



Early Charters and Documents relating to the Church and Manor of Bisham, Berks.

By Mr. Nathaniel Hone.

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IN continuation of the documents illustrating the connection of the Knights Templars with Bisham, the following Charter, undated, of Thomas de Sandford is of interest.

Charter of Thomas de Santford of all his land of Saundford, and of the advowson of the Church of Blebyry.

To all, &c., Thomas de Santford, son of Thomas de Santford. Health in the lord. Know all of you, that I, by intuition of divine piety and for the health of my soul, and the souls of my father and mother and all my ancestors and successors, have given, granted, and by this my present charter have confirmed, to God and blessed Mary, and the Knights Brethren of the Temple, in free and perpetual alms in aid of the holy land, and to sustain one chaplain who shall celebrate mass for the faithful departed for ever, in the house of the Temple at Bustleham, all my land of Saunford, with the advowson of the Church of Blebyry (Blewbury), and with all their appurtenances, without any withholding. To have &c., doing therefrom foreign service to the chief lords of that fee, as far as belongs to the said land, &c. These being witnesses; Sir John de Nevill, Sir Richard de Turri, Sir John de Plesiz, Sir Stephen de Harnehill, Sir John de Helesfeld, Sir Geoffrey de Stocwell, Richard de Brackele. (*Monast. Angl. tom. III. p 62 b.*) Templars' farm, with some features of architectural interest, still exists at Sandford-on-Thames.

The following early Feet of Fines may be here given. For those not conversant with these documents, it may be as well to briefly explain their nature. They were in fact conveyances, or the *final* agreements between parties concerning any lands, rents, &c., where

of there was any suit between them. The Concord was made by leave of the King or his justices, whereby the lands, &c. in question became, or were acknowledged to be, the right of one of the parties. The foot of the document, which contained a summary of the whole transaction, was cut off and retained by the Court. Hence the official name of this series of documents.

The first is of the 8th year of Richard I. (1196-7), of which the following is a translation:—

This is the final Concord made in the Court of the lord King at Westminster, in xv. days after the feast of St. Michael, in the viii. year of the reign of King Richard, before H Archbishop of Canterbury, R Archdeacon of Hereford, Osbert fits Harvey, Simon de Pateshull, Master Thomas de Husseburn, Richard de Herierd, then Justices, and other lieges of the lord King then and there present. Between Henry fitz Henry, petitioner, and Henry his father, and the brethren of the Knighthood of the Temple, tenants, of one virgate of land with the appurtenances in Bustlesham. Whereupon it was impleaded between them in the aforesaid Court, that the aforesaid brethren and Henry the father should remit to the aforesaid Henry, the aforesaid virgate of land with the appurtenances. To hold to him and his heirs of Henry his father while he lived, paying annually vi^s shillings iii^s shillings at the feast of St. Michael, and iii^s shillings at the feast of St. Mary in March, and the aforesaid brethren of the Knighthood of the Temple have granted to the aforesaid Henry the father, half a hide of land which he formerly held of them in Bustlesham, for one mark of silver per annum, to be held of them to the said Henry and his heirs for ever, for xii^s shillings per annum for all service and exaction, at the feast of St. Michael vi^s, and at the feast of St. Mary in March vi^s. And for this fine and concord, the aforesaid Henry the father hath given and quit claimed for ever from him and his heirs, to the aforesaid brethren of the Knighthood of the Temple, vi^s viii^d rent which he had from a freehold of "Talc" and Gunilda his wife, and whatever he had or shall have in the aforesaid tenement.

By this final agreement two conveyances are effected; in the one case a virgate of land in Bustlesham is conveyed to Henry fitz Henry to be held of his father while he lived, at an annual rent of 6^s shillings and in the other a hide of land is conveyed to Henry the father by the Knights Templars, at a rent of 12^s shillings per annum, he relinquishing the rent of a freehold in his possession valued at 6s. 8d. per annum.

The next concord is of the 5th year of John 1203-4, and runs as follows :—

This is the final concord made in the Court of the lord King at Westminster, in the Octave of St. Martin, in the fifth year of the reign of King John before G fitz Peter, Richard de Hervey, Eustace de Fauconberg, Geoffrey de L'Isle, Walter de Creping, Osbert fitz Hervey, Justices and other barons of the lord King then and there present. Between Phillip de Oxhey, petitioner, and the brethren of the Knighthood of the Temple, tenants, of one hide of land with the appurtenances in Bustlesham. Whereupon it was impleaded between them in the aforesaid Court, to wit, that the aforesaid brethren have acknowledged the whole of the aforesaid land with the appurtenances to be the right of the said Phillip. And for this recognition, fine, and concord the aforesaid Phillip hath granted to the aforesaid brethren, the whole of the aforesaid land with the appurtenances, to hold to them and their successors of the aforesaid Phillip and his heirs for ever, paying therefrom annually sixteen shillings at two terms of the year, to wit, at the Annunciation of St. Mary eight shillings, and at the feast of St. Michael eight shillings for all service, saving the service due to the King. And for this concession the aforesaid brethren have given to the aforesaid Phillip thirty marks silver.

The above two fines are printed in Record type, with abbreviations, in Hunter's Fines.

From this date, for the next few reigns, the history of the Manor appears to be somewhat involved. Bp. Tanner in his *Notitia*, under Bustleham, says, "Upon their dissolution (*i.e.* the Templars), this Manor seems not to have passed with the greater part of their estates to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, for they had before granted it away in fee to Hugh de Spencer, junr.," giving as a reference Patent Roll 19 Ed. III. pt. 3. m . . . The entry on this roll m. 17, is an *Inspeximus* of a Charter of Thos. Larcher, late *Prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem*, granting among others the Manor of Bustleham (reserving the Church) sometime of the Templars, to Hugh le Dispenser dated at London, Thursday in the feast of SS. Peter and Paul 17 Ed. II. This *Inspeximus* was granted to the then Prior of the Augustinian Canons at Bustleham Montague, into whose hands the Manor had come, and "*tenore presentium duximus exemplificand*," at West., 20 Day Decemb., 1345-6. But on the Charter Roll two years previously to above grant 15 Ed. II., appears the enrolment of a grant to Hugh le

Dispenser, which shows that the Manor was then in the hands of Thomas E of Lancaster.

Grant of the Manor of Bustleham to Hugh le Dispenser, junior.

The King to the Archbishops, &c. greeting. Know ye that we, for the good and laudable service which our beloved and faithful Hugh le Dispenser, junior, hath hitherto rendered us, have given, granted, and by this our present Charter have confirmed to the said Hugh the manor of Brustesham, with the appurtenances, in the County of Berks, which was of Thomas sometime E of Lancaster, and which by forfeiture of the same, came into our hands by way of escheat. To have and to hold to the said Hugh and his heirs, together with the Knight's fees, advowsons whatsoever, and with the hundreds, markets, fairs, chases, free warrens, fisheries, free liberties and customs, and all other things to the said manor whatsoever and wheresoever appertaining or belonging, as freely and wholly as the aforesaid Earl ever held the said manor, without any withholding; of us our heirs and other chief lords of that fee, by the services which were due from the same manor, before that it came into our hands, for ever. Wherefore We will and firmly command for Us and Our heirs, that the aforesaid Hugh may have and hold to him and his heirs the manor aforesaid with the appurtenances, together with the Knight's fees, &c., as above, by the services aforesaid as is aforesaid for ever. These being witnesses, John de Brittany, Earl of Richmond, Aylmer de Valence Earl of Pembroke, John de Warrenne Earl of Surrey, Edmund Earl of Arundel, John de Segrave senior, John de Somery, Ralph Basset de Drayton and others. Given by our hand at Pontefract xxij day of March. By writ of Privy seal. (*Charter Roll 15, Edward II. No. 19.*)

This Charter was granted two days after the execution of the Earl of Lancaster at Pontefract which took place on the 22nd March, 1322.

The present writer has not been able, as yet, to trace on the Rolls any grant to the Earl of Lancaster; it is possible that it may have come to him by his marriage with Alice, daughter of Henry Lacy, E of Lincoln, but the two following entries on the Originalia Rolls seem to point to the conclusion that the Manor remained in the hands of the Knight's Templars up to the time of their suppression, when it would fall, by way of escheat, into the hands of the King. The first entry is:—

The King to all to whom, &c. greeting. Know ye that we have committed [*i.e.*, the custody of] to our beloved and faithful Robert

de Hanstede junior, the Manor of Bustleham with the appurtenances, which together with other lands and tenements of the Master and brethren of the Knighthood of the Temple, is in our hands, to have custody thereof as long as it shall be Our pleasure. So that of the issues thereof forthcoming he shall answer to Us at our Exchequer. In witness whereof, &c.

In this year the Templars throughout the kingdom were seized, imprisoned, and their estates confiscated, and four years after the Order was suppressed, when all their lands and tenements in the County of Berks, were committed to John de Bloxham with the exception of the Manor of Bisham, which was committed, as appears by the following entry, to Roger de Wyngfield. (*Originalia 1, Edward II., r. 10.*)

The second extract runs as follows :—

The King to all to whom, &c. greeting. Know ye that we have committed to our beloved clerk, Roger de Wyngfield, the Manor of the Templars of Bistelesham with the appurtenances in the County of Berks, which for certain reasons is in Our hands. To have as long as it shall be our pleasure, paying therefrom to Us per annum at Our Exchequer fifty pounds, one half to wit, at our Easter Exchequer, and the other half at our Michaelmas Exchequer. In witness, &c. By the Council.

A further search on the Rolls may perhaps clear up this apparent discrepancy in the history of the Manor ; in the meantime it may be mentioned that on the Great Cowcher of the Duchy of Lancaster (which, by the way, is a magnificent folio, richly illuminated, and in fine preservation) is an entry of the grant of the Manor to Eubulo Lestrangle and Alice, his wife, widow of the above Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, dated at Westminster, 25th September, 8, Edward III. (1334). In the following year, the King grants the Manor to William de Montecute, Earl of Salisbury (Pat. Roll 9, Edward III., m. 9), and in the Report of Prior Philip de Thame to the Grand Master of the Knight's Hospitallers of the possessions of the Order in England in 1338, the Church of Bisham is valued at x. marks, while the Manor is stated as *not in the hands* of the Hospitallers, but held by the Earl of Salisbury and worth c. marks. (*Originalia 5, Edward II., r. 7.* Camden Soc. Vol. 65.)