

PART II

Notes on the Manor and Parish of West Monkton

BY E. E. TROTMAN

I

WEST MONKTON owes its name to the fact that the manor was held from early days by the Abbey of Glastonbury.

Among the muniments of the Abbey at Longleat is a document headed 'Charter of King Centwine concerning Quantock-wood, now West Monkton, near Taunton' and dated in the year 682. It was included in de Gray Birch's *Cartularium Saxonicum* in 1885, and quoted by F. H. Dickinson in the Society's *Proceedings*.¹ Dr. G. B. Grundy, who examined this and other Saxon charters, with special attention to their authenticity, came to the conclusion that 'if it is a forgery, it is one of not later than the ninth century, in all probability'.²

Forgery or no, the charter is of great interest. It purports to record the grant to Abbot Hamegils of 23 *mansiones* in a place 'near the well-known wood called Quantock-wood' and including a good part of the wood itself, and proceeds to define the area so granted by landmarks, many of which can be identified to-day—the Walford Brook, from its source to the Tone, the *Ealdwuylle* (Old Spring), which in course of time became *Oldewell*,³ *Yalwell*⁴ and Yalway, Hestercombe, the Sedgebrook, from which Sidbrook took its name, and thence bearing west to the Tone at 'Horsepool', including three cassates between the Blackbrook and the Tone 'on the

¹ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xxviii, ii, 89.

² *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxxiv, ii, 51, and also, for the boundaries, lxxxiv, ii, 104.

³ Walter de Oldewell paid *xii*d. in the Lay Subsidy of 20 Ed. III (*S.R.S.*, III, 261).

⁴ Closes called Withayes at Yalwell—Conveyance of 6 Chas. I (*S.R.S.*, li, 225).

island near the hill which is in the British tongue *Cructan*, but in ours *Crycbeorh* (Creechbarrow).

Except for the area south of the ford at Walford, later incorporated in Creech St. Michael, this might have served as a description of the parish as it was until, a few years ago, there was a loss of territory to the growing Borough of Taunton. Quantock Wood has long since disappeared; perhaps the name of Quantock Farm commemorates it.

Also included in the *Cartularium Saxonicum*, though not mentioned by Dr. Grundy, is a charter of King Ine dated 705, which is actually preserved in the Taunton Castle Museum. Attention was drawn to this document by J. B. Davidson,⁵ who says 'It . . . has the appearance of a copy. It may have been written as early as c. 800, but is probably much later.' Among the lands granted by this charter to Abbot Berwald are 'twenty cassates near the Tone', which in the opinion of Davidson may be identified as part at least of the area granted by Centwine thereby confirmed.

After this glimpse of Saxon Monkton, darkness descends until the *Gheld Inquest* of 1084, when, owing to the fortunate circumstance that Monkton, for some reason now inexplicable, formed a Hundred or Liberty of its own, a separate return was made for this Manor by the Commissioners, who reported that it contained 15 hides (not 23, as might be expected), that they had collected 55 shillings and sixpence on 9 hides and 1 virgate and that Geoffrey the Constable and Edret owed 34 shillings and sixpence for 5 hides and 3 virgates. The reduction in hidage may reflect the loss of the land south of Walford, while also confirming Eyton's opinion that Quantock Wood was by now Royal Forest and so not taxable.⁶

Two years later came the Domesday Survey. The Commissioners report that *Morchetona* (*sic*) is held by the Abbot of Glastonbury. In the time of King Edward it was held by Abbot Aegelnath in demesne and three thegns of his. It then paid gheld as 15 hides and contained land for 20 plough-teams. Now Walcheline the Bishop⁷ holds $5\frac{1}{4}$ hides in demesne with 3 teams and his villeins $2\frac{1}{2}$ hides with 7 teams. Roger de Corcelle holds $4\frac{3}{4}$ hides of the Abbot with 3 teams

⁵ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xxx, ii, 11.

⁶ *Domesday Studies* (Somerset), i, 164.

⁷ Of Winchester.

and his villeins have 1 team. Serlo de Burei holds of the Abbot $2\frac{1}{2}$ hides with 1 team and his villeins have a team and a half. There are in the whole manor 2,400 acres of arable, 140 of pasture, 39 of meadow and 24 of wood; the population includes 28 villeins, 18 boors and 10 serfs; the livestock, 1 pack-horse, 22 cattle (as opposed to draught oxen), 18 pigs and 70 sheep. To these must be added, of course, the ox-teams of 8 oxen each. The annual value is £11 10s. 0d.

The total Domesday acreage of 2,603 is about 400 less than that of the parish about twenty years ago. If, as has been suggested, Quantock Wood was Royal Forest, the missing 400 acres are accounted for.

Eyton suggests that the debtors of the *Gheld Inquest*, Geoffrey the Constable and Edret, were officers of the Bishop and that Geoffrey was Constable of Taunton Castle; he held $4\frac{1}{2}$ hides of the Bishop's Manor of Taunton. There is no mention of the manorial demesne, and it is clear that this was in the hands of the Bishop, who, with the other two tenants, occupied the whole manor.

Roger de Corcelle held no less than 108 manors in chief, as well as many, in succession to his father, William, under the Abbot. In Monkton he occupied the western part of the Manor, which passed to his probable descendant William Malet. The *Rentalia of Abbots Ambresbury and Ford*⁸ (1235-61) records that 'William Malet held Godinton⁹ juxta Munckton; after him William de Fortibus and his heirs'. William de Vivonia, alias William de Fortibus, married Matilda de Kyme, heiress of, among others, William Malet. His daughter and heiress Cecilia brought the estate to John Beauchamp (d. 1283), ancestor of Beauchamps of Hatch and Stoke-sub-Hamdon.

Serlo de Burei held in chief 15 manors in Somerset and 2 in Dorset; he was a tenant of the Abbot both in Somerset and in Wiltshire. A Feodary of the Abbey of 1342¹⁰ states that his holding was Overton and that he was succeeded, first by William FitzWalter, then by the great family of FitzMartin, then by Philip de Columbariis and finally (1342) by James d'Audlye. The FitzMartin family descended from Gera, daughter and heiress of Serlo, and William de Falaise, her second husband. The position of William FitzWalter is not

⁸ *S.R.S.*, v, 228, 230.

⁹ Gotton.

¹⁰ *S.R.S.* xxvi, 87, 88.

clear, unless, indeed, he held the land in trust during a minority. Serlo's holding, though smaller than Roger's, appears to have been called indifferently Overton and Monkton: 'Nicholas FitzMartin held Munckton' (*Rentalia of A. and F.*).

(It may be observed here that the early alienation of the demesne by Glastonbury was to affect the whole subsequent history of the Manor. As has been seen, by the thirteenth century cohesion was being lost, and it was possible for the smallest of the three tenancies to be given the name of Monkton. At the Dissolution the amount of land which came into the King's hands was infinitesimal, which may serve to explain why the lordship has never been associated with any considerable estate in the manor. Most of the lords of the manor have, in fact, been non-resident. As subdivision proceeded, Monkton became a parish of small properties. The Muster Roll of 1569 returns only one parishioner prepared to admit to an estate of 100 marks; in 1812¹¹ there were 69 proprietors, in 1840,¹² 138.)

II

On the rest of the pre-Reformation period, scattered references throw occasional shafts of light.

The *Register of Ralph of Shrewsbury* (1329-63)¹³ bears witness to some ecclesiastical difficulties.

In 1331 the King orders the Bishop of Bath and Wells to sequester the goods of various debtors whose payments of the clerical tenths to the Abbot of Glastonbury are in arrears; among them the Rector of West Monkton owes 20s.

The following year the Bishop replies to a further writ that goods to the value of that amount have been levied, but there are no purchasers. Later in the year, however, the Bishop is able to report that the sum has now been paid.

In 1333 the same situation has arisen once more, and again the Rector of West Monkton (a new incumbent) is among the debtors.

In 1351 the Bishop reports to the Perpetual Vicar of Taunton the complaint of John de Bathonia, Rector of West Monkton,

¹¹ Tithe Valuation.

¹² Tithe Commutation Agreement.

¹³ *S.R.S.*, ix, x, *passim*.

that some of his parishioners go to Mass at Taunton on festivals. The Vicar of Taunton is instructed to make enquiry before celebrating Mass and to expel any attendants who do not belong to his parish. No doubt the offenders lived in the corner of the large parish remote from the Church and near Taunton.

In 1362 the Bishop orders the Rector of West Monkton to inhibit any persons intruding on tithes or oblations pertaining to the Church of Creech or administering sacraments to parishioners of the said Church.

The affair of Bathpool mills is a reminder of the lay pre-occupations of Church dignitaries. In 1364, Richard de Acton, knight, had obtained from the King for a payment of £20 licence to alienate in mortmain to the Abbot and Convent of Glastonbury a messuage, 3 mills, 70 acres of land, 15 acres of meadow and 2 acres of pasture in West Monkton to celebrate his obit and distribute 13 shillings and fourpence to the poor yearly.¹⁴

The *Patent Rolls* for 1381-5 record, under the date 15 December 1384, the exemplification, at the request of John Chynnok, Abbot of Glastonbury, of the tenor of the record and process had before Guy de Briene, knight, and other justices *de wallis, fossatis, etc.*, in the county of Somerset on the Monday after St. Margaret, 6 Richard II, reciting an inquisition held at Taunton on the Tuesday after St. Giles (2 Sep.) in the same year, wherein the jurors present that the said Abbot maintains in Monkton trees hanging over the Tone right across it, so that boats cannot pass as they were wont, viz. between the mill of Tobrigge and Bathepole; that Bathepole mill erected for grinding corn is raised in the middle of the Tone by stone walls six feet higher than they were ever before, to the damage of the country below the mill-house built upon them by Richard de Acton, knight, and is now held by the Abbot; that another mill has been erected for fulling in the same river close by, both by the said Richard since the great pestilence and both in the Abbot's Lands; and that inundation takes place, the highway between Taunton and Bathepole brigue is thereby undermined and the passage of boats and fish between Bridgwater and Taunton alike prevented; furthermore that a piece

¹⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 38 Ed. III (*Pub. Rec. Office*).

of ground in Monkton is appropriated on one side by the Abbot for the fixing of willow and other trees, and on the opposite side by John Poulet, knight, to the diminution of the breadth of the river from 30 feet to 10 feet or 12 feet at most from Bathpole to Criche.

The Abbot answers that the copse complained of has been removed and the other nuisances abated; whereupon it is decreed that the said Abbot, the said Richard and their tenants should go free, except for certain fines.

The business was not finally settled, however, for at an Inquisition¹⁵ held at Taunton on 5 November 1414 it was presented that Walter Abbot of Glastonbury had made a water-course adjoining Bathpool mill so narrow with an obstruction of timber and massive masonry through the midst of the channel of the river between Taunton and Bridgwater that the river craft '*vocat*' *Botes et Trowys*' carrying firewood, timber, charcoal, pitch, salt, iron, lime, grain, ale, wine, etc., could not reach their destination by reason of these his enclosures and impediments to the loss and damage of a thousand pounds and much more, if a remedy were not quickly applied.

It would be interesting to know the upshot, but unfortunately *cetera desunt*.

One would give much, too, for the story behind the Pardon¹⁶ granted in 1413 to Roger Mulleward 'for the death of William Cokerball on Sunday, 24 May, 12 Hen. IV, at Walford within the tithing of Monkton of the Abbot of Glastonbury; and pardon to him of the abjuration which he made on Tuesday after Whitsuntide in the said year before William Bury, one of the coroners in the county of Somerset, on account of the same'.

During this century names that were to become familiar in Monkton begin to appear in the records.

William Porteman and others obtain licence for alienation in mortmain in 1406.¹⁷

Hugh Sanford, cleric, no doubt of the family which was to acquire Walford and the advowson, and to provide three eighteenth-century rectors, figures in a conveyance of 1409; William Powlet appears as a tenant in 1464 and 1475; John

¹⁵ *Inquis. ad q. d.*, 2 Hen. V.

¹⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1 Hen. V.

¹⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 7 Hen. IV.

Poulet, knight, becomes a landholder in 1436, and Robert Warre in 1439.¹⁸

The Inquisition Post Mortem of John Porteman, 2 Hen. VII (1486) shows that he had enfeoffed William Boys, clerk, Rector of Orchard, of land in West Monkton.

III

Some account must here be given of the Leper Hospital, which stood in what was, until the Borough swallowed it up, the south-west corner of the parish. Its history up to the Dissolution was dealt with by the Reverend Thomas Hugo in Vol. xviii of the *Proceedings*¹⁹ and need only be briefly summarized.

The Hospital and its Chapel, dedicated to St. Margaret and served by Taunton Priory in virtue of a virgate of land at Bathpool granted by Alina de Brocton in 1334, are thought to have existed between 1174 and 1185. Records of 1279 and 1280 refer to endowments of land in West Monkton. Early in the sixteenth century the house was rebuilt by Abbot Beere, whose badge appears on a tablet in the south wall. After the Dissolution, the Hospital remained in the King's Lands, but the Chancery Commission on Lands given for Charitable Uses of 1612 referred the question of its future administration to Quarter Sessions, reporting that 'Humfry Quyck late of West Mounckton, decessed, hath taken away and imbeseled such wrytyngs and evydences as did concerne the ordering and governynge of the Almes House in West-mounckton . . . commonly called the Spittle howse'. It was ordered that the administration should be by consent of the two nearest justices for the time being and the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of West Monkton for the time being.²⁰

This finding in effect converted the Hospital into the Parish Almshouse, though it did not remain the only refuge of the kind, for in 1616 Robert Musgrove of West Monkton obtained licence to erect two houses under one roof 'upon parcel of the waste of Richard Warre, Esq., to the use of the poor people of the said parish'.²¹ The tradition of the Hospital's former

¹⁸ *Pedes Finium*.

²⁰ *S.R.S.*, xxiii, 89.

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¹⁹ *Vol. xviii*, ii, 100-31.

²¹ *S.R.S.*, xxiii, 189.

purpose, however, seems to have died hard, for in 1635 Quarter Sessions considered a petition of the Inhabitants of the Parish of St. James, Taunton, representing that the Spittle was reserved for West Monkton people, though intended for the service of any part of the County and ' notwithstanding there is alsoe some Annuall pention payed out of the Stocke of the said County by the Thresurers unto the said howse '. They prayed, therefore, that parishioners of St. James, ' much burdened with poor ', might be considered.²² A Committee was appointed to take evidence ; its findings are unfortunately unrecorded, but it would appear that the method of filling vacancies remained unchanged, for when, in 1652, an application for admission was received on behalf of Roger Taunton, ' a poore, impotent and blinde man,' formerly an inmate but ' putt forth at the time of the Seidges against Taunton (the said Hospital beinge possessed by the late King's forces) ' his case was referred to the nearest Justices to West Monkton.²³

In 1676 a dispute arose which finally settled any doubts as to the Hospital's status, Lady Warre, wife of Sir Francis Warre of Hestercombe, Lord of the Manor, led a revolt of ratepayers against the overseers, ' touching poor rates and the placing of poor people in St. Margaret's Hospital.' It appeared that the late overseers and churchwardens ' had raised several sums and built a new house for the poor ', against which action Lady Warre and other parishioners appealed. Quarter Sessions confirmed the legality of the overseers' action in raising up to 24 rates—apparently a statutory maximum—and appointed a Committee (which included a member of the Warre family) to examine the accounts, with powers, if they found that the overseers had ' legally disbursed ' more, to authorize the collection of two or three rates in addition and ' if possible to compose the dispute '.²⁴

The Committee's award ²⁵ was delivered at the next Sessions, as follows :—

- (a) The rate for new building the house on Knowle Hill ²⁶ is void and contrary to law.
- (b) The Overseers' account is imperfect, being overcast £4, besides the omission of money received.

²² *S.R.S.*, xxiv, 236.

²³ *S.R.S.*, xxviii, 201.

²⁴ *S.R.S.*, xxxiv, 206.

²⁵ *S.R.S.*, xxxiv, 214.

²⁶ Now Noah's Hill.

- (c) Six rates are to be collected by last year's Overseers in addition to the eighteen rates already collected, and are to be employed for the relief of the poor and the repair of houses already erected for the poor.
- (d) The nomination of poor people to be placed in the Hospital of West Monkton called the Spittle has always belonged to the ancestors of Sir Francis Warre, Bart., ever since they were lords of the manor there. If any persons outside the parish be placed in the Hospital, the parish from which they came is to pay as much more money for their maintenance as shall be needful, over and above the ordinary allowance.
- (e) The church house formerly belonging to the parish, which was employed for the dwelling of the poor and other necessary uses for the lord of the manor and the inhabitants of the parish, was illegally pulled down by William Doble, Esq., and shall be rebuilt and used as formerly.
- (f) Another meeting shall be held to take the completed accounts of the overseers and churchwardens of the parish.

After this pronouncement, no further attempt to widen the Hospital's scope is recorded. In 1938 new Almshouses were built within the new boundaries of the parish and the old building, in danger of condemnation, was acquired and restored as the headquarters of the Somerset Rural Community Council.

IV

To revert to the Manor. From the Return of 1539-40 of the Property of Glastonbury Abbey,²⁷ and the Ministers' Accounts²⁸ for 1540-1, it appears that the King's acquisitions on the Dissolution were as follows:—

A fishery extending from Bathpool Mills, in the tenure of Mr. Sooper, to the sea, 'in length vi myles', let to Mr. Thomas Warer by copy for 6s. 8d. a year.

A quarry of tilestone and rag let annually for 5s.

A Common called 'Lynche'²⁹ of 100 acres, of which the

²⁷ *Misc. Vol., Off. Augment.*, 420, 53, 53^b. *Add. MS., B.M.*, 15662, 164-66.

²⁸ *Ministers' Accounts*, 32-33, Hen. VIII, No. 103.

²⁹ Now Burlinch.

King may let yearly for tillage 10 acres at *2d.* an acre 'for yt wylle bere but ii croppes together'; another Common called 'Mounnten Hethfeld' of 40 acres, on which were certain 'shrubbed oaks' let with the Court House to John Totehill; another Common called Bathpool Green of 20 acres.

Woodland is returned as *nil.*

A mill ³⁰ demised to Roger Adamps at a yearly rent of *23s. 4d.*

Another mill ³⁰ demised to William Adamps at the same rent.

Bathpool mills rented at *106s. 8d.*

The 'new stone quarry', demised to Thomas Drayton and Hugh Smythney during their lives at a rent of *12d.*

The customary payment called Plough Silver, *14d.* for each plough owned by a tenant, bringing in in 1540-1 *14d.*

Rent of the Manor House with the dovecot and 'the herbage of a garden', in the tenure of John Totehill, *6s. 8d.*

The parsonage, in the King's gift, was worth £20 a year, after deduction of a pension of *26s. 8d.* to the Sexton of Glastonbury.

In addition to the direct proceeds of the Abbey, the King also had in land, 'voyd for default of a Tenant', 60 acres at Bathpool—the virgate granted to the Priory for the service of St. Margaret's. The two chantries, of the Virgin Mary in the Church and of St. Margaret at the Hospital, were suppressed, and the priests pensioned off, in 1548.

In 1547 Edward VI granted the Manor, with the advowson, to the Earl of Wiltshire, afterwards Marquess of Winchester,³¹ who sold it in 1573 to John Quick of Rendy in Oak,³² retaining the advowson. In 1616 it passed to Sir Francis Warre of Hestercombe,³² and in that family it remained until 1872, when it was acquired by the 1st Lord Portman.³³ Until recently the Lord of the Manor was Capt. the Hon. G. B. Portman. The Manor is now vested in the Crown, after nearly 400 years.

Collinson speaks of 'the Marquess of Winchester's mansion hard by the Church',³² There is no evidence that John Quick ever lived here; the Warres and Portmans certainly did not.

³⁰ Probably the windmills whose remains may yet be seen at Woodball and in Burlinch Wood.

³¹ *Orig. 1 Edw. VI, p. 1 rot. 88.*

³² Collinson, iii, 454.

³³ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc., lxxxix, 52, footnote.*

The present Monkton House, higher up the hill, was built about 1810³⁴ by Matthew Brickdale, Esq.,³⁵ and at that time the eighteenth-century house adjoining the west door of the Church was demolished, with the exception of the east wing, which forms the present Rectory, and the stables, now owned, together with the old Rectory, by Lt.-Col. V. B. Thurston. Fixed to the stable arch are the remains of a plaster pendant with the inscription: 'Geve God Thanks For All—1564,' which appear to be a relic of a previous building, possibly a tithe barn. A few old cedars on the south slope were once in the park.

Collinson calls this older house 'Court House'. The Tithe Valuation of 1812 gives this name to the newer house, just completed, but the Commutation Agreement of 1840 calls the new house 'Court Place'. This name was later transferred to another house, now owned by Capt. Cochrane, R.N., which suggests a tradition, since lost, that the Courts Leet were once held on that site. No such court has been held within living memory.

Of the Domesday subtenancies, Gotton, after being at one time in the possession of the Cary family,³⁶ passed in the seventeenth century to the Musgraves,³⁷ and from them, through heiresses, to the Hammets and thence to the Beadons, whose descendant, Col. R. N. Beadon, owns the house to-day.

It was a member of this family, 'Madam Musgrave of Monkton', who about 1710 enlisted the help of Bampfylde Moore Carew, the celebrated 'King of the Mendicants', to discover a treasure which she believed to be buried somewhere about her house. Carew, who was the son of the Rector of Bickley and had run away from school at Tiverton to join a party of gipsies, was then 16 or 17. He consulted the stars, advised her to dig under a certain laurel some days later, when there would be a favourable conjunction of planets,

³⁴ Tithe Valuation, 1812, preserved in the Church.

³⁵ b. 1735, d. 1831; M.P. Bristol 1768-74, 1780-84 and 1784-90, m. Elizabeth, dau. Thomas Smith of Bristol, Lord of the Manor of Sandford, Som. She d. 1801 at Bath; *m.i.* Monkton Church. For an account of his activities as Treasurer for the County subscriptions to meet invasion 1794 see *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxxix, ii, 95.

³⁶ Collinson, iii, 455.

³⁷ For these families see *Burke's Landed Gentry*, edn. 1851, S. 15 and edn. 1937, 125.

accepted twenty guineas and took his leave. The search was unsuccessful.³⁸

Also descended in the female line from the Musgraves through the Beadons is the family of Meade-King of Walford, who have owned that estate since it was inherited in 1841 by Richard Meade-King of North Petherton, High Sheriff of Somerset 1846, from Robert Farthing Beauchamp, who added the portico to the house, rebuilt in the main by the Rev. Thomas Sanford after the fire of 1780. Two other members of this family have served as Sheriff, Richard King Meade-King in 1873 and in 1931 his grandson the late Sir William O. E. Meade-King, whose son Mr. R. E. B. Meade-King is the present owner of the property. The Sanfords acquired Walford early in the eighteenth century from the Sellick family.³⁹ Readers of the *Woodforde Diaries* will perhaps remember the elegant dinner which the Parson had there in 1764 in 'a very noble, spacious parlour' with Mr. and Mrs. Sanford and 'about ten of their children'.

Overton was held for some generations by the Pauls, one of whom founded a charity distributed annually. The house is now a farm.

V

In 1565 Commissioners were appointed to examine into the state of the Musters, which, by Statutes of 1327, 1542 and 1557-8, should have been organized in each tithing. These musters were appointed for the preservation of law and order; they were not to be called upon for service outside their own counties, but in principle all able-bodied men were required to turn out, armed according to a scale carefully adjusted to their means. A store of weapons and armour had also to be provided and stored according to the substance of the tithing.

The Commissioners' Report,⁴⁰ dated 1569, is prefaced thus:—

SOMERSET

The Certificate of the musters taken by Hugh Paulet, Maurice Barkeley, Raffe Hopton, Knights, and John Horner, Esquier,

³⁸ *Bampfylde Moore Carew, King of the Mendicants: His Story and Curious Adventures.* Anon. (Robert Davies, Lon. N.D.)

³⁹ Collinson, iii, 455.

⁴⁰ *S.R.S.*, xx, 15.

of all the able men as well horsemen as fote men with their armour and weapons, as also of the parks for the bread of mares and horses within the said county of Somerset, by vertue of the Queene's Maiestie's commission unto them and others directed in the eleventh yere of the Raigne of oure Sovereigne Lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God of Englande France and Irelande Queene, Deffendoure of the faythe etc.

The section of the report dealing with West Monkton reads as follows :—

*Tithing of West Monton [sic]*⁴¹

ABLEMEN

Edmond Bayne ..	light	Richd. Hamblin ..	pekeman
	horseman	John Taunton ..	billman
Richd. Buller ..	pekeman	Richd. Taunton ..	billman
Richd. Gelot ..	gonner	Roger Tuthill ..	archer
Richd. Langford ..	billman	Richd. Hare ..	billman
Robt. Griffith ..	archer	Richd. Prince ..	archer
Richd. Foxe ..	billman	Thos. Matthewe ..	billman
John Gedland ..	archer	John Saunders ..	archer
Xpofer Davie ..	billman	Robt. More ..	billman
John God ..	archer	John Noris ..	billman
John Grosse ..	billman		

ARMOR

One tething corslet furnished.

Hugh Mores, gent.,⁴² one light gelding furnished and one corslet, with a harquebus furnished.

Jno. Kempland	} vi paire of almaine rivets furnished, ii bowes and ii sheafs of arrows.
Henry Bonde	
Robt. Credland	
Nichs. Coxe	
Jno. God etc.	

Entries in the Parish Accounts⁴³ bear on this subject :—

	£	s.	d.
1587. Imprimis Received for the Rate of the Par- ishioners for the maintenance of armor ..	8	12	4
Item Received Collection gathered by Henry Sellick for the tithing for payment for armor and powder	4	10	2

⁴¹ *S.R.S.*, xx, 66.

⁴² Apparently an error, such as might be caused by a verbal communication, for Hugh Norrys, who in 1575 was enjoying a lease, for the lives of himself and his wife Johane, of Hankridge Farm. Escheator for Somerset and Dorset 1569.

⁴³ For this and later references to the Parish Accounts, the writer is indebted to the valuable extracts contributed to *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xi, ii, 158, by R. K. Meade-King of Walford.

	£	s.	d.
1587. Paid to Porters for carriage of armour ..	1	4	0
1588. Paid Whitley [<i>Hundred</i>] to the Constable King towards the collection of £10 for the hundred muster	5	4	

The Statutes of Armour having been repealed, there are no similar entries after 1603.

While the Ableman on mustering was not liable for service outside his county the Levies made, with questionable legality, by Elizabeth and later in virtue of the Act of 4 and 5, Philip and Mary, saw foreign service of a varied nature. The Parish Accounts bear witness to the raising, training and embarkation of the Levies and also to measures taken for the relief of the disabled.

	£	s.	d.
1588. Received of Constable King of money paid him before for Service into Ireland ..	18	4	
Given press money two several times ⁴⁴			8
<i>(Many similar entries)</i>			
1592. Imprimis paid to the Constable of Whitley for a service into France	8	0	
Item for a pair of musketts	6	0	
Bullet bag			6
Item paid at Bridgwater at the going forth of the soldiers	1	9	
Item with the wester limit of Whitley for the fifth part of a Galliot ⁴⁵	5	4	
1593. Imprimis received for a collection made for the service into Britton	1	13	8
Item received of collection made for a service into Jersey and Garnsey	2	6	6
Item paid to James Bullinge for service into Brittani	1	8	0
Ditto Jersey and Guernsey	1	3	0
1599} Received of the parishioners for 2 services	2	6	6
1600} into Ireland 1st year			
1601} Ditto 2nd year	3	9	6
1599-1603. Paid for 12 pounds of powder ..	12	0	
9 pounds of lead	1	0	
Delivered to the trainers at Staplegrove 2 pounds and a half			
1601. Delivered to the trainers at Bathpool 5 pounds powder			

⁴⁴ Ration allowance for the day of joining.

⁴⁵ Apparently passage money.

	£	s.	d.
1588. Paid at the coming home of the Portugal Soldiers	}	6	6
1601. Item Received of Inhabitants a half rate for maimed soldiers	}	10	2
1603. Ditto		10	1
1610. Paid for maimed soldiers and Hospitals at Wells Sessions	}	17	4
1612. Paid for maimed soldiers and Hospitals at Taunton Sessions	}	12	8

Quarter Sessions Records for this period show several payments of pensions through 'The Treasurer for the maimed soldiers'.

VI

From time to time throughout the seventeenth century the problem of the repair of the parish roads recurs in Quarter Sessions Records, and with it the difficult question of Bathpool Bridge.

As early as 1501 John Tose of Taunton, merchant, had left 40s. for the repair of the highway from St. Margaret's Hospital to 'Blakeburgh' ⁴⁶ Bridge, and 40s. for the repair of the highway from the Spittall to Bathpool.⁴⁷

In 1605 the Waywardens' Account shows a payment of £1 8s. 7d., 'about the mending of Bathpool Bridge' and £1 6s. 6d. to 'Pitchers of the Footways and Pavours'.

Whatever was then done had no lasting effect, for in 1623 the Inhabitants of West Monkton petition Quarter Sessions that 'farther Bathpool Bridge' is very dangerous, 'being a great thoroughfare way, the greatest in those parts, and being unknown whether it should be repaired by the County or by private persons.' A Committee was appointed to take speedy steps to repair the bridge and report at the next Sessions.⁴⁸

It does not appear what report was made, but there is no further mention of Monkton communications until 1652, when the following Order was made :—

Whereas att Taunton Sessions in the yeere of our Lord 1651 an Indictment was preferred against the Inhabitants of the parishe of West Mounckton, etc., for not placing of rayles on the outside of a certen Causeway ⁴⁹ lyeinge within the same

⁴⁶ Blackbrook.

⁴⁷ 18 *Blamyr., Som. House.*

⁴⁸ *S.R.S.*, xxiii, 332.

⁴⁹ On the old Bathpool road, now built over.

parishe and adjoyninge to a common highway leadinge from the Towne of Taunton to the Towne of Bridgewater, upon which Indictment the Inhabitants appeared and pleaded not guilty, which yssue att this Sessions hath beene tryed and verdict passed against the same Inhabitants; But forasmuch as it appeared upon evidence att the said tryall that tyme out of mind there hath not been any rayles upon the same causeway, this Court doth respitt its Judgement on the said verdict and doth desire the twoe next Justices of the peace to West Mounckton aforesaid to view the same way whether it bee necessary that rayles should bee placed there or not and to certify their opinions herein att the next generall Sessions [all proceedings in the meantime to be stayed].⁵⁰

Accordingly in 1653 Thomas Gorges and John Gorges, Esquires, report that they have viewed the said causeway but 'conceive that the placinge of rayles would much tend to the prejudice of travellers with themselves horses and carriages'. The inhabitants were therefore discharged.

Not, however, from all their troubles, for two years later they are petitioning that they have been assessed at 'a pound rate'⁵¹ for highways, but their roads, 'being neere twelve miles in length' are still out of repair and will cost at least £150 over the rate; the inhabitants request that other parishes not assessed at a pound rate should be required to contribute.⁵² The two nearest justices were again desired to investigate and report.

One would like to be able to record that this early movement for equalization of rates met with at least some success, but Quarter Sessions Records are silent and things must have dragged on in the old way. In 1671 the surveyors of the highways of the parish complain that 'the common highways, causeys and bridges' in the parish cannot be properly repaired by the laws now in force.

Quarter Sessions, 'in pursuance of a late Act of Parliament', order the surveyors to raise £30 on all property rateable to the poor, not exceeding 6*d.* in the pound on real estate and 6*d.* on £20 on personal estate, and to employ the proceeds on the necessary repairs, distraining on any person failing to pay within ten days.⁵³

⁵⁰ *S.R.S.*, xxviii, 188.

⁵² *S.R.S.*, xxviii, 267.

⁵¹ 12*d.* in the pound.

⁵³ *S.R.S.*, xxxiv, 104.

The other major preoccupation of the period, Poor Relief, is reflected in many entries in the Parish Accounts. Reference has already been made to the 'two houses under one roof' built for the use of the poor by Richard Musgrove in 1616, and also to the 'church house', whether the same or another, which high-handed William Doble Esqr. had illegally pulled down and was ordered to rebuild in 1676. But, apart from the housing of the indigent, the Act of 1601 raised many problems.

For one thing, the newly created Overseers of the Poor were directed, where possible, to 'set the Poor on work'. Hence, no doubt, the entry in the Parish Accounts of 1603: 'Received one hatchet, one shoule and one bisgue'.⁵⁴ For another, the ratepayers regarded with extreme disfavour the invasion of their parish by those who should have been chargeable to another. Quarter Sessions Records for this period are full of orders that such persons should return where they belong and of applications for such orders, while the Parish Accounts have many entries bearing on the transit of such people through the parish.

	£	s.	d.
1603. For carriage of poor people and to soldiers who travelled from the wars for their relief ..	6	11	
1611. Paid for bread and carriage of a poor man from Walford to Taunton by the parish ..	6		
Paid to a poor man that was borne from Walford to Taunton.. .. .	7		
1612. Paid for carriage of a poor woman ditto	6		
Paid for carriage of the same woman and her child from the Spittall back again to Walford with meat and drink	8		
1613. Paid to two men to bear a poor man from the Spittall to Walford in a barrow the 19th of April	1	0	
And bread and meat for the same man	2		

Walford, of course, was the parish boundary to the east, where the responsibilities of the parish began and ended. It will be noted that, while expense was not spared to hasten the passage of these unwelcome wayfarers, hospitality on the way was not withheld. There was, of course, the consideration

⁵⁴ *Bisgy*: local term for a kind of mattock.

that additional expense would be caused if any should die within the parish limits, but it is permissible to think that humanity was the over-riding motive.

In addition to the references bearing on these two paramount problems some others may be quoted testifying to the all-embracing activities of Quarter Sessions as an instrument of local government.

1625. Order for preventing the danger of infection of the Plague, by the erection of booths or tents for the isolation of persons infected or coming from London or other infected places, in a close of 4 acres called Tunwayes in the Tithing of Bathpool, by consent of Mr. John Trowbridge.⁵⁵
1654. Petition of the Inhabitants of West Monkton that Edward Musgrave, now Constable, and Edward Rich, Tithing-man, be disabled to act by reason of disaffection to the Government, 'but by great and gross neglect have occasioned the increase of vice by countenancing alehouses and prophanation of the Sabbath'.—Petition allowed and the officers to be discharged.⁵⁶
1657. Statement by Edward Pavy of North Curry made to Edward Ceely 22nd June, 1657. About two years since he was working in the house of Mrs. Abigail Symes at Hanckridge in West Monkton, when 20 shillings was stolen from a sum of ten pounds in a chamber, and Susan Baker a servant 'being willing to have the truth discovered or having a guilty conscience' gave him four shillings to go to Glastonbury to see one Bambury, 'who is accounted to be a conjurer', to find out who had the money. Bambury told him it was a female servant with a wart under her ear and another on her body. On giving this message to the said Baker, she afterwards send Humphrey Upham, who brought back the same message.⁵⁷
1675. Order that the Churchwardens and Overseers of West Monkton pay Mr. Thomas Paige of Taunton, barber surgeon, 40s. for his pains and labour in curing Thomas Rogers, a poor man who was beaten and wounded in the highway in the said parish and was likely to die of his wounds. In case of disobedience the nearest Justice is desired to bind over the said Churchwardens and Overseers to the next General Sessions.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ *S.R.S.*, xxiv, 6.

⁵⁷ *S.R.S.*, xxviii, 331.

⁵⁶ *S.R.S.*, xxviii, 239.

⁵⁸ *S.R.S.*, xxxiv, 177.

1675. Discharge of Richard Batten from his apprenticeship with John Torry of West Monkton, blacksmith, 'lately accused and indicted of various felonies and has fled, having often heretofore enticed his said apprentice to several unlawful actions, which he refused to do'.⁵⁹

VII

Materials for the history of the parish during the eighteenth century are unfortunately unexplored at present—a state of affairs which it is hoped may be remedied in more propitious times—and it only remains to consider the Tithe Valuation of 1812 and the Tithe Commutation Agreement of 1840.

The former is of local, but hardly of general interest; the latter, together with the Tithe Map preserved with it in the vestry, illustrates the sweeping changes which had come to the parish with the Enclosures of 1810 and the construction of the Bridgwater Canal in 1835.

The parish officers had at their disposal not only 'The Spittal', where five 'widow pensioners' were accommodated, but also a house hard by with five dwellings, and two houses containing several dwellings, 'part of Rock Cottages'. These were undoubtedly the two houses which have already appeared in these notes. 'Knowle Hill' had now become 'Noah's Hill' in general acceptance. There were three smithies in the parish, two in the Higher Side and one at Bathpool; the Quaker burying-ground at Halcon Corner was not as yet built over and the site of the Chapel of St. Margaret at The Spittal was occupied by a turnpike house.

Most noticeable was the steady drift of population already taking place from the Higher Side to Monkton Heathfield and Bathpool, where the enclosures had led to the formation of a number of small holdings and the Canal had brought many new houses. The enclosure of Burlinch Common, on the other hand, depopulated that part of the parish, where there had formerly been roads converging on the windmill and a scattering of houses round the Common Field.

A final glimpse of the older system is afforded by the recital

⁵⁹ *S.R.S.*, xxxiv, 169.

of the *moduses*, customary payments in lieu of small tithes, hitherto collectable :

For every garden *1d.* ; For every communicant *2d.* ; For every acre of Meadow in the Higher Side of the Parish *2d.*—in the Lower Side *2½d.* (except the Common Meadows, which paid Tithe in kind) ; For every Cow in the Higher Side, in lieu of Tithe milk *2d.*—in the Lower Side *2½d.* ; For every new-sprung Heifer in the Higher Side *1½d.*—in the Lower Side *2d.* ; For every acre of land-ground mown or scarred⁶⁰ *1d.* ; For each Calf fallen and reared, when the whole number fallen shall be less than seven, *½d.* ; For each Colt fallen *1d.* ; For each Lamb fallen, when the whole number shall be less than seven *½d.* ; For each Pig farrowed, when the litter shall be less than seven *½d.* ; For Bath Pool Mills *10s.* ; For the Tucking Mills *2s. 6d.* ; for Taunton Mills *1s.*

In Wherratts Common Meadow, in the south-east corner of the parish, the Rev. Thomas Putt had the right to the after-grass, which he let to the various owners of the fore-share.

It may be of interest to remark that the prices of wheat, barley and oats in 1840 were respectively *7s. 0¼d.*, *3s. 11½d.*, and *2s. 9d.* a bushel.

The trend of population to the Lower side of the parish, already marked in 1840, became accentuated in the succeeding years by the approach of the Borough and the increase of traffic on the Bristol road, and in 1897 the Church of All Saints, Bathpool, was built to serve its needs.

Great changes have already taken place in the past century and further changes can be foreseen, but one may trust that, however sweeping they may be, the past of this ancient manor and parish will not altogether be forgotten.

⁶⁰ *I.e.*, land which is occasionally tilled.