

Annual Report 2019 – Shapcott Barton (Chenutdestana)

Shapcott Barton, Chenutdestana, Knowstone estate are all synonym names for this ancient farmstead, which goes back to before 1066 when it was owned by Algar.

The Domesday record records 'Algar has a manor called Chenutdestana (The Stone of Canut) and the name from which the village of Knowstone got its name. A true old manor is where courts were held.

This last year we have continued to open the grounds for the NGS cancer charities.

Although this is tiring, time consuming work for us, it is also interesting because of some of the visitors we meet.

Some of them come to see the two national plant collections etc, and others to learn how to dowse – not only for water, but also to locate objects, illnesses, food intolerances etc, and many go away enlightened and fascinated. Even a sceptic went away with his newly found skill. He seemed almost disappointed I had proved him wrong in his beliefs.

One group of visitors were lichen specialists and later came to do a survey of the lichens on the farm. They found almost a hundred different ones here, some quite rare.

Another visitor was an orchid enthusiast and pointed out features which make each species so unique. Many have just appeared here on unfertilised grassland.

The mini arboretum we planted a few years ago was another area visitors found to their liking. We have planted one of almost all of Britain's native trees, so that children can learn how to identify them.

Another visitor was interested in Viking history and put me in touch with a lecturer at Exeter University, who is keen to visit Shapcott (Chenutdestana) because of its Viking past. I must organise this visit very soon.

Many visitors find the history of this ancient small estate very interesting. A few years ago we were very kindly given copies of newspaper articles relating to Shapcott going back to 1830.

One of them in 1878 relates to Rabies (Hydrophobia) being present in the area – a rabid dog attacked and bit 5 sheep and a bullock died from being bitten. Another article relates to the parish races being held here, and another of drunken exploits etc etc. All are most interesting and can be read here if anyone is interested.

Shapcott (Chenutdestana) has changed hands very few times in its long history of over 1000 years.

The Shapcotts were descendants of Algar and they lived here for more than 700 years – when it was nicknamed ‘Shapcott’s Barton’. This name then stuck – rather than calling it by its original name ‘Chenutdestana’ which is after all a bit of a mouthful.

‘Stana’ means stone – reading it backwards it says ‘Stone of Canut’, the name from which Knowstone village got its name.

One of the more recent owners (Mr Campbell) used its original name –The Knowstone Estate – (Chenutdestana), because it was no longer owned by the Shapcotts.

In 1966 Mr Campbell sold off a small area of Shapcott for building bungalows at Roachill. In our vast collection of deeds and other documents we have correspondence between him and a Mr W. Bucknell who was renting the farm from him at the time.

Mr W. Bucknell obviously wanted a reduction in rent because he was losing a small piece of the farmland (a map copy of the original is included).

When that strip of land was sold off covenants were put into the deeds of all those properties to safeguard the interests of neighbours and all the successors in title of the farm, a piece of which was sold off. It is referred to in their deeds as the Knowstone Estate (Shapcott) .

The parish council should be aware of these many covenants so that they are not contravened.

A friend recently told us that he had stopped NDDC selling off a piece of land for building houses because it had been left to them by a lady specifically for a playing field and this covenant was in the deeds. It was only because Mr Jackson knew what was in the deeds that he was able to prevent NDDC from flouting the legal covenant.

I have attached 3 photos of the gardens here, taken over the last year.

Please remember anyone is welcome to visit anytime by prior arrangement. Hopefully next year I will have more knowledge to convey on Knowstone’s Viking past.

Kinds Regards

Anita and Bill Allen