

The Manor of Langford Budville

COMPILED BY THE REV. S. J. SWAINSON

(1) NOTE ON THE GEOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

GEOLOGICALLY, the manor of Langford Budville crosses the varied 'crush' zone of West Somerset, including belts of Devonian Grits, Permian Sandstones, Breccias and Marls, Triassic Pebble-beds and Sandstones, and Alluvium along the Tone Valley. This diversity of outcrop has resulted in hilly country and a variety of soils which are moderately fertile and better suited to pasture than arable. There is also a wide-spread distribution of springs and wells, particularly from the water-bearing Pebble-beds.

These factors, combined with a plentiful and well distributed rainfall, have encouraged the development of a predominantly pastoral economy and hence of primary dispersion of settlement right from Saxon times. No enclosure awards were made for Langford Budville in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, so the manor must have been enclosed from early days. The pastoral nature of agriculture is shown by the lack of evidence of common arable, traces of which are often found in East Somerset. All common rights are those of pasture, still claimed or used by a dozen or so landholders on the unenclosed heathfield.

There is evidence, within the limits of the present parish, of fourteen isolated settlements by the year 1327 (one of which dates back to 854 A.D.). Most of these are on the lower slopes round the edge of the manor as the soil is relatively thin and infertile on the ridge top. On the hill in the centre of this dispersion a nucleus of population developed round the church, in form like a double village. The circular settlement from the old Vicarage to Butt's cottage round a central field reflects

the pastoral economy; the linear section, largely of recent growth and including the inn, is strung along the old highway.

It was in this milieu of varied but stony soils, of well distributed water supply, of pastoralism and early enclosure, and of isolated hamlets and farms, that the manor of Langford Budville evolved.¹

BEATRICE M. SWAINSON.

(2) HISTORY OF THE MANOR

The Saxon name 'Langford' signifies 'deep or high going', and refers either to the depth of the ford at Harpford on the Tone or the steepness of the ascent from Harpford to the village. From Langford Gate to Holywell Lake the ridge road became a herepath or main road before the Conquest connecting Milverton with the county boundary. All writers subsequent to Collinson claim Langford as part of Queen Edith's manor of Milverton T. R. E.

The earliest reference to the granting out of the manor by the Crown is in 1212. Adam de Stawell is reported as holding part of Langeford which belonged to Richard de Buddevill by the will of the lord John the King, by the service of half a knight's fee.² The transfer, however, left lands in the possession of the Buddevills as will afterwards appear. The family would seem to have served King John in his earlier wars, and are ancestors of the Marquess of Bath. The *Patent Rolls*, vol. i (1201-1216), refer to 'milites et probi homines de honore de Butevill' (p. 110 b).

By a fine in 20 Henry III Margery, widow of William de Bodevill, granted to Baldric de Noviton half a carucate of land, etc., as a marriage portion. There is a memorandum that William de Longspee and Idonea his wife put in their claim, which was probably allowed, for in the next year, 21 Henry III, they made a number of fines with various persons granting sundry parcels of land in Langford. The Longspees seem to have been the superior lords of the fee and these grants were

¹ For further details and diagrams see *Rural Settlement in Somerset*, by B. M. Swainson, in the Society's Library, at Taunton Castle.

² *Book of Fees*, ed. 1920, p. 84.

probably in the nature of confirmations of grants by the immediate owners of the manor.

In or before 41 Henry III the manor was provided with a chapelry dependent on Milverton.¹

In 52 Henry III Philip Bodevill failed to establish his claim to Harpford, an indication of the position of one portion of Adam de Stawell's half-fee, to which reference is made above.²

In 53 Henry III there is a fine between Philip de Flory and William de Hamme touching a carucate of land in Hamme which is granted to Philip and his heirs for ten marks. Hamme lies on the west of Langford Heathfield.

In the next document³ this William de Hamme is described as William de Buddeshulle (dup. Buddehull) and Philip le Flory as his son and heir. Philip had given the aforesaid carucate to the Archdeacon of Taunton for ecclesiastical purposes. (*See below*—the I.P.M. of 1339.) As a result, his sister Margery de Flory, who had tenanted a messuage and half-acre of land on the estate, found herself dispossessed. The Archdeacon was sued for disseising Margery. Though in error about his facts—for he stated that William died seized of the carucate and that Philip inherited as son and heir—he won the case. Margery was pardoned 'because she was poor'.

It would seem to be indicated that the Budddevilles and the Florys were the same family, for both Philip and his sister bore the name of de Flori. Their manor of Hamme was known later as that of Langford Flory, and subsequent possessions of the family lay presumably in Nynehead Flory (West Nynehead), Combe Flory and Withiel Flory.

It will be convenient at this point to pursue the subsequent history of this carucate or sub-manor, returning later to the general history of the manor.

In 8 Edward II the Archdeacon was summoned⁴ to answer by what warrant he claimed to have view of frankpledge, 'pit and gallows', pillory, tumbrel and right to amend the assize of bread and ale in his manor of Langeford Flory without

¹ *Som. Rec. Soc.*, vol. ii, 'Somerset Pleas', p. 316.

² *Id.*, vol. xxxvi, 'Somerset Pleas', 18 May 1268.

³ *Som. Rec. Soc.*, vol. xli, 'Somerset Pleas', m. 14 d.

⁴ *Quo Warranto Roll*, rot. 66.

the licence and will of our Lord the King. 'And Master Nicholas came; and he says that the aforesaid manor of Langford was immediately annexed to the Archdeaconry of Taunton, and he could not reply without his diocesan.'

The Archdeacons' exercise of full manorial rights was, however, short-lived, as superior lords of the whole manor, including Hamme, appear in 1315 (*see below*).

In 1339 an Inquisition at Milverton recorded that 'Philip de Flori gave to Master N. de Cranford, predecessor of Robert Hereward and his successors, a carucate of land in Langford Bodevyle called 'Hamme' in the time of King Henry III, nine years before the publication of the statute of Mortmain,¹ to find two chaplains to celebrate divine service for the soul of the said Philip, for the said land and the lordship of the manor of Langford aforesaid, doing to the chief lord, Sir John Brytoun, the services due and accustomed. The land is of the yearly value of 20s.'²

In the I.P.M., 20 Richard II, one fee in Langford and Hamme which the Archdeacon of Taunton holds is mentioned in two inquisitions among other fees pertaining to the castle of Christ Church, Twynham (Hants); one taken on the death of William Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, in 20 Richard II, the other on that of Thomas Montacute, his successor in title.

In 9 Henry VI Nicholas Galton, Archdeacon of Taunton, was assessed for lands and tenements in Langford at a quarter knight's fee.³

The value of Hamme in the Lay Subsidy of 1327 may be estimated from its assessment at 8s. out of a total for the manor of 42s. 7d. In the tenths and fifteenths assessment of 1594,⁴ it is assessed at 6s. 8d. out of a total for the parish of 38s. 9d.

There is authority for stating that on the purchase of the lordship of Langford by Mr. Edward Clarke in the late seventeenth century a chief rent of £3 10s. p.a. was paid by the owners of Hamme to Mr. Clarke and his successors in title until the estates of the Archdeacon passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in the mid-nineteenth century. The property

¹ In A.D. 1270.

² Calendar of Inquisitions, Record Office. Misc. File 138 (I).

³ *Feudal Aids*, 9 Henry VI, p. 437.

⁴ Churchwardens' Accounts, Langford, 1594.

was then sold and the charge redeemed. In 1840, its extent was 171 a. 3 r. 7 p.¹ It is now part of Wellisford manor farm.

To revert to the general history of the manor—in 1303 Peter of Avesbury held Langford, for a half fee, from the Earl of Lincoln (Henry de Lacy), the Ordainer and Regent² of England. By 1315 the lordship had passed to Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, nephew of Edward I.³ After his execution in 1322 it appears to have passed to the Despensers, probably Hugh the younger. In the Fines of divers counties, 18 Edward III, there occurs one between Hugh le Despenser and Ebulo Lestrangle and Alice his wife concerning fifteen knights' fees in Langford, Hamme and other places in Somerset, 'jus Hugonis'. They were doubtless chief lords.

In 1327 appears the first list of tenants of the manor.⁴ The holdings which can be identified to-day are (in modern spelling) Gundenham, Ramsey, Harpford, Stretchey, the Archdeacon's estate of Ham, Stancombe, Clode's cottage and land, Bere.

In 20 Edward II the tenants of the half fee which Peter of Avesbury had held are assessed at 20s.,⁵ and in 6 Henry VI they are specified 'From Lucy, widow of John Guppehay, from the heirs of Thomas Cler, and from those of Nicholas Walrond, from Philip atte Bere, and from the heir of Henry Sydenham, for half a knight's fee, 3s. 4d.'⁶ Bere, therefore, as well as Harpford, was within the half fee.

In 20 Henry VI a chief lord appears in a trust settlement, extant, executed by John Crosse vesting the manor of Langford in Edward Sydenham, John Sanford, John Southey, Hugo Sanford, on his marriage with his wife Sybyly.

In 12 Edward IV there is an I.P.M. of Joan, widow of John Sydenham, to which I refer only to remove the tradition that the ownership of Langford Heathfield is annexed to the lordship of West Runnington. This inquisition, while including the manor of Runnington with lands and tenements in Thorne St. Margaret and Langford as 'in their demesne as of fee', does not specify the manor of Langford as appertaining. A reference to John Sydenham's I.P.M., 8 Edward IV, will show

¹ Poor Rate and Particulars Book, 1840. (Parish Chest.)

² *Feudal Aids*, vol. iv, p. 302.

³ *Id.*, p. 333.

⁴ *Som. Rec. Soc.*, vol. iii, 'Lay Subsidies', p. 252.

⁵ *Feudal Aids*, vol. iv, p. 341.

⁶ *Id.*, p. 370.

that what he owned was the reputed manor of Harpford, which, then as now, has land in both Thorne and Langford, extending from Harpford to Holywell Lake, on both sides of the road.

In 1594, we have in the churchwardens' accounts a copy of a note assessing the tenths and fifteenths of the freeholders, of whom there were thirty-nine. The fresh names of holdings identifiable are Tibcombe (Tibby), Gallhill, Cholwell, Middle Hill, Bindon, with several field names still in use. There are several assessments 'for Commons' Place', *i.e.* rights of common.

In 1619 Nicholas Sydenham was lord of the manor of Langford Budville and obtained leave from quarter sessions for the erection of a poor house.¹ The date when the manor passed from the Crosses to the Sydenhams has yet to be ascertained.

In 1637 Humphrey Sydenham and Nicholas Sydenham, his son and heir, sold to Hugh Crosse and John Crosse of Holcombe Rogus the manors both of Runnington and Langford Budville, the deed being still in existence. Later in the century the manors were purchased by Mr. Edward Clarke of Chipley to whose descendant, Mr. Sanford, they now appertain.

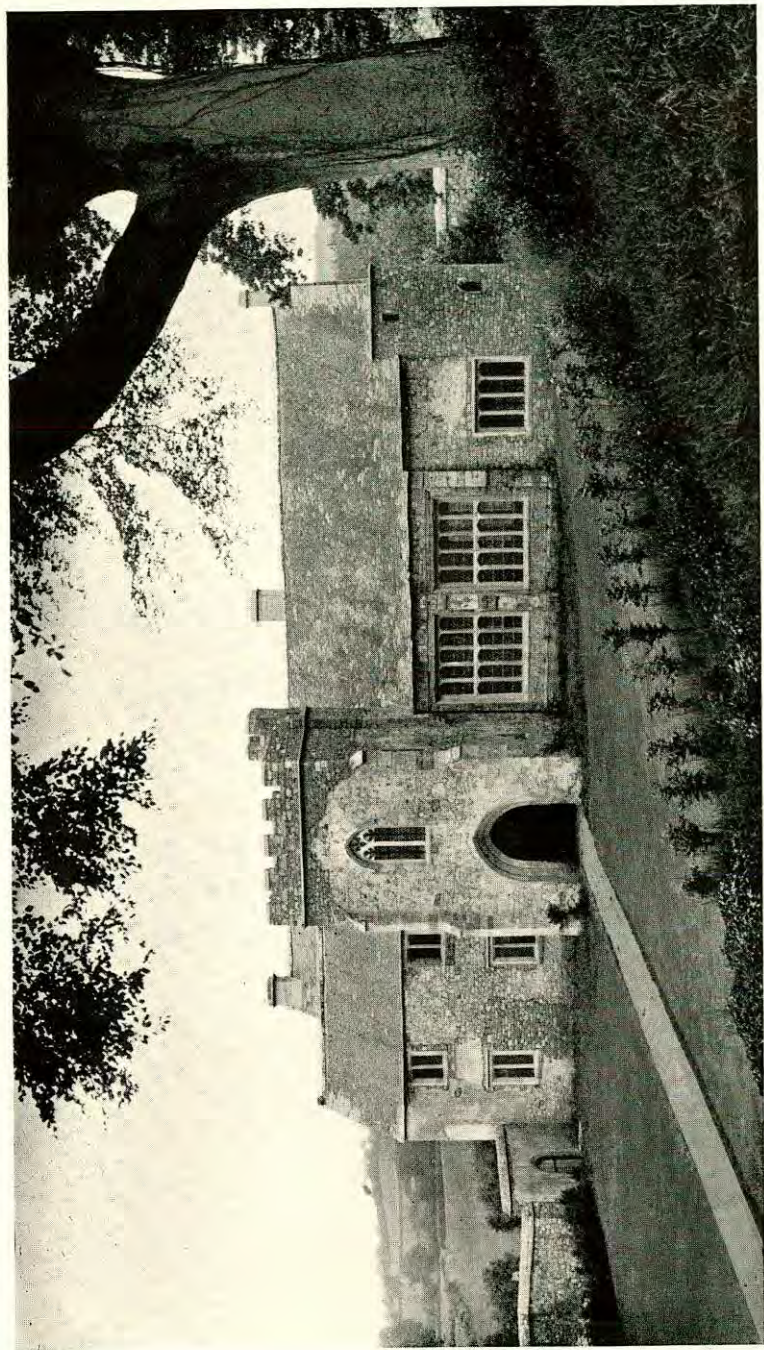
The remaining manor of the parish, Wellisford, was held in Domesday by Robert de Auberville who had succeeded two Saxon thanes, Edric and Bruninc. It was granted to William of Wrotham,² the king's forester, by Richard I and was a knight's fee. In 1284 it was held by Philip of Welleforde for a quarter fee from Richard of Plessy, who held it of the king.³ In 1303 Philip held it for $\frac{1}{8}$ -fee 'in Nyweton Plessy'.⁴ In 1316 Simon is chief lord.⁵ In 1346 Roger had succeeded Philip,⁶ and in 1428 Robert Warre owned the $\frac{1}{8}$ -fee formerly Roger's.⁷ It would seem to have remained with the Warres until the 17 May 1654, when it was purchased by Edward Clarke the elder of Chipley from the representatives of Edward Warre, deceased. While the property has changed hands since then, on many occasions, the shadowy manorial rights seem to be still held in conjunction with those of Langford Budville.

¹ *Som. Rec. Soc.*, vol. xxiii, p. 257.

² *Lib. Nig. Scacc.* i, 102.

³ *Book of Fees (Testa de Nevill)*, 1284.

⁴ *Feudal Aids*, vol. iv, p. 302. ⁵ *Id.*, p. 333. ⁶ *Id.*, p. 341. ⁷ *Id.*, p. 370.



GREENHAM BARTON: THE ENTRANCE FRONT

By Permission of "Country Life Ltd."