

## Farnhill Hall

Author unknown

“In the days of dim antiquity,”

when the Saxons were the ruling power in England, Farnhill, in all probability, formed part of the possessions of Earl Edwin, a son of the Earl of Mercia. Bolton was the principal seat of Earl Edwin, and he had extensive possessions in Craven.

The earliest definite mention of the name of an owner of the lands of the village is Camel. He was possessed of the manor (under the King) when the great Domesday Survey was made by William the Conqueror in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Camel was probably an Anglian, or Englishman, and he, or his ancestors, would be the chief men in the village in the days of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066) the last king of the old English stock.

Nothing can be said of Camel, as we cannot be sure that the Camel who held land in one place is the same Camel who held land in an adjoining district. Whether Camel of Farnhill and Bradley was the great Camel, the under lord of Bradford, does not appear. Camelbar held land in Eastburn, and also in other neighbouring manors, and it has been said that the suffix “bar” means “son”, or “bairn”. This may be so, but it is also possible that Camel is a contraction of Camelbar. All we can do, however, for these early owners of Farnhill is to leave their solitary names on record.

After the conquest this (Farnhill) became a mesne manor in the parish of Kildwick, and the manor house, now Farnhill Hall, probably occupies its original site. The last mention of the first lords discovered by Dr. Whitaker occurs in an award made in 1318 by the Canons of Bolton to Willm. de Fernhill, for a destructive raid upon his property by the Scots, after their triumph at Bannockburn. Later than this, however, a John de Fernhill was witness to a deed dated at Glusburn, 14<sup>th</sup> Edward III (A.D. 1340); and in the 40<sup>th</sup> Edward III the family of Copley appears, from whom early in the next century the Eltofts acquired the manor and retained possession until 1636, when it was bought by the Currers. Its subsequent transmission is well known.

Farnhill Hall (F.E. Slingsby, Esq.) with its ivied front and towers standing amid a framework of ancestral trees, is an interesting feature in the view from the railway between Kildwick and Cononley. Remembrances of the marauding Scots probably led to its erection as a seat of defence, the outer walls having an average thickness of six feet, and in some places are over eight feet thick. The cellars are hewn out of solid rock, and from which there is a passage (now blocked) that is said to have communicated with Royd House on the opposite side of the valley.