

The rent is ... *how much* ?

Many people will have heard the term “peppercorn”, meaning a token rent which is not necessarily collected by the landlord. The Local History Group has found a couple of examples of an interesting variation on the concept of a “peppercorn”.

- From a medieval document called the Feet of Fines for Yorkshire, for the year 1342 (http://www26.us.archive.org/stream/feetoffinesforco42bail/feetoffinesforco42bail_djvu.txt):

Westminster. Octave of Hilary, 15 Edw. III, 1342.

Robert de Bradelay of Hamundthorp, quer., Thomas de Berewyke of Farnhill and Alice his wife, def., of 2 messuages, 30 acres of land, 6 acres of meadow, and 2 acres of wood, in Farnhill near Kildewyke : To hold to Thomas and Alice for life, of Robert and his heirs, paying yearly one rose at the Nativity of St. John Baptist [June 24th] for all service to them, and doing all services to the chief lords ; remainders in succession to Robert, William, and Nicholas, sons of the said Robert de Bradelay, and the heirs male of their bodies ; reversion to Robert de Bradelay and his heirs.

Hamunthorp is Hamblethorpe, at one time a separate manor within Bradley. All that remains today is the name Hamblethorpe Farm.

It seems possible that Alice was the daughter of Robert de Bradelay and this legal transaction is a way for Robert to provide land for his daughter and her husband for their lifetimes, while ensuring that the ownership of the land then reverted to his sons on their death.

- From a collection of hand-written sheets headed “Hagar Papers”, which contain transcripts of old legal documents relating to Kildwick Grange; the following extract seems to be part of an assessment of the estate of one John Cote being passed on to his son, also called John. It is dated 1622:

The extente and their yearly value of all the messuages, lands tenements & hereditaments late of John Cote late of Kildwick Grange in Craven, yeoman deceased the nyneth day of Julye last past before the fynding of the Office & which been distended & comen in possession & reversion unto John Cote his son & nexte heir being of age fyve years and eleven moneths at the tyme of the death of his said father ...

It is found that the said John Cote by deed dated 11 or 6 May last before the fynding of the office for the consideration in the same specified did graunt & to fearme lett unto Anne Swyer & Roger Swyer 5 closes of land arable in p[asture ?] conteyning by est. 21 acres pcell of premises within mentioned with a newe barn thereupon built with [... text missing ...] to them their executors & assignees from the date of the said deed for the terme of M [1000] yeares for & under the yearly rent of a red rose ...

Not a bad deal really. A 1000-year lease on 21 acres of land and a new barn; all for one red rose per year.

The earliest rose rent that is still collected seems to date from 1381, and that also payable on 24th June each year (<http://www.ahbtt.org.uk/history/knollys-rose-ceremony/>).

What next – can you help ?

Do you have any information on the early history of Kildwick or Farnhill that you'd be willing to share with us ? If so, please email admin@farnhill.co.uk