



Swallowfield and its Owners.

By Lady Russell.

(Continued from page 130.)

1361. We learn from a Roll, 34 Edward III., that the Park of Swallowfield was used by the Crown at this date for the breeding of horses. Edward III. kept a large stud and gave immense sums for some of his horses. In Devon's "Issues of the Exchequer" we find mention of the price he gave for three chargers. For a bright brown bay, named Bayard, with two white hind feet he gave £50 (now equivalent to about £1,000); for one dappled with grey spots, called "Lebryt," £70 (equivalent to about £1,400), and for the third, called "Pomers," grey, with a black head, £120 (equivalent to £2,000). In Orig. 34, Edward III., rot. 5, we find entries "De equitio Regis vendendo," viz., commissions to the three officers appointed to view the King's "Stalones Jumenta and Pullani, &c., citra Trentani," i.e., in Parks of Windsor, Guildford, Odyham, Swallowfield, Woodstock, &c., and to take so many for his use or for sale. The three Commissioners were John de Brocas who was "Custos equorum regis," Edmund Rose and the famous William de Wykeham. War with France being supposed to be over, the King wished to lessen his stud, and the money realised by the sale of his horses was given towards the building of Windsor Castle. In 1365, 38 Edward III., the King ordered Ralph de Restwold and Thomas de Hynden to inquire (by inquest) concerning the removal and concealment of £2,000 found "sub terrâ apud Shynnyngfield" (Shinfield).

1369. By an Inquisition P.M. 44 Edw. III., we find that Swallowfield and Beaumys were then in the possession of Edmund de la Beche, Archdeacon of Berks, who also held other lands and tenements in the neighbourhood at Whitley and Trunkwell. The family of the De la Beches took their name from the Manor in the parish of Aldworth called "La Beche," probably, it is said, from the Beech tree having flourished there, and they had long been connected with

the neighbourhood. Philip de la Beche, Sheriff of Berkshire in 1331, had a right of free warren over Beaumys in Shinfield granted him in 1336. He died in 1339, when the King granted it to his brother Sir Nicholas de la Beche, who already had immense territories in Berks and elsewhere. Besides Beche, he owned East and West Compton, Binfield, Burghfield, Basildon, Cookham, Harwell, Stratfield, Padworth, Peasemore, Lekhampstead, Bradfield, Farley in Wilts and estates in Sussex, and he is also said to have owned Swallowfield, but this does not appear to be certain, though he undoubtedly held some land there. Sir Nicholas was tutor or superintendent of the Black Prince, and in 1335-6 was made Constable of the Tower where the Royal children were to be left under his care during the King's absence in France; but he appears to have neglected his duties, for, on the sudden and unexpected return of the King, his Majesty found, on landing at the Tower, the fortress badly guarded, the Governor absent, and only three ordinary servants as attendants upon his children. Greatly enraged at this neglect, the King ordered the arrest and imprisonment of Sir Nicholas and other officers, and treated them with exemplary rigour (Holinshed), but in less than two years Sir Nicholas received his pardon, was re-instated as Constable of the Tower and was allowed to build a castle at Beaumys and fortify it. He died in 1346 and was buried in Aldworth Church. He had no children, but his wife Margery, or Margeret, whom he had married in 1339, survived him, and to her he left his lands in Swallowfield and Beaumys. She was the daughter of Michael, Lord de Poynings, and had previously married Edmund Bacon of Essex, at whose death, in 1338, she held the Manor of Hatfield Peverell, which Edward II. had granted to Edmund Bacon in fee in 1310 [*Pat. 4, Ed. II.m. 8. I.*]. She held this estate for the term of her life; "partly of the King as of his Honor of Huntingdon, and partly of the Earl of Hereford, by homage and the 3rd part of a Knight's fee and 2 pairs of gilt spurs of 12d. price." She also held Cressing-hall or Cressinges, Essex, "of the Honor of Clare." By her first husband she had one daughter, Margery Bacon, born 1337, who married in 1352 William de Molyne, son of Sir John de Molines, and she had also a step-daughter Margaret Bacon, daughter of her husband (by his first wife, Joan Brewes) who married William second Baron Kerdeston. At the death of her second husband, Lady Margery de la Beche was exposed to the designs of many suitors. We find her mentioned in the year 1347 as being the wife of both Thomas de Arderne (*Lysons, Ashmole, Dugdale, Pat 21, and*

23, *Ed. III.*) and Gerard de l'Isle (*Close Roll, April 21, 1347*), and again that same year we find she was carried off and forcibly married to Sir John de Dalton. Very possibly the Black Death which was raging this year may have carried off both Gerard de l'Isle and Sir Thomas Arderne within a few months of each other. John de Dalton was the son of Robert de Dalton, a large landowner in Lancashire. Accompanied by several lawless friends, amongst whom we find the names of Hugh Fazakerley, Henry de Tilderslegh, Sir Thomas Dutton, Sir Edmund de Mauncestre and William, son of Sir John Trussel, he broke into the Castle of Beaumys before dawn on Good Friday, 7th April, 1347, frightened Roger Hunt the domestic Chaplain to death, killed Michael le Poynings, Thomas the Clerk of Shipton and others, and carried off many prisoners, among whom was Lady Margery. During the affray goods and chattels to the value of a thousand pounds were stolen. In consequence of this assault a writ was directed to the Sheriff of Lancashire to arrest John de Dalton and all his accomplices and commit them to the Tower of London, but the King granted "a free pardon to Thomas de Litherland, Prior of Buscogh, who was present, as regards the murder and the abduction of Lady Margaret Arderne [*Calend Rotulo Patents, folio 155, art 13, Pat. 21, Ed. III., pt. 3, m 15*]. A precept was also issued to the Sheriff of Bucks (*sic*) and other counties to seize into the King's hands all the lands, goods and chattels of the said Margaret [*Rowe Mores*]. On the same day John Darcy, keeper of the Tower, is commanded to receive Sir John and his companions, Robert his father, etc. [*Close Roll 21, Ed. III.*] Lady Margaret died in 1349-50. "Seized of Swallowfield" [*Inq. P.M. Ed. III., pt. 1, No. 89*]. In a roll 22, *Ed. III.*, we find an order for the sale of woods "pertaining to Margery, who was wife of Nicholas de la Beche, ore la femme Johan, son of Robt. de Dalton, by reason of the forfeiture of the said John for treasons and felonies." Lady Margery was buried in Aldworth Church with her second husband, Sir Nicholas de la Beche, where their effigies are much admired. Beaumys then went to the two younger nieces of her second husband, Isabel de la Beche, married to William Fitz Ellis, and Alice de la Beche, married to Robert d'Anvers, and it remained in the hands of their descendants till 1424. In Edward IV.'s reign it belonged to the Stonor family.

Swallowfield went at the death of Lady Margery, as we have said before, to Sir Edmund de la Beche, Archdeacon of Berks, a brother of Sir Nicholas. He appears to have been of an audacious character, for we find that he had assisted in the escape of Lords Audley and


Berkeley from Wallingford Castle in 1323, for which he was imprisoned at Pomfret. Soon after, however, he was set at liberty and "presented to the rectory of North Moreton" in 1347.

1371. He died 59 Edward III. "Seized of Swalefield."

The name of Beche still survives in this neighbourhood, in Beech-hill, the property of Mr. Henry Hunter, who is also the owner of the site of Beaumys. A slight indication of the mote is all that now remains of this ancient castle.

A Short Paper on the Parish of Warfield.

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N writing, at the request of your Secretary, a paper on some interesting points connected with my parish of Warfield, I must first apologize for the same not being as complete as I might wish, owing to my having only been myself a year and three-quarters in the parish, and therefore having hardly had time to find out all I could wish about its history, abounding as it does in points of archæological interest.

To begin at the Parish Church, dedicated to Michael and all Angels. It is an interesting structure, dating probably to the time of Stephen, and worked for some centuries from the monastery of Hurley-on-the-Thames, as is shown by a royal grant, made in the second year of King Edward VI., granting various tithes and endowments to the Parish Church of Warfield, then created a Vicarage; and giving the advowson thereof to one Richard Scycett, all in succession to the monastery of Hurley-on-the-Thames, then lately suppressed under King Henry VIII. Warfield Church was thoroughly restored in 1876 by the great church architect, Street, whose skill, in conjunction with the efforts of the then Vicar, the Rev. F. T. Gill, has produced a work alike striking and reverend. The great chancel, of unusual length, with a carved screen, all in white chalk stone, is very beautiful, while some of the glass is dated by its own pattern as early as the 14th century. There is also a very