

The Village. 1201-1339AD

The village street began and ended in common land. At its southern end was a very large common situated near where the Surgery is now which extended up the hill towards the Warren and across the existing road towards the fen. At the north end was another equally large common of around 20 acres which became known as Mutford Green, again straddling the street. Although these areas of land belonged to the lord of the manor under feudal law the right to graze animals was granted to the villagers so that they were able to provide for themselves. This was in addition to the piece of land which was attached to their cottages.

The Market.

In 1201 King John granted Lakenheath the right to hold a market and Anchor Lane was its site. Better off villagers were able to sell at least some of their produce so a market was very important to them. The granting of market rights also added prestige to the village.

J T Munday.

Because Ely Abbey received rent from the market stalls the Prior of Ely could not have been disinterested in this economic activity!

Things became complicated when the Prior of the Abbey of St. Edmundsbury appealed against the granting of Lakenheath's market because it was in breach of St. Edmundsbury's legal rights, called 'Liberties' and that it damaged the Abbey economically. Lakenheath's market Charter was annulled but the villagers continued to hold one with the support of the Prior of Ely.

Negotiations to settle the disagreement failed and the annulment being disregarded, the High Sheriff of Suffolk ordered the Prior of St. Edmundsbury to enforce the closure, whereupon 600 men at arms were sent to Lakenheath. Something of a riot took place after which produce and villagers' cattle were seized by the men at arms. They were returned later.

The market was reinstated about 100 years later when times seem to have been more settled.

Villagers could be licenced to own a small boat, enabling them to fish and to transport produce to Ely using the Fen's waterways and the Little Ouse.

*M Bailey
C Dyer*

From about 1300 to 1870 is known as the 'Little Ice Age' when the climate was colder and weather more extreme. It's known that skating was a way of getting about in the fens, probably using the shin bones of cattle as skates.

Wikipedia

The Vicar's Seal.

In 1339 the vicar was John de Wreskynworth. To authenticate his signature on documents he made an impression in wax on the document with his personal seal. This seal was lost on the ancient path to Undley which runs by the Brendan Fulham Centre and was found by local metal detectorist PAUL ROLPH.



S' IOHIS : VICARII DE LAKINGHYTHE

expanded:

SIGILLUM JOHANNIS VICARII DE LAKINGHYTHE .

which translates :

The Seal of John , Vicar of Lakenheath !

The spelling of the village name puzzled me at first but I've checked the place name books and Lakenheath was spelled as follow

1020-1023 : LAKINGHETHE
1086 : LAKINGAHETHE
c.1120 ? : LACHINGAHUTHA.
c.1150 }