



## Swallowfield and its Owners.

*By Lady Russell.*

*(Continued from page 14.)*

1554. Christopher Lytcott died the 6th December, 1554, and was buried at Swallowfield, where there is a good brass to his memory. Ashmole thus described it : " At the east end of the chancel lyes a gravestone, bearing some brass plates, whereon, under the feet of a man in armour, and a woman in her usual habit, is this following inscribed :—

‘ What I am thou seist,  
What I have been thou knowest ;  
As I am thou shalt be,  
What thou art remember this.’

Christopher Lytcott, Esquire, deceased, the 6. Day of Dec., A.D. 1554. On whose soule Jhesu have mércy. Who married Katherine, the daughter of Robert Chene, of Chesham Boyes, in the county of Bucks, Esq. ; and had by her three sons and one daughter, John, Leonard, Christopher and Dorothy.

Under this inscription are the figures of the three sons and daughter, standing with their hands erect, and joyned in the posture of praying."

Haines in his " Monumental Brasses " says : " The figure of Christopher Lytkot, Esquire, 1554, at Swallowfield, Berks, affords a good representation of the military equipment depicted on brasses just after the middle of the century ; the breast-plate is now generally without placcates, and has the tapul or projecting edge formerly in fashion ; the mail skirt has an indented edge, frills are worn at the wrists, and the skirt of taces is divided at the lower part by an arched opening between the tuiles." He also says " The costume worn from the time of King Edward VI. until the earlier part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth is well illustrated by the effigy of Katherine Lytkott, at Swallowfield. The centre of the ' Paris head ' is

depressed ; the gown has an opening up the front, tied with bows in the upper part, collar of fur, sleeves puffed and slashed on the shoulders." Katharine Lytcott survived her husband, and held Swallowfield "for her life, by right of accruer, with reversion after her death to John Lytcot, Esq., as son and heir of Christopher, aged 13 at his father's death in 1554."

1567. She died in 1567, when a Licence of entry was granted to John Litcott.

1573. He mortgaged the Manor in 1573 to one Thomas Pope, and in 1574, when he redeemed it, he again mortgaged it to one John Cade.

1581. In 1581 John Litcott once again mortgaged the Manor of Swallowfield to Anthony Higgins.

1582. Ultimately he sold it in 1582 to Samuel Backhouse.

We do not find any further mention of John Litcott, but his youngest brother, Christopher Litcott, was High Sheriff of Berks in 1584 and 1595, and was knighted in 1591 in the camp before Rouen by King Henry IV. of France. He married, first, Jane, widow of Thos. Essex, of Beckett House, Berks, and secondly, Katharine, daughter of William Barker, of Sonning, and relict of William Young, of Basildon. He died at Basildon in 1599, sp., and was buried at West Hannay. Leonard, second son of Christopher Lytcott, of Swallowfield, was of Checkendon, Oxon ; he married Frances, daughter of John Pettie, of Tottesworth, Oxon.

Dorothy, the daughter of C. Lytcott, of Swallowfield, married Sir Christopher Edmonds, of Lewknor, and their daughter and heir, Frances, married John D'Oyley, of Chiselhampton.

1582. Samuel Backhouse, who bought Swallowfield from John Lytcott in 1582, was born in 1554, and was the eldest son of Nicholas Backhouse, Alderman and Sheriff of London in 1578, by his first wife Anne, daughter of Thomas Curzon, of Croxall, Derbyshire, and grandson of Thomas Backhouse, of Whiterigg, co. Cumberland, and Eleanor, daughter of John Parkyns, of Hurlloo, Cumberland.

By his first wife Nicholas Backhouse had, besides Samuel, another son, Rowland Backhouse, of Widford, Herts, born 1558, who was also Alderman and Sheriff of London, and had a long and eventful life. When past 80, he was seized at the House of Commons and conveyed to the Tower, where he was imprisoned some years in consequence of his fidelity to King Charles. He died in 1648, aged 90, and his wife Elizabeth, who was daughter and heiress of

Bartholomew Barnes, of St. Swithins, died 1664, aged 95. A monument in Swallowfield Church is erected to their memory. They had seven children, the eldest of whom, Nicholas Backhouse, was father of Sir William Backhouse, Bart., who became later on owner of Swallowfield.

To return to Samuel, he married at Little Marlow, 6th September, 1581, Elizabeth, daughter of John Borlase of that place, by Anne, daughter and heir of Sir Richard Lytton.

1582. He must have taken up his residence at Swallowfield soon after, as we find his eldest child, Anne, was baptized there the following year.

1598-1601. Samuel Backhouse was High Sheriff of Berks in 1598 and again in 1601.

1603-4. He was in 1603 elected Member for Windsor with Thomas Durdent, and was again returned in 1604 and 1611.

1607. In 1607 Samuel Backhouse was chosen as one of the arbitrators in the great controversy concerning the estates of the Corbets, of Moreton Corbet, Salop. Large estates were left by Sir Robert Corbet, who had no son, and his daughter Elizabeth, who had married Sir Henry Wallop (ancestor to the Earl of Portsmouth), but they were claimed by Sir Richard Corbet, K.B., his brother. Samuel Backhouse was closely connected to Lady Corbet, as well as to Sir Henry Wallop. We find continual allusions to Samuel Backhouse in the interesting collection of letters, published by Dr. Birch, illustrative of the reign of James II., many of the letters being to and from Sir Dudley Carleton, who was his cousin and intimate friend.

1608-9. The following is an extract from a letter written by Sir Dudley to John Chamberlain in March, 1608-9, alluding to a visit to Swallowfield :—

“SIR,—Now I am uppon cumming I wish myself every day with you, because the countrie growes pleasant and if I should suffer the goode time of the yeare to growe uppon me, I should the more unwillingly leave it. Wherefore, God willing, I will hold my purpose, though I am now invited to longer stay here which I may as well make use of another time, and am now going a progress for two or three dayes to take leave of our neighbours ; as first of Sir Henry Nevill whose Lady hath brought him another boy, and hath thereby broken the ranks of 5 boyes and as many wenches, but she deserves thanks for filling our countrie with so goode a name. The christening is to-morrow, and my cosen Backhouse is invited to be

one of the godfathers, which comes well to pass to remove his jealousies of Sir Hen. Neville and disaffection towards him, &c."

1611. Another letter which mentions Sam. Backhouse, written in 1611, by John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, seems worth quoting as shewing a curious belief extant at that time: "My Lady Cope gives you many thanks for her trochises of vipers. We had a solemn supper there yesternight, which they would make me believe was for my coming here. There was Sir Anthony Cope and Sir William (his son), Sir Rowland Lyttan, Sir William Borlase, and Mr. Backhouse, etc." The trochises of vipers were sent to cure some ailment.

1626. Samuel Backhouse died in 1626, aged 72, and was buried at Swallowfield. His widow, Elizabeth, survived him 4 years, dying 1st February, 1630, and was also buried there. Their granddaughter, Flower, Lady Backhouse, had their remains interred in the vault, now covered by the Russell Tribune, and raised to their memory a handsome black and white marble monument which is on the wall of the said Tribune.

Samuel Backhouse had four sons and four daughters. The sons were: 1, John (Sir); 2 and 3, Nicholas and Samuel, ob. sp.; and 4, William (Sir). The daughters were: 1, Anne, married to Thomas Chester, Esq., of Agmondesbury, county Gloucester; 2, Elizabeth, married to — Bellingham, Esq., of Bromley, county Lincoln; 3, Sara, buried at Swallowfield in 1615; and 4, Mary, married to William Standen, Lord of the Manor of Arborfield, Barkham, etc., and Sheriff of Berks in 1615. In the Collection of Letters we have before mentioned a letter from John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, in November, 1616, thus alludes to him: "The Sheriffs are pricked on Sunday. . . . And one, Standen, a widower, a near neighbour of Sam. Backhouse, and shall marry his youngest daughter, for Berkshire. It has become a great matter of canvass and suit to avoid the place, and your brother Harrison was in bodily fear that it would light upon him."

*(To be continued.)*

