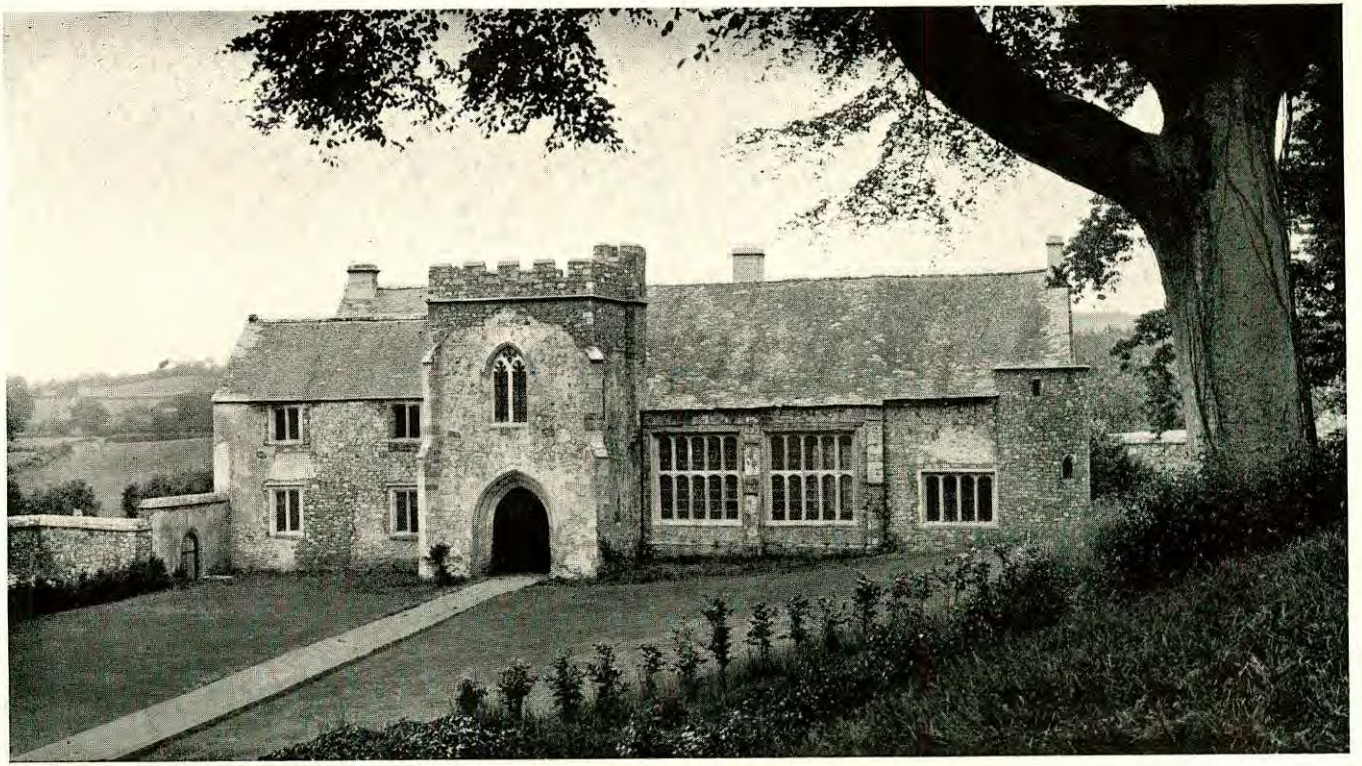


GREENHAM BARTON: THE ENTRANCE FRONT

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Greenham Barton

BY ARTHUR W. VIVIAN-NEAL, M.C., F.S.A.

THERE are many Tudor manor-houses in Somerset, and some of these occupy the site of earlier manor halls, but there are in the county few important domestic buildings of the Plantagenet period of which so large a part survives as at Greenham Barton. Almost the whole of the existing house appears to date from the reign of Henry IV. Until recent years there were also at Greenham two detached buildings, one of which is thought to have been a thirteenth-century hall and the other a chapel of slightly later date, but, unfortunately, these have been demolished.

Greenham or Grindeham is mentioned in Domesday as one of the holdings of Bretel St. Clare under the Count of Mortain, and it was part of a compact property held by him which also comprised Ashbrittle, Appley and Wellisford. How early the family which took their name from the place were settled here is not known, but about 1235 the name of William de Grindeham occurs, and for the next century there are frequent references to the name Greenham in its various spellings, though the relationship of the different members of the family is obscure. (*Feudal Aids, Som., 1284-85, 1303, 1316, 1346* and *S.R.S.*, xii, 59). Simon de Grindeham was owner of Grindeham and Kydeford in 1284 (*Kirby's Quest*), and in 1273, Simon de Grindham, who may be supposed to have been the same man, had come before the King and sought to replevy his land in Henhangre which was taken into the King's hands for a default before the Justices of the Bench (*Close Rolls*). Sir Peter de Gryndenham (Harl. Soc., *Knights of Edward I*), who may have been a brother of Simon, is said to have married Eleanor de Keynton of Kenyton or Ketton in Rutland, and founded the family of

Greenham or Grenham of Ketton which long preserved a connection with Loxton in Somerset. In 1391 a certain Philip de Gryndenham recovered 11 messuages, 4 carucates and 360 acres of land in Frome which had been granted to him on his marriage with Juletta, daughter of Sir William Braunche (*De Banco Roll, Common Pleas*, 15 *Rich. II*). The Greenhams had been connected with Frome at any rate since 1340. Descent from the Ketton and Loxton branch is claimed for the Greenhams of Norton-sub-Hamdon, who were established there in the sixteenth century, and for the later Greenhams of Yeovil.

The arms borne by the Greenhams of Greenham were, *Argent, a chevron sable a label of three points gules*, a coat also well known as that of Prideaux by which family it was adopted after the marriage of Geoffry Prideaux, whose father Richard died in 1250, to Isabella, daughter and heiress of John Orcharton. Previously it had been the coat of the Orchartons with whom the Greenhams may have been connected. When two families are found as early as the thirteenth century living in the same part of England and using the same coat of arms, a connection may be surmised, though such a conjecture would hardly be justified even a little later in the history of heraldry.

There seems to have been a strong tradition that the heiress of the Greenhams who married Sir Walter Bluett was Christian, daughter of Sir Simon de Grindeham, and Sir Walter's wife is thus named in a pedigree from the Harleian Manuscripts printed by Vivian in his *Visitations of Devon*, but this pedigree, although substantially correct, is suspect as regards certain Christian names which would seem to have been introduced to give an effect of completeness without due regard to documentary evidence. However, the Harleian pedigree is the earliest record forthcoming of some of these names. It is clear that other Greenhams held the property after the time of the Simon de Grindeham of *Kirby's Quest*; but there may have been a second and later Simon Greenham, father of the heiress, or she may have indeed been daughter of the original Simon but have succeeded some other relation. As late as 1317 ' licence was granted for the alienation in mortmain by William

de Gryndenham of a messuage, 40 acres of land, 4 acres of meadow and 5 acres of moor in Gryndenham, to Henry de Sancto Claro, parson of the Church of Asshebritel, to find a chaplain to celebrate divine service on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of each week in his chapel at Gryndenham' (*Patent Rolls*, 1317; *S.R.S.*, i, 112; *Harl. Soc.*, lxxxi, 161).

The Bluetts were already an ancient and distinguished family when Sir Walter Bluett married Christian Greenham. Sir Walter was apparently a younger son of Sir Ralph Bluett of Ragland, and according to the Harleian pedigree his mother was a de Monthermer, a connection which has been said to account for the green eagles in the Bluett coat; but in another pedigree she is stated to have been a daughter of Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford. The lordship of Ragland had come to the Bluetts by marriage with an heiress of the Ragland family, and the estate was held by the senior branch till it was conveyed to Sir James Berkeley (*d.* 1404) by his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Bluett.

The first Sir Walter Bluett of Greenham was M.P. for Somerset in 1311 and again in 1322; his son by his first wife, the heiress of Greenham, was the second Sir Walter Bluett of Greenham, M.P. for Somerset in 1368, 1373 and 1377, who married a daughter of Sir John Malet, probably the Sir John Malet of Enmore whose wife was Elizabeth Kingston. The son of the second Sir Walter was John Bluett of Greenham who married Agnes, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Thomas Beaupyne of North Petherton and Bristol, M.P. for Somerset in 1390, and of his wife, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Stephen de la More, perhaps the Gloucestershire knight of that name who also held lands in Somerset and Dorset. Sir Thomas Beaupyne had been mayor of Bristol and a considerable access of fortune came to the Bluetts through him. The house built by John Bluett and Agnes his wife, probably soon after 1403, the year of her father's death, may be considered one of the first of the surviving houses in the county having its origin in Bristol merchandise. Of their building are the arches of the porch-tower, and the two arches at the back of the dais, as are, doubtless, the walls of the hall, the solar, the kitchen and the buttery, now the dining-room, though windows in these walls

have been altered, giving them an appearance of much later date. The thirteenth-century hall, recently destroyed, may have been used as an independent dwelling by junior members of the family after the building of the new house, or it may have been turned into lodgings for the servants of the enlarged household.

The son of John Bluett who built the existing house was the John Bluett who acquired Holcombe Rogus in Devon by his marriage with Maude, daughter of John Chesilden, and co-heiress with her sister Margaret, wife of Sir John Wadham of Merifield. Besides the coat of Chesilden, this marriage added to the Bluett quarterings the arms of Rogus of Holcombe Rogus and of Tantyffer (*Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lviii, i, 59).

Whether Holcombe was at this time a more important house than Greenham is not known, but the family seem to have used Holcombe as their chief residence. The son of John Bluett and Maude Chesilden was Walter Bluett who married Joan, daughter of John St. Maure of Beckington. Of this marriage there were (?) two sons, Nicholas, who inherited Greenham and Holcombe, and Richard, whose brass is in Kittisford Church, and who inherited part at any rate of the lands in Kittisford that had come to the Bluetts from the Greenham family ; he is believed to have built Cothay Barton.

Nicholas Bluett of Greenham and Holcombe died in 1523. His wife was Joan, daughter of John Fitzjames of Redlynch. The son of this marriage was Richard Bluett who married Mary, sixth daughter of Sir Thomas Grenville, K.B. of Stowe in Cornwall. Richard Bluett may have occupied Greenham as he died before his father. With a younger son, Francis, who married the heiress of Colan in Cornwall and founded a branch of the family the representative of which inherited Holcombe in 1700, Richard Bluett and Mary Grenville had an elder son, Sir Roger Bluett (*b. circa* 1503, *d.* 1566), a friend of the Protector Somerset. Sir Roger built the existing house at Holcombe. His wife was Jane, daughter of John Rowe of Kingston, Devon, Sergeant-at-Law, and he had by her a son John Bluett who lived, at any rate during his father's lifetime, at Greenham. The insertion of the three large Tudor windows in the hall at Greenham was almost certainly the work of this

John Bluett about the time of his marriage to Dorothy Blount. She was a daughter of William Blount, K.G., Lord Mountjoy (*d.* 1534), the pupil of Erasmus whom he brought to England, and the friend of many scholars, including Leland. Dorothy Blount's mother was Dorothy Grey, daughter of Thomas, Marquis of Dorset, and aunt of the unhappy Lady Jane Grey.

It is thought that it was John Bluett who raised the walls of the hall at Greenham, ceiled the hall and added rooms over it, and also raised the tower-porch, but these additions have since been pulled down. By his first wife, Dorothy Blount, he had a son Richard Bluett of Holcombe who married Mary, daughter of Sir John Chichester of Raleigh by his wife Gertrude, daughter of Sir William Courtenay of Powderham. The Chichesters were descended from Thomas of Woodstock, youngest son of Edward III, through Sir John's mother Lady Elizabeth Bouchier, daughter of John, Lord Fitzwarren, Earl of Bath. Lady Elizabeth was of Somerset stock, also through her mother, Cecilia, daughter of Giles, Lord Daubeney of South Petherton.

Richard Bluett died in 1615. His wife had died earlier, and he seems himself to have erected the elaborate alabaster monument at Holcombe in her memory. The head at any rate of his effigy on the monument is of stone. It shows him as an old man and the face is well characterised. Her effigy, which is entirely of alabaster, is very striking, and it is suggested that the face may have been from a life-mask.

Richard Bluett's son Arthur Bluett, died in 1612, three years before his father; he had married Jane, daughter of John Lancaster of Milverton and Bagborough by Dorothy, his wife, daughter of Thomas Carew of Crowcombe. Jane Lancaster was a great heiress: she and her husband lived at Greenham which had been made over to them. (Chancery Proceedings, Ch. i. Bundle 57, no. 14. Poyntz *v.* Gamlyn.) Their eldest son, John Bluett, married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Portman of West Coker, and lived at Holcombe where there is heraldic panelling of their insertion. When John Bluett died in 1634, he left no son and Holcombe passed to his brother Francis, but Greenham and the greater part of his estates were left in trust for his surviving daughters. His wife only lived two years after his death. Her will is a long one and she made

many curious and interesting bequests (Brown's *Somerset Wills*, v, 20). She instructed her executors, her brother Sir William Portman and her sister Grace Portman, that she wished to be buried at Holcombe Rogus near her husband and that ' a decent monument be set up for us both '. The decent monument is still in a perfect state of preservation ; it is entirely of alabaster, with some colouring, and marble, and is a remarkably beautiful example of the period of Charles I. Evidently it came from the same workshop as the monuments at Wiveliscombe of Humphrey Wyndham (*d.* 1622) and at Pitminster of his son-in-law John Colles (*d.* 1627), both of which have been a good deal damaged. Elizabeth daughter of this John Colles married Sir William Portman, Madam Bluett's executor, who may well have been responsible for the erection of all three of these unusually fine tombs. The effigies of John and Elizabeth Bluett are in pure white alabaster on a black marble base. Her face was perhaps carved from a portrait, but the whole of his effigy is perfunctory in execution though a personal touch is introduced in the embroidery of the Bluett squirrel among the arabesques on the cushion beneath his head. His feet rest against the Bluett crest, carved in the round, *a squirrel sejeant proper, in his paw an acorn fructed gules* ; hers against the Portman crest, *a talbot sejeant proper*. The tinctures of the squirrel and talbot are not as generally blazoned : both should be gold. Besides scutcheons of the Bluett and Portman arms, there is on the canopy of the tomb the fully quartered achievement of the Bluetts. The origin of each of the quarterings has been indicated earlier in this paper. The shield is quarterly of 9 :—

1. BLUETT. *Or, a chevron between three eagles displayed vert.*
2. RAGLAND. *Azure, three bends within a bordure argent.*[1]
3. GREENHAM. *Argent, a chevron sable a label of three points gules.*
4. BEAUPYNE. *Argent, a chevron between two crosses formée in chief and a saltire in base all sable.*
5. DE LA MORE. *Argent, three moor-cocks sable.*

[1] Baring-Gould and Twigge, *An Armory of the Western Counties*, 89. Harl. MSS. 5827.

6. CHESILDEN. *Or, on a chevron gules three martlets argent.*
7. ROGUS. *Azure, a chevron between three chess rooks or.*
8. TANTYFFER. *Azure, two bars between eight martlets or, three two and three.*[2]
9. LANCASTER. *Argent, two bars gules on a canton of the second a lion passant or.*

Of John Bluett's eight daughters, small figures of whom are placed on the plinth of the monument, only four survived their mother; Ann, *b.* 1625, married Cadwallader Jones;[3] Mary, *b.* 1627, married firstly Sir James Stonhouse, Bart.,[4] of Amberdon Hall, Essex, and secondly Sir John Lenthall,[5] (Governor of Windsor Castle, and created a baronet by Cromwell) son of Speaker Lenthall; Dorothy, *b.* 1633, married Henry Wallop,[6] son of Robert Wallop, the regicide, and was ancestress of the Earls of Portsmouth; and Susan, *b.* 1634, married John Basset[7] of Heanton Punchardon.

It seems not to have been until about twelve years after their father's death that Greenham actually passed into the possession of the Bluett heiresses. Their grandmother, Jane Lancaster, had married after the death of their grandfather, Arthur Bluett, a certain Philip Poyntz who survived her. Apparently under the terms of the settlement made by her father-in-law on her first marriage, Poyntz retained Greenham; he lived there until his death in 1645 or 1646.

Cadwallader Jones became of Greenham in right of his wife who appears to have been the last of the Bluetts to live there. She died in 1683 (Brown's *Somerset Wills*, iii, 113). In the will of her son Cadwallader Jones of Cameley, proved 1692, are mentioned 'the fourth part of the Barton of Greenham in Ashbrittle, Somerset, with the fourth part of the stone quarry and woods belonging thereunto, and the fourth part of Pres-

[2] *Ibid.*, 91, Harl. MSS. 5827, where different tinctures are given for virtually the same coat.

[3] Burke's *Landed Gentry, Jones of Langford Court* under *Somers, late of Mendip Lodge.*

[4] Burke's *Extinct Baronetcies, Stonhouse of Amberdon*, and *Landed Gentry, Jervoise of Herriard.*

[5] Burke's *Landed Gentry, Lenthall of Bessels Leigh.*

[6] Burke's *Peerage, Portsmouth, E.*

[7] Burke's *Landed Gentry, Basset of Umberleigh.*

bridge Mills in the said Parish, all which premises were lately purchased by me of William Lenthall Esq ', showing that as late as 1687 when the will was made, the shares of all the Bluett heiresses had not been divided, territorially at any rate, as regards the Greenham property.

Cadwallader Jones of Cameley married Elizabeth Creswick, heiress of Langford Court, and their son, John Jones of Langford Court married Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Clarke of Chipley, Comptroller of the Household to Mary II. Greenham eventually came to Elizabeth, granddaughter of John Jones of Langford and daughter of his eldest son, Edward. Elizabeth Jones married as her second husband Thomas Sedgwick Whalley, D.D., of Mendip Lodge (*b.* 1746 ; *d.* 1828), a poet and traveller (*D.N.B.*, lx, 400), who through her was possessed of the Jones property in Ashbrittle. Dr. Whalley executed a disentailing deed, and Greenham was sold during his lifetime.[8]

Probably it was not long after the death of Ann Jones, in 1683, that most of the Tudor additions to Greenham were demolished. The house was in a bad state of repair when it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Fry about ten years ago. The great hall, which had been divided into several rooms, was restored by them to its original proportions. A screen of early type was inserted, surmounted by an enclosed gallery, lighted by a small oriel giving into the hall. Admirable reproduction and restoration of the early plaster ceilings in the hall, in the room behind the dais and in the solar, were carried out by Mr. Smallcorn of Bath.

The house is now empty and awaits a successor to the Greenhams and Bluetts whose home it was for so many centuries.

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For additional information about the Bluett Family see Prince's *Worthies of Devon,* edition 1810; Vivian's *Visitations of Devon,* edition 1895 ; Vivian's *Visitations of Cornwall,* edition 1887.

[8] The writer is indebted to the Rev. T. C. Dale for the evidence of Dr. Whalley's connection with Greenham.