

ART. XXII.—*Muchland and its Owners and Newbarns.*

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Read at Barrow in-Furness, Sept. 4th, 1923.

MUCHLAND.

THE late William Barrow Kendall, who died at Londonderry in 1919, was a native of Barrow, an assiduous collector of notes and an entertaining writer on the archæology, natural history and geology of his native district. An article from his pen on Gleaston Castle is printed in these *Transactions* N.S. vol. vi. In the course of his life Mr. Kendall accumulated a vast quantity of MS. notes, most of which through the kindness of his brother I have had the opportunity of going through. Among the unpublished papers there is one entitled "Muchland and its Owners" which I wish to bring to the notice of this meeting. This article is of considerable length containing 143 closely written quarto pages as well as a number of valuable maps and plans. The subject matter consists of a detailed relation of the history of the manor of Muchland and an account of the families who have successively held it from its creation at the beginning of the 12th century till it reverted to the Crown in 1554.

The earlier pages contain a general description of the geographical features and the boundaries of the manor and then the author proceeds to give a brief historical survey of that part of Furness from the earliest times to the formation of the Manor. This portion is divided into sections chiefly descriptive of pre-historic remains and implements found there. Most of this matter has already been printed in our *Transactions* or in the Barrow Field Club Year Books. Sections are devoted to the Roman period and the

Anglian settlements and a considerable amount of space is allotted to the coming of the Northmen and their colonies in the Furness lands. This is followed by an account of the devastated condition of the country during the reigns of William the Conqueror and his son Rufus. Furness after the conquest was held by Tostig earl of Northumbria and after him by Roger de Poitou who forfeited it to the Crown for treason in 1102 along with his other possessions. Henry I retained them in his own hands for a dozen years or more and then bestowed them on his nephew Stephen, afterwards King of England. It was during the period when Furness was in the hands of the King that the manor of Muchland was founded, as the lands were held directly from the Crown so that it could only then have been created. It was evidently in pursuit of Henry's well known policy of founding, on the forfeited estates of the rebellious barons, smaller fiefs held by his lesser adherents who not only served as a counterpoise to the greater Normans but acted as agents in developing the country, that Muchland owes its origin. This would most probably be shortly after Henry's return from Normandy in 1107 and not later than 1111. The grant was to Michael le Fleming and from him the manor took the name of Michael's land or Muchland. The lands included in the original grant were those lying to the eastward of what is now known as the Abbey Beck and to the southward of the moors of Birkrigg and Swarthmoor, the one half of Urswick (which Mr. Kendall identified with Hougum village) being excepted. Michael's land, as carved out of the original Manor of Hougum of the Domesday Survey, comprised half of Hougum, Neutun, Suntun, Rosse, Hert, Lies, Alia Lies, Glassertun, Cliverton, Borch, Aldingham, Bodeltun and Dene, with a total of 54 carucates or practically half of the 109 carucates that comprised the original manor of Hougum leaving out the nine carucates of three villages in Cumberland. These boundaries were however

modified about the year 1153 by an adjustment between Michael and Abbot Ewan, the first Abbot of Furness. Michael surrendered to the monks Ross, Fordebodele (with Suntun) and Clivertun (with Neutun), a strip of territory about a mile in width along his western border, and received in return Bardsea on his north-east border and the monks' half of Urswick called Little Urswick which had been dovetailed into his manor on the north-west. The boundaries thus agreed upon are those still maintained. In the 13th century only 20½ carucates of arable land was rated in the Muchland Manor instead of 54, showing how large an area had gone out of cultivation during the troublous times that followed the death of Edward the Confessor.

The MS. then deals with the descent of the Flemings or, as they afterwards became known, the de Furness family. In this section there is much that is of interest to students of local topography and it contains many details of the relations between the lords of Aldingham and their near neighbours the monks of Furness. These transactions relate largely to disputes about boundaries and agreements for land drainage and reclamation, mostly from the Coucher Book which, as interpreted by Mr. Kendall with his unrivalled knowledge of the place names, is of special interest. I think that he knew the name of every field in Low Furness.

In the year 1227 Henry III transferred the rent of £10 per annum and the homage and services of the lords of Muchland from the Crown to the Abbot, thus reducing them to the position of vassals of the Abbot of Furness.

The main line of the Flemings came to an end with the drowning of Michael de Furness while crossing the Leven sands in 1269. The new owner of Muchland was his sister Alina, the wife of William de Cancefield, who dying without issue, the manor went to John de Harrington, his nephew.

The section dealing with the Harringtons and their successors the Bonvilles contains a great deal that belongs rather to the general history of England and particularly to the wars with Scotland.

A peace effected in the year 1323 enabled the country to recover from the late disasters and nine years later we find the men of Muchland contributing their quota to the fifteenth granted to assist the king against the Scots. For the purpose of this tax the country was assessed in townships of which there were three in Muchland:—

(1) Urswick, coterminous with the parish. (2) Aldingham, comprising the village of Scales and all the coastland from Seawood to Whitehall and (3) Leece, taking in the rest of Aldingham parish and including the villages of Leece, Gleaston and Dendron. It will be noticed that the township of Aldingham assumes a very peculiar shape. This is because the old Domesday divisions were followed. Aldingham township embraces the Domesday Aldingham and Borch originally 10 carucates; Leece township embraces Lies, the other Lies, Glasserton, Hert, and Dene (13 carucates) and Urswick takes in Hougum, Berretseige, Steintun and Bodeltun (16 carucates). With regard to valuation the three townships are practically equal. In Urswick 13 men paid 28 shillings, 13 men in Leece paid the like amount and 14 men in Aldingham paid 27s. 10d., making 83s. 10d. from the whole manor.

There is also included a lengthy description of Gleaston Castle. Following the death in 1458 of Sir William Harrington, Muchland was entirely deserted by its owners, the Castle of Gleaston being allowed to fall into ruins and the management of the manor left entirely in the hands of stewards who resided at Seawood House near Bardsea where they were accustomed to hold their manor courts. After the Bonvilles the manor came by marriage to the Greys, Marquises of Dorset. Henry Grey the third Marquis, afterwards created Duke of Suffolk, became im-

plicated in Wyatt's rebellion and was beheaded on Tower Hill in February 1554 when Muchland and all his other possessions were forfeited to the Crown.

The history of the manor since it became Crown property is also detailed, together with an excellent account of the descent of the freeholds. Much of the demesne land with Gleaston Park and Scales Park (lands inclosed in the reign of Edward III) is still in the possession of the Crown, but a large area has been sold. The third Marquis of Dorset granted a lease for life to Walter Curwen, his bailiff in 1542, of a considerable portion of the demesne lands including the site of Gleaston Castle and the closes adjoining, and Curwen afterwards managed to acquire the freehold of the latter. Early in the reign of Elizabeth he conveyed them to Thomas Preston of the Abbey, the new owner of the site and demesne lands of the late dissolved monastery of Furness. By the year 1672 the Prestons had acquired from the Crown, Colt Park, Hert Park, Hare Hill, Warlotts, Greenhill, Mere tarn and meadow, Sheep Parks, and Sheep or White Farm; also Sea Mill along with New Mill and Hert Mill (two water-mills under one roof, now known as Gleaston Mill). These properties passed by descent to the Cavendish family who still own them.

Some account is given of the customs of the manor as well as details of the ancient rates and taxes and the organisation of the militia. In the earliest militia return extant (1553) Muchland found 27 and Bardsea 2 out of the 350 men provided by the Hundred of Lonsdale.

Muchland had appendant to it a few mesne or sub-manors. These were Bolton with Adgarley, Bardsea, Westby Lands in Great Urswick, and Redmayne Hall in Little Urswick. Of these Bardsea and Bolton were the most considerable.

Enclosed within and entirely surrounded by Muchland is the small manor of Bolton with Adgarley of 688 acres, coinciding approximately with the 6 carucates of the

Bodeltun of Domesday. The history of this little manor is briefly traced from the grant by Michael le Fleming of three carucates of land in Adgarley (which forms the southern half of it) to his daughter Goditha on her marriage. Bolton (the northern half) was granted later and with Adgarley formed a manor which we find in the possession of the Coupland family in the 13th century. It is now held by the Earls of Derby. A few of the special manorial customs are also mentioned.

The manor of Muchland as crown property is now controlled by the commissioners of Woods and Forests, The yearly rent of £10 formerly paid to the Abbot of Furness as overlord is still paid by the Crown to the present Lord of the Liberty of Furness, the Duke of Buccleugh.

NEWBARNES.

In addition to his work on the manor of Muchland there was another phase of Mr. Kendall's activity in all that pertained to the history of Furness. The town of Barrow, which at the census of 1921 contained 74,254 inhabitants, in 1843 consisted of only 28 dwelling houses. In the course of this expansion the town has absorbed 7 ancient villages some of which have entirely disappeared. These villages were Biggar and Northscale on Walney Island, Barrow with old Barrow and Hindpool, Salthouse, Cocken with Ormsgill, Hawcoat and Newbarns on the mainland. With the exception of Hawcoat and Newbarns all these villages were in existence before 1336 and were originally outlying granges belonging to the Furness monks. As the growth of the town proceeded Mr. Kendall conceived the idea of collecting all that could be learnt of these villages, their townfields and the customs of the inhabitants and placing it on record before the field boundaries and old landmarks had been swept away. Most of these village histories are printed in the Proceedings of the Barrow Field Club. So long ago as 1868 he commenced the history

of Salthouse, his native village, which has been long completed but is still in MS. In 1897 our late member Mr. H. G. Pearson wrote a paper on "Biggar and its Ancient Customs" this was followed by a paper on "Cocken" the year after and another on "Northscale" in 1899, both by Mr. Kendall. Some notes and a plan of the village of Barrow in 1843 by Mr. Kendall and the late Mr. Harper Gaythorpe were printed in 1909. At the time of his death he was busy with a paper on "Hawcoat" but this was left unfinished.

In order to complete the series I myself some years ago began to collect notes on the history of Newbarns, which village is not yet quite destroyed. It may be asked whether the history of these obscure villages is really worth while, and my excuse is that, of history as it is generally understood, Low Furness has none. Out of the track of marching armies this remote district has no spectacular Roman camps or Norman strongholds to shew and we are compelled to fall back upon the humble records of husbandmen and customary tenants to trace the story of the place. Whilst all the other villages on the Furness peninsula had an origin in the middle ages and are frequently mentioned in the Furness Coucher Book the names of Hawcoat and Newbarns are conspicuously absent. It is not until we come to the reign of Henry VIII that we find any evidence of their existence. The reason is that these two hamlets did not in fact exist till then. They were the creation of the Abbot and Monks of Furness when that community was almost at its last gasp, just a few years before the Dissolution. When the Furness monks gave up cultivating the land themselves the tenants to whom it was let were established in homesteads grouped around the old granges which with the surrounding townfields were known as gravewicks. A curious custom prevailing in their Manor of Plain Furness was that each gravewick invariably consisted either of four or multiples of

four tenements. Thus Salthouse had four tenements, Barrow and Cocken each had eight, Northscale and Biggar had 16 and so on. Among these gravewicks was one known as Sellergarth, which had 32 tenements. The site even of this village was unknown but that it was quite close to the Abbey is plain and it may possibly have occupied a position in a field now known as Seller Butts near the Western Gateway. Sellergarth was destroyed in 1516 by Abbot Banks and the inhabitants driven out in order to enable that Abbot to extend his deer park. This high-handed proceeding was followed by a suit in the Palatine Chancery Court, but what the outcome of it was is not known. It is almost certain that the Abbot would be forced to make restitution to his dispossessed tenants. From that time we hear of Sellergarth no more and the names of Hawcoat and Newbarns first appear in our records. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that these villages were founded at this time for the purpose of satisfying the claims of the Sellergarth tenants. Twelve of them were established in new homesteads at Hawcoat, where there was already in existence a sheep-cote belonging to the Abbey, and twelve were in like manner established at Newbarns. For these latter an entirely new site had to be selected and when built the village became known as the Newbarns. The remainder of the Sellergarth tenants were settled in outlying holdings situated at Bridge Gate, Hall Beck, Breast Mill Beck and other outlying farms. The amount of land allocated to Newbarns was 420 acres and consisted of six large open town-fields. These fields retained their old boundaries and names and were known respectively as Risedales, Sandylands, Middle Hills, Hare Hill or Harrel, Flass and Rootings. There was another field known as Ostley Banks which was divided between Hawcoat and Newbarns. The Hawcoat share, which was much the larger, was included in the holdings but at Newbarns the tenants paid an additional rent of 8*d.* per tenement. The reason for this does not appear.

In addition to the privileges accorded by the monks to all their tenants, which included bread, beer and free education for their children, the Hawcoat and Newbarns tenants had the exclusive rights to all the manure from the Abbey stables. This was a very valuable concession at a time when live stock was so scarce that manure was practically unobtainable and was no doubt conferred because neither gravewick had an outlet to the sea and consequently no tangle-dales or liberty to take sea-weed or sea-sand from the beach for manure.

The first list of tenants occurs in the Ministers' Accounts, a valuation of the Abbey possessions taken immediately after the surrender in 1537. Most of these tenants would be the original settlers and the names of several of these families persisted in the village until well within the 18th century.

There are only two of the early Court Rolls extant; one of 1537 and the other 1561. Both are in the Public Record Office.

In 1564 the Furness customs were confirmed by Queen Elizabeth and a money rent fixed in lieu of the rent in kind formerly paid to the monks. In Newbarns the rent of each tenement was fixed at £1. 2. 2 with an additional greenhew rent of 2d.

The annals of the village during the 17th century are very slender. The court rolls of the Manor after the grant to the Duke of Albemarle in 1660 are in private hands and inaccessible. The Dalton Registers only give bare lists of names and I have not had an opportunity of seeing any of the Richmond wills. The earliest deeds of any of the property commence about 1692.

The local government was in the hands of two men, the Grave and the Pain looker, appointed by the Court Leet from what was known as the Grave round. The arrangement followed was that all the tenements were numbered 1 to 12. In the first year No. 1 furnished the

Grave and No. 2 tenement the Pain looker and so on, the odd numbers being Grave and the even numbers being Pain looker until the seventh year when Nos. 1 and 2 came on duty again ; but this time the even numbers were Grave and the odd numbers Pain lookers until the 12th year, when the Grave round was completed to recommence the following year as before. The Grave was the principal man in the village during his year. Their duties consisted largely in looking after water-courses and ditches and as a system of irrigation by water meadows was practised it would be a responsible duty.

The Furness farmers were among the earliest in the North of England to perceive the advantage that would accrue from abolishing the old wasteful system of open fields cultivation. Accordingly we find as early as the first half of the 18th century most of the Furness land had been divided and enclosed. The enclosures at Newbarns took place in two stages, the first being about 1742 when two thirds of the old open town-fields were enclosed and husbandry roads and water pits set out. The remaining one third was similarly enclosed in 1750.

The tenants did not trouble to acquire parliamentary powers by special Inclosure Acts nor did they even seek the permission of the Manor Courts. They treated it as a matter concerning only themselves and invited disinterested outsiders to measure up each man's dales in the town fields and to allot them in their proper proportions. Agreements were drawn up and the tenants bound themselves to abide by the decision of those whom they invited to divide the land. These agreements were carried out to the letter without, as far as we can learn, the slightest friction.

The whole of the village was rebuilt between the years 1685 and 1770, all the old thatched clay biggins being demolished and replaced by the present substantial stone farmhouses. The original 12 tenements, of about 35 cus-

tomary acres each, did not long survive. Before the end of the 17th century there was a tendency for the land to become concentrated into fewer hands and we find the wealthier tenants gradually absorbing the estates of their less substantial neighbours. By the year 1778 there was only one of the original tenements left, the remainder of the land being in the hands of but four owners. Most of the land has now been enfranchised and built upon, but a fairly large area of about 90 acres, the estate of Mr. E. T. Baldwin, is still customary-hold, for which the old tenant-right, greenhew and Ostley Banks rent is paid to this day.

Until the growth of Barrow provided a ready market for milk and butter, most of the milk produced was made into cheese. Heavy stone presses were used to press out the whey. Most of these have been dismantled and the stones used for mounting blocks, but there are still in Newbarns two of these presses in perfect order, mounted in their frames and with lifting screws complete. Our illustration of these we owe to the kindness of Mr. J. I. Ferguson of Barrow.



CHEESE-PRESSES AT NEWBARN.

Phot. by Mr. J. I. Ferguson.

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