hall or Hartshorne Manor house

The tax assessment of 1547/8 and the 17th century church rates for Hartshorne clearly indicate that the Benskin family were occupying the manor in the sixteenth century and from at least 1619 to 1665. It seems highly probable that the tenancy was unbroken from 1547/8 to 1665. From the fourteenth and fifteenth century

onwards it was normal in south west Derbyshire for the lords of manors and monastic granges to enclose for private grazing the bulk of the meadows and better pastures, leaving as little as possible of the commons and wastes for use by the commoners. It is obvious from the church rates that the beasts and sheep were regarded as the real source of wealth in the village, and it is equally obvious from the 1712 lease that much of the lands in the hands of the lord of the Upperhall manor were already then privately enclosed, including several meadows and part of Hornhill. In addition to this Cantrell's will of 1722 makes it plain that he had valuable grazing rights in the remaining commons and wastes. Although the enclosure of these was contemplated in 1722 the enabling act was only passed in 1765.

The Benskin family were therefore big graziers, big enough to be described as yeomen in 1547/8 and to dominate a village with a resident lord of the manor or old grange of Shorthazels. The 1629 rate with the two ratings for Mr Benskin's livings, one for the main living and the other for his new house, dates the replacement of Benskin's house. The new house which is presumably that referred to as Upper Hall in 1635 is not mentioned again until 1679 when Upper Hall was rated at 7s.7d. It seems unlikely that it should be identified with the Ould Hall which is first mentioned in 1666. It is possible that the Benskyn family continued to live in the house built for Benskyn about 1629 but did not farm on the earlier scale. On this premise the lands formerly farmed with the Benskyn house were split up and farmed by different people, and partly from the Old Hall. There seems to have been difficulty in attracting tenants to the Old Hall. In these circumstances the Benskyn family were probably persuaded to release their tenancy of the Upper Hall, and from 1679 the manor demesne lands were again farmed from the Upper Hall. Certainly the Cantrell family used it as their manor house. The post Cantrell history of the Upper Hall or Hartshorne Manor as it is now known has not been traced. The architectural style identifies it as the house described as Mr Benskin's new house in 1629, which was later described as Upper Hall.