

Some Notes on the Family of Woodrofe.

By HENRY KIRKE, M.A., B.C.L.

THE King's Forest of the High Peak was a favourite hunting ground for the Plantagenet and Angevin monarchs. It was divided into three wards called respectively De Campana or Champaign, Ashop and Edale, Longdendale. There were numerous officials appointed to maintain the king's rights and enforce the strict forest laws. The foresters of fee were tenants in capite of the king as lord of the manor, who held lands to themselves and their heirs by the service of guarding the king's forest. The frequent mention in the rolls of the heirs of a deceased forester or foresters by right proves that the office was hereditary, even if it had not been so from the first, though the use of the word "fee" which means an estate of inheritance, would incline us to think that the office was from the first hereditary. The foresters were the original gentry of the High Peak and from them many of our principal county families are descended. Amongst these foresters the name of Woodrofe frequently occurs, as early as the reign of Edward I and II and down to the reign of Henry VIII. The Woodrofes lived in the parish of Hope, which was included in the Ashop and Edale division of the forest, which was dominated by the Peak Castle.

In a roll of the 13th year of Edward I Roger Woodrofe is entered as a forester of fee holding two bovates for his bailiwick worth 6s. per annum, for which he duly performs his services at the Peak Castle. In the same roll it is noted that Thomas, son of Nicholas de Woodrofe of

Hope, gave 6s. and 8d. for a licence to obtain a messuage and a bovate of land with the appurtenances in Hope and the bailship of a certain forestry in Hopedale from Walter, the son of Walter de Kydeval, knt.

At a swainmote, holden at Chapel-en-le-Frith, Roger Woodrofe was fined 12d. for keeping 6 horses in the forest.

At a later date the heirs of Oliver Woodrofe are entered as foresters of fee in Hopedale. In the 17th year of Henry VIII, Thurston Woodrofe appears in the roll as forester of fee in Campana, and George Woodrofe in the same capacity in Hopedale.

In 1428 a tragedy occurred in this family, as William Woodrofe ¹ was found murdered by some unknown person. A full account of this will be found in the 24th vol. of this *Journal*, p. 78.

The Woodrofes often appear in the Subsidy Rolls.

Exchequer Subsidies, High Peak, 1535 :—

Nicholii Woodrofe qui hēt bona ad vall xx^{li} tax x^s

Exchequer Subsidy Roll, 1546 :—

Georgio Woodrofe pr bonis xxx^{li} tax x^{ls}.

Exchequer Lay Subsidies, 1571 :—

Nichus Woodruffe in terr lx^s tax iiij^s.

Subsidy High Peak, 1599 :—

Edmund Woodrofe sen^r gent in land iiij^{li} tax xii^s.

Nicholas Woodrofe and his wife were legatees under the will of Anne Stafford of Eyam, 1560.²

The Woodrofes must have experienced vicissitudes like other families. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries they were evidently of some importance in the High Peak, and the Subsidy Rolls under the Tudors show them to have been persons of property. In the list of landowners in the High Peak in 1570 appears the name of Nicholas Woodrofe of Hope, gentleman. In the Herald's Visitation of Derbyshire in 1569, Woodrofe of Hope is included in

¹ He was probably the Wm. Wooderove who was concerned in the release of land at Abney, 1416; vol. xxxiv, p. 68 of this *Journal*.

² Vol. xxx, p. 290 of this *Journal*.

the list of gentlemen ; but in the Visitation by St. George in 1611 he is denounced as a usurper and not entitled to bear arms. I expect the fact was that the representative of the family had not paid the fees to the Heralds office to have his arms entered during the Visitation. Notwithstanding this the arms of Woodrofe are given in that Visitation.



*Arms of Woodrofe
from Harl: MS. 1537.*

On the north wall ¹ of the chancel of Hope church their arms are painted with the motto "Quod transtuli retuli."

In the Parish Registers of Chapel-en-le-Frith there appears the following entry :—

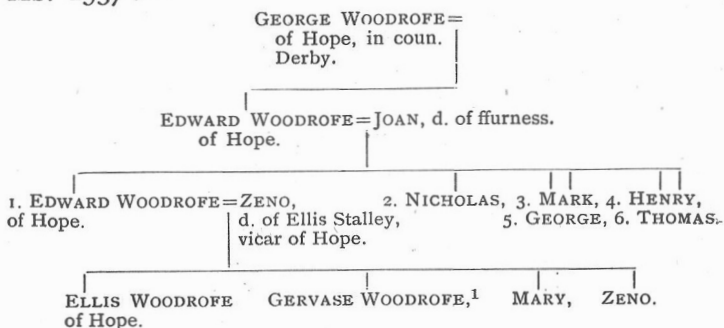
January 17th 1661 The coate of armes belonging to Nicholas Bowden of Bowden in ye countie of Derby Esquire beinge

¹ See vol. xxxiv, p. 64 of this *Journal*.

quartered with the two coates of his two wives Woodrofe and Barnby be placed over ye seate belonging to Bowden by consent of us

James Holme Henry Kirke — Church-
 John Cooper — wardens.

There is a pedigree of the Woodrofe family in the Heralds Visitation which is as follows, copied from Harl. MS. 1537:—



Ellis Woodrofe was the last heir male of the elder branch of the family; he died in 1634, leaving five daughter co-heiresses. The eldest, Jane, married on the 19th September, 1642, Peter Foljambe; Alice married Nicholas Bowden of Bowden Hall, Chapel-en-le-Frith; Elizabeth wedded Edward Lewis of Manchester; Mary became the wife of Richard Whittler of Yeldersley, and after his death she espoused George, a son of Sir Thomas Gascoigne; finally Anne married a man named Harris.

A Nicholas Woodrofe, possibly the Nicholas in the above pedigree, like so many cadets of good families in Derbyshire, migrated to London and entered business as a haberdasher. He prospered and rose to be an alderman and sheriff of London in 1572 and eventually lord mayor as Sir Nicholas Woodrofe in 1579. To his firm of haberdashers there was owing in 1612 a debt of £718 12s. 5d. for wares delivered for the queen's use.

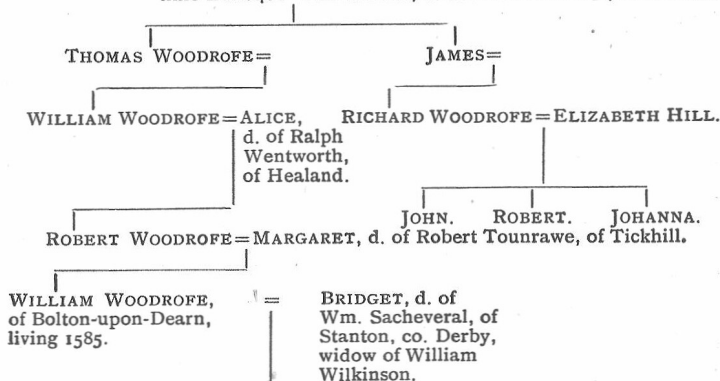
¹ See conveyance by these two brothers of land to Michael Burton, 1616; vol. xxxiv, p. 73 of this *Journal*.

An Edmund Woodrofe was a soldier in the king's army in 1644, and was taken prisoner by the rebels at Warwick. He was allowed ten days on parole to endeavour to obtain his exchange. Sir Edw. Nicholas writing to the earl of Forth prays him to favour Woodrofe as he was of great use to the crown office, which continually employed him as a messenger to carry His Majesty's proclamations into the country, especially in the north, and would be extremely inconvenienced by his loss.

A Benjamin Woodrofe, M.A., of Christ Church, Oxford, caused much agitation in academic circles. It was the turn of Balliol college to nominate a proctor, but having no fit person in their own body they nominated Woodrofe, having previously entered his name in the college books. This raised the ire of the vice-chancellor and other heads of houses, who declared the nomination null and void, and nominated one White as proctor. Woodrofe would not submit quietly to this so appealed to the visitor of the college, and eventually to the chancellor of the university, the duke of Ormonde, but to no effect, his nomination was rejected and White elected. Woodrofe was subsequently presented to the rectory of Market Bosworth in Leicestershire, and later on to a canonry at Christ Church. When in residence at Christ Church he busied himself with a scheme for turning Gloucester hall into a college: this scheme was carried out by the trustees of Sir Thomas Cookes, baronet, in 1714, when the present Worcester college was erected on the site of Gloucester hall.

Turning over the leaves of Add. MS. 28113, in the British Museum, I discovered the following pedigree of the Woodrofe family:—

RICHARD WOODROFE, 3rd son of Woodrofe, of Hope, co. Derby,
time Edw. 4th=ELIZABETH, d. of Thomas Clarke, of Tickhill.



A William Woodrofe was a witness to the will of Edward Eyre of Hope in 1559.

I cannot connect the above pedigree with the one on the Visitation of 1611, but as that does not ascend as far as the reign of Edward IV, it is possible that Richard was a son of an earlier Woodrofe.

A branch of the Woodrofes lived at Wolley, where Francis Woodrofe married Margaret, daughter of Arthur Kaye of Woodsome, and at his death his widow espoused Peter Frecheville, as appears by the pedigree of Frecheville in Dugdale's Visitation of 1662. Maynard Kaye was one of the co-founders of Netherthorpe school in 1572.