

A SUSSEX KNIGHT'S FEE.

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IN the well-known returns of knights (*cartæ baronum*) in 1166 the few lay fiefs are those of the several Rapes and their lords, with the solitary exception of a return for a single knight's fee. This is thus transcribed in the *Red Book of the Exchequer* (p. 203):—

Carta Roberti Peverel

Ego Robertus Peverel and Normannus de Normanville tenemus feodum j militis de Rege in capite in Suthsexa, unde ego Robertus facio Regi duas partes j militis et Normannus iij^{am}

Before proceeding to identify this fee, I should like to describe briefly the returns of knight's fees for the benefit of those who may be working on topographical history, but who may not have made a study of that *catena* of returns which enables us at times to trace the descent of even a small property from very early days.

We have now available:—

(a) The returns of 1166 (published by Hearne in his edition of the *Black Book of the Exchequer*, and, for the Master of the Rolls' series, in the *Red Book of the Exchequer*). These give us the names of the holders of knight's fees, but not those of their holdings.

(b) The returns to the great Inquest of 1212. These have been little used, because they are little known. They give the names of the holdings as well as of those who hold them; and, as they cover a far wider field than that of knight's fees, they would be of supreme importance if they were complete. But, unfortunately, we have only fragments, which are scattered about in the *Testa de Nevill* and *Red Book of the Exchequer*. I was, apparently, the first to make out a list of these, which I published in my paper on "The Great Inquest of Service" (1212).¹

¹ In *The Commune of London and other Studies* (1899).

(c) The returns *temp.* Henry III. in the *Testa de Nevill*, with which the regular sequence of returns begin. For Sussex, unfortunately, we have only the return for the twenty-sixth year (*i.e.*, the scutage of Gascony in 1242), but this is in duplicate.² Its date, though important, seems to be little known, in spite of the *Testa* naming it as the twenty-sixth year (p. 222), for, in his paper on "The Manor of Eastbourne," Mr. Hudson limits "its date to between 1241 and 1269,"³ without attempting to fix it, while in Cartwright's *Rape of Bramber* (p. 40) it was even styled "a record of the end of the thirteenth century."

(d) The returns printed (by the Record Office Authorities) in *Feudal Aids*, which are now available for Sussex. These begin with Kirby's Quest in 1303, and like the preceding returns in the *Testa*, name the holdings as well as the holders. Each successive return refers to its predecessor, and Kirby's Quest, as I shall show, refers at times to the earlier returns.

I now propose to trace through these returns the knight's fee I am dealing with, and show that, although entered as one, it consisted of two separate parts, East Blatchington, which was held by the Peverels as two-thirds of a knight's fee, and the manor of Beverington Radmell (in Eastbourne), which was held as a third of a fee.

The first mention of our knight's fee is on the Pipe Roll of 1161, when Robert Peverel and Norman de Normanville are found paying two marcs of scutage for it. They then appear as its holders in the return of 1166 (printed above), and continue to be entered on subsequent Pipe Rolls as paying scutage in respect of it. The Rolls of 1169 and 1170 take us a step further by identifying Robert Peverel with one of the Blatchingtons.⁴ Thenceforth the names of Robert Peverel and Norman de Normanville appear as holders of the fee with almost

² *Testa*, pp. 219-224.

³ *S.A.C.*, Vol. XLIII., p. 193.

⁴ "Terra de Blechintona, que fuit Roberti Peverelli."

suspicious regularity⁵ till we come to the great Inquest of 1212, when the fee is held by Robert Peverel and Robert Burnard, the latter now holding the Normanvilles' "third of a fee."⁶ Some years later (1226) Andrew Peverel has succeeded Robert,⁷ and it is Andrew who appears in the returns of 1242 as holding the two-thirds of a fee in Blatchington.⁸

He also appears in these returns as holding four knights' fees, not in chief, but of the barony of Bramber, at Sompting and Ewhurst.⁹ These lands in West Sussex appear to have come to him by marriage, for in 1226 we have a fine relating to six hides at Cokeham (in Sompting) for which Andrew Peverel *and Lucy his wife* claimed the service of one knight from William Bernehus. William gave up to them by this fine one virgate which he had held of Andrew Peverel at (East) Blatchington.¹⁰

In Cartwright's *Rape of Bramber* (p. 97) the pedigree of Peverel of Sompting Peverel begins only with this Andrew (d. 1274), but the descent from him to his heirs, the lords Delawarr, is there duly shown.

It is worth noting that these Peverels held also a knight's fee at Bradford Peverel, Dorset, an escheated estate which Richard I. bestowed on Robert Peverel, who was holding it in 1212, and was succeeded, there as in Sussex, by Andrew and by Thomas (1285).¹¹

We now return to the other third of the knight's fee we are tracing, that which was held by Ralf de Normanville. A slender thread just enables us to trace its descent for two generations, and to locate it in Eastbourne. For a suit of Easter term, 1234, recorded

⁵ The scribes are suspected of repeating names even when the generations had changed. Mr. Salzmann, however, sends me an important note from the Pipe Roll of 1190 (2 Richard I.) of an entry proving that a younger Robert then succeeded to this holding of his father's.

⁶ *Red Book of the Exchequer*, pp. 147, 554. *Testa de Nevill*, p. 226; but the latter wrongly gives the total as three-quarters fee.

⁷ *Sussex Fines* (10 Hen. III.), No. 197.

⁸ *Testa de Nevill*, pp. 223, 224.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 222, 223.

¹⁰ *Sussex Fines*, Vol. I., pp. 53-4.

¹¹ *Testa de Nevill*, pp. 164, 167, 168, 170, 171, 222, 223; *Feudal Aids*, Vol. I., p. 17.

in *Bracton's Note Book*,¹² though entered as relating to Suffolk, really relates to Sussex, and its *Burn'* is Eastbourne. It gives us this pedigree:—

Ralf de Normanville

↓
Roesia

↓
Katherine=John le "Cham."

Katherine and John claim half a hide in *Burn'* against Juliana, daughter of Norman, and eight acres against John Gulafre. Turning from this to our Sussex fines we discover John le "Chanu" and Katherine his wife impleading in this same Easter term, 1234, Remi "de Bosco," for 18 acres in Willingdon, and compounding with the above John Gulafre for the eight acres in "Burne" rather later.¹³

The above lawsuit also resulted in the suit of John and Katherine against Juliane for the half hide being postponed until the suit of John Gulafre against her for the same land should be decided. It was settled by another of our fines in 20 Henry III.,¹⁴ the parties being John Gulafre and Juliane "de Beverington." Other fines show that Juliane was wife, first of Richard Gulafre, and then, in 1206, of William de Bodiham.

We have then to find in Eastbourne some holding represented by a third of a knight's fee, as held by Ralf de Normanville. Unluckily, there are two entered in the *Testa* returns of 1242. One of these was held jointly by Richard Cardy (or Sard) in Beverington (pp. 223, 224), and the other by "the heirs of Gilbert Frank" in Burne (p. 224). In the present state of our knowledge we can hardly say definitely which is the one we want. Of the former holding we catch a glimpse in the Inquisition of 1257 on Alice, late the wife of Philip

¹² Ed. Maitland, Vol. II., pp. 654-5.

¹³ *Sussex Fines*, Vol. I., p. 83. Mr. Salzmann has kindly communicated to me an entry from the Pipe Roll of 1195 (7 Richard I.), which shows us Emma de Normanville and *Rohesia*, Margaret and Juliane, her sisters, paying 10 marcs for leave to marry. This appears to give us the four daughters (and co-heirs) of Ralf de Normanville, of whom Rohesia and Juliane are named in the above suit. Richard Gulafre occurs as a crusader in 1191.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

“de Beverinton,” whose holding is duly recorded as half of one-third of a fee, and whose heir is her son, Walter de Beverinton.¹⁵ In the return assigned to 1302-3 we pick up the history of this third of a fee as follows:—

Johannes de Rademelde tenet in Beverington de tenemento quod fuit Ricardi et Philippi de Beverington terciam partem unius feodi.¹⁶

In the return attributed to 1324-5 we read of this holding:—

De tercia parte j feodi militis in Beverington (tenta) de rege in capite que fuit Ricardi Card et Philippi de Beverington nihil sciunt.¹⁷

The other holding can be similarly traced in the returns of knights' fees. In that of 1302-3 we find several men holding “de tenemento quod fuit Gilberti le Frank in Beverington terciam partem unius feodi,”¹⁸ and in that of 1324-5 Simon Evening is returned as having held of it in “Bourne” a sixth of a fee, and William le Batt the other half, also a sixth of a fee, in “Bourne.”¹⁹

It is obvious that the former of the two holdings of which we have traced the history became Rodmill-Beverington, and is now Rodmill, the interesting old name of Beverington having thus disappeared, as has its fellow, Yeverington.

In *Domesday* we have three hides assigned to Beverington, seven and a half to Yeverington (*Iovringetone*)²⁰ and four and a half ($2 + 2\frac{1}{2}$) to Beverington and “Iovringetone” jointly. It is significant that this gives us a total assessment of 15 hides for Beverington and Yeverington, which constitutes a normal multiple of the five hide unit.

¹⁵ *Calendar of Inq., Henry III.*, Vol. I., p. 104. For Walter see *S.A.C.*, Vol. XLII., p. 194. He did homage for the land (*Exc. e Rot. Fin.*, Vol. I., p. 256).

¹⁶ *S.A.C.*, Vol. XLIII., p. 196; *Feudal Aids*, Vol. V., p. 132.

¹⁷ *Feudal Aids*, Vol. V., p. 145.

¹⁸ *S.A.C.*, Vol. XLIII., p. 196; *Feudal Aids*, Vol. V., p. 131.

¹⁹ *Feudal Aids*, Vol. V., p. 145.

²⁰ The name was read wrongly as “Lovringetone” in the Society's *Domesday* volume, where the place is identified as Lullington. But this error has been corrected in the *Victoria County History*.