

The Manor of Eastbourne Medsey

A BRIEF HISTORY



by The Right Revd Dr Damien Mead
25th Lord of the Manor of Eastbourne Medsey

About this revised edition

This edition rewrites and consolidates the earlier history of the Manor of Eastbourne Medsey, first compiled in 2022 and revised in March 2025. Its purpose is twofold: to preserve the narrative of an ancient Sussex lordship, and to distinguish more clearly between what is securely documented, what is a reasonable historical reconstruction, and what belongs to modern emblematic usage.

That distinction matters particularly in the medieval and Tudor portions of the story. From the later sixteenth century onward, Eastbourne Medsey is repeatedly visible in surveys, rentals, court material and estate papers. The earlier history is more difficult. The association with the de L'Aigle lords of Pevensey and with Michelham Priory is plausible and has long formed part of the reconstructed descent of the Manor, but the surviving material reviewed for this edition does not establish an uninterrupted chain of title from the twelfth century to the Sackvilles. Where the evidence is less certain, this account says so.

Illustrations in this edition. This illustrated edition also restores the historical maps, manuscript facsimiles, armorial illustrations and photographic material that appeared in the March 2025 history published on the Manor website. They are retained as part of the documentary history of the Manor's own presentation; where an image is illustrative rather than primary evidence, the caption makes that distinction clear. The current Manorial Emblem and Episcopal Arms are reproduced from the later supplied artwork and supersede the lower-resolution reproductions in the earlier PDF.

How to read the history

'Documented' means supported by an identifiable archival, official or published source.

'Reconstructed' means a historical conclusion drawn from related evidence but not yet proved by a continuous surviving title instrument. The modern manorial emblem and Episcopal Arms are discussed as symbolic and ecclesiastical heraldic displays; neither is presented as a grant by the College of Arms.

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1. The place: where the Downs meet the sea

Eastbourne Medsey - also encountered in forms such as Medes, Meades and Meads - belongs to the historic landscape south and south-west of the old town of Eastbourne, towards the chalk heights of Beachy Head. The modern village of Meads occupies the most familiar part of that landscape. Before nineteenth-century development it was a markedly rural district of farms, downland pasture and tracks between the sea, the Downs and the older settlements farther inland.

The phrase 'Where the Downs meet the Sea' captures the character of the place unusually well. It also explains why the modern identity of the Manor has naturally drawn on chalk cliffs, open downland and the sea as visual motifs. The phrase should be understood as a modern descriptive motto rather than an etymological proof of the name Medsey. Medieval spelling was fluid, and the appearance of the surname de Medese in local material of 1296, noted by Walter Budgen in his 1912 history of Eastbourne, adds another strand to the problem of the name without finally resolving it.

By the mid-nineteenth century Meads was still recognisably a small settlement. A contemporary visitor's guide described scattered houses inhabited chiefly by farmers and fishermen. That world was soon transformed by Eastbourne's growth as a resort, yet the underlying geography remains legible: the town rises towards the Downs and ends dramatically at one of the most famous chalk coastlines in England.

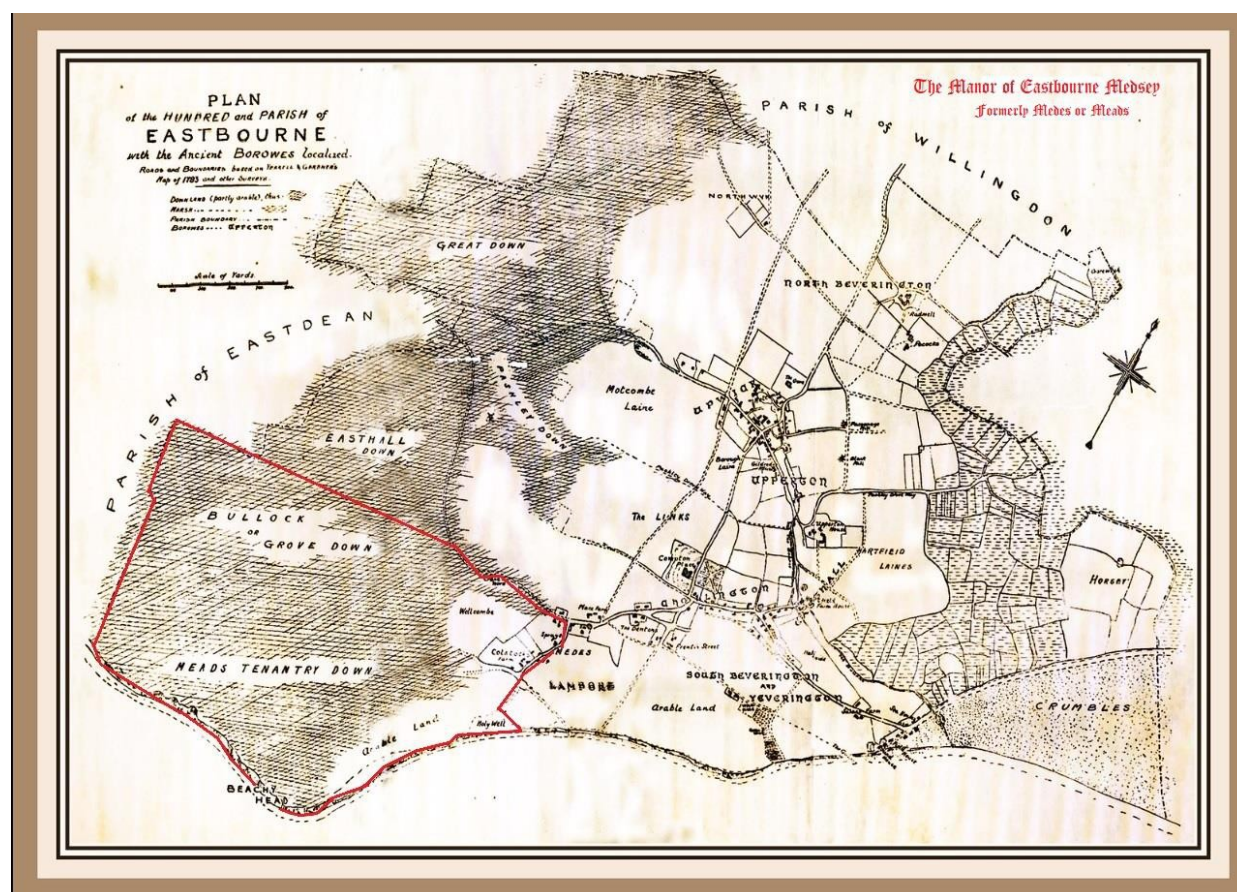


Plate 1. Plan of the Hundred and Parish of Eastbourne, with the traditional Medsey/Meads area outlined in red, as reproduced on the cover of the March 2025 history.

A note on boundaries

No definitive modern title plan exists for a lordship of the manor merely because the lordship exists. HM Land Registry expressly notes that lordship titles are incorporeal and generally have no title plan showing the original manor's extent. Any modern map of the historic manor should therefore be labelled as an illustrative reconstruction unless supported by a specific historic survey. [1]

2. Before the manor: prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon landscapes

The history of Medsey begins long before the vocabulary of manors. Bullock Down and the surrounding chalk landscape preserve evidence of repeated occupation over thousands of years. The Eastbourne Downland archaeological record includes a Neolithic concentration of worked flint on Bullock Down, interpreted as an occupation or settlement site dating broadly to 4000-2351 BC. The wider Bullock Down landscape contains prehistoric, Roman and medieval field systems and settlement evidence. [2]

Later prehistoric communities exploited the light chalk soils and commanding views. Archaeological work in and around Eastbourne has demonstrated that the Downs were not an empty fringe but an intensively used landscape of farming, burial and movement. In the Roman period, the area continued to support settlement and agriculture; finds from Bullock Down have also been discussed in relation to the Roman villa at Eastbourne and the wider Romano-British economy of the coast.

Anglo-Saxon settlement followed. Eastbourne's name is associated with the 'bourne' or stream that gave the old settlement its identity, while cemeteries and other finds demonstrate substantial early medieval occupation. The later manorial pattern grew out of this older agricultural landscape. It is therefore safer to say that the institutions which became the medieval manor were rooted in pre-Conquest landholding and community organisation than to assign a precise pre-1066 date to the lordship now called Eastbourne Medsey.

3. Domesday Eastbourne and the problem of origins

The Domesday Book of 1086 does not identify 'Eastbourne Medsey' by that name. It records Eastbourne in several holdings, including estates associated with Robert, Count of Eu, and Robert, Count of Mortain. It also records nearby Chollington. The multiplicity of entries is significant: later Eastbourne contained several manors and sub-manors, sometimes bearing confusingly similar names. That complexity is one reason why retrospective identification of a single Domesday entry as the later Medsey manor must be approached with caution.



Plate 2. Illustrative Domesday composite from the March 2025 history: an image of Domesday Book beside a later representation of William I. The portrait is illustrative, not contemporary.

The older history of Eastbourne Medsey proposed that the large Mortain holding, or alternatively Chollington, may have contained the land which later emerged as Medsey. Either is possible as a territorial hypothesis, but Domesday does not provide the decisive link. The documentary identity of Medsey becomes clearer only in later medieval and, especially, Tudor records.

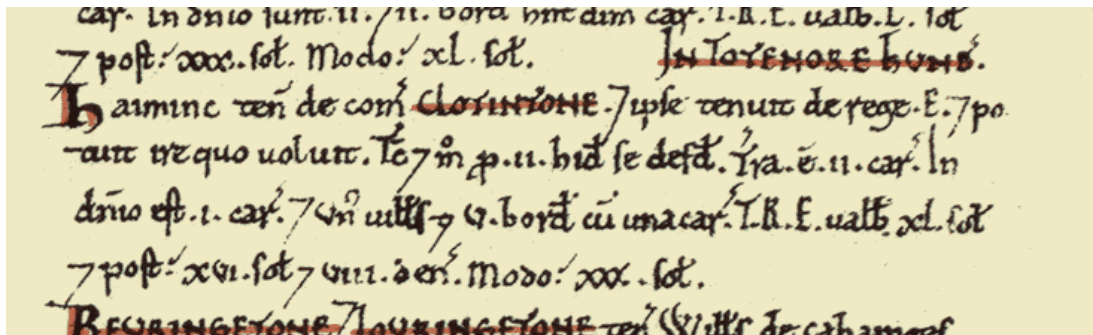


Plate 3. Domesday manuscript extract reproduced in the earlier history in connection with the Chollington entry. It is retained here as a visual reference to the Domesday evidence discussed in this section.

Why the early history is difficult

Eastbourne's later manorial landscape included more than one manor using names related to Meads or Medsey. Later archive descriptions distinguish the Sackville manor from Devonshire/Cavendish manors with similar local names. This makes it unsafe to treat every medieval or early-modern reference to 'Meads' as necessarily referring to the same lordship. [3]

4. The medieval reconstruction: de L'Aigle and Michelham Priory

The traditional reconstruction of Eastbourne Medsey's medieval descent connects the manor with the de L'Aigle (de Aquila) lords of Pevensey. The family held the Honour of the Eagle and possessed extensive lands in the Rape of Pevensey. Gilbert de Aquila founded the Augustinian Priory of the Holy Trinity at Michelham in 1229. Historic England confirms both the founder and the date; the priory was dissolved in 1536. [4]

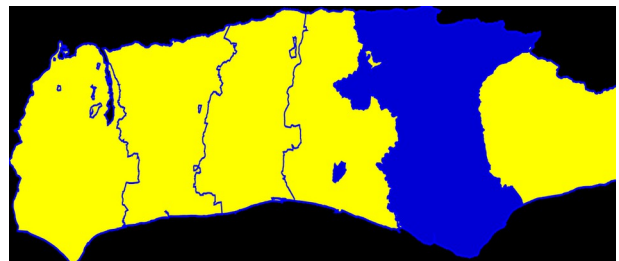


Plate 4. Traditional de L'Aigle armorial device and a map of the Sussex rapes with Pevensey highlighted, both reproduced from the March 2025 history. The armorial image is illustrative of the family association.

The foundation charter, as discussed in nineteenth-century Sussex antiquarian scholarship, certainly conveyed Gilbert's lordship of Michelham, his park at Pevensey, rents, men and lands or rights in several neighbouring places. The surviving text cited in that scholarship does not, however, expressly name Eastbourne Medsey. [5] A later specialist account of Eastbourne Medsey considers that the lordship appears to have formed part of the Michelham estate, and the subsequent association of Medsey rentals with Brighton Michelham strengthens that possibility. [6]



Plate 5. A generic emblem of the Holy Trinity used in the March 2025 edition to illustrate Michelham Priory. The earlier history expressly noted that the Priory's own arms are not known and that this device was representative only.

For that reason this revised account retains the Michelham connection, but with a qualification absent from the earlier edition: it should be described as a plausible and established reconstruction rather than as a continuously proved chain of lordship from Gilbert de Aquila. The same caution applies to numbering individual de L'Aigle lords as successive Lords of Eastbourne Medsey unless further primary title evidence is produced.

The 1296 appearance of the surname de Medese in Eastbourne-related material is nevertheless important. It shows that a recognisable Medese/Medsey name was in local use by the end of the thirteenth century, even though it does not by itself establish ownership of the manor.

5. Dissolution, Tudor transition and the emergence of the Sackville record

The Dissolution of the Monasteries brought Michelham's institutional life to an end in 1536. Its estates were dispersed through Crown grants and subsequent conveyances. The older Medsey history placed the manor in a sequence running from Michelham to Thomas Cromwell, then to Anne of Cleves as part of her 1540 settlement, back to the Crown after her death, and finally to Thomas Sackville. Parts of that wider estate history are well known, but the specific instrument proving Eastbourne Medsey at each stage has not been identified in the sources reviewed for this edition.

Anne of Cleves certainly received substantial English property after the annulment of her marriage to Henry VIII, and former Michelham-related property elsewhere in Sussex can be traced in post-Dissolution records. The Medsey connection is therefore not inherently improbable. It is, however, better presented as part of the reconstructed Tudor descent until a deed, grant or rental naming Eastbourne Medsey in Anne's settlement is located.

By contrast, the connection with Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst and later 1st Earl of Dorset, is securely documented in the later sixteenth century. The British Library catalogue for Additional Manuscript 38483 records a 'Survey of Estborne Medsey manor, annexed to Wilmington: 1571-1668' and specifically groups surveys of Brighton Michelham and Estborne Medsey among papers associated with Thomas Sackville. [7] From this point the Manor enters a much firmer documentary light.

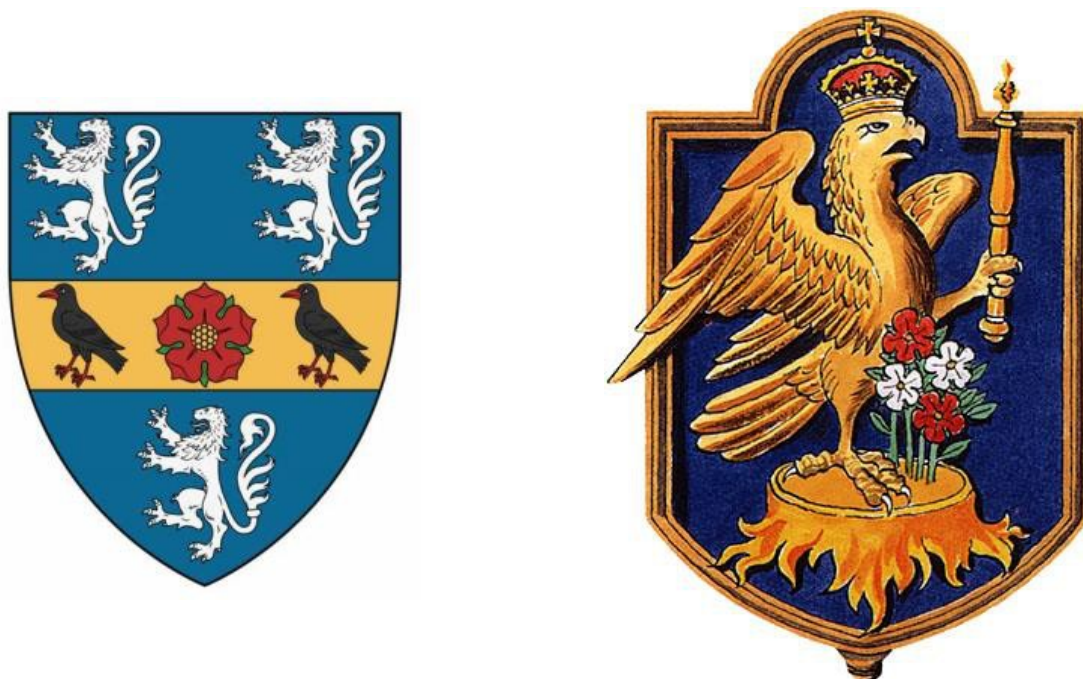


Plate 6. Heraldic illustrations used in the March 2025 account of the Dissolution and Tudor transition. They are reproduced here as illustrations from that edition rather than as independent evidence for the descent of Eastbourne Medsey.

6. The Sackville manor: surveys, courts and rentals

The Sackville period is the best documented part of Eastbourne Medsey's history. Estate papers and manorial records show the lordship embedded in the administration of one of the great Sussex landowning families. The 1613 material, later rentals and court records, and the survival of references through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries establish continuity far more securely than is possible for the medieval period. [6]

The documentary trail includes a survey spanning 1571-1668 at the British Library; 1613 estreats; a 1618 rental and later copy; rentals for 1654-56; a list of quit rents in 1656; demesne-lease rental material for 1618-19; a rental of 1682; minutes of 1751; and a rental of 1829. The record also contains later evidence of heriots, rents and court admissions. These are exactly the kinds of records which give a manor a documentary identity independent of later titles or traditions.

A 1720 rental, for example, records rents associated with the manor, while an eighteenth-century court entry records the admission of a tenant to land at Yarborough furlong in Medsey. By the nineteenth century courts were less regular, but the lordship remained an administrative and property concept within the Sackville estate.

One especially useful piece of evidence helps disentangle Medsey from similarly named neighbouring manors: a nineteenth-century estate rental records the Duke of Devonshire paying a heriot as a freeholder of the Sackville manor. The Duke could therefore be both owner of other local manorial interests and a tenant within Eastbourne Medsey. This is a warning against assuming that similarly named manors were identical. [6]

The Sackville and Dorset succession

The manor descended with the Sackville estates through the Earls of Dorset and, from 1720, the Dukes of Dorset. The principal succession traditionally associated with Eastbourne Medsey is set out in Appendix A. The sequence runs from Thomas Sackville, 1st Earl of Dorset, through his Sackville heirs to Lionel Cranfield Sackville, created Duke of Dorset in 1720, and then through the ducal line until the death of George John Frederick Sackville, 4th Duke of Dorset, in 1815.



Plate 7. Sackville and Dorset armorial illustrations from the earlier history, reflecting the long association of the Manor with the Sackville estates and the Earls and Dukes of Dorset.

7. From the Dukes of Dorset to the Earls De La Warr

The death of the 4th Duke of Dorset without surviving legitimate issue brought the principal Sackville inheritance to his sister, Lady Elizabeth Sackville. Through her marriage into the West family, the Sackville estates became associated with the Earls De La Warr, whose descendants adopted the Sackville-West name. Eastbourne Medsey continued within this estate structure into the twentieth century.

The surviving estate record demonstrates that the manor was not merely a ceremonial name. It appeared in financial and estate transactions, including nineteenth- and early twentieth-century mortgage arrangements, and continued to be accounted for among the family's manorial interests. A specialist history of the title describes the Sackville and descendant ownership as demonstrable from the early seventeenth century to 1986. [6]



Plate 8. A historic De La Warr armorial bookplate and a later De La Warr armorial representation, reproduced from the March 2025 history.

The modern title papers used for the previous edition record a conveyance in 1963 to William Herbrand Sackville, later 10th Earl De La Warr, and a private-treaty transfer in 1986 to Jack Gardener. Mr Gardener died in 2000. Because the Manorial Documents Register is not a register of title, such modern transfers are ordinarily proved by conveyances and title

documentation rather than by the MDR itself. The National Archives expressly warns that the MDR records the whereabouts of manorial documents, not current ownership of lordships. [8]

8. The changing landscape: Meads, the Downland and public ownership

The nineteenth century changed the physical setting of Medsey more dramatically than any earlier period. Eastbourne's development as a planned resort transformed former farmland and scattered settlement into suburban streets, villas, hotels and civic spaces. The village identity of Meads survived, but it became part of a rapidly expanding town.

At the same time, the Downs remained fundamental to Eastbourne's character. The modern Eastbourne Downland Estate extends to roughly 4,174 acres, including open-access chalk downland around Beachy Head and Belle Tout. [9] Public acquisition and statutory protection in the twentieth century preserved much of the landscape from development. The older history rightly treated this as a turning point, although it is important to distinguish public ownership of land from ownership of the incorporeal lordship.

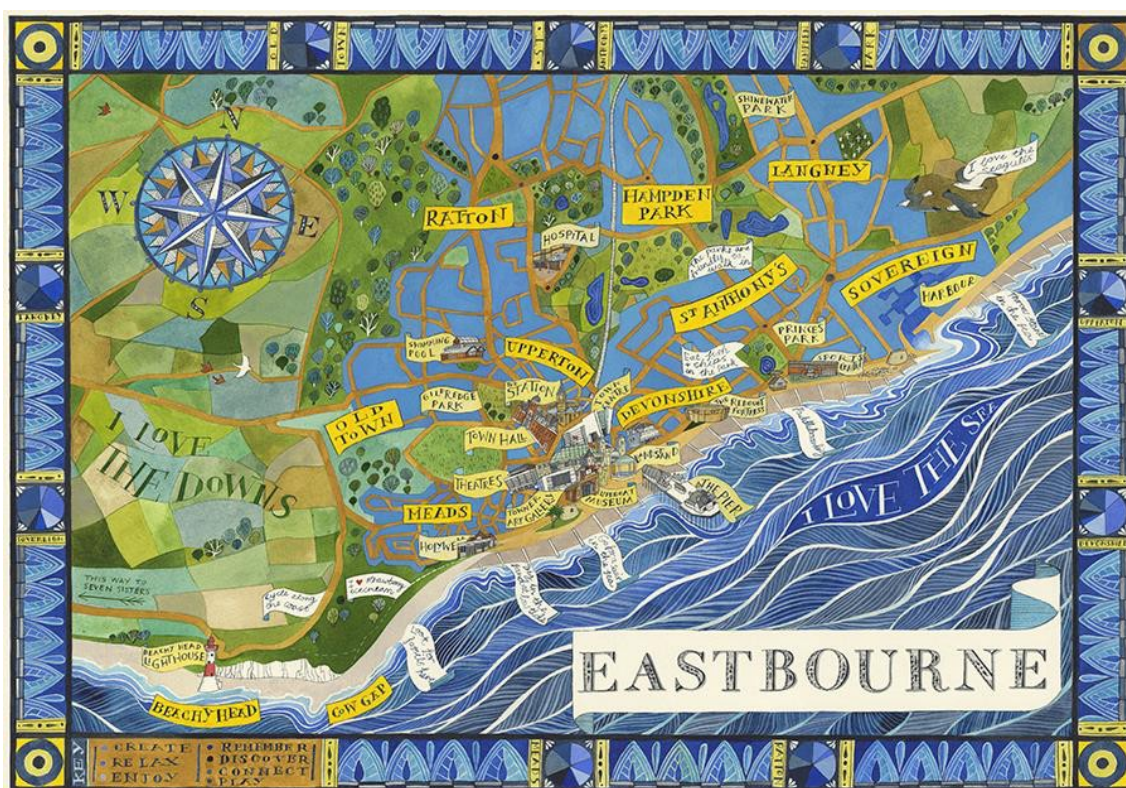


Plate 9. Illustrated map of Eastbourne reproduced in the earlier history. Its decorative form complements the documentary maps by locating the Manor within the wider landscape of the modern town and coast.

The Law of Property reforms of the 1920s abolished copyhold and ended the last meaningful functions of many manorial courts. They did not abolish manorial lordships. Nor did the later public acquisition of downland convert a formerly territorial title into an incorporeal one: in modern property law the lordship itself is already an incorporeal hereditament, legally distinct from physical manorial land and from any surviving manorial rights. [1][8]

Lordship, land and rights are different things

HM Land Registry distinguishes three separate elements: the lordship title, physical manorial land, and manorial rights. They may exist separately. A lordship may therefore survive even when the historic land has long since passed to other owners and when no exercisable manorial rights remain. [1]

The Origin of Manorial Lordships

In medieval England, the distinction between manorial lordship, feudal barony and the later peerage was not always as sharply defined as it subsequently became.

The King governed with the counsel of his leading tenants-in-chief, ecclesiastical lords and other great landholders, many of whom were themselves lords of numerous manors and were bound to the Crown by obligations of military, financial and administrative service. Their attendance upon the King in council formed part of the development of the *magnum concilium*, or Great Council, from which the parliamentary peerage and, ultimately, the House of Lords emerged.

Although possession of a manor alone did not confer nobility or an automatic right to sit in Parliament, many of the families who entered the medieval baronage and later peerage had first established their position as substantial feudal and manorial lords, their service to the Crown, territorial influence and relationship with the King providing the foundation upon which higher noble dignity might subsequently be built.

In this sense, the history of English manorial lordship is closely intertwined with the development of the nobility and of the King's Council into the House of Lords.

Eastbourne Medsey in context

Through its history, many nobles have held the Manor of Eastbourne Medsey - including the Earls and Dukes of Dorset and, most recently, the Earls De La Warr. The reconstructed medieval history of Eastbourne Medsey associates the Manor with the endowments of Michelham Priory, although a continuous documentary trail has not yet been established.

9. The modern lordship and its legal character

Modern English law recognises a lordship of the manor as an incorporeal hereditament - an interest without physical substance. HM Land Registry states that whoever owns the lordship is entitled to refer to himself or herself as Lord of that Manor. It also notes that many lordship titles no longer have land or rights attached to them, and that the lordship of a single manor cannot be divided. [1]

The National Archives likewise confirms that the Law of Property Acts did not abolish manorial lordships and that they may be bought and sold. It also stresses a point often misunderstood in popular discussion: ownership of a lordship does not automatically carry ownership of the historical manorial documents. Those documents may have been retained, sold separately or deposited in archives. [8]

On 3 November 2022, a notice published in The London Gazette recorded that The Right Reverend Damien Steven Robert Mead had acquired the Lordship of the Manor of Eastbourne Medsey on 10 August 2022. [10] The Gazette notice is evidence that notice of the transaction was publicly given; it should not be confused with the Manorial Documents Register, which is not a title register, or with a Land Registry title plan, which ordinarily does not exist for an unregistered incorporeal lordship.

In the reconstructed succession adopted by the Manor, Bishop Mead is reckoned as the twenty-fifth Lord. The public presentation of the lordship emphasises stewardship of history and local heritage rather than the exercise of feudal jurisdiction: the historic land is not claimed as a consequence of the lordship, and no noble or peerage status is asserted merely by possession of the manor.

10. The present stewardship

In the twenty-first century, the practical meaning of an ancient manorial lordship is necessarily different from that of the medieval court or estate. Eastbourne Medsey no longer exists as a self-contained agricultural jurisdiction. Its value lies instead in continuity: preserving the record of a historic community, identifying and protecting documentary sources, interpreting the landscape, and maintaining a link between the old manor and the modern place of Meads and the surrounding Downs.

The present Lord has therefore treated stewardship as the central idea of the modern dignity. That approach also explains the development of a distinct manorial emblem. Rather than attempting to manufacture a new coat of arms for the Manor, the emblem was conceived as a symbolic device capable of expressing place, ancestry and stewardship without pretending to be a grant of armorial bearings.



Plate 10. Bishop Damien Mead, present Lord of Eastbourne Medsey, photographed with his episcopal portrait.
Reproduced from the March 2025 history.



Plate 11. The 25th Lord of the Manor with his niece, and heir apparent, Dr Rosie Young, at the unveiling of the Donors Board during the opening of the restored Meads Hall.

11. The modern manorial emblem



© The Manor of Eastbourne Medsey

Figure 1. The modern Manorial Emblem of the Manor of Eastbourne Medsey. The design brings together the pelican and torse, the acanthus-leaf manorial coronet, the Eastbourne downland and coast, and the Latin motto UBI COLLES OCCURRUNT MARI ('Where the Downs meet the Sea').

The modern emblem is deliberately not presented as a coat of arms, a complete heraldic achievement or a newly assumed 'crest'. It is a composite symbol for the Manor. Its elements are borrowed from heraldic language because heraldry provides a rich visual vocabulary, but the composition is emblematic rather than a claim that the whole arrangement is blazoned or granted under the English law of arms.

At its centre is the pelican in her piety, shown upon a blue-and-gold torse. The pelican is retained as a personal and ancestral reference of the present Lord and, at the same time, has an especially appropriate Christian symbolism of sacrifice, nurture and self-giving. In the manorial emblem it therefore links personal identity with the idea of stewardship.



Plate 11. The pelican device with the motto TOUJOURS PRÊT as reproduced in the March 2025 history. The pelican and torse provide the personal and ancestral reference carried into the modern Manorial Emblem.

Beneath the pelican is an acanthus-leaf coronet or circlet. This should be described carefully. A published account of the insignia of the Manorial Society of Great Britain states that the acanthus-leaf coronet was adopted as the coronet of the manorial lord, deliberately differentiated from Royal and noble coronets. The same account attributes the Society insignia to Cecil R. Humphery-Smith OBE, FSA, and says that it was authorised by Sir Colin Cole, sometime Garter Principal King of Arms. [11]

That provenance makes the acanthus form a respectable modern manorial symbol, but it does not turn it into a coronet of peerage rank or establish an automatic heraldic entitlement for every lord of a manor. No general Royal Warrant, Earl Marshal's Warrant or published College of Arms ruling has been identified which creates an acanthus coronet as a formal coronet of degree. In Eastbourne Medsey it is therefore used as an emblem of manorial dignity and stewardship, not as an assertion of nobility.

Why the crest and torse may stand above the coronet

A criticism sometimes made of the design is that the pelican and its torse appear above the acanthus coronet. If the image were being presented as a conventional complete achievement of arms, a herald would be entitled to ask how each external ornament was authorised and how the whole composition should be blazoned. That is not what this image claims to be.

The arrangement is symbolic: the pelican and torse signify personal and ancestral identity; the acanthus coronet signifies manorial dignity; the downland and sea signify place. Their vertical relationship is therefore visual rhetoric rather than a statement of heraldic precedence. To criticise the composition solely because it does not reproduce the syntax of a formal armorial achievement is to judge an emblem as though it were claiming to be something else.

Recommended description

The Manorial Emblem of the Manor of Eastbourne Medsey is a symbolic composition, not a coat of arms. The pelican and torse express personal and ancestral identity; the acanthus-leaf coronet expresses manorial stewardship and is deliberately distinguished from Royal and Peerage coronets of rank; the coastal imagery and motto identify the place.

12. The Episcopal Arms



Figure 2. The Episcopal Arms used by Bishop Damien Mead. They are ecclesiastically accepted within his Church and are not represented as a grant or confirmation by the College of Arms.

The Episcopal Arms provide the other principal heraldic reference behind the modern manorial emblem. Their overall structure is recognisably episcopal. A mitre is used as the principal external ornament, and the shield is impaled: the ecclesiastical arms occupy heraldic dexter and the personal device occupies heraldic sinister. The College of Arms itself describes impalement of a bishop's personal arms with the arms of his diocese as an ancient and established usage, and its modern grant for the Bishopric of Leeds expressly states that diocesan arms may be impaled by a bishop who has personal arms. [12][13]

Within the personal half of the shield is the pelican in her piety upon the blue-and-gold torse. In strict conventional English armory, a torse normally belongs beneath an external crest upon a helm, rather than appearing as a charge within the field of a shield. Its inclusion here is nevertheless deliberate: it preserves the visual form of the ancestral pelican crest and makes that ancestry part of the personal half of the episcopal composition.

That distinction is central to understanding the design. The Arms have been formally accepted for episcopal use within Bishop Mead's own Church. They have never been represented as having been granted by the College of Arms, and no claim is made that every feature follows the conventions that would govern a College grant. Ecclesiastical heraldry has always developed external ornaments and conventions appropriate to office; within this achievement the mitre, rather than a secular helm and crest, correctly provides the dominant episcopal external symbol.

It is also important that the pelican is not stacked externally above the mitre as an additional secular crest. Instead, it appears within the personal portion of the impaled shield. A useful College of Arms parallel is the 2005 grant to Bishop Richard Hurford of Bathurst: his

personal arms were shown impaled with the arms of his See, while his separately granted crest was specifically recorded but not illustrated in that episcopal display. [14] This demonstrates both that a bishop may possess a personal crest and that the conventional episcopal display need not show it externally.

The motto *TOUJOURS PRÊT* ('Always Ready') appears beneath the achievement. Together with the pelican, it forms part of the personal symbolic vocabulary carried into the Manor's modern visual identity. The manorial emblem and the Episcopal Arms should therefore be regarded as related but distinct: one is an emblem of the Manor and its stewardship; the other is an ecclesiastical heraldic achievement used by the Bishop.

Heraldic status stated plainly

The Episcopal Arms are used by ecclesiastical authority within the Bishop's Church, not by virtue of a College of Arms grant. The manorial emblem is a symbolic device, not a coat of arms. Stating those two facts openly removes the principal source of confusion and allows each design to be judged in its proper category.

Conclusion: continuity rather than feudal revival

Eastbourne Medsey is best understood not as an attempt to recreate medieval jurisdiction but as a surviving incorporeal lordship anchored in a substantial documentary and landscape history. Its later-sixteenth-century and subsequent record is strong; its earlier descent is intriguing but should be reconstructed with care. The modern legal title can exist separately from the land, just as the surviving archives can exist separately from the title itself.

The Manor's modern symbols follow the same principle of honest continuity. The acanthus coronet is used as a differentiated emblem of manorial stewardship, not as a peerage coronet. The pelican and torse retain a personal and ancestral association. The Episcopal Arms belong to an ecclesiastical context and are not presented as a College of Arms grant. Together these elements express a present-day stewardship which looks backward for meaning without pretending that the social and legal world of the medieval manor still survives unchanged.

That approach is perhaps the most appropriate way to preserve Eastbourne Medsey: to treasure the documentary past, to acknowledge uncertainty where it exists, and to maintain the dignity of an ancient lordship through scholarship, service and responsible symbolism.

Appendix A. Succession and chronology

Important qualification

The pre-Sackville portion of the succession is a reconstruction based on the wider de L'Aigle, Pevensey and Michelham history. The documentary chain becomes substantially firmer from the later sixteenth century. Numbering the present holder as the twenty-fifth Lord follows the succession traditionally adopted by the Manor.

Reconstructed medieval phase

- c. 12th-13th centuries - The de L'Aigle/de Aquila lords of Pevensey: traditionally associated with the early lordship in the reconstructed descent.
- 1229 - Gilbert de Aquila founds Michelham Priory. The Manor is traditionally understood to have entered the Michelham estate, although the foundation charter excerpt reviewed does not expressly name Medsey.
- 1296 - The surname de Medese is recorded in Eastbourne-related material cited by Walter Budgen, demonstrating use of the Medese name in the locality.
- 1536 - Michelham Priory is dissolved. The precise post-Dissolution path of Eastbourne Medsey before the Sackville evidence is reconstructed rather than continuously proved.

Documented Sackville and descendant phase

Period	Holder / phase	Note
Later 16th c.	Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst; 1st Earl of Dorset	British Library records include a survey of Estborne Medsey associated with his manors.
1608-1609	Robert Sackville, 2nd Earl of Dorset	Succeeded the Sackville estates.
1609-1624	Richard Sackville, 3rd Earl of Dorset	1613 material includes Eastbourne Medsey.
1624-1652	Edward Sackville, 4th Earl of Dorset	Manor continues in estate administration.
1652-1677	Richard Sackville, 5th Earl of Dorset	
1677-1706	Charles Sackville, 6th Earl of Dorset	
1706-1765	Lionel Cranfield Sackville, 7th Earl / 1st Duke of Dorset	Created Duke of Dorset in 1720.
1765-1769	Charles Sackville, 2nd Duke of Dorset	
1769-1799	John Frederick Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset	
1799-1815	George John Frederick Sackville, 4th Duke of Dorset	
1815 onward	Lady Elizabeth Sackville and the Sackville-West / De La Warr line	Inheritance passes through the Duke's sister into the De La Warr family.

19th-20th c.	6th to 10th Earls De La Warr	The manor continues in Sackville/De La Warr estate papers and transactions.
1986	Jack Gardener	Modern title papers record a private-treaty transfer from William Herbrand Sackville, 10th Earl De La Warr.
2000	Estate of Jack Gardener	The lordship passes through the estate after his death.
10 Aug 2022	The Right Reverend Dr Damien Steven Robert Mead	Acquisition publicly notified in The London Gazette on 3 Nov 2022; styled the 25th Lord in the Manor's adopted succession.

Appendix Plate A - Traditional Armorial Succession Chart



The armorial succession chart reproduced from the March 2025 edition. It preserves the traditional sequence used in that publication; the revised historical text should be consulted for the distinction between documented descent and reconstructed medieval association.

Appendix B. Documentary references to Eastbourne Medsey

The following list brings together the principal manorial records identified in the existing history and the Manor's published source list. It is not intended as an exhaustive catalogue. Archive descriptions should always be checked against current repository catalogues before citation in scholarly work.

Date	Record	Repository / reference
1571-1668	Survey of Estborne Medsey manor, annotated/continued within this date range	British Library, Add MS 38483, f.218
1567-1589 / later copies	Surveys of Thomas Sackville's Brighton Michelham and Estborne Medsey manors	British Library, Add MS 38483, ff.218, 223-225
1613	Estreats, with other manors	Kent History and Library Centre (as listed in the Manor's source schedule)
1618	Rental, with later seventeenth-century copy	Repository/source schedule as published by the Manor
1618-1619	Rental of demesne leases, with other manors	East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office
1654-1656	Rental	Source schedule as published by the Manor
1656	List of quit rents	Source schedule as published by the Manor
1682	Rental	Source schedule as published by the Manor
1751	Minutes	Source schedule as published by the Manor
1829	Rental, with other manors	Source schedule as published by the Manor

The British Library entry is particularly important because it independently names 'Estborne Medsey manor' and places it among surveys associated with Thomas Sackville. This provides a firm archival anchor for the later-sixteenth-century history. [7]

Selected sources and notes

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- [11] Martin Goldstraw, "A Manorial Coronet", A Heraldry Addict's Weblog (26 April 2010), reproducing the account of the Manorial Society insignia and its acanthus coronet. This is evidence of the Society tradition, not a general College of Arms warrant. <https://weblog.heraldryaddict.uk/2010/04/a-manorial-coronet.html>
- [12] College of Arms, "Impaling Arms of Office" (ruling of the Kings of Arms, 16 July 1980), noting the ancient usage of a bishop impaling personal arms with the arms of his diocese. <https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/resources/impaling-arms-of-office>
- [13] College of Arms, "The Arms of the Bishopric of Leeds" (2014), showing the diocesan arms with a mitre and stating that a bishop with personal arms may impale them.
<https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/news-grants/grants/item/103-bishopric-of-leeds>
- [14] College of Arms, June 2005 Newsletter (No. 5), Richard Warwick Hurford, Bishop of Bathurst: personal arms impaled with the See; separately granted crest recorded but not illustrated. <https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/news-grants/newsletter/2005/item/59-june-2005-newsletter-no-5>
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- [16]** The Manor of Eastbourne Medsey, *A History of Lords of the Manor of Eastbourne Medsey* (Alias Medes, Meades or Meads), Sussex, March 2025 illustrated edition, formerly published as the downloadable history on the Manor website: <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/bb412625-eb6c-4a48-8be7-00617a49512e/Lords%20of%20the%20Manor%20of%20Eastbourne%20Medsey%20March%20.pdf>. Historical plates in this revised edition are extracted from that publication.

Editorial conventions

Dates, spellings and titles have been normalised where clarity required it, while historic forms such as Estborne Medsey are retained when quoting catalogue descriptions. The word 'coronet' in the section on the modern manorial emblem describes a symbolic manorial circlet and not a coronet of Peerage rank. The use of 'Episcopal Arms' refers to the achievement accepted within the Bishop's Church and does not imply a grant by the College of Arms. The lower-resolution reproduction of the Episcopal Arms contained in the March 2025 PDF has not been duplicated as a separate plate because the present edition already reproduces the current supplied artwork at higher quality; it supersedes that earlier reproduction.

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