

## XI.—SHORTFLATT TOWER AND ITS OWNERS.

By A. L. RAIMES.

PART II—1604 to 1954.

SECTION V.

*The Selbys, Fenwicks and Haytons.*

(Continued from Vol. XXXII, p. 148.)

William Selby, the new owner of Shortflatt, was a younger son of a wealthy Newcastle merchant of the same name and brother of Sir George Selby, who, in 1617, entertained James I in his house at Newcastle. He may probably be identified with "William Selby the younger esq" who was sheriff of Northumberland in 1603. His wife was a Widdrington, and his sister Margaret was the wife of Sir William Fenwick of Wallington.<sup>1</sup> He was knighted by the king at Royston in 1613, and in the following year was elected knight of the shire for Northumberland. It was probably he who, as Mr. Honeyman suggests, built the central block at Shortflatt.

During this period the penal laws against Catholic recusants were intermittently enforced. Sir William Selby conformed, but in 1604 and again in 1630, his wife was convicted of recusancy, Sir William compounding for her fine at the cost of £8 annual rent.<sup>2</sup> It was possibly at this time that the secret hiding place in the dining-room chimney was made. In 1625 Sir William succeeded to his brother's estate at Winlaton. In 1629 he sold his property in Bolam and Shortflatt to Cuthbert Heron,<sup>3</sup> who resold Shortflatt to his

brother-in-law Roger Fenwick, described in 1631 as "of Shortflatt".<sup>4</sup>

Roger Fenwick was the third son of Sir William Fenwick of Wallington and a nephew of Sir William Selby. He was under age in 1613 when his father died,<sup>5</sup> and in 1627 he married Margaret, daughter of Sir William Blakiston.<sup>6</sup>

In 1634 Roger Fenwick and others were sued by Robert, George, William and Philip, sons of John Raymes, who pleaded that their father had charged Bolam, Shortflatt, Aydon, and Longwitton with an annuity of £20 to be paid to themselves and their brother Joseph, who had since died, and to be continued to the last survivor. They said that the indenture passed with the title deeds into the hands of one or another of the subsequent owners—Sir William Selby, Roger Fenwick, Lionel Winship and Henry Winship—who, together with their brother Henry, refused and did still refuse to pay the annuity. Roger Fenwick and the Winships denied possession of the indenture and disclaimed liability for the payment. The replies of Sir William Selby and Henry Raymes are not given, nor do we know how the case was decided.<sup>7</sup>

During the winter of 1634/35 Roger Fenwick and other Northumberland gentry then living in London were convicted "before justice Hall in the Old Baylay" of absenting themselves from church from October 10th, 1634, to January 10th, 1635. They were all fined £20 for each month of recusancy.<sup>a</sup> Roger Fenwick refused to pay the £60 and the usual procedure followed, two-thirds of the income from Shortflatt and South Middleton having to be paid to the Crown until the debt was extinguished.<sup>8</sup>

Roger Fenwick died at Gibside in 1636, leaving a widow and four young children.<sup>9</sup> The iron fireback at Shortflatt, dated 1631 and bearing the initials R.F. and R.H., is a reminder of his brief ownership of the property.

William, his son and heir, was six years old when his

<sup>a</sup>I am indebted to Father W. Vincent Smith of Lanchester for this information.

father died, and in March 1637 his wardship and marriage were granted to Sir John Fenwick, Sir William Blakiston and Cuthbert Heron.<sup>10</sup> It is probable, however, that he lived at Shortflatt with his mother, who had married Thomas Woodall as her second husband. He must have had an exciting boyhood, as in 1640/41 and during the years 1644 to 1646 Scottish armies occupied most of Northumberland, and "alarms and excursions" must have been frequent. During the Civil War, William's sympathies would be with the Royalists, with whom several of his relatives were fighting, two of his cousins, John Fenwick and George Heron, being killed in 1644 at Marston Moor.<sup>11</sup>

In January 1647 the Scots recrossed the Tweed, and the accounts of the Bywell fisheries for that year show that the agent sent £10 to "my young Master Fenwick of the Shortflatt", and £28 to "my Mistress Woodhall of the Shortflatt when she was seeke"; also that salmon to the value of £2 4s. 10d. had been sent to Shortflatt. £5 14s. 8d. had also been paid to a Captain Gray "for the two parts of a Cess laid on by the Skots".<sup>12</sup> The war flared up again in 1648 and on July 1st the Royalists were defeated near Rothbury. During the autumn Roundhead troopers were twice billeted at Shortflatt.<sup>13</sup>

William Fenwick, as a Roman Catholic, was named as a delinquent in 1648. His estates were sequestered, but he compounded and regained possession.<sup>14</sup> He came of age in 1650, but Sir John Fenwick shewed great reluctance to surrender some of the properties held by him as guardian. It was only by legal action that William obtained possession of the Bywell fisheries and the Hawick property in 1658, and of the barony of Bywell in 1661/62.<sup>15</sup>

About this time William Fenwick left Shortflatt and settled at Bywell. Shortflatt was apparently let to Cuthbert Ogle, who was described in 1666 as "of Shortflatt, Gent.". A later tenant was George Ogle, said to have been an Ogle of Kirkley.<sup>16</sup>

William Fenwick died in 1679, when several of his

children were still under age. They were brought up as Roman Catholics, and most of them remained staunch to their faith in spite of fines and persecution. Robert Fenwick, however, who succeeded to Bywell and Shortflatt, conformed.<sup>17</sup> In 1683 he was knighted at Windsor, and in 1689 he was serving as a justice.<sup>18</sup> His estates were encumbered by his father's debts and by legacies due to his three sisters, and in order to raise the necessary money he sold the manor of Shortflatt in 1690.<sup>19</sup> He died in 1691.

The new owner of Shortflatt was Thomas Hayton, a prosperous citizen of London, who evidently bought the property as an investment and not for a residence. After his death Shortflatt passed to his younger son William, and then to his son, another William, who is described as "of Essex Street, Strand" and "of Ivinghoe".<sup>20</sup> About 1700 Shortflatt Tower was apparently tenanted by a family named Burfield.<sup>21</sup> Towards the end of the Hayton ownership it ceased to be used as a mansion house, being included in 1745/46 in a lease of the Middle Farm, and in 1748 in one of the West Farm.

In 1750 William Hayton and his mother Deborah Hayton sold Shortflatt for £5,500 to John Dent of Walker Key, Gent and William Hepple of East Bitchfield, Gent. A survey of the property made at this time does not mention the mansion house as such but describes the estate as consisting of the West, Middle and East Farms and the "Millar's Tenniment", the total area being 497 acres.<sup>20</sup>

## SECTION VI<sup>22</sup>

### *The Dents and Hedleys.*

John Dent of Walker was a son of William Dent of Swallwell and later of Wincomblee.<sup>a</sup> William Dent was a farmer who became affluent through his connection with the

<sup>a</sup> Hodgson states that the Dents were descended from the Dents of Byker, but gives no evidence of this descent.

coal trade, and particularly through his association with William Cotesworth, the Durham industrialist, for whom he acted as sub-agent, staithman and trustee.<sup>23</sup> He rented a farm at Axwell and owned a copyhold property at Ryton Woodside, now known as Dent's Hall.<sup>24</sup> His will was proved January 18th, 1743.

In 1767 the manor of Shortflatt was divided, John Dent taking the mansion house and the western moiety, and William Hepple, and his associate, Lancelot Robson of Belsay, sharing the eastern moiety. The deed also provided that John Dent and his heirs should "use, possess and enjoy" the eastern moiety of the "Shortflatt Isle" in Bolam Church, and that Hepple and Robson and their heirs should have the western moiety (pl. XVI). In the same year the three proprietors of Shortflatt were summoned to a Court Leet of the manor of Bywell—an interesting survival of the feudal connection with the barony of Bolbec.

John Dent lived at Wincomblee or Walker till about 1770, when he settled at Shortflatt, occupying the seventeenth century part of the house, and letting the tower to the farmer who rented as the "West Farm" most of the Dent land. He died in 1786.<sup>25</sup>

He was succeeded by his son, William Dent,<sup>26</sup> who served in the Northumberland Militia for more than twenty-five years, retiring as lieut.-colonel. He died in 1831, leaving his real estate to William Dent Hedley, whose grandfather had married a daughter of William Dent of Wincomblee.<sup>27</sup>

Hodgson describes Shortflatt in about 1825—"The approach to it is by a door-way in a garden wall, finely overhung with ivy. The tower is of strong masonry, and in good repair; its upper parts occupied by the farmer of the Shortflatt grounds, and its vault used as a cow house. . . . A shield over the door-way into the old entrance, if it was ever charged with armorial bearings, has been unfaithful to its trust."

William Dent Hedley was descended from a family which

took an active part in the industrial and municipal life of Newcastle. His great-grandfather, William Hedley, described as a yeoman, was living in South Shields in 1730-1738,<sup>28</sup> and later settled in Newcastle. His wife, Elizabeth, daughter of George Johnson of Monkseaton,<sup>29</sup> came of a family prominent in the coal trade; his sons, William and Robert, were master mariners, while John and Thomas were hostmen. Three of the sons were men of some local distinction, John being Mayor of Newcastle in 1777 and 1788, William an Elder Brother of the Trinity House, and Robert in 1769 Master of the Trinity House. In the next generation, Matthew Hedley was Master of the Trinity House in 1789 and Sheriff of Newcastle in 1801, Shafto John Hedley sheriff in 1791, and Robert Shafto Hedley mayor in 1799.

William Dent Hedley was the son of Matthew Hedley, and through his mother, Jane, daughter of Edward Charlton of Hexham, he was descended from the Loraines of Kirkharle and the Fenwicks of Wallington.<sup>30</sup> He had had an adventurous career. Entering the Navy in 1810, he took part in the American war, and before he was nineteen he had taken an enemy ship, had been captured and had made his escape, had fought in the operations against New Orleans in 1814, and again been taken prisoner. After sixteen years service, his health broke down, and he retired in 1826 as lieutenant, later being promoted commander (ret<sup>d</sup> list).<sup>31</sup>

In 1831 a licence was granted for "William Dent Hedley of Shortflatt, son of Matthew Hedley, late of Newcastle upon Tyne, and grandson of William Hedley, late of the same place, by Ann his wife, formerly Ann Dent, who was the aunt of William Dent of Shortflatt, dec<sup>d</sup>, to take the name of Dent, and to bear the arms of Dent quarterly with those of Hedley, such arms being first duly exemplified according to the laws of arms".<sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> The arms exemplified in 1831 were—Quarterly: 1st and 4th, or, on a bend per bend gules and sable, three fusils conjoined of the field, for DENT: 2nd and 3rd, gules, two chevrons or, between three hawks belled argent, for HEDLEY. Crests—1st DENT; a panther's head affrontée erased, with flames issuing from the mouth and ears, transpierced by an arrow barbed and flighted, the pheon

Many structural changes were made at Shortflatt at this time, the most notable being the re-incorporation of the tower with the main building, the vaulted basement being converted into a drawing-room.

Edward John Dent, who became owner in 1880, made Shortflatt famous in sporting circles, his record as a breeder and trainer of greyhounds being six winners of the Waterloo Cup in eight years. His son, Lieut.-Colonel W. E. Hedley-Dent, assumed the name of Hedley-Dent in 1926,<sup>32</sup> and he and his wife have created a charming garden, and wide stretches of lawn, with beds of roses and lavender, and fine trees in the background, making a delightful setting for the old Border house, whose history I have told.

towards the dexter, all proper: 2nd HEDLEY; a swallow rising out of clouds, motto—*Nil desperandum*.

John Hedley, mayor of Newcastle 1777, bore gules, a chevron between three falcons argent, talons and bells or (HEDLEY), a scutcheon in pretence, gules, on a bend argent three molets azure (SHAFTO), his crest being a martlet or, wings endorsed (A.A., 4th ser., XIII).

The Dents of Newcastle and Byker bore or, on a bend sable, three lozenges ermine (N.C.H., XIII, 275). Also see S.S., CXXII.

#### ABBREVIATIONS.

A.A.—*Archæologia Aeliana*.

Proc.—Proceedings of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries.

H.N.—Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*.

N.C.H.—*County History of Northumberland*.

S.S.—Surtees Society Publications.

H.D.—Hedley-Dent Muniments.

R.C.—Recusant Rolls.

#### REFERENCES.

<sup>1</sup> Surtees' Durham, II, 274; Welford's Newcastle, III, 219.

<sup>2</sup> Composition MSS., Ushaw Coll.; R.C., E.377/14.

<sup>3</sup> A.A., 4th ser., XXXII, 150.

<sup>4</sup> Chancery Bills and Answers, 1634; S.S., CXLII, 231.

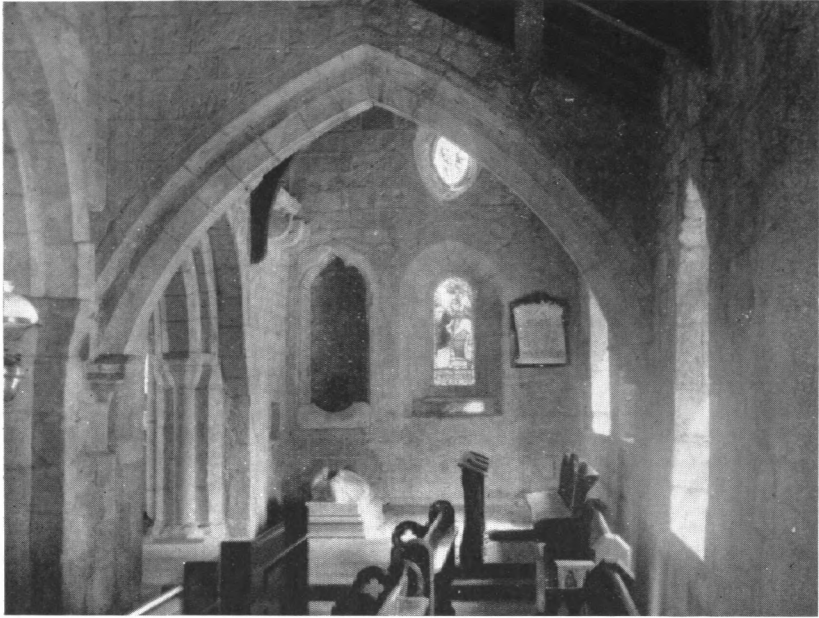
<sup>5</sup> Proc., 3rd ser., III, 172.

<sup>6</sup> N.C.H., VI, 98.

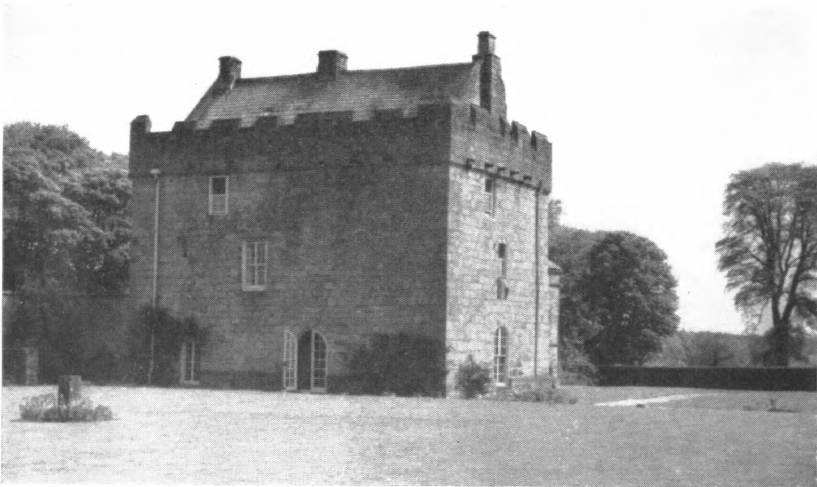
<sup>7</sup> Chancery Bills and Answers, 1634.

<sup>8</sup> R.C., E.377/41: E.377/55.

<sup>9</sup> N.C.H., VI, 98.



THE RAYMES CHAPEL, BOLAM CHURCH.



Photo, W. F. T. Pinkney.  
SHORTELATT TOWER FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.





<sup>10</sup> A.A., n.s. XIII, 121.

<sup>11</sup> H.N., II, I, 256; N.C.H., IV, 341.

<sup>12</sup> A.A., n.s. XIII, 117-119.

<sup>13</sup> Proc., 3rd series, IX.

<sup>14</sup> S.S., CXI; Cal. Com. for Compounding, IV, 2487.

<sup>15</sup> Proc., 4th ser., VI, 364; A.A., n.s. XXIV, 122.

<sup>16</sup> Ogle and Bothal—Sir H. Ogle, 317; N.C.H., XI, 406.

<sup>17</sup> R.C., 28 and 32, Chas. II.; A.A., 4th ser., I, 58 *seq.*

<sup>18</sup> S.S., XL, 297.

<sup>19</sup> H.D.; Journals House of Commons, 1690.

<sup>20</sup> H.D.

<sup>21</sup> A.A., 4th ser., I, 53, note 10.

<sup>22</sup> Most of the details in Section VI are from the Hedley-Dent muniments.

<sup>23</sup> *North-country Life in the Eighteenth Century*—Prof. E. Hughes; or communicated by Prof. Hughes.

<sup>24</sup> Nat. Coal Board deeds.

<sup>25</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, Nov. 25th, 1786.

<sup>26</sup> Bapt. Long Benton, 1746.

<sup>27</sup> Wills of William Dent, 1742, and Hannah Dent, his widow, 1762.

<sup>28</sup> Reg. St. Hilda's, S. Shields.

<sup>29</sup> Will of Wm. Johnson of Newcastle, 1750 (naming Wm. Hedley's wife and children); N.C.H., IX, 296.

<sup>30</sup> Edward Charlton was a son of Forster Charlton of Lee Hall by Grace Dorothea, da. of Sir Wm. Loraine, Bart.—Hexham and Kirkharle Reg.; Pedigree and Memoirs of Loraine of Kirkharle (ed. L.L., 1902), 146-7; H.N., II, I, 247.

<sup>31</sup> O'Byrne's Naval Biographical Dictionary.

<sup>32</sup> For pedigree of Hedley-Dent, see Burke's *Landed Gentry*.