

Author's Note & Introduction

For many centuries the outstanding landmark that dominates the skyline in the beautiful, peaceful countryside around the small village of Whitegate, in the ceremonial county of Cheshire, has been the impressive Vale Royal Abbey, which for most visitors to the area proved to be an enigma. When I was asked to write a comprehensive report on the history of Vale Royal Abbey and its occupants over the years, this presented an enormous personal challenge.

This book is about the intriguing history of Vale Royal Abbey, England, and is written from the vantage point of my first visit in the year 1946, up to the latest visits that I made during the years 1999 and 2000, at the invitation of the management of the current new owners of the estate. Being able to dig deep into the archives of some of England's most famous institutions, museums and libraries, which revealed and uncovered such fascinating information and details about the County of Cheshire and more particularly the elegant, inspiring estate of Vale Royal Abbey, proved to be one of the most exciting endeavors I have ever undertaken.

With the assistance of a dedicated team of researchers and genealogists, I also cover in this 'saga', over eight generations of the well-known Cholmondeley family line associated with the Vale Royal Abbey in Cheshire, from 1615, when Lady Mary Cholmondeley bought the estate from the Holford family, which later was to become the home of the Lords' Delamere; and up to the 1940s when the bankrupt estate, controlled by the mortgagees and subject to the rules and restrictions of the British Crown, was sold and disposed of to the present owners.

To the more informed reader; while I acknowledge that some of the events and incidents related to our main characters in this account cannot always be accurately confirmed or irrefutably authenticated from available and reliable sources and may appear to some readers like 'fiction' or in fact may question whether these incidents actually happened and are based simply on rumors, innuendoes and hearsay. I have never the less thought it expedient

and appropriate to include most of these details in this book, based on my sincere effort to expand and embellish for our readers benefit, the life style and conduct of the aristocracy and nobility in England over the past few centuries, being contemporaries of our main characters during their lifetime. I like to describe myself as a writer, author, researcher and a reporter of truth. All references, quotations, opinions and views expressed in this narrative based on our research, are not necessarily those of the author or members of our research team.

However, much of the material, especially in Chapter Five and Six, which is related to Hugh, 2nd Lord Delamere is also based on information and material contained in our private family Bibles, plus personal letters and copious hand written notes and other details orally passed down from my various family ancestors.

Especially important to me was the writing of Chapters Seven and Eight of the book related to the country of Kenya, and based on the fact that I spent many years living in Africa as a freelance missionary related to the educational field, I undertook this task as a pleasure and personal privilege. Also being able to research and write about this beautiful country and to be able to undertake the extensive reading of many books and articles related to the checkered history, background and development of this awe inspiring country of Kenya, was a delight in itself and I hope our readers will enjoy ruminating; being captivated and enlightened about this country, as much as I did in my personal experience of researching and the writing of this informative material. Africa is such a highly diverse continent full of fascinating cultures, beautiful scenery and of course the incredible array of its majestic wildlife.

In Chapter Eight we also draw a parallel between eastern and southern Africa in the 20th century, and especially include a short overview of the Apartheid system in South Africa during the years 1948-1994, which legally introduced racial laws and regulations that were part of one of the most obscene systems known to man, as it reduced the status of the South African blacks to nothing more than animals; in fact many animals owned by white citizens of South Africa were treated to a higher standard.

I hope you also get as much satisfaction from reading about some of the fascinating, albeit, short extracts of the past history of Cheshire and Wales, and experience as much pleasure as I

did undertaking this research and the uncovering and recording of this descriptive, detailed material. Much of the information in the Preface, plus Chapters One and Two was gleaned from the archives of the sources acknowledged, some of which is available to the general public; other sources are only available by special permission. Material related to the politics of the characters involved, especially in Chapter Three, connected to Charles Cholmondeley, Member of Parliament for Cheshire, is also available in the public domain, but in all cases we have acknowledged the sources. Charles Cholmondeley provides a magnificent example of how to handle a major setback in life and still retain your dignity in any given situation, but especially how to deal with a serious defeat if you are contemplating or planning to run for political office or taking up a career in politics.

This book is not so much a 'history' book but rather an intimate view and insight of the 'dramatic chronicles' of the lives of our main characters that lived at Vale Royal Abbey. This narrative also forms part of a trilogy. The second book, titled "Zero Hour of the Apartheid Regime of Suid Afrika", covers the 30 years that the author spent living in Southern Africa as a witness and contributor to the end of Apartheid and the beginning of a new democracy. This book is also in celebration of 25 years of the end of Apartheid in 1994. Book three, titled "The Birth, Life and Death of King Cotton", covers the establishment of the slave trade, especially from Africa to the Americas, the development of the cotton plantations of the southern States of America and includes the history of Lancashire families and ancestors of the author plus their experiences related to the cotton trade and the 'dark and satanic' cotton mills of Lancashire.

When asked under which category this book, *The Delamere Saga*, is to be published I was presented with a conundrum! Is it a historical narrative; a genealogical report and also partly autobiographical, or is it a political summary and observation of British politics of the past or maybe just another fictional, romantic, historical novel? I ruminated that it's probably a mix or 'witches' brew' of all of these categories? However I will let you, our revered readers decide.

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to be incorporated as a non-profit corporation and recognized as a Section 501(c) (3) organization by the Internal Revenue Department of the US Government as a non-profit company based in the USA and therefore all donations are tax deductible. A percentage of the proceeds from this book will be donated to nominated wildlife sanctuaries in Kenya, which are registered members of the “Kenya Wildlife Conservation Association” as decided by the management committee of the MTC International Foundation.

Preface

My first visit to Vale Royal Abbey in the county of Cheshire, was as a young boy in 1946. I had been invited to visit the town of Northwich by a friend of our family, a Mr. Norris Jopson, who was the chauffeur for Mr. Dunkerley, a local wealthy businessman, who owned and lived in the large mansion house known as 'Higher House', located at the top of our local street where I was born; Rochdale Lane in Royton, Lancashire. Plus this well-known family; the Dunkerley's, who along with the Cheetham and Gartside families, owned numerous cotton factories and businesses in the local area of Royton, Crompton and Shaw. Higher House, one time home of the Dunkerley family, was what many Royton residents will remember, later became the 'Tramtracks' Pub (public house) and after that a nightclub named 'Scandals'. It was later demolished and the site is now where the new houses exist at the corner of Rochdale Road and Rochdale Lane, opposite Dogford Road and the Junction Inn.

Mr. Jopson, a phlegmatic sort of person, was assigned by his employer, Mr. Dunkerley, to drive down to Cheshire and collect some Polish refugees who were being housed on the Vale Royal Abbey Estate after the Second World War (1939-1945), and who were to be transported back to our local town of Royton in Lancashire for much needed employment.

Royton, in the North West of England was an industrial centre with many cotton mills providing essential employment for most of the towns' residents. In as late as the 1950s, 80% of Royton's population was employed in the over 40 textile mills. As imports of cheaper foreign goods increased during the mid-20th century, Royton's textile sector declined gradually to a halt; cotton spinning being reduced in the 1960s and 1970s. To quote from the local history society of Royton:

After the Great War the Cotton industry went into decline due to competition mainly, from India, which had imported Lancashire machinery and had the advantage of