

Map and graphic by kind permission of the Beaulieu Estate. The original is on display in Beaulieu Abbey

The Beaulieu Estate

The land that now forms the Beaulieu Estate was originally owned by the Crown, but in 1204 King John gave it to a group of Cistercian monks from Cîteaux, France for the founding of an abbey. It was an isolated spot far from large centres of population and consisted of approximately 10,000 acres of boggy, uncultivated land bisected by a river. In addition to building the abbey, the monks brought the land into cultivation, built barns and other utility buildings, and reclaimed land from the sea.

Today, the Parish of Beaulieu covers much the same area, of which about 70% is in the ownership of Lord Montagu. This includes woods, farmland, two villages and the bed of the river. The landscape still reflects the pioneering work of the monks; this can be seen in some of the boundaries, the names given to farms and ruins of monastic granges. As in the later years of the abbey, much of the farmland is now leased to tenants and used for dairying, beef, the growing of crops and market gardening.

Place names and their meaning

ABBOTSTANDING: A place where the hunting or driving of deer could be viewed; if the abbot did not hunt, then he would often have had guests for whom hunting was arranged.

BEAULIEU: 'beau lieu', 'beautiful place' in French; from the original 'bellus locus regis', the 'beautiful place of the King' in Latin.

BEUFRE: From the Latin 'boveria', meaning cattle-shed; the centre for Beaulieu Abbey's plough oxen and dairy cattle.

BERGERIE: From the Latin 'bercaria', meaning sheep pen; headquarters of the master shepherd who controlled Beaulieu Abbey's sheep flocks.

GINs: Derived from 'gin' or 'ingenium', a Latin word for machine; the monks probably installed a lifting or winding mechanism at this point on the Beaulieu River to load and unload large vessels before the navigable channel narrowed.

HARFORD or HARTFORD: Crossing place of the hare or of the deer; from the Old English 'hara' (hare) or 'hroort' (hart or male deer). One of the original monastic farms or granges.

MONKSHORN or MONKEYSHORN: Corrupted from 'Monk's Corner'; the monastic estate boundary is marked by a distinct bend or corner at this point.

MONKSWELL: 'Monk's Well'; site of the source of Beaulieu Abbey's piped water supply.

RAVENSBECK: 'Stream of the ravens'; 'beck' is a northern word of Scandinavian origin which also occurs in Normandy, France.

ST. LEONARDS: A not uncommon monastic dedication, St. Leonard is often associated with forested areas. St. Leonard's was the most important monastic grange.

SALTERNSHILL: 'Hill by the saltens', a saltren is a series of pools which produce salt from the evaporation of seawater, from the Old English 'sealt'.

SOWLEY: 'south ley'; 'ley' is the Old English for an 'open place in a wood' and 'south' distinguishes it from Norley, just to the north-west. The monks created Sowley Pond in 1270.

SWINESLEYS: An 'open clearing in a wood' providing pasture for 'swine' or pigs; from the Old English 'swin' and 'ley'. The monks raised pigs for sale.

THORNS: A holding created from 'wasteland covered in prickly shrubs'; from the Old English 'thorn'.

WARREN: An area heavily populated with rabbits; from the Latin 'warem'.



Did you know you can often work out how a place got its name? Bergerie, where the monks kept their sheep, comes from the Latin, 'bercaria', meaning 'a place for keeping sheep'. Find out about other names by using the map.

