

St Nicholas Buckland Rippers

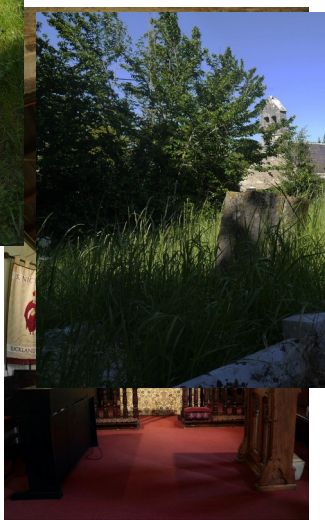


The story of this church has been taken from a number of sources and is, by collective assumption, reasonably accurate. The story is not definitive however and is always open to critique, correction and addition. All contributions welcome.

All photography c. A Wood

Buckland Rippers is a hamlet 2 miles south-west of Upwey and 4 miles north-west of Weymouth. The small church was built in 1655 after fire destroyed the earlier medieval church. It is dedicated to St Nicholas and has 100 sittings, the registers date from 1665.

Buckland derives from the Old English bocland 'charter land', Rippers is a manorial addition from the family of de Riuers or de Ripariis there in the 13th Century.



A Brief and Tentative History of Buckland Rippers Manor and Church

'The wife of HUGH FITZGRIP had one manor which is called BOCHELANT which three thanes* held in parage on the day when King Edward was alive and dead.

So Hutchins relates in his History of Dorset, that four Saxon knights owned the Manor in the time of King (Saint) Edward 'the Confessor' ie – before the Norman invasion.

Soon after 1066, the year of the Norman invasion of England and of King Edward's death, the Domesday Book (1086 et sec) records that the Manor was held by the wife of one of the first Norman sheriffs (of Dorset?), a certain Hugh Fitzgrip. (Hugh - a man-at-arms, Grip - son of.)

It seems that, with the authority (or not ?!) of William the Conqueror, he took possession of land from church and laity round about but died before the returns of 1084 were made. His estate passed to his wife, Margaret, who fought off various claims - 'depredations and injustices' - by (among others?!) the Abbot of Abbotsbury from whom she allegedly 'wrestled it by force'!

[It is likely that the Manor was one of many acquired by Norman nobles of the time, as a spoil of the Conquest. The legitimacy of many of these acquisitions was questionable; it was only as a result of the Domesday survey that such holdings were authorised as gifts from King William to his favoured nobles to be held in perpetuity.

The Manor, though never very impressive, was probably very different and somewhat grander, with more extensive holdings (esp. to the east?) than it has today. And that, along with the surrounding land, buildings and workers, was all there was to Buckland Rippers! The stone is thought to be very local and there is evidence of some ancient quarrying nearby.]

Some 200 years later, in 1285, the Manor came to the de Rippers family (alias Rivers, de Riparius). It was during this time that surnames were adopted or added to so 'Bochelant' or 'Bochelande' may be the 'normanised' Old English word 'Bocland' – (a land held by charter). Or, perhaps they were just known as the 'riversiders',
or
Riparians.

By 1310 PETER de MALORE was living in the Manor. He 'held half a knight's fee' together with ALIANOR de COLBERE, 'relict of Robert de Colbere'. In other words – Peter and Robert's widow held it jointly! He may have been the great uncle of Thomas Mallory, the author of 'Morte d'Arthur'. He built the church (parts of which remain) and instated the first rector, a John Lawrence. (An undated notice hangs in the church, a copy of which is included hereunder.)

By 1360 the estate had passed to the FRAMPTONS (although it is recorded that by 1399 the 'Parliament Lords' of Buckland Rippers were the Earls of Marsh.)

The Framptons (who became Lords of Moreton) have remained patrons of the church to the present day. During the Civil War (1610-1615?) the Manor, associated buildings and the church were partly destroyed (Cromwell / Dissolution of the Monasteries?) but James Brampton started to rebuild the ruins in 1655 but died before the work was completed and was buried in the church. The chancel, font and rear wall** predate the damage. The chalice and paten are of 1663.



JOSEPH DAMER, who became Lord of Milton and then the Earl of Dorchester, bought the Manor in 1704. He finally lived at Milton Abbey and entirely rebuilt Milton Abbas, supposedly to house his minions out of sight and mind. He gave the Manor to his son John. John married ANNE SEYMOUR CONWAY, a relative of Warpole's, of Nelson and of the Duke of Argyle. Her father was the Governor of Jersey. Often working with Portland stone, she was a sculptress of considerable talent; she gave a bust of Nelson (now in the City of London Guildhall) to Napoleon and Joshephine. She fashioned a bust of Queen Caroline whom she befriended during her trial. There is a statue of her in the British Museum.

She inherited Strawberry Hill from Horace Warpole and bought York House in Twickenham. After the death of her husband, she built a new west wing to the Manor in 1790.



In 1825 the Manor passed to her sister-in-law, CAROLINE DAMER who sold it to her relatives, the CHURCHILLS, relatives of the Duke of Marlborough and Sir Winston, who held the Manor till Edwardian times. It is their crest that oversees the front door.

The DOUGLASES ran the Manor as a convalescent home during the First World War. Since then, what was once a single entity has become a modern village and the Manor and its properties have become fragmented. Many parts are now in separate ownership and many of the ancillary buildings have been demolished. Some have retained much of their 18th century appearance and medieval ambience; others have been replaced or modified for modern use (as the Coachhouse). In addition, many new domestic buildings have been built (notably on the approach road to the west) on what was originally estate land. However, some of the Manor's medieval ambience has been tenuously retained in the immediate vicinity of the original buildings and of the church, and is much valued.



More recently in the 20th Century, ownership has passed from Canon H W M Hearsey to Mr and Mrs P W Mummery (1964) and then to Maj. and Mrs D Clary (1976)

*Thegns – pre-conquest nobles below the rank of earls. Local estate owners with at least 5 hides of land and a residence. Backbone of the army.

** The rear (North) wall was rebuilt in the 1980s, with funds raised mostly by local effort.

An undated Notice in the Church reads:-

Over the porch is carved J.F. 1655, being the date of the rebuilding. The Chalice and Paten are 1663. In the chancel are two gravestones, one for James Frampton, Esqre., who died in 1631, and another for Jane, his former wife without date. Near the Font is another to the memory of John Scovil, who died in 1707. It seems that these gravestones are now covered by a tile flooring.

The ancient Register is lost, the present one begins 1659.

Buckland Rippers is a small village, which takes its name from ancient Lords de Riperis or Rivers it is situated about a mile from Radipole.

The Framptons owned it from the time of Richard II, 1377. They sold the Manor and its demesnes to Joseph Damer in 1704; Lady Caroline Damer sold it in 1825 to The Revd. W. R. H. Churchill, in whose family it still remains. (??)

The Manor House stands near the Church, and together with it was burnt in 1655.

The old Rectory was close to the Church, but has been entirely demolished. The present Rectory* was built soon after 1842, when the Revd. J. S. Litchfield was the Rector.

Buckland Rippers is to be found in Domesday. Book, and some the above information has been extracted from Hutchins History of Dorset, Vol. 1. Edited 1774.

*Now Buckland House.

Information gleaned by Andrew Clary of The British Museum and member of a previous owner's family is acknowledged with thanks.

