

The Horsey Family.

BY JOHN BATTEN, F.S.A.

THE family of de Horsey, or Horsey, has been, since the beginning of the 15th century, so closely associated with the county of Dorset, one is apt to forget that from a much earlier period they were seated in Somersetshire; their "dwelling-place," as Leland calls it, being at Horsey, a hamlet in the parish of Bridgwater called "Hursi" in Domesday book. From this place, which means in Anglo-Saxon, an island for keeping or breeding horses, they took the name of Horsey; unless we accept the more romantic derivation from the Saxon chieftain Horsa, who, with his brother in arms, Hengist, is said to have paid a *friendly* visit to our island in the fifth century. Be that as it may, their residence, until they acquired Charlton, was, as Leland says, at Horsey, and we may presume that an ancient chapel there, in which the Vicar of Bridgwater was bound to perform divine service every Sunday, was erected for their accommodation.¹

The manor of Leigh Powlet in Devon, and Powlet in Somerset, were held of the manor of "Horsey neere Bridgwater, of which Philip de Horcy and Thomas de Horcy were owners in King Henry II's time."² But, in fact, both Horsey and Powlet were fiefs of the Lordship of Bridgwater, as, early in the reign of King John, Fulk Painell, whose family had inherited that

(1). Somerset Chuntries, *Record Society*, p. 57.

(2). *Sir William Pole's Devon*, p. 210.

lordship from Walter de Dowai, the Domesday tenant, notifies by letter to Philip de Horsia that he had transferred to William de Briwere the services due from Philip for one knight's fee in Horci, one in Powletta, and one in Bue (Bower), and commanding him to acknowledge the said William as his future lord.³ And these fees were afterwards held by Philip's son William de Horsey of the heirs of William de Briwerr.⁴ Both Philip and William his son were witnesses to several other charters relating to lands in the neighbourhood of Bridgwater,⁵ and Philip was one of the knights on the grand assize held 6th John for trying the right of Robert de Mandeville to the barony of Marshwood.⁶

It is said⁷ that William de Horsey, son of Philip, sealed a charter s.d. with the arms *az.*, three horses' heads, couped at the neck, *or*, bridged *arg.* This was undoubtedly the coat of the family in later times, but without further verification it may be questionable whether the use of allusive or canting arms had been introduced at so early a period as the reign of King John.

This William (I) had a son of the same name (William II), who, by charter s.d., wherein he is described as "William son of William de Horsya," granted to Edward Hatherick the land in Pedredham juxta Combwich, which William his father gave to the said Edward and Adam his brother,⁸ and by another charter (also s.d.) William Avenell, son of Nicholas Avenell, acknowledged that "William de Horsya son of William de Horsya" had done his homage for the land of Swindon (Wilts), which William the father formerly held.⁹

(3). Charters of Duchy of Lancaster, no. 79. 35th Report D. K. Records, App. II.

(4). Testa de Nevill, p. 200.

(5). *Ibid.*

(6). Historical Memorials of South Somerset, p. 120.

(7). Notes and Queries, 5th series, vol. xi, p. 409.

(8). Harl. MS., 4120, f. 17.

(9). *Ibid.*

William de Horsey (II) increased his Somersetshire possessions by the purchase of a moiety of the manor of Charlton Mackerel. That manor, with the adjoining one of Charlton Adam, was part of the Barony of Arundel (so called from Roger Arundel, the Domesday tenant), which, in the reign of Richard I, was held in moieties by Robert de Pole (ancestor of the Fitzpayns) and Roger de Newburgh. Roger being an infant, the wardship of his estates was granted by the crown to Robert Belet.¹⁰ It does not appear how the Belets acquired the inheritance, but from the record of an assize 7 and 8 Edward I, between Robert Fitzpayn and John de Horsey (I), respecting the church of Charlton Mackerel, we learn that William de Horsey (II) "purchased a moiety of the manor of William Belet son of Robert Belet, and this is confirmed by the fact that William Belet, by deed under his seal of three escallops, with the legend 'Sigill. Willi. Belet,' and dated 41 Henry III, acknowledged the receipt from William de Horsey of £100 at different times, for the land at Charlton."¹¹

John de Horsey (I), who died in or before 22 Edward I, leaving his wife Cristina and a son and heir, William (III), surviving. By an inquisition taken after his death, of the yearly value of his lands, it was found that he was seised in fee of half a knight's fee in Charlton Mackerel, for which he owed suit at the Hundred Court of the King at Somerton, and that his mansion (*curia*), with the garden, was worth by the year — shillings. Also rents of assize, 8*s.*; customary works, 18*d.*; pleas and perquisites of court, 12*s.*; a dovehouse, 2*s.*; one moiety of a watermill, 6*s.* 8*d.*; eight acres of arable 26*s.* 8*d.* each acre, 2*s.*; twenty acres of meadow 20*s.* each acre, 12*s.*; also pasture in different places, 2*s.* 8*d.*; total, 73*s.* 6*d.*, together with the right

(10). *Dugdale's Baronage*, vol. i, p. 614, and see *Fine Div. Cos.*, 9 Hen. III, no. 42.

(11). Harl. MS., 4120, f. 4. His wife was probably Elizabeth, daughter and coheirress of Sir William de Reigny (*Pole's Devon*, p. 324), by whom he left a son.

of presentation every other turn to the church of Charlton Makerel worth 20*s.* The jury also found that he held the manor of Horsey of the heirs of Patric de Chaworth by service of half a knight's fee, that the "curia" with the curtilage was worth 2*s.*; rents of assize 74*s.* 6*d.*; customary works 2*s.*; pleas and perquisites of court, 4*s.*, including "capitagium garcioni" (a peculiar and unusual manorial custom, probably a poll tax on the "villeins:" see Ducange, *sub* capitagium); a mill, 6*s.* 8*d.*; 122 acres of arable, 62*s.*; seven acres of meadow, 16*s.* 6*d.*; total value of Horsey, £11 12*s.* 6*d.* Besides the above he held of Lord Simon de Montacute a tenement called Sydewere, worth 25*s.* a year; also one eighth part of a knight's fee in Asolte (Asholt, Somerset,) of the heirs of Hugh de Neville, belonging to the manor of Radeway (Radeway Fitzpays in Cannington parish). Lastly, it was found that William de Horsey was his son and heir, and aged 18. In consequence of the son's minority, the crown had taken possession of lands held by his father in addition to those already mentioned, but they were claimed by the widow, Cristina, as her jointure, and, on an enquiry held by the eschaetor, proof being adduced that more than ten years before Cristina and her husband had been jointly enfeoffed of lands in Stables Newton (in the parish of West Newton?) by Walter Fichet under the service of one eighth part of a knight's fee and a rent of 5*s.* payable to James de Gardino and suit twice a year at the court of John de Erlegh of Migheles chirche (Michaelchurch), these lands were restored to the widow.¹² She married for her second husband Sir Hugh Popham, probably a neighbour at Huntworth close by, who left her a widow again in 1321, and she died in 1330, having made a will from which it appears that she retained (which was not unusual in those times) the name and arms of her first husband. The following is an ancient translation of it:

"I Cristian Horsey make my testament in the yeare of our Lord God 1330 first I committ my soule to God and

(12). Eschaetor's Inquisitions, *citra* Trentam, series I, file 7.

all saintes and my body to be buried in St. Francis Church in Bridgwater. I give xis. for a trentall for my soule. To my daughter Alexandria I give my best ewer and basin. To Ralph Horsey I give a payre of wheelles of a wayne and the plough withall. To Jeane Stawey my whole wardropp. Executors, John son of John Popham, John Stawey and John Horsey. Seale 3 horse heds in a scucheon."¹³

William (III) died in 1327. He held the estates of Charlton and Horsey, and also that at Swindon which had descended to him from his ancestor, William (II). His wife, Matilda, survived him, and, as her husband held his lands direct of the king, she was subject to that wholesome feudal restraint which checked the vagaries of widows, and her dower was conditional on her engaging on oath (to be taken in the presence of his son and heir if he chose to attend) that she would not marry again without the king's consent.¹⁴ John (II), son and heir of William (III), died in 1338 s.p., and was succeeded by his brother Ralph de Horsey, who was one of the collectors of subsidies for the county. He probably resided at Charlton, in an ancient house, called Horsey Court, and he was the founder of the chantry there, mentioned by Collinson, vol. ii, p. 193. After him the name De Horsey seems to have been dropped. His grandson, another John, was the first of the family who allied himself to the county of Dorset by his marriage with Elena, daughter and heiress of Philip Maubanc, the owner of the manor of Clifton, near Sherborne, called after him Clifton Maubanc. As we shall not have occasion to allude to Charlton any more, it may be as well to note down for the benefit of future inquirers, that on the death of Sir John Horsey of Clifton, in 1588, it descended in moieties to his sisters, Mary the wife of Richard Arnold, and Elizabeth the wife of Sir William Mohun. The Arnold moiety came to Ann and Mary,

(13). *Pole's MSS. Collections*, Queen's College, Oxford, no. 151.

(14). *Close Rolls*, 1 Edw. III, memb. 27.

sisters and coheireses of Hubert Arnold, who sold it in 1675 to James Samson, who, in 1709, purchased the Mohun moiety of Charles Bodvile, Earl of Radnor. On his death in 1713, the entirety, by his will, vested in his son James Samson, junr.¹⁵

By virtue of several settlements referred to in inquisitions p.m., which it would be difficult and unprofitable to unravel in detail, Clifton, as well as Horsey and Charlton, and some other lands in Somerset, devolved, in 1422, on Henry Horsey, son of Sir John Horsey, knt.,¹⁶ and after his death it was found by inquisition that he died, 30 Henry VI, seized of three hundred acres of land at Pegenasse (practically Horsey), of half the manor of Charlton, and of the manor of Clifton Maubanc, and that Thomas Horsey, his brother, was his heir.¹⁷

Thomas did not succeed to his inheritance without resistance, for Henry in his lifetime, by deed poll, said to be dated 18th February, 33 Henry VI (*i.e.*, three years after his death, according to the inquisition) had settled his estates (subject to a life interest to his wife Johanna) on himself and his issue, with a limitation over to James Ormonde, Earl of Wilts, in case of attempted alienation. As the document is rather an extraordinary one, and is exemplified by the common seal of the borough of Bridgwater, I append an abstract of it from the Close Roll (38 Henry VI, memb. 10).

Deed poll (in English) under the hand and seal of Henry Horsey, esq. Reciting that he had by deed bearing date the last day save one of November, 33 Henry VI, enfeoffed John Ormond, esq., Humphry Stafford, esq., Alexander Hody, esq., William Bronyng, esq., Henry Fylongby, esq., William Bokedlond, esq., William Correwyn, esq., James Frampton and William Billman, in and of his manors of Horsey and Chareltou Makerell with their appurtenances, with the advowson of the church of Charlton Makerell and of all his lands in Horsey and Charlton aforesaid, Pegenasse and elsewhere in the county

(15). MS. in my possession.

(16). Esch., 1 Hen. VI, no. 28.

(17). Esch., 1 Edw. IV, no. 25.

of Somerset, to hold to them and their heirs for ever. And reciting that he had by another deed dated 1st December, 33 Henry VI, enfeoffed the same persons in and of the manor of Clyfton Maubanke, in the county of Dorset, with the advowson of the church or free chapel of the same, to hold to them and their heirs for ever, to the intent to perform thereof his will. He declared his last will and full entent to be that his said feoffees should make estate of all said manors, lands, advowsons, &c., to James, Erle of Wilts, and to one other person to be named by the said erle, to hold to them and their heirs for ever. And that the said erle and other persons after the said estate so made to them should give the manor of Horsey to him the said Henry Horsey and Johan his wife and the heirs of his body and all other the said manors, advowsons, &c., to the said Henry Horsey and the heirs of his body upon this condition, that if he the said Henry Horsey or any of his heirs should alien the said manors, &c., or any of them to any person in fee simple, fee tail, or term of life of any person save of his own in the manor of Horsey it should be lawful for the said erle and other persons or their heirs to re-enter into the said manors to hold to them and their heirs to the use of the said erle and his heirs for evermore, and this he declared to be his full will and intent of the feoffment aforesaid. Dated 18th February, 33 Henry VI.

N.B.—The feoffments are also enrolled in Latin and releases as well. Seal of the borough of Bridgwater affixed. Witnesses (to one), Humphry Courteny, knt., Hugh Malet, esq., Robert Warre, esq., and others. (To another), William Poulet, knt., John Sydenham, esq., Alex. Lynde, esq., and others.

The Earl of Wilts seems to have set up some claim under this deed, but it was set aside probably on the ground that Henry had no right to settle the estates. And Thomas having recovered possession died seven years after, leaving an infant son and heir John, who in due time married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Richard Turges, of Melcombe, and so acquired another large domain in Dorset, which soon became known as Melcombe Horsey.

We need not pursue the pedigree of the main line any further, as it is set out in Hutchins and in the addenda to the Dorset Visitation of 1623, but there was a branch (only casually noticed by Hutchins) seated in the reign of Henry VI near Bridport, which had acquired very considerable property from another source.

In the reign of Henry IV or V a certain Henry Horsey had married Alianor, one of the daughters of Thomas Bingham and Mary, his wife, daughter of Sir Walter Romsey, knt., of Rockborne, Hants. By failure of his male issue his granddaughters, the above Alianor Horsey and her sister Joanna, wife of Thomas Kelway, became coheiresses of the Romsey estates, including one third of the ancient barony of Bysset, of which the overlordship of the manor of Clifton Maubanc formed part; and it is a singular coincidence that at the time now referred to, the mesne ownership of Clifton was held by one branch of the Horsey family, and the overlordship by another. Both sisters were married before 3 Henry V (1416), as in that year they were parties to a deed wherein they are described as Henry Horsey and Alianor his wife, daughter and coheir, with Joanna, the wife of Thomas Kelway, of Thomas Bingham and Mary his wife.¹⁸ Henry Horsey and his wife, Alianor, were succeeded by their son and heir, William Horsey, who died in 1448.

By the inquisition after his death¹⁹ it is found that he held the manor of Bingham's Worth, the manors (*i.e.*, the overlordship) of South Perrot and Clifton Maubanc, the manor of Ocle (Oakley in the parish of Chilthorne Domer), lands at Otterhampton, Combwich and Pipplepen (in North Perrot), one third of the manor of Mudford Terry, and land at Adber (in Trent); and that Thomas his son, aged seven, was his heir. All these estates had descended to him as his share of the Romsey estates, except Bingham's Worth, which came from

(18). Historical Memorials of South Somerset, p. 44.

(19). Esch., 26 Hen. VI, no. 26.

Thomas Bingham, who was a member of that branch of the Bingham family which held for many generations estates in West Dorset, and was known as Bingham of Bingham Lodgers.²⁰

William Horsey resided at Rockburn, and there his son Thomas was born on the 8th February, 144 $\frac{9}{7}$ (19 Henry VI), and baptized in the church there on the same day. On the death of his father, in 1448, his estates (being held in chief) were taken in wardship by the crown, and on his coming of age it was necessary that he should prove the fact before he was let into possession. According to the legal procedure of that day, this was done by the production of witnesses who could depose to the day of the birth before a jury empanelled by the eschaetor. It was a clumsy contrivance, but the best that could be adopted in the absence of parish registers, and it is interesting as giving us an insight into mediæval domestic life. In the case now before us, no less than twelve witnesses vouched for the birth and baptism, each witness explaining the grounds of his recollection. One recollected it because on the same day he fell into a pit and broke his arm; another, because he carried a torch in the church on that day; another, because on that day he took a lease from William Horsey, the father, of a farm in Rockburn for ninety-nine years; another that whilst he was in the church he heard that Maud the wife of Nicholas Ormonde had brought forth a son, whose name was William; another, that he was in church with the suite of William Horsey, and before he went from his presence he bought a mare three years old from one John Besteryle, the farmer of the demesne lands of Rockburn; and the last remembered the day because there was a high wind which blew down a "beche" tree.

Thomas Horsey resided at Bingham's Worth, and settled it as a jointure on his wife Ann, a daughter of John Wykes or Wyk of Bindon, near Axmouth. This appears by a charter dated at Bynedon, 3rd Edward IV, whereby Thomas Horsey

(20). Cal. Pat. Rolls, 8 Edw. I, m. 10d (44).

grants to John Wyk, Walter Cheverill, and John Scovyll, rector of Charborough, his manor of "Bynham ys Othe,"²¹ to hold in fee, yearly rendering one rose. The witnesses are John Newburgh, William Browning, John Russell, William Frampton, William Oliver, Thomas Porter, and others, and it is indorsed "Junctura Anne Horsey."

By another deed, dated 20th July, 1 Richard III, the above John Wyk and John Scovyll (who had survived William Cheverell) granted a lease of Bingham's Worth to Humphry Baskervisle, esq., for his life, with remainder to "John Horsey, son and heir of Thomas Horsey," in fee. Witnesses, William Mountague, John Pokeswell, Henry Hyde and others.²²

The mention of John Horsey as son and heir of Thomas is very puzzling, for Thomas died in or before 1477, and by the inq. p.m. (17 Edward IV, No. 46) his heir was his son William Horsey, an infant only four weeks old. He inherited an estate of 200 acres at Saltford near Bath (part of the Barony of Bysset) and four messuages and 160 acres of land in Chilthorne Domer (held of the Honor of Gloucester), and also the manors of Okley Hill, New Hill (in Chilthorne), and Littleton (held of the Earl of Sarum). According to the Dorset and Wilts' Visitation of 1565,²³ Thomas, his father, resided at Bridport (Burport), about three miles from Bingham's Worth, and there we may presume he was buried. In Harl. MS. 111 there is a note of an inscription (taken no doubt from a memorial in the church where he was buried), "Orate pro anima Thomas Horsey filii et heredis Witt Horsey qui obiit 1477." Bingham's Worth is not mentioned in the inquisition, but it must have continued in the Horsey family for many years, as in a conveyance in 1636, it is stated to have been "heretofore the inheritance of Thomas Horsey of Damerham, Wilts, esq., and Bartholemew Horsey, his father."²⁴

(21). Old English for "Bingham's Worth." Worth, in Anglo-Saxon, means an inclosure or homestead.

(22). Charters in my possession.

(23). Harl. MS. 888, p. 44.

(24). Harl. MS. 888, p. 44.