

THE EARTHWORKS AT LAGHAM.

BY

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THE earthworks at Laggerham consist of an oval enclosure of about 700 by about 580 feet, with a high bank and ditch, comprising about six acres of land and two of water. The greatest perpendicular height of the bank above the bottom of the ditch is 30 feet. This is to the south. To the north the ground rises, and the height is not so great. The ditch is from 33 to 55 feet wide, and is contained by a less well-marked outer bank. The ditch is divided into two portions by causeways at the north-west and south-east of the enclosure. The two portions are on different levels, but both were originally wet, and are still partly full of water, supplied only by rain and natural drainage, and retained by the stiff clay soil. There are two small interior ponds.

The works may be primitive; it is impossible to be sure of their origin. A fragment of Romano-British pottery has been found in the bank near the surface of the original soil. A Roman road crossed the country from south to north, about 700 yards to the west, and a raised road used to run from the works northward to the higher ground beyond Godstone Station.

But the excellent preservation of the works, the height of the bank and the depth of the ditch, are probably to be attributed to the fortification of the site in the 13th century, when either ancient works were repaired or new ones made, when Roger St. John received *licentia crenellare*

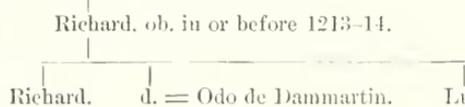
at Lagham in 1261 (Pat. Rolls, 46 Hen. III, m. 16). On the lawn of the present house foundations of stone buildings were discovered four or five years ago, when some cattle sheds were removed, and when Manning wrote part of a gateway, perhaps at the north-west entrance, was still standing. But the present house is a small gentleman's house of the 17th century only, with some interesting mantel-pieces and panelling.

In *Domesday* Wolcnested, *i. e.* Godstone, was held by Eustace of Boulogne. Richard de Lucy held Wolcnested *in capite*, as of the Honour of Boulogne, in Testa de Nevill, *nescit per quod servitium*. He was the son of Reginald de Lucy, who died in 1199, and Reginald was perhaps the brother of Richard de Lucy, the great minister of Henry II. Richard de Lucy, who died in or before 15 John, 1213-14, left a son Richard and two daughters. Richard *junior* gave the northern half of the manor to Odo de Dammartin in marriage with his sister, to be held as a quarter of a knight's fee, and the southern half, including Lagham, to Roger St. John in marriage with his sister Lucy de Lucy, also for a quarter of a knight's fee. Roger was the son of John, alive in 1229, who was the son of Roger, dead before 1215, lord of Stanton, in Oxfordshire.

Roger, who acquired Lagham with his wife, was the fortifier of the place. He was an ardent supporter of the baronial cause against Henry III. Bishop Stubbs believed that he was one of the Council of Nine who governed under De Montfort and De Clare, after the battle of Lewes. He sat in De Montfort's parliament in 1265, summons to which did not constitute a claim to a parliamentary barony later. His son John was among the baronial leaders captured by the king at Northampton in 1264, before the battle of Lewes. The possession by St. John of a strong place close to the road from London by Croydon and Godstone into Sussex, may have helped, along with the castle of De Clare at Blechingley, in determining the course of the baronial march after the king by that road to Lewes. Next year, Roger St. John fell at Evesham. His elder son John

died s.p. His younger son Roger succeeded, and was followed by his son John, who was summoned to parliament as Baron St. John of Lagham from 1297 to 1316. He died in 1317. His son John had summons to parliament and died 1323. His son John was born 1308 and died 8th April 1349 of the Black Death: he also sat in parliament. By some means he acquired the other half of Godstone also, which had gone originally to Odo de Dammartin. His son Roger, who died in 1353, was never summoned. His heir was his "kinsman," probably his cousin, Peter. But Roger had already alienated the estate to Sir Nicholas Louvaine. He had been under age when the first parliament after his father's death was summoned, and probably did not hold the barony when the parliaments of 1351-52 were called. It was no longer worth having, perhaps. The *Inquisitio post mortem* on St. John, ob. 1349, tells a terrible story of the ravages of the Black Death. "There is a ruinous "water mill, of no value this year because all the tenants "who used to grind there are dead. Perquisites of court, "nothing, because all the suitors are dead. There are "200 acres of sheep pasture, formerly worth $\frac{1}{2}d.$ an acre, "but worth nothing this year, for it cannot be let to "farm. There are 200 acres of arable land in Lagham "which cannot be farmed. Last year the rents of free "tenants were £4; this year 30^s because almost all the "tenants are dead, and their tenements are empty for "default of heirs. The profits of court (from free "tenants) are nothing, because the tenants who did suit "of court are dead." It is no wonder if in the circumstances the castle also of the St. Johns was allowed to fall into neglect and to become ruinous. Some of the stones of the interior building are probably built into the basement of the present house, but there is no trace of a stone wall round the banks, and the real defences of the place were probably earth and water, with—doubtless—wooden palisades. There may or may not have been stone work in mediæval castles; earthworks there almost always were, and those at Lagham may be confidently counted among them in use if not in origin.

REGINALD DE LUCY, ob. 1199.



ROGER ST. JOHN, ob. before 1215.

