

THE WOLLEY MSS. ACCOUNT OF THE MANOR OF PLEASLEY.

With notes by W. E. GODFREY.

PLESELEGH, Pleseleia, Pleasleigh, Pleasleygh, Plesaley, Plesley,¹ a moderate sized village containing about 470 inhabitants,² most of whom are supported by agriculture, is situated nine miles S.E. of Chesterfield and three miles N.W. of Mansfield, and is situated in the hundred and deanery of Scarsdale, on the edge of the county towards Nottinghamshire.

As Pleasley is not mentioned in Domesday Book I presume it was then considered a part of the manor of Glapwell,³ for that manor appears then to have been held under William Peveril by Serlo who was also lord of the manor of Ashover, and whose male descendants assumed the name of de Plesley from their being lords of Pleasley, as well as of Ashover.

Serlo de Pleasley (son of Ralph de Pleasley) and grandson or great-grandson⁴ of Serlo mentioned in Domesday, and who appears to have been a considerable benefactor to Beauchief Abbey in this county, to Felley Priory⁵ in the county of Nottingham, and to Garendon Abbey, county Leicestershire, who was lord of the manors of Ashover and Pleasley, died in the

¹ According to Ekwall *Oxford Dic. of English Pl.-names*, the name Pleasley simply means 'Plēsa's leah,' i.e. 'the clearing of a man named Plēsa.'

² This was evidently about 1801, when the population, consisting of 473, comprised 88 families living in 84 houses.

³ This would seem to be a correct conjecture; see *D.A.J.* No. XLVII, p. 196-7, paper by the Rev. S. P. H. Statham.

⁴ 'Great-grandson' seems to be correct, but according to *D.A.J.*, No. XLVIII, opp. p. 80, his father was not Ralph, but Simon. This last Serlo de Pleasley died c. 1194.

⁵ In Stoney Houghton (Pleasley parish) a portion is still called Houghton Felley even to-day.

reign of King Rich^d I or early in that of King John,⁶ leaving two daughters his coheirs, Sarah, the elder of whom married Ralph de Willoughby of Willoughby in Lincolnshire, and Amabilia, the younger daughter married John Deincourt.⁷

Ralph de Willoughby had issue by his said wife two sons,⁸ Hugh and Robert, the younger of whom appears to have had his mother's estates in Derbyshire and to have been knighted. He had a son of own name who was living in the 53rd year of the reign of King Henry 3.

John Deincourt had issue by his wife Amabilia⁹ two daughters only; Amicia the eldest daughter married Isidore de Reresby of Reresby in Lincolnshire,¹⁰ and Alice the younger daughter married to William de Musters.¹¹ Isadore de Reresby had issue by his said wife one son, named Ralph, who to his second wife married to Margery, the sister and heir of Sir Adam de Normanville, of Thryburgh in Yorkshire,¹² between which said Ralph de Reresby and Robert, the son of Sir Robert de Willoughby, there appears to have been a partiton or exchange made of their shares of the manors of Ashover and Pleasley, for sometime in or about the [gap, for date, never entered] the above mentioned Robert de Willoughby granted to Ralph de Reresby and Margery his wife, all his manor of Ashover,

⁶ King Richard's reign apparently.

⁷ There is apparently an error here; see *D.A.J.*, XLVIII, opp. p. 80 where Mr. Statham gives Serlo's daughter Matilda as married to John Deincourt. Mr. Statham bases his statement on Jeaye's *Derbyshire Charters* No. 2773, which in turn is a quotation from Hunter's *Fines*, p. 23.

⁸ Hence a further discrepancy. Wolley seems to have omitted one generation, if the Rev. S. P. H. Statham is correct.

⁹ *D.A.J.*, XLVIII gives Matilda as the elder daughter who married John de Aincourt (Deincourt).

¹⁰ Isorius FitzAlexander, dead by 1248, according to "Saints and Sinners of Ashover," p. 13 (Lugard) q.v.

¹¹ Living 1247, *D.A.J.* XLVIII, opp. p. 80.

¹² A generation seems also to be omitted here. According to Statham there were two Ralphs de Reresby, and the second one married Margery, who was alive 1302.

for which the said Ralph and Margery gave him their manor of Pleasley,¹³ but in the 4th of Edward I the Sheriff of the County of Nottingham was commanded to seize the manor of Pleasley which Ralph de Reresby, deceased, had held of the king *in capite*, on account of the said Ralph having alienated the same without licence.¹⁴

Some time after the above ["exchange" crossed out] took place the manor of Pleasley seems to have been granted by this Robert de Willoughby to the Prior of Felley,¹⁵ and afterwards granted by the Prior of Felley to Thomas Beke, B. of St. David's, and brother of Anthony Beke, the celebrated Bishop of Durham, and on his decease it descended to his eldest brother, John Beke, Lord of Eresby in Lincolnshire (though in the Escheat Rolls of 4 Ed. II it is stated that Anthony Beke, B. of Durham, died seized *inter alia* of the manor of Pleasley¹⁶ vide

¹³ See *D.A.J.* XLVIII, p. 81.

¹⁴ Lyson's "Magna Britannia," Vol. V, p. 16.

¹⁵ The evidence seems to be the opposite to Wolley's statement. The manor was in the hands of Thomas Beck and he granted certain lands and tenements to Felley, which lands and tenements became known as Houghton Felley. The following is taken from Jeayes' *Derb. Charters*, No. 1896.

Deed whereby Thomas [Beck], Menevensis Episcopus [Bishop of St. David's], grants that the Prior and Convent of Felley may hold certain lands and tenements in his fee of Pleseleya, for which the said Prior, etc., has been accustomed to perform customs and services according to their charters held from previous bishops of St. David's, by performing personal service (*viz.*, of the Prior or one of his canons) paying yearly 2s. 8d. for the tenement which the Priory holds of the grant of R. de la Bache [Ralph de la Bache, seneschal of Burton-on-Trent]; the said Prior being exempted from summons to the Bishop's Court for trial of thieves, etc., or other law business, and the said bishop hereby takes the Priory under his protection like their other men and tenants "penes dominam Constansium de Byerne et alios dominos de Tykehall capitales dominos feodi nostri predicti." For which privileges the Priory grants to the Bishop nine acres of lands in Estefeld in the field of Pleseleya lying on Ballehoue, and Langthwaytes. Witn. Dom Henry de Perepoint, Dom. William de Steynesby, milites, Hugh de Rodmerthwayt, Robert le Graunt, Hugh Stoffyn, William Pyte, Jordan de Sutton, Gilbert le Parker, Thomas le Breton [1280-1293] (Harl. 43, I, 16).

¹⁶ *Inq. Post. Mortem* 4, Ed. II. File 21 No. 8. The Inquisition was held at, Chesterfield before Robert del Wodehouse on the Sabbath day next after the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, in the 4th year of Ed. II by Walter de

Esc. 4 Ed. II No. 45: *Dugd. Bar.* Vol. I, p. 427(?), and that Robert de Willoughby, son of Sir William de Willoughby and Alice his wife, daughter of John Beke, Lord of Eresby, and grandson of Robert de Willoughby before mentioned, and John de Harecourt (son of Richard de Harecourt, and Margaret his wife), another daughter of the said John Beke and *sister* of the bishop were found to be his cousins and coheirs.

By charter dated the 9th day of May, 13 Edw. I, the king granted to the said Thomas Beke, B. of St. David's, that he and his heirs should have a market on Monday in every week at his manor of Plesley in the county of Derbyshire, and two fairs at the times therein mentioned, and also free warren in all his demesne lands in the said town of Plesley, and in the course of the same year the bishop obtained the King's licence to embattle his mansion house at Plesley.¹⁷

Eston, Hugh Staffyn, Ralph de Glapwell, Thomas de Shirebrook, William Franceys, William Bryan, John de Glapwell, Ralph Sampson, Richard Robert Robert Gilmyn, Robert de Batley and Thomas FitzHugh.

¹⁷ *Calend. Rot. Chart.* 13 Edw. I, No. 105. The Lysons, enquiring about the market found it was "discontinued long ago." Just below the church on the road to Shirebrook lies a field in which some remains of paving were said once to exist. This is called to-day "Merkit Hollow." In spite of various accounts saying "one," *two* fairs were actually held, one on the eve, day, and morrow of St. Mark, and the other on the eve, day, and morrow of St. Luke. Where the two fairs were originally held is conjectural, but till comparatively recently one portion was held at a field called 'Horsefair' on the ancient Teversall road. They were for fat and lean cattle, horses and sheep. In recent years the fairs were kept on May 6th and October 29th, i.e. eleven days later than originally, to allow for the alteration of the calendar in 1752. This addition of eleven days was a common local custom, and occurs elsewhere in Derbyshire in connection with the village wakes. The site of the embattled manor house has completely passed from memory, and nobody can indicate it, though it was big enough once to house Edward I and his retinue (Weds., Feb. 18th, 1292-3) en route to Codnor from Welbeck. Reverting to the fairs: just before their discontinuance they were for one day each only. The sheep were then at the Cross, horses as indicated above at Horsefair on Teversall Road, and cattle in front of the church. The license to embattle the manor house is stated to be *Rot. Pat.* Edw. I, 30. Letters Patent of Edw. I, granting permission to Thomas [Beck], Menevensis Episcopus [Bishop of St. David's], "quod mansum suum de Plesele in comitatu Derbeye muro de petra et calce firmari et kernellare et illud sic firmatum et karnellatum tenere possit sibi," etc. Dat. apud Bristol, 1 Jan., anno 13 [1285] (Harl. 43 C. 52, printed in Jeayes', No. 1897).

Robert de Willoughby received a summons to parliament as baron Willoughby of Eresby in the 7 Ed. 2, and died in the 10 Ed. II, seized *inter alia* of a moiety of the manor of Pleasley, held of the honour of Tickhill, and of a fourth part of a knight's fee in Glapwell, and of the church of Plesley, leaving John de Willoughby his son and heir, then 14 years of age.

In the 4 Ed. 3 a *quo warranto* (sic) was brought against W^m de Harcourt and Margaret the widow of the said Robt. de Willoughby to show by what authority they claimed to have in the manor of Plesley a market¹⁸ on Monday in every week, two fairs, a park, and free-warren in all their demesne lands there, whereupon the said Margaret pleaded that she held a moiety of the said manor to which, etc. in the name of dower of the inheritance of John the son and heir of the said Robert de Willoughby, and the said W^m de Harcourt pleaded that he held the other moiety of the same manor and *prayed aid* (?) of the said John, and afterwards the said William, Margaret and John pleaded the charter made by King Edw. 2 to Thos. Bek, bishop of St. David's as before stated, and deduced the title to the said manor and liberties from the said bishop to John Beke as his brother and heir, and from the said John to Alice and Margaret as his daughters and heirs, as to one moiety, and from the said Alice to the said Robert de Willoughby her son and heir, and from the said Robert to the said John, one of the then claimants, and as to the other moiety from the said Margaret, daughter of the said John Beke, to John de Harcourt her son and heir, and from the said John de Harcourt to the said William de Harcourt, his son and heir, and one of the then claimants.

The jury afterwards found for the claimants, but John de Wiggeley and John de Shirwode made fine with the king of one mark for the said William de Harcourt and others to have the said fair and market afterwards, whereupon as to all the said liberties, the claimants were to be without a day, etc.

¹⁸ *Placita de Quo Warranto*, P.R.O., 1818.

[The remainder is fragmentary, and consists of notes and pieces clipped out of letters of correspondence].

John de Aiencourt and Ralph de Wilageby owed 25 marks and a palfrey for having the lands of Serlo de Pleseleg and the king's confirmation. (*Nova Oblata*, A° 5 Joh. Not and Derb).

John de Aiencourt rendered an account of two palfreys for having a partition made between himself and Robert de Liseures of the Park of Pleseleia, by the view of lawful knights of the vicinage of Pleseleia. (*Nov. Obl.* A° 11 Joh. Not and Derb) (see *Abb. de Placitorum*, p. 87).

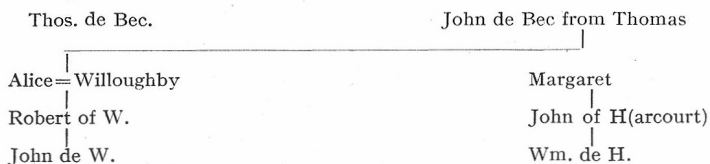
[In Latin] Extract from an array of the hundred of Scarsdale, temp. Ed. III: Pleasley, Note: That John de Willoughby and Ralph de Ferrers¹⁹ are lords of Pleasley and are in the service of the king in France. Note that Ralph of the Wood has goods and chattels to the value of 20 shillings (?) and that there is one archer, namely Adam Taylor.

Pleasley market and fair 1285. Thomas Beck, B. of St. David's, brother of Anthony Bec, and fair still continued

Pleseleghe market and fair. Ths. Beck, bishop of St. David's (*Cart.* 13 Edw. I, 105).

Wm de Harcourt and Margaret, who was wife of Robert de Willoughby, claim market at Pleasley, Monday, and fair three days St. Luke, and park, and Margaret . . . John de Willoughby and Wm de Harcourt of the same inheritance.

Market, etc. were granted by Edw. I anno 13 to Thos. de Beck, B. of St. David's, relation of the said Wm and John.



¹⁹ Apparently year 1347, Joanna Grey of Codnor married Ralph de Ferrers after the death of her husband Sir William de Harcourt de Bosworth, acc. to Wolley's Harcourt pedigree.

Park in Pleasley called Warsop Wood in Co. Derby of John de Willoughby, Thomas, Margaret de Roos? of Wm. de Roos. Next heir Thomas de Roos (46, E. III, No. 49).

Roos Park . . . Warsop Wood . . . Plesley . . . 12 Rich. II.

Pleasley. Wm. Roos lands held of John Waltham, B. of Sarum (ac. of his ch. of Pleasley?) 2 Hy. V, 40).

Roos lands at Pleasley²⁰ and park held of Leake de ch. Pleasley (3 H. VI, 48).

M. Pleasley Anthony B. of Durham de Ralph de Resesby and Ralph of honour de Tickhill. Robert de Willoughby and John de Harcourt cousins and heirs de Anthony Bec. (4 Ed. 2, No. 45).

$\frac{1}{2}$ Manor of Pleasley. Robert de Willoughby. John, son, then aged 14 years (10 E. II, No. 78).

Pleasley M. William Harcourt (*Inq. ad quod damnum* 17 E. II, 18).

$\frac{1}{2}$ manor of Pleasley was in Harcourt 17 E. II, 18, *Inq. a. q. d.* Wm. de Harcourt claimed a park in Pleasley, 4. Ed. III.

$\frac{1}{2}$ m. of Pleasley. Joan who was wife of John Harcourt (43 Ed. III).

Willoughby $\frac{1}{2}$ manor of Pleasley. 8 R. II.

Manor Pleasley . . . Robert Willoughby 30 H. VI.

Joan, wife of Sir R. Willoughby.

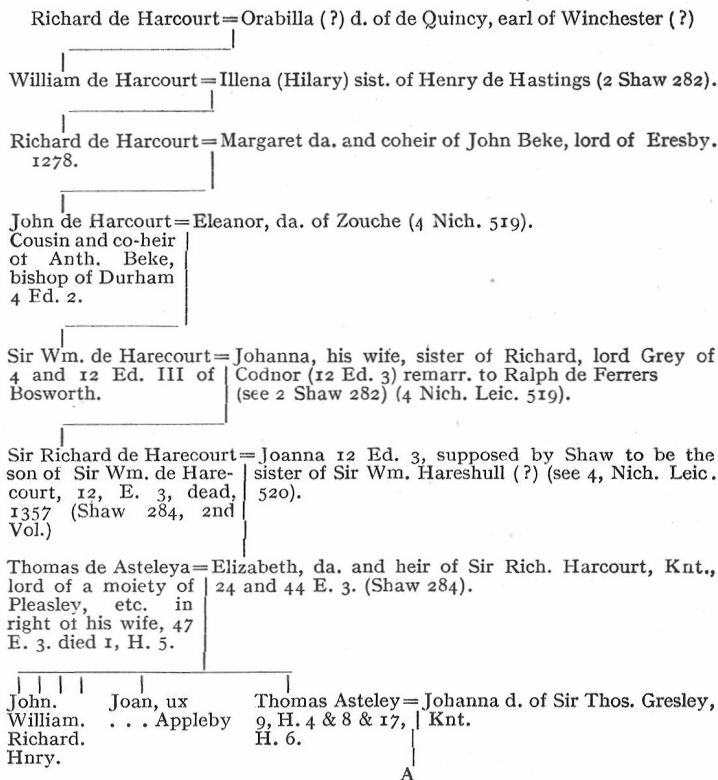
Pleasley was the E. of Scarsdale's, now Bache Thornhill, Esq.: was his uncle's Henry Thornhill, Esq., who purchased about 1742.

Pleasley Church, a double chancel,²¹ one beyond the other, the first arch circular and depressed with billet

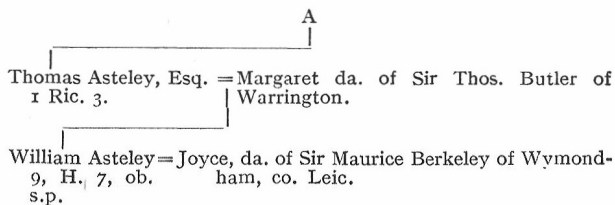
²⁰ This would appear to be the explanation of the name Roseland Farm, so puzzling to local people.

²¹ This is correct. There actually was a double chancel till at least up to 1785 and possibly till 1817 and even after. Two Norman archways separated the first from the nave and the first chancel from the second. The former of these remains and is very beautiful though quite simple. The presence of two arches suggests that there was originally a central tower between chancel and nave.

moulding has been cramped, the pilasters square, plain mouldings, the inner arch circular, quite plain square pilasters. Within rails a cross fleury on a slab, with a book on one side; and a chalice on the other. Font octagon. The windows of the chancel pointed. At the corner of each of the great square columns supporting the first arch a pilaster with this capital. [Small drawing, useless for reproduction purposes].

HARCOURT PEDIGREE.²²

²² This has not been checked.



NOTES ON THE FOREGOING.

The foregoing account was taken verbatim from photographs of the original documents by Artists, Illustrators, Ltd. The statements should be tested before reliance is placed on their accuracy. There are many errors and half-truths, not all of which are dealt with here. The account is given in order to indicate the type of information one can expect to encounter in the Wolley MSS.