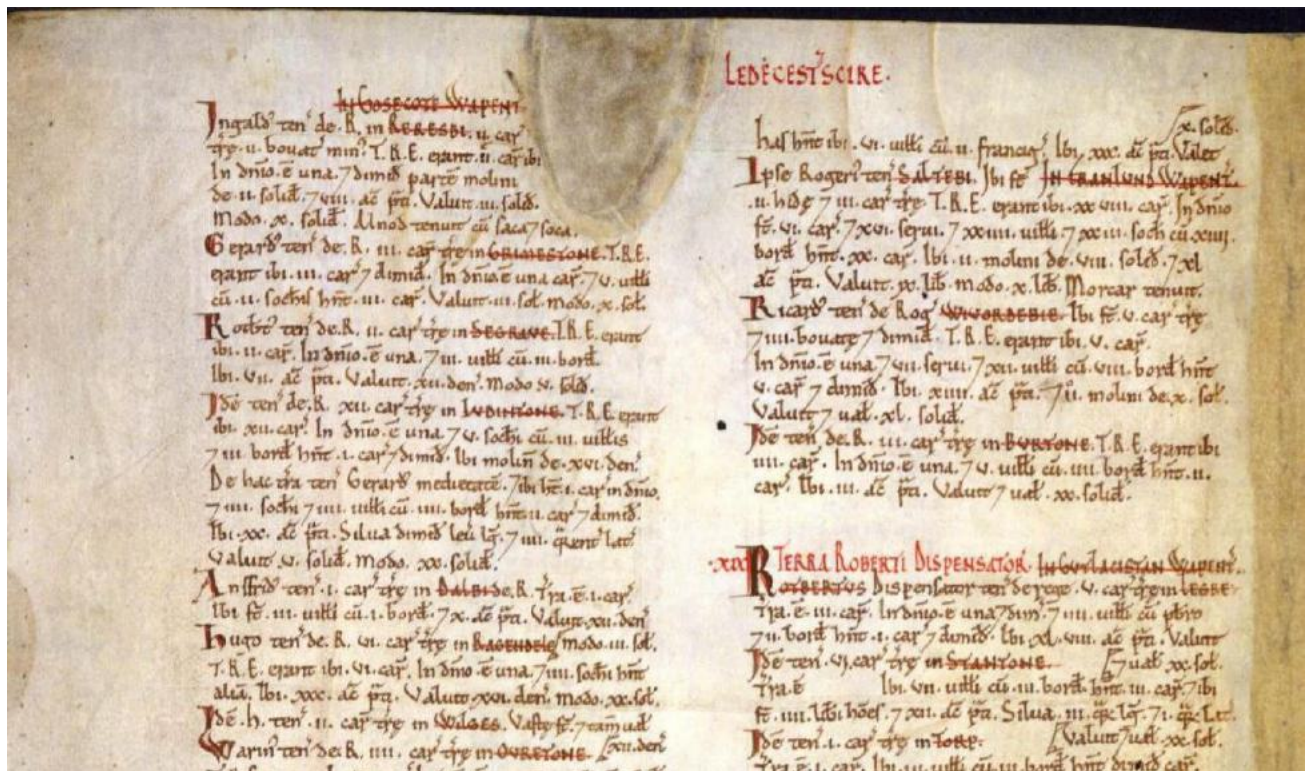


# Manorfield Detectives.



This is a page from the Domesday Book.

What's the Domesday Book?

It was a record made in 1086 by William the Conqueror of all the lands in England, which he now owned now that Edward the Confessor was dead.

The Normans had invaded England in 1066. They invaded because William of Normandy said he had been declared the heir to the English throne by Edward the Confessor, (the King who'd just died), because he'd had no children of his own.

There was a BIG problem with this, Edward, even though he was the King of England, had no right to do that. It wasn't his decision to make.

## Witan

What on earth is a Witan?

Well, in Anglo-Saxon England a Witan was a council or group of men, (bishops, eldersmen and thanes), who amongst many other things could decide who should be king.

Just because you were the son of the king, it didn't mean you would automatically become king after their death.



Here is an image from an illuminated manuscript, of a Witan meeting with an Anglo-Saxon king.

So, Edward shouldn't have promised the throne of England to William, (if indeed he did), even though they were distantly related.

After Edward's death, Harold Godwinson (a Saxon from England) also declared himself King, stating that Edward the Confessor had made him heir.

This caused a lot of trouble, as there was a third man who also wanted the throne of England for himself.

Harold Hadrada, already the King of Norway also wanted to be king of England. This wasn't going to be easy to resolve and invasions were how it was to be settled.



In September 1066, Harold Hadrada invaded England near York and Harold Godwinson marched north from London to fight. On September 25<sup>th</sup> the King of Norway was killed at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. Harold Godwinson was safe but all was not well, because William had by now invaded on the south coast near Hastings.

So, Harold Godwinson and his soldiers, after fighting off the Viking invasion of Harold Hadrada, marched 180 miles south again in 4 days to then fight the Normans.

It was very nearly a victory for Harold here too but, sadly as the Bayeux Tapestry appears to show and tradition tells us, Harold was hit in the eye by an arrow and died.



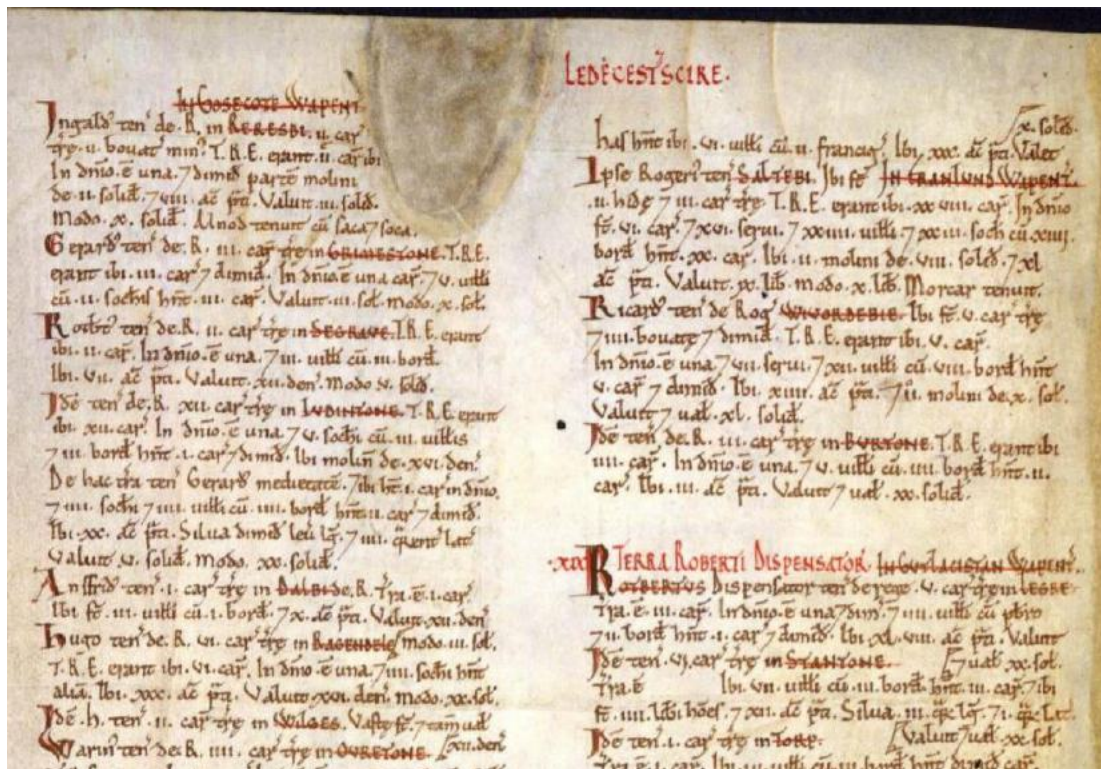
After the Normans won the Battle of Hastings in 1066, William had himself crowned King in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066.

After all that invading and marching and fighting and marching, William of Normandy became the first Norman King of England and **everything** changed.

As a reward for their efforts, the Norman knights who'd fought with William replaced almost all of the Anglo-Saxon Lords. French became the language of the court and the English peasants (that's you and me) were seen as very much as the lowest of the low.

Not a happy place to live unless you were the King or a Norman Knight.

William decided he needed to know as much about the country as he could as he was now the king. He needed a census, a comprehensive list of who ran which estates and parishes. More importantly, how much tax could he charge for those lands, because Kings always needed money and peasants were expected to pay.



This is the page which shows Stoney Stanton or Stanton, who owned it, how much it was worth and who lived there. Can you see it at the bottom right of the page?

You won't be able to read the entry for Stoney Stanton unless you can read abbreviated latin. So here is what it says.

The same man (Robert Despenser) holds 6 carucates of land in Stanton. There is \_\_\_ land. There are 7 villans with 3 bordars have 3 ploughs and there are 4 free men and 12 acres of meadow. There is woodland 3 fulongs long and 1 furlong broad. It was and is worth 20 shillings.

This shows there were about 14 families living in Stanton in 1086, 7 villans + 3 bordars + 4 freemen = 14.

To work out a total population the formula used is that an average family of the time would be 5.

So  $14 \times 5 =$  If you partition it  $10 \times 5 = 50 + 4 \times 5 = 20 \quad 50 + 20 = 70$

The total population of Stanton in 1086 was about 70 people.

Robert Despenser also owned land in the villages of Leire, Primethorpe, Sutton in the Elms, Ratcliffe Culey, Shakerstone, Congerstone, Snarestone, Odstone and Fleckney.

Latin was the language used by scribes (a person employed to write out or copy documents before the invention of printing).

The new rulers of England (Normans) spoke French and the people spoke English but not as we speak it today.

The link below is spoken Anglo-Saxon as we would have heard and spoken it before the Norman Invasion of 1066.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaCjgf3\\_T6M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaCjgf3_T6M)

So, 'Stantone' was part of the lands of the Norman, Robert Despenser, in the Guthlaxton Wapentake.

Well, I hear you ask, where is Guthlaxton and what is a Wapentake?

Some very strange vocabulary indeed.

Guthlaxton is the area of Leicestershire to which Stoney Stanton belonged.

In the Anglo-Saxon era, land in the county of Leicestershire was split into 4 Wapentakes.

This is an Old Norse word from the time that we were ruled by the Danes, elsewhere in England these divisions of land were known as Hundreds. These were worked out as enough land to feed 100 households under the supervision of a Hundredman or Hundred Eolder (Elder).

So, originally there were 4 Hundreds or Wapentakes in Leicestershire and we were in Guthlaxton.

This name Guthlaxton means Guthlac's stone, people would have met at the stone on Guthlac's land which is actually in Cosby, not far from here.

They might need to meet because of a dispute or disagreement with a neighbour. They would meet at the court held in their Wapentake or Hundred about once a month.

Later in 1346, other Hundreds were added and we became part of the Sparkenhoe Wapentake or Hundred. These land division names are still occasionally used today over a thousand years later.

### **Glossary of Terms.**

**Villan** = A peasant who had to work for his lord for two or three days per week, but who also farmed land for himself. Villans were the wealthiest and most numerous of unfree peasants. The spelling could also be villains or villeins.

**Freeman** = was a man who was free and might own his own small amount of land but who still had to work for his lord when required.

**Bordar** = an unfree peasant with less land than a villan.

**Carucate** = A unit of land measurement sometimes used for tax purposes, in the Danelaw, how much land could be ploughed by 1 team of 8 oxen in 1 day.

**Furlong** = an area of land for taxation, generally about 220 yards long. (This is equal to nearly 202 meters).

**Plough** = a team of 8 oxen and the actual plough tool.



**Eldorman** = the Anglo-Saxon term for an Earl, someone of high rank, sometimes of royal blood.

**Thane** = an Anglo-Saxon Lord who was given land directly from the king.

How many people do you think live in 'Stantone' today?