

Barony of Benington

Seat/County	Benington Hertfordshire	Principal Source	English Baronies By IJ Saunders
Date	History of Lordship		Monarchs
871	Creation of the English Monarchy		Alfred the Great 871-899 Edward Elder 899-924 Athelstan 924-939 Edmund I 939-946 Edred 946-955 Edwy 955-959 Edgar 959-975 Edward the Martyr 975-978 Ethelred 978-1016 Edmund II 1016 Canute 1016-1035 Harold I 1035-1040 Harthacnut 1040-1042 Edward the Confessor 1042-1066 Harold II 1066 William I 1066-1087
1066	Norman Conquest- Battle of Hastings		
1066	A Norman nobleman Peter de Valognes accompanies William the Conqueror to England with the invasion force and fights at the Battle of Hastings.		
1070 - 1076	As reward William gives Peter (1st Baron) extensive lands in Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Lincolnshire and makes him a Baron. Peter makes the baronial seat at Benington.		
1072 – 1086	Peter is High Sheriff for both Hertfordshire and Essex.		
1086	Domesday		
Late 11 th century	Although it is believed Benington was fortified during Saxon times Peter builds a motte and bailey castle. He is also granted Hertford Castle (first fortified by Edward the Elder around 911) by William the Conqueror which is a moated motte and bailey.		William II 1087-1100
1091	Peter founds the Priory of Binham in Norfolk where the bulk of his estates are.		Henry I 1100-35

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1110	Peter dies aged 64/65 and is buried at Binham Priory. Peter leaves a son and heir Roger (2nd Baron). Roger is Sheriff of London and Middlesex. Roger adds to the barony by acquiring his nephew's estate which has considerable holdings in Suffolk and Norfolk. These included the honour of Bacton measured at 13 knight's fees.	
1136	At King Stephen's first Easter court Roger is listed as one of the barons supporting his succession to the throne. Roger replaces the motte and bailey of Benington with a stone castle and keep.	Stephen 1135-54
Unknown	Empress Matilda grants further lands to Roger.	
1140	Roger issues a charter confirming his father's donation of land to Binham Priory. The charter is unusual in that it mentions a "decree that where there is no son the daughters divide their father's land by the spindles, nor can the elder take the younger half of the inheritance by violence or injury". The reference to spindles is assumed to be lordships/manors. Furthermore, he states that upon the counsel of Lord Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury that "all lords holding 6 or more knight's fees should give a 1/3 part of a fee to God and the church for the soul's health of himself and his kin". This is so influential that future lords holding more than 6 knight's fees are to be known as bannerets.	
1141/2	Roger dies at the beginning of the civil wars of Stephen's reign and leaves the barony to his eldest son Peter II (3rd Baron). Peter is unable to gain effective control of the honour of Bacton, a key part of his inheritance.	
1158	Peter dies with no children and so the barony passes to his brother Robert (4th Baron). A charter by Henry II confirms Robert's holdings.	Henry II 1154-89
1166	The Carta Baronum (a survey commissioned by the Treasury) states the barony is measured at 35 knight's fees including 2 further Norfolk knight's fees from the Earl of Arundel.	
1170 - 1174	Robert reconstructs Hertford Castle, building flint walls, gatehouses and including drawbridges under the keen interest of King Henry.	

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1177	King Henry orders that the tower of Benington Castle be demolished as part of a wider strategy of demolishing castles. The Pipe Rolls shows 100 picks are ordered for the work.	
1184	Robert dies with no male heir so his daughter Gunnora (5th Baron) inherits the barony.	
1185	Gunnora is married to Durand de Osteill (5th Baron by right of his wife).	
1194	Durand dies.	Richard I 1189-99
Circ. 1199	Gunnora re-marries Robert fitz Walter, Baron of Little Dunmow (5th Baron by right of his wife). Benington is measured at 30 ½ knight's fees.	John 1199-1216
1201	Robert seizes Hertford Castle, after it had been taken into Crown control, installs his own tenants and garrison and is taken to court. Robert withdraws his claim and they are evicted by King John.	
1202	King John issues letters of patent appointing Robert as Warden of Hertford Castle.	
1203	Robert accompanies King John to Normandy and Rouen. He is made joint Governor of Le Vaudreuil Castle. King Phillip II Augustus of France takes to the field and the Governors surrender. Robert is released after a ransom of 5,000 marks.	
1206	Robert is a witness to the treaty between King Phillip and King John.	
1210	The barony is measured as 9 knight's fees.	
1212	Robert is among the group of barons who resent King John. John quarrels with Pope Innocent III and the Pope absolves the barons of England from their allegiance to King John. John believes his barons are plotting to capture him and demands each baron send him a relative as hostages. Robert flees to France and is condemned to perpetual exile.	
1213	King John seizes Robert's estates and destroys Baynard's Castle in London and Benington Castle. King John is reconciled with Rome and letters of patent are issued so that Robert can return to England. All Robert's estates are returned to him.	

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1214	Robert meets with Archbishop Langton and other barons in secret at Bury St Edmunds. The barons withdraw their fealty to King John and swear on the alter that they will wage war on John. Robert and several other barons visit King John, at the headquarters of the Knights Templar in London, wearing armour and King John asks for a truce.	
1215	The barons elect Robert as their general with the title, Marshal of the Army of God and Holy Church. His first two battles at Northampton and Bedford fail however Robert is successful at London and enters the city at the head of the "Army of God". King John concedes to the barons demands, signs Magna Carta and Robert is appointed one of the 25 executors to ensure it is adhered to.	
1215	Magna Carta	
1215-1217	First Barons War	
1215	Robert remains Marshall of the Army and it is not long before it is apparent King John will not adhere to Magna Carta. Robert's priority is to ensure baronial control of London. He leads a force to Rochester Castle and places William d'Albini in charge of its defence. Fearing a defeat at Rochester at the hands of King John's mercenary army Robert withdraws his main force from Rochester.	Henry III 1216-72
1216	King John's army maintains its military advantage and Robert with Saer de Quincy travel to France, ask the French King's son, Lois for assistance and offer him the English crown. Lois lands in England. During the siege of Lincoln Castle Robert is taken prisoner but is later released. Robert and the other barons pay homage to Henry III in London.	
1219	With England now settled Robert embarks on the 5 th Crusade and takes part in the siege of the Egyptian city of Damietta.	
1235	After his return to England Robert dies and the barony reverts back to the de Valognes family. Robert Valognes the 4 th Baron had a younger brother Philip who in turn had a son William who had died in 1219. William had left 3 daughters; Lora (married to Henry de Balliol), Christina (married to Peter de Maune) and Isabel (married to David Comyn). The barony lands and rights are broken up so that each sister could receive their share and the barony is never returned back to a whole.	

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1264-1267	Second Barons War	Edward I 1272-1307 Edward II 1307-27 Edward III 1327-77 Richard II 1377-1399 Henry IV 1399-1413 Henry V 1413-22
1455-1487	War of the Roses	Henry VI 1422-61 1470-71 Edward IV 1461-70 1471-83 Edward V 1483 Richard III 1483-5
1534	The Act of Supremacy – Church of England	Henry VII 1485-1509 Henry VIII 1509-47 Edward VI 1547-53 Mary I 1553-58 Elizabeth I 1558-1603
1642-1651	English Civil War	James I 1603-25 Charles I 1625-49 Charles II 1660-85 James II 1685-88 William III 1688-1702 Anne 1702-14
1750-1850	Industrial Revolution	George I 1714/27 George II 1727/60 George III 1760-1820 George IV 1820-30 William IV 1830-7 Victoria 1837-1901 Edward VII 1901-10 George V 1910-36 Edward VIII 1936
2019	The title appears not to have been used for 784 years.	George VI 1936-52 Elizabeth II 1952-