

Notes on the History of Dulverton.

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BUT a few years ago the history of any parish would have commenced with some extract from *Domesday* book, now, thanks to one, alas! lately departed from us, two years earlier can be included, and much new matter gained. Still all is rather complex, and future workers may yet find room for their investigations. In the Gheld Inquest then, taken in 1084, Dulvertona is found as part of Williton Hundred, and, with Netelcoma and Uinnesforda, was rated at six hides, one virgate and one fertin, the dues on which were in arrear. The *Domesday* measurement is about a third more. But although Dulverton is here found already in Williton, it for a time, it would seem, gave the name to the Hundred. It here included Potesdona (Pixton), Holma (Hollam), and certain lands owned by thirteen Taini, the value, £3. 4s. 2d., making up the *Domesday* measurement of 8,337 acres, held by the King *in capite*. Before the Conquest it was owned by Earl Harold, who received a rent from Brigeford, from the Earl of Moretain, of twenty-four sheep; a custom, says the Inquest, "now discontinued." The rental was eleven pounds ten shillings, paid in white money.

Within the manor was a still uncertain holding of one virgate of land, called Widepolla, the same spelling as for Withypool, held by Robert de Odburvilla, formerly owned by one Dodo in the time of King Eadward. D'Auberville, as the name next becomes, and Dodo, were both King's foresters, but D'Auberville, by a suit at law, managed to secure the property, and then to separate it from Dulverton, holding it by what was considered the more honourable tenure, by service, instead of, as before, by a money rent. Mr. Eyton, in his *Domesday Studies of Somerset*,

suggests that this property was Hawkridge, a parish or manor not mentioned in that book.

At some time in the reign of Henry I, by his gift, the manor also passed to Turberville, as the name became and still is. In 1150, towards the end of that King's reign, Richard de Turberville, with the consent of his brother Hugo, gave the church of Dulverton, and land called Golianda, to the Priory of Taunton,¹ a gift which influenced the after history of the manor.

The next mention, with any certain date, is in 1253, 38 Henry III, when, by arrangement, the manor was sold by Richard de Turberville to Robert de Shete, conditionally however that he, Richard, died without heirs.² In 1255, Robert de Sete again appears, now in an action of *mort d'ancestor*, as defendant against Roger de Reyni, for a carucate of land, with belongings in Dulverton.³

Henry the third, as is well known, spent many years in France, and died there. During this long absence many of his followers must either have died or have been killed, and the Turberville sale, probably a family arrangement, was perhaps in consequence of this possibility. On the death of Henry, and the return to England of Edward I, the royal properties were found neglected, and enquiries consequently ensued. In the *Testa de Nevill* (p. 162a), documents originating either at the end of Henry or beginning of Edward, 1272, Dulverton is found as owned by Hugh de Turberville, held of the King, by the service of making or keeping a ward or guard at Breckinot. It was so held by the gift of King Henry I, the grandfather of King Henry II, the father of John. Hugh seems to have died without immediate heirs, and the Turberville holding ceased. By 1274, 2 Edward I, the manor had passed to an heiress, Hawisia, daughter of Robert de Shete, and so the intention of

(1). *Additional MSS.*, British Museum, 30,283.

(2). *Feet Fines*, 28—40 Hen. III, No. 100.

(3). *Patents*, 39 Hen. III, m. 8, dors.

the sale was completed. In the *Hundred Rolls*, from enquiry made in this year at Langport, Thomas de Pyn was returned as lord of the free manor of Dulverton, and it was declared that he took and restrained all waifs and strays which came on his lands, but by what warrant or ancient custom the jury knew not. Thomas de Pyn came into possession through his wife Hawisia, and in 1278-9, they granted the manor or Hundred of Dulverton, reserving a third the dower of Hawisia, to Alianore the Queen and her heirs,¹ with all rights and services; and then curiously in 1281, the King and Queen re-granted their two-thirds, at a rental of one penny, payable at Easter, to the said Thomas and Hawisia, for their lives or the longer liver of them, afterwards to revert to the King.² Thomas pre-deceased Hawisia, and she then married Nicholas de Boneville. By the inquisition taken after his death, it was found that Hawisia had married him for her second husband, and that he held the manor of Dulverton with her, under John, son and heir of John de Bello Campo (Beauchamp), Baron of Hache, who at the time was a minor in the King's charge,—*i.e.*, a ward of Court—who held it of the King in chief; and that the said Hawisia, with Thomas de Pyn, her first husband, had been enfeoffed by the King, and that she was still so seised after the death of her second husband, and after her death it would go to the King. It was further declared that Hawisia held the manor of Shete, in Devon, by heirship, in free socage, of Thomas de Sandford; and the manor of Combe and half the manor of Lydeard Punchardon. Nicholas Boneville, her son, aged nearly two years, was next heir.³

In time Hawisia died also, and by the inquisition taken at Dulverton in 1331, these transactions are more clearly stated. It was then found that Hawisia Pyn, as she was called, held

(1). *Close Rolls*, 7 Edward I, m. 3 dors., extra skin.

(2). *Feet Fines*, 1—20 Edward I, No. 58.

(3). *Escheators Inquisitions*, 23 Edward I, No. 73. *Inq. Post Mortem*, 23 Edward I, No. 44. *Close Roll*, 23 Edward I, m. 8.

for her life, the day she died, two parts of the manor of Dulverton by concession of Edward, formerly King of England, grandfather of the then King, which two parts were held of Emericus de Pauncefoot, as of the Honor of Kyrkehowel, by the service of a third part of a knight's fee; and that Thomas and Hawisia had conceded the said two parts to the King for a sum of money, and the King had again conceded them to the said Thomas and Hawisia for their lives. The said two parts were worth seventy-three shillings and fourpence; there were two hundred acres of hill land, of which some forty acres could be sown with oats, worth three halfpence per acre, and the remaining one hundred and sixty acres were worth nothing. Other acres of meadow were worth twelve pence, and two parts of a water mill were worth ten shillings. There were also customary and free rents and perquisites of Court. These two parts now passed to the Crown. Hawisia also held in her own demesne in fee the other third part of the manor, also of the Honor of Kirkhowel, by the service of a third part of a knight's fee. The value was fifteen shillings and sixpence, with a hundred acres of hill land, of which twenty acres could be sown with oats, worth three halfpence per acre, and the remaining eighty acres were worth nothing, being in common. There were two acres of meadow, at twelve pence each, a third of a mill, worth five shillings, and free rents, etc., payable at Michaelmas; and Nicholas de Bolevyle (*sic*) was declared the next heir, then aged thirty years or more. As Nicolas de Boneville, his father, died in 1295, the 'more' here must have been five or six years.¹

As the property was granted to Pyn, Hawisia, for property purposes, retained that name, her other marriages being ignored; for as shown below, she married a third husband, one William de Lughteburgh, who in turn held these lands with her during and for her life. It was this William who received the first grant of a Market and Fair at Dulverton. By this grant

(1). *Inq. P. M.*, 4 Edward III, No. 25, 1st nos.

made in 1306, 34 Edward I, the King gave and confirmed to William de Lughteburgh and Hawisia his wife, for the life of the said Hawisia, that he might have a market every Thursday at his manor of Dulverton, and a fair every year for three days—the vigil, the day, and the morrow of All Saints, unless such market and fair should interfere with neighbouring markets and fairs. Dated at Lanercost, Cumberland, 16th Oct.¹

The King's two-thirds were next granted to William de Montacute, Earl of Sarum, but the deed does not seem to have been enrolled. William held them but a short time, as in 1336 they passed by his gift to the Priory of Taunton. The Prior took care to have his deed enrolled, and further, that the King, by *inspeximus*, at the same time declared that he had seen the indenture by which the Earl of Sarum so gave and granted the "Hundred and Manor of Dulverton," at an annual fee farm rent of £10, payable at Easter and Michaelmas: the transaction was thus confirmed at Westminster, on the 21st March.² The Earl was not allowed even to retain his annual rent, as in 1337, the next year, he granted it to the Priory of Butlesham, in Berks; for all purposes the same as a grant direct to Taunton.

Nicholas de Bonevill, too, did not manage to hold his mother's third part long, as by an enquiry made at Lawrence Lydeard, 12th April, 1340, it was declared that he had given and assigned it to the Priory of Taunton, and that the Priory held it of William de Montacute. The Prior at the same time made his peace with the King, and paid a fine of five marks *ad manum mortuum habendi*, and for this the King duly confirmed the transaction, 2nd May, 1340.³

With their spiritual masters for their earthly lords, the Dulverton people had now a very poor and uneventful time,

(1). *Charter Rolls*, 34 Ed. I, pt. 1, No. 21.

(2). *Pat.* 2 Ed. III, pt. 1, m. 12.

(3). *Esch.*, 4 Ed. III, vol. ii. p. 38, roll 12. *Inq. P. M.*, 14 Ed. III (2 nos.), 48. *Abbrevatio Rot. Orig.* vol. iii. p. 139. *Pat.*, 14 Ed. III, pt. 1, m. 2.

there being little to record, except the re-establishment of the fair, which had lapsed on the death of Hawisia.

By patent, 12th Nov., 1488, the Prior was empowered to hold at his town of Dulverton two fairs; one on the Feast of St. Peter the Apostle, for all the Feast, and for a day immediately preceding, and a day immediately following it; and another fair on the Feast of SS. Simon and Jude, and for all the same Feast, a day before and a day after it, yearly, with a Court of Pie-powder during the fairs, and all profits and fines, etc., belonging.¹

No further record occurs until the great disgorging in the time of Henry VIII; when the manor passed again to the King. It was then granted to the Earl of Oxford, but for some reason the Earl, in 1553, requested to exchange it for other lands. He stated that it was worth £12. 18s. 8d. per annum, from which should be deducted 2s. 3d., paid to the sheriff, and the Hundred of Freemanors, leaving £12. 16s. 5d. clear.

A more minute statement shows the value in Dulverton Bailiwick, and lands in Whithill and Lucott.		£	s.	d.
Rent of tenement called Downe	10	0	0
„ „ assise and customary rents in Lucott	1	18	8
„ „ called Shamells	2	10	0
„ „ certain lands in Dulverton	4	0	0
„ „ assise and customary in Whithill	1	11	0
„ „ „ etc., called Boubyldes	1	12	0
Perquisites and casualties and commons	9	12	0
		<hr/>		
		£ 15	10	6
Deduct rent to John Carse, Bailiff of the same, conceded to him for his life by letters patent of 10th June, 30 Henry VIII, as by full exemplification appeared				
		4	0	0
		<hr/>		
Leaving clear ² ...		£ 11	10	6

(1). *Pat.*, 4 Hen. VII, pt. 1, mem. 6 (26 in pencil).

(2). *Particulars for Grants*, 35 Hen. VIII.

By this exchange the manor [passed again to the King, and remained so held by him, and after him by Edward VI, and until 3 and 4 Philip and Mary, 1556, when it was granted, with Thurloxtou, for the sum of £1,230. 5s., duly paid, to William Babington, a gentleman of the Privy Chamber, with all courts, liberties, etc., and all the woods known as Marshwood, Alchutwood, and Wareclywood, and the advowson of Thurloxtou, and all privileges in Dulverton, Pixton, Combe, and Thurloxtou, "in the hands of our dear father, Henry VIII, and after him of our dear brother, Edward VI." The clear annual value was now declared £87. 10s., held by the service of the thirtieth part of a knight's fee. In 1568, Babington sold it to John Sydenham, and by the final concord between them, as duly registered in the Court of Sir James Dyer, it was declared to consist of eighty messuages, twenty cottages, twenty tofts, six mills, six dovecotes, eighty gardens, thirty orchards, two thousand acres of land, one hundred acres of meadow, two hundred acres of pasture, three hundred acres of wood, two hundred acres of gorse and heath, one hundred acres of woodland, and a hundred shillings rent in Dulverton, Pyxton, and Combe. As usual at this time, all sales of land were proclaimed in the market-place, and this one was so announced on the 1st, 4th, 26th, and 28th Nov.; the 6th, 7th, 10th, and 12th Feb., 1569; the 22nd March; the 25th, 28th, and 31st May; the 10th June; the 2nd, 5th, and 7th July, 1570.¹

After the dissolution of the Priory, and the consequent disappearance of the Prior to whom it had been granted, the market again lapsed. In 1555 a new grant was made. This sets out that "the town and borough of Dulverton, in our county of Somerset, is very populous, and in decay, and the poor inhabitants now in great want, as is related to us by several of the said town, who for the amending and reparacion of the same humbly supplicate us by our gracious liberality for the amelioration of the town and relief of the poor. Know

(1). *Pedes Finium*, Mich., 9-10 Elizabeth, No. 22.

that by our special grace we concede to John Sydenham, Esq., John Toute, John Casse, Roger Chilcote, Robt. Vens, Robt. Catford, John Capper, William Howcombe, Nich. Trott, and Robt. Westerne, and others, inhabitants of the said town, their heirs and assigns, that they may have and hold, etc., a market every Saturday, all day, for the sale of cattle and other things; and that they may also hold two fairs each year,—the first in the Feast of SS. Simon and Jude, all the day of the said Feast, and the other fair annually in the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, for all the day of the said Feast, annually. They were also to hold all the stallage, tolls, and profits of the said fairs and markets, with a Court of Pie-powder and its emoluments, and dispose of them for the good of the inhabitants. When all but two of those named were dead, the remaining two were empowered to give over the management to ten others, the “most discreet and honest inhabitants,” for the same purposes and intentions; and so again, when but two of them remained, they were to do the like.¹

The opposition party to the Reformation, active, but foiled, during the long reign of Elizabeth, had some encouragement in the time of her successor; and through the influence brought to bear on the education, and especially the marriage, of his son Charles, a still wider chance for interference offered. The result was the great quarrel, the Civil War. Preceding the actual commencement of hostilities, the Parliament, in May, 1641, drew up a Protestation, which the Members first signed, and then ordered to be printed and sent down into all parishes, with an intimation with “what willingness the House had made it, and as they justify their taking it themselves, so they cannot but approve it in them that shall do likewise.” It was declared to be a “shibboleth” to discover every true Israelite; and any man not signing it was to be considered unfit for any office. The returns, made by the Constables of Hundreds, are chiefly dated February and March, 1642.

(1). *Pat.*, 2-3 Philip and Mary, pt. 1, m. 8 (29).

The Protestation was that, "I, A. B., do promise and vow to maintain and defend, as far as lawfully I may with my Life, Power, and Estate, the true Reformed Protestant Religion, expressed in the Doctrine of the Church of England, against all Popery and Popish Innovations and as far as lawfully I may, I will oppose and endeavour to bring to condign punishment all such as shall do anything to the contrary . . . and neither for hope, fear, nor other respect to relinquish this Promise, Vow, and Protestation."

The Dulverton return was signed by two hundred and twenty-six inhabitants, being over eighteen years old, including John Sydenham, Esq., Thomas White, minister, and Henry Sydenham. The document concludes with the note that Ames Upham "came not upon warning;" a little omission which probably did not make Dulverton the more comfortable for him.

During the war, 1642-1649, the affairs of the Parliament in the various counties were managed by committees of gentlemen nominated for the purpose, necessarily those who were strongly on the right side. The losing party was duly mulcted, or his property sequestered, from time to time, by the winning one. Thus:—"Att the Standing Committee for the County of Somerset, at Ivelchester this 11th of June 1646;" it was:—"Ordered that the Sequestrators of the Hundred of Williton and Free Manors doe forthwith seize, sequester and dispose of for the best advantage of the State all the estate reall and personall of Capt. Trowbridge, Capt. Wm. Drikes, and Dr. John Byam, clearke."

"Ri. Treuillian,	Edwd. Ceely,
Thos. English,	He. Mintern,
John Pyne,	Fr. Henley."
Nich. Sands,	

Again, on 18 March, 1647, from Ilminster it was ordered that John Byam, of Clatworthy, being sequestered for delinquency, be forthwith removed from his parsonage house at Clatworthy.

All Constables and Tithing men of Clatworthy, and all others to be assisting.

“ Ri. Trevillian, John Pyne,
Edw. Ceely, Matthew Clift.”

That this was done was certified from Elworthy 5 Feb. 1651 :—“ These are to certify that Jno. Byam of Clatworthy was duly sequestered according to the Order. I say that he was sequestered by me. Henry Wipple, Sequestratour.”

It is clear that Byam was not more in accord with his parishioners at Dulverton, but Dulverton could not be touched, as the ownership had passed to others, the result being a struggle in which Byam was the victor. In December, 1651, Dulverton sent up a petition to the Commissioners for Compounding, dated 17th December, setting out that the parsonage of Dulverton had been granted to Byam for three lives, all living ; that it was liable to sequestration, but Byam had prevented it by a sale to Thos. Balsh, since dead, but who often said, as by the oaths of several inhabitants can be proved, that he had no interest in the said parsonage, notwithstanding his pretended lease, but that he received the profits only as a servant to Byam. Since Balsh's death the pretended right was claimed by Thos. Pippen, who being questioned about the lease had a month given him to prove his title, then on his desire two months more, so extended to nine months ; “ yet in all this time he had not proved the same, and only seeks delay.” “ Most humbly therefore pray that an order be made forthwith to sequester the said parsonage.”¹

“ Henry Seymour. Aldred Crewes.”

Byam was ordered to show cause within fourteen days, and thus sent in his reply :—“ To give you satisfaction touching the petition of some few parishioners of Dulverton, and the implacable hatred of these informers for sixteen years and more, through my opposing their pretended customs and overthrowing them in Chancery and Common Law when I was

(1). *Royalist Composition Papers*, 1st series, vol. xxi, fol. 317.

vicar there, and the joining of one Henry Seamour now vicar there; the said Balsh had a real lease by advice of counsel learned in the law, bearing date 1639, which he conveyed, being doubtful of his life, unto his brother-in-law (Peppin) after holding it about eight years."

"And I beseech your Honres not to finde fault with my answer for want of form, for I am a poor man and cannot pay a counsellor or advocate, but I know how to set forth the truth in plain words, which I doubt not but you will favourably receive."

In a second answer, dated 28th January, 1651, as the Humble petition of John Byam of Clatworthy, clerk, he declares "that he never adhered to, or in any way assisted, against the Parliament; and besides, for a valuable consideration, in 1649, he conveyed away the parsonage of Dulverton to Thos. Balsh, who sold the same to Thos. Pippin; and of this he is ready to make oath to the Committee of the County, but being aged seventy years is not able to travel. Prays therefore that the purchasers may quietly enjoy the parsonage and petitioner be dismissed from further trouble."

This is underwritten:—"Petitioner to be discharged if the County Committee say nothing against it, as nobody appears to make good the allegations against him."

It will be observed that Byam made a clerical error here in the date 1649 for 1639, and this was at once detected at Dulverton, from whence was sent up another petition, asserting that the parsonage was kept by fraudulent means from sequestration, and that "since the order was made Byam hath showed no cause more than his petition, put in to make longer delays, being as full of falsehoods as words, as by the original order for sequestration of June, 1646, doth appear. And whereas he saith that he conveyed the lease in 1649, this we know to be not less false than the rest, for to our knowledge Balsh was buried the 23rd July, 1648. Henry Seymour. Aldred Cruse."

The Commissioners considered the matter, and then finally

ruled "that Byam had filed his answer according to their order of 17th December, and not any person appearing to make good what was alleged the petition be discharged, and the purchasers allowed to enjoy the vicarage without interruption, if the County Committee say nothing against it."

Judgment being thus given, nothing more could be done.

There appears to have been only one other owner in Dulverton who had been in opposition to the Parliament.

Henry Sydenham was called upon to settle for his delinquency, and was charged "that he was in arms against the Parliament, in the garrison of Exeter;"¹ but being there at the time of the surrender, was entitled to the benefit of the Articles. By these articles it was conceded that all compositions should be moderate, and not exceed two years' value of real estate. Personal estate was to be charged according to the ordinary rule, but not to exceed two years value.

Henry Sydenham petitioned to be admitted to composition, acknowledging that he had been in arms as charged, but had since taken the Covenant and the Negative Oath before the minister of "John Zacharies," and compounded upon particulars of his estate as delivered under his hand. As he was the son of the owner of Dulverton, his property was personal only. It was declared worth two hundred pounds, viz:—

Household goods, furniture, bedding, linen,	£	s.	d.
pewter, and brass, with other necessaries,	65	10	0
Mares, colts, sheep, oxen, and cows	48	0	0
Owing to him by Thos. Tyttesly and Fras.			
Brooks	86	10	0
...			
...			
...			
...			
	<hr/>		
	£200	0	0

Upon this sum he was fined one-tenth, viz., £20. He then received a pass, signed by John Bampfylde and John Pyne, permitting him to go to Dulverton without molestation, and

(1). *R. C. P.*, 1st series, vol. xliii, fol. 303.

certifying that he had taken the Covenant, and was obedient to the Parliament.

The fact that the father, whatever his opinions may have been, either from age or some other reason, had avoided offence, saved the manor from sequestration or forfeiture, and so the property remained in the family until a recent date.

Although the manor did not come to them until as herein recorded, the Sydenhams had long held lands in Dulverton. In 1366, 40 Edward III, a concord was made with Michel de Sydenham for half a messuage, a carucate of land, eighty acres of wood, and a hundred acres of pasture in Dulverton, and these were duly warranted on payment of a hundred marks in silver.¹

Dulverton, as a border manor of the Forest of Exmoor, is often mentioned in the perambulation accounts. The subject, a difficult one, may well be treated separately. In 1257, 42 Henry III, Wm. Herelwyne and others killed a stag in the woods of Hawkrigge, but William "was not taken, for he could not be found." An enquiry followed, which produced no result, whereupon the price of the stag was charged on four villages near: Hawkrigge paid 4s.; Dulverton, 5s.; Wynsford, half a mark; and Withypool, 4s. In 1269, Wm. de Regny de la Hele and others, with bows and arrows killed a large hind (*bissam*) in the woods of Dulverton. John, too, did not appear, so the sheriff was ordered to distrain at his house, and produce him when wanted. In 1365, Robert Coram killed a stag in Dulverton, and was found hunting foxes in the forest; and Roger Dikelane and Walter Cromer killed a calf (*boviculum*) and a stag. Hugh Sydenham was on the jury in this case, as also in another in 1367, when James Dandeloe took a stag, and John Sully, Kt., took a stagard and a hind (*bissam*) in Easter week.²

It does not fall to the lot of every parish to furnish much

(1). *Feet Pines*, 39-51 Edward III, No. 38.

(2). *Placita Forestæ, Inquisitions*, Nos. 16, 17.

material for history, but there are always, besides these details relating to property, others to be gathered and considered, relating to the social habits, conditions, thoughts, and environment of the people. There must be some such in existence relating to Dulverton. The Hundred, as a more extended area, or the county perhaps, would form the better basis for this subject; yet every parish should be able to furnish some document, and this being preserved and recorded, would some day aid in forming the ground work for an essay. Space, too, here hardly ever permits more than a detail of facts; much must be left to the imagination or general knowledge of the reader to fill in. Facts, however, if dry, are always better history than the strongest or most vivid picture; word-painting, which too often, for the sake of popularity or a well-turned sentence, is either consciously or unconsciously untrue.
