

It <sup>e</sup> of ye testeme't of jon <sup>e</sup> belle ij towellys & ij <sup>d</sup> of money ... ..	
It <sup>e</sup> of y <sup>e</sup> testeme't of thomas ta'ner ij <sup>s</sup> y paid ...	
It <sup>e</sup> we reseyved at estyr of halle y <sup>e</sup> parsche ...	x <sup>s</sup> vi <sup>d</sup>
It <sup>e</sup> of my fadyr for y <sup>e</sup> vayle¶ of y <sup>e</sup> gretebell ...	vi <sup>d</sup> ob.
It <sup>e</sup> of jho' edwarde for y <sup>e</sup> be quest of thomas longg ... ..	vi <sup>d</sup>
It <sup>e</sup> at Kyrsteman we reseyved of halle y <sup>e</sup> parsche	xiii <sup>s</sup>
It <sup>e</sup> of y <sup>e</sup> testeme't of yong ho't ys wyffe of morton	iiij
It <sup>e</sup> at estyr we reseyved of hall y <sup>e</sup> parsche ...	x <sup>s</sup> v <sup>d</sup>
It <sup>e</sup> for y <sup>e</sup> beryyng of jho' mylton yn tretyele ...	iiij <sup>s</sup> iiij <sup>d</sup>
Sum de rec lviii <sup>s</sup> xi <sup>d</sup> ob.	
S'm total recepte vi <sup>ii</sup> xviii <sup>s</sup> xi <sup>d</sup>	

¶ Vayle—fee for tolling.

(To be continued.)

## The History of Littlecote.

By Walter Money, F.S.A.

**L**ITTLECOTE HALL, as it was formerly called, is one of the most interesting specimens of an early Tudor Mansion to be found in England. Surrounded by a finely-wooded park of four miles in circumference, and flanked by a lofty knoll, covered with stately timber, with a branch of the Kennet, famous for trout, flowing through the grounds, there are few more picturesque country houses than this long irregular building, with its quaint chimney stacks and many gables. It was originally built by the Darells, on the site of an older manor-house, but for generations has been successively the family mansion of the Pophams and Leybourne-Pophams. To an architectural mind the place is simply delightful on account of its almost perfect state of preservation. With few exceptions the old country houses of this period have been allowed to fall out of repair by absentees, or more completely ruined by being modernised, "restored," and vulgarised,

until only a trace of their original beauty is left. No complaint of this kind can be made concerning Littlecote, which from the date it was first built has remained almost unaltered, and is, therefore, precious beyond measure to the antiquary and artist. Writing of this house about 1540, Leland in his "Itinerary," says "Littlecote, the Darell's chief house, is a mile from Ramesbyri, a right faire and large parke hangynge upon the cliffe of a high hille welle woddyd over Kenet;" and this describes it accurately enough at the present time save in one respect. It is no longer the "Darell's chief house."

The mansion and lands passed into the possession of Sir John Popham, who was Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench between 1592 and 1607. They are still held by his descendants, though not in a direct line, the present owner being paternally descended from William Leybourne-Leybourne, Governor-General in the West Indies, who married Ann Popham, daughter of Edward Popham of Littlecote. Their son, General Edward William Leybourne-Popham assumed the name and arms of Popham, upon coming to this estate. He died in 1853, and was succeeded by his eldest son and heir Edward William, on whose death in January 1881, the property devolved on his nephew, Francis William Leybourne-Popham, the present owner of the estate. When Leland saw it, the existing house was probably not a very old one, and it had most likely taken the place of some ancient structure about the time of the termination of feudal warfare, when defence came no longer to be an object in a country mansion. To the taste of many the finest aspect is from the northern terrace towards the river. Unquestionably this is the older part of the house, and together with the servants' apartments appears to have formed part of some earlier building. The red brick is mingled with flint, the walls are of enormous thickness. The upper staircase is made of solid blocks of oak, each forming a step. A semi-circular buttress, hardly in keeping with the rest of the structure, projects from the middle of the great gallery, which is very like that of Haddon Hall. A gateway of old ironwork marks the position of the ancient entrance, also indicated by a lodge and part of a pathway down to the river. The precise date at which the two fronts of the house were built is not known, but they speak distinctly of the last days of the fifteenth, and the early or middle part of the sixteenth century. The coloured glass in the principal lancet-windows, and the small-leaded panes

of the lesser casements, have all been studiously preserved and the general effect of the north front is delightful in its absolute perfection of detail. At a distance from the Ramsbury road it is a bewildering nest of gables and chimney stacks, like a little town, as the rustics have it, and charmingly picturesque as the smoke curls upwards from its twisted chimneys and loses itself among the trees which cover the higher ground beyond. Taking the rooms in order as we enter from the south or principal entrance we first come to the Great Hall, which measures 46 feet in length, by 24 in width, and 25 in height, is a remarkable table of massive oak, black with age and use ; this and some other of the furniture in all likelihood came from the old house. The table, which reaches nearly the full length of the hall, is constructed at one end to admit the game "shuffle-board"—an amusement formerly much indulged in at large houses, particularly in bad weather. It was probably round this that the retainers sat in old times. Coats of mail, once worn by a long line of Darells and of Calstons, from whom the Darells acquired the Littlecote estate in the fourteenth century, which perhaps were battered in the strife of York and Lancaster, crossbows, as well as a number of yellow jerkins, are hung upon the wall above the high oaken wainscoat. Nowhere in England, it is said, is to be found a finer collection of buff coats. These buff leather doublets, or jerkins, cut somewhat in the shape of a shooting jacket, described as "the simplest, safest, cheapest, most economical, and most lasting dress a soldier ever took the field in" are those worn by the yeoman troopers of Colonels Edward and Alexander Popham. The "bandoliers," a broad leather belt with charges of powder hung by little cords, and worn by the dragoons over the right shoulder, the sword belts, "back and breast pieces" of steel, the "pot" helmets, pistols, petronels, arquebusses or carbines, priming-boxes, swords, &c., of the Caroline period, are also said to be part of the equipment of the sturdy Wiltshire yeoman troopers who served in the saddle under the squires of Littlecote. At the east end of the Hall is a complete suit of armour stated to have been worn by Colonel Alexander Popham ; and close by is a staff surmounted with a silver top or finial, upon which is represented the bearer of the staff in the military costume of the time. The large equestrian portrait at the west end of the Great Hall is that of the Colonel Alexander Popham, just mentioned, son of Sir Francis Popham, and grandson of Judge Popham. Like his father and

brother Edward, the eminent Parliamentary commander, he was a zealous opposer of the government of Charles I. He took an active part in the military transactions of the period, and sustained a siege of his house at Wellington, Somerset, by the King's forces. He afterwards assisted General Monk in restoring Charles II., and on the 23rd February, 1659, he was elected one of the Council of State, who took upon themselves the administration of the government between the dissolution of the Long Parliament and the restoration of the King, when he obtained his pardon. The father of John Locke, the philosopher, served under Colonel Alexander Popham, who always interested himself in the education of his son, and was instrumental in sending him to the University of Oxford. He married, as his second wife, Letitia Carr, sister of Ann Carr, the wife of his brother Edward, and dying in December, 1669, was buried at Chilton Foliat. The view of the house of Littlecote over the fireplace is said to have been painted by a Dutch General, who was confined as a prisoner in the house. We shall speak more fully of this when we come to the "Painted Room." At the west end of the Hall is suspended a grand specimen of the horns of the Irish elk, measuring 7-ft. 6-in. from tip to tip. We must not forget to mention Judge Popham's chair, built in a combination of triangles, from which the Chief Justice sentenced contumacious offenders to the thumb-stocks, which can still be seen at the east end of the Great Hall. The Long Gallery which is about 110 feet in length, contains a number of portraits of the Popham family. In the ante-chamber is a curious piece of needlework representing a large Roman tessellated pavement which was unearthed in the adjoining park. It was first discovered in 1728 by the steward to Mr. Edward Popham, the then possessor of Littlecote. By that gentleman a coloured drawing was made and it was communicated to the Society of Antiquaries, who ordered it to be engraved. The pavement measured 41 feet in length by 33 feet in breadth, and seems to have formed the floor of a temple. It was completely broken up soon after it was brought to light. Another apartment of considerable interest is that which was occupied by William during his stay at Littlecote, but the bedstead upon which his Majesty reposed has been removed. The present bedstead, however, is a handsome one of carved oak and is appropriately hung with orange velvet. Here William slept after the memorable conference with James' Commissioners on December 8th, 1688. Another interesting apartment is the Darrell Room, which like other things in this rare old house

has been kept intact ; but the legendary beds and curtains have long since been removed. The so-called haunted chamber is the ante-room to this apartment. The Painted Room is fraught with unusual interest, the walls and ceiling being painted by a Dutch officer (a general) and other prisoners, who were detained at Littlecote, during the Commonwealth period. This is said to have been done in return for the kindness shown them by its owner, Colonel Alexander Popham. The principal scenes represented are from Don Quixote and Hudibras, and evince a remarkable amount of artistic humour and unquestionable merit. In the course of the Dutch war, in which the Admirals Van Tromp, De Ruyter, and De Witt were met by the Commonwealth leaders, Blake, Deane, and Monk, a number of prisoners were taken by the English, and despatched to various provincial towns. Several hundreds were sent to Newbury, and in 1653, John Burch, the Mayor, petitioned Parliament that the town might either be paid for the keep of the Dutch prisoners or have them removed, as the inhabitants were sorely distressed by this extra burden laid upon them. The Littlecote prisoners were probably sent there about this time.

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**A RARE COIN.**—A shilling of Edward VI. has been found in the neighbourhood of Beaconsfield, where the excavations for the new main line of the Great Western and Great Central Railway Companies are in progress. The coin, which is in good preservation, bears a well defined bust of the boy King.

**OLD CLOTH HALL, NEWBURY.**—In a recent number of your Journal you kindly gave a plate of this ancient building, at the same time drawing attention to the work taken in hand by a large and influential committee, to purchase, restore, and fit up as a Museum of Local Antiquities and Art Gallery this building, as a memorial to our late beloved Queen Victoria. The building has been purchased, and the work of restoration should be completed this next month (October). A very liberal response has been made to our appeal for funds, but there is still wanting some £400 to meet the liability incurred by the committee. May I urge any of your readers who have not yet subscribed, and who take an interest in the preservation of these fine old buildings, to forward subscriptions to the Treasurer, John Rankin, Esq., J.P., Mayor of Newbury, or to G. J. Watts, Hon. Sec. ?