

HISTORY OF MARGARET RODING

There are eight villages with the name Roding, all located within the valley of the River Roding. The river was named after Hroda the Saxon who with his tribe called the Hrodingas sailed up the River Thames and along its tributary river. They settled in the fertile area in the 6th Century creating settlements to the east and west of the river.

Following the Norman Conquest in 1066 a large part of the area passed into the hands of William the Conqueror. The settlements are recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. By the 14th Century the boundaries and names of the villages had become fairly established. Eight villages use the Roding name which is the largest group in the country bearing a common name.

The Parish of Margaret Roding, previously known as Roothing Margaret, is an ancient parish with the first parish records recorded in 1538. It has an area of 1226 acres and a population of 144 people in 1801, 282 in 1871, 191 in 1901 and approximately 170 today. Most of the land within the Parish was in the manor of Marks Hall and Marcie Fee.

The de Bohun family possessed the manor but in 1403 they gave it to King Henry IV. Almost immediately he passed it onto University College Oxford with the donation arranged by Walter Skirlaw, then Bishop of Durham who decreed that the income from Marks Hall should support three Fellows attending the University. Income from the property was first recorded in 1406.

The oldest building in the Parish is the church of St. Margaret of Antioch. The nave with its three-foot (90cm) walls was constructed by the Normans in the 12th Century. It is now protected as a Grade I Listed building of historic interest. Part of the church was rebuilt in the 14th Century and restored in the 19th Century when additions were added. New organs were installed in 1849, 1864 and 1910. The first recorded collection of £6 19s 2d (£6.96p) occurred in November 1939 with the proceeds being used to supply the children of the Sunday school with warm winter clothing, especially bonnets for the girls. It is the oldest church in the Rodings. The small graveyard has a grave of a Crusader.

The manor of Marks Hall and Marcie Fee also included the freehold of the Marks Hall farm and Waples Mill. Waples Mill is located in Ongar Road close to the south boundary of the Parish. Tenants recorded for the mill in 1427 was Thomas and John Ferman, millers who paid thirty shillings (£1.50p) a year for the water mill, wind mill and three acres of pasture. Numerous tenants occupied the mill and in 1842 the tenant, William Underwood was neglecting the structure. It was during his tenancy that John Baker, aged 46 was killed when he was drawn into the machinery. The wind mill, which had not been in use for a number of years, burnt down in 1910 and the mill house was extensively damaged by fire in February 1937. The water wheel was removed sometime before 1930 and the water mill and adjacent mill house were still standing in the 1950s but nothing remains now.

Mayes Cottage, located in Chelmsford Road close to the eastern boundary of the Parish, was constructed c1750. It was named after a sea captain who resided and committed suicide at that cottage. It was the first coach and horse stop from Chelmsford and provided blacksmith and wheelwright services as well as a general store. The stopping point ceased in 1860 and the shop ceased in 1970. The cottage was rebuilt in 2006.

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