

THE MONASTERIES OF SHROPSHIRE: THEIR ORIGIN AND
FOUNDERS. BUILDWAS ABBEY.¹

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BEELD, BIELD, or BELDE, a word signifying shelter, or a place of shelter, is probably of Anglo-Saxon origin, and cognate with the Saxon verb *Byldan* (to build).² The termination *was* is nothing else than the Saxon word *wæs* (water), whence came the Saxon verb *wæscan* (to wash).³ Buildwas, surrounded on three sides by an amphitheatre of hills, and bounded on the fourth by the River Severn, has therefore a name, which unchanging nature still stamps as appropriate.

The Shropshire Domesday describes the Manor of "Beldewes" as lying in Conodovre (Condover) Hundred, and says that the Bishop of Chester had held it in Saxon times, and still retained it at the period of the Survey. It was estimated at one hide, was held partly in demesne and partly cultivated by villains and serfs, whose dependent condition may further be gathered from mention of a resident Provost. The Manor contained a mill and some wood-land.⁴

Second in succession to Robert de Limesey (the Domesday Bishop of Chester) came Roger de Clinton, who, from the Archdeaconry of Buckingham (then in Lincoln Diocese), was elevated to this see, receiving consecration from the hands of Archbishop William Corbois, at Canterbury, on Sunday, September 22, 1129.⁵

¹ Communicated to the Historical Section, at the Meeting of the Institute in Shrewsbury, 1856. This Memoir completes the series of notices of the monasteries of Shropshire, for which the Institute was indebted to the kindness of the Historian of the county on that occasion. Mr. Eyton's Memoir on Lilleshall Abbey, will be found in this Journal, vol. xii. p. 228, and that on Haughmond Abbey, vol. xiii. p. 145.

² The word is still used in the North of England for a hovel. There also a cattle-shed is called a *beeiding*. I have also seen the word significantly embodied in a proverb,—“The fox will not worry near his beeld.”

³ I find a good illustration of this etymology in Herefordshire. The River Wye, in its passage through that county, skirts the three *Vills* of Moccas, Sugwas, and Rotherwas.

⁴ Domesday, fo. 252, a 2. “Terra Episcopi de Cestre. Isdem Episcopus tenet Beldewes, et tenuit tempore Regis Edwardi. Ibi i hida, geldabilis. In dominio sunt ii carucæ, et iii Villani cum Præposito habent iii carucas. Ibi v Servi et Molinum et Sylva cc porcis. T.R.E. valebat xlv solidos, et post xl solidos: modo xlv solidos.”

⁵ Florence of Worcester, ii. 91.

Roger de Clinton was nephew of the elder Geoffrey de Clinton. The latter, at the time of which we speak, was holding high office in the court and kingdom of Henry I. : he was a Royal Treasurer and Chamberlain, a Justiciar commissioned to every part of the realm ; he also had the Shrievalty of Warwickshire in this very year, beside other fiefs, for which he was accountable to the crown. The nephew, who, although Archdeacon of Buckingham, was not ordained priest till the day previous to his consecration, was enthroned at Coventry shortly afterwards, by Simon, Bishop of Worcester. He is said to have purchased his bishoprick by a present of 3000 merks to the King.⁶ The pipe-roll of 1130 exhibits many tokens of royal favour to Geoffrey de Clinton, and more than one to the new bishop, but it in no way confirms this simoniacal story.

Roger de Clinton is said to have founded Buildwas Abbey in 1135,⁷ a date which becomes extremely probable from evidence presently to be cited. He is also said to have been Founder of Fairwell, a Benedictine Nunnery in Staffordshire. His evident interest in the prosperity of Kenilworth Priory may be attributed to his relationship with Geoffrey de Clinton its founder. A charter, which Roger de Clinton expedited to Shrewsbury Abbey, indicates a deep concern in the parochial condition of the diocese, and is in sympathy and verbal concert with similar charters of the cotemporary bishop of Hereford, perhaps the most exemplary prelate of his day.

Roger de Clinton has had various degrees of credit in regard of his contributions to the fabric of his Cathedral at Lichfield. The question between large improvement and entire reconstruction cannot be settled by existing evidence, for the present church contains little or nothing that can be assigned to his era. He increased the dignity of the collegiate body by the addition of eight prebendaries, endowed apparently out of the revenues of the See.

In 1139, Roger de Clinton was one of the five dignitaries elected to represent the English Church at the tenth General Council, which, under the auspices of Pope Innocent II., assembled in the Basilica of the Lateran on April 20 in that year.

⁶ Simeon Dunelm : col. 256.

⁷ Tanner, quoting the Annals of Parcolude.

Not one authentic instance can I find of this Bishop's having attended the courts of Henry I., Stephen, or the Empress. He joined the Crusade of 1147, and died at Antioch, on April 16, 1148.

The writer of the *Gesta Regis Stephani* supplies us with a very different estimate of the character and conduct of Roger de Clinton. Detailing the wretched state of England in the autumn (as I infer) of 1143, he makes severe remarks on the conduct of the bishops;—the cowardice and fickleness of some, the violence and rapacity of others. The latter he describes as girt with the sword, clad in splendid armour, fortifying and manning their castles, oppressing and spoiling their neighbours, riding forth in the same ranks with the fiercest agitators of the period;—the prime movers of enormities which they never attempted to palliate, except by charging them on their subordinates. "And," continues this chronicler, "that I may at present keep silence about others, for it is indecent to stigmatise all equally, public rumour hath denounced the Bishops of Winchester, Lincoln, and Chester as more eagerly bent upon such unholy pursuits than any others."

The individuals thus held up to infamy appear to be selected by this cotemporary writer, without the usual leaning which he exhibits to the cause of King Stephen. Henry of Winchester was the King's brother, and, though once his opponent, had been at a more recent period the main instrument of his restoration to the throne. There is some slight ground for supposing that Roger de Clinton was in turn associated with each of the political parties of his day; but a temporising spirit, which were venial in him, if a man of peace, was only servile treachery if combined with that love of cruelty and violence with which he is charged.

Summarily, the character of Roger de Clinton, Founder of Buildwas Abbey, is presented to us under contrasts which no ingenuity can reconcile. On the one hand we have the simoniacal occupant of a bishoprick, busy in fortifying the Castle of Lichfield, in surrounding the town with a rampart, in converting the peaceful tenants of a spiritual fief into tenants by military service; we have, in short, the picture of a ruffianly marauder and persecutor. On the other hand, we find him improving his Cathedral

by a costly outlay, increasing the number and dignity of its collegiate members, originating or stimulating other religious foundations: we read his charters warm with pious zeal and full of holy considerations; we see him representing Catholic England in the Councils of Christendom; lastly, we behold the Crusader devoting his energies and his life to a cause as hazardous as it was accounted holy.

We may gather from all this, not the specific truth which regards an individual, but a more general fact, viz., that the internecine war, which deluged this kingdom with crime and bloodshed, blotted also the records of the age with impenetrable falsehood.

From the man and his ambiguous character, we now pass to the date and circumstances of one of his undoubted works.

Among the various branches of the Benedictine Order, the Cistercian arose in A.D. 1098, when its first house was founded at Citeaux, in Burgundy. It adopted a white habit in contradistinction to the black dress of the original Benedictines. It affected other reforms of usage, chiefly revivals of a more ancient rule. Its presumptive purity soon increased its influence, and other monasteries were founded on the pattern of Citeaux. Amongst these was the Norman House of Savigny, originally a hermitage situated in the woods which terminated the southern frontier of the Diocese of Avranches. The probable date at which Savigny became a Cistercian Abbey was A.D. 1112, but it soon established itself as the leader of a separate Order, called Savigniac or Tironensian, during the period of its independence, but which in 1147 was, with most of its affiliations, reunited to the Cistercian body. Meanwhile Savigny had two such affiliations in England, viz., Furness in Lancashire, and Buildwas.⁸ Furness, which for a time resisted all reunion with Citeaux, had been founded in 1126 or 1127, or rather transferred to Furness in one of those years, after a previous sojourn at Tulket in Amunderness. Its founder was Stephen de Blois, then Earl of Boulogne, and afterwards King of England, whose Norman fief of Mortaine adjoined, if it did not comprise, the district in which Savigny was built.

⁸ Furness had also colonised Abbeys at Byland in Yorkshire, and Calder in Cumberland.

Buildwas, said to have been founded in 1135, was the second or third Savigniac house in England, but, when it became simply Cistercian, it lost this relative precedency.⁹

We have a transcript of Roger de Clinton's foundation-charter of Buildwas. Its inaccuracies, verbal and grammatical, are probably due to its transcribers. In other respects it has every appearance of being derived from some genuine original. I give the charter substantively as it stands in Dodsworth's MSS.¹

"Ego Rogerius Dei Gratiâ Cestrensis Episcopus, universis Sanctæ Matris Ecclesiæ² filiis, prelatiis et subditis, clericis et laicis, salutem. Jesu Xti Creatoris nostri monitis obsecundare cupientes, qui dixit, 'Thesaurizate vobis thesaurum in cælo, ubi neque erigo³ neque tinea demolitur, et fures non effodiunt neque furantur : '—hoc igitur intuitu, fratres carissimi, donamus, concedimus, et in fundamentum Abbatie confirmamus Deo et charissimo fratri nostro Abbati Ingenulfo et fratribus ejus, villam nostram de Buldewas cum omnibus pertinenciis, etc. Testes,—Laurentius Prior, et Conventus Coventrensis Ecclesiæ; Willielmus Decanus⁴; Ricardus Coventrensis, Radulfus Staffordensis, Rogerius Scropesburiensis, Rogerius Derbiensis⁵; Odo Thesaurarius, et Conventus Lichfeldensis⁶; Rodbertus Comes de * * *⁷; Rodbertus de Stafford; Gaufridus de Clintonia; Willielmus filius Alani; Philippus de Belmeis; Gulielmus de Clintonia; Gulielmus filius Nigelli; Brionisia; Rodbertus de Thorpe, et Helias et Gaufridus fratres ejus.

Ego Rogerius Dei Gratia Cestrensis Episcopus—
Ego Laurentius Prior Coventrensis Ecclesiæ—
Ego Willielmus Decanus Ecclesiæ Lichfeldensis—
Ego Willielmus Cestrensis Archidiaconus—
Ego Rogerius Derbiensis Archidiaconus—
Ego Rogerius Scropesburiensis Archidiaconus—
Ego Odo Thesaurarius Ecclesiæ—"

⁹ Combermere was Savigniac, and is said to have been founded in 1133.

¹ Vol. cx. (Bodl. Lib. Oxon.)

² Sic, for Ecclesie.

³ Sic, for erugo.

⁴ Viz., Lichfeldensis.

⁵ Supply "Archidiaconi" here.

⁶ That is, *Capitulum Lichfeldense*.

⁷ The word written here is "Rokess."

There were only two English Earls during the æra of Roger de Clinton who bore the name of Robert. They were of *Leicester* and *Gloucester*, two words which bear about an equal resemblance to the misnomer of the transcript. All other associations would make the Earl of Gloucester the most probable witness of this deed.

This Charter, appearing at first sight to be coeval with the actual gift which it implies, will, if 1135 were the date of the foundation of Buildwas, be construed to have been written in that year. Some internal evidence supports such a conclusion,—*e. g.* the first lay attestation, if rightly attributed to the Earl of Gloucester, indicates the presence of a person who can have attended no peaceful meeting, in company with the Bishop of Chester, after Easter, 1137. Nearly the same may be said of the Earl's son-in-law William fitz Alan, who early in 1138 was in arms for the Empress, and before the close of the year an exile,—never restored to his Shropshire estates till seven years after the death of Bishop Clinton. It is also quite certain from external evidence that the gift implied by this Charter took place before August, 1138, when King Stephen, occupied in the siege of Shrewsbury, confirmed it.

However, a diligent examination of the testing-clause of this Charter convinces me that it was not written at the time when the Bishop's grant was made, but some years later, and that the names which it embodies are of two classes, viz.,—first, some who were afterwards remembered by the Bishop to have been present when he gave Abbot Ingenulf formal seizin of Buildwas Manor, and secondly, some who, not having been then present, were afterwards witnesses and approvers of a Charter, written to record the conveyance and assure the Abbot's title.

Of the first class, as I take it, were the Earl of Gloucester, William fitz Alan, Philip de Belmeis, and perhaps other lay witnesses. Of the last class, were Ralph, Archdeacon of Stafford; Roger, Archdeacon of Derby (neither of whom were in office till after 1139); perhaps also Laurence, Prior of Coventry, and the other ecclesiastical witnesses.⁸

The gift of Buildwas Manor and the foundation of the Abbey belong, I doubt not, to the year 1135 or 1136; the written record to a period perhaps ten years later.⁹

⁸ Laurence, Prior of Coventry, has not yet been heard of earlier than 1144; and that gives him thirty-five years of office, for he lived till 1179.

⁹ I have been very particular on this matter of date. Monastic Charters constitute something like half of the historical evidences of that period. It is therefore of the greatest importance that

we should ascertain how these Charters passed, instead of seizing on their superficial inconsistencies, and presumptuously rejecting them as forgeries.

My estimate of Roger de Clinton's Charter to Buildwas is grounded on some general remarks of the late Mr. Stapleton in his notes to the *Rotuli Normannie* (vol. i. p. lxxiv). Mr. Stapleton seems to

The next subject to be noticed is King Stephen's Charter to Buildwas, which, being already printed, I need not repeat here,¹ though I have one or two remarks to offer thereon. It confirms Bishop Roger's grant of the Manor as a grant made in the King's presence,—another proof that verbal and public concession was a mode of conveyance quite distinct from the written charter, for the Bishop's Charter has no appearance of having passed before the King.

The King's Charter also quotes the estimated hidage of Buildwas, and exempts the manor from all dues and obligations appertaining to the Crown. The hidage given is that of Domesday, and the privileges allowed by the usurper were afterwards respected by his lawful successors on the throne.

Again, the King speaks of the Abbey as Savigniac, and as dedicated to St. Chad. The latter was the Patron-Saint of Bishop Clinton's Cathedral at Lichfield, as well as of his Collegiate Church at Shrewsbury. When Buildwas became Cistercian, we should expect to find it following the unvarying rule of that order by associating the tutelage of the Virgin with that of its previous patron; but I shall presently show that this addition was made earlier, *i. e.*, while Buildwas was simply Savigniac. Earl Symon de Silvanecta, who attests Stephen's Charter, should perhaps be noticed as identical with Simon de St. Liz, Earl of Northampton.

The King's Charter is dated "*apud Salopesberiam in obsidione, anno Incarnationis Dominicæ mccccxix, regni vero mei tertio.*" Here the Dominical year given is inconsistent with the regnal year, as well as with the historical fact; for no part of the third year of Stephen fell later than Christmas, 1138, and the Siege of Shrewsbury, which lasted a month, ended in a surrender between August 21 and August 28, 1138. This has been pointed out and commented upon before;² but the Charter involves another matter very pertinent to chronology and history. It is

me to have understood and valued this class of evidence better than any other antiquary.

¹ Dugdale, *Monasticon*, edit. Cayley, vol. v. p. 356.

² History of Shrewsbury (Owen and

Blakeway), vol. i. p. 78 n. In all cases of inconsistent dating clauses which I have examined, I have found the Dominical year to be the least trustworthy element.

tested by Robert de Ferrars, whose services to Stephen are said to have procured him an Earldom in this very year.³ This Charter helps to prove his activity. He must have quitted the siege of Shrewsbury immediately, for he commanded the men of Derbyshire at the Battle of the Standard which was fought on Monday, August 22, 1138, and in that very week Shrewsbury surrendered to Stephen.

Milo de Gloucester, another witness of Stephen's Charter, was at the siege of Shrewsbury, but probably by no will of his own. Little more than a year after, he was apprised by the Earl of Gloucester of the Empress having landed at Arundel. Milo, obviously known to the Earl as a secret friend to her cause, at once became an open one.

Philip de Belmeis, the last witness of Stephen's Charter, should be noticed more particularly in connection with Buildwas Abbey, to which, after the King and Bishop, he was probably the next benefactor.

His grant of Ruckley to "Saint Mary and Saint Chad" of Bildewas, I have printed, from the original, elsewhere.⁴ The grantor acknowledges the reception of himself, his wife, and heirs into the fraternity of Buildwas, and of the Mother-Church of Savigny,—a proof that Buildwas, while simply Savigniac, adhered to so much of original Cistercian rule as to acknowledge the tutelage of the Virgin.

Belmeis's Charter passed about 1139, as I think, but more certainly before 1145, when he was enlisted in favour of another and very different foundation.

Another very early benefactor to Buildwas was the first William fitz Alan, who is known to have died about Easter 1160. He gave Little Buildwas, an outlying member of his great manor of Wroxeter, but only separated from the bishop's land by the River Severn. The charter conveying this grant is not known to be in existence, but it is expressly alluded to, and its contents distinctly enumerated and confirmed, by his son, in a deed which seems to have passed about 1175.⁵ Other grants by the founder are only known by subsequent confirmations, which shall be cited in their place.

³ J. Hagustald, p. 262.

⁴ Antiquities of Shropshire, vol. ii. p. 203. The original is in possession of

George Pritchard, Esq., of Broseley.

⁵ Printed in Dugdale, Monasticon, vol. v. p. 359, Num. xviii.

No chartulary of Buildwas is known to exist, but the deficiency may be supplied from the *Inspeximus* of Edward I., and other public and private documents.⁶

There is another story about the foundation of Buildwas Abbey, which, as it was adopted by Leland and indirectly strengthened by Dugdale, deserves some attention. Leland tells us that—"Matild de Bohun, wife to Ser Robert Burnelle, foundar of Bildevois Abbey (thowghe some, for the only gifte of the site of the howse, toke the Bysshope of Chester for founder), was buried in the presbitery at Dour."⁷

I am not aware who Matilda de Bohun, buried at Dore Abbey, may have been; but I presume that Leland's somewhat ambiguous sentence means to indicate Sir Robert Burnell as the founder of Buildwas, not his wife, as the editors of the *Monasticon* have concluded.

Dugdale, in his account of the Barony of Burnell, tells us of "an old Martyrologe (sometime belonging to the Abby of Buldewas) which plainly demonstrated the great antiquity" of that family.⁸ At the head of the succession, thus authenticated, stands Sir Robert Burnell, Knight, alleged to have died November 15, 1087, 20 Will. Conq. (where, by the way, we must read either 1086 or 1 Will. 2).

This Sir Robert Burnell must be the same as he whom Glover reveals to us as "a knight in the army which Earl Roger de Belesme brought over to this kingdom with William the Conqueror," and as dying in 1087, and being "buried at Buildwas in Salop."

We need not stop to identify that mythical personage, Earl Roger de Belesme, or the man buried at Buildwas nearly fifty years before it was founded, nor yet to criticise the two schemes of succession, by which Glover and Dugdale pass through a series of unheard-of Burnells till they arrive at a genuine Philip Burnell, who died in 10 Edw. I. (1282).

The truth I have already stated elsewhere,⁹ and now

⁶ I should particularly notice a series of Charters, edited by Mr. Hunter for the Camden Society, and printed in the volume entitled *Ecclesiastical Documents* (pp. 51—54). These Charters not only show that Buildwas, when it became subject to Cîteaux, remained still Savigniac, *i.e.*, *mediately* subject to Savigny also; but they exhibit the whole ratio and working of this system of graduated

dependence, and how the Welsh Abbey of Basingwerk, and the Irish Abbey of Saint Mary, Dublin, were amenable to the control of Buildwas, as Buildwas was to Savigny, and Savigny to Cîteaux.

⁷ *Itinerary*, vol. viii. fo. 84 b.

⁸ *Baronage*, vol. ii. p. 60.

⁹ *Antiquities of Shropshire*, vol. vi. p. 121, *et seq.*

repeat it. The Burnells were a family of moderate estate in Shopshire, heard of first in the reign of Henry II., and thenceforward, till, in the time of Henry III., the head of the house was outlawed for murder. His confiscated estates were in time repurchased by a relation, Robert Burnell, who, after various minor accessions of wealth and honour, became Bishop of Bath and Wells, Lord Chancellor of England, and the founder of a splendid barony. The æra of Burnell's chancellorship corresponded with the time when the first Statute of Mortmain dealt a heavy blow on Monastic interests. Alive to their prospective needs, the monks of Buildwas bethought themselves of an ingenious plan for propitiating their powerful neighbour at Acton Burnell. Under the shape of a Martyrology they concocted a genealogy of the Burnells, which (whether we take Glover's or Dugdale's version thereof) omits all accurate mention of every known progenitor of the race, and is specially silent about the outlaw.

The list commences with Sir Robert Burnell, who is made to die in 1087, and was adopted by the monks as founder.

It is mortifying to find Leland, Glover, and Dugdale, dupes of such an imposture ; but the combination of credulity and self-deception which induced the monks of Buildwas to commemorate the deeds, pray for the souls, and perhaps point out the tombs, of men who never lived, never died, and never were buried, is simply ludicrous.

I now resume my account of Buildwas with the accession of Henry II.

On November 26, 1156, Richard, Abbot of Savigni, committed to Ranulf, Abbot of Billwas, the cure and disposition of the Savigniac house of St. Mary's, Dublin. In the next year the Flintshire house of Basingwerk was subjected to the same Abbot and his convent of Billewas, by a second ordinance of the Abbot and convent of Savigni.¹

The Staffordshire Pipe-Roll of 1157 excuses the monks of Buildwas their quota of the Danegeld, and of the donum, then assessed on that county. This refers to a previous acquisition of the monks. Gerold de Brelectun, a knight of the first William fitz Alan, had given them "the land of

¹ Eccles. Documents, pp. 51, 52.

Broctun." This estate was in the parish of Sheriff-Hales, and is still known at Brockton Grange.

In 1158 the monks of Buildwas are excused two sums of 2s. 4*d.* and 4s. 2*d.*,—their respective quota of the donum then collected in Staffordshire and Shropshire. In 1162 they are excused 2s. of the Danegeld of Staffordshire.

Between the years 1163 and 1166 King Henry II., being at Lichfield, issued a writ in favour of the monks of Buildwas, which requires some explanation, independently of its being inaccurately printed elsewhere.² A charge, called "*le cheshambre*," had in the time of Henry I. been payable by a certain district of Shropshire to the Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield. This due Bishop Peche (consecrated in April 1161) had recently made over to the monks of Buildwas, but the latter it seems were resisted in levying it. The King's writ orders the sheriff of Shropshire to enforce the monks' right by judicial process against the men of his Bailiwick. The writ is tested by Geoffrey, Archdeacon of Canterbury.

In 1174 King Henry II. is said to have subjected St. Mary's, Dublin, to Ranulf, Abbot of Buildwas.³ The date and circumstance are supported by a charter. The King's act was in effect a ratification of the previous arrangement of the chapter of Savigni.

In or about 1175 the second William fitz Alan expedited two charters to Buildwas Abbey, confirming two acts of his father relative to Little Buildwas and Brockton.

About the year 1177, Matthew, Abbot of Basingwerk, endeavoured to free both his own house and that of Dublin from subjection to Buildwas. He had appealed to Cîteaux in the matter, but William, Abbot of Savigni, summoned both Abbots (Matthew of Basingwerk and Ranulf of Buildwas) to appear before the chapter of Savigni and plead the cause. They obeyed. The charters of Richard de Curci, Abbot of Savigni in 1156 and 1157, were produced, and settled the question. Abbot William of Savigni, in full chapter, ratified the ascendancy of Buildwas, and issued

² Monasticon, vol. v. p. 358, No. xv. The original is in the British Museum (Campbell, vol. xxix. p. 6).

³ Monast. Hibern. (Archdall). If Arch-

dall's authority be the deed printed, Monasticon, vol. v. p. 363, No. ii., the date is perhaps 1175.

injunctions of obedience accordingly, to Matthew, Abbot of Basingwerk, and to A., Abbot of Dublin.⁴

In 1182 we hear that Robert, Abbot of Buildwas, transferred the Seignevity over the Irish Abbey of Dunbrothy to St. Mary's, Dublin.⁵ Harvey de Montemarisco had given Dunbrothy to Buildwas; but Alan, a monk of Buildwas, having gone over to inspect Dunbrothy, found it waste and desolate. Hence this prudent transfer.

On October 21, 1189, King Richard I., being at Winchester, granted a charter to Buildwas, acquitting the Abbot and his men of all obligation to pay toll (theloneum) and other dues, anywhere in his dominions.⁶ The next day (October 22) the King expedited a general charter of confirmation to Buildwas, which may be taken to recite all the previous acquisitions of the Abbey. It ascribes to Bishop Roger (de Clinton) the grants of the Manor of Bildewas, of Meola (Monk Meole), and of the "Chirchomber" assessable on the two hundreds of Wrockwardine and Condover;⁷ also, the grant of one man, named Edric, in the territory of Lichfield. It ascribes to Bishop Richard (Peché) the grants of a messuage in the Forgate of Chester, and of 4s., receivable yearly out of the mill of Burne, near Lichfield. Then follow the grants of (Little) Buildwas, Brockton, Ruckley, Cosford, and Hatton. Walter fitz Heremann had given a moiety of Walton (in Staffordshire); Henry fitz Fulcher had given the land of Ivenbroc (in Derbyshire); and William de Caldene, the land of Caldene (in Staffordshire).

A more interesting piece of evidence is the confirmation of Bishop Hugh de Novant to Buildwas Abbey. It is dated at Bildewes itself, in the fifth year of the grantor's pontificate, and on Sunday in the feast of St. Cecilia, in the year 1192; that is to say, November 22, 1192. The witnesses are Hugh, Abbot of Shrewsbury, Robert, Abbot of Basingwerk, Richard, Abbot of Hagemon, Robert, Prior of Wenloc, William fitz Alan, Robert Corbet, Henry, Archdeacon of Stafford, Richard, Archdeacon of Salop, Master

⁴ Ecclesiastical Documents, pp. 52, 53.

⁵ Archdall (*ut supra*). I suspect either that the date 1182 is a mistake, or that the Abbot's name was Ranulph.

⁶ Rot. Cart. 20 Edw. I. No. 39.

⁷ This does not, I think, prove that the Domesday Hundred of Recordine

existed as a territorial division in Bishop Clinton's time (1129—1148). An ancient ecclesiastical due, like Chirchomber, would naturally be unchangeable as to the district on which it was assessable. It would not be influenced by secular changes of boundary.

Robert of Salop, Master Richard de Gnowsale, Master William Duredent, Master Henry de Bredeshale, Roger Corbet, William de Hedlehe, Stephen de Stanton, Richard de Lehton, Malcolumb de Harlehe, and Alan de Bildewes.⁸

The Charter professes the grantor's deference to the institutes of his predecessors, Bishops Roger, Walter, and Richard. It concedes to the Monks the place in which they are militant under the rule of St. Benedict, and under the Cistercian order. It also confirms the vill of Meole and those Burgesses of Salop which belonged to the Bishops of Lichfield, and the tenure near Lichfield which Edric formerly held, and four solidates in the mill of Burne, and half a *mansura* in the Forgate of Chester, which had been Herbert the Scrivener's, and the right to collect the corn called Chirchomber, which right the Bishop's predecessors were known to have themselves enjoyed, and to have conferred on the Monks, as appurtenant to the Manor of Bildewas and Meoles.¹ The Charter was corroborated by the seals and authority of the Bishop himself, his Chapter of Coventry,² and his Chapter of Lichfield.

In this same year (1192) we hear of another quarrel between the Houses of Buildwas and Basingwerk. The latter had renewed an attempt to withdraw itself and Dublin from the jurisdiction of Buildwas, and to subject both to the immediate control of Savigni. William, Abbot of Savigni, and the cotemporary Abbot of Clairvaux, sitting at Clairvaux in judgment, again decided that Basingwerk and Dublin were subject to Buildwas, as Daughters.³ This decision was recited and confirmed in the same year by William, Abbot of Citeaux, as head of all Cistercian houses, Savigniac or not.⁴

Within six years of this time A. (probably Arnold), a succeeding Abbot of Citeaux, confirms Buildwas in this superiority, citing the former acts of Richard de Curci and William de Tolosa when Abbots of Savigni. The testing-clause of this manifesto shows the enormous influence

⁸ Blakeway's MSS., from the Bridge-water Muniments.

¹ "Et collectionem bladi quæ appellatur Chirchomber, quam predecessores nostri habuisse et contulisse noscuntur, pertinentem ad Manerium de Bildewas et Meoles."

² A curious illustration of a well-known story, viz., Bishop Novant's expulsion of the Monks of Coventry, and substitution of Secular Canons in their room.

³ Blakeway's MSS.

⁴ Ecclesiastical Documents, pp. 53, 54.

of the Cistercian Order, congregating, as it did, to its General Chapter the Heads of its various Houses, whether situated in France, Normandy, Scotland, Wales, or Yorkshire.

On October 24, 1198, King Richard I., then at Roche Andeley, expedited a Charter whereby the Monks of Buildwas were entitled to hold all their lands, whether already obtained or thereafter to be obtained, free and quit of all waste and regard of the King's Forest.⁵

Soon after this, I think, H. (perhaps Huctred) Abbot of Buildwas, caused transcripts to be made of the Charters which proved the subjection of Basingwerk and Dublin to his House. These transcripts, verified by W., Abbot of Cumbe, W., Abbot of Miraval, and W., Abbot of Stanle (Stoneleigh), were forwarded over sea to W., Abbot of Citeaux, presiding over a Chapter of his Order.⁶

In Hilary Term, 1221, an unusual but curious subject occupied the attention of the Courts at Westminster. It was the expediency of altering a certain pass in the Royal Forest near to Buldewas, the spot having become notorious as a haunt of malefactors, and for the constant commission of crimes.

The History of Buildwas Abbey during the thirteenth century becomes somewhat obscure. The Hundred-Rolls of 1255 do not mention the Manor, obviously because it was extra-hundredal. The Abbot seems to have obtained a Charter from Edward I., dated September 14, 1290; this Charter does not remain on the Rolls, but we gather from another Record that it was, in part at least, an *Inspeximus* of one of Richard I.'s Charters. The Charter inspected was recited most fully in this instance, as far as privileges were concerned, and it seems doubtful whether it was not different to either of the three Charters of Richard I. already quoted. It allowed to the Church of St. Mary of Buldewas all the lands and tenements previously granted thereto, and that the monks should hold both those lands and all lands thereafter acquired, free and quit of geld, danegeld, scutage, fines for murder and larceny,

⁵ Forest Roll, Salop, No. vi.

⁶ Ecclesiastical Documents, p. 54. A very similar certificate and transmission of certain Charters of Tintern Abbey

appears in a document, printed in Dugdale's *Monasticon*, vol. v. p. 426, No. ii. It was evidently a form usual among the Dependencies of Citeaux.

also of hidage, of shires and hundreds (that is the suit thereof), of military services (*exercitibus*), of summonses, sheriffs' aids, and all other aids; also free of any amercement set upon the county or hundred, of toll, of passage, and of pontage belonging to the King, of all work at castles, bridges, fish-ponds, walls, or parks, of fencings (*clausuris*), of pleas, plaints, and all other customs, of all secular service, exaction, and servile work.⁷ Such were the privileges coveted by, and congenial to, the peaceful and even indolent genius of the Cistercians. The Charter explains the comparative obscurity in which the internal affairs of Buildwas Abbey are buried.

The Taxation of 1291 gives us the first general statement of the possessions of this house. In Hereford diocese it derived from Kynnerton, Wentnor, Ragdon, and Hope-Bowdler an income of 6*l.* 7*s.* 10*d.* from lands and rents, and 9*l.* 10*d.* from live-stock.⁸ In Lichfield Diocese, and Stafford Archdeaconry, it had, from Walton, Brockton, and Cud-desdon, an income of 21*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.* Its gross income from places in the Archdeaconry of Salop was 76*l.* 12*s.* 3*d.* Its total temporalities, that is, excluding Churches, Tithes, &c., may therefore be put at 113*l.* 19*s.* 5*d.* per annum. Of this sum Buildwas Grange, that is the Abbey Manor (not including Little Buildwas), yielded 15*l.*, or 4*l.* 10*s.* on six carucates of land and 10*l.* 10*s.* on live-stock.

On February 6, 1292, Edward I.'s ample *Inspeximus* of Buildwas Charters passed the Great Seal.⁹

In 1301 the old disputes about the supremacy over Dublin were revived. The Abbot of Savigni now claimed the honour against Buildwas; but a General Chapter, presided over by John, Abbot of Cîteaux, and sitting at Cîteaux, decided once more for Buildwas. William de Ashburne, who on this occasion acted as proctor for Buildwas, was a monk of the house, but afterwards became Abbot of Dublin.

The existing Abbot of Dublin was Roger de Brugor, who also had been a monk of Buildwas, and who died in 1309.¹

I should here observe that the Diocesan Registers of

⁷ *Placita de Quo Waranto*, p. 145.

⁸ *Pope Nich. Taxation*, pp. 163, 253, 260.

⁹ *Rot. Cart.* 20 Edw. I., Nos. 39, 40, 41.

¹ *Blakeway's MSS.*

Lichfield do not afford the slightest evidence that the Bishops of that See retained any right of patronage over Buildwas Abbey. A letter of Bishop Roger de Northburgh to the Abbot of Buildwas, dated at Eccleshall on January 14, 1324-5, not only precludes all idea of friendly intercourse, but is a philippic of no ordinary violence. The Bishop had been commissioned by the Pope to collect the biennial tenth, last accruing to the Apostolic See. The Abbot had pertinaciously, the Bishop says insolently, neglected to pay his quota. After plentiful abuse the Bishop threatens to proceed to the publication of censures (meaning excommunication) against the Abbot, in such churches and places as he shall deem expedient, unless the Abbot pay before the 2nd of February.²

In 1342, John, Abbot of Buildwas, attending a general Chapter at Citeaux, confirmed to St. Mary's Dublin a supremacy over the Abbey of Dunbrothy.³

I now pass to the Valor of Henry VIII., in whose seventh year (1535-6), Stephen, then Abbot of Byldwas, declared the revenues of his house to be as follows:—

Byldwas itself, that is the Abbey Manor, yielded 20*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.*;—the land being partly in hand and partly let to tenants. Little-Byldwas yielded 18*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.* Other Shropshire manors and estates yielded 64*l.* 13*s.* 10*d.* From Derbyshire came 6*l.*, from Staffordshire 9*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* The tithes receivable from Leighton and Hatton were 6*l.* The Abbot of Lilleshall paid a fee-farm rent of 4*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* for certain land at Longdon upon Tern. The Manor-Court (of Buildwas I presume) yielded 5*s.* The total temporalities and spiritualities of Buildwas Abbey were therefore 129*l.* 6*s.* 10*d.* The outgoings on this income were put at 18*l.* 7*s.* 6½*d.*, leaving a net balance of 110*l.* 19*s.* 3½*d.*⁴

The Ministers' Accounts of 1536-7 estimate the gross income of the then dissolved Abbey of Byldewas, at about 30*l.* more than the Valor. The excess was chiefly in the valuation put upon the receipts from Great and Little Buildwas, which, instead of 39*l.* 1*s.* 4*d.* per annum, were increased to 61*l.* 16*s.* 1*d.*; but the site of the Monastery was an item in the later calculation. Also, the Rectory,

² Register Northburgh, C. fo. 16, b.

³ Archdall (ut supra).

⁴ Valor Ecclesiasticus, vol. iii. p. 191, 192.

or Rectorial tithes of Buildwas were now reckoned as 5*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, an item which does not appear in the Valor.⁵ In the following year, the King granted the site of the Abbey, with its possessions in Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Derbyshire, to Edward Grey, Lord Powis.

⁵ Monasticon, vol. v. p. 361.