

ARCHAEOLOGIA AELIANA.

I.—PURCHASES AT CORBRIDGE FAIR IN 1298.

By F. W. DENDY, a vice-president of the society.

[Read 31st August, 1904.]

Situated where the Watling Street crosses the Tyne and protected on the north by the Roman Wall, the ancient borough of Corbridge must have been a mart of importance from very early times. Its Midsummer fair doubtless existed before 1204-5, when the manor of Corbridge was granted to Robert fitz-Roger, with the privilege of a weekly market, and an annual fair on the eve, day, and day after the feast of St. John the Baptist.¹

Held originally on the 24th June and the preceding and following days, the yearly date was, at the change of style in 1752, altered to the 4th of July, or in other words it still continued to be held on old Midsummer day.

From time immemorial the actual place for holding the fair has been at Stagshawbank, a mile or so to the north of Corbridge, although the proclamation with which the fair is opened is first made in Corbridge market-place.

The features and former greatness of country fairs are described in Brand's *Popular Antiquities* and other works of reference, and there is a graphic account of the doings at the Corbridge fair at Stagshawbank in 1825, taken from Raine's *Memoir of the Rev. John Hodgson*, with other interesting particulars relating to it, in the fourth volume of the new *History of Northumberland*.²

¹ Close Roll. 6 John, m. 14, cited in Wallis's *Northumberland*, vol. II. p. 119.

² *History of Northumberland*, vol. IV. by J. C. Hodgson, pp. 209-211.

As these books are so accessible, it is not necessary to cumber this paper with any similar details, and we may proceed at once to describe an interesting memorandum found by Mr. William Brown, the honorary secretary of the Yorkshire Archæological Society, amongst the papers of Colonel Gascoigne of Parlington, Leeds, relating to purchases made at Corbridge fair in 1298. It has probably strayed out of official custody. The original and the translation of the document are as follows:—

[Original.]

Ad subscripta emenda receperunt Robertus de Hephale et Johannes de Hibernia, clericus, de Edmundo Talboth' xlvij libras.

Empciones facte in nundinis de Corbrugge per Robertum de Hephale et Johannem de Hibernia, in festo Sancti Johannis Baptiste, anno regni regis E. vicesimo sexto, videlicet:—

- De Henrico de Neuburgh' ij boves, precium bovis, vijs.
- De Willelmo filio Hugonis j bos, precii vijs. vjd.
- De Roberto de Dod j bos, precii vijs. vjd.
- De Ricardo filio Henrici iiij boves, precium bovis viijs.
- De domino Willelmo, capellano, iiij boves, precium bovis ix.
- De eodem domino Willelmo, capellano, v boves, precium bovis vjs. viijd.
- De Ricardo le Turner j bos, precii vjs. iijd.
- De Ela de Cauley j bos, precii vijs. vd.
- De Willelmo de Eydene j bos, precii vijs. vjd.
- De Michaelle de Neuburgh' iij boves, precium bovis vijs. vjd.
- De Roberto Hawemogh' j bos, precii vijs.
- De Thoma filio Roberti j bos, precii viijs.
- De Johanne le Wrigh' iij boves, precium bovis vs. ijd.
- De Adyn Wolf' j bos, precii vjs. vjd.
- De Willelmo le Reede j bos, precii vjs. ijd.
- De Henrico Buntyngh' j bos, precii vijs. iijd.
- De Thoma Smalmouth' j bos, precii vjs. ijd.
- De Rogero de Bavynton' ij boves, precium bovis ix.
- De Roberto de Bokeley, j bos, precii vjs. iijd.
- De Rogero Goos j bos, precii vijs. vjd.
- De Willelmo de Halidene j bos, precii vjs. vjd.
- De Willelmo de Gonewardone j bos, precii vjs. ix.
- De Willelmo Tod iij boves, precium bovis vijs.
- De eodem Willelmo iij boves, precium bovis viijs.
- De Johanne le Wrigh' j bos, precii viijs.
- De Thoma de Dileston' iiij boves, precium bovis viijs. iijd.

- De eodem Thoma j bos, precii vijs.
 De Matill' Cubbe j bos, precii vjs. vjd.
 De Rogero Beneth' j bos, precii vjs.
 De eodem Rogero Beneth' j bos, precii viijs. vjd.
 De Roberto de Minstanaccres ij boves, precium bovis vjs. iijd.
 De Willelmo de Elledene iij boves, precium bovis viijs.
 De Ada de Blakedene j bos, precii vijs.
 De eodem Ada j bos, precii vs. ixđ.
 De Willelmo Fraunceys j bos, precii vjs. iiijd.
 De Hugone de Corebrigge j bos, precii viijs.
 De Thoma le Webbestere ij boves, precium bovis vjs. ijd.
 De Roberto del Ruddyng' j bos, precii vijs. ijd.
 De Roberto de Weldene j bos, precii vs. iijd.
 De Galfrido de Hidwyn ij boves, precium bovis vjs. viijd.
 De Alano de Gonewardeston' j bos, precii vjs. viijd.
 De Johanne filio Godefridi j bos, precii viijs.
 De Willelmo de-Rayes j bos, precii vjs.
 De Roberto de Chipchace, preposito, j bos, precii vjs.
 Summa boum, lxxij.
 Summa denariorum, xxvli. xvs. vjd.
 De Thoma de Heley pro j curro cum iij jugis et iiij axis, ijs. ijd.
 Item in j curro de eodem empto, xxđ.
 Item in j curro, empto de Radulpho de Gap, cum iij jugis et j axi, ijs. ob.
 Item in j curro, empto de Petro le Webbestere xxijđ.
 Item in ij rotis, ij jugis, iiij axis, et j hame, emptis de Michaelae de Rughsu',
 ijs. jd.
 Item in j curro cum ij jugis, emptis de Ricardo Slaueley, xxiijd.
 In j curro et iij jugis, emptis de Rogero Holfoth', ijs.
 In j curro, empto de Galfrido Dod, xxijđ.
 In j curro, empto de Willelmo Foth', xxijđ.
 In j curro, empto de Thoma de Heley, cum ij jugis, ijs.
 Item in j corpore curri empto, vijđ.
 In xij arcubus boum, emptis de Willelmo Slaueley, ijd.
 In iij jugis, arcubus, et alio hernesio empt', iijd.
 Item in vj arcubus, emptis de Galfrido Dod, jd.
 Item in ij jugis emptis, jd.
 Item in cingulis, cordis, vij jugis, et in diversis minutis apparatibus,
 xvij paribus de lones (?), emptis pro curris, iijs. ijd. ob.
 Item in predictis x curr' axill' apud Novum Castrum, xiijd.
 Summa, xxiiijs. xjd.
 Item in quatuor equis pro carecta, xxxvijs. ijd.
 Item in j carecta empta, ferro ligata, de Hugone de Corbrigge, xijs.
 In j sella et iiij colariis, emptis pro predicta carecta, xiđ.

Item in iiij paribus traiceorum, emptis pro carecta, *xd.*

In teris et cordis, emptis pro eadem, viijd. ob.

Item in iiij swyuel, ij huroures (?), et iiij ringes pro capistris equorum predictorum, iiijd. ob.

Item in iiij capistris, emptis pro affris de carecta, iiijd.

Summa, liijs.

(Note corrected from *xvs. xd.*)

Item ix^o ferris equorum, xv^m et cccc clavibus pro eisdem, iiij*li.* xxjd.

Summa ut patet superius.

Item in ix^{xx} et xvj clittis, vj^o et v^{xx} clavibus pro eisdem clittis pro curris et carrectis, xjs. *xd.*

Summa, ut patet.

Item in ij saccis, emptis pro ferro equorum, carriandis, *xd.*

Item in vj ulnis de canabio, emptis pro minutis saculis feciendis pro clavibus carriandis, vjd.

Item in ij minutis saculis, emptis pro eodem, iijd.

In ferrura, iiijd. ob.

Item in eodem, jd.

Summa, ijs. ob.

Item in vadiis xij garcionum pro curris et carectis, die Martis, in festo Sancti Johannis Baptiste, ijs.

Item die Mercurii sequenti in vadiis eorundem, ijs.

Item die Jovis sequenti in vadiis eorundem, et ij garcionum pro custodia boum, ijs. iiijd.

Item per dies Veneris et Sabati sequentibus (*sic*) in vadiis eorundem, iijs. viijd.

Summa, xjs.

Item in expensis Roberti de Hephale, Johannis de Hibernia, clerici, et Johannis le Ferour, et aliis (*sic*) coadjuvant' circa predicta emenda in nundinis de Corbrigge per iij dies, et apud Novum Castrum per iij dies pro eisdem, xxxvjs. ob; preterea xs. in hominibus locatis pro predictis bobus emendis.

Summa, xlvjs. ob.

Summa tocuis expense, xxxviij*li.* vjs. jd.

..... (Ven) eris proxima post festum Sancti Johannis Baptiste, mense Junii, anno predicto, apud Novum

.....*li* xiijs. xjd.

Bottom of the membrane torn.

Dorso: [very worn] Rob' de Hephale de Cardoil.
Providencia

[Translation.]

For the under-written purchases Robert of Hephle and John of Ireland, clerk, received of Edmund Talbot 48l.

Purchases made in the fair of Corbridge by Robert of Hepple and John of Ireland at the feast of St. John the Baptist in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of King Edward (I.) [that is Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, the 23rd, 24th, and 25th June, 1298] as follows:—

- Of Henry of Newbrough 2 oxen, price per ox 7s.
- Of William, son of Hugh, 1 ox, price 7s.
- Of Robert of Dod 1 ox, price 7s. 6d.
- Of Richard, son of Henry, 4 oxen, price per ox 8s.
- Of Sir William the chaplain 4 oxen, price per ox 9s.
- Of the same Sir William the chaplain 5 oxen, price per ox, 6s. 8d.
- Of Richard the turner 1 ox, price 6s. 3d.
- Of Elias de Canley (?) 1 ox, price 7s. 5d.
- Of William of Aydon 1 ox, price 7s. 7d.
- Of Michael of Newbrough 3 oxen, price per ox 7s. 6d.
- Of Robert Hawemogh 1 ox, price 7s.
- Of Thomas, son of Robert, 1 ox, price 8s.
- Of John the wright 3 oxen, price per ox 5s. 2d.
- Of Adyn Wolf 1 ox, price 6s. 6d.
- Of William the Red (?) 1 ox, price 6s. 2d.
- Of Henry Bunting 1 ox, price 7s. 3d.
- Of Thomas Smallmouth 1 ox, price 6s. 2d.
- Of Roger of Bavington 2 oxen, price per ox 9s.
- Of Robert de Bewclay 1 ox, price 6s. 3d.
- Of Roger Goos 1 ox, price 7s. 6d.
- Of William of Halidene 1 ox, price 6s. 6d.
- Of William of Gunnerton 1 ox, price 6s. 9d.
- Of William Tod 3 oxen, price per ox 7s.
- Of the same William 3 oxen, price per ox 8s.
- Of John the wright 1 ox, price 4s.
- Of Thomas of Dilston 4 oxen, price per ox 8s. 3d.
- Of the same Thomas, 1 ox, price 7s.
- Of Maud Cubbe 1 ox, price 6s. 6d.
- Of Roger Benett 1 ox, price 6s.
- Of the same Roger Benett 1 ox, price 8s. 6d.
- Of Robert of Minsteracres 2 oxen, price per ox 6s. 3d.
- Of William of Elledene 3 oxen, price per ox 8s.
- Of Adam of Black Heddon 1 ox, price 7s.
- Of the same Adam 1 ox, price 5s. 9d.
- Of William Francis 1 ox, price 6s. 4d.
- Of Hugh of Corbridge 1 ox, price 8s.
- Of Thomas the weaver 2 oxen, price per ox 7s. 2d.
- Of Robert of the Riding 1 ox, price 7s. 2d.
- Of Robert of Welton 1 ox, price 5s. 3d.

Of Geoffrey of Heddon 2 oxen, price per ox 6s. 8*d.*

Of Alan of Gunnerton 1 ox, price 6s. 8*d.*

Of John, son of Godfrey, 1 ox, price 8s.

Of William of Raylees (?) 1 ox, price 6s.

Of Robert of Chipchace, grieve, 1 ox, price 6s.

Total oxen, 72.

Total price 25*l.* 15s. 6*d.*

Of Thomas of Healey for 1 wain with 3 yokes and four axles 2s. 2*d.*

Also for one wain bought of the same 20*d.*

Also for one wain bought of Ralph of Gap with 3 yokes and one axle 2s. 0½*d.*

Also for one wain bought of Peter the weaver 22*d.*

Also for 2 wheels, 2 yokes, 4 axles, and 1 hame,¹ bought of Michael of Roughside 2s. 1*d.*

Also for 1 wain with 2 yokes bought of Richard Slaley 23*d.*

Also for 1 wain and 3 yokes bought of Roger Holfoth 2s.

For one wain bought of Geoffrey Dod 22*d.*

For one wain bought of William Fotherley 22*d.*

For one wain bought of Thomas of Healey with 2 yokes 2s.

Also for one body of a wain bought 7*d.*

For 12 ox-bows² bought of William Slaley 2*d.*

For 3 yokes, bows, and other harness bought 3*d.*

Also for 6 bows bought of Geoffrey Dod 1*d.*

Also for 2 yokes bought 1*d.*

Also for girths, cords, 7 yokes, and divers small apparatus and 8 pairs of lones (?)³ bought for the wains 3s. 2½*d.*

Also for stallage (?) of the aforesaid 10 wains at Newcastle 14*d.*

Total 24s. 11*d.*

Also for 4 horses for a cart 37s. 2*d.*

Also for 1 cart bought bound with iron of Hugh of Corbridge 12s.

For 1 saddle and 4 collars bought for the aforesaid cart 19*d.*

Also for 4 pairs of traces bought for the cart 10*d.*

For halters and cords bought for the same 8½*d.*

Also for 4 swivels, 2 huroures (?)⁴ and 4 rings for bridles of the aforesaid horses 4½*d.*

¹ Hames are the curved pieces of wood or iron fastened round a horse's collar to which the traces are attached.

² The bow is the part of the yoke which embraces the neck.

³ Mr. R. O. Heslop suggests that this word is 'sowmes' now spelled soames. They are chains or ropes used for traces.

⁴ Mr. R. O. Heslop suggests that this word is 'hurtoures.' Hurters are the shoulder-plates of an axle against which the wheel boss strikes. The word is still in use. See 'hurter' in Brouckett and 'Horter' in Heslop's *Northumberland Words*.

PURCHASES AT STAGSHAWBANK FAIR IN 1298.

7

Also for 4 bridles bought for the cart horses 4*d.*

Total 53*s.*

(Note corrected from 15*s.* 10*d.*)

Also 900 horse shoes and 15,400 nails for the same 4*l.* 1*s.* 9*d.*

Total as appears above.

Also for 9 score and 16 (196) iron patches and 605 score (12,000) nails for the same 11*s.* 10*d.*

Total as appears.

Also for 2 sacks bought for carrying the horse shoes 10*d.*

Also for 6 ells of canvas bought for making little bags for carrying the nails 6*d.*

Also for 2 little bags bought for the same 3*d.*

For ironware 4½*d.*

Also for the same 1*d.*

Total 2*s.* 0½*d.*

Also in wages for 12 serving men for the wains and carts on Tuesday in the feast of St. John the Baptist, 2*s.*

Also on the Wednesday following in wages, 2*s.*

Also on the Thursday following in wages for the same and for 2 drovers for taking care of the oxen 2*s.* 4*d.*

Also on the Friday and Saturday following 4*s.* 8*d.*

Total 11*s.*

Also for the expenses of Robert of Hepple, John of Ireland, clerk, and John the farrier and others helping them about the aforesaid purchases in the fair of Corbridge for 3 days and at Newcastle for 3 days for the same 36*s.* 0½*d.* besides 10*s.* for men hired for buying the aforesaid oxen.

Total 46*s.* 0½*d.*

Sum of the whole expense 36*l.* 6*s.* 1*d.*

.....Friday next after the feast of St. John the Baptist in the month of June in the year aforesaid at Newcastle.

l. (obliterated but doubtless 11*l.*) 13*s.* 11*d.*

Indorsement (very worn) Robert of Hepple de Cardoil.
Provision

It will be seen that much care was taken to make the purchases at the most reasonable rates. The cattle were not bought wholesale at a fixed price, but each ox or lot of oxen appears to have been separately bargained for, and men were placed in different parts of the fair to effect the dealings, so that it should not be known that the cattle were all wanted by one party of large buyers. Each item of expense was noted down to a half-

penny, and so carefully was the business done that after purchasing seventy-two oxen, nine complete waggons and the body of another waggon, four horses, a cart, many articles of harness, a large number of horse shoes, nails, and other articles of iron-ware, conveying them to Newcastle and paying wages, the agents for the transaction had a balance in hand of 11*l.* 13*s.* 11*d.* out of the 48*l.* entrusted to them, their total expenses thus amounting only to 36*l.* 6*s.* 1*d.*

The nine wains or waggons were evidently bought to be drawn by the seventy-two oxen, making eight oxen to a team. The waggons must have been of very rude manufacture for the average price of each was only 1*s.* 10*d.*, whilst the iron-bound cart for the four horses cost 12*s.* The average price of each cart horse was 9*s.* 3½*d.* and of each ox 7*s.* 1¼*d.*

There is no indication in the document itself of the purpose for which this provision was required, and we must turn to the events of the time in order to find out what that purpose was.

In the preceding September of 1297, Edward I. being in Flanders, William Wallace had beaten the English commanders Warenne and Cressingham at Stirling; in October he crossed the border and in that month and the following month of November he so harried Northumberland and Cumberland that there was an entire cessation of public worship through all the country between Newcastle and Carlisle. In January, 1298, a parliament met at York where it was resolved that there should be a general muster of the English forces at Newcastle, and that they should march from that place against the enemy.

About the beginning of Lent, letters came from Edward I. which announced his intended return to England and ordered that nothing of moment should be attempted against the Scots until his arrival.

By the 26th May, the king was at York and he remained there collecting men and money till after the 4th June.

There is no record of his stay at Newcastle, but by the 26th June he had reached Alnwick and he wrote from there on the 29th June to the sheriff of Northumberland to send him carpenters and ditchers, with their tools, to receive his horse from his valet, to keep it in the castle of Newcastle supplied with oats, bran, and other things needful, until the king's return from Scotland, and to pay his groom two-pence a day, which was, as the manuscript shews, the same rate of wages as was current at Corbridge fair in the same month and year.³

Passing on into Scotland, Edward I., on the 22nd July, 1298, defeated Wallace at Falkirk, and returning by way of Carlisle to Newcastle he spent some time at Tynemouth.

In all probability the oxen, waggons, horses, iron-bound cart, horse-shoes, nails, and other effects bought by Robert of Hepple and John of Ireland at Corbridge fair and taken by them to Newcastle in the same week in June in which Edward I. having passed through that town, was staying at Alnwick to complete his equipment, were intended for and devoted to the uses of his expedition against the Scots.

Six hundred midsummers have come and gone since this scrap was written. The then burning question of the succession to the throne of Scotland has long since passed into the realm of matterless history. But from the same hamlets on the banks of the Tyne, the descendants of the same farmers still drive their cattle to the same fair on the same day, and receive in exchange towards the payment of their yearly rents coins of the realm of the same denominations.

³ *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, II. 251-255.