

A NOTE ON SIR WALTER DE HANLE

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THE tentative identification by the late Mr. F. G. Gurney of a Buckinghamshire knight of the thirteenth century named Sir Walter de Hanle as the author of *Le Dite de Hosebondrie*¹ makes all that can be learnt concerning his life and circumstances worthy of notice. Since his article appeared in the *Records* for 1945, a good deal of additional information has become available; in particular, the recently-published Part II of the Missenden cartulary² has afforded conclusive evidence that Walter de Hanle dwelt for most of his life at Great Kimble, where he was obviously a person of some consequence.

He is first met with in a charter dated 1220 when he attested the grant by John, son of Hugh de Kimble, of the mill at Kimble to Gilbert Martel.³ In 1227 Richard de Parco and Walter de Hanle occur as pledges for Alice de Jarpenville, who had appealed Peter de Ilmere for fraudulently making deductions from the account to be rendered by him to her.⁴ In 1230 as Sir (dominus) Walter de Hanle he witnessed a demise of lands in Kimble for six years from the feast of St. Martin after the return of the King from Brittany.⁵

Thereafter he attested many Kimble charters, by far his most frequent associate being his neighbour, Robert fitzNigel, with whom he must have been well acquainted.

Although it is likely that his age precluded his taking any very active part in the war, it is clear that he adhered to the party of Simon de Montfort. In 1265 an inquisition found that ten shillings of the land of Walter de Hanley in Great Kimble, "who was against the King", had been seized by A. de Mohaut.⁶ He occurs again in 1267, when Walter de Hameleye, a bachelor of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, was pardoned the King's indignation by occasion of things done by him on the Earl's retirement from Wales to London⁷; a delicate allusion to the Earl's march on the capital!

No doubt he recovered his lands, for he returned to Kimble and is found attesting Kingshill charters c. 1270.⁸ There is a final reference to him in 1275, when he and others were arraigned by John de Bosco touching common of pasture in Little Kimble.⁹

The little that is known about his lands is derived from the charter by which Thomas, son of Ralf de Deyvile, granted to Robert de la Mersch and Isabel his wife all his lands in la Mersch in Great Kimble, excepting "the lands and tencements which I have in Great Kimble of the fee of Westhalle which sometime were of Sir Walter de Haunlee".¹⁰ This deed can be dated fairly closely, for Sir William de Luton, one of the witnesses, died in 1295.¹¹

Walter de Hanle had sons named Nicholas and Martin.

About the middle of the century a rent of nineteen pence payable by Nicholas de Hanle was granted by John, son of Hugh de Kimble (otherwise known as John de la Westhalle), to Missenden.¹² Nicholas, who gave to the abbey his part of the garden that Walter, his father, had of the gift of John de la Westalle,¹³ witnessed a number of Kimble charters with Robert fitzNigel.

Hactenus presentes et futuri quod Ego Thomas de Beuile filius Radulphi de Beuile. Dei. Concessi. et hac presentia carta mea confirmavi.
 Robertus de la Mersche et sua uelle uxori et eorum mee. Omnes terras meas. et omnia tenementa mea cum omnibus suis pertinentiis que habui in la Mersche.
 In parochia de magna beneville. cum arsuagio. domibus. et edificis. pratis. piscariis. piscariis. aquis. curiis. et communis. In dicitur. Roma
 suis. redditibus. septuagis. et consuetudinibus earum. Libyaz tenentium qui Gillanoz cum suis sequens. et rebus quibuscumque ad heredes et tenementa
 predicta qualitercumque spectantibus. Exceptis quidem arsuagio in magna beneville quod dicitur La Mersche. et his et tenementis illis que habeo in mag
 na beneville de feodo de la Gesteulle. que aliquando fuerunt de Waltero de Haukes cum suis pertinentiis. habendos et tenendos predictis Roberto et sua uelle
 et heredibus. Roberti assignatis de capitebus. dicitur feodi per curiam meam de dicitur et consuetudine mypocum. Et nichilominus reddendos inde annuatim quibus. et ali
 queux mee assignatis in ipso loco tempore que consueuerunt fieri. Et dicitur etiam quod dicitur ad duos annos terminos. videlicet quod dicitur ad Robertum
 et aliam medietatem ad festum sancti Michaelis. Et ego predictus Thomas et heredes mei omnes terras et tenementa cum suis pertinentiis. saluis predictis ar
 suagio. et his et tenementis de feodo de la Gesteulle sicut predictum est. predictis Roberto et sua uelle et heredibus. Roberti assignatis. Cumque omnes terras et communis
 mypocum. Et rebus meis donatis. Concessi. presentia carta mea confirmatio. Quamvis. facta sit et stabili. hanc presentem cartam sigilli mei impressione. Robo
 rum. suis testibus. Dno Roberto le finel. Dno Willo de Lucone. Dno Waltero de Gouone. Gouone de la Mersche. Hugo de la Mersche. Roberto le Mersche.
 Roberto filio Willo de Badenham. Willo de la Mersche. Willo filio suo. Roberto de la Mersche de feodo. Chis de la Mersche. Chis filio suo. Alano scol de la Mersche.
 Willo de Guchore. Hugon le suuone de la Mersche. Willo de la Mersche. Willo de la Mersche. Et alii.

PLATE XXI. Counterpart of Thomas de Deyville's grant to Robert de la Mersch.

He is also mentioned in the Close Rolls for 1255 (p. 171) when the sheriff of Essex and Herts was ordered to distrain Nicholas, son of Walter de Hamleg', for his debt of £4 to Abraham the Jew of Berkhamsted and to pay the same to Richard, Earl of Cornwall, to whom the goods of the said Abraham had been granted.

To Martin, son of Sir Walter de Hanleie, John, son of Hugh de Kimble, gave twelve selions in the croft before his gateway.¹⁴ Nicholas quitclaimed his right in eight of these selions¹⁵ which were given by Martin to Missenden.¹⁶

There are no further references to either Nicholas or Martin and it is possible that, like Robert fitzNigel who was killed at Evesham,¹⁷ they perished in the wars.

The fate of Sir Walter himself is unknown, but according to a manuscript in the Cambridge University Library he ended his life as a friar-preacher¹⁸ and it may well be that, as an old man who had outlived both sons and friends and was weary of a time that he describes as "wyschous e catillous", he became a religious.

Such evidence as can be adduced from the treatise itself is not incompatible with its having been written by him. Addressing his son, he speaks of himself as having "fallen into old age". The cartulary shows that he had at least two sons and it is evident that by the middle of the thirteenth century—the date to which Dr. Fowler ascribes the work—he was no longer a young man. Nor need the fact that he refers to a time when he had been a bailiff necessarily imply that he was of villein blood, for he advises his son not to choose a bailiff or servant for *kindred or liking* but because they are true and prudent and know about cattle and tillage.

Dr. Cunningham observes that the treatise was known at Canterbury at an early date and that no fewer than four of the manuscripts now extant were written there. It is worth noting that Christ Church held Monks Risborough, a manor adjoining Great Kimble, and that at Halton, yet another of the priory's manors, Walter de Hannleg' held lands of the grant of Richard de la Tur.¹⁹

It may, too, be significant that the family of the Robert fitzNigel, who was so constantly associated with Walter de Hanle and his son Nicholas, were benefactors to Luffield priory²⁰ and that the thirteenth-century text, edited by Miss Lamond, obviously emanated from that house, the manuscript containing memoranda relating to its lands.

However, the weightiest evidence is perhaps the fact that no other knight of the name is known to have lived at the time required; and it is therefore submitted that, in default of any other claimant, this Buckinghamshire man may reasonably be considered, as Mr. Gurney suggested, the author of the earliest English work on agriculture.

NOTES

¹ *Walter of Henley's Husbandry*, edited by Elizabeth Lamond with an introduction by W. Cunningham, D.D., 1890. The manuscript (Camb. Univ. Lib., Ee.I.1, fo 251) is intitled "Ce est le dite de hosebondrie ke un sage homme fist jadis ke avoyt a non syre Walter de Henle" and this version of the name is also found in the Missenden cartulary—Nos. 455 and 527. In the great majority of cases, however, it appears as Hanle or Hanlee.

² The Cartulary of Missenden Abbey (Harl. MS. 3688), Part II, edited by J. G. Jenkins, *Bucks. Record Society*, Vol. 10.

³ *Ibid.*, 452.

⁴ Eyre Roll for 1227, edited by J. G. Jenkins, *Bucks. Record Society*, Vol. 6.

⁵ Missenden Cartulary, Part II, 482.

⁶ Cal. of Inquisitions Misc. I, p. 194.

⁷ Cal. of Patent Rolls, 1262-1272.

⁸ Missenden Cartulary, Part I, 110 and 116. *Bucks. Record Society*, Vol. 2.

⁹ Patent Rolls 3 Edward I (Deputy Keeper's Report, 1883).

¹⁰ This deed and its counterpart, which were among the Hartwell muniments sold by Sothebys in 1939, have lately been acquired by our Society.

¹¹ V.H.F. Bucks., II, p. 296.

¹² Missenden Cartulary, Part II, 450.

¹³ Ibid., 487.

¹⁴ Ibid., 445.

¹⁵ Ibid., 488.

¹⁶ Ibid., 522.

¹⁷ V. C. H. Bucks., III, p. 402.

¹⁸ Dd. VII, 6. fo 52b.

¹⁹ Feet of Fines. Bucks., 46 Henry III.

²⁰ V.H.C. Bucks., III, p. 406; IV, p. 153.