

V

St. Anne's Chapel, Brislington.

BY THE REV. A. RICHARDSON.

THE manor of Brislington was in the honour of Gloucester, which included Bristol and Bristol Castle, and was given to Robert Fitzhamon by Rufus.

Fitzhamon's¹ eldest daughter and heiress, Mabile, married Count Robert, illegitimate son of Henry I, and who was created Earl of Gloucester² on his marriage with Mabile, as she objected to marry a commoner.³

On the death of Robert Earl of Gloucester the manor of Brislington passed to his son, William Earl of Gloucester, who, having no heir, left it to Henry II in trust for his younger son, John, afterwards King of England, but Henry II gave it back to Isabel, sister of William Earl of Gloucester, and she, on her marriage with King John, requested that it might be given to a knight named Sir John de la Warre, in whose family it remained until the middle of the sixteenth century. The De la Warres were raised to the peerage by

(1). Fitzhamon is said to have founded Tewkesbury Abbey, where he is buried, and to have been with Rufus at Winchester the night before his death in the New Forest, of which he was warned by a monk who had a dream, in which he saw the King die whilst out hunting.

(2). Robert Earl of Gloucester espoused the cause of Maud, daughter of Henry I, in her war with Stephen, the Conqueror's youngest son, and imprisoned Stephen in Bristol Castle, which he rebuilt. Robert Earl of Gloucester's figure is upon one of the Bristol gates, hung up above the entrance to the castle at Arno's Vale (the property of J. C. Clayfield-Ireland, Esq.)

(3). The story of their marriage is given at length in *Seyer's Bristol and Bristol Past and Present*, vol. i, 72. See *Seyer*, vol. i, 342; *Collinson*, vol. ii, 400; *Bristol Past and Present*, vol. i, 70, 71.

Edward I, 1298, and one of the family in 1356 was present at the battle of Poitiers with Edward the Black Prince.⁴

The manor was sold by the De la Warre family to the Lacys in the sixteenth century, and sold by the Lacys to the Langtons in 1653. The Langtons built Langton Court soon after coming into possession, which is still standing—the former manor house having been situated at the other end of the parish towards Filton, now known as the Manor House Farm, on the property of J. Cooke-Hurle, Esq.⁵

Colonel William Gore married⁶ Miss Langton, the heiress to the property, and by right of his wife became owner of the manor towards the end of the eighteenth century, and from him it passed in direct descent to the present Lord Temple, who sold it about fifteen years ago.⁷

William Wycester (in his *Itinerary*, page 191) states that a certain Lord de la Warre founded the chapel of St. Anne, and there is little doubt that Collinson and other writers are correct in stating that the founder gave certain endowments to the chapel, viz: land for the erection of a house for a chaplain at Newycke (traditionally said to have been situated where Wick House, the residence of Mr. T. Harding, now stands), and some land at Hanham and Warley Wood.

The chapel and its endowments are mentioned in a lease granted by John, last abbot of Keynsham, on 30th of June, 1538, to Robert Stafford, yeoman, of Brislington.

“To all the faithful in Christ to whom this our present indented writing cometh, John, by divine permission, abbot of the monastery of the Blessed Virgin, and the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul of Keynsham, in the

(4). See Collinson, vol. ii, 410, 411, who quotes a charter of 8 John for gift of manor to De la Warre.

(5). Mr. J. Cooke-Hurle's title deeds.

(6). This marriage is in the Brislington Parish registers of marriages.

(7). A considerable portion of the original manorial estates had passed away previous to this sale, the village of Brislington having formerly belonged to the manor, as well as property now owned by Messrs. Clayfield-Ireland, J. Cooke-Hurle, and W. J. Braikenridge, etc.

county of Somerset, and the convent of the same place send greeting in our Lord everlasting, and know ye that in the aforesaid abbot and convent by our unanimous assent and consent for the sum of forty shillings sterling to us in hand paid by Robert Stafford of Bristtelen, yeoman, the receipt, so have granted all that one house, situate near the chapel of St. Anne, in the wood at the southern part of the said chapel in the parish of Bristlington, in the county aforesaid, and called Newyke, with all houses, out-houses, orchards, to the said house belonging or appertaining; also the 'chapel' or 'shrine' in which the image of St. Anne formerly was, with the cemetery in which the said 'chapel' or 'shrine' now is with all other commodities, profits, advantages, and easements and the said house, with the gardens, orchards, chapel, and cemetery belonging or appertaining."

This lease also grants "Hamcliffe Wood in West Hannam," and "Cosyner's lez under Warley Wood," to Stafford (evidently the original endowments of the chapel, the gift of Lord de la Warre).

The date of the foundation of the chapel is uncertain, but it was after the foundation of Keynsham Abbey in 1170,⁸ as the chapel was founded in connection with that abbey. It was before 1392, as a will of that date is extant in which a small legacy is left to the chapel.

Dallanay, in his *History of Bristol*, thinks that the chapel was founded by the same Lord de la Warre, who founded St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Bristol. (*See Dallanay*, p. 61).

Messrs. Nicholls and Taylor, in *Bristol Past and Present*, place St. Anne's and St. Bartholomew's at the end of the thirteenth century.

Wycester, in his *Itinerary*, says St. Bartholomew's Hos-

(8). Keynsham Abbey was founded by William Earl of Gloucester, to the memory of his son Robert, who died in his twentieth year (*see deed*, Bristol Museum). *Seyer*, vol. i, 253. *Farmer's Notitia Monastica (Som.) Dugdale's Monasticon Anglicanum*, vol. vi.

pital was formerly a priory of canons regular, founded by the ancestors of Lord de la Warre, and adds that it is now a hospital for poor persons. (Wycester's *Itinerary*, p. 408).

Barrett, in his *Bristol Antiquities*, refers to a deed dated 1386, by which the patronage of St. Bartholomew's Hospital was vested in the De la Warre family, "whose ancestors founded it." (Barrett, p. 430).

It is probable that the founder of St. Anne's Chapel and also of St. Bartholomew's Hospital was *Roger de la Warre*, raised to the peerage in 1298 by Edward I. He is described in the *Complete Peerage*, by G. E. C., as of Isfield, Sussex, and Wick-Warr, co. Gloucester, in which county it says he had considerable estates.

If this Lord Roger de la Warre (who died seized of Brislington, 1320, *see* Collinson, vol. ii, 411) was the founder, as is probable, it will meet Wycester's statement that it was founded by a *Lord de la Warre* (he being first Baron de la Warre); it will also agree with the date usually given as the date of the foundation of the chapel, *viz.*, the thirteenth century, as he died in 1320, an old man, having a son forty years old (*see* Collinson, vol. ii, 411); and it will also agree with Dallanay's surmise as to the foundation of St. Bartholomew's Hospital having been by the same founder as St. Anne's, as the land endowments of St. Bartholomew's lay in *Brislington* and *Wickwarr*, as well as in other parishes in Gloucestershire and Somerset.

In the Record Society's *Somerset Feet of Fines*, vol. vi, p. 237, there is an account of a trial at Westminster, when Roger de la Warre, in 1274, claimed the manor of Brislington from John, son of Jordan de la Warre, when judgment was given in favour of John, but at his decease the said manor was "wholly to revert to Roger." It is also stated at the same trial that the *Abbot of Keynsham appeared to put in his claim for an endowment*, possibly the Chapel of St. Anne.

The chapel had evidently become a popular place of pil-

grimage before William Wycester's time, 1414—1480. In his *Itinerary* he describes its structure as follows: "The Chapel of St. Anne contained in length 19 yards; the breadth contained 5 yards; there are 19 buttresses (*Capella Sanctæ Annæ continet in longitudine 19 virgas; Latituro ejus continet 5 virgas; et sunt de boterasses circa capellium 19*). See *Itinerary*, p. 408.

He also describes its interior as follows:

"The chapel contains two four-sided wax lights, the gift of the Weavers' Guild (*artes textorium*) which contain in height from the ground to the arch of the roof (probably the tower) eighty feet, and the through measurement of one four-sided light from the Guild of Shoemakers (*corduanarii*) contains in width ten inches, and the breadth eight inches—and the four-sided wax lights given by the Guild of Weavers, contains in height to the roof of the chapel, eighty feet, width eight inches, breadth seven inches, and in each year the said wax lights are renewed about the day of Pentecost, and the wax and the making cost £5 (£60 of our modern currency); and there are in the chapel thirty-two ships and little ships (*naves and naviculæ*⁹) and five are of silver, each costing twenty shillings, and before the image of St. Anne are thirteen four-sided wax lights."

The first authentic record of St. Anne's Chapel is, as has been already alluded to, in a will dated 1392 (a copy of which is in the possession of the Bristol Corporation), when John Becket, merchant of Bristol, left a small legacy to Sir Richard, chaplain of St. Anne's, and another to the abbot and monastery of Keynsham, of which Sir Richard was doubtless a canon, as two tombstones¹⁰ were dug up in the abbey cemetery

(9). Dallany thinks the ships were for burning incense and receiving and containing offerings, and says that William Wykeham gave one eleemosynary dieh, in the form of a ship, to Winchester Cathedral. He also adds that amongst Cardinal Wolsey's plate there were some "lytell shippes," some "silver," and some "gilte," for collecting offerings on Christmas Day.

(10). These tombstones were broken up some years ago to make coping stones for a garden wall by the owner of the Abbey lands.

some years ago bearing the names of canons of Keynsham, who were also chaplains of St. Anne's.

The inscription on one of them runs as follows: "Here lies Walter Joie, canon, formerly custos of the chapel of St. Anne's in the wood, on whose soul may The Most High have mercy."

(*Hic lacet Walternus Joie (or Jocc) canonicus super custos capelli Sancti Anni in the wode, etc.*)

The lettering is said to be of the sixteenth century in which case this was probably the last chaplain of St. Anne. (See *Journal of Archæological Society Paper on "Keynsham Abbey,"* by Loftus Brock.)

Another Bristol Will, relating to St. Anne's chapel, is that of Maud Esterfeld, wife of John Esterfeld, dated 21st July, 1491, in which, amongst other behests, she leaves a gold ring to the use of the chapel of St. Anne's in the wood. (See *Wadley's Bristol Wills*, p. 177).

Amongst the illustrious visitors to this chapel was Henry VII, who first visited Bristol in the spring of the year, after the battle of Bosworth, 1485, and at that visit made a pilgrimage to St. Anne's Chapel.

A manuscript in the Cottonian Library, quoted by Leland in his *Coll. De Rebus, etc.*, vol. iv, p. 185, contains this extract:

"And on the morne when the King had dyned he roode on pilgrimage to Sainte Anne's in the Woode."

Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry VII, also visited the chapel during a progress in the West of England, and left an offertory of 2s. 6d.

The following extract is given in her almoner's account:

"1502. It^m the xxist day of August to the King's Almoner—For the queen's offering to St. Anne in the wood besides Bristol 17^s. vjd. (See *Privy purse expenses, Elizabeth of York*, p. 42).

The Duke of Buckingham, the builder of Thornbury Castle, and the last who held the office of High Constable of England,

made a pilgrimage to St. Anne's in 1508, with his wife and daughter, and the following entry is recorded in the duke's private account, now at the Record Office :

"1508, 6 May. My lord, my lady's, and my young lady's oblation to St. Anne in the Wood 7s. 4d."

The Duke of Buckingham revisited the chapel in 1521, shortly before being put to death as a traitor, and the entry appears in his account as follows :

"1521, January. Oblation to St. Anne in the Wood, 7s."

There is another previous entry in these accounts relating to St. Anne's Chapel, which is given as follows :

"22 June, 1508. To a Welsh harper at St. Anne's, 1s"
(See Brewer's *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII's Reign*, vol. iii, part 1, p. 497).

There is an interesting reference in *Bristol Past and Present* to a pilgrimage made by two hundred pilgrims from St. Anne's to Compostellia, in Spain, in 1448. (See *Bristol Past and Present*, vol. ii, 126. Quoted from Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. vi, p. 79).

The historian Leland also refers to St. Anne's Chapel in his *Itinerary*, probably about the year 1542, when he relates :

"A 2 miles above Bristow was a common Trafectus by bote wher was a chapelle of St. Anne on the same side of the Avon that Bath standeth on and heere was great pilgrimage to St. Anne. (Leland's *Itinerary*, vol. ii, p. 57).

But not long after the chapel had become so famous as to attract royalty and nobility, the tide of the Reformation had set in, and in 1533, Hugh Latimer, then an incumbent of the Wiltshire parish of West Kington (then in the Diocese of Bath and Wells), was invited by some of the Reformist clergy to visit Bristol, and in the pulpits of St. Nicholas and St. Thomas he denounced certain doctrines of the Romish church, especially pilgrimage, as mischievous and superstitious.

Being prohibited from preaching in the Diocese of Worcester, in which diocese Bristol then was, he defended himself,

one of his opponents being Dr. Powell, and in the following letter to the Chancellor of the Diocese of Worcester he mentioned St. Anne's Chapel as being no less famous for pilgrimage than the shrine at Walsingham.

Latimer to Dr. Bagard (Chancellor of the Diocese of Worcester).

"The reason why you have not moved your parishioners so instantly to pilgrimages as you have to works of charity, arises, as I suppose, for lack of scripture to bear you out. Therefore, I send you one of Dr. Powell's finding, who deriveth pilgrimages to Master John Sharne, Walsingham *St. Anne's in the Wood*, from the text in St. Mathew, xix, 29, 'Every one that foresaketh houses,' &c. The seven sacraments he picked out of Psalm xxii (xxiii). *Dominus regit me. Tuus L.*"¹¹

But the destruction of what Latimer deemed an evil was even nearer than he imagined. In January, 1539, the abbot and canons of Keynsham surrendered their monastery to the king, and the chapel of St. Anne's, already dismantled, and let on lease to Robert Stafford, yeoman of Brislington was sold by King Edw. VI, in 1552, to Robert Bridges, a brother to Lord Chandos, who, along with this chapel, purchased most of the abbey property for a small sum.

The part of the conveyance referring to the chapel, which is slightly different from the lease of 1538, runs as follows :

"All that Tenement called Newycke with its appurtenances situate near the late chapel of St. Anne at Bristleton, and all houses, gardens, and profits belonging to the said messuage of Newycke. Also all the chapel of St. Anne aforesaid, the churchyard where it was situated, and all rents belonging to the said messuage, chapel and churchyard."

And then follows the description of the rest of the endowment,

(11). This controversy is given at length in *Seyer's Memoirs of Bristol*, vol. ii, 216, and in *Nicholls and Taylor's Past and Present*.

viz., the land at "Hamcliffe Wood in West Hannam and at Warley Wood." (*See* copy of conveyance, Collinson, vol. ii. Keynsham Abbey).

It is impossible to say how much of the chapel had been demolished between the years 1538 and 1552, the time between which it was let on lease and sold.

Probably it shared the fate of other similar edifices, and, bereft of its roof timbers and stained glass windows, it was left during this period to fall into decay.

The walls had probably fallen in or been pulled down before 1790, as Collinson speaks of the Chapel at that date as being "long since ruined."

There are old people who say that a portion of the ruins were used as a cart-shed when they were children, and that this cart-shed was nearly all pulled down, about the year 1860, to make a garden wall, on a farm near the chapel, called St. Anne's Farm.

A portion of this ruined cart-shed was, however, still standing in 1880, and possibly forms the subject of a sketch made in that year by a Roman Catholic clergyman, named Father Grant. Now almost all these remains are gone, there is little more than a grassy mound to mark the site, which is on the Brislington side of the Avon, near the end of the lane running through St. Anne's Wood, and opposite Crew's Hole, in the parish of Hanham.

The old well and ferry are still in existence, and there is a right of way to the ferry and chapel site from both the Somerset and Gloucestershire sides of the Avon.

The names "Pilgrim Inn" and "Pilgrim Street," retained in the village of Brislington, still keep alive the memory of the chapel, and though it is gone for ever, yet the romantic associations and natural beauty of the place remain. Nor can any one visit this still charming locality so near a great city and yet so secluded in its nature, without sympathising with

Collinson who, evidently struck with the quiet beauty of the place, writes in 1790 :

“The place where the chapel (long since ruined) stood is but little known, being in a nook of the county opposite Crew's Hole, in the parish of Hanham, in Gloucester, by which it is divided by the Avon. A more retired spot could hardly be found. A deep well,¹² overhung with aged oaks, alders, and poplars, bounds its southern aspect ; through it runs a languid brook, gently murmuring over a rocky bottom and making several waterfalls.”



RUINS ON THE SITE OF ST. ANNE'S CHAPEL.

(From a sketch made by Father Grant, in 1880.)

[The writer of this paper desires to express his thanks to the Librarian of the British Museum, the Rev. F. J. Poynton, Rector of Kelston, and to Mr. Latimer, of Bristol, and also to Mr. James Sinnott, the present owner of St. Anne's Wood, for their kind assistance, and wishes to add that Mr. Latimer's *Notes on St. Anne's*, written about ten years ago, for the Bristol and District Pathway Preservation Society, contain considerable information on the subject.]

(12). Some coins were found in this well about ten years ago by Father Grant, and were as follows : 1. Half groat, Edw. IV ; 2. An abbey token ; 3. A half groat, Hen. VII ; 4. A Portuguese coin ; 5. A reckon-penny or counter.