

CHADDESSEN, THE SHERIFF AND MAGNA CARTA

‘Given under our hand ... in the meadow which is called Runnymede, between Windsor and Staines, on the fifteenth day of June, in the seventeenth year of our reign’. So concludes the original version of Magna Carta, the ‘Great Charter’, perhaps the best-known legal document in the world. The charter was imposed on King John by a rebellious and powerful group of English barons, who aimed to put an end to his impulsive and erratic abuses of royal power by creating a set of clearly defined laws to be observed by the king when dealing with his free subjects. Although Magna Carta was of great importance, it was not a particularly large document. Once King John and the barons had completed their formal negotiations and sworn binding oaths on 19th June (i.e. four days after the date on the document), the various copies of the charter that were carefully written on parchment and despatched around the country typically measured only some fifteen inches by twenty inches and were covered with many lines of closely-written Latin text [Note 1].

With 2015 marking the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta, I thought it might be worthwhile to take a look at Philip Mark, the Sheriff of Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire (Fig. 1), one of the comparatively few people actually mentioned by name in the charter, and highlight his possible connection with Chaddesden [Note 2]. Philip Mark occupied this important post from 1209 to 1224 and has been suggested as one of the most likely prototypes for the villainous sheriff in the tales of Robin Hood, which thanks to the research of Dr. David Crook, we now know date back to the years before 1262 [Note 3].

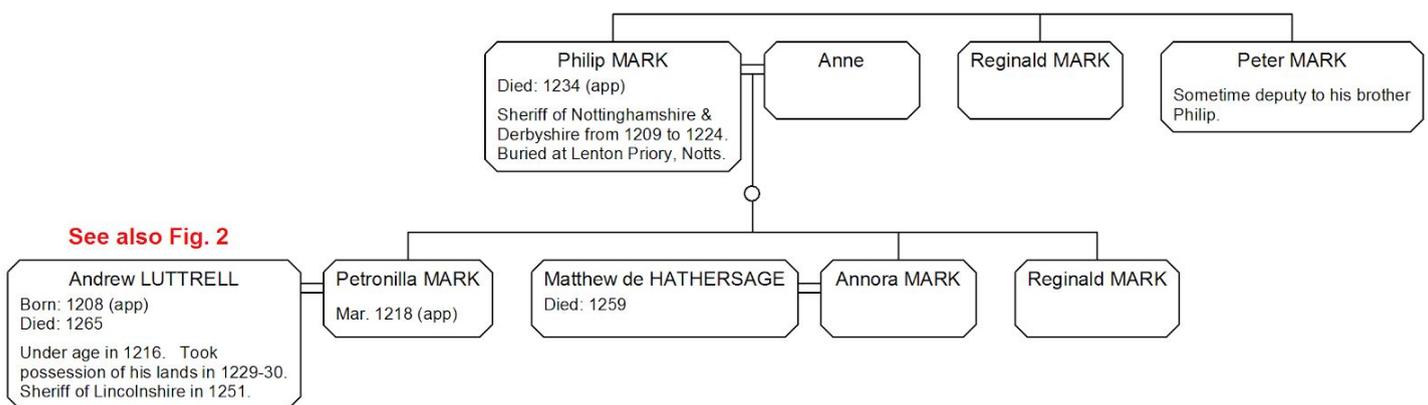


Fig. 1: Simplified family tree of Philip Mark, Sheriff of Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire.

It was a chance discovery that sparked my interest in Philip Mark. Some years ago I was looking through the calendars of various ‘Inquisitions Post Mortem’ that were held after the death of a major landowner to identify exactly what property he (or she) held of the Crown. One specific entry, an inquiry held at Stafford on 12 May 1298 after the death of Edmund, Earl of Lancaster (younger brother of King Edward I) to determine the lands he held in the Honour of Tutbury, caught my attention, for it revealed that Andrew Luttrell held an estate at Chaddesden by virtue of the feudal obligation of knight service, a form of tenure in which an individual was granted land in return for providing a defined level of military service to the Crown. The basic unit of assessment was the knight’s fee – an area of land which required its holder to give the Crown the services of a fully equipped mounted knight and his retinue for forty days each year [Note 4].

In Andrew Luttrell’s case, he held land assessed at one-sixth of a knight’s fee in Chaddesden and neighbouring Locko [Note 5]. The Luttrells were major landowners in Lincolnshire and Somerset and this is the only time they are featured in connection with property at Chaddesden, however, their name is familiar to countless students of medieval history in the form of the Luttrell Psalter, an exquisitely illustrated book of psalms now in the British Library (Add. MS 42130), which was commissioned by the family sometime around 1330 [Note 6]. How then had Andrew Luttrell somehow become possessed of an estate in Chaddesden? Seemingly the answer lay with his connection to Philip Mark.

Mark owed his position as sheriff to his royal patron. Unlike many mediaeval monarchs, King John was certainly no stranger to our part of the country for he visited Derby three times between 1200 and 1216, Horston Castle at Horsley in 1204 and 1209, and Melbourne on no less than five occasions between 1200 and 1213 [Note 7]; he also made good use of the facilities of his royal hunting lodge at Clipstone in Sherwood Forest. John was therefore well aware of the strategic and financial significance of Nottingham, and in the turbulent years of his reign, he needed a dependable Sheriff of Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire, but where was such a trustworthy individual to be found? With his barons seemingly in a perpetual state of rebellion, John increasingly came to rely upon the services of foreigners. After failures in Normandy and Poitou during the early years of John's reign, some of his loyal foreign captains settled in England and were rewarded with various official positions. Of especial interest to us is the shrievalty of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, for by the summer of 1208 Gerard d'Athee, one of John's foreign commanders, was sheriff, and then later that same year the shrievalty passed to Philip Mark, acting as d'Athee's deputy to begin with, but then serving as sheriff in his own right from 1209 to 1224, initially assisted by his brother, Peter Mark, who was his deputy between 1210 and 1212 and also served as for a time as Constable of Nottingham Castle.

Almost certainly related to Gerard d'Athee, Philip Mark probably came from the Touraine province of France and once installed as sheriff soon became unpopular with other local grandees as he gathered up estates and privileges for himself. In particular, Mark quickly realised the profit to be made from a special type of privilege – the wardship. When a tenant-in-chief (one holding land of the Crown) died leaving an under-age heir, the Crown intervened and managed the estate until the heir (or ward) eventually came of age. In practice, this meant the monarch took all the revenues whilst paying only for the ward's upkeep; furthermore, the Crown could also direct the marriage of a ward. The Crown sometimes consigned wardships to favoured individuals as a form of patronage and they were highly sought after as a means of financial advancement. In this way, Philip Mark acquired the wardship of Matthew Hathersage of north Derbyshire and, thanks to his position of influence, secured his ward's marriage to his own daughter, Annora, although the young groom had to be imprisoned in Nottingham Castle for a while before he assented to becoming Mark's son-in-law [Note 8].

Early in the reign of King Henry III and following the death of Sir Geoffrey Luttrell of Gamston and West Bridgford, Nottinghamshire, Philip Mark was granted the wardship of Luttrell's son and heir, Andrew, and set about the business of marrying the wealthy young man to Petronilla, another of his daughters. Once more things proved to be a little problematic, for an entry on the Close Roll of 2 Henry III (1217/18) reads thus: 'Of the marriage of the heir of Geoffrey Luttrell. The king to Philip Mark, greeting ... we grant that you may have the son and heir of Geoffrey Luttrell to marry to your daughter, if you should be able to acquire this against Ralph de Rodes and his sons' [Note 9]. Mark evidently succeeded in circumventing the vested interests of the de Rodes family for the king duly wrote to the sheriffs of Lincolnshire and Leicestershire instructing them to give Philip Mark full possession of all the land which had been held by Geoffrey Luttrell (i.e. Andrew's father) in their respective jurisdictions [Note 10]. The Luttrell family tree reproduced here (Fig. 2) shows that Andrew Luttrell who married Philip Mark's daughter was the grandfather of the like-named Andrew Luttrell, who held the one-sixth knight's fee in Chaddesden and Locko in 1298.

Philip Mark died in 1234 but when the Tutbury Feodary was compiled towards the end of the thirteenth century it revealed that he, too, once had an estate at Locko, which was then rated at one-half a knight's fee [Note 11]. Furthermore his former holding there was sub-divided into three equal one-sixth knight's fees each of 63 acres as follows:

- (a) Land in Locko held by the Master of Burton Lazars of the heirs of Philip Mark.
- (b) Land in Locko held by John Birde of the heir of Philip Mark [Note 12].
- (c) Land in Locko held by William de Chaddesden senior of the heirs of Philip Mark.

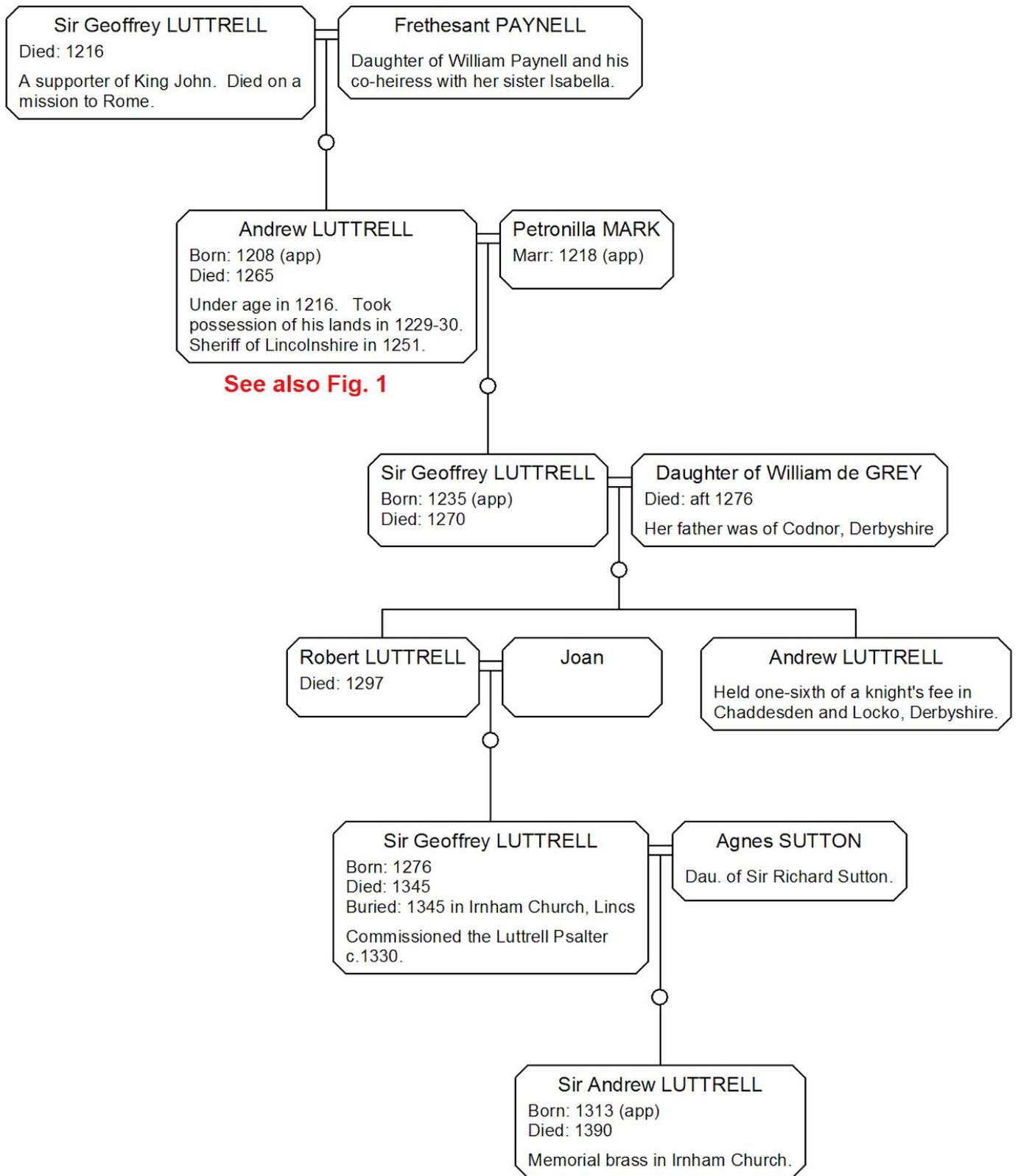


Fig. 2: Simplified Luttrell family tree

Philip Mark's holding at Locko is confirmed in another one of the inquisitions made into the extensive estates of Edmund, Earl of Lancaster who died in 1296. A survey of Edmund's lands appertaining to the Honour of Tutbury was made at Ashbourne on 7 Dec 1297 and records the estate of one-half of a knight's fee at Locko held by the heir of Philip Mark [Note 13]. Unfortunately, it has so far proved impossible to determine exactly how and when Philip Mark and his great-grandson Andrew Luttrell acquired their respective land-holdings in Locko and Chaddesden. Were the lands originally part of a Luttrell estate seized by Mark when his daughter married the first-named Andrew Luttrell c.1218? Or then again, perhaps Mark acquired them by other means and passed them on to his descendants – remember, the Tutbury Feodary keeps referring to land held 'of the heirs of Philip Mark', a term

which could equally well suffice to describe Andrew Luttrell, the holder of the one-sixth knight's fee. Because the two families were connected in the manner described above, I think it is quite plausible that Philip Mark was the original holder of Luttrell's property in Chaddesden and Locko. Indeed this is hinted at by the fact that both estates were expressed in multiples of one-sixth of a knight's fee, suggesting the subdivision of what had once been a larger land-holding.

However Philip Mark is judged by later historians, he was certainly a survivor. The barons clearly hated him, for he and his relations were the subject of a specific section of Magna Carta, i.e. Clause 50: 'We will entirely remove from their jurisdictions the relations of Gerard d'Athee so that in future they shall have no jurisdiction in England, that is to say, Engelard de Cigogne, Peter, Guy, and Andrew de Chanceaux, Guy de Cigogne, Geoffrey de Martigny and his brothers, Philip Mark and his brethren, and his nephew Geoffrey, and the whole brood of the same' [Note 14]. King John may have reluctantly assented to Magna Carta, but as far as Philip Mark was concerned, the charter only had limited effect. Unlike some of the other foreign officials he did not leave the country, but carried on as Sheriff of Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire for another nine years until 1224. Even then he maintained his local links and after his death in 1234, he was laid to rest in Lenton Priory on the outskirts of Nottingham.

There is one last, intriguing, reference to Philip Mark's great-grandson, Andrew Luttrell, that is worth highlighting: On 25 January 1315/6, the Mayor and Community of Nottingham agreed to extend for an extra year the twenty year mortgage they had previously arranged to fifty-nine named individuals of the annual rent of 25 marks which the Burgesses of Retford were bound to pay them in respect of the tolls of a bridge called 'Miriellbridge' [Note 15]. Is it mere coincidence that in this document the name of Andrew Luttrell is preceded by that of Henry de Chaddesden?

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NOTES:

1. One of the British Library's copies of Magna Carta (Cotton MS Augustus ii. 106) may be seen online by following this link: <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/magna-carta-1215>
2. Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire shared the services of a sheriff based at Nottingham Castle until 1567.
3. Crook 1988, pp.59–60. Dr. Crook discovered a reference in the King's Remembrancer Roll of Easter 1262 which demonstrated that the Robin Hood legend was already known by this date.
4. The performance of military service in exchange for the grant of an estate was gradually replaced by scutage, a monetary payment in lieu.
5. *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.3, p.304. This Andrew Luttrell is very probably the Nottingham burgess of that name who features in property transactions there between 1317 and 1338 (*Records of the Borough of Nottingham*, vol.1, pp.381, 384, 388, 400 and 401).
6. Pages from the fourteenth-century Luttrell Psalter may be seen by following this link: <http://www.bl.uk/turning-the-pages/?id=a0f935d0-a678-11db-83e4-0050c2490048&type=book>
7. Turbutt, 1999, vol.2, p.608.
8. *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol. 2, p.303.
9. Stapleton, 1848, p.124.
10. Stapleton, 1848, p.124. Assuming the marriage contract was drawn up around this time, both Andrew Luttrell and Petronilla Mark would still have been children.
11. The Tutbury Feodary only exists in the form of a later copy. An early attempt at dating this document assigned it to 1427-8, but this seems far too late for some of the names (J. P. Yeatman, *The Feudal History of the County of Derby*, Vol.1, London, 1886, p.491). The Feodary is also mentioned in I. H. Jeayes, *Descriptive Catalogue of Derbyshire Charters*, London and Derby, 1906, p.119, no. 966. The most recent description is that given in the British Library's catalogue, where Wolley Charter xi.1 is stated to be a 16th cent copy of a roll of knights' fees in Derbyshire held of the king 'in capite' originally made by Philip de Wylyby, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the reign of King Edward I, and dated to 1278–80.

12. This reference to an individual called John Bird holding land at Locko is unusually early, since the Bird family are usually associated with Locko from the 15th century onwards. However, if the original document does indeed date from 1278–80, the reference is probably to a member of the family from Derby, e.g. Henry de Berde was a juror for the Borough of Derby in the Eyre of 1281 (Hopkinson, 2000, p.195), and a John Bird was MP for Derby in 1366 and 1377 (Simpson, 1826, Vol.2, p.758), so it is perhaps not unreasonable to think that the family had probably begun to acquire land hereabouts in the 13th century.

13. *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, Vol.3, p.313

14. The clauses of Magna Carta are not numbered in the original document.

15. *Records of the Borough of Nottingham*, Vol. 1, 1155 to 1399, Nottingham, 1882, pp.84–87.

Mirielbridge, alias Mirihil Bridge, Markham Moor Bridge or Eel Pie Bridge is a small bridge over the River Maun at West Drayton, Nottinghamshire (SK 7126 7422)

NB Spellings of the Mark and Luttrell surnames has been standardised throughout this article.

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