

V.—THE MANOR AND TOWNSHIP OF EAST MATFEN.

BY W. PERCY HEDLEY.

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An account of the township of East Matfen appears in vol. xii of *A History of Northumberland*. An examination of the title deeds to property in East Matfen belonging to Sir Hugh Blackett, bart., can amplify and correct this account.

The Manor.

In the charter of inspeximus granted by Edward I to the prior and convent of Hexham¹ it is recorded that Thomas de Fenewyke granted to the prior and convent one manor, six messuages and three carucates in East Matfen and that the grant was confirmed by Robert de Insula in the time of Henry I. In the Rental of 1479 called the *Black Book* there is no mention of the manor of East Matfen being held by the prior and convent, and at the dissolution in 1536, Hexham only held four tenements. In the abstract of title dated 1741 to Mrs. Anne Douglas's estate at East Matfen there is a record of a suit or plaint depending before the Justices of the Common Bench between John de Hertwythow (Hartington) and Robert of the Island (de Insula) regarding the custody of the manors of Fenwick and East Matfen. The date of this suit is 6 Edw. I, and a record of Quo Warranto proceedings dated 21 Edw. I confirmed Robert of the Island in his claim to have gallows

¹ S.S., vol. 46, pp. 114-15.

in Fenwick and East Matfen. It is clear, therefore, that the manor remained in the hands of the Fenwicks of Fenwick. By letters patent dated 22 June 5 Jas. I the Crown granted to Edward Newport and John Crompton four tenements and lands in East Matfen of the yearly rent of 53s. 4d. late parcell of the possessions of the late monastery of Hexham. On 28 Nov. 6 Jas. I Newport and Crompton conveyed to Jon Newman and Henry Ryly and the latter conveyed to Sir John Fenwick on 15 Feb. 7 Jas. I.

On 18 Dec. 3 Chas. I the manor of East Matfen was settled by Sir John Fenwick on his marriage with Dame Margaret Selby widow of Sir George Selby; the settlement was on Sir John and his heirs till the marriage, then Sir John for life, remainder to Sir John and the heirs male of his body, remainder to William Fenwick (second son of Sir John) and the heirs male of his body, remainder to Robert Fenwick (third son) and the heirs male of his body, remainder to Allan Fenwick (fourth son) and the heirs male of his body, remainder to the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth sons of Sir John and the heirs male of their bodies, remainder to the heirs male of the body of Sir John Fenwick, remainder to Sir William Fenwick and the heirs male of his body, remainder to Roger Fenwick (brother of Sir William) and the heirs male of his body, remainder to Oswald Fenwick (second son of William Fenwick of Bitchfield) and the heirs male of his body, with further remainders to the heirs of the body of Sir John Fenwick, Sir William Fenwick (father of Sir John), Sir William Fenwick of Meldon, Roger Fenwick, and final remainder to the right heirs of Sir John. This amplifies the Fenwick pedigree given in the *County History*, vol. xii, p. 352.

It is stated in this history that the manor remained in the Fenwick family until the sale of their property to Sir William Blackett in 1689 and that it has remained in the possession of his descendants and is now the property of Sir Hugh Blackett. Both these statements are inaccurate; Sir Hugh Blackett is not descended from Sir William

Blackett of Wallington, and East Matfen was not sold to Sir William. On 25 Feb. 1685/6 Sir John Fenwick sold the manor of East Matfen for £1,000 to John Douglas, whose granddaughter Anne carried it by marriage to Sir Edward Blackett, great-great-grandfather of the present owner Sir Hugh Blackett.

The Township.

In 1536, at the time of the dissolution of Hexham Priory, Gerard Fenwick, Thomas Rutter, Thomas Archer and the wife of William Rutter each held a tenement, one close of half an acre, 4 acres of meadow, 15 acres of arable, and common rights, and paid 26s. 8d. a year. The later history of these four farms can be followed for some time from the Abstract of Title.

Dunn's Farm. On 8 April 9 Jas. I Sir John Fenwick conveyed to Arthur Dunne one messuage and farmhold in East Matfen of the yearly rent of 13s. 4d. This was apparently the farm occupied by Thomas Rutter in 1536. On 10 Feb. 1658/9 William Dunn by his will left his farm to Thomas Harle in trust to pay his debts and divide the residue between the testator's four daughters. An inventory of the goods of William Dunn was taken on 13 April 1659. On 29 March 1660 Edward Chatto and Ellinor his wife, Thomas Newham and Elizabeth his wife, and Anne Dunn, spinster (Ellinor, Elizabeth and Anne being daughters of the late William Dunn), released the farm in East Matfen to Thomas Harle. He mortgaged it in 1682, and on 29 Aug. 1700 Margaret Newham (daughter and heir of Thomas and Elizabeth Newham), Anne Sparrow (formerly Anne Dunn) and Ellinor Chatto (formerly Ellinor Dunn) sold the farm to John Douglas, the purchaser of the manor.

Archer's Farm (Thornham Hill). In 1611 Sir John Fenwick conveyed to Thomas Archer a messuage and farmhold in East Matfen of the yearly rent of 13s. 4d. On 5 May 1697 Thomas Archer and Stephen Archer, his son and heir apparent, conveyed to John Douglas certain lands

and garths in East Matfen on the north east part of John Douglas's close there enclosed with a stone wall. This land was evidently the original farm steading which stood in the village. The common fields had been divided and the Archers' allotment of land was so far removed from the village as to have necessitated the erection of a new steading on the allotment. Archer's Farm was to be known in future as Thornham Hill. On 28 Oct. 1747 Thomas Archer of Thornham Hill made his will in which he mentions his sons Michael, Stephen and Thomas, his daughters Sarah, Jane and Mary, and his wife Jane. On 7 March 1748 Michael Archer made a settlement on the occasion of his marriage with Margaret Smith of Anick. On 7 July 1760 he made his will. His heir was his eldest son Thomas; he had a younger son Matthew and two daughters Mary and Jane. In 1776 Thomas Archer sold Thornham Hill to Sir Edward Blackett.

Gerard Fenwick's Farms (Butcher Hill and East Moorhouses). On 8 April 9 Jas. I Sir John Fenwick conveyed to Gerard Fenwick, gent., two messuages or farmholds, one in Gerard Fenwick's own occupation, the other occupied by Widow Rutter, each of the yearly rent of 13s. 4d. On 21 June 1688 James Fenwick sold to John Douglas for £70 four houses in the town of East Matfen, but specifically reserved all his lands in the fields, precincts or commons of East Matfen.

Further details about the Fenwicks of East Matfen appear in the *New County History*. On 2 March 1754 James Fenwick sold East Matfen East Farm (now called Butcher Hill) to John Rowell of Laverick Hall. In 1774 William Smith of Newcastle and Thomas Smith of Hedworth voted as freeholders for this farm. It is now the property of Mr. Henry Angus of Matfen High House. The Fenwicks retained the farm of East Moorhouses, and in 1774 Thomas Fenwick of Danby Whisk, county York, voted in respect of it. A plan of the adjoining estate of Ouston dated between 1774 and 1777 gives the owner as

Mrs. Newton. The present owner is Mr. Robert Patterson of East Moorhouses.

On 28 March 1689 John Douglas agreed to an exchange of lands with James Quincy. The former owned three farms and the latter four. It is evident, therefore, that Douglas's purchase of the manor in 1686 included one farm only; he purchased two farms 30 Aug. 1688 from Thomas and Luke Fenwick. These two farms had been leased on 9 July 1647 by Sir John Fenwick to Gerard Fenwick for life and were then in the occupation of Luke Fenwick. Sir William Fenwick renewed the lease 8 Jan. 1660/1 to Thomas and Luke Fenwick (sons of Gerard Fenwick) for their lives and the life of the surviving wife of either of them.

On 2 March 1651/2 Sir John Fenwick leased to William Jameson, Jane his wife, and William Jameson junior, a cottage in East Matfen for their lives and the life of the longest liver at the yearly rent of 2s. This was purchased 26 Jan. 1688/9 by John Douglas from William Jameson senior and William Jameson junior, and is then described as a cottage with six kine stints, one horsegate and fifteen sheep gates.

Some brief records of a dispute with the adjoining manor of Welton about common rights are of interest. On 10 May 1680 there is a view of the bounders between the town of East Matfen belonging to Sir John Fenwick and other freeholders and the town of Welton. Squire Welton claimed to pasture and feed upon 100 acres of East Matfen. The dispute was carried on by John Douglas, and on 30 Aug. 1686 there was a bond between him, James Quincy, James Fenwick, and others for defraying the expenses of all suits between them and Michael Welton, esq., about the boundaries and common of East Matfen. The result of the dispute is not recorded, but the fact that the township of Welton has about 100 acres of land on the north side of the Military Road suggests that Squire Welton won his case.

Amongst Sir Hugh Blackett's estate papers is a plan of "East Matfen lands and grounds belonging to Mr. John

Douglas taken in December, 1699." Three farms occupied by George Cragill, Robert Rowell, and Edward Cragill contained 781 acres 3 roods 22 perches; East Matfen Mills contained 26 acres 2 roods 2 perches inclusive of "The Meadow Close where the miller's new house and byers are"; and Luke Fenwick's farm contained 107 acres 3 roods 32 perches. Luke Fenwick's farm was the farm later known as Clipper Headland, now part of Thornham Hill, but had lands in the "townegate called ye Green enjoyed with Luke Fenwick's farm." Again we have the original farm standing in the village.

James Quincy's four farms, later High House and Bog House, became the property of the Pearsons, was sold by them to the Claytons and exchanged in 1891 with the Blacketts for Fallowfield in the parish of St. John Lee.