



Hurley.

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DOOMSDAY (commenced in 1080 and finished in 1086) tells us that Herlei was owned by Esgar, probably a Saxon or Dane (who was chief staller to King Edward the Confessor). It speaks of "Terra Goisfridi de Manneville, in Benes Hd." and goes on "Isdem Gousfridus tenet Herlei. Esgar tenuit de rege Edwardo. Tunc et modo pro 14 hidis una virgata minus. Terra est 18 carucatæ. In dominio sunt 4 carucæ et 25 villani et 12 cotarii cum 15 carucis. Ibi et 12 cotarii cum 15 carucis. Ibi 10 servi et molinum de 20 solidis. Ibi ecclesia et 2 piscaria de 12 solidis et 20 acræ prati. Silva de 5 porcorum. Valet et valuit 12 libras." Thus it appears clear that the Monastery had not at the completion of Domesday been yet founded; otherwise this General Survey would surely have referred to it; so that, William the Conqueror having died on September 9th, 1087, the Monastery was established, and the church dedicated (to S. Mary), and endowed by Geoffrey de Mandeville at some date between the completion of Domesday and the Conqueror's death. No doubt Hurley Church was originally built by the Saxons—see the north wall, —and was probably ravaged by Danes in 870, during their occupation of Reading, or else in 894, when they traversed Herlei on their way "up by Temese" from Essex to Gloucestershire (of which march up we are informed by the Saxon Chronicle, and which is attested by an encampment called the Danes Ditches (Danesfield), in the immediate vicinity of Hurley Church); and whereas Herlei, also called Esgareston from having been held by Esgar under King Edward the Confessor, is stated in the Norman Survey to have possessed in the time of the Confessor every possible indication of wealth and prosperity—such as mills, fisheries, meadows, woods and swine—it is not surprising that this beautiful spot should have been at that time in possession of a parish church. It is noticeable that in the neighbourhood there should occur the name of *Cividen*, by which title the picturesque seat of the Duke of

Westminster (now known as Cliefden) was identified as late as in 1299. In "Liber Niger Quaternum" (*Westminster, 12 Dugdale, No. 14*), we read of a certain Prior of the (Benedictine) Monastery of Hurley beseeching the King "pro reverentiâ dominæ Edithæ sororis sancti regis Edwardi Confessoris *ibidem sepultæ*," to appropriate to the Monastery the church of "Warefeld," of which the Prior and Convent of Hurley were the patrons, because of their being in much distress at Hurley owing to Thames floods which had destroyed the houses in the village, and had drowned many of its inhabitants—the Convent being obliged to give sanctuary to the survivors; so that we have, here, an instance of the great esteem in which the Confessor held our village (Hurstelega—place of the wood) as indicated by the burial of his sister in this parish.* In a later number of the 'Journal,' I hope to offer some notes in connection with Geoffrey de Mandeville's Charter, a translation of which will then be printed, but I think that preparatory to the appearance of this extremely interesting piece of Berkshire history, it may not be out of place to attempt a short sketch of this ancient parish in chronological order. In the Westminster series of Hurley Charters we find (? in 1090) the founder of our Monastery writing sharply to Ædric, his "præpositus," and men at Waltham—on account of a heavy complaint made to him by his Prior and Monks at Hurley ("prior et monachi mei de Hurleia michi graviter conquesti sunt") because their wood and "licentia" had been badly laid waste and violated; and the indignant Geoffrey commands his bailiff and the rest "super feoda vestra" that they are not to let in water upon the Monks' holdings, nor to take anything out of their wood by transgressing their own borders, without leave in writing from the prior and his brethren of the convent; and, that if at any time anything should be necessary for the repair of the houses (in Waltham) or for the repairs of fences they were to get written consent from the aforesaid parties. It is a stern, peremptory, and convincing document, and ends abruptly—"Valete." In (?) 1130, Geoffrey (grandson of the founder of our Monastery), in conjunction with his wife Roesia, grants title "Deo et ecclesiæ S. Mariæ elemosinæ suæ de Herleia," and denounces on all who might violate his gift, as follows: "and may their portion be to dwell everlastingly with those who said to the Lord God 'Depart from us, we will have none of thy ways;'" and, in a Charter to King Stephen (c. 1136), Hurley is again referred to by the last-

* The date of the document is in Richard II.'s reign, but it is supposed to refer to a *much* earlier date.

named Geoffrey. A Charter by Henry I. is of exceeding interest in the Westminster series of these old Hurley Deeds, inasmuch as it not only confirms the original grant made by Geoffrey at the instigation of his wife Leceline, in the Conqueror's reign—being addressed to the “justices, viscounts, barons, and all their subordinates and to the men of Berkshire (Berchesira) ‘Francis et Anglis’—greeting,” but also states that he does so “pro meâ et matris meâ salute et *imperatricis* filiæ meâ petitione et animæ suæ redemptione,”—“*eâdem Imperatrice*” being one of the witnesses, and Roger, Bishop of Salisbury [1107-1139] the other. And then follows “Per Otuelum filium ois apud Turrim Lundoniæ.” One interesting paragraph in this Charter in favour of the Hurley Priory is as follows: “Et terra et homines ecclesiæ ejusdem, quocumque loco sint per Angliam, sint liberi et quieti de shiris et Hundredis, de placitis, querelis, geldis, Danegeldis, scottis, et auxeliis omnibus et de omnibus operationibus, et occasionibus et exactionibus et assisis, excepto solummodo murdro et probato latrocinio.” Pope Adrian IV., in a Bull of 1157 confirmed amongst other possessions to the Abbey of Westminster “Cellum de Hurleyâ cum eâdem villâ cum omni obedientiâ et subjectione, et pertinentiis suis.” The Second Henry also confirmed the Charter, and with the following difference in regard to the above paragraph. That is to say—Henry II. writes “Et terra et homines ecclesiæ illius, quo cumque sint loco per Angliam, sint liberi et quieti de siris, et hundredis, *et murdro et latrocinio*, et danegeldo, et omnibus assisis quæ ad 6 hidas terræ pertinent de dominio eorum, &c.”; and, His Majesty concludes his charter “quoniam iste eis pro anima avi mei regis Henrici, et Willhelmi filii mei, concessi, et animæ meâ salute, et reginæ meâ Alienoræ voluntate et petitione.” In the Westminster series of Hurley Charters is one, made probably at some date anterior to 1175 by Agnes, daughter of William, Constable of Chester, in which she confirms a gift of two hides, given by her father—one in Pyrton (?) and the other in Clewer (?) to Hurley Church; and, in addition, certain woodland which had belonged to Godwin, the Briton. This last named Charter is interesting, too, from the fact that amongst the witnesses—“ex parte Prioris” occur—Richard, the porter; Robert, the miller; and Nicholas, the cook, as holding these several offices in the Hurley Monastery.

In 1190, Richard (probably Fitz Neale), Bishop of London (1189-1199) confirmed Hurley Charters on October 15th at Cofford. (*Walden Register of Hurley Series*).

In King John's days the Rolls came in, and in his first year (1199)—*Roll. 1.*—a plea is introduced into the Courts "Prior de Herle noluit talliari," because his church was a *Cell* only to Westminster; and in the third year of this Monarch the Pedes Finium have a suit between Robert Fitz Ordgar plaintiff, and Robert, of Luttelnote, defendant, as to half a hide in Hurley, and again in his ninth year King John issued a certain writ to the Priory of Hurley.

A curious little episode in the History of the Hurley Cell is given by Widmore (1751) in his history of Westminster Abbey. One Ralph de Arundel, the first Abbot of Westminster who was ever buried in the body of the Abbey, so far as is known, was at one time Prior of Hurley. Having first been Almoner at the Abbey he was removed to preside over the Hurley Cell by Abbot Laurence, but was moved back again to Westminster, on the nomination of the Abbey Monks, by King John on November 30th, 1200. He was finally removed from his high office—after no more eventful incidents in his career at Westminster being recorded of him than his gaining consent from the monks to celebrate the feasts of St. Vincent, St. Laurence, St. Nicholas, and that of the translation of St. Benedict in a more splendid manner than formerly—at the instance of Nicolas, the Pope's legate, in A.D. 1213, in consequence of a scandal and of letting the Abbey get into dilapidation, 39 years after the death of Laurence; and thenceforward he lived upon the manors of Sunbury and Toddington until his death in 1223. While Prior here, we learn from one of the Westminster Series of Hurley Charters, that Arundel 'communi assensu et voluntate conventus Hurleia' alienated 4 solidi annually, for ever, from the Prior's revenues in Easthampstead, to enable the Sacristan of Hurley for ever afterwards to supply "honorifice et plenarie," wax tapers at the mass of S. Mary, "quam," he writes, "cantare constitui."

In Henry the Third's reign, the Hurley Charters were, for some reason, again confirmed by William, Bishop of London, at Hadham, (*Walden Register of Hurley Series*), under date November 26th, 1218. An incident of another sort occurred at this period of our Parish History. In the ninth year of this Henry a writ was issued to the Justices of Berkshire to postpone a suit which John, of Hurley, had brought against the master and brethren of the Temple concerning a pond made at Bisham to the injury apparently of Hurley. This is curious. In 1235 Richard, Prior of Hurley, was defendant concerning lands at Hurley; and in 1246 and 1247 Theobald, Prior, was plaintiff as to lands in Hurley. The first of the above-named Priors

was translated in 1236 to the Abbot of Evesham ; he had as a *soubriquet* Richard le Gras or Crassus (Fat)—or Richard le Grey. This Richard was succeeded by Samson de Eswell. The above-named Theobald was in the commission for the visitation of S. Albān's (1251).

On April 29th, 1280, two charters were provided in the forest pleadings at Windsor, which refer to certain Liberties and the Free Warren claimed by Hurley. These are assigned to 1236. In one of them are the words "*Beatæ Mariæ de Hurle quæ est cella abbatia de Westmonasterio.*" In 1258 Geoffrey, Prior of Hurley, made an agreement with the Abbot of Walden as to certain tythes, in which occurs an expression concerning the "*Anglican*" title and description of our Church, which I cannot refrain from quoting, viz., "*quod quotienscunque tallagium vel aliud onus extraordinarium ecclesiæ Anglicanæ fuerit impositum, &c.*" Passing over miscellaneous notes, there was a suit as to the tythe of Great Compton in 1320 (referring to the suit going on in May, 1286) ; and then we come down to a quit claim of the Prior and Brethren of Hurley as to the pension of 100 'solidi,' and the confirmation of the same by the Abbot of Walden. Such are some of the (probably *numerous*) references to the parish of Hurley from the date of the (conjectured) ravages of Hurley Church towards the close of the 9th century. "So, Age by Age and Year by Year, His grace was handed on"—until misfortune befel the church in Hurley. Dark days were those of the Reformation period.

In the 26th year of Henry VIII. (1535) the lesser monasteries were suppressed. As for Hurley—in the following year, two 'exchanges' were effected by Act of Parliament, i.e. (1), on the part of the Crown—the site of the Priory of Hurley was bartered, along with many of the lands, for the Manor of Hyde (now included in the London Park, to which the Manor lends its name), of Neyte, Eyberg and Toddington, of the advowson of Chelsea Rectory, some lands at Greenwich, and meadows and closes near the Horseferry, which had been until that time in the possession of Westminster Abbey ; and, also, on the part of the Crown, the Great Wood of Hurley, called Hurley Wood, was exchanged for Covent Garden, which until that time had also belonged to Westminster Abbey.* This arrangement, by the crafty Tudor, is remarkable as falsifying the dictum that "exchange is no robbery," since, a few years later, the unhappy Monks of Westminster surrendered to the Crown

* See Widmore's History of Westminster Abbey (1751, p. 127).

"omnia et singula, dominia, maneria, hundreda," &c., and on March 20th, 1541, we find this amusing Monarch handing over the Hurley estate to Charles Howard; and three years later still to Leonard Chamberlayne, from whom it passed to John Lovelace in the same year. The latter died here on August 25th, 1558—a large chimney-piece monument still standing to his memory within the altar rails of Hurley Church! I have a transcript of the grant to Leonard Chamberlayne (in which the Dovecote still standing is clearly included, as well as Hurley Mill, and the fish ponds in Lady Place)—the words "Necnon omnes illas Rectorias nostras et ecclesias nostras de Hurley, Waltham, et Stretley," as well as "Maneria nostra de Hurley et Easthampstede" occurring in the Deed.

The above named John Lovelace was succeeded by his son Richard, who is said in our burial register to have been "Ar locum tenens castri et hōris de Windsor," and he, too, was succeeded by a son Richard, afterwards "knighted in the wars," and eventually created Lord Lovelace, of Hurley. During the time of the first of these two Richards, at Easter, 1592 (*34 Eliz.*), an order was made in the Court of Exchequer as to lands called "Hall's Place," in Hurley. (*D. and O., vol. 19, fo. 39*). The last of the Lovelace line, who owned the Manor, was the scapegrace John, Lord Lovelace (who was buried in Hurley Church on October 6th, 1693), under the cover of whose hospitality at "Lady Place"—in the crypt of the old Monastery (then the cellars of Lady Place House), many of the plans for the dethronement of King James II. were concocted. In the person of Nevile Lord Lovelace (who succeeded, as fourth baron, to the last-named John), the title became extinct. Nevile, who never lived here, died in 1736.

The great rebellion of 1688 succeeded, pregnant as it was with results for the future of religion in England. The old cellars in Lady Place still exist, and the ground plan of the fine old Elizabethan mansion—built by one of the Lovelaces on the ruins of the old Monastery—is clearly traceable. The curvature of the arches in the crypt is very beautiful. At the commencement of the present century the bones of some of the old Friars were exhumed. Our registers teem with entries of the Lovelace family, who were the owners of Hurley Manor from 1545 to 1693. Judging from a flowery epitaph which until recent years embellished the face of the family monument, John Lovelace (who died in 1558) had the credit of being an exemplary person. The following forms a part of it :—

"Blessing the Poore, more blessed thou did'st thrive,
 "Six sons, two daughters, blessed was thy Bed ;
 "Thy Lyfe in Christ, then blessed thou alive,
 "Thy Death in Christ, and blessed art thou dead ;
 "Blessed by name, by Title and by Wife,
 "By Father, Children, Poore, by Death and Lyfe."

There is an epitaph inscription still extant in Hurley Church to his successor (his son Richard) reporting him to have lived virtuously and departed this life the 12th day of March, 1601. There is also an epitaph to his successor (afterwards created Lord Lovelace, of Hurley, by King Charles I., on May 31st, 1629) ; and, although his epitaph (evidently written by himself), "lived worthily and departed this lyfe Anno Dni." has never until the present day been filled up above his kneeling stone effigies in the church, yet his burial took place here on April 28th, 1634, and is so entered in the Register. By an indenture, dated in 1625, enrolled in Chancery 29th January, 1639-40, he granted 10 quarters of Rye to the Poor of Hurley and twenty nobles to the Vicar of Hurley, both which gifts are still paid regularly by two farm rents at Aldworth. This worthy old man was succeeded by his son John, who died at Woodstock on September 24th, 1670, "and," our register says, "was brought from thence to Hurley on Saterdag, the first of October, and buried there in the vault the same night 1670." As for the next in line, another John, son of the one immediately above mentioned, he is described as "*Avitæ virtutis degener hæres*," having squandered his patrimony, and was buried in the vault here on October 6th, 1693. At his death the Manor was sold to pay his debts to one Vincent Oakley for £41,000. The massive silver Communion Plate still in weekly use at S. Mary's, Hurley, was presented, in 1695, by the Hon. Sir Henry Johnson, who appears to have been executor to this degenerate Lord. Not long ago I procured an original copy of the *London Gazette* for October 21-24, 1689, in which occurs the following advertisement : "This is to give Notice that my Lord Lovelace's Plate is to be run for on Clireden (*sic*) Heath or Common, and the Dinner to be at the Bear at Maidenhead, there being no room in Hurly for the gentlemen and their horses." There was a racecourse formerly (not far from Cliefden House), behind the "Feathers Inn" at Taplow. Enclosed in 1787, it now forms a part of the Dropmore property.

In 1708, Vincent Oakley sold by far the most valuable part of Hurley Manor, including Manorial Rights and the Great Tithe, to the Trustees of the will of the then late Sir Robert Gayer. This was again sold in 1768 by the Gayer family to George, Duke of

Marlborough, who in his turn sold it to Thomas Walker in 1790 ; and, in 1839, the Honourable H. Flower Walker, great grandson of the latter, sold it to Sir East George Clayton East, Bart., as Trustee for his son, Sir G. E. Gilbert East, Bart., together with the other, less valuable, portion of the Manor, which he (Honourable H. Flower Walker) had purchased from the relatives of the then late Mr. Richard Troughton. A portion of the Manor was then purchased (with the consent of the late Sir G. E. Gilbert East, Bart.), by the late Colonel T. P. Williams, of Temple House, Berks.

I append a list drawn up by Hurley Churchwardens on August 6th, 1552, of the goods, plate, &c., at that time in their custody at Hurley Church. "A chalice and three bells, a cope of white damask, a cope of red damask, a cope of blue satin, a vestment of crimson velvet embroydered, a red vestment embroydered, a white vestment of satin of bridges, a vestment of black satin of bridges, a vestment of red satin of bridges, two fronts for the high altar of satin of bridges, and another front of dorning, an old front of satin of bridges, a cross of latten with four altar clothes, three old small candlesticks, an old pair of censors, a ship and three old cruets of tin."

I have endeavoured ever since I was instituted as Vicar of Hurley (my native place) in 1868, to make out the History of Hurley, and here are some of the results. In 1887 I secured a list of the 'Clerici' of Hurley and of most of the Patrons from 1304 down to the present time, mainly from the Salisbury Diocesan Registry. A manuscript copy of it hangs, framed, on the wall of S. Mary's Church. Hurley was, with the rest of Berkshire, in the Salisbury Diocese until October 7th, 1836.

