

ART. XI.—*Notes on the history of Ulpha.* By MARY C. FAIR.

*Read at Penrith, July 10th, 1947.*

THE mis-statements of the county historians have been so widely accepted, being repeated by all writers on the parish of Ulpha, that it is incumbent upon our Society to place on record such facts as are available. There is very little authentic information earlier than the end of the sixteenth century; my own investigations have been greatly helped by Mr C. Roy Hudleston, F.S.A., the Rev. C. M. Lowther Bouch and the Rev. W. S. Sykes, who have supplied me with valuable details, and I am indebted to Commander and Mrs Cooper, of Ulpha Bobbin Mill, for much help in field-work.

§ 1. *Ulf, son of Efward.*

Evidence for the connection of Ulf, son of Efward, with Ulpha is completely wanting, though the unsupported statements of early historians that he was so connected have been repeated by every writer on the district. The story that Ulf was granted Ulpha must be rejected as a fabrication, like those which connect the Wybergs with Waberthwaite (cf. CW2 xlix 221-222), Michael the Falconer with Corney and the entirely fabulous Wych with Whicham; Maurice of Moresby is another myth. The Oxford Dictionary of Place-Names interprets the place-name as "Wolf hill", and not Ulf's hill; and Ulf, son of Efward, was in fact of Hyton:—

(a) A grant of half a ploughland in Urswick was made by Michael le Fleming of Furness to Ulf son of Edward in marriage, a rent of 5/- yearly to be paid (*Lancs. Inquis. and Extents.* I 83).

(b) The land was before 1187 transferred to Roger son of Augustin de Heaton, and descended like Heaton

in Lonsdale to the end of the fourteenth century (*VCH Lancs.*).

(c) Roger de Heaton acknowledged that his four oxgangs of land in Urswick were held of Ulf de Hyton and Alexander his son, by rent of 5/- yearly (*ibidem*).

(d) Alexander son of Ulf de Hiton, plaintiff and Roger de Heton, defendant, tenant of four oxgangs of land with appurtenances in Ursewic (*Lancashire Feet of Fines, 1196-1307*). Roger acknowledged the land to be the right of Alexander. For this acknowledgment Alexander granted the said land to Roger and his heirs to hold of Ulf father of the said Alexander. After the decease of Ulf, Roger and his heirs shall hold the land of Alexander and his heirs in perpetuity by service. Roger paid Alexander ten marks in silver.

It must be added that Denton, the seventeenth-century historian whose statements have been copied by later historians, has confused the family history of Ulf son of Efward. He writes (p. 14): "Ulff had issue, Ailfward and Ketell. Ailfward paid to King Henry 2nd in the 27th year of his reign, 20 marks assessed upon him for an attainr." Ketel, however, was Ulf's uncle, son of an earlier Ulf whose other recorded son was Efward. Ketel and Efward are styled "de Caupland" when witnessing the charter of Godard Boyvil, granting Monk Foss to Furness Abbey about 1150. Efward son of Ulf was of Ravenglass, where he founded a hospice for poor travellers and repaired a bridge he had built over the Esk, c. 1168 (CW2 xxix 39). His sons were Roger (of Ravenglass), Hugh (of Waberthwaite) and Ulf (of Hyton). In 1181 Efward son of Ulf renders account of 20 marks for false essoign (*Cumberland Pipe Rolls*, ed. Hinde). Ketel was "de Corney"; his son Benedict was granted the manor of Austhwaite in the lordship of Millom by Henry son of Arthur de Boyvil (*Register of St. Bees*, p. 541); Alan, another son, was of Bootle and William was of Thwaites. It will thus be seen that Ketel

and Eward and their sons had considerable grants within the lordship of Millom (as well as elsewhere), but they had no connection whatever with Ulpha, as far as can be ascertained by careful search of relevant documents, and Denton's statement is founded upon a misapprehension of the family sequence.

Moreover, all the grants of estates held of the lordship of Millom were not within the forest of the lordship but just upon its outside fringe, while Ulpha was entirely within the forest. It follows that there never was any independent manor of Ulpha, but that it was always demesne forest of the lordship and its occupants were tenants of the common of the forest, small-holders of tenements with rights of grazing their stock upon the common of the forest, but not holding any more important position. At the dalehead a group of these tenements were held by the Penningtons of Muncaster—Brotherelkeld in Birker, Birks, Blackhall and Gaitscale Close; for the rest, Ulpha was purely demesne forest of the lordship, and so continued until the estate was broken up during the eighteenth century.

§ 2. *Ulpha Old Hall.*

W. G. Collingwood devoted a short paper to a description of Ulpha Old Hall,<sup>1</sup> over half a century ago, and concluded that it was built as a peel, "in the latest period of peel-building". But further very close examination of the fragmentary ruins of the building makes me extremely doubtful whether it ever was a tower of any kind. There is no local tradition to that effect, and a document of 1666, the earliest to mention it, merely calls it "High Brackenthwaite alias the Hall in Ulpha". W. G. Collingwood's plan<sup>2</sup> and description of the structure are inaccurate in many details; indeed, he himself told me, many years ago, that it was largely based on other sources than personal observation. The

<sup>1</sup> CWI xv 315-320.

<sup>2</sup> CWI xv 317.

masonry, though strong, is rough and extremely crude; no freestone at all has been used, the walls being rubble-work of the local stone, grouted internally, with quoins of very roughly dressed local boulders, while the window-jambs and lintels, and probably the hearth-beams too (as in so many houses of the same type), were of heart of oak, as may be seen still at Dalegarth Hall, Eskdale, a sixteenth-century building across the moor. I suggest that Ulpha Old Hall was really a late fifteenth-century hall-farm house of the Millom Castle demesne, and not a pele tower. It must have been built by the Hudlestons of Millom, as was the case, a little later, with Frith Hall (said to have been a hunting lodge). The great forest park within Ulpha must have been an early enclosure, possibly made by John de Hudleston in the middle of the thirteenth century, when he married Joan de Boyvil, heiress of the lordship of Millom. The first recorded mention of it is in the schedule of the property of Alicia de Hudleston, widow of Sir Richard de Hudleston (Inquis. 1337), in which it is stated:—

“Alice holds the Manor of Millom of the said John (her son) . . . including a Park and another Park called Ulpha.”

The first park was probably that near Millom Castle; the Ulpha park was of considerable extent, reaching almost to Devoke Water: its existence shows that there was no other independent manor within Ulpha, which must thus early have been demesne forest of the lordship.

### § 3. *Ulpha Chapel.*

Denton, followed by later historians, states that Ulpha chapel existed from the time of Henry III, but no evidence to that effect has been found. The first recorded mention of it is on Saxton's map of Lancashire, 1577, where St. John is marked in the correct position for the present building. In 1596, as Mr C. Roy Hudleston points out, the tenants of Ulpha met at the chapel of St. John in Ulpha to discuss trouble which had arisen as to

the payment of rents, owing to an attempt to dispossess Sir William Hudleston, the then lord of Millom. They collected 55/-, which was handed to Richard Stable so that he could go to London to obtain advice. On 19 December 1597 Ulpha witnesses gave evidence at Millom church in a lawsuit between the above Sir William Hudleston and his cousin, Sir John Delabere. The Ulpha witnesses were:—

William Brockbank, Husbandman. Aet. 40.

William Cockersole. Aet. about 52.

Roger Dicconson, Yeoman. Aet. about 62.

Ulpha was within the great parish of Millom, together with Birker and Austhwaite, but the inhabitants of the two latter places were permitted to have parochial rights at the chapel of St. Catherine, Eskdale, on account of the distance from the parish church at Millom; they had to pay church dues to Millom, however, and they had a representative on the Jury of XII there. Ulpha had a churchwarden to represent it at Millom, to which it too had to contribute parish dues.

Tradition states that the early chapel of Ulpha was situated on the moor near the Old Hall; there is no record to confirm this, but should occasion serve, it is hoped to make careful search of the adjacent area, to see if traces of foundations can be found.

#### § 4. *The forge in Ulpha.*

The forge at Ulpha, worked by Ferdinando Hudleston, son of Sir William, at the end of the sixteenth and in the early years of the seventeenth century, must have been a very considerable undertaking. Sir William's will, dated 10 June 1625, mentions rents and arrearages of rents due to him by Ferdinando Hudleston, his eldest son, for his forge in Ulfay since he, Ferdinando, entered into the same, being £300 by the year. The forge was in Ulpha park; its extensive slag heaps have largely been removed for road repairs, but the site is known, and will

be examined to ascertain if details of the lay-out can be recovered. Its importance at that period is shown by the rent of £300 per annum, which represents a very much larger sum at the present day; it is also on record that great quantities of timber from the woods were felled, to provide charcoal for the forges. But the business does not seem to have been financially profitable.

It is possible that, during his period of iron smelting in Ulpha, Ferdinando Hudleston lived either at Old Hall or at Frith Hall. But the Commonwealth brought disaster to the loyal Hudleston family, crippling its financial position. Old Hall and Frith Hall declined to the status of farm-houses, and finally fell into the ruins they are today. Frith Hall was occupied, during the eighteenth century, as a farm-house and tavern for traffic on the packhorse roads; Ulpha Old Hall became a quarry for the building of homesteads near by, and what is left of its massive walls is now utilised as a dump for farm gear. But the situation of both halls is grand. From Frith Hall a splendid view is obtained over moor and mountain, and when it was a forest lodge the hunting of the deer could be viewed for many miles; but today it stands dark and grim upon the skyline, the tottering shell of a once fine building with its great hall and massive chimney stack: its only inhabitants the jackdaws which nest in the ivy clinging to the crumbling masonry.