

Burton-by-Lincoln Parish history

Who was he, the roman officer or administrator who rode out from the important Lindum Colonia along the escarpment to the north and took a liking to a site where he chose to build his villa? The site was ideal with a spring that has never known to run dry and high above the flood plain of the river which often flooded. It was probably around 200AD when he built his villa, a highly desirable residence with the latest tessellated paving, under floor hot air heating and superb views to the west over the Fossdyke canal, dug by the Roman engineers in 120AD linking Lindum with the Trent.



200 years later the villa was abandoned and the forces of nature obliterated the site until it was rediscovered in 1966 with the building of the Waterhouse in the village.

Over the next 800 years the land was claimed first by the Anglo Saxons and then by the Danes who fixed their winter quarters at Torksey in 873. Many of the names of the springline villages derive their origins from the Danelaw with Burh (a fortified place) and tun (a farm) forming Burhtun which at the time of the Domesday book, had become Burtone. While Burhtun is derived from Old English, the Domesday book records that Sortebrand (a Scandinavian name) farmed land in Burton and other landowners included Bishop Remigius the builder of the first Lincoln cathedral. It is likely that the parish boundaries that are bounded by Ermine street to the east and the Fossdyke to the west were much the same as they are today.

With the impact of the Norman invasion, the names of William of Paris and Peter de Valognes appear as lawmen and owners of land in the parish who were succeeded in the 14th century by the Sutton family who established their family seat in Burton. The very first entry in the Burton parish register reads “ 1558 James Sutton, gent, was buried on the 12th day of the month of February. Another family established in Burton were the Randes, it is believed they lived in a large house on the site of the current Manor House. On the North wall of the church nave is a fine alabaster monument to Christopher Randes who died in 1639.

In 1507, the Monson family established the family seat at South Carlton and in 1607 Sir Thomas Monson who had acquired most of the land in Burton, established his residence in Burton. The fortunes of the Monson family ebbed and flowed with the political climate and under Cromwell, the Burton estates were sequestered by the Commonwealth. However his son, Sir John Monson, still had funds in 1651 to provide a covenant of £20 towards the maintenance of 10



The Burton Almshouses

Bedeswomen in Burton. The almshouses remain a listed feature of the village. In 1728, his grandson John, was created Baron Monson of Burton by George II.

Hunting was a popular sport and the first record of the Burton Hunt appears in 1672 with a map showing “*Parte of Lincolnshire showing the boundaries for hunting ye foxe with our hounds in the year of grace 1672*” The Hunt kennels were established in Burton and the pack continued to be based in the village until 1848 when the kennels were closed and transferred to Reepham. The Kennel cottages, shown on the tithe map dated 1772, are now private houses. The Burton Hunt had some extraordinary characters as Masters including Lord Henry Bentinct of Welbeck Hall, who hunted 6 days a week and for a time hacked daily from his family seat near Mansfield, a round trip of 60 miles. The Hunt still meets during the season under its Master, Mr John Lockwood. The hunt kennels are now at Riseholme.



The Burton pack

The first three Lord Monsons were successive Masters of the Burton Hunt and in 1766 John Monson, the second baron (1726-1774) employed James Paine to enlarge the existing hall to make it the family's principle residence and to “accommodate more comfortably the hunt breakfasts”. Paine added an imposing south facing front to the old hall with a total of 68 rooms and 167 windows. Completed around 1770, Paine designed other buildings including a stable block, china house, game larder, ice house, laundry and store rooms. The hall was set within parkland with the approach along the Coach Road from



Burton Hall

Ermine Street. A walled garden was constructed to provide exotic fruit and vegetables for the family and to entertain their many guests. Most villagers were employed by the estate as gardeners, game keepers, grooms and labourers paid out of the income from the 20,000 acre Lincolnshire estates. Others were employed as servants and housemaids whose live-in wages were no more than £10 a year. The weekly wage for a labourer was around 10/- a week (more at harvest time) and the rent for a tied cottage 30/- a year. Most cottagers kept a pig which was killed and salted for meat in winter and some a cow for milk.

Unlike many estates there was no home farm, but the land was let to tenant farmers including John Evens, whose family would continue to farm the land in Burton for 170 years. Between 1770 and 1800 it was a time of great change in agriculture with the enclosure of the great heath stretching northwards along the Lincoln edge to Kirton and beyond. It resulted in the field system with neat hedges which can be seen today, allowing the land to be converted into profitable arable farms. Farm rents increased from 2/- an acre for the old heath land to 10/- an acre for an enclosed field. Crops included turnips which were fed to sheep and cattle in winter, barley, wheat and oats which were grown in rotation.



The Hall Yard

Flooding remained a problem on the low lying fields between the Lincoln edge and the Fossdyke, and in 1795 the river Trent broke its banks, flooding Lincoln and the land almost to the edge of the villages of Burton and the Carltons. The flood level of 5.8m above MSL remains the datum for the building of all new properties within the parish. As result of the 1795 floods, an Act of Parliament was passed for the embanking and draining of land in Lincoln, Burton and other parishes. The Burton Catchwater drain was excavated, channelling water from the Carlton and Burton parishes under the Fossdyke at Bishops Bridge. The water was then pumped into the Skellingthorpe drain and from there it flowed into the Witham at Sincil bank. The catchwater drain still plays a major part in flood alleviation measures for the area, taking excess water from the Till and Fossdyke before it reaches Lincoln.



The catchwater drain Burton

When John George Monson the 4th Lord, died in 1809 aged only 21, the title and the Burton estates were inherited by his son, Frederick, who was just 9 months old. His mother, The dowager Lady Monson, then married the Earl of Warwick and from the age of 10, the 5th Lord was brought up in Warwick Castle. He was a very delicate child and the Lincolnshire climate was considered unsuitable for him. Therefore in 1830, the Trustees sold 12,000 acres of the Lincolnshire estates to fund the purchase of Gatton Hall in Surrey as a more suitable residence for the 5th lord when he came of age. He spent a great deal of money on the house especially on a magnificent marble hall replicating the [Corsini Chapel in the Basilica](#) of St. John Lateran in Rome which he visited on a Grand Tour of Europe. In consequence rent from the remaining Lincolnshire land was invested in Gatton, and Burton Hall, the village and the tenanted farms were neglected. In 1841 the parish records show that Burton hall was occupied by just 2 old retainers, Thomas Turnbull aged 65 and his wife Mary aged 60.



Gatton Hall, 1930
The hall was destroyed by fire in 1934.

In 1841 Frederick Monson died aged only 32. His marriage to [Theodosia Monson](#) in 1832 was a disaster and the couple separated 2 years later. As the marriage was childless, the title and the estates at Gatton and Burton passed to his second cousin, William Monson who was born in Madras in 1796. Although the family ties were distant, linking back to the 2nd Baron, William Monson appears to have been well prepared for his accession to the title as the 6th Lord Monson of Burton. He found the estate in poor condition and heavily in debt. Gatton Hall was unfinished, Burton hall was in decay and the tenant farms from which his income was derived, starved of investment. He had no personal fortune so his immediate plan was to reduce his financial commitments by letting Gatton Hall (to Lady Warwick) and to refurbish Burton Hall as his family residence..... in the meantime he move to Florence to save money! He installed David Middleton as his house steward to oversee the repairs and improvements to the hall and to organise the estate workforce. Middleton was the perfect choice, scrupulously honest, fair but firm with traders and villagers alike. The tenanted farms Burton,

South Carlton and Croft near Wainfleet were administered by his Land Agent, William Brown who farmed at South Carlton.

In 1843 Monson appointed his brother-in-law the Reverend Edmund Larken to the Burton living, worth £420 which with his income from a family inheritance, gave him an annual income the equivalent of about £100,000 today. Revd Larken and his large family took up residence in the rectory, situated within the hall grounds. They had 8 children and could afford to keep 3 servants, a cook, a housemaid and nurserymaid. The Larken and Monson families were connected through their respective fathers' service in India at the turn of the century - Larken (Sen) as a Tea Trader with the East India Company and, Monson serving with the Indian Army as Colonel of the 76th Regiment of Foot. The families were united in marriage in 1828 when Eliza Larken (Larken's younger sister) married William Monson.

The Revd Larken was an evangelical Christian, a radical intellectual, ambitious, energetic with a wide circle of contacts within the church and the Lincolnshire gentry. However his political beliefs would put him at odds with the Establishment and although he sought preferment to more lucrative and influential church appointments, he was to remain in Burton as Rector for 53 years until his death in 1895. The Burton living with only 200 inhabitants was hardly intellectually demanding so his energies were channelled into many different causes. He was founder of the "Penitent Females' Home" in Lincoln which was designed "to reclaim the poor creatures who walk our streets"; he set up a cooperative mill in Lincoln, and on Sundays he would often preach 5 sermons - in Burton, at the Penitent Females Home, to the prisoners in Lincoln prison and to the Lincolnshire Militia. He was President of the Mechanics Institute in Lincoln founded to provide education for working people, secretary to the Liberal party in the North Lincolnshire constituency, and political adviser to William Monson(jun) who was elected MP for Redhill. He was described as a "communist" by Harvey Gem, Lord Monson's lawyer, for articles he wrote in "[The Leader](#)" (a radical political newspaper) and Gem recommended his dismissal as Rector for his views. Edmund Larken also had connections with the feminist movement funding the publication of works by [George Sand](#), (Baroness Dudevant) a bisexual French Avant Garde, writer, described as loud, lewd, shocking, and scandalous, and with Matilda Hays, the translator of Sand's works, who later had an affair with Theodosia Monson. To complete the complex circle, Edmund Larken was chaplain to Lady Theodosia - a difficult assignment as she was described as a dilettante and an atheist. It is unlikely that either lady visited the Revd Larken in Burton but it would have raised a few eyebrows. Both dressed as men from the waist upwards and smoked in public!

A devoted family man with many interests, he must have seemed remote from his parishioners, except for one activity - his passion for the game of cricket! In 1848, the inaugural meeting of the Burton Cricket Club was held. Lord Monson was elected President, Revd Larken secretary, his brother Arthur, treasurer, and committee members included the Hon William Monson and other local dignitaries. The annual subscription was set at £1.1s, a practice day was held on a Thursday with lunch costing 2/6d. Larken was masterful organiser and through his network of contacts, obtained sponsors and subscriptions from the local gentry and businessmen. A square was prepared in a field next to the hall at a cost of £16.18s.11d, 2 cricket balls were purchased at a cost of 14/- and wicket keeping gloves for 12/-. The Club went from strength to strength and in 1854, the Burton ground hosted a game between a Lincolnshire 22 and an All England XI. The Cricket Club played on the ground for 120 years until 1970 when sadly it disbanded through lack of players. The original scorebooks for 1849 - 1860 are held in the Lincolnshire Archives and they give a fascinating view of the social life in Burton in the mid C19. Click [here](#) for more details about the club.



Burton hall looking east from the cricket square. On the left was a wooden pavilion on wheels.