



Some Notes on the Abingdon Chronicle.

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IN the series of historical documents published under the authority of the Master of the Rolls, the *Chronicle of Abingdon Abbey* fully merited its place as the second work which was undertaken, after Capgrave's *Chronicle*; and the choice of the Rev. Joseph Stephenson as Editor was well justified by the learning and critical power and general equipment which he brought to the work. Unfortunately the important qualification that he lacked was a special knowledge of the district with which he had chiefly to deal. It is disappointing to find, more than once or twice, a place-name occurring in different passages, or even in the same passage, interpreted as meaning one place in the Index and an entirely different place in the body of the work, with no hint of apology for the discrepancy and no explanation of it.

Thus we have *Mordun* in the Index described as "Moreton near Uffington," while in a note to the Chronological List of Charters (II. 516) it is "Morton in Berkshire, of which there are now two parishes," and in a third place (p. 523, note) it is doubtfully suggested as "Mordon in Surrey, four miles from Croydon (?)." Twenty hides of land in Mordune were granted by King Edgar to Eadwine in 962 (I. 305); and in 1012 the same land, which had come back by forfeiture to the Crown, was granted by Ethelred to the Church of Abingdon (I. 377). This may or may not be Mordon in Surrey. A Mordun in Berkshire occurs in the boundaries of Uffington and also in the conterminous part of the boundaries of Ashbury, as indicating a "Moordown" situated between these two places; but this, which seems to have suggested the "Moreton near Uffington" of the Index, can hardly be the same as the place in question, and no doubt there would be plenty of "Moor-downs" along this front of the Berkshire hills. Certainly

the name *Mordun*, occurring several times, cannot mean a *Moreton*; nor is there the least reason for supposing that the Abbey ever held lands at either North or South Moreton in Berkshire.

Again, the Chronicle mentions some ten times a possession of the Abbey which is variously written *Lega*, *Lege*, and *Leia*. The Index refers to one passage (I. 128) under "Lea near Abingdon" and to the rest under "Lega, Co. Warwick?." Of Lea near Abingdon there is no doubt. We read that near the town of Abingdon there was a mansion called *Leia* from which a Knight's service was due; but this was repudiated by William, the King's Chamberlain from London, who held the place when Faritius became Abbot (*Est juxta Abbendonix burgum unius militis mansio quæ Leia vocatur; hanc Willelmus regis Camerarius de Lundonia tenebat, sed nullum inde servitium militis vel homagium domno Faritio Abbati cum Abbatiam primo suscepisset impendere volebat*; I. 128): and when Robert of Normandy was invading England this William refused the Knight-service for which the Abbot appealed in aid of the King; but after the conclusion of peace he owned that he was in the wrong and paid his fine, the offence was condoned, and he acknowledged himself the Abbot's man. Then, among the passages which are referred with a query to Lea in Warwickshire, we find mention of the Chapels of *Tubbenei* and *Lega* (II. 325), Tubney being some four miles from Abingdon; and we find *Leia* again with *Tubbenei* in the list of the military tenants of the Abbey (II. 5). We also read of the tithe payable to the Infirmary of the Abbey by "William the Knight of Lege" (II. 329). In fact there is nothing in any of the references to Lea which suggests that it was any other than the Lea near Abingdon; and the only passage in which we have any allusion to Warwickshire in connection with it is the account (II. 232) of a certain Richard from Warwickshire (*quidam Ricardus nomine de Wareauikscira*) coming to Abingdon to transact some business "with William de Lega, a Knight of this Church" (*cum Willelmo de Lega milite istius ecclesiæ*).

There is indeed a second Lea, which is written *Leoie* and *Leia*, and is mentioned with Frilford and Appleton as being like each of them a member of Marcham in King Edgar's time when he granted Marcham to the Abbey in 965 (I. 265, 266). The boundaries are given; but the Editor has not observed that they are identical with those of Thæclege which are given in Charters of Ethelred, 1015, and of Edward the Confessor, 1052 (I. 427, 456). Thæclege is the woodland belonging to Chiltune or Cildatun, which the Index

places "near Hungerford, partly in Berkshire and partly in Wiltshire," though a note (II. 523) says it is not easy to decide which of the two Chiltons in Berks is meant, one being near Hungerford (Chilton Foliatt) and the other near Ilsley. It is worth observing that the boundaries of *Leia* or *Thæclege* mention there other leas, *Merclege*, *Stanlege*, and *Dunlege*: hence it must have been necessary to distinguish the central *Lea* which they enclose, and it therefore becomes *Thæclege*. The only other points named in its boundaries are *Dudemeres Hall* (*Dudemæres Hele*) and a hedge or enclosure (*hæcce*).

There are at least three instances of places mentioned in the Chronicle where the Editor has gone entirely astray in his attempts to identify them. Eighteen references to the Manor of *Worth* are given in the Index, and it is there described as "in the parish of Faringdon." Elsewhere (II. 510) it is "Word in Faringdon;" and in a third place (II. 534) it is "Littleworth, a member of the Manor of Faringdon," which is apparently to be understood as Littleworth in the parish of Buckland and lying between that village and Faringdon. But when we turn to the Charters of Edwy and Edgar confirming Worth to the Abbey (I. 245, 246; 256—260), we find in both that *Wrth*, *Weorth*, or *Wyrth* lies between the Thames and the Ock, and that its boundary follows the Thames to the limit of *Cingham* in the one and *Cingtun* in the other, and also follows the Ock as far as the limit of Charney (*Cearninga gemære*, *Cearna graf*). These facts at once identify Worth with Longworth, between Charney and Kingston Bagpuize. And afterwards (II. 30, 120) we read that Kingston had been in the parish of Worth in King Edward's time, but a chapel with a cemetery was founded there by Adeilm and Ralph de Bachepuiz in the time of William Rufus and was dedicated by Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury.

Further, we have a charter of King Edgar (I. 299) granting seven hides at Cingestune to his servant Brihteah in 970, and five years later (965, error for 975) another charter of Edward the Martyr (I. 349) granting to the Abbey these seven hides, which had evidently reverted to the King. In the Index this is rightly explained as "Kingston, co. Berks," (but without defining whether it is Kingston Bagpuize or Kingston Lisle); yet a note in the Chronological List of Charters suggests "Kingston-upon-Thames in Surrey?" overlooking the fact that the boundaries, which are given in two distinct charters of King Edward (I. 350, 353), begin from the Ock (*ærest of Eocene*).

The position of *Linford* is defined in two charters (I. 107, 440) as being between the Ock and Cilla's brook" (*Cillanrithe*). In the one charter King Edmund gives it to Alfeg, who conveys it to the Abbey, and in the other Cnut confirms it to the Abbey, the boundaries leaving no doubt that the same place is described in both cases. We read again of a "Linford-men's mere" (*Linfordinga gemær*) in the boundaries of Garford, and *Cillanrithe* appears again as dividing Garford from Hanney (I. 95, 206). In one place also (II. 4) the name appears as *Liford*. All this establishes with certainty that it is Lyford. Yet the Index suggests "Linford in Buckinghamshire, near Newport Pagnell" for that of Edmund's Charter, and "Linford co. Oxford?" for that of Cnut's.

There is a charter of King Edwy, dated 956, granting to Alfwin fifteen hides at *Middeltune*, which Alfwin conveys to the Abbey (I. 212, 213). In the Index it appears as "Middelton in Marcham," presumably because some writs of Henry II. order the restitution of the Church of Marcham with its appurtenances and a hide and a half in Middeltune to the Abbey (II. 222, 223); and similarly it follows immediately after Marcham in the Bull by which Pope Eugenius III. confirms various possessions to the Abbey in 1146 (II. 192), though no such connection appears usually in the numerous passages in which the two places are mentioned. But in a note (II. 512) we are told that the Middelton of Edwy's charter is "probably Middleton co. Oxford, three miles from Bicester." This is perhaps suggested by the fact (recorded II. 118) that in the year 1108 the Bishop of Lincoln's men from Middeltun broke into the close of the Abbot's Mill at Cuddesdon and were required by the Bishop to repair the enclosure. But whatever be the Middelton in this case, it is clear that the Middelton given to the Abbey by King Edwy is neither in Oxfordshire nor a Middelton (the existence of which seems to be a pure assumption) in Marcham. The boundaries given in the charter include several points which appear again in the boundaries of Drayton (I. 271), where, by the way, we find also "Mydeling." Further, in the reign of William Rufus, Alfwi the priest of Sutton asks that his son may succeed him in that Church, and Abbot Rainald and the brethren grant his petition but except the Chapel of Middeltun and its appurtenances (II. 28). There is therefore no question that this is Milton, a possession of the Abbey down to the time of the dissolution, adjacent to Drayton and to Sutton of which it was originally a Chapelry. And in the writ of Henry II. where Middelton is connected with Marcham it is

equally connected with Appleford which is still a Chapelry of Sutton Courtney.

There is also a confusion which should be noted between *Walingeford* (Wallingford) and *Waliford* (Welford near Newbury). The compiler of the later copy of the Chronicle has himself written *Walingeford* in two places where the older copy has *Waliford* (II. 82, 83). A charter of King Kenulf in 821 according to the earlier copy gives to the Abbey "Lechamstede, Boxora, *Weliford*," together with "Wickam" (I. 26), where the later copy reads *Walingford*, though the association with Leckhamstead, Boxford and Wickham shows plainly that Welford, adjacent to them, is intended. Similarly, where the confirmatory Bull of Eugenius III. in 1146 reads "*Weliford*, Chiveleam" (II. 192), the second Bull in 1152 reads "Chiveleam, Boxoram, *Walingasfordam*, Wicheham:" yet in the Index this latter passage (II. 196) is placed under Wallingford. Again, we have a writ of Henry I. mentioning "the wood of the Abbot of Abbendon which belongs to his Manor of *Walingford*," where the title of the passage is "De Bosco apud *Waliford*" (II. 83). There is a passage also relating to the tithes of *Waliford* (II. 144), given correctly in the Index under *Welford*, where the Editor's marginal heading is "Of the tithes of *Wallingford*." Lastly, under the heading of Rents due to the Chamberlain (*De Redditu Camerae*), we read, "*De Weliford xxxvij. lib.*" (II. 326), and some lines below, on the next page, it is directed that if the Chamberlain goes to Winchester Fair the tenent of *Weliford* shall bring home his purchases. The direction occurs again (II. 389), where we read the name as *Welleford*. It is obvious that in these three passages the same place is meant. But the Index assigns the middle one doubtfully to a "*Weliford in Hampshire or Wilts?*" and puts the two others with the rest of the references to "*Welford six miles from Newbury.*" The list of such inaccuracies might easily be lengthened; but enough instances have been given to show that students of the Abingdon Chronicle must be on their guard in making use of the assistance which the Rolls Edition offers them.

A very interesting question has lately been raised about the identification of a spot connected with the earliest period of the history of Abingdon, as to which no doubt seems to have been previously entertained. Some papers have appeared in the *Oxford Diocesan Magazine* (June to September, 1904), criticising the *Provisional Prospectus* of "The Victoria History of Berkshire" and offering valuable suggestions relating to the antiquities of the

County. It deals at length (pages 169—172) with the story told in the Chronicle of the removal of the Nuns of Helenstow at Abingdon to their new settlement at Witham (I. 8), or Wittheham (II. 269), which took place after the death of their foundress, Cilla, and probably about the year 700. This writer observes that two places are called "Witham" in the Chronicle, Wytham and Wittenham, at both of which the Abbey held lands; and he urges strong reasons against the usual view, which is accepted by the Editor of the Chronicle, that the Nuns settled at Wytham, four miles from Oxford, and shows that the documents themselves and the facts which they record point rather to Wittenham, some sixteen miles further down the river. He notes that a few pages further on (I. 40) we read of King Ethelred confirming to one of his nobles named Ethelwulf a grant, made to him in 862, of ten hides in *Witham*; and this is called *Witthennam* in the charter that follows, and is unquestionably Wittenham. The same land, we are told (I. 41), was afterwards given to the Abbey by Bishop Siward (who died in 1075); and it is further described as "Wittheham in civitatis Wallingford contermino sita." Wittenham too appears in the Domesday Survey as "Witeham." Also a second charter of confirmation (I. 134, 135) calls it *Wittanham*, and gives the boundaries, which mention "Scillinges broce," a name surviving still in the neighbouring Shillingford across the river, and also a tree called "headdan treowe," perhaps connected with a neighbouring hill still named Hadden. He might have added that the latter part of the boundary follows a *higweg*, or highway, leading out upon the Thames, and then turns up the river northward, corresponding exactly with the present southern boundary of Wittenham, which follows the course of a Roman road to the point where it crossed the river into Dorchester, and which from that point follows the river. It is further pointed out by this writer that the reason alleged in the Chronicle for the final dispersion of the Nuns was the erection of a fort (*castellum*) upon the hill of Witham by Offa in his war with Kinewulf of Wessex (I. 8, cf. II. 270), which points strongly to Wittenham; for there a great British earthwork, which Offa may well have utilised, is still conspicuous on Sinodun or "Castle Hill," in a position commanding a wide view of the district which Offa conquered at this time, as the Chronicler describes it (I. 14), from Wallingford to Ashbury and from "Ichenilde strete" to the Thames; whereas on Wytham Hill no traces of fortification can be discovered, and the site would have been of no value as a point of outlook over the district of which

Offa took possession. A good case, therefore, seems to have been made out for the view that the Witham where the Nuns were settled for some three-quarters of a century is the Witeham of Domesday and the modern Wittenham, not the Witham of which the more distinctive name was Wihtham, now Wytham.

It has been already noted in these pages (84, 85) that Bestlesford, which is mentioned in three charters in connection with the early history of Abingdon, is not Besilsleigh, as has been supposed, but is adjacent to Bradfield and Streatley, and therefore is no doubt a ford at Bestlesdene or Basildon, this being the district where it was intended that the Abbey should be built before the site at Abingdon was chosen.

DISCOVERY OF POTTERY AT OAKFIELD PARK.—I send you, as promised, a few particulars of the Roman remains found in the kitchen garden at Oakfield Park. I am sorry I cannot give you fuller details, but, unfortunately, I did not hear about it until rather late, and, when I went, found that most of the garden had been trenched and turned destroying almost all evidence that might have been obtained. However, from what I observed, there appeared to have been five or six regular rows running across the garden from east to west $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, about 50 feet in length, and 10 feet apart, of burnt earth and calcined stones, intermixed with which were numerous fragments of pottery. The depth at which these were found was about one foot. The severe firing of the stones suggested that they had been subjected to great heat, and had no doubt been fired many times over. The fragments of pottery found show that they belonged to two classes—*hand made* and *wheel turned*; of the former, the vessels appeared to have been of large make, and the paste contained much silicious grit, no doubt to give additional strength; of the wheel turned variety, the vessels were of smaller make and the paste considerably finer, and in some cases showed signs of a glaze (black); other varieties were of a reddish-brown colour and unglazed. The fragments show that they were chiefly parts of cooking pots, but the remains of a bottle, of medium size with handle attached, was also found. A good deal of similar pottery has from time to time been found at Silchester; it has always been looked upon as of local manufacture. The site where these remains were found is not more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Silchester. It may be possible that on this site existed a Pottery which supplied Silchester with coarse and common wares (these were undoubtedly made somewhere near the city), the rows of burnt earth, etc., being where the vessels were fired. There is also plenty of clay suitable for pottery making found in the immediate neighbourhood. Coins of late Roman date have been found in the garden.—J. W. COLYER, Museum and Art Gallery, Reading.