



YEOVIL CHURCH,
With the Chantry at the West end, 1824.

John Botreaux of Trent and his Chantry.

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THE early history of Trent has been already related by Mr. J. Batten and Mr. T. Bond in our *Proceedings*, vols. XX, XXI. At a very early date the manor was parted between three coheireses, the sisters of William de Braose. One portion became the property of Studley Priory in Warwickshire, and has no history. Another portion which at length came to the family of Gerard has been treated of in the *Dorset Field Club Proceedings*, vol. xxxv. The descent of the remaining third was traced by Mr. Batten from Robert de Seford in 1285 to a purchase by John Young in 1545 without any apparent break. But the public records show that at the opening of the fifteenth century its owner was John de Botreaux, of whom Mr. Batten makes no mention.

A document recently unearthed in the "large MS. Book of Evidences" compiled by the great antiquary Sir W. Pole,¹ and now transcribed for issue by the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, has provided the clue to his appearance as a landowner in Trent.

About the year 1408 Thomas Affelton of Affton in West Worlington, co. Devon, was the owner of this portion of Trent in right of his wife Elizabeth. She was the daughter and heiress of Thomas Manyngford and Joan his wife, daughter and heiress of Thomas Chastelyn of Trent and Emma his wife, who was the daughter and coheiress of John de Cantelo lord of Chilton Cantelo.

1. *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries*, IV, 170.

Thomas Affelton must have been alive at this date, as on the third of April, 1407, he presented to the benefice of East Worlington; but on 26th October, 1409, John Botreaux was patron of Affton. In the interval Thomas had died, leaving his eldest son and heir John under age, whose wardship was possessed by Sir John Cornwall. What then happened is explained by the deed itself, of which the following is a translation.

“To all the faithful in Christ John Botreaux esquire, son of William Lord Botreaux sendeth greeting in the Lord. Whereas Sir John Cornwall and others have granted to me the custody of the lands and the ‘maritagium’ of John Affton son and heir of Thomas Affton, which by the death of Thomas the father, and by reason of the minority of the said John came to Sir John Cornwall aforesaid: know that I the said John Botreaux have granted to my mother the lady Elizabeth Botreaux, to Ralph my brother, to Sir William Palton knight, and to Henry Nausumer parson of the church of North Cadbury, the custody of the lands, &c., to pay my debts. Given 13 June, 3 Henry V (1415).”

The scandal of a system whereby the profits of the wardship of an heir could be utilized to pay off the debts of the guardian could not be better exemplified.

In his position as guardian John Botreaux was returned as owner of one third of Trent and a moiety of Chilton Cantelo in 1412; again in 1428 with John Wadham and Thomas Blaneford he held one fee in Chilton; and with John Stork and the Prior of Stodele one third part of one fee in Trent, which Thomesina¹ who was the wife of Thomas Chastelyn formerly held [*Feudal Aids, Somerset*].

As late as 1428 the heir might have been just under age; but in 1431, when the wardship must have terminated, John Botreaux *armiger* of Tiverton is described as holding Chilton Cantelo; and he presented to Trent in 1440.

The inference of course is that the guardian had consolidated his position by marrying Elizabeth widow of Thomas Affelton, and so obtaining an interest in her dower; but some

1. Really Emma; it seems a very curious slip on the part of the scribe.

years before 1440 John Botreaux had lost his wife, and her christian name was Alice.

In the *Patent Rolls*, under 12th November, 1432, there is entered a licence to William Lambrooke, Treasurer of Wells Cathedral, Alice late the wife of John Wynford, John Botreaux, Esq., and Stephen Hoper of Yevele and Joan his wife, to found a chantry of one chaplain to celebrate mass daily at the altar of the Holy Cross in the church of St. John Baptist in Yevele, for the souls of the said John Wynford and John de la Bere, sometime husbands of the said Alice, of Alice late the wife of John Botreaux, and of Margery Warmwell, to be endowed to the annual value of ten marcs. Two later entries show that Hoper gave lands in Yeovil and East Lambrooke, Alice Wynford lands in Galhampton, and John Botreaux lands in Kingston and Hendford. A deed among the muniments of Woburne's Almshouse in Yeovil, dated 1438, refers to a messuage within the free borough of Yevele, situated on the south side of Pyttelane near the messuage formerly belonging to William Graunger and now to John Botreaux, Esq.

The income of the Chantry derived from seventeen tenements amounted in 1548 to £8, 2*sh.* 2*d.* (*S.R.S.*, II, 322).

The chantry was established in a chapel built at the south-west corner of the tower of Yeovil church. When the Survey of Colleges, Chantries, &c., was made in 1548, preparatory to their confiscation, the commissioners recorded that "Ther is a chapell scituate within the churchyard of Yevill kevered with leade . . . , which the inhabitants ther desire to have for a scholehouse."¹

Their desire was gratified, as in 1573 a building in the churchyard, which had formerly been a chapel, had been converted into a school-house at the parish expense, at a cost of £12, 13*sh.* 4*d.* The building thus altered appears in several views of the church.

Perhaps the oldest is a painting taken from the south side of the churchyard, preserved at Newton. It shows the school, but no penthouse on the south side of the tower, so that the chantry must have been quite detached from the body of the

1. *Som. Rec. Soc.*, II, 141.

church. By way of providing colour the artist has depicted the congregation assembling for service. Up the main path advances the vicar in black gown; behind him a citizen in a long white coat walks hand in hand with his wife attired in a red gown. From the door of the school issues a line of boys two and two preceded by the master who is arrayed in a magnificent gown of pale blue with red stripes, the cut reminiscent of a lord chancellor's robe. The costumes and wigs indicate the middle of the eighteenth century. The plate in Collinson, III, 110, allows no room for the school.

A large lithograph of the church shows the penthouse and the east window of the school blocked up, and a small square aperture inserted. The illustration accompanying this paper (Plate VIII) is taken from the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1824, pt. ii, 17.

When the building was finally taken down in 1855,¹ a stone coffin was dug up from under the west buttress, which contained only rubbish. The head of a cross (figured in Pooley, 144) was found built up in the wall, and now rests on a new shaft at the Roman Catholic church in Kingston.

A new school-house, now known as the Chantry, was built outside the churchyard opposite the west door. It preserves a beautiful piscina with two shields unfortunately blank, two carved niches and several corbels, all of Ham Hill stone. A boss in the roof of the old building bore the arms of de Veer, which were adopted by the family of Wynford;² and so heraldry enables us to identify the chapel as the home of the chantry founded by Alice Wynford and her associates.

Of the ladies named in the licence, Alice Wynford has most left on record. On their marriage John Wynford gave her a life interest in Brympton Devercy, the reversion of which they sold to John Stourton of Preston Plucknett. The three shields on the stone screen in Brympton church bear the arms of Stourton, Wynford, and a third coat which may be presumed to commemorate the paternal family of Alice the joint

1. D. Vickery: "Sketch of the Town of Yeovil," 1856. A very useful little work.

2. J. Batten: "Historical Notes," p. 70.

owner of manor and advowson. It bears *sa.* three pallets wavy *or*, on a chief of the first three crescents *gu.* Mr. Batten considered these to be the arms of Beauchin of Beauchinhays in Whitchurch Canonorum, but he could trace no connection between the two families; and he also referred to a charter in Hutchins' *Dorset*, iv, 318, wherein Alice Wynford is described as a sister of William Lambrooke, treasurer of Wells Cathedral. Gerard definitely assigns her to that family (*S.R.S.*, xv, 107). There can be no doubt on this point; and as the arms of Beauchin and Lambrooke differ only in the tinctures of the charges, it is most probable that the variation at Brympton is due to a "restoration" of the colours on the shield.

The arms of Lambrooke are also carved, with curious variations, on the magnificent tower at Kingsbury Episcopi.¹ Symonds in his diary has preserved an inscription found beside the shields: "Sett up 1640"; so it is quite possible that the variations are really due to the want of knowledge of the mason at some restoration. One of the shields bears the arms of Robert Stillington, Bishop of the Diocese, 1466-1491.

The family of Lambrooke took their name from a hamlet within the parish of Kingsbury. If they did not actually claim to have come in with the Conqueror, their long continuance in the land is brought out in an official document of the thirteenth century.²

This is an inquisition undated but taken in the reign of Henry III. It was found that John de Lambroc and his predecessors had held half a hide in Kingsbury of the Bishops of Bath and Wells in chief by military service since the conquest. It was seized into the king's hand only because the said John held one virgate and a half in Compton of Eustace de Dureville; and the said Eustace having been hanged for felony, the lands were in the king's hand for a year and day; after which, not being claimed by either Robert de Vallibus, chief lord, or his heirs, they remain in the king's hand.

Although the exact date of the execution of Eustace de

1. Gerard: *S.R.S.*, XV, 122, and notes.

2. *Chancery Inq.*, miscellaneous.

Dureville is not known, it must have been before 1255. In that year an inquisition held after the death of Reginald de Bathonia records that he held one and a half virgates of land in Compton Dureville of the king's escheat of the fee of Eustace de Dureville hanged for felony, doing royal service.¹

The family of Dureville gave their name to Compton Dureville in South Petherton. Eustace and William de Dureville appear as parties or witnesses to several deeds in the Bruton chartulary; but Eustace seems to have had an inclination to crime. Among the pleas of gaol delivery, etc., taken at Ilchester in 1225, it is recorded that Eustace de Durevill', accused of burglary and other misdeeds, was taken and put in prison at Ilchester. He broke gaol and fled to the monastery and abjured the realm. He had no chattels (*S.R.S.*, XI, 250).

Having apparently made his peace with the authorities, he seems to have returned to his evil life, which led to his execution. The frequent reference to this event in later inquisitions, as explanatory of the royal overlordship, has caused authorities to date it as late as 1296 and even 1330.

Domesday is provokingly silent as to the original ancestor of the Lambrooke family. It only records that at Kingsbury three knights (*milites*) and one cleric hold eight hides, which were worth as many pounds. In 1166 Adam de Lambroc with four other tenants held one knight's fee of the Bishop of Bath.² Roger son of Adam de Langbroc is a witness to a deed of confirmation of a gift by Robert son of John de Langbroc, and Alice his wife, of rents in Compton (Durville).³

Robert Lambrook was a juror on an inquisition taken at Montacute in 1378 to enquire into the ownership of Haselbere, which was found to be the property of Ingelram Coucy 'an enemy alien.' So history anticipates itself.

Margery Warmwell, the second lady named in the licence, was the first wife of John Warmwell of Newton Surmaville near Yeovil.⁴ The register of Bishop Bubwith (*S.R.S.*, XXIX,

1. *Inq. p.m.* Hen. III, no. 328.

2. *Liber Ruber*, I, 221.

3. Buckland Cartulary, no. 43, *S.R.S.*, XXV, p. 33.

4. *Proceedings*, LVI, ii, 12.

110) contains a licence granted to Robert Langebrok and Christian his wife to have masses and other divine offices celebrated in a chapel or decent oratory in the dwelling place of John Warmwelle at Newton ; date 10th October, 1411. In the Wells documents the name of the treasurer is often given as Langbrook ; so the indulged Robert may be identified with the elder brother, who died in 1419, leaving for his heir John Rodbard son of his only daughter Catharine.

It seems very probable that Margery Warmwell was their sister ; but at present it is only a surmise that Alice Botreaux was a third sister, and a second Alice ; but otherwise there seems no particular reason why John Botreaux should desire to associate his wife with the other ladies. So also Joan Hopere may have been another sister.

John Botreaux was the third and youngest son of William Lord Botreaux, of North Cadbury, who died in 1391. His name hardly ever appears except in connection with the guardianship of Thomas Affelton. We know that he was in debt in 1415, and that he helped to found a chantry in Yeovil church.

The royal licence was granted on 12th November, 1432 ; and exactly a week earlier a licence had been granted to Anne late the wife of Hugh Earl of Devon to marry John Botreaux, Esq. By the death of his elder brother Ralph without issue he succeeded to some property in Yorkshire, which had descended to their mother Lady Botreaux from her uncle Thomas fourth Lord Thweng, as appears in the inquisition taken after his death.

We cannot even now be sure that we have come to the end of Sir John's matrimonial ventures. The pedigree of Trevelyan of Basill in Vivian's *Visitations of Cornwall* (p. 507) records that Henry Trevelyan married firstly Alice Trencreek, by whom he had a son Thomas, whose son John became the owner of Nettlecombe ; and secondly Margaret daughter of Sir John Bottreaux, knight, and Margaret daughter and heir of . . . Restorville. Margaret Trevelyan survived her husband and remarried John Langdon of Lostwithiel.

Sir John Botreaux died on the 25th March, 1444. The inquisition after his death was taken on the festival of St. Thomas the Martyr (29th Dec.) in that year.

He held the manor of Lund-super-Wold (near Beverley), and sundry knights' fees and the alternate presentations to the churches of Hilderwell and Watton, by the gift of Lady Elizabeth Botreaux, consequent on the death of her son Sir Ralph and his wife Matilda without issue. John had issue Anna, now the wife of Sir John Lisle, aged twenty-four years and more, who claims (*defendebat*) the said property. John had nothing more, and died on Ladyday last past.

Collins' *Peerage* states that Anne Botreaux married Thomas Littleton of Spectkley, co. Worcester, son of the great lawyer Sir Thomas Littleton (1402-1481). This may have been a second marriage, in which case there must have been considerable disparity between their ages.

There is no reference to Margaret Trevelyan ; but it will be noted that Anne Lisle is said "to claim" the paternal property, which looks as if her title was in dispute.

Robert Affton, a citizen of Wells in the reign of Richard II, appears to have belonged to a younger branch of the Devonshire family to judge by his heraldic seal. It is appended to a document, no. 64 in the Serel collection at Taunton Castle, whereby Thomas Tanner of Wells confirms to Robert Affton and Johanna his wife, and her heirs, the reversion of certain lands in and near that City ; dated 7th Aug., 21 Rich. II, 1398.



Seal of Robert de Afftone.

The small seal is of beautiful design and workmanship ; inscription, *S. roberti : afftone* : The shield bears : a chevron engrailed between three fleur-de-lys, and a label of three points each charged with as many roundels. On the helmet the crest of a dragon's head between two wings. These are the crest and arms of Affelton differenced with a label, and the roundels may refer to the bezanty bordure of the shield of the Cornwall family, who as we have seen above, were their overlords.

In the *Patent Rolls* for 3rd October, 1401, is this entry : “ Pardon to Nicholas Wodehay for the death of Robert Affton on the Saturday before fest. St. Dunstan, 1 Henry IV (15 May, 1400) at Sparkford, co. Somerset.” It may be that the unfortunate man was on his way to visit his cousin at Trent when he met with his untimely death.