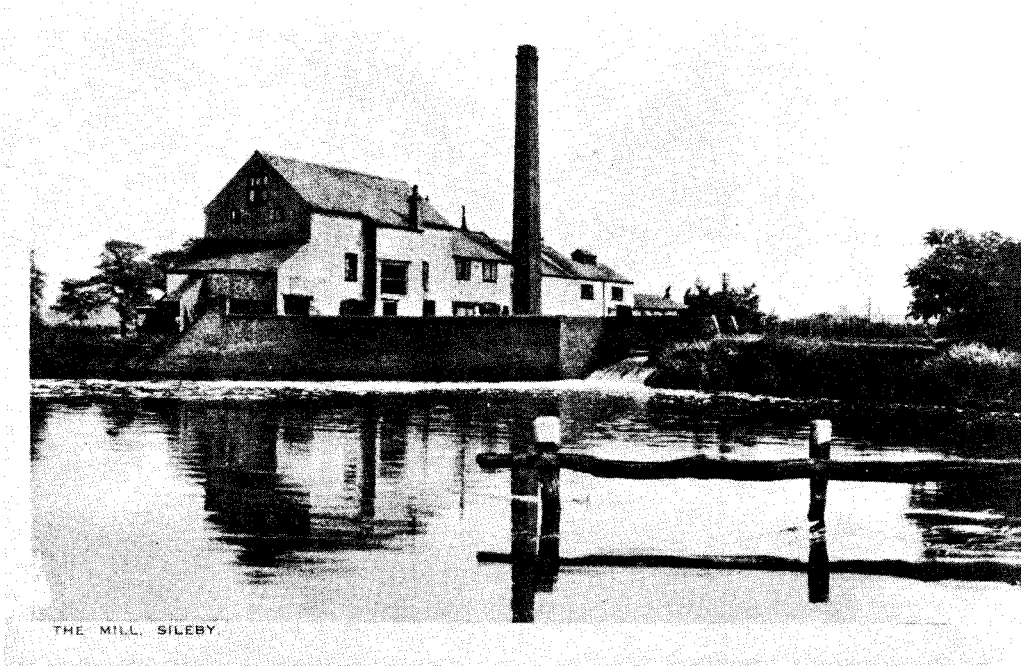


BYGONE

SILEBY



The Early

Plantagenets

No. 11

SILEBY IN EARLY PLANTAGENET TIMES

This booklet outlines some historical events concerning Sibley during the reigns of the Plantagenet Kings, Henry the Second, Richard the First, John, and the first two years of Henry the Third.

King Henry the Second was the son of Matilda, daughter of King Henry the First, and Geoffrey Martel, Count of Anjou. Martel was known as "Plantagenet," because he used to wear in his cap and helmet a bunch of yellow broom, which was called planta-genet. Broom was a symbol of humility, and was first worn by the Count on a journey to the Holy Land as a pilgrim.

The descendants of Geoffrey Martel, a direct line of eight Kings, who reigned 245 years, bore the family name Plantagenet, or, the "Yellow Broom Kings."

THE OVERLORDS AND MANOR LORDS OF SILEBY

1066 - 1220 A.D.

Norman Overlords

Hugh de Grantmainsii 1066 - 1093

Ivo de Grantmainsii 1093 - 1100

Earls of Leicester

Robert de Beaumont 1100 - 1118

Robert Le Bossu 1118 - 1168

Robert Blanchemains 1168 - 1189

Robert FitzParnel 1189 - 1204

Simon de Montfort the Elder 1204 - 1216

Simon de Montfort the Younger 1216 - 1265

Manor Lords

Sir Robert de Harecourt 1204 - 1220

Sir Richard de Harecourt 1220 - 1247

THE VILLAGE OF SILEBY AFTER 1154 A.D.

SILEBY LAND BELONGING TO THE LORDSHIP OF BARROW-ON-SOAR

Since the time of the Norman Conquest, part of the village had belonged to the Manor of Barrow-on-Soar. In 1154, the area was some 360 acres, held by the Earl of Chester.

Ranulf de Gernons, 1128 - 1153 A.D.

During the reigns of King Henry the First, Stephen and Henry the Second, this part of Sileby was held by Ranulf de Gernons, fourth Earl of Chester. He died on 16th December, 1153.

Hugh Cevolioc, 1153 - 1181 A.D.

Ranulf's son, Hugh Cevolioc, who had married Bertrude, daughter of Simon, Earl of Evreux, in Normandy, took his father's estates on becoming the fifth Earl of Chester in 1155.

In 1172, he fought with the King's sons against their father, Henry the Second, but was taken prisoner, and all his possessions in France were confiscated by the Crown. After a Convention made between the King and his sons in 1174, the Earl was released. It was not until 1177 that the Parliament of Northampton restored his estates.

Hugh Cevolioc died at Leek, Staffordshire, in 1181, and was buried at Chester.

Ranulf de Blondville, 1181 - 1217 A.D.

Hugh was succeeded by his son, Ranulf de Blondville, the sixth Earl, a most distinguished soldier and administrator in the service of the Plantagenet kings.

This Earl was the last to hold that part of Sileby which has belonged to the lordship of Barrow-on-Soar since Saxon times. In 1217, he sold the 360 acres to Stephen de Segrave, lord of the Manor of Seagrave, and later, lord of the Manor of Sileby.

It is interesting to note that Ranulf de Blondville is twice mentioned in connection with the name of Robin Hood. The Pipe Roll, or Great Roll of the Exchequer of 1228, shows that Ranulf was Sheriff of Yorkshire, and that year held chattels belonging to Robin Hood, to the value of 32s. 6d. The 14th Century Piers Plowman, wrote :

"I can not perfittly my pater noster
As the prest it syngeth,
But I can rhymes of Robin Hode
And Ranulf Earl of Chester."

When King John died at Newark Castle on 18th October, 1216, Ranulf de Blondville was one of the noblemen made responsible for the disposal of the King's property. Ranulf died in 1232.

THE MANOR OF SILEBY IN EARLY PLANTAGENET TIMES

Robert Le Bossu, 2nd Earl of Leicester, 1118 - 1168 A.D.

Robert the Hunchback, Earl of Leicester, was the second of the Beaumont family line to hold the Manor of Sileby, taking possession after the death of his father, Robert de Beaumont, in 1118. Le Bossu married Uta, daughter of Ralf de Waer, Earl of the East Angles.

During his fifty years as overlord, he saw Sileby prosper, and clear its waste land to provide a greater area for cultivation. He died in 1168, and was buried within the walls of the Abbey of St. Mary de Pratis, by the river Soar in Leicester, which he had founded in 1143.

Robert Blanchesmains, 3rd Earl of Leicester, 1168 - 1190 A.D.

Le Bossu was succeeded by his son, Robert Blanchesmains, who married Petronella, a descendant of Hugh de Grentmaisnil, the first Norman overlord of Sileby.

Blanchesmains was a man of violence, with a terrible temper. In 1173, with Hugh Cevelioc, Earl of Chester, he revolted against King Henry the Second, in support of the King's son. These two powerful Earls, who held the entire land area of the village of Sileby, were both defeated in the campaigns which followed the revolt. The Earl of Chester was taken prisoner, and the King marched on Leicester. The year 1173 was long remembered. The walls of the town were pulled down during a siege of three weeks, the castle destroyed and dwelling houses burnt to the ground. In addition to the destruction of the town, the people of Leicester were heavily fined. Sileby and other Manors passed into the King's hands. When King Richard the Lionheart came to the throne, he restored the Earl's estates.

Robert Blanchesmains died in 1189, when travelling through Rumania on his way to Jerusalem. The Countess Petronella was buried in Leicester Abbey, on the south side of the high altar.

Robert FitzParnel, 4th Earl of Leicester, 1189 - 1204 A.D.



At the death of Blanchesmains, his son, Robert FitzParnel became the fourth Earl. He married Laura, daughter of Reginald de Bruis.

Like his father, FitzParnel was a man of military ability, and followed King Richard the Lionheart to the Holy Land. During the Third Crusade he was taken prisoner by Saladin, but obtained his release after paying a ransom of 2,000 marks.

Robert FitzParnel died childless in 1204, during the reign of King John, and was buried in Leicester Abbey.

The shield of Robert FitzParnel.

Simon de Montfort the Elder, 5th Earl of Leicester, 1204 - 1216 A.D.

As Robert FitzParnel died without children, his estates passed to his two sisters, Amicia and Margaret.

In 1165, Amicia had married Simon de Montfort, Count de Rochefort, father of the famous son who laid the foundation of the English Parliament. By right of marriage, de Montfort received the Earldom of Leicester, and among the estates, the Manor of Sibley.

The younger sister, Margaret, married Saer de Quincy, who became Earl of Winchester.

Simon de Montfort the Elder spent most of his time in France, and in his absence, his estates were held in trust by Ranulf de Blondeville, the Earl of Chester.

The shield of Simon de Montfort.

S I L E B Y A N D T H E H A R E C O U R T F A M I L Y

1 2 0 4 - 1 2 4 7 A.D.

The beginning of the 13th Century brought the Norman family of Harecourt into an association with Sibley Manor and the Parish Church, which lasted more than forty years.

Sir John and Sir Robert Harecourt, 1204 - 1220 A.D.

When Simon de Montfort the Elder became Earl of Leicester in 1204, he presented the Manor of Sibley to Sir Robert de Harecourt.

Five years before, in 1199, King John in the first year of his reign gave to Sir John de Harecourt, the father of Sir Robert, part of the Royal Manor and Soke of Rothley. The deed states that the gift was: "£35 in land in Roleia and the Soke of Roleia to John de Harecourt for his homage and service, to hold of John de Harecourt and his heirs of the King and his heirs, by a service of one knight's fee."

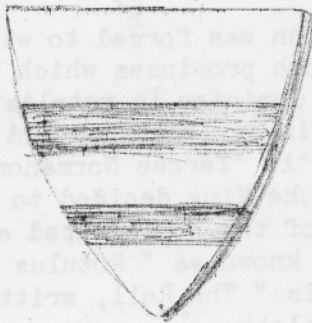
The gift was confirmed on 26th May, 1203.

The Year King John Seized Sibley

In 1199, when news reached England that King Richard the First had been slain by an arrow when besieging the castle of Chalus, in Normandy, Prince John claimed the throne.

The true heir to the throne was Prince Arthur, the son of King Richard's brother, Geoffrey, Duke of Brittany. Prince Arthur with the help of King Philip the Second of France, raised an army in an attempt to obtain his inheritance, but during a battle in 1203, he was taken prisoner, and conveyed to the castle of Rouen. It was in that castle that the unfortunate young Prince was murdered, it is said by the hand of his uncle, King John.

THE
SHIELD
OF THE
HARECOURT
FAMILY



THE NAME
IS SOMETIMES
WRITTEN
HARCOURT
HARCURT
HARCURTH
HACOURT

ERRAND DE HARECOURT (1)

ANTICHEL (2) --- ROBERT (3)

WILLIAM (6) --- PHILIP (5) --- RICHARD (4)

ROBERT (7) --- IVO (8)

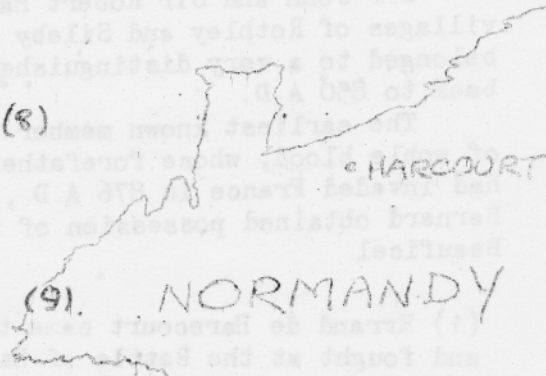
ROBERT (9) NORMANDY

WILLIAM (10) --- OLIVER (11) --- SIR JOHN (12)
DE HARECOURT

LORDS OF THE
MANOR OF SILEBY

1204 SIR ROBERT DE HARECOURT

1220 SIR RICHARD DE HARECOURT



In 1204, when King John was forced to withdraw from France, King Philip took all those French provinces which belonged to the King of England, and added them to his own dominion. In retaliation, King John confiscated the lands of all noblemen in England who paid homage to the King of France, and held them under the title "Terrae Normanorum," or Norman Lands.

The next year, 1205, the King decided to inquire how much he would benefit from the revenues of the confiscated estates, and authorized an assessment of land values, known as "Rotulus de Valore Terrarum Normanorum de Anno Sexto Regis Johannis." The Roll, written in Latin, contains a reference to Rothley and Sibley:

"Roeleg terra qui suit Johannis de Harecourt
est dominicum de omnia regis

Silleby terra Roberti de Harecourt."

As Simon de Montfort the Elder had great possessions in France, and paid homage to King Philip, all his estates in Leicestershire were seized in the King's name by Robert de Roperley, the Sheriff.

The Manor of Sibley as "Norman Land" was taken by King John in February, 1207.

A SHORT PEDIGREE OF THE HARECOURT FAMILY FROM 1066 - 1220 A.D.

Sir John and Sir Robert Harecourt, the father and son who held the villages of Rothley and Sibley at the beginning of the 13th Century, belonged to a very distinguished Norman family who traced their ancestors back to 850 A.D.

The earliest known member of their ancient line was Bernard, a man of noble blood, whose forefathers had lived in Saxony. After the Vikings had invaded France in 876 A.D., and Rollo the Dane had conquered Normandy, Bernard obtained possession of the lordships of Harecourt, Cailleville and Beauficel.

- (1) Errand de Harecourt came to England in 1066 with the Norman invasion, and fought at the Battle of Hastings. William the Conqueror rewarded him with Manors and lands for his services.
- (2) On the death of Errand, Antichel de Harecourt inherited the estates in Leicestershire and Sussex, with the Manor of Stanton Harecourt in Oxfordshire. In Leicestershire, the village of Newton Harecourt still retains the family name, since it was given to Errand de Harecourt 900 years ago. When Antichel died, the estates passed to his brother.
- (3) Robert de Harecourt built the castle of Harecourt in 1100 A.D. He had three sons:
- (4) Richard de Harecourt became a Knight Templar.
- (5) Philip de Harecourt was Dean of Lincoln Cathedral, and assisted at the coronation of King Henry the Second in 1154 A.D.

(6) William de Harecourt was lord of Harecourt, Gaileville and Beauficel in Normandy, and lord of the Manor of Standon-under-Bardon, in Oxfordshire. William had two sons:

(7) Robert de Harecourt, who added more glory to the family name, as Seigneur and Baron de Harecourt. He was the ancestor of the Dukes de Harecourt, Counts d'Aumale, Counts de Tankeville, Viscounts de St-Saveur and a John de Harecourt, who was Marshal of France, under Philip le Beau. He chose to remain in Normandy, and have his English estates to his brother Ivo.

(8) Ivo de Harecourt had one son, Robert.

(9) Sir Robert de Harecourt was born in 1169, and became lord of the Manor of Staunton. He was Sheriff of Leicestershire in 1199, 1201 and 1202, during the reigns of King Richard the First and King John. He married Isabel, the only daughter of Sir Richard de Camville. Their sons were William, Oliver and John.

(10) Sir William de Harecourt was known as "the Englishman," and was lord of the Manor of Bosworth. He held Manors in several counties, and was patron of a number of churches in Leicestershire.

(11) Sir Oliver de Harecourt joined Louis, Prince of France, and fought against King Henry the Third at the Battle of Lincoln in 1217.

(12) SIR JOHN DE HARECOURT was given the lordship of Rothley by King John in 1199. He married Hawis, daughter of Sir William Burdet, an outstanding soldier of that time. When Jerusalem and its sacred relics and treasures had fallen to Saladin in 1187, the Pope called upon the Princes of Europe to take up arms in the cause of the Cross. King Henry the Second levied a tax called "the Saladin tithe" on all property in the kingdom to pay for a Crusade. Sir William Burdet sailed to the Holy Land, and served there several years. On his return to England, he devoted his wealth and energies to the building of a monastery at Ancote, near Tamworth in Staffordshire.

Sir John de Harecourt remained in the favour of King John throughout the seventeen years of his reign. In Leicestershire, in addition to the gift of Rothley Manor, the King gave him Birstall, and only six weeks before the Magna Carta, the Manor of Frowlesworth. On 28th May, 1215, King John sent a Writ to the Sheriff of Warwick and Leicestershire:

" The King to William Cantelupe.

Order that if the Manor of Frellesworth be of the fee of SILEBY or Burstal which We gave Our Trusty John de Harecourt, and pertains to the same, then you are to cause the said John to have seisin forthwith."

Like his father-in-law, Sir William Burdet, Sir John de Harecourt went to the Middle East to fight the Saracens. In 1218, he sailed with William Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, to Egypt, and on 5th November, 1219, took part in the storming and capture of the town of Damietta. He remained with the garrison in the fortress of Damietta for a year, and died there in the spring of 1220.

(13) SIR ROBERT DE HARECOURT 1204 - 1220 A.D.

Sir Robert, the son of Sir John de Harecourt, became lord of the Manor of Sibley in 1204, holding it of Simon de Montfort the Elder, Earl of Leicester.

Sir Robert had land and estates in Normandy, and he paid homage to the King of France, King John confiscated his English possessions as "Norman Lands."

In September, 1204, the King issued a Writ to Robert de Poyer, the Sheriff:

"The King to the Sheriff of Co. Leicester.

Order to extend (assess the value) of the lands of Robert de Harecourt and Robert de Tiberville in his balliwick, and cause Ivo de Veteriponte to have £40 for the custody of the castle of Mountsorrel, and to answer for the rest at the Exchequer. Know that we have granted to our beloved Robert Earl of Leicester, the custody of all the lands which were of Robert de Harecourt and Robert Tiberville and of other Normans of the Earl's fee in the County of Leicester."

Robert FitzParnel, the Earl of Leicester, had possession of Sir Robert de Harecourt's lands in Leicestershire for only a few weeks, as he died in the late autumn.

In October, 1204, King John issued another Writ ;

"The King to the Sheriff of Dorset,

Order to cause Geoffrey de Neville to have £10 of the land which was of Robert de Harecourt in Cherlbourg, which we gave him for guarding our castle of Corf."

By the end of October, Sir Robert de Harecourt had little or no land in England which was not in the hands of King John. However, before the end of 1204, Simon de Montfort the Elder had become the fifth Earl of Leicester, and had presented to him the Manor of Sibley. Even this Manor was taken by the King in 1207, but all the estates were restored at the death of King John in 1217.

Sir Robert de Harecourt died in 1220, the same year his father died at Damietta, in Egypt.

SIR RICHARD DE HARECOURT 1220 - 1247 A.D.

In 1220, Sir Richard de Harecourt suffered the loss of his father, Sir Robert, and his grandfather, Sir John de Harecourt. By right of inheritance, Sir Richard claimed the estates of his father and grandfather. Before Manors and lands could be taken by the heir, a fine had to be paid to the King, who then gave the necessary authority for the transaction.

In 1220, King Henry the Third issued a Writ to William de Luditon, the Sheriff:

" The King to the Sheriff of Co. Leicester.

Know you that Richard de Harecourt has made a fine with Us for £500 to have the lands which were of Robert de Harecourt his father, which accru to him by hereditary right.

We therefore command you to give him seisin of the Manors of Sylebi and Burstal and 40s. rent in Fretheworth."

In this way, Sir Richard de Harecourt inherited the Manor of Sileby from his father, and the Manors of Birstall and Frowlesworth from his grandfather. The Manor of Rothley had been given to the Knights Templars.

As lord of the Manor of Sileby, Sir Richard was also patron of the Parish Church, and appointed clergy to the living. (His work as patron of the church will be described in a series of booklets on the history of Parish Church and biographies of the clergy and patrons).

In 1232, Sir Richard de Harecourt gave a messuage, that is, a dwelling house with its outbuildings and adjoining lands, within the Manor of Frowlesworth, to Sir Stephen de Anvers, ancestor of the Danvers family. Sir Richard's seal on the deed depicted an armed knight on a horse, holding a shield with two bars, and caprisoned similarly. On the reverse side of the seal was an escutcheon with two bars.

Two years later, in 1234, Sir Richard conveyed the Manor of Frowlesworth to Hugh de Anvers.

THE HARECOURT COAT OF ARMS



In the time when knights were protected by armour, and wore helmets, it was difficult to identify one man from another. By the use of coloured devices on his shield and coat, on the trappings of his horse, or the flag on his lance, a knight could be recognised on the field of battle.

The Harecourts carried a golden shield with two red bars, described in heraldry as "Or, two bars gules.

Before 1600 A.D., many churches erected stained glass windows which displayed the Arms of patrons of the living, or benefactors of the parish. In the 16th Century, the Arms of the Harecourt family were to be seen in the Parish Churches of Appleby Magna, Bosworth, Lutterworth, Shakerstone and Sheepy Magna. Although there were two Harecourts who were Manor lords and patrons of Sileby Parish Church, their Arms were not among those in our windows.

THE DESTRUCTION OF MOUNTSORREL CASTLE

The castle of Mountsorrel, which had been built by Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, in 1080, passed by a charter to Robert Le Bossu, Earl of Leicester, in 1150.

On the death of Le Bossu, his son Robert Blanchesmains took possession, but after his revolt and defeat in 1173, King Henry the Second confiscated the castle, and kept it for his own use.

When King Richard the Lionheart came to the throne, he retained the castle, and in 1190, 1191 and 1197, made repairs to the tower over the well, the chamber, the great hall and other buildings within the walls. This work cost the Treasury £36.

King John, who succeeded his brother Richard the First, in 1199, also regarded the strategic position of the castle of such importance, kept the fortress in his own hands, and during the next ten years made repairs to the fabric.

In November, 1204, King John ordered the Sheriff of Leicester to provide Sir Ivo de Veteriponte, the Custodian of the castle, with £40 from the income of confiscated land in Leicestershire. Most of this money belonged to Sir Robert de Harecourt, lord of the Manor of Sileby.

From 1207 to 1215, the power of the King was evident in Sileby. The village with its large fields and rich meadows had been confiscated as "Norman Land," and beyond the meadows rose the square towers of the fortress which covered the hill at Mountsorrel, overlooking the countryside in all directions. To the Sileby villeins, it was "the King's castle," and a symbol of royal power.

In April, 1215, the King ordered timber to be cut in Charnwood Forest, to make hoards for the walls. A hoard was a wooden structure attached to the front of the battlements for the purpose of helping in the defence of a castle in time of war. The King anticipated the coming struggle.

Two months later at Runnymede, on 15th July, 1215, the barons met in arms, and delivered to King John the Magna Carta. Under the terms of that meeting, the castle of Mountsorrel had to be surrendered, and it was given to Saer de Quincy, Earl of Winchester, the husband of Margaret, a daughter of Robert Blanchesmains, who had held it during the reign of King Henry the Second.

Although King John accepted the Magna Carta at Runnymede, as soon as the barons dispersed, he raised a large army of foreign soldiers, to take revenge. The barons appealed to the King of France to help them, and he sent his son, Prince Louis, with 20,000 Frenchmen.

King John died at Newark-on-Trent, little more than twenty miles from Sileby, on 18th October, 1216, and was buried in Worcester Cathedral. He was succeeded by his ten year old son, Henry the Third.

There was much anxiety in Sileby in the spring of 1217, when Mountsorrel became a focal point in the civil war between the barons and the Earl of Pembroke, who was Regent, and Guardian of the kingdom when the King was a boy.

Mountsorrel castle was being held on behalf of Saer de Quincy by one of the Barons, Henry de Braibroc, with ten knights and a strong band of armed men. From the towers of the castle, the village of Sileby could be seen clearly, and farm carts and plough-teams could be observed as they moved across the fields.

During Easter, 1217, news reached the castle that the Regent's army under the command of Ranulf de Blondewille, Earl of Chester and other noblemen, was marching on Mountsorrel to lay siege to the fortress. Henry de Braibroc sent a messenger to Saer de Quincy requesting relief, then left the castle with his men to search the surrounding district for food and supplies to sustain them during the expected siege. Sileby villagers were without doubt compelled at sword point to surrender livestock and grain to these desperate enemies of the King. On such perilous occasions, most of the people in Sileby took refuge in the Parish Church.

Henry de Braibroc returned to the castle with the booty, and was secure within the granite walls by the time the royalist army arrived and encircled the castle.

Excitement rose in Sileby, as travellers from Leicester passing through the village told of Saer de Quincy with a great number of English, and the Count de la Perche at the head of 20,000 Frenchmen were moving towards Mountsorrel to relieve the castle.

The braver inhabitants gathered on the high ground of the village to watch the conflict between the two armies, but the battle did not take place. The besieging soldiers began to withdraw, and clouds of smoke curled into the sky as they set fire to battering-rams and heavy siege engines which were too cumbersome to take on a forced march.

Henry de Braibroc left the castle in the charge of a garrison commander, and joined Saer de Quincy. The Anglo-French army marched on to Lincoln, where they captured the town and its castle.

The Earl of Pembroke, the Regent, summoned forces from all over the kingdom, and moved on Lincoln with a great army of men. On 19th May, 1217, the French were totally defeated. Although history records a "Battle" of Lincoln, the only men slain that day were the Count de la Perche and two of his officers.

On 20th May, the day after the battle, the young King Henry the Third commanded Ranulf de Blondewille to destroy the Castle of Mountsorrel, which he described as "a nest of the devil, and a den of thieves and robbers." When news of the disaster at Lincoln reached the castle, the garrison fled.

The castle, which had been part of the landscape for 137 years, was razed to the ground. It is said that people in the neighbourhood helped the Earl of Chester in the work of demolition.

It is believed that many of the large granite stones now seen in the tower of Sileby Parish Church, were once part of that "nest of the devil" at Mountsorrel, and were brought here when the tower was enlarged some years after the destruction of the castle.

Today, the Castle Hill at Mountsorrel is adorned by a Memorial to those who gave their lives in the cause of freedom in the two World Wars.

ADVERTISEMENTS

HIGHGATE TAXIS

YOUR LOCAL TAXI SERVICE -

ANY DISTANCE
ANY WHERE
ANY TIME

AND NOW ALSO A SEVEN-SEATER MINI - BUS

How do I get a TAXI or the MINI - BUS ?

RING SILEBY 2015

Or you can book them at the

Modern Maid Baby Wear Shop, 28 King Street - Telephone Sileby 2962

Please remember the name - "HIGHGATE TAXIS."

Proprietor: Mr. H.J.Taylor.

* * * * *
GOOD QUALITY PAINTING

AND DECORATING -

For HIGH-CLASS interior & exterior work

By

JOHN SKORIK

Telephone SILEBY 2057

Free Estimates. Reasonable Prices

* * * * *

BYGONE SILEBY

The next booklet, Number 12, continues the story of bygone Sileby WAKES, and describes the fairground with the various roundabouts and side-shows about 1900.

Some of our older villagers will remember the "Show of Living Pictures," the Boxing Booth, Fortune Tellers, Freak Shows etc. Every item in the booklet has been remembered and told by Sileby folks who visited the Wakes show-ground in those days.