

# On the Charters of Bruton Priory.

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BY LORD TALBOT DE MALAHIDE.

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**B**RUTON must have been a place of some consequence previous to the conquest, as, independently of the traditions concerning Algarus, Earl of Cornwall, Mr. Dymock, in his valuable paper on Saxon coins, has proved that, from the time of Canute to Edward the Confessor, coins were struck at Bruton. The names of three moneyers appear on them, ÆLFELM, LEOFVINE, and ÆLFVINE. This is a most remarkable discovery, and shows the great value of numismatics, when judiciously studied, for the illustration of the obscure periods of our history.

The earliest written authority we have is the Domesday survey. In it Bruton is called Briweton, and appears to have belonged to Roger de Courcelles.

“Terra Rogerii de Corcelle. Erneis ten. de Ro. Briwitone, Goduinus tenuit T.R.E. et geldabat pro 1 hida et una virg. terræ. Terra est 2 car. Ibi est 1 car. cum 3 Bord. & Molind redd. 30 den. Valuit et valet 30 solid.”

Collinson considers that *Brumeton*, which is entered as in the hands of the king, belongs to Bruton; but without any good foundation. In the same survey, *Brewham* or

Briweham is given to Willelmus de Moion. It appears to have been a much more considerable manor than that of Brewton. It is well worth the enquiry of antiquaries what place is meant by Brumeton: it is probably in the vicinity of Frome. There is no allusion to the Priory of Bruton in the survey.

The earliest Charter of the Priory known is one from Willelmus de Moyun, or Mohun. He doubtless was a great benefactor; but in the words in this paper alluding to the *terra quæ fuit Rogeri Coci*, it seems very probable that *Roger de Courcelles* is meant, and that he was the first founder; indeed I am not aware of our having any evidence of the Mohuns having possessed any lands in Bruton; they had, it is true, the large Manor of Bruham, and endowed the Priory with great part of it.

The Chartulary of the Abbey, placed at our disposal by the liberality of the Earl of Ilchester, gives much information as to the possessions of the Abbey. It is much to be regretted that so great a part of the early portion of this volume is lost; but through the industry of Mr. Harbin, a learned Somersetshire antiquary of 1700, there are copious extracts remaining of the early papers, and transcripts of as many as six Charters of the Mohuns to Bruton Priory. One of these, purporting to be by *Willelmus de Moyun juvenis*, is a very remarkable one. It is not addressed, as the earlier ones, to Robert, Bishop of Bath, but *omnibus S. Dei Ecclesiæ fidelibus, tam prosentibus quam futuris & omnibus hominibus suis Francis & Anglis salutem*. He next goes on to confirm the gifts to the Church of St. Mary of Bruton, and the Canons regular made by *avus meus, Comes Willelmus & Willelmus, pater meus*. By this it would appear that the first benefactor to the Priory of the name of Mohun was grandfather to the

said Willelmus juvenis; he must therefore have been Willelmus the first lord. This would also agree better with the date, 1114, generally given as the foundation of the Abbey, which was during the reign of Henry the First, not that of Stephen, as represented by those who make Willelmus the 3rd the founder. It will be seen also that in this Charter, as in the earlier one, the founder is styled *Comes*, but not *Somersetensis*. This obscure part of the history of the Mohuns should be investigated, as there is no historical evidence of any of that family having the title of Earl of Somerset confirmed upon him, though the Empress Maude is said to have made him Earl of Dorset. See these two Charters.

One Charter of *William de Moyun juvenis*, directed to Robert, Bishop of Bath, grants 1 hyde of land, a well, and whatever other property he has in Bruton; also six acres and pasture for 100 pigs in his forest of Selwood, for the health of the soul of his father, and his mother, and his brothers, and his own.

Another Charter is in these terms: "Will'us de Moyun Juvenis omnibus S. Dei Eccl'ie Fidelibus tam presentibus quam futuris & omnibus hominibus suis Francis & Anglis Salutem. Sciatis me concessisse omnes donationes quas avus meus Comes Will'us & Will'us pater meus fecerunt Eccl'ie B. Mariæ de Bruwton & Canonicis regularibus in câ Deo servientibus, in Eccl'is & Terris & Decimis & libertatibus & in omnibus aliis rebus, sicut cartæ eorum testantur. Concedo etiam eas donationes quas Homines de Feod. meo præd. Canonicis pro salute animarum suarum fecerunt. Hanc autem concessionem meam ut firma et illibata permaneat, scripto meo et sigilli impressione confirmo et subscriptis testibus corrobore. Lucia Uxore meâ, Gilberto Capellano, Ric'o de Moyun, Ric'o Clerico de Longham, Will'o Britt. Rad'o Perd."

“Carta Willielmi de Moyne Comitis Somerset de fundatione.

“Roberto dei gratiâ Bathoniensi Episcopo, et omnibus filiis Sanctæ Ecclesiæ, Willelmus de Moyne Comes Somersetensis, Salutem. Notum vobis fieri volo, me, prece Willielmi Capellani, uxoris meæ, et multorum amicorum ac hominum consilio, hæredumque meorum concessu; et pro animæ meæ, uxorisque filiorumque meorum salute; et pro redemptione peccatorum meorum, Deo et Sanctæ Mariæ, Canonicisque regularibus, Ecclesiam de Briweton concessisse, cum terris et decimis et consuetudinibus et omnibus rebus sicut prædictus Willelmus Capellanus meliùs tenuit; videlicet cum terrâ quæ fuit Rogeri Coci et adquietationibus tam in bosco quam in plano; scilicet de pannagio et cæteris consuetudinibus, et de bosco meo convenienter ad negotia sua, sive ad focum, sive ad domos suas reficiendas, sive ad alia in quibus bosco indigebunt; et communem pasturam in omni manerio meo de Briweham.

“Teste. Willelmo filio meo, Henrico, Juwanno, Petro et Ricardo, clericis; Radulpho capellano, Roberto capellano, Magistro Willielmoque, Willielmo de Briuton, Reinaldo Rich’ de Wacheforde, Hugone de Punchardun, Willelmo Dastard, Willelmo de Locunnis, cum pluribus aliis.

“Et qui hanc meam donationem minuere tentaverit, maledictionem Dei æterni consequatur. Amen.”

There is also a Charter of Savaricus, Bishop of Bath and Glastonbury, “Diversorum donationes recitans et confirmans,” particularly those made by Henricus de Caraville, and Alexander de Cantelo. This Savaricus was appointed bishop as one of the conditions of the release of Richard the First by the Emperor, and the

Abbey of Glastonbury was then attached to the See, which led to many years of angry litigation between the Bishop of Bath and the monks of the Abbey. It ended in a compromise: the bishops dropping the title of Glastonbury, and the monks sacrificing a few of their manors.

The prior's house, in the main street of Bruton, is the only part of the conventual buildings remaining above ground, and on it are the two ancient bearings of the Mohuns, and the arms and badge of John Henton the prior. It is said that there are still extensive crypts remaining under the Abbey lawn, before the parsonage.

There is considerable variance in the list of the priors; Sir R. HOARE'S list is as follows:

- 1114. G——, prior.
- 1159. William, prior.
- 1184. Robert, prior.
- 1188. Philip, prior.
- 1194. Gilbert, prior.
- 1416. 9th Nov., John, summoned to the convocation.
- 1418. John Corsham, prior, died 10th Dec.
- 1429. John Schoyle, resigned.
- 1448. Richard Glastonbury, prior, died.
- 1488. John Henton, prior.
- 1498. William Gilbert, prior.
- 1533. John Ely, abbot, surrendered the Abbey in 1539.

I have also added the lists made out by Collinson and Mr. Phelps, in their *Histories of Somerset*, and Mr. Bord, in his valuable essay on the *History of Bruton*.

COLLINSON:

- 1144. Gilbert.
- 1159. William.
- 1184. Robert.

- 1188. Philip.
- 1194. Gilbert.
- 1416. John.
- 1418. John Corsham.
- 1429. John Schoyle, resigned.
- 1448. Richard Glastonbury, died.

## BORD :

- 1144. Gilbert.
- 1159. William.
- 1184. Robert.
- 1188. Philip.
- 1194. Gilbert.
- 1274. John de Grindlesham.
- 1416. John Cuham, presented to convocation.
- 1418. John Schoyle, presented.
- 1448. John Henton.
- 1495. William Gilbert.
- 1532. John Ely.

## PHELPS :

- 1114. G——, prior.
- 1159. William.
- 1184. Robert.
- 1188. Philip.
- 1194. Gilbert.
- 13.. Stephen. (*See his Seal.*)
- 1396. John Cusham, died 1418.
- 1418. John Schoyle.
- 1429. Richard de Glastonbury.
- 1448. John Henton.
- 1498. William Gilbert.
- 1533. John Ely, abbot.

By these it appears that between the years 1194 and 1416 there is a great hiatus. This is partially supplied by

Phelps, who very properly interpolates Stephen somewhere in 1300, on the authority of a fine seal engraved in Sir R. Hoare's work. Mr. Bord has also added the name of John de Grindlesham in 1274, I suppose on the authority of Dugdale's *Baronage*. But there must have been at least five or six priors in the 212 years which are left almost blank.

The lands of the priory are thus enumerated in the taxation of Pope Nicholas :

Ecclesia de Bruton.	£	s.	d.
Cum capella . . . . .	26	13	4
Ditto . . . . .	5	0	0

Prior de Brouton.

Habet maner' de Rungetow Archdeacon'

Cicestr . . . . .	8	17	4
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Prior de Bruton.

Pro Bruton . . . . .	17	10	0
Ditto Horsyngton . . . . .	0	13	4
Ditto Babcary . . . . .	1	0	0
Ditto Charlton Adam . . . . .	6	0	0
Ditto Chedesye . . . . .	0	10	0

The last survey is given by *Dugdale*, vol. vi., p. 336 :—

SURVEY OF LANDS OF BRUTON ABBEY.

Computum Ministrorum Domini Regis, HEN. VIII.

*Nuper Monasterium de Brewton.*

Com' Somers'	£	s.	d.
Brewton—Redd' liber' ten' . . . . .	0	19	10
Brewton—Reddit' assis' . . . . .	67	12	11
Wyke et Pytcombe—Reddit' assis' . . . . .	7	13	8
Horewood—Reddit' assis' . . . . .	6	3	8
Bratton—Reddit' assis' . . . . .	2	7	8
Carskelyffe—Reddit' assis' . . . . .	0	12	6
Hengrove—Reddit' assis' . . . . .	2	13	8

Wylkinthorpe—Reddit' assis'	..	0	14	4
Brewton—Redd' tenement'	.. ..	11	4	10
Brewton—Redd' macell'	.. ..	4	8	4
Brewton—Perquis' cur'	.. ..	6	17	3
North Bruham—Redd' lib' et cust' ten'		23	6	5½
North Bruham—Firma maner'	..	10	0	0
North Bruham—Perquis' cur'	..	18	15	8
Dyscove—Redd' assis'	.. ..	6	14	6
Cyckewick—Redd' assis'	.. ..	1	17	0
Holywaters—Redd' assis'	.. ..	0	15	10
Brewton—Redd' assis'	.. ..	1	0	2
Brewton—Scit' nuper mon,' &c.	..	20	0	0
Brewton—Firma rector'	.. ..	30	14	6
Mynhed—Firma rector'	.. ..	24	5	8
Mynhed—Redd' assis'	.. ..	4	0	0
Horsley—Firma cap' mans'	.. ..	6	3	4
Glaston—Redd' un' ten'	.. ..	3	6	8
Mylton Clyvedon—Reddit'	.. ..	1	0	0
Stert—Firma terr' dñic'	.. ..	4	10	0
Horsley—Firma	.. ..	1	0	0
Milton Clyvedon—Firma decim'	..	1	3	4
Sherston—Red' un' ten'	.. ..	0	4	0
Charlton Adam—Redd' lib' ten'	..	0	17	7
Charlton Adam—Redd' assis'	..	10	7	8
Charlton Adam—Firma rector'	..	6	0	0
Charlton Domer—Firma rector'	..	5	13	4
Charlton Adam—Purquis cur'	..	0	0	9
Stony Eston—Redd' assis'	.. ..	5	8	7
Stony Eston—Firma maner'	.. ..	12	18	9
Stony Eston—Perquis cur'	.. ..	0	18	4
Westbury—Redd' assis'	.. ..	5	1	2
Westbury—Firma terr' dñic'	.. ..	5	6	8
Westbury—Firma rector'	.. ..	7	0	0



Westbury—Perquis cur'	..	..	0	0	6
Banwell—Redd' lib' ten'	..	..	1	12	10
Banwell—Redd' custum' et convenc' ten'	12	15	11		
Banwell—Pens' vicar' ..	..	..	1	0	0
Crysheton—Pens' rector'	..	..	0	8	0
Banwell—Perquis' cur'	..	..	16	4	1
Horsley—Redd' assis'	..	..	45	6	6
Horsley—Firma terr' dñic'	..	..	11	9	0
Horsley—Firma rector'	..	..	20	0	0
Witnester—Firma rector'	..	..	11	6	8
Horsley—Pannag' porcor'	..	..	0	8	6
Horsley—Perquis' cur'	..	..	1	10	4
Horsley—Vend' bosc' ..	..	..	0	15	8
Rongton—Redd' assis'	..	..	18	18	11
Rongton—Firma terr' dñic'	..	..	5	13	4
Rongton—Firma rector'	..	..	9	10	0
Merston et al'—Penc' et porc'	..	..	2	6	8
Banwell—Firma rector'	..	..	38	3	4
Shepton Mountagu—Firma rector'	..	..	15	12	8
North Pederton—Redd' assis'	..	..	19	0	9
North Pederton—Firma molend'	..	..	0	6	8
Meryet—Pens' rector' ..	..	..	1	1	0
North Pederton—Perquis' cur'	..	..	0	15	1
Blynfield—Firma maner'	..	..	8	0	0
Wormyster—Redd' terr'	..	..	2	5	0

By this it appears how enormously their lands and possessions had increased.

Before I conclude, it may not be uninteresting to those who are unacquainted with the works of Leland, to read the quaint account of Bruton, given by this eccentric antiquary: "From Milton to Briweton about a mile dim. Briweton, as I cam from North West into it by South, lyith al a this side Brywe Ryver; there is a streat yn it

from North to South, and another far fairer then that from Est to West. The town is now much occupied with making of clothe. The Paroche Church and th' abby by it stand beyond the Ryver, hard over the Est bridge in Bruton. This bridge is of three archys of stone. There is in the market place of the town a new cross of six archys, and a pillar yn the middle for market folkes to stand yn, begun and brought up to fornix by Ely, last Abbote of Bruton."

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