



## Hatton Hall.

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**N**OTWITHSTANDING the many points of interest afforded by the study of an ancient church or fortification, an old domestic building—the stage on which so many generations have entered the world, played their little part, and made their exit—possesses an attractiveness which should not be underestimated.

Cheshire, like other counties, has its fair proportion of ancient halls and manors, many of them fallen from their old estate, but still exhibiting remnants of vanished glories. In the great majority of instances, however, the original buildings have altogether vanished, and the only record of their appearance is to be found in stray notes or sketches left by some painstaking antiquary of bygone days.

Among the fine old houses that have disappeared may be included Hatton Hall, near Waverton—a specimen of the domestic architecture of the early part of the sixteenth century. William Webb, writing in 1622, speaks of the

“very large demain of Hatton, a seat of one branch of the great and famous race of the Duttons of Dutton, and the house, a fair ancient Building in the midst thereof,”

as being possessed by Mr. Dutton of Hatton.<sup>1</sup> The estate, which was held of the sovereign in socage,<sup>2</sup> came into the possession of this family by the marriage of a younger son of Sir Thomas Dutton, of Dutton, with a co-heiress of the Vernons of Hatton, a branch of the Shipbroke family, who, in turn, had inherited the estate through an heiress of the Hattons.

The history of the old hall is interwoven with that of its successive owners, and to enlarge upon that subject is beyond the scope of these notes. I may, however, relate a few incidents in which the hall has figured as a setting.

In 1537 a number of charges were made against Sir Piers Dutton, in his capacity of sheriff of the county, and one of his creatures, a coiner and poacher named Fieldy, was sentenced to death. Sir Piers, evidently fearing to leave the man in the charge of any but his own party, lest he himself should be incriminated, took Fieldy from out "the King's castell at Chester," and conveyed him "to his howse at Hatton and there contynued and kept hym untill the sat'day . . . and then put hym to execucon at Boughton." Fieldy is said to have "openly desired and required to have a discrete gostely ffather to here his confession, notw<sup>t</sup>standing that there was a p<sup>t</sup> appoynted unto him at Hatton by S<sup>r</sup> Peires Dutton to here his seid confession there, who by comaundement of the seid S<sup>r</sup> Peires hadde byn w<sup>t</sup> the seid Fieldy at Hatton foreseid the day before, being fryday, all day, and" who had on "the same Sat'day com w<sup>t</sup> hym from Hatton to the seid place of execucon." It was said that other priests who offered their services were not allowed to approach the prisoner

<sup>1</sup> *King's Vale Royal*, part II., p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Memorials of the Duttons of Dutton*, p. 218.

by the servants of Dutton, who suffered only the above-mentioned priest, who was stated to be "the assured lover and ffrende of the same S<sup>r</sup> Peires and calleth hym maister, and hath a yerely ffee or wage of the seid S<sup>r</sup> Peires of twenty shillings st<sup>l</sup>ing during his lif."<sup>3</sup>

It was in the private chapel of Hatton Hall, about 1556, that Bridget, daughter of Ralph Dutton, then between four and five, and unable to "perfectelie speak the wordes of matrimonie after the priest, because she was, at that tyme, in yeares tender and younge," was married to George Spurstow, a youthful bridegroom of the age of six, "bie a priest that then servid at Wauerton."

Two other marriages of young children took place within a few years in the same chapel. The first was between Bridget's brother Rowland (whose initials were over the doorway in the quadrangle), aged nine, and Margaret Stanley, aged five. The other, between William Stanley, aged twelve, and Anne Dutton (who was probably another sister of Rowland), aged ten. Not one of these marriages was consummated, the parties within a few years strongly objecting to the partners provided for them by family interests, and divorces being granted.

The marriage of Alice, a fourth child of Ralph Dutton, with John Stanley of Oulton, both at the age of ten, met with better success, being ratified when the parties reached fourteen years, and resulting in a numerous family.<sup>4</sup>

In 1572 the celebrated "dancing chancellor," Sir Christopher, then Mr. Hatton, wrote to his kinsman,

<sup>3</sup> *Memorials of the Duttons of Dutton*, pp. 130 *et seqq.*

<sup>4</sup> *Child Marriages, etc.*, Early English Text Society, Vol. CVIII., pp. 39, *et seqq.*

Mr. Ralph Dutton, at his house at Hatton, asking for information respecting his descent, and his connection with the Dutton family. Dutton appears to have been rather loth to supply the information, evidently being suspicious lest Hatton should make a claim upon the estates. Henry Townshend, a brother-in-law of Ralph Dutton, tried to disabuse his relative of this idea, and assured him that no injury was intended, but that "yor discent better affirmed and furnyshed w<sup>th</sup> Richer coats" would reward compliance with the request. The persuasion appears to have had the desired effect, and in a letter of 1574 Dutton tells Hatton that like his father he was utterly unskilled in Heraldry, and wishes his correspondent "had some good occasion to see these partes and my poore howse."<sup>5</sup>

Rowland Dutton of Hatton in his will, dated May 12, 1604, left to his son Edward,

"All the glasse in the windowes, and wainscott about my walles, & benches in my mansion house at Hatton, because I wishe not the said house to be defaced, and all my furniture in my stables and oxehouses not to be altered;—my tables in my hall and buttrie, boardes in my kitchen & dey houses, all brewing vessells, the great bed and bedding therein, boardes in the Great Chamber over the Great Parlor, my best bason and ewer of silver, my twelve apostle spoons, my twoe great silver salts, six oxen with their plowe and furniture, one teame, twelve milch kyne, and three silver bowles . . . for his better beginning and settling the said house."

The inventory of the goods of the deceased is a formidable document and gives the contents of a considerable mansion of the period. The great bed mentioned above was valued at £26 13s. 4d., and is described as

"One great standing bed with a tester and arras and

<sup>5</sup> *Memorials of the Duttons of Dutton*, p. 44.

three large stained worke curtains, a large feather bed and wolbed, a matt, twoe coverings of arras, a blankett, a boulder, and twoe pillowes."

The total value of the articles enumerated was £1,838 12s. 2d.

Ormerod, writing in 1819, gives an interesting description of the portion of the old hall which then remained standing.<sup>6</sup> He says:—

"The township is situated in a flat country, about six miles from Chester, to the left of the Barnhill road. The hall is environed by a square moat about twenty<sup>7</sup> yards wide, and containing about a statute acre. On the west side of the moat are the remains of five most magnificent oak trees; they are all of nearly one size, the largest measures twenty feet in girth at the height of a yard from the base, and twenty six feet at the base.

The hall appears to have been quadrangular, but not more than a fourth part is standing, built of timber, wickerwork plastered over, and brick within, and some mixture of stone-work towards the moat.

The drawbridge leads to a lofty gateway, opening with strong folding doors to the court within. The roof of the gateway is composed of massy beams, carved in good style at the intersections.

Over the entrance is a figure of St. George and the Dragon, over which the family arms have been emblazoned.<sup>8</sup> A little higher up the plaster conceals an immense bay window. The gable with which this part terminates is surrounded with vine leaves boldly carved. In the centre of the gable are two small windows joining each other, the oak mullions of which terminate in elegant cinquefoil heads; the windows project on two brackets resembling the pendants in a roof of the time of Henry the Seventh. It is much to be regretted that this beautiful

<sup>6</sup> Ormerod's *History of Cheshire* (Helsby Edition), Vol. II., p. 794.

<sup>7</sup> Hanshall [p. 379] says "The moat was *twelve* yards wide."

<sup>8</sup> Hanshall [p. 359] says "The family arms once over it, no longer remain."

entrance is so much disfigured by plaster, as to be an unfit subject for the pencil.

Over the door in the quadrangle is the date 1597, with the initials of Rowland Dutton, and his lady, Eleanor Scriven."

The old building was standing in 1850,<sup>9</sup> but in 1882 had given place to a modern brick farm house, erected some years previously on the site.<sup>10</sup>

At the present time there is little of interest to be seen: an ancient barn is still in existence on the road side, the moat is still filled with water but is of much narrower dimensions, and there are the remains of one of the venerable oak trees. The entrance to the farm is by a gateway pierced through a continuous range of farm buildings, forming three sides of a square, with the two extremities abutting upon the moat, which adjoins the fourth side of the farmyard. In the centre of this side there is a stone bridge giving access to the island occupied by the plain modern farm house, and garden.

In *Harleian MS.*, 2151, there are a number of trickings of arms which were to be seen at Hatton Hall in 1572, with names (sometimes correct and sometimes incorrect) of the owning families written above the coats in several instances, and with remarks as to their various positions, as detailed hereafter:—

"Vnder certaine windowes carved in wood are these armes following."

1. Or, a cinquefoil sable. This is the coat of Brailsford, and as Ralph Vernon, of Hatton, married Margaret, daughter and heiress of Ralph Brailsford, and they were ancestors of the Duttons of Hatton, this is no doubt the correct identification. It should be

<sup>9</sup> Bagshaw's *Directory*.

<sup>10</sup> Ormerod's *History of Cheshire* (Helsby Edition), Vol. II., p. 794.

noted, however, that or, a cinquefoil pierced sable, in a quartered coat of Dutton of Dutton, printed in the *Visitation of Cheshire*,<sup>11</sup> 1580, is assigned to Vernon.

2. [Gules], three legs flexed in triangle and conjoined in fess point, in armour [proper], garnished and spurred [or]—Isle of Man. There does not appear to have been any family reason for the display of this coat, and it can only be conjectured that it was intended as a compliment to the prominent family who were at the time “kings” of Man.

3. [Gules], three sparrow hawks [argent]—Atherton. This shield is surmounted by an esquire's helm having double ostrich feathers. The coat is accounted for by the marriage of John de Dutton of Hatton, with Margaret, daughter of Sir William de Atherton, knight.

4. Sable, a cross flory argent—“Nuthurst.” I cannot find such arms assigned to Nuthurst, nor can I find any reason why the shield of this family should be displayed at Hatton Hall. These arms are probably intended for those of the Pulford family [sable, a cross flory (or patonce) argent] from whom the Duttons are descended through the Belgraves and Leghs of Adlington. The estates of Joan de Pulford, heiress of that family, appear to have passed to the Grosvenors by her second marriage; the issue of her first marriage, namely, the heiress of the Belgraves, only succeeding to the Belgrave property. The arms of the last named family were somewhat similar but the tinctures were reversed.

The next manuscript note refers to two heraldic animals not tricked on shields: “These two are vnder the falcons in the same window” :—

5. A lion passant guardant.

<sup>11</sup> *Visitation of Cheshire, 1580, etc.*, Harl. Soc., Vol. XVIII., p. 87.

## 6. A griffin passant.

Then follow shields surmounted with plumed helms, introduced by the remark: "These two are carved vnder two other windowes":—

7. [Azure], a chevron [or] between three garbs [of the second]—Hatton of Hatton. The arms are not identified in the manuscript, but there cannot be much doubt about them. (See No. 15.)

8. [Or], a cinquefoil [sable]—Braylesford. (See No. 1.)

"These arms are in the chappell at Hatton Hall, painted on the wall":—

9. A plain cross. It is almost impossible to identify this shield. It may have been the cross of St. George who, as already mentioned, was represented over the entrance to the hall.<sup>12</sup>

10. Azure, three coronets or. This is evidently intended for Corona, of the arms of which family there were many variants. An heiress of the Coronas married a Legh; the Adlington branch of the latter family often bore the arms of Corona in the first and fourth quarters of their shield, and it has, in consequence, sometimes been called their paternal coat. Ormerod says

"The Leghs of Adlington bore antiently, within a border argent, azure, three ducal coronets or, in the centre point a plate; being the coat of Corona of Adlington differenced."

The connection between the Duttons and Leghs has already been mentioned.

<sup>12</sup> Among the shields in the Dutton Chapel in Great Budworth Church there were three bearing plain crosses i.e.:—

i. Argent, a cross gules—"St. Geo."

ii. Gules, a cross argent—. . . .

iii. Argent, a cross sable, in the dexter chief quarter a fleur de lis of the second—"Hadock" [Haydock].

*Harleian MS.*, 2151, fo. 71.



11. An eagle, wings expanded, preying on an infant, swaddled. The family of Culcheth<sup>18</sup> bore similar arms to these, but why this family should be represented in the display at Hatton does not appear. The crest of the earls of Derby was a similar device.

The next remark—"this cut in wood over the gatehouse,"—refers to a shield surmounted by a plume of three ostrich feathers, which are erect, and not wavy as in the earlier examples. Can these be the arms to which Ormerod refers in his description of the gatehouse and entrance? If so, he is obviously incorrect in ascribing them to the family of Dutton.

12. [Or], a cinquefoil [sable]—Braylesford.

Trickings of eight shields are then given, preceded by the remark: "these armes are in the parlor windowe":—

13. A cross floy. Above is written: "Rydehall or Nuthurst." Evidently the person who noted the arms was in doubt as to the owner of this coat, and neither assumption appears to have been correct. The arms are the same as No. 4. In similar notes on the arms in the Dutton Chapel in Great Budworth Church, the same coat is assigned to Rishall, possibly connected with Rushall, the manor of which was owned by the Duttons.

14. Gules, two lions passant in pale or, a label of five points [. . .]—"Golborne de Golborne Bella." One of the Hattons, from whom the Vernons of Hatton were descended, married a daughter and heiress of Richard de Golborne of Golborne David, not Belleau, and the arms of this family were: Argent, a cross patonce between four martlets gules. Possibly the arms in the window have been misappropriated? On

<sup>18</sup> *Visitation of Cheshire, 1580*, Harl. Soc., Vol. XVIII., p. 124.

the other hand Ormerod says that the manor of Golborne Belleau most probably passed *at various periods* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the Duttons of Hatton. Perhaps the coat is intended for Strange quartered by the Earl of Derby; if so the lions are argent.

15. Azure, a chevron between three garbs or—"Vernon." This is not so, the arms are those of Hatton. (See No. 7.)

16. Ermine, on a chevron [gules] three escallops [argent]. These are probably intended for Townshend, as the father of Rowland Dutton married a daughter of Sir Robert Townshend, knight. See quartered coat of Edward, son of Rowland Dutton.<sup>14</sup>

17. Or, a cinquefoil sable—"Brellesford." This is the fourth representation of this coat. (See Nos. 1, 8, and 12.)

18. Two coats occupying the dexter half of the shield, one in chief and the other in base, viz.: 1. Quarterly, argent and gules, in the second and third quarters a fret or—Dutton; 2. [Azure], a chevron between three garbs [or]—Hatton. Impaling: Barry of ten, or and gules—"Padmore." This impaled coat is Poyntz; Sir Piers Dutton married as his second wife Juliana, daughter of William Poyntz of Essex—(see pedigree in Ormerod, Vol. II., p. 796). She was a widow in 37 Henry VIII.

19. Or, on a chevron azure three garbs of the field—"Hatton." If this identification is correct, this is an unusual variant of the Hatton coat,<sup>15</sup> but possibly it is intended for Vernon, i.e.: or, on a *fess* azure three garbs

<sup>14</sup> *Funeral Certificates*, Lanc. and Chesh. Rec. Soc., Vol. VI., p. 77.

<sup>15</sup> Ormerod, Vol. II., p. 795, refers to this as a variant of the Hatton coat.

of the field. In view of the property that accrued to the Duttons by the marriage of Petronilla de Vernon, the arms of her family might naturally be expected to be found among the others.

20. Sable, a fess humettée argent—Bostock. The reason for the inclusion of this coat is not clear, but it is curious to note how frequently arms are found in windows and elsewhere which are quite unaccountable on the grounds of consanguinity. Many of these were doubtless set up out of respect or friendship, but this does not account for all.

Six of the coats enumerated above are included in the shield of twelve quarters blazoned in the funeral certificate of Edward Dutton of Hatton, who died in 1620.

I have once again to tender thanks to Mr. J. Paul Rylands, F.S.A., for assistance in the identification of the heraldry; and to Mr. T. A. Williams, whose artistic skill, when this paper was read, enabled me to shew, much more clearly than could have been done verbally, the armorial devices with which the Duttons of Hatton adorned their old mansion.

