

Taken from *The Knights of St John in Essex* by  
Kenneth Nicholls Palmer. (Their copyright)

BOBLOW

In the parish of Helions Bumpstead, the Hospitallers owned another important property, the manor of Boblow. There is no copy of the grant amongst the Cotton documents, but Mr Morant states that Simon and Isobel of Boblow gave land to them and that the estate continued with them until the dissolution. Boblow is mentioned in a number of grants. Robert of Helion granted to the brothers of St John a valuable gift of a virgate of land at Glumaneshegd, held by Robert de Helion:

*with the dwelling house, a grove, an acre of meadow in Holemede, 16 acres, the small parcel of meadow which Roger de Helion gave to the Hospitallers with Robert's consent-8 acres of the land that David held, with the dwelling house and another acre of meadow in holdings of Maurice the priest, Ordiner Brachur, Alwin the merchant, and 2 acres in the vill of Sturmere, of the gift of William son of Cungar, my man. And all these lands and whatever tenements they have of my fee, I confirm to the said brethren in frankalmoin, quit of all secular service for ever. Brother Roger Simple, Brother Robert de Starteford, Brother Ralph Barre, Brother William de Vaux, Ralph the priest of Standon, Randolph Picot, Girard de Sturmer, Roger de Helion, Gilbert de Helion.*

Other documents concerning Boblow are of note. One, c 1230, is a quitclaim: *We, Agnes, Juliana, Maud, Helewise (Eloise) and Amice, daughters and heirs of Baldwin of Boblow have quitclaimed to Thomas Merville all right in 1 1/2 acre of land in Webbecroft of the fee of the Hospital of St John, extending from the assart of Michael son of Josc to the road running in front of the door of Reynold the husbandman for which quitclaim the said Thomas has paid us, 5s.*

A hearing by the Master of the Hospitallers in Essex, William de Nuttsted, was held in full court at Boblow, c 1235-59. It rehearses the terms of the gift of an acre of land with a house by Robert, son of Jordan, opposite the steeple at Bumpstead. The cross of the Hospital was affixed to the house, to show that it was their property and therefore exempt from various tythes and taxes. Gilbert the Cordwainer, as heir, the brother of Robert's great-grandson, had paid all his dues to the Hospitallers, but one William the Clerk had *violently and unjustly thrown down the Hospital cross from the said house* and reclaimed the rent and all rights, as his father, Robert Brian, had done before him. This had not worked and it did not work for William, as the cross had to be replaced on the house. **The Hospitallers also had land at Hempstead, nearby, and William Baldwin, c 1270, undertook to pay 2d annual rent for land and to plant a hedge, where the brethren had been accustomed to turn their plough, suggesting cultivation by the Hospitallers of their tenants, or servants.**

The manor of Boblow stands on rising ground about 3/4 mile due south of St Andrew's Church, Helions Bumpstead. The site is moated, overlooking a deer-park, and has a resident kingfisher. The present building, said to be 16th century, is most attractive and well maintained. It is timber-framed with a large brick chimney, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. At the south end there is a garderobe on the first floor, with a cupboard at the side of the chimney said to be used for warming wigs.



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