

# The Saron Charters of Somerset

## WEST MONKTON

### REVISED NOTES OF ITS CHARTER

(See *Proceedings*, vol. lxxiv, Somerset Charters supp., pp. 51-54).

---

BY DR. G. B. GRUNDY

---

MR. E. E. TROTMAN of West Monkton has sent me some notes on the West Monkton charter B.62 which demand my serious attention, all the more so as I had never been satisfied with my own solution of the survey attached to the charter. (*Cf.* p. 52, twelve lines from the bottom : ' it presents certain difficulties which do not admit of any sure solution ').

I have for the last few years received about fifty letters per annum in reference to my publications of many hundreds of charters of various counties. Most of them are concerned with evidence drawn from investigation on the spot confirming identifications I made from the map. A good many supply identifications of landmarks which I admitted that I could not determine ; but so far only two, of which the above letter is one, have pointed out mistakes which I have made in dealing with a survey. All my work relating to Somerset and other counties is pioneer work, *i.e.* work never done before ; and therefore it has not been possible for me to rely, as one generally can rely in large matters relating to history and archæology, on some help from the works of previous writers. As my aim is to make the work as correct as possible I am not merely ready but anxious to publish any additions or corrections which may be made by other inquirers. Mr. Trotman's notes are very important.

The reason for my misinterpretation of the West Monkton survey is that it is unique among the hundreds of surveys I

have dealt with hitherto. The Saxon surveyors worked on a system which included the following practices.

(1) To begin the survey at some cardinal angle of the boundary of the area.

(2) To take the landmarks in order round the boundary back to the starting-point. Except in the case of the present charter this rule is always strictly followed. (I am speaking of charters with regular surveys, not of those early charters which simply give in general terms the N., S., E., and W. limits of an area.)

Such being apparently the universal practice in the many surveys with which I had dealt, I was not prepared to find a marked departure from it in the case of the present charter. Hence I tried to solve the survey on the usual lines.

(3) To take the landmarks with the clock. In very few surveys are the landmarks taken in the reverse direction.

Leaving out the Creechbarrow part of the survey which the surveyors have relegated to a note, the main survey, Landmarks 1-9 (pp. 51, 52) are not, as it might certainly be expected they would be, a series in continuous order, but a broken series. Landmarks 1-3 give the N. and the E. boundaries of that part of the grant N. of the Tone. Then comes the Tone, and then landmark 4 states that the remaining landmarks are on the west boundary. That being so, it was natural to assume from the apparently universal practice of Saxon surveyors that the landmarks on that west boundary ran N. from the Tone to the NW. corner of the parish where the survey started. But in this case, as Mr. Trotman shows by his identification of the landmarks, the surveyors, instead of giving the landmarks in their regular order adopted the plan of making a new start from the NW. corner of the parish and giving the landmarks on the W. boundary in order from N. to S. I will now tabulate the revised identifications, adding later such notes on them as I feel inclined to make.

1. *Helsdena*. Where the stream rises near Oggsole (OM1) near the NW. angle of the parish.

2. 'Then by a brook to the ford called *Wealaford*.' Along the stream which forms the N. and the N. part of the E. boundary of the parish to Walford (OM1).

3. 'And so along that brook to the channel of the *Tan* (Tone).' The same stream as in 2.

4. 'They' (*i.e.* the 23 hides) 'have on the west the spring called *Ealdwuylle* (Old Spring).'

5. The spring called *Acuwille* (Spring at the oaktree).

6. *Haegstaldescumb* (Hestercombe).

7. 'By the way called *Hrycweg* (Ridgeway).' The road which runs along the edge of the hill for Hestercombe to Gotton and so on E.

8. 'From the way to the stream called *Segbroc* (Sedge Brook).' Now Allen's Brook (OM1).

9. 'From the brook the land lies westwards towards the channel of the aforesaid *Tan* (Tone).'

On the above identifications I may make the following notes. I think 1, 2, and 3 are unquestionably right. It will be seen that 3 implies that the W. part of Creech St. Michael was in the grant. Of the springs of 4 and 5, one is probably commemorated by the name Catwell, that of a field on the boundary about  $\frac{1}{4}$  m. WSW. of Yalway Farm (OM1).

The Ridgeway of 7 cannot be the road which Mr. Trotman suggests, for the name ridgeway, common as it is, is always applied to a road or track along the crown of a ridge, often quite a short ridge. Many parish roads are old local ridgeways.

The ridgeway mentioned is now represented by a road or track which runs down the W. boundary S. of Hestercombe. It does not apparently extend to the *Segbroc* at the present day, but may have done so in the past.

The *Segbroc* of 8 is undoubtedly Allen's Brook.

The reconstruction of the survey entails the following deletions and corrections in my account of it.

P. 52, delete last paragraph.

P. 53, delete paragraphs 1 and 2.

P. 54, delete from line 5 to the end.

It also entails certain corrections at the end of the account of the great Taunton charter.

P. 22, correct landmarks 69 and 70.

P. 8, line 17, delete *West Monkton* and in the next line *Creech St. Michael*.

P. 9, line 3, for 43,000 read 40,000, and in the next line for 323 read 300.