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## Castle Rising – 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> Century Lords of the Manor – the de Montalts

The building of the Castle at Rising and its elevated status as a Borough was probably due to it being a port in Saxon times. The D'Albini family were to remain Lords of the Manor for about 100 years. When Hugh d'Albini died on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1243 with no direct heir, his vast inheritance was divided between his four sisters. One of them, Cecily, took Castle Rising as her share and the Lordship passed to her husband, Roger de Monte Alto, also referred to as de Montalt, de Mohaut, de Montealt or de Mold. This second dynastic family who had other Estates, were to remain Lords of the Manor for nearly 100 years from 1243 -1329, when it passed into the ownership of the Crown and arrival of Queen Isabella.

Lion Rampant (silver) – the de Montalt Shield



Many changes were happening in England between the years 1243 -1329. The Roman Church was one of the great landholders in England with many churches, monasteries and priories. Pilgrimages were very common and monks and friars were to be seen everywhere. Still in place was the rigid manorial system with its rules, taxes and justice system and strict hierarchy from baron down to peasant. Even the type of clothing worn was determined by a person's position in life. The King though was the ultimate authority and had the power to grant charters and lands. He also had recourse to any lands if a baron died for example, without any remaining heirs to continue on in his name. This period encompassed the long reign of Henry III (1216-1272), followed by the Three Edwards – I (1272-1307), II (1307-1327) and III (1327-1377). The King needed to be strong - a weak king meant that strong barons could rebel to depose him and rule the country. Although barons gave allegiance to the king, rebellion was always a threat. The Magna Carta conceding liberties to the people was signed earlier in 1215 but problems still arose. In 1258, the first Royal proclamation in English since the Conquest was made, namely, the *Provisions of Oxford* when seven barons, led by Simon de Montfort, took over royal government. The Battle of Lewes in 1264 resulted in Simon de Montfort and the barons defeating the King. The following year Simon de Montfort was killed at the Battle of Evesham.

As well as internal civil fighting, the Crusades lingered on until the last Christian city Acre fell in 1291. The English were now asserting their identity as a people who provoked many problems with the French. There were many altercations with them and also with the Scots. The Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 resulted in a Scottish victory. The barons were required to provide knights to fight and archers to fight for the king so they needed to be strong and able leaders.

This period can be viewed as a time of great brutality and cruelty with its fighting and punishment by torture but the people survived, even through times like the famine of 1315-16. In stark contrast it was also a time of romance, courtly love and chivalry and romantic literature and the nobility enjoyed many outdoor activities. Luxuries such as glass windows and chimneys were becoming increasingly common in the homes of the wealthy people from about 1300.

Medieval society was dominated by men and the women were seldom involved in warfare, land management or government. The lives of ordinary women mainly revolved around their families with the running of household affairs each day and the bearing and rearing of children. Their role was vital though as part of the domestic economy, beginning with any dowry brought to the marriage. Sometimes they extended their labour in the running of the household into small-scale production in the form of selling eggs, vegetables, making ale for sale or even some form of textile production. Maybe the womenfolk of Castle Rising were involved in this with the weekly markets, providing an outlet for their efforts.

Women of noble birth had other challenges. They were responsible for the management of large households of servants and retainers as well as families of their own. Their presence graced banquets, and other social events held at the court or in the castles of the nobility. The ability to do so was important as often their husbands were away fighting, attending Parliament, visiting other Manors or about the King's business. Even when widowed they sometimes took over the management of their late husband's estates. It was important to keep estates together and legally the oldest surviving son inherited any title held and lands from his father. Widows generally received about a third of the estate during their lifetime or until they remarried with permission from the King. An example of this can be seen from some Court business of Edward III at Castle Rising and concerns an order to Hugh de Moriceby, escheator in County Cumberland regarding Christiana, widow of William de Loghmaben *to cause dower to be assigned.....tenant in chief of all the lands which belong to her husband in that baliwick, taking her oath that she will not marry without the King's licence.*<sup>1</sup>

When there was no male heir, women could inherit as did Cecily d'Albini and her sisters. Daughters were usually given a substantial dowry at the time of their marriage. This was controlled by their husbands for the duration of the marriage but could be reclaimed by the woman if her husband died. If she chose a religious life instead or entered a nunnery because no suitable husband could be found, a portion might be given to the religious house.

So when Cecily d'Albini took Rising Castle as her share of inheritance, the control passed to her husband Roger, the first Castle Rising de Montalt lord of the manor, who himself came from a lineage of extremely important Norman barons.

Roger de Montalt descended from the family of Maude, originally Lords of de Monte Alto in Italy and established in England by Eustace de Monte Alto, surnamed the Norman Hunter. He was a soldier of the Conquest and very little is known about him other than he was possibly the first Baron de Montalt. William Taylor, who was a Fellow of the Lynn Society of Antiquaries and great friend of Daniel Gurney, brother to reformer Elizabeth Fry, worked out an early genealogy chart in 1850 and refers to him as Norman. It is difficult sifting through the various interpretations of the records to identify the correct person, especially as so many of the de Montalt heirs held the name Roger or Robert. Reference has been made to other research and documentary evidence to make this article as accurate as possible. Taylor's chart was a reasonable attempt to list the de Montalt family but now shows some inaccuracies. This is mainly due to modern resources and popular interest in genealogy<sup>2</sup>. Any usage from this is made as and when necessary, especially if it is relevant and supports previous personal research in this area and disagrees with Taylor.

It was also the custom to have an Inquisition Post Mortem on those of noble birth and useful when researching medieval lineages as well as the other primary sources that have now been translated as well as secondary sources like books.

Huge tracts of lands were given to Hugh (Lupus) de Montalt, (2<sup>nd</sup> generation) by William the Conqueror in gratitude. This included the manors of Montalt and Hawarden (Flint) which formed part of the county Palatine of Chester and its stewardship. Hawarden became an important residence by the de Montalts as it held a peculiar geographical location. It was situated in the only part of the Marches through which access could be obtained by the English to the heart of North Wales and subsequently rendered it the scene of many of the most important events connected with the subjugation of Wales and its people and the scene of much fighting.

Hawarden Castle – present day



Seneschal, judiciary, or stewardship of Chester was an important post and to qualify, it was usual for the holder to supervise the running of several manors, each visited at least three times a year and to manage any debts, seeing which Manor allowed money at the greatest advantage and the smallest loss. Wealthy manors provided the funds to supply men of arms for fighting when needed, required as part of the oath and obligation of allegiance to the King. Funds could be taken from these manors to pay any debts incurred in smaller less profitable manors and both supplied food and anything else required to run the household.

The county Palatinate of Chester encompassed Cheshire, the city of Chester and Flintshire and was established in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by the Norman dynasty to defend the western area (Wales) and useful to Edward I when subjugating the Welsh. It was an area ruled by an hereditary nobleman, namely the Earl of Chester who possessed special authority and autonomy from the rest of the kingdom. Noblemen swore allegiance to the king but had the power to rule the county largely independently of him.

After Hugh (Lupus) de Montalt died, the line continued through his brother Ralph who was joint grantor with Hugh. The Minster church of St. Werburg<sup>3</sup> in Chester was re-founded as a Benedictine Abbey in 1092 by Hugh and years later in 1540 became Chester Cathedral. St. Werburg Abbey's chronicles report that the dying Ralph Montalt presented Neston church<sup>4</sup> to St. Werburg *because of his evil deeds*. It was this gift/grant that was later challenged by a descendant, Roger de Montalt but there is also another account, noted later, as to how St. Werburg acquired Neston.

Ralph's elder son Robert then continued the line, followed by his eldest son also called Robert. He was known as the Black Steward of Chester. The 'Battle Abbey Roll'<sup>5</sup> lists him as 'le Blakesteward'. The Castle of Mold, was built by Robert de Montalt in about 1140 and with Hawarden was to become the main manorial seat and another site of frequent battles between English and Welsh forces. The name Mold derives from Norman French – mont-hault meaning high hill. This was a time of castle building and also around the date Castle Rising was started.

Civil war in King Stephen's reign made for very turbulent times. The Earl of Chester was made a prisoner of King Stephen with his possessions seized. He was later released and became a bitter enemy of the King because the Welsh had taken advantage of the situation and lay waste the province of Chester. Robert de Montalt who was then Seneschal of Chester went to battle against them with a few men and subsequently killed many thousands at Nantwich on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1146<sup>6</sup>.

The second account as to how St. Werburg acquired Neston was about 1150 whilst Stephen was still on the throne. The de Halton barons transferred the Church and Manor of Neston to the de Montalt barons – Neston church was part of Robert's wife Leucha's dower<sup>7</sup> The oldest son Ralph who was a baron of the court of the Earl of Chester and another son William who was the incumbent of Neston, with their mother Leucha (Fitzneel de Halton), bestowed the said church upon the Monastery of St. Werburg Chester about 1180. Ralph's grant included respect for the souls of his father Robert and mother Leucha and any injuries incurred between 1162-80 and confirmed by William Peche, Bishop of Litchfield. This gift, upon the death of Ralph, was confirmed by his brother and successor Robert de Montalt.<sup>2</sup>

Robert's heir was his brother, Roger de Montalt who refused to acknowledge this grant, wanting it for his son. This dispute with St. Werburg continued with his son Roger (married to Cecily d'Albini) using force later in 1258. This version seems more plausible than the first – seen as an ongoing dispute rather than from something that occurred nearly 200 years before. Whatever the true reason, St. Werburg would pay a high price to retain Neston, as did Roger, who suffered the loss of his oldest son and heir, was himself to die a year or two later.

Robert and Leucha had at least six children, Ralph, Robert, Roger, Ranulph, William and Adam who are a generation completely omitted by Taylor in his genealogy chart. However it is clear from the dates alone, that one generation is missing.

Robert, husband to Leucha, died about 1162 and according to Taylor the next generation was Roger, married to Cecily. As we know from the *Annals* Roger died at Castle Rising in 1260/61<sup>8</sup> which would make him at least 100 years of age and as he was still active, highly unlikely. So who made up the missing generation? Robert and Leucha's first three sons are noted here as the line continues afterwards through the third son Roger.

Ralph—son and heir married Matildis<sup>9</sup> with no surviving children.

Robert – not married<sup>10</sup>

Roger (a) – brother and successor of Robert, married to Nicholaa They had two children – Leucha born about 1190 and Roger (b) born about 1200.<sup>11</sup>

According to Taylor, Leucha was the daughter and not the sister of Roger (b) but again the dates do not make sense as Leucha was born about 10 years before him. Leucha was married to Philip de Orreby of Alvaney. They both appear to have died before 1229 as Sir Philip Orreby, Judiciary of Chester from 1209-28 purchased the custody of their daughter Agnes de Orreby from Roger de Montalt whilst Philip still held the Steward's position in 1228<sup>12</sup> Because of this missing generation, it is easy to see how Taylor might have listed Leucha as Roger (b)'s daughter rather than sister, when in fact she was Roger (a)'s daughter.

Further possessions were obtained through marriage and some time after Roger married Cecily he obtained more. In 1243 she inherited as co-heiress to the Earl of Arundel, several manors including Castle Rising<sup>13</sup> and Snettisham in Norfolk, Cheylesmore in Coventry and Boseley and Neston in Cheshire as well as having interests in Suffolk and elsewhere. As barons, during the reign of Edward II, along with prelates and heads of religious houses they were frequently summoned to parliament, where a group of royal judges and clerks would also be present.

### **Castle Rising and the de Montalt Barons**

#### **Roger de Montalt - c. 1200 – died 1260**

The facts have already been noted of how he became Lord of Rising Castle – i.e. by marrying Cecily, the daughter of William de Albini, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Arundel and sister and co-heir of Hugh, 5<sup>th</sup> earl on whose death in 1243, *the great domains of this branch of the house were divided between his four sisters and co-heirs.*<sup>14</sup>

Cecily took as part of her share the Castle of Rising, in Norfolk, which thenceforth became *the principal residence of herself and her husband Roger de Montalt.*<sup>14</sup> This marriage was therefore an important liaison between two people who both came from very distinguished ancestors who were high in the social scale.

Rising can be seen at this time as a home, a place to relax and enjoy pastimes such as hawking and hunting, as well as carrying out manorial duties. It provided a place for Roger to be connected to Rising, perhaps a refuge, away from the troubled areas of Cheshire and Flintshire. Any entertainment could be made in relative peace and enjoyment and if necessary he could probably rely on Cecily with her noble background to take charge of the household whilst he was needed elsewhere. The castle would subsequently provide a residence to visit or live for the future wealthy, strong and powerful barons, during what must have been their very busy, well-travelled and varied lives.

The charter for a fair at Rising was recorded as granted to Roger de Monte Alto on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1254. This Charter records the fair as beginning on The Ascension of the Lord (Easter departure) and that the lay subsidy was £90. The town already had a market twice a week, granted back in 1150.<sup>15</sup>

Fairs, held once a year, were usually great gatherings and people could buy more exotic items, spices, figs rare dyestuffs and the like that probably arrived through the recently developed port at King's Lynn.

Hawarden Castle was forcibly taken from Roger by the Welsh under Llewelyn but later restored. From 1241 he was in dispute with David, son of Llewelyn about the lands of Mold and problems were to occur during the next few years.

Roger also improved the fortifications of Cheylesmore Manor, Coventry; the original hunting lodge being replaced by building a new manor house. In 1250 he took the Cross and left for the Holy Land. To fund his expedition he sold his wife's rights to the priory on the south side at Coventry but reserved his right and that of his heirs to hunt and hawk. He also sold timber and mortgaged lands to the monks of Coventry. In 1253 he was summoned to attend the King in his expedition to Gascony and was there from December 1253 to September 1254 when he became one of the sureties for the King's debts at Bordeaux.<sup>16</sup> His misfortunes began with his preparations for the Crusade and that compounded with ecclesiastical enmity with St. Werburg embittered his life.

Roger was appointed to the office of judiciary at Chester on May 27 1257, succeeding Gilbert Talebot. An example of him in this position can be read when he granted *William, son of Henry, of two acres of land and appurtenances in Kerisle (Keresley, co.War.)*<sup>17</sup> Whilst in that post, he was reported in the *Annals*<sup>18</sup> as having violently attacked Thomas the Abbott of St. Werburg in 1258 and laid claim to his possessions including Neston which had earlier been granted by Leucha, Ralph and William, seen earlier. To retain Neston, St. Werburg paid the price by exchanging amongst other things, the manors of Bretton and Lea. Like his grandfather before him, Roger has also been referred by some as the Black Steward of Chester.

The Chester Chronicles<sup>18</sup> accuse him in 1258 of abusing his power to extort the Manor of Bretton from Abbott Thomas and predicted the death of his eldest son within 15 day and Roger's own death within 3 years. The Annals<sup>17</sup> continue by confirming that his eldest son died within 15 days of this attack. On September 29<sup>th</sup> 1259 Roger resigned the post of Judiciary and it is said that many notable misfortunes subsequently befell him and he died in poverty within two to three years. This death was blamed on the shock of losing his oldest son and most of his wealth. The Annals also record Roger's death about the feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist (June 24<sup>th</sup>) at Castle Rising, 1260.<sup>18</sup> A writ was issued to seize his goods at Rysing referring to debts owed to the king. Another writ was issued to take most of his lands into the King's hands. This usually occurred when there were debts owing or no male heir which was not the case as Roger and Cecily had two other sons, Robert and John. A Mandate in 1260<sup>2</sup> directs forbearance beyond possession of lands as to the lands of his widow, Cecilia. She was commanded to attend the King with the heir of her late husband if he was with her on St. John's Day – the heir was Robert.

Taylor shows Roger and Cecily's children as John, Robert and Leucha, widow of Philip de Orreby. Leucha has been dismissed earlier as Roger's sister, not daughter and this should read – first son, name unknown, second son, Robert, born 1230-35, definitely the heir to Roger following his brother's death at St. Werburg, died in 1275, and third son, John, who was younger than Robert as his Inquisition Post Mortem taken in 1294 proves. He was born about 1250 and died in 1293.

Of special additional interest from the Westminster Abbey website is the following information:

Wealthy benefactors to the building of Henry III's church between 1245 and 1272, were first commemorated on the wall of the nave by carved, shields of arms. A few shields were re-painted in the 1960s and can be seen in the choir aisles and easternmost bays of the nave. Amongst those names that remain on the south side is Roger de Montealto.

#### Robert de Montalt - born 1230-1235 – died 1275

Robert succeeded his father in 1260. He does not seem to have had much connection with Castle Rising. Possibly his mother Cecily lived there following her husband's death as it was part of her original inheritance that she chose and unproven sources say that she died at Castle Rising Castle sometime in the

1260's. She did however reside at Cheylesmore for some of the time and was still alive 1260-65 proven by the fact she was concerned with deeds enclosing wood and common lands in Coventry.<sup>19</sup>

Neither she nor her late husband Roger were buried at Castle Rising but in the Franciscan Friary, or Greyfriars at Coventry which was bounded on the south-east by Cheylesmore Park - *Late in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Roger and Cecily de Montalt were buried near the great altar in the centre of the choir.*<sup>20</sup>

Hawarden was Robert's main concern because along with Mold it was more of a military fortress than any feudal home. It was the place of conciliation between Llewelyn de Montfort in 1264 and the castle of Hawarden was delivered to Robert as heir in June 1265. He was however captured by Llewelyn in 1267 and taken prisoner but released after Llewelyn made peace with Henry III. The Annals record:-

*1267 [Gilbert de Clare], earl of Gloucester, John d'Eyville and certain other disinherited barons being joined with him, secretly entered London and stayed there for a little time. And [Walter Giffard,] archbishop of York, and several other bishops having armed themselves, went to the Tower of London, and brought out from thence the legate Othobon who was besieged there. But the king having collected an army, came to Stratford, near London, and having remained there until, peace being effected between him and the barons, he entered London with the permission [of the citizens]. Also peace was made between our lord king Henry and Llewelin, prince of Wales, and Robert de Montalt was delivered from captivity. Peace was established in England.*<sup>21</sup>

A condition was made that no fortified castle should be built for 30 years but 10 years later the existing one was fortified.

The only references to Rising comes just before the close of Henry III's reign (1272), Robert de Montalt is shown in arrangement with Robert de Tateshall respecting the right to present a clergyman to a benefice, subject to the approval of a diocesan bishop attached to his Lordships of Rising and Snettisham.<sup>22</sup>

Robert married Joan de Mowbray, daughter of the earl of Mowbray, about 1261. They had and two sons and a daughter. Roger de Montalt, the elder son was born 1262/3 and died before 2 December 1296, Isabel born 1270 and died 1294, married to William de Mowbray and Robert, the younger son who would be the last of the de Montalt barons before Isabella. He was born on 25 March 1274 in Mold Castle and died 26 December 1329.

Two Inquisitions Post Mortem were taken for Robert de Montalt.<sup>23</sup> Patent Rolls show that Robert de Monte Alto as Steward of Chester was alive October 1274 and also show that on September 7 1275 an order was made to deliver the custody of lands to the king's kinsman Maurice de Credonio, lands that belonged to Robert de Monte Alto, tenant in chief....it does not say that Robert was dead by then but 9 days later, dower was being assigned to his wife, so it is almost certain he was so can say he died in 1275.<sup>2</sup>

Joan survived her husband but was dead in 8 Edward II (1314-15) when her second son Robert became heir with a petition to the Crown respecting her late dowry lands in Eulowe which was part of the Hawarden Lordship. She died at Castle Rising Castle.<sup>24</sup>

### **Roger de Montalt, 1262/3 -1297, 1<sup>st</sup> \* Baron (Lord) Montalt**

\*Barony - Lord Mohaut 1295-1297 - this title by writ of summons, not inheritance.

Roger de Montalt, eldest son and heir of Robert, was 13 on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1275 according to his father's Inquisition. A much later Writ also confirms this<sup>25</sup> and it was written to excuse Robert, Roger's brother and heir from arrears of military service for Edward I in 1281-2, when Roger was a ward of the Crown. In August 1282, whilst still underage, The King gave Roger possession of Mold and Hawarden with a condition he should answer for the issues to Roger de Clifford the elder who had been granted custody of the lands during Roger's minority and was also appointed his guardian.

By 1284, Roger had reached his full age and was in possession of his share of the Arundel inheritance due to him following the death of Isabel, widow of Earl Hugh. He made a grant to the Franciscan friars of Coventry in 1289 and also confirmed his ancestors' grants to Basingwerk (Flintshire). In 1290 he joined in the Baron's letter to the Pope protesting about the appointment of foreigners to English benefices (York and Lincoln Cathedrals). In that same year in Parliament he consented to the aid (a gift from a Lord or tenant-in-chief to the Crown) on the marriage of the King's daughter.<sup>2</sup>

He was jointly in charge of the arrangement of watches on the coast of Norfolk in 1291<sup>2</sup> a position also held by his successor, Robert in 1324 (shown later) – so maybe Roger spent some time at Castle Rising. He was summoned for service in Gascony in the summer of 1294, Wales in January 1294/5 and again Gascony in 1295. In June 1295 he was directed by writ to Parliament whereby he was held to have become Lord Mohaut.

How much time he actually spent at Castle Rising is difficult to prove but interest was shown because the 1334 Lay Subsidy Records (tenths and fifteenths tax) state that on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1297 the grant for a twice weekly market at Castle Rising with £90 subsidy was held by Roger de Monte Alto.<sup>15</sup> In addition there was the attraction of the fourth part of the revenue generated by the Tolbooth in Lynn and this is looked at in more detail when discussing his heir, Robert, the final de Montalt Lord of the Manor.

Roger was married to Juliane, daughter of his previous guardian, Roger de Clifford and there is no record of any dower for her being claimed after Roger de Mohaut's death, so it is presumed she predeceased him and there were no surviving children. His lands, including Rising passed to his younger brother Robert and the barony became extinct.

### **Robert de Monte Alto, 1270/74 -1329, Baron (Lord) Montalt (re-created in 1299)**

Robert was born in Mold Castle 25 March 1270/74 and died 26 December 1329, with no direct heir and was buried at Shouldham Priory, Norfolk. In 1301/2 he married Emma, widow of Sir Richard Fitzjohn of Stradsett who had died in 1297 and was buried at Shouldham Priory.

Roger de Monte Alto's Inquisition<sup>26</sup> places Robert as aged 22, 26 or 27 and his heir. It specifies his estates within the Palatinate, manor of Hawerthin, held by the Senaschalship, Neston manor and various other manors. A separate inquisition was taken for his estates in Norfolk, Suffolk and Oxfordshire. Chancery records show *Robert de Monte Alto to settle the manor of Kenninghall on himself, Emma his wife, and the heirs of their bodies, with remainder to his heirs, retaining the manors of Rising and Snettisham, the hundreds of Smithdon, and the fourth part of the toll-booth of Lynn, Norfolk*<sup>27</sup>

In 1290 he was under the guardianship of Maurice de Craon. After making his ceremonial loyalty pledge of loyalty and obedience, he was ordered livery on 7 February 1296/7 and summoned as a Baron on 30 March 1298 and the following September called for service in Scotland and the like at then at various times for the rest of his life. From 6 February 1298/9 to 13 June 1329 he was summoned to Parliament by writ that directed Robert de Monte Alto, or de Mohaut as Lord Mohaut.<sup>2</sup>

He served in both the Gascon and Scottish Wars of Edward I and Edward II. Mention of him is made several times in the Close Rolls of Edward II. Robert de Montalt was also active in his capacity as Steward of Chester, signing documents and giving various grants as well as being involved as in the running of his estates with claims for lands to which he thought he was entitled. He seems to have been constantly raising money to pay for his obligation to equip and supply men to fight as well as other general expenses incurred during his life. Of all the de Montalt barons we have the most evidence of his connection with Norfolk and sometimes Castle Rising. He may also be seen as a shrewd man who always managed to keep on the winning side of things but could be tyrannical and very much aware of his position in society.

For income purposes, the quarter of the Tolbooth at Lynn would have been a valuable asset to him as well as any income from the tenements.<sup>28</sup> The sharing of the Tolbooth was well-established at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century when the co-partners were the Bishop of Norwich and William d'Albini.<sup>29</sup>

Each toll owner had a bailiff in the Tolbooth. A Charter of King Henry I in favour of William d'Albini translates as, *granting to him the misteria of Lynn, and half the fair and tolls and other customs there, the port with moorings, lofcop,*<sup>30</sup> *the way of the water and passage, with all cases arising 1107-09*<sup>31</sup>

The Gazetteer also makes mention of a charter by King John to John, Bishop of Norwich that:

*The customs of the fair were to be shared between the bishopric and his heirs and William, earl of Arundel and his heirs...*<sup>32</sup>

At some time, the half share seems to have become a quarter. In 1311-12, Robert de Montalt definitely held a fourth part of the tollbooth of Lynn, Norfolk.<sup>33</sup> It is known that Isabella acquired an extra eighth share in 1333 after the death of Joan de Driby, co-heiress of the Tattershall quarter share. This royal share held during her residence at Rising passed on to John of Gaunt.<sup>34</sup> Joan de Driby, nee Joan de Tattershall was married to Sir Robert de Driby and she was the great granddaughter of Maud d'Albini, married to the Sheriff of Lincolnshire, Robert de Tattershall of Lincolnshire and the eldest sister of Cecily d'Albini.<sup>35</sup> So it seems logical that when the sisters became co-heirs of their brother Hugh d'Albini's estate, Maud as well as Cecily inherited a quarter share of the profits from the Tollbooth - hence the Tattershall quarter. Why Isabella acquired an eighth share rather than the whole Tattershall quarter is unclear. Isabella already held the quarter share in addition through the de Montalt acquisition.

Joan de Driby is also mentioned in April 1326 when King Edward II was still on the throne:

*Enrolment of surrender and release by Joan de Driby, lady of Tateshale, to the king of all her purparty of the Tolbooth (Tolbothe) of the town of Lenn, and of the custom of the water there, and all her tenements in the town and its suburbs. Witnesses: Sir Walter Friskene, Sir Robert de Malberthorp, Sir William de Bernak, knights; Gilbert de Toudeby, James de Ros, John de Thweyt. Undated.*<sup>36</sup>

So Joan de Driby had surrendered her interest earlier to the Crown and by the end of 1327, Edward II was dead and Isabella and Mortimer were in control of the interests of the young Edward III. So why Isabella later inherited the eighth share of the Tattershall quarter through Joan is difficult to say unless the share reverted back to Joan de Driby sometime between 1326 and 1333. Isabella herself of course was to be stripped of many assets anyway with a set annual allowance as punishment when she came to Castle Rising in 1330. After 3 years or so she seems to have been 'forgiven' somewhat and gradually had things restored to her. Maybe that is why she acquired an eighth share in 1333.

Over the years, many disputes and issues surrounding the Tollbooth arose between the co-partnership and the townsmen. The townsmen, including the burgesses and Mayor, resented religious houses being exempt from tolls and the control the co-partnership held over them when it came to the running of the Tolbooth and income from it.

Robert de Montalt was personally involved in matters in King's Lynn. With a residence at Castle Rising and other interests in the area it could be that he came many times when other duties permitted or when any dispute arose that might need his personal attention.

About 1309, Robert de Mohaut was one of the people mentioned in a petition by John Lomb of Bishop's Lynn. John Lomb was a burgess of the town and held the tenement which extended in length from the Street called Stowgate towards the east, towards the common way in the west and also the wharf which extended in length from the common way towards the east and the great river of Lynn in the west.<sup>37</sup>

Lomb complained to King and Council that those who were indicted of selling victuals to the King's enemies were allowed by the bishop of Norwich to pay fines of 40 or 60 pounds rather than make full payment of the 4000 pounds that they had made. He thought this was against the will of the king. Lomb did not dare to pursue this suit without the aid of the council. Those appointed to determine this wrong included William de Orymsbi, justice, Bishop of Norwich, William de Briston and Robert de Mohaut. They attested that the petitioner was of little truth and the matter was not prosecuted any further.<sup>38</sup>



It can be seen as an example of the control that the Bishop of Norwich and Robert de Montalt (and also his predecessors) shared over the tollbooth in Lynn and the many disputes with the burgesses of the town.

Another example of Robert's interference and involvement can be seen and this has been given some varying interpretations by relatively modern historians.

In 1907, Henry J Hillen wrote an exhaustive history of the Borough of King's Lynn.

*Suddenly Sir Robert Montalt quitted his baronial residence in the beautiful chase to sojourn for a while in the insalubrious burgh of Lenne..... Brother John (de Bromholm) was disgusted at his lordship's bearing..... publicly assaulted him; and the populace, encouraged by the heroic though unwise behaviour of so important dignitary of the church, rose against the intruder who year after year had been deliberately ruining the trade of their port. They ....wounded his attendants, wrecked the house in which he abided, secured their enemy and bore him off to prison in triumph.*

*Sir Robert was immediately set free, but being as crafty as was conscientious, he soon afterwards brought the matter before the Court of King's Bench and the judges decided that the imprudent burghers must pay the Lord of Rising, whom they had so grossly offended, an indemnity of £4000, which was equivalent to the total municipal expenditure for about 36 years.*<sup>39 (a)</sup>

H. L. Bradfer-Lawrence, the historian wrote a history of Castle Rising in 1932.

He describes this incident between Robert and the Mayor and Burgesses of Lynn slightly differently:-

*During the time Lord Robert de Montalt possessed Castle Rising, great disputes arose between him and the Mayor and Burgesses of Lynn concerning the tolls of the Port and Market of Lynn, and in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of King Edward II it appears that he brought the action against the Priory and the Mayor ..... for an assault committed upon him and his attendants. .... it is alleged that the assault was committed..... when the said Robert de Montalt came into the said town for the purposes of business, when Nicholas de Northampton and a host of other malefactors with banners, unfurled in a warlike manner, insulted the said Robert de Montalt and his men and followed them to his dwelling-house within the town, which they besieged and broke the doors thereof and that they there beat him and his men and carried away his goods and chattels..... that they led away and imprisoned his men, so that their services were lost.....*<sup>39 (b)</sup>

Following the allegations concerning theft and also his imprisonment for 2 days under threat of death, Robert defended the right which belonged to him as appurtenant to the Castle and Manor of Rising 'of appointing a bailiff for the collecting of his share of the profits of the toll booths and the water and port of Lynn.....'<sup>39 (b)</sup> against the Mayor and commonalty and their successors. The Mayor and commonalty defence was that they had done nothing to the said Robert de Montalt against the peace saying they he had come to town with his men and used force as the aggressors. All this resulted in judgement given for Robert de Montalt and damages against the Mayor and commonalty to the amount of £6,000 which they were compelled to pay by yearly instalments. Evidence though suggests this figure to be £4000 rather than £6,000.<sup>40</sup> Bradfer Lawrence concludes with 'Amongst the muniments of Lynn are still preserved some of the acquittance of these periodical payments.'<sup>38</sup> . The following excerpts come from The Borough of King's Lynn.<sup>40</sup>

22 December, 16 Edward II. Robert de Monthaut's Acknowledgment and acquittance for £30 17. 4d. paid him by the Mayor and community of Lenn, in part payment of the 50l., due next Easter in part payment of the 4,000l., &c., &c. Dated at Lenn

31 December, 16 Edward II. Robert de Monthaut's Acknowledgment and acquittance for £10.9s.4d., paid him by the Mayor and community of Lenn, in part payment of the 50l., due next Easter in part payment of the 4,000l., &c., &c. Dated at Chastel Risinges

16 Edward II. Robert de Monthaut's Acknowledgment and acquittance for £14.13s.4d., paid him by the Mayor and community of Lenn, in part payment of the 50l., due to him at the next Feast of All Saints in part payment of the 4,000l., &c., &c. Dated at Chastel de Risinges on St. Margaret's Eve  
**Copy of original document illustrated below**

16 Edward II. Robert de Monthaut's Acknowledgment and acquittance for £2. 10s. 4d. paid him by the Mayor and community of Lenn, in part payment of the 50l., due to him at the next Feast of All Saints in part payment of the 4,000l., &c., &c. Dated at Chastel Risinges on the Eve of St. Simon and St. Jude.

16 Edward II. Robert de Monthaut's Acknowledgment and acquittance for 6l. paid him by the Mayor and community of Lenn, in part payment of the 50l., due to him at the next Feast of All Saints in part payment of the 4,000l., &c., &c.

16 Edward II. Robert de Monthaut's Acknowledgment and acquittance for 21l. paid him by the Mayor and community of Lenn, in part payment of the 50l., due to him at the next Feast of All Saints, in part payment of the debt of 4,000l., &c., &c. dated at Chastel de Risinges.

Edward Beloe also has confirmation of this incident and has a copy of one of these receipts in his book *given of our Castle at Rising*<sup>41</sup>



Beloe translates this as: *To all those who this letter shall see or hear - Robert de Mohaut, Seneschal of Chester, health in the Lord – Know you that I have received of the Mayor and the Commonalty of the town of Lynn, by the hand of Peter de Elmham, fourteen pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence of money for wine by him purchased, in part of a sum of fifty pounds, the which the aforesaid Mayor and Commonalty are bound to pay me at the feast of All Saints next following the making of that writing, of the debt of four thousand pounds, the which I the said Robert and Emma my consort recovered against the aforesaid Mayor and Commonalty in the court of our lord our king, before his Justices at Bane at Westminster, at the quinzaine of Easter in the seventh year of the reign of King Edward, son of King Edward of which fourteen pounds thirteen shilling and fourpence I acknowledge fully to be paid, and the said Mayor and Commonalty acquit for all time. In testimony whereof to this letter of acquittance I have put my seal. Given at the Castle of Rising the Vigil of Saint Margaret, the year of the said King Edward sixteenth.*<sup>41</sup>

For added interest, it is noted as well that in the same Borough of King's Lynn file<sup>40</sup> there are four writings referring to the profits of the Tollbooth of Lenn during 36 Edward III (1362-3), one describes the profits of and another the issues of the Tollboth of Lenn – so there seems to have been a great clash of interests over the Tollbooth profits (future inclusion in Markets and Fairs Chapter). Another couple of brief references are contained during the Richard II / Duke of Brittany period – again both sections to be written later.

An interesting Memorandum <sup>42</sup> again illustrates what a controversial man Robert seems to have been, often in disputes. This describes an incident at St. German's bridge which was the main bridge crossing to Lynn at that time. It describes how Robert de Montalt in his life, in the 3rd year of Edward II's reign (1309-10) appointed a court to be held on his presumption of authority at the bridge of St. Germain in Wygenhale. His first bailiff there was Walter Payn - his wife Emma appointed Thomas Wolsy and John Philip to be her Bailiffs there. These two oppressed and harassed ships and boats laden with merchandise and men as they rowed and flowed to Lenn, hurling stones at them as they landed and extorting heavy fines from them. As a result, many merchants became impoverished and were forced to leave and sell their ships and boats, causing a very great loss of persons passing that way. This usurped the King's statute to his injury and also to certain magnates like the Abbot of Crowland who hold of the Lord King in chief by victuals and other goods bought in Lenn water. It ends with saying that they answer before them for trespasses committed and contracts made in the county of Lincoln and other counties of the kingdom. So here we have an example of an organised medieval extortion scheme! There is no further record given of the outcome.

Hillen again refers to this incident as follows:-

*"In 1310 Robert Montalt presumptuously established a court by the bridge spanning the new formed river at St. Germain in Wygenhale. The position was well chosen, it commanded the road as well as the river, and here the Lord of Rising arrogated to himself the right to extort heavy fines from the traders crossing the bridge with their bales of goods, and from the merchants rowing and flowing with their freights in the Lenne waters. Through Walter Payne, his head bailiff, they were summoned in inquests, distrained, attached, oppressed and harassed whenever they came that way. So intolerable was this persecution that many being broken down and greatly impoverished wisely sold their boats and sought employment elsewhere..... But the baron's despotic usurpation of the King's Court ..... How could the merchants possibly complete their contracts when hindered by the exacting bailiffs who either hurled stones at them, or slyly dropped great lumps of earth upon their heads as they glided beneath the bridge? How were they to keep the faith with their customers when they were persistently being thwarted .... by Montalt's unscrupulous partisans?"*

As well as local matters, Robert was concerned with the political rumblings that surrounded King Edward II in the 1320's. The Barony was alarmed by the growing power of Hugh Despenser and his father. Hugh's greed was running free, including the seizure of the Welsh lands of his wife's inheritance. Under his influence Edward II confiscated Gower from John de Mowbray and when he refused to relinquish it, Edward sent men to take it from him by force. This enraged the Marcher lords and an opposing group including Marcher Lord Roger Mortimer and the support of the Duke of Lancaster, formed against the Despensers making a rift between them and the King. The group left Court and returned to fortify their castles and rally the other barons. The ensuing brief Civil War culminated in the opposition calling for the execution of the two Despensers, later revised to their exile.

The important parliament which opened at Westminster on 15 July 1321 had been summoned by Edward II in the hope of saving the Despensers but in this he was disappointed as this parliament resulted in the gravest crisis of his reign to date. Following negotiations between the king and magnates Edward had to reluctantly accept the exile of the Despensers. Accusations against them concerned their false scheming which prevented the great men of the realm, the good counsellors, being unable to speak or approach the king to counsel him well without the intimidating presence of Sir Hugh or either of the Despensers. They ousted these good men and replaced them with false and wicked ones to gain control over their lands and were said to be *unlearned in the law of the land, to hear and determine matters touching the great men and people of the realm.....they caused to be indicted falsely by false jurors of their alliance, the peers of the land, namely the Earl of Hereford, Sir John Gifford of Brimpsfield, and Sir Robert de Mohaut, and other good men, through their desire to have their lands.* <sup>43</sup>

So Robert, with his interest as a Marcher lord and connections through family marriage to de Mowbray, would be in the position of having his lands forcibly taken away by the scheming of the Despenser's power and greed. There is no proof though that he was actively involved in the rebellion and his loyalty to Edward seems to have remained. A couple of years later, the barons had fallen out amongst themselves and Edward II called back both Despensers from exile. The Battle of Boroughbridge followed which left the main baronial opposition weak and leaderless. Lancaster was executed and John de Mowbray was hanged at York for joining in Lancaster's rebellion against Edward II. Mortimer had surrendered and was imprisoned in the Tower of London. The Despensers had particular issue with him as his grandfather had killed Hugh Despenser's grandfather but despite repeated pressure from them to have him executed, it didn't happen and Mortimer escaped from the Tower to France. There is no mention of Robert de Montalt being involved in these events and can be seen maybe to have been more aggrieved by the Despensers rather than actively rebelling against them and the King, so his 'protest' remained passive rather than taking any action and remained loyal to Edward. An entry in May 5 1323<sup>44</sup> shows Robert de Montalt as one being ordered to pay the wages of footmen, archers and other armed men – he supplied 100 from his lands in Estraden and Hawarden to fight for Edward II.

Edward II seemed willing to let the Despensers continue unchecked and as their wealth grew from their administration and corruption the feeling of hostility against them, and Edward (by proxy), grew. An entry from the Patent Rolls state *Original letters patent whereby the king releases to Hugh le Despenser, the younger, his right in the manor and advowson of Shaldeford, which Hugh holds for the life of Emma wife of Robert de Mohaut (Monte Alto) by the demise of the said Robert and Emma.....*<sup>45</sup> Shalford manor, Surrey was held in dower by Emma de Montalt from her first deceased husband, Richard de Fitzjohn. It was due to go to one Idonea Crumbwell when Emma died. As well as Emma conveying her right in it to Hugh le Despenser, Idonea had to release her claim *this conveyance being forced on her against her will*<sup>46</sup> In spite of this example which indirectly affected Robert de Montalt through Emma, loyalty to Edward still seemed to continue.

In 1324/6 he was one of the joint keepers of the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, helping Edward II. Norfolk Archivist, John R. Alban writes:-  
*Against invasion, pirates, French and Scottish hit and run raids and attempts to overthrow the monarch. At this time the rebellion of Isabella and Mortimer was the biggest threat to Edward II. So the Crown issued a series of commissions to oversee coastal shires.*<sup>47</sup>

Alban continues to say that the commission for Norfolk and Suffolk was Thomas, Earl of Norfolk, Robert Montalt and Thomas Bardolf, the Earl of Norfolk was to be the captain.<sup>48</sup>

De Montalt and Bardolf worked hard all through the spring and summer putting defensive measures in hand and Alban says that *The ordinances for observing watches from Lynn to Yarmouth was probably issued by them at some time during the summer of 1326/7*<sup>47</sup>

It is quite likely that he stayed at Rising during this period and took an interest in his properties in these two counties as well. John Alban, referring to Brown 'Castle Rising', thinks that Castle Rising was his main residence from the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and furthermore says that it has been suggested that he was responsible for the substantial works of renovations on the castle keep and for the addition of the upper storey to its vestibule tower which appears to be of early 14<sup>th</sup> century date.

Given his involvement with Lynn and the references to acceptance of monies in 1322-3 and position as joint keeper of the coast it seems very likely that he was very often at Rising in between duties elsewhere. Although strains were put on his finances during his life, he was a wealthy man by most people's standards, so where else to spend money than by improving a main residence?

Things were to change however with his loyalty to Edward II, in spite of his position of joint coastal keeper. Queen Isabella had a special dislike for Hugh Despenser the younger. When she was sent to France to negotiate between her husband and the King of France, she formed a liaison with Roger

Mortimer and made plans to mount an attack on England. The youthful Edward III was also in France and in October 1326 the invasion began, the intention being to remove Isabella's husband, Edward II and the two le Despensers. Very few people were willing to fight with Edward II, mainly because of the hatred for the Despensers. Robert de Mohaut swore an oath of allegiance to Isabella and was part of the protection of the young heir apparent, being with them when they came to England. *The oath taken by divers persons to maintain the commonalty of the realm; to protect Isabella, Queen of England and Edward eldest son of the king and heir-apparent of the Realm of England; to aid them in their cause against Hugh le Despenser the younger* .....<sup>49</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> January 1327 Robert de Mohaut was recorded as a Baron and one to take the oath.<sup>48</sup> He was called to the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1327 Parliament still in the name of Edward II and it then reassembled on 3 February after the deposition of Edward II and the coronation of Edward III. He put forward his claim to service as butler at the Coronation.

A note made on August 28 1328 at Clipstone<sup>50</sup> records that *The like Archbishop of Canterbury, under date 19 September, the king being at Rising* This tells us that Edward III was at Castle Rising on that date and so, was familiar with Robert de Montalt and had visited Castle Rising before his mother, Isabella took up residence there. As one of the new King's barons Robert now of course had allegiance to him and was obliged to provide food and accommodation for the King as he travelled round the country, on this occasion at Rising.

As previously mentioned, Robert de Montalt seemed to have had financial problems, either needing money or debts to deal with throughout his life, in spite of inheriting many possessions and gaining some through marriage. He seemed to be a wealthy man as were most barons and it may well be that this was just the way financial matters were dealt with as there are many entries of people's debts being owed in the Close Rolls Records. However as well as recorded debts his need for money can be seen from another translation made by Beloe when one of the payments owing from Lynn had not been made at the appropriate time. He translates:

*To the wise men and those dear friends.....Mayor of Lynn and the burgesses of the said town, Robert de Montalt, Steward of Chester salutation and all good and fair greetings. Dear friends, foreasmuch as you have sent me word that the money which ought to have been paid to me now at the Feast of All Saints last past, is not yet levied by reason of the grievances and disturbances which you have had, know, dear friends, that for your grievance I am sorely vexed, and if I could ease or lighten you of your grievance I would do it most kindly . But assuredly, dear friends, I am now in such mischance of money that I must needs be better supplied, wherefore I pray you dear friends that you let me have my money in the most haste that you are able for assuredly I cannot longer put them off which press me much. .....the shame to me is not redressed.....amends be made me for the said shame. Adieu dear friends.....Written at Shouldham, the 5th day of November<sup>41</sup>*

Some debts he might well have inherited. It was mentioned earlier that Roger de Monte Alto sold part of his wife's lands to fund his expedition to the Holy Land or maybe he did not have enough income from his estates to maintain his lifestyle requirements. This might have arisen from having to deal with the many things in what would have been a very busy life and paying his many dues and obligations to the King. As early as 1300 he was leasing lands and rents to the value of £100 for discharge of debts.<sup>51</sup>

There are several recordings in the Close Rolls<sup>52</sup> shown below of him owing money of varying amounts. By today's standards the figures might seem moderate but they were actually considerable in medieval England, especially when looking at income derived for example, from Castle Rising.

Mark – the Mark was not an English coin but was used in a unit in accountancy, especially in Danelaw counties. It was a weight of metal originally valued at 128 silver pennies (53.3p) but later revalued at 66.6p<sup>53</sup>

l = £

July 1313 – Robert de Monte Alto, knight, acknowledges that he owes to John de Handlo 140 marks; to be levied, in default of payment, of his lands and chattels.....

November 1314 – Robert de Monte Alto acknowledges that he owes to Cambinus Fulberti of Florence 110 marks; to be levied, in default of payment, of his lands and chattels.....

March 1315 - Robert de Monte Alto acknowledges that he owes to Bartholomew Seneward and Burnettus William de Luk, merchants and citizens of London, 350l; to be levied.....

June 1315 -... to allow to Robert de Monte Alto, who is going to Scotland by the king's orders, respite until All Saints for all debts due to the exchequer. By K.....

July 1315 - Robert de Monte Alto acknowledges that he owes to Bartholemew Geonarde and Bornetus William, citizens of London, 50l; to be levied.....

December 1317 - Robert de Monte Alto acknowledges that he owes to Richard But, citizen of London, 1000l; to be levied, in default of payment of his lands and chattels.....

February 1318 - Robert de Monte Alto acknowledges that he owes to Richard But, citizen of London, 400l; to be levied, in default of payment of his lands and chattels.....

March 1318 - ...Lincoln. Cancelled on payment. Robert de Monte Alto acknowledges that he owes to Richard But, citizen of London, 213l 6s.8d; to be .....

The last 3 entries can be seen as example of Robert collecting monies either owed to him or income from somewhere, manors etc., to gradually pay his debts—a pattern seemingly adopted during his life.

July 1318 - Robert de Monte Alto acknowledges that he owes to Master John Walewayn, clerk, 300l; to be levied, in default of payment of his lands and chattels.....

May 15 1322 - Thomas Cok puts in his place John de Evesham and John de Norton to prosecute the matter of recognisance for 200l made to him by Robert de Monte Alto.

August 23 1325 – Robert de Monte Alto, steward of Chester, acknowledges that he owes to Richard de Lamhethe, citizen of London, 165l; to be levied, in default of payment of his lands and chattels in co. Norfolk.

December 14 1325 - Robert de Monte Alto, knight, acknowledges that he owes to Robert de Wateville, knight, 80l; to be levied, in default of payment of his lands and chattels in co. Norfolk.

Robert petitioned the King in 1327 for a charter to renew his manor of Snettisham, it being said to be *too fragile to last*<sup>54</sup> and then in the same year he settled all his estates, Mold, Hawarden, Castle Rising etc. on himself and his wife for life, and his own issue male, with remainder in default to Queen Isabella and her son John and his heirs and the King successively. The King paid him 10,000 marks.

In April 1327 at Stamford are the following entries:<sup>55</sup>

April 9 1327 - Robert de Monte Alto acknowledges that he owes to Queen Isabella 200l; to be levied, in default of payment of his lands and chattels in co. Norfolk.

April 13 1327 – Robert de Monte Alto acknowledges that he owes to Queen Isabella 20,000 marks; to be levied, in default of payment of his lands and chattels in cos. Norfolk, Suffolk and Derby

*Enrolement of letters of Queen Isabella, witnessing that whereas Sir Robert de Mohaut has made to her a recognisance for 20,000 marks in chancery, to be paid at her will. She grants that the said recognisance shall be cancelled in case Robert die without an heir male (madle) of his body, whereby his inheritance shall come, after his death and the death of Emma, his wife, to the queen or John de Eltham, her son, the recognisance to remain in force in case Robert leave an heir male. This was dated 14 April.*

April 14 1327

*John, bishop of Ely, and Henry, bishop of Lincoln, acknowledge that they owe to Robert de Monte Alto, knight, 10,000 marks; to be levied, in default of payment, of their lands and chattels in co. Lincoln.*

*Memorandum, that this recognisance was made at the request of the king and Queen Isabella, in order to make security to Robert for the aforesaid sum, which they promised to pay him for the reversion of all his lands in England, Wales and co. Chester, after his death and the death of Emma his wife, if he die without an heir male, to the queen and to John de Eltham and to the king, under a certain form contained in the fines levied concerning this matter.*

*Enrolment of final concord made at Staunford before the king on Monday after the quinzaine of Easter, in the first year of the king's reign, between Robert de Monte Alto and Emma his wife, demandants, and Master Henry de Clyf, clerk,<sup>56</sup> deforciant, concerning the castle and manor of Hawardyn, the stewardship of Chester, and the manors of Lee and Bosele, co. Chester, that county being in the king's hands, to wit that Robert acknowledges the castle, manors and stewardship to be Henry's right as of his gift, and for this acknowledgement, fine, and concord Henry granted the castle, manors, and stewardship aforesaid to Robert and Emma, and rendered the same to them before the king, to have and hold to them and the heirs male of Robert's body, of the king as of the earldom aforesaid by the services pertaining to the castle, manors and stewardship shall remain, after the death of Robert and Emma, to Queen Isabella for her life, with remainder to John de Eltham, the king's brother, and the heirs of his body, with remainder to the king and his heirs.*

Whilst Rising is not specifically included here, it was part of the surrender.<sup>59</sup>

So whether this business of transference was due to money matters or very little chance of any direct heir by then, can be regarded as a couple of reasons. In 1300/1 Robert had married Emma,<sup>57</sup> widow of Sir Richard Fitzjohn who died shortly before 5 August 1297. Women could marry at a very early age with relationships commencing when the wife was about 14 years of age. As Emma was a widow when she married Robert, it can be assumed she would be 20, at the least and some 27 years later would be in her late 40's and probably past childbearing. It is possible that Emma could die before Robert and he re-marry and have a child, hence the 'heir of his body' included.

There is also the idea that maybe the Crown were interested in acquiring somewhere like Rising with its established castle and closeness and connection with the fast-growing Bishop's Lynn. Certainly the estates were specifically enfeoffed<sup>58</sup> to Henry de Cliff, the King's clerk and was an issue when Robert died two years later leaving no direct heir of his own by Emma his widow. The Escheator was involved and all his property including Castle Rising was seized by the Crown. An order was given *To Simon de Bereford, escheator this side of the Trent not to intermeddle further with the castles, manors etc., specified below, which he has taken into the king's hands by reason of the death of Robert de Monte Alto.....as the king granted licence to enfeoff Master Henry de Clif, king's clerk, of the manor of .....a list follows which includes Cheylesmore and of the castle and manor of Risyng, co. Norfolk,.....and a quarter of the tollbooth (tolbothe) of Lenne, co. Norfolk.....*<sup>59</sup>

As the agreement made previously in 1327 allowed for Emma to enjoy interest for the rest of her life, it wasn't until 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1331 that she surrendered to Queen Isabel her life interest in the lordships of Mold, Hawarden, Cheylesmore, Rising etc. for an annuity of £400.<sup>60</sup> Emma herself died not long

afterwards on 26 January 1331/2 and was buried in Stradsett Church where a black marble slab can still be seen today under the carpet in the centre of the church.

Robert de Montalt was buried in the priory of Shouldham Norfolk (Inquisition Post Mortem) which was a Gilbertine Order.



View of Burial Site Shouldham

Hillen contradicts this and states:-

*Worn out with persecuting the Lenne traders, Robert Montalt passed into his long rest and was interred in the church of saints Peter and Paul at Watlington (1329).*<sup>61</sup>

No reference is given by Hillen as to where this information is obtained or why Robert would choose to be interred at Watlington. Given Robert's connections with Shouldham and the fact that Emma's first husband was buried there, this seems the more likely resting place. It might also be worthy of note that with Robert's close connections with the Crown, one of Roger Mortimer's daughters was in orders at Shouldham.

There were almost certainly distant de Montalt heirs still in existence that possibly started with Andomar de Montalt, founder of the Yorkshire branch of the family and family of Emma – any possible claim made as heirs-in-law failed for the main part. Apart from anything else any heirs were to be of Robert's body. However other lands, excluded from the fines in 1327 were also held by the Crown after he died. A petition by *Robert de Morle Morley, kinsman and heir of Robert de Mohaut* to the King and council stated *Therefore after Robert de Mohaut's death, the esheator seized all his lands, tenements, fees and advowsons, into the king's hand, both those included in the fine and the others*<sup>62</sup>

Castle Rising, included in the 1327 fine, was to remain in Royal hands, apart from one brief period of about 20 years, when in 1378 Richard II exchanged it with John, Duke of Brittany for the castle of Brest.<sup>63</sup> It was returned to Royal ownership once more until Henry VIII exchanged it with the Duke of Norfolk for other lands about 1544.

Isabella was said to hold the castle for her life and in 1330 it was to be inherited by her second son, John of Eltham, the King's brother after her death. John died however in 1337. There were accusations that Edward III was responsible for his death yet Edward had a large memorial made for him at Westminster in tribute to him and was said to have been devastated by his death<sup>64</sup> In 1337 things were changed. Following Isabella's death in 1358, the castle at Rising and the other de Montalt holdings, such as Cheylesmore Manor - later said to be a favourite place for the Black Prince to go to hunt and hawk - passed to Edward the Black Prince, Isabella's favourite grandson. A memorandum in 1337 reads *Enrolement of deed testifying that whereas Queen Isabella holds the castle and manor of Rysyng, co Norfolk, a fourth part of the Tolbothe of Lynn, in the same county, the manor of .....which formerly belonged to Sir Robert de Mohaut, steward of Chester, of which the reversion belongs to the king, who has granted it to \*Edward, Duke of Cornwall and earl of Chester, his son, the queen accepts the grant and is attoned to the duke according to the said grant.*

*Dated at Rysyng, on 10 December, 11 Edward III (1337-8).*<sup>65</sup>

Underneath this entry is a Memorandum *that on Thursday, Christmas day, Sir Henry de Ingelby, clerk, who had power by writ of dedimus postatem, which is on the files, went to Rysyng, co. Norfolk, and*



*received the queen's acknowledgment of the preceding deed.* <sup>66</sup> We can probably conclude that Edward was again at the castle on this date, to arrange this business and perhaps visit his mother at the same time.

So this ends the era of the de Montalt family at Castle Rising and marks the beginning of the period when it became the property of the Royal family and Queen Isabella was in residence.

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Close Rolls Edward III Volume 6 pp 372-386 - dated 6th February 1342 at Castle Rising

<sup>2</sup> archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com-ENG-KEN-SANDHURST Maude family

<sup>3</sup> St. Werburg was an Anglo Saxon Princess, the daughter of Wulfhere, King of Mercia. She was canonised after death and re-buried in a Saxon church in Chester. In 907 it was re-dedicated to St. Werburg and St. Oswald. She was the Patron Saint of Chester and the Shrine of St. Werburg was an important place of pilgrimage in the 14th Century.

<sup>4</sup> At Domesday, the manor of Great Neston was held in three parts – one by the monks of St. Werburg, one by William Fitz-Nigel baron of Halton and the third by Robert the Cook. Early in the reign of Stephen the 2nd baron of Halton obtained that portion which belonged to the monastery in exchange for Raby; a subsequent arrangement put him in possession of the entire manor. It shortly afterwards passed to Robert de Montalt and afterwards to Queen Isabella. A Topographical Dictionary of England pp.368-372

<sup>5</sup> The Battle Abbey Roll Vol. 2

<sup>6</sup> Annales Cestrienses – Chronicle of the Abbey of St. Werburg at Chester 1133-86 - entry 1146 pp.20-35

<sup>7</sup> (Grandson) Robert's Inquisition Post Mortem 4 Edward I (1275-6)

<sup>8</sup> Annales Cestrienses – Ibid. 1235-61 pp 60-79

<sup>9</sup> Proven by Inquisition Post Mortem 4 Edward I (1275-6) – dower of Ladies of Hawarden

<sup>10</sup> No wife named in Inquisition 4 Edward I (10)

<sup>11</sup> (Grandson Robert) Inquisition Post Mortem 4 Edward I (1275-6)

<sup>12</sup> Annales Cestrienses – Ibid. 1235-61 pp 60-79

<sup>13</sup> Named in 1243 Pat.28 Henry III as husband to Cecily

<sup>14</sup> Annales Cestrienses – Ibid. 1235-61 – Footnote (18)

<sup>15</sup> Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England & Wales to 1516 – Castle Rising 5667 3248 'Norfolk'  
For further reference see the chapter on 'Markets and Fairs – Castle Rising History Group booklet'.

<sup>16</sup> A History of the County of Warwick-The City of Coventry and Borough of Warwick Vol. 8 pp 208-221

<sup>17</sup> MS 3649/ACC 1938-013/478914 (13TH Cent) Birmingham City Archives

- <sup>18</sup> Annales Cestrenses – Chronicle of the Abbey of St. Werburg at Chester 1235-61 pp 60-79  
- entry for 1258
- <sup>19</sup> City of Coventry and Borough of Warwick - The City of Coventry and Borough of Warwick.  
Volume 8 pp 199-207
- <sup>20</sup> A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 8 Ibid. pp 125-141
- <sup>21</sup> Annales Cestrenses – Ibid. 1262-71 pp 80-101
- <sup>22</sup> The Hundred Rolls of 3 Edward I (1274-5) mention his name among the co-heirs of Earl Ranulph, respecting, Hauteburg in Lincolnshire, and elsewhere with reference to Holflete Port, Rysing Honor and Lynne Water.
- <sup>23</sup> 1.3 Edward I (1274) and 2, 6 Edward I (1277)
- <sup>24</sup> archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com-ENG-KEN-SANDHURST Maude family - ref.csu.edu.ac
- <sup>25</sup> Writ dated 17 Edward II (1323-4)
- <sup>26</sup> Inquisition Post Mortem 23 January 25 Edward I (1296-7)
- <sup>27</sup> National Archives C 143/89/6 – covering dates 5 Edward II (1311-12)
- <sup>28</sup> Whilst there is no specific evidence of Robert and these incomes, there is a list of the tenants of land in Newland with a rental before 1296 (The Making of King's Lynn p 156). One such listed in Latin and roughly translated refers to houses and grounds of Robert de Tatteshall and Roger de Monte Alto in an area of the part of Lynn called Newland. According to the Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England & Wales to 1516, the Prescriptive Borough of Lynn – Tuesday Market recorded 1222-23, - the Tuesday Market developed in the Newland area.
- <sup>29</sup> Owen - The Making of King's Lynn p 37
- <sup>30</sup> cop is a certain quantity of grain – lopcop seems to be one moiety of the charges on exported grain, seeds and corn levied at a certain town upon the coast
- <sup>31</sup> Owen - The Making of King's Lynn p95 quotes from from Regesta, ii, 322 no. lxiii from an exemplification made for Robert de Monte Alto in 1327
- <sup>32</sup> Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England & Wales to 1516 KING'S LYNN 56173198 – Trans of Nicholas (9 May); feria gr. 10 July 1203 by King John.
- <sup>33</sup> National Archives: Chancery Records C 143/89/6
- <sup>34</sup> Owen - The Making of King's Lynn p. 38
- <sup>35</sup> [www.geneajourney.com/tatshl.html](http://www.geneajourney.com/tatshl.html)
- <sup>36</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward II: volume 4: 1323-1327 pp. 555-559
- <sup>37</sup> Derbyshire Record Office GB0026D231
- <sup>38</sup> National Archives SC 8/334/E1134 1309
- <sup>39</sup> (a) HJ Hillen - History of King's Lynn – Ch.10 pp. 81- 82

- <sup>39</sup> (b) Bradfer Lawrence - Castle Rising – A Short History and Description of the Castle pp 14-17
- <sup>40</sup> The Borough of King’s Lynn Misc. Writings BH Online pp 4-5
- <sup>41</sup> Beloe - Castle Rising Norfolk: Norfolk Archaeology Vol.12 pp 14-17
- <sup>42</sup> The Manuscripts of the Corporation of Southampton and King’s Lynn - pp 235-247
- <sup>43</sup> Parliament Rolls of Medieval England Edward II: July 1321
- <sup>44</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls May 1323 - May 7 York Edward II Vol. 3: 1318-1323 pp.645-655
- <sup>45</sup> A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds: Volume 5 pp. 527-547
- <sup>46</sup> A History of the County of Surrey Vol. 3 pp. 107-111
- <sup>47</sup> Alban (Norfolk County Archivist) - NAHRG Quarterly No. 48
- <sup>48</sup> Calendar of Patent Rolls 1324- 27 p.220
- <sup>49</sup> Calendar of the plea and memoranda rolls of the City of London Vol.1 1323-64 pp 11-37 Footnote A1(b)
- <sup>50</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls Ed.III Vol. 1 1327-1330 pp. 403-12  
Clipstone in Nottinghamshire was the site of a royal hunting lodge in Sherwood and used for convenience as a meeting place for Parliament
- <sup>51</sup> By Petition of Council 4 April, 1300 (Edward I Lent) at Stratford - Parliamentary Rolls of Medieval England 1292-1301 p.502
- <sup>52</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls Edward II: volume 2 (1893)
- <sup>53</sup> John Richardson ref: Q15 p.197
- <sup>54</sup> National Archives Special Collection; Ancient Petitions SC8/261/13023 date 1327
- <sup>55</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward III: volume 1: 1327-1330 pp 96-116
- <sup>56</sup> Keeper of the Rolls and at times the Great Seal of England
- <sup>57</sup> By Royal License 25 January 1300/1
- <sup>58</sup> To put a tenant legally in possession of a property or to surrender a property
- <sup>59</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward III: Vol.1 January 1330 pp512-513
- <sup>60</sup> Francis Blomfield Vol. 9 pp 42-49
- <sup>61</sup> HJ Hillen - History of King’s Lynn – Ch.10 p. 84
- <sup>62</sup> National Archives : Petition dated 1330 - SC 8/293/14638

<sup>63</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls, Richard II: volume 1: 1377-1381 pp 162-165 This topic to be covered later in another chapter.

<sup>64</sup> See Chapter on John of Eltham

<sup>65</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward III: volume 4 1337-1339.

<sup>66</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward III: volume 4 1337-1339 P. 287

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