



Cranmer Local History Group

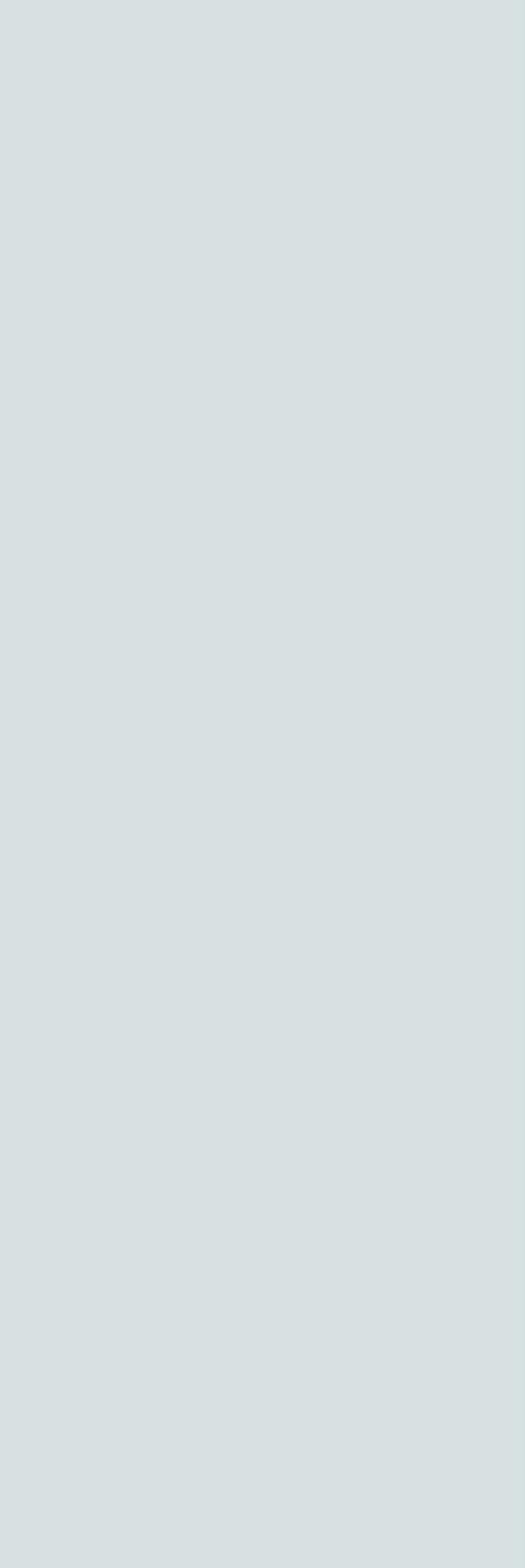


Cranmers Mound

Edited by GR Redford

Archive Series

Volume 2



Cranmer Local History Group

The Cranmer Local History Group as part of its' constitution is committed to promoting the history of Aslockton, Scarrington and Whatton-in-the-Vale in particular and local history in general and archiving material pertinent to the history of the three villages.

The group organises a series of talks throughout the year and this and other publications together with the quarterly Local History Digest contribute to that commitment.

The Cranmer Local History Group Publishes material in four categories:

Archive Series

The Archive Series are transcripts of published material relating to the three villages. The basic principle underlying this series is to collate and archive previous published articles etc.

Research Series

The Research Series are prepared for Research Purposes.

Public Series

Original material written by members of the Group, targeted at residents of the three villages.

Local History Digest

Published quarterly, the Local History Digest contains a series of short articles written by members of the Group.

Archive Series

Volume 1

Thomas Cranmer 1489—1556

Volume 2

Cranmers Mound

Research Series

Volume 1

Census Analysis—Aslockton—1881

Volume 2

Parliamentary Enclosure of Aslockton and Scarrington

Public Series

Volume 1

Cranmer Walks

Document Information

The information below describes the source documents used in document.

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ENTRY COPY

ENTRY IN THE SCHEDULE OF MONUMENTS COMPILED AND MAINTAINED BY
THE
SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER SECTION 1 OF THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS
AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS ACT 1979 AS AMENDED.

MONUMENT: Cranmer's Mound motte castle, prospect mound, moated fishponds, enclosure, hollow way and ridge and furrow

PARISH: ASLOCKTON COUNTY: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

DISTRICT: RUSHCLIFFE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 13400

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE (S): 5K74414017

CRANMER'S MOUND ASLOCKTON – Archival Report for Rushcliffe Borough Council

Prepared by: Christabel Durant, 4 Westhorpe Hall, Southwell, Notts. NG25 0NG
December 1999

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SCHEDULE OF ENTRY

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the motte known as Cranmers Mound or Mount, which was later adapted to become a prospect mound, the enclosure to the west of the mound and the hollow way leading southwards towards it, a series of fishponds which are linked together to form moats round five islands, and a block of ridge and furrow which lies north of the fishponds.

The name of the mound derives from its traditional association with Thomas CRANMER, Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of Henry VIII, who is said to have climbed the mound in order to listen to the bells of Whatton church whilst visiting his brother who resided at the family home in Aslockton. If this story is true, it indicates that the mound was already in existence in the first half of the sixteenth century. This would make it somewhat earlier than most purpose-built prospect mounds, which were garden landscape features dating primarily to the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, some prospect mounds were adapted from earlier features, such as the earthwork castles of the Middle Ages. Cranmers Mound is interpreted as a small medieval motte or castle mound, which originally stood some 5m high and was surmounted by a stone or timber tower. The tower could never have been substantial, since the level area at the top of the motte is only 4m by 6m, but it is possible that an enclosure known as a bailey extended from the foot of the motte and contained additional buildings and ancillary features. In fact, later documents call the field in which the monument is situated Bailey Close, as if there had been a tradition of a bailey associated with the motte. However, it is not known when the name originated and, as the enclosure of the field clearly post-dates the ridge and furrow within it, and the ridge and furrow itself post-dates the motte, the name may not be of much significance.

The west face of the motte drops directly into a 9m wide ditch, which is c.2m deep and also extends round the south side where it widens to 10m. This section is deeper and more substantial than the rest of the water-management complex and is believed to have been part of an original circular ditch round the base of the motte which was later re-cut to form two sides of a square. To complete the square, shallower ditches were dug round the north and east sides, and it can be seen that the older and newer sections do not join up being at different levels. By the addition of these two new ditches, a platform was created round the base of the motte on its east side so that it now appears to occupy the west half of a rectangular island measuring 35m from east to west by 25m from north to south. It is not known precisely when these alterations were carried out but it would measure 26m and, from east to west, 34m. There is a 5m wide entrance at its northwest corner, which is approached from the north by a sunken track or hollow way. This hollow way flanks the head of a block of linear earthworks representing the grassed over remains of ridge and furrow ploughing. There are six ridges running west to east, all except for the southernmost measuring c.11m wide and divided from the next by a 1m deep furrow. The southernmost is slightly narrower at its west end, though it widens out to the east, and is higher at 1.5m. This ridge forms the north boundary of the mooted fishpond complex and indicates that the fishponds and ridge and furrow are broadly contemporary. The ridge and furrow has been cut by the modern field boundary to the east, but a broad headland east of this boundary shows where the block ended and the plough turned. East of this headland, the south ridge continues to the ends of the fishponds while, to the north of it, faint earthworks indicate a second block of ridge and furrow approaching from the north at right-angles to the first. This block is far less well preserved, however, and has been ploughed out to north and east.

South of the enclosure which lies west of Cranmer's Mound is a roughly rectangular fishpond which measures 24m from west to east by 7m from north to south. It is enclosed at its west end but only partially enclosed at its east end where a 2m wide sluice connects it to the ditch round the south and west sides of the mound. This sluice would have controlled the movement of water between the two and, after it was re cut, the motte ditch probably also served as a fishpond. It is enclosed to the north but, at the southeast end, there are two sluices connecting it to other parts of the water-management complex. The southernmost is another 2m wide channel linking it to the pond along the south side of the second island, while the northernmost is a narrow drain connecting it to the ditch dividing the second island from the first. A narrow earthwork measuring 12m by 3m extends from west to east in the ditch immediately west of these sluices and will have been a water-management feature. The ditch between the first and second islands is 3m wide and formed a single fishpond with the ditch round the north side of the motte.

The second island measures 33m from east to west, by 22m from north to south. In addition to the main platform, there are earthworks projecting from the north-west and south-west corners which form the sluices controlling the junctions between the ditches round the two islands. On the platform itself, extending north to south along the west side, there is a rectangular sunken area measuring 4m by 19m. This may also be a fishpond though, as it does not connect with the other features, it could prove to be the cellar or sunken floor of a building. The ditch to the south of this island is 10m wide and 2m deep, while the ditch to the north is 8m wide and 1m deep. Both the north and the south ditch continue in an unbroken line past the remaining three islands, though the width of the north ditch varies in accordance with the dimensions of the islands. The ditch between the second and third island is 8m wide but is partially blocked towards its south end by a sub-circular mound measuring 7m by 6m. This mound is less than 1m high and would have been the site of a bridge-support or sluice gate. Both the first and second-islands are roughly 2m high but slope at 45 degrees out of the surrounding ditches so that the platforms are substantially smaller than the base measurements. The third island slopes to the same degree but is slightly higher than the others at .5m. It measures 27m from north to south and 35m from east to west and, like the other islands, has a level, featureless platform. The ditch to the east of the third island is 8m wide and is planted with the same boundary hedge that cuts through the ridge and furrow. Beyond this later boundary, the north and south ditches begin to draw together round the fourth and fifth islands, growing shallower as they do so. The fourth island is of a similar height and gradient to the others but smaller and rhomboidal in shape. Its west and east sides measure 22m and 14m respectively while, from east to west, it measures 15m. Further to the east lies the fifth island which is only 1m high and roughly square with a diameter of 7m. In addition; a very low 3m wide mound can be seen to the east of this, in the sunken area where the north and south ditches join. This sunken area forms a crescent shaped pond c.18m long, which curves to the northeast. At its tip, the ridge forming the north boundary of the site ends and, 5m beyond this, there is a final shallow sunken area-measuring 5m from north to south by 9m from east to west. A faint sluice joins this pond to the main system. At the eastern limit of the site there is a raised track way which leads to a stile in the north field boundary but ends suddenly on the east field boundary. The age of this track way is uncertain, neither is it known whether it is associated with the monument. It is therefore not included in the scheduling. Excluded from the scheduling are the field boundaries crossing the monument though the ground underneath these is included?

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Motte castles are medieval fortifications introduced into Britain by the Normans. They comprised a large conical mound of earth or rubble, the motte, surmounted by a palisade and a stone or timber tower. In a majority of examples an embanked enclosure containing additional buildings, the bailey, adjoined the motte. Motte castles and motte-and-bailey castles acted as 'garrison forts during offensive military operations, as strongholds, and, in many cases, as aristocratic residences and as centres of local or royal administration. Built in towns, villages and open countryside, motte castles generally occupied strategic positions dominating their immediate locality and, as a result, are the most visually impressive monuments of the early post-Conquest period surviving in the modern landscape. Over 600 motte castles or motte-and-bailey castles are recorded nationally, with examples known from most regions. As such, and as one of a restricted range of recognised early post-Conquest monuments, they are particularly important for the study of Norman Britain and the development of the feudal system. Although many were occupied for only a short period of time, motte castles continued to be built and occupied from the 11th to the 13th centuries, after which other types of castle superseded them.

Cranmers Mound is a well-preserved example of a small motte, which was later, re-used as a prospect mound to overlook an extensive complex of fishponds and islands. All the earthworks survive well and have not been disturbed since the site went out of use. The remains of a variety of associated features will therefore be retained, and will include the buried foundations of buildings. MAP EXTRACT

The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract outlined in black and highlighted in red.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

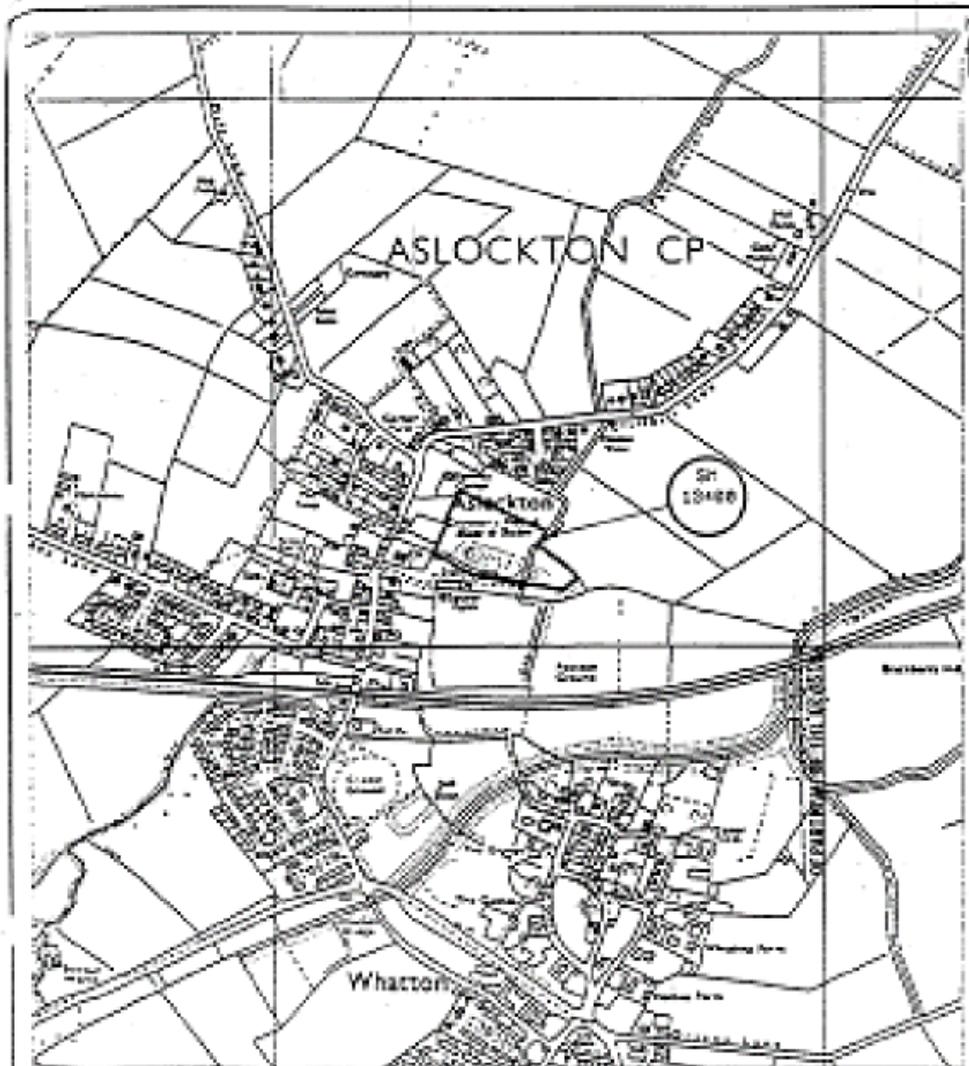
Monument included in the Schedule on 22nd April 1977 as: COUNTY/ NUMBER: Nottinghamshire 177

NAI: Cranmers Mound, motte and bailey castle, the reference of this monument is now: NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 13400

NAME: Cranmers Mound: motte castle, prospect mound, moated fishponds enclosure, hollow way and ridge and furrow SCHEDULING REVISED ON 23rd October 1992 SIGNED BY: C.Edwards

On behalf of The Secretary of State for National Heritage.

Scheduled Monument



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For identification purposes only

Site Name: Cranner's Mound; motte castle, precept mound, moated flatgarden, enclosure, hollow way & ridge & furrow

County: North Yorkshire	District: Ruskellife	Parish: Aslockton
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Name: For excluded areas, see text record

Key: Monument No. Location/extent of site



Scale: 1:10000 Derived from: 1:10000

Control on NGR: ST4414017

Extract from OS sheet: ST4404

Date: 15.5.92	Monument No: 2001000
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English Heritage

For more information contact English Heritage, London SE1 8UP. Telephone 01 924 3000 Fax 01 924 3100

Archival Report

THE SITE

The site consists of the remains of a motte and bailey¹ the schedule includes descriptions of what were possibly two bailies, or one may have been a house platform for the vanished manor house. To the west of the castle mound are fishponds, contemporary with the ridge and furrow in the field in which it stands. Fishponds were a useful source of food in any village and could have been maintained long after the manor house decayed. The bailey and the supposed house platform are rectangular and were at one time moated. It is tempting to put the manor on the second rectangle, which was connected by a small bridge to the first rectangle at the foot of the mound, on which there could have been a knott garden. It could, by the end of the 16th century, have been a very charming situation.

The Cranmer family and descendants were living in the vanished manor house throughout the 16th century until they sold it in 1612. Thereafter the site was let to tenants and the building allowed to decay. The legend is that Archbishop Thomas Cranmer used the mound to admire the view and a knott garden below, and to listen to the church bells of Whatton. This is possible, because mounds for views were a fashionable feature of many gardens from the 1550s to the early 17th century. The mound was already made and on the site but Thomas Cranmer cannot have been much at Aslockton after his childhood -- his father died in 1501, when he was twelve, and the manor left to his older brother. Additionally, the childhood of Thomas is too early for a knott garden and a fashionable garden mound.

Without doubt the young Thomas climbed the mound and, on a Sunday, heard the distant bells of Whatton Church. John Cranmer, Thomas's brother, died about 1578 and he could have designed a garden based on the mound, the Rossalls and Molyneaux who followed until 1612 could just as easily have designed it. It is very unlikely that the working tenants after 1612 would have had either time or taste to design a garden.

The village was enclosed in 1790 when the principle landowner was Mr Grant of Bingham, and the 3rd Duke of Portland owned a lesser section of the Parish² In fact the Duke only held it for a few years. You will see from my text that in 1794 Mr Spurr realised the importance of the site, with its historical associations, and was attempting to preserve it. Sometime in the 18th century a new farmhouse was built away from the original manor house site. The Ordnance Survey map for 1812 shows the mound as a tumulus, then the local opinion, but sometime during the 19th century it began to be referred to as a castle mound.

There was a raised walkway leading from the manor site towards Whatton, and it is shown on the 1812 Ordnance map; there is now no sign of this.

Footnotes

¹Schedule of Monuments maintained by the Secretary of State, National Monument No; 13400. , ²Throsby.

THE MANOR & ESTATE

In 1600, according to Robert Thoroton, the old manor house existed on the site. The Hearth Tax returns of 1674 show Mr Shipman of Scarrington occupying a house with only two hearths; the size of a small farmhouse. Whether or not this would have been the original manor is not clear. ³, In 1759 the 2nd Duke of Kingston mortgaged the manor of Aslockton for £4,000 to Richard Hoare. Thomas Brand, a descendant of John Brand, was a co-signatory to the document³

In 1774 the manor was leased for a year to Mr Bonfoy and afterwards to Nicholas Bonfoy. In 1776 Thomas Brand of Hoo, Hertfordshire sold the manor to William Bentink, 2nd Duke of Portland (1708-1762) for £32,000. It then consisted of messuages, cottages, lands, tenements, pastures, feeding woods, underwood, common pastures and waste ground, bringing in a rent of £147.1 ls 6d. The price was calculated on 20 years rental, a common valuation at the time.⁴ Another document concerning a Mr Clementson describes the estate as having 40 messuages, three tofts, two windmills, 10 dovecotes, 20 gardens, 1,500 acres of land, 500 acres of meadow, 600 acres of pasture, 100 acres of woods, 500 acres of furze and heath with free warren and fishing. The warren is an area where rabbits were bred for food. This is a total of 3200 acres in addition to rights of common; the heath and furze would have returned almost nothing. It was a large estate that must have included all the parish of Aslockton.⁵

Footnotes:

³P1F/7/1/3/6/5. Portland manuscripts, University of Nottingham. ~ ⁴P1F/1/3/8. Ibid.

⁵P1F/7/1/3/5. Ibid.

THE FAMILIES

At the time of the Conquest there were three manors in Aslockton of these one was held by Thori and another by Leofric. Thori's manor was given by William the Conqueror to Walter d'Ayncourt and Leofric's went to The King's Thanes. There is no mention in the Doomesday book of what became of the third manor. By the subsequent descent it appears that the d'Ayncourt manor is that on which a motte (the present Mount) and bailey were late~' built by the de Aslockton family who settled there in the 12~' century when Reginald'de Aslockton (see tree) was a tenant of the d'Ayncourts.

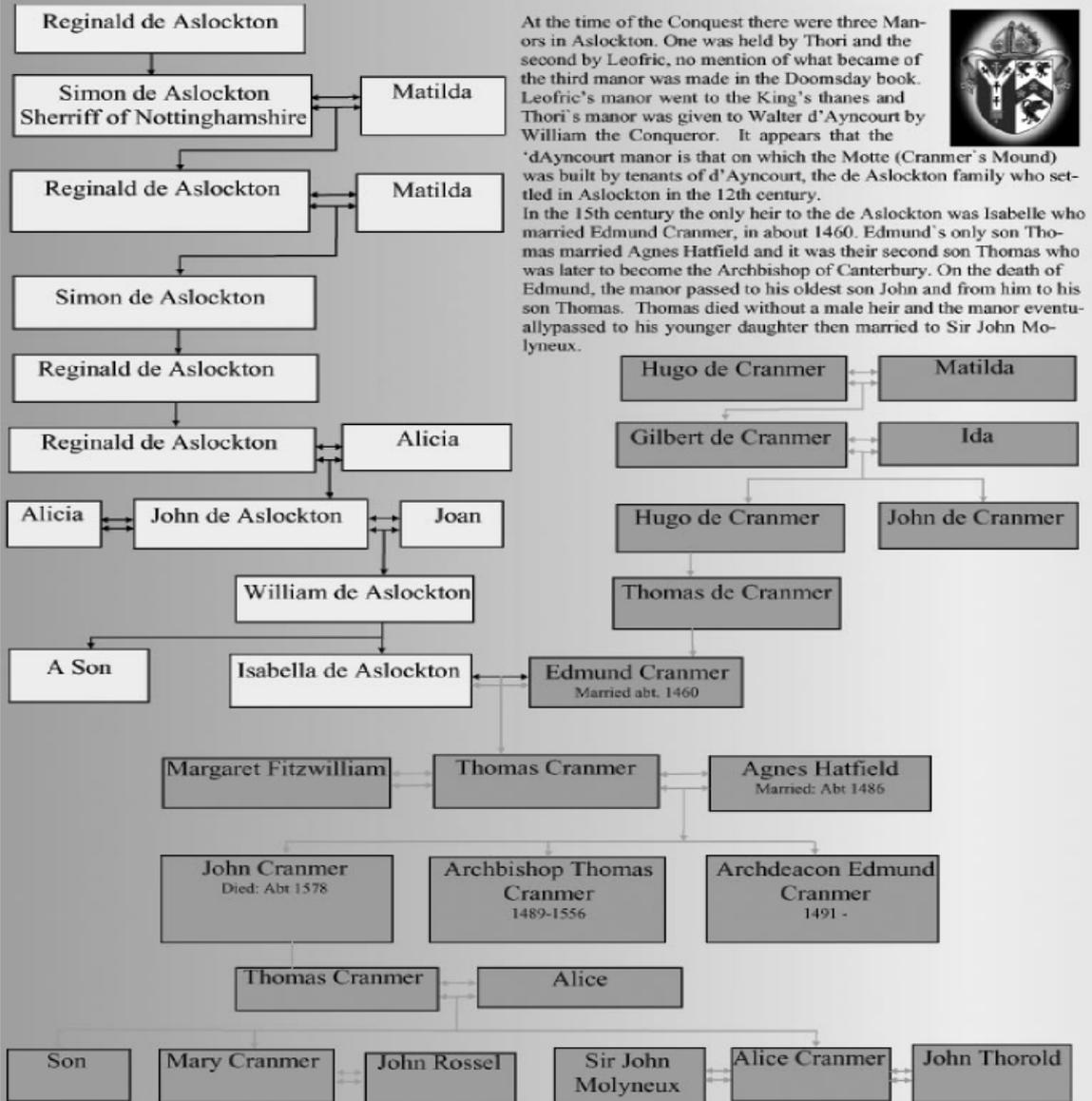
In the 15th century the only heir to the de Aslockton land was Isabella who married Edmund Cranmer in circa 1460 (see tree), so beginning the Cranmer connection with the village. Their only son, Thomas married Agnes Hatfield in circa 1486 and he was the father of the Martyr, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer who was born in Aslockton in 1489. His father died in 1501 when he was only 12 years old. His older brother inherited the manor and Thomas went on to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he became a fellow. Under Henry VIII Thomas became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533, and was burnt at the stake at Oxford as a heretic by the Catholic Queen, Mary, in 1556.

In 1578 (as mentioned in the site history) the Archbishop's brother John died and the manor passed to his son Thomas married to Alice. On Thomas's death and as his only son and heir predeceased him, the Aslockton manor went first to his eldest daughter Mary married to John Rossall and eventually to his youngest daughter, Alice, by then married to Sir John Molyneux. In 1612 Molyneux sold the manor to Robert Pierrepont, Marquis of Dorchester, later first Earl of Kingston (1584-1643). The First Duke of Kingston, Evelyn Pierrepont (1665-1726), willed Aslockton to his nephew John Brand and the manor was occupied by tenants throughout the 18th century.

Evelyn, 2nd Duke of Kingston (1711-1773), mortgaged the manor to Robert Hoare, who must of the banking family, for £4,000. Thomas Brand, a descendant of John Brand was a co-signatory. Before 1794 the Pierreponts sold the estate to William Cavendish-Bentink, 3rd Duke of Portland (1738-1809). He then divided the estate into three and the part on which. The Cranmer house stood was sold to Mr Marnott who, in turn, rented it out to Mr Spurr, an historian. By this time there was a house near the site and Mr Spurr is reported to be careful to preserve what is left of the old site.⁸

In 1844 it is reported that a farmhouse of Mr William Green occupied the site of the old Manor.

Descent of the Walter d'Ayncourt Manor of Aslockton to the Cranmer Family



At the time of the Conquest there were three Manors in Aslockton. One was held by Thori and the second by Leofric, no mention of what became of the third manor was made in the Domesday book. Leofric's manor went to the King's thanes and Thori's manor was given to Walter d'Ayncourt by William the Conqueror. It appears that the 'd'Ayncourt manor is that on which the Motte (Cranmer's Mound) was built by tenants of d'Ayncourt, the de Aslockton family who settled in Aslockton in the 12th century. In the 15th century the only heir to the de Aslockton was Isabelle who married Edmund Cranmer, in about 1460. Edmund's only son Thomas married Agnes Hatfield and it was their second son Thomas who was later to become the Archbishop of Canterbury. On the death of Edmund, the manor passed to his oldest son John and from him to his son Thomas. Thomas died without a male heir and the manor eventually passed to his younger daughter then married to Sir John Molyneux.



Source: *The Thoroton Society*



