



The Manorial Descent of Frilsham.

ONE of the first principles which has to be grasped by those who set themselves to trace obscure manorial descents is that they must not limit their research to the borders of a single county. There are cases in which the descent of a manor, especially in early days, can only be ascertained by tracing that of a manor in another and possibly a distant county. The co-existence of the county and the fief, as the result of the feudal system, led to a great cross-division which has always to be borne in mind. The all important *cartæ baronum* of 1166 are the returns of barons' fiefs; they are entered under counties, only because the head (*caput*) of each fief lay in a certain county, and it would be quite wrong to suppose, as is sometimes done, that all the Knight's fees recorded as belonging to the fief lay in that county also.

Thus it is that the evidence for the early descent of Frilsham is found, not in any Berkshire records, but in those of a family which held its lands in Derbyshire and Staffordshire under the great house of Ferrers, Earls of Derby, of whose vast fief a substantial portion lay, locally, in Berkshire. This family was that of Rydeware, and its cartulary describes itself thus:—

Thomas de Rydeware, fiz e heyr Wauter de Rydeware, fit fere cete livre en l'an de Reigne le Roi Edward fiz le bon Rei Edward le secunde, de tus le tenementz quil tint en sa main en Rideware, en Scheyle, en *Fridlesham*, e en Ketelburston e en Rossingthone.

The MS., therefore, was compiled in 1308-9, and in 1316 we find Thomas "Rydewarde" lording it in *Fridlesham*.*

In this cartulary the family transcribed their title-deed to Frilsham, which runs thus in the printed text:—

Comes de Ferrariis omnibus hominibus et amicis suis Francis et Anglicis et nominatim hominibus suis de Berkeschyra Salutem. Sciatis me reddidisse et concessisse Reginaldo de Grey (sic) et heredibus suis Fryddelysham et terram de Ildeslea cum omnibus pertinentiis suis libere et quiete cum alio feodo ubicumque sit, sicut unquam Rogerus Venator et Radulphus filius suus unquam melius tenuerunt et liberius. Testibus Rogero capellano et Willelmo Pantol et Roberto de Piro dapifero et Ricardo de Fishide (sic) et Roberto de Bakepuz (pp. 283-4).

**Feudal Aids*, I. 49.

Of these four witnesses two held lands in Berkshire, namely, Robert de Fifhide (as the name should be read), who took his name from his holding at Fyfield, and Robert de Bakepuz, of Kingston Bagpuz. And all four are found as tenants of the Earl in the return he made of his Knights in 1166.

But for Reginald de *Grey*, to whom Frilsham is here restored, we must read Reginald de *Gresley*, who appears in that return as holding of the Earl Ferrers (i.e., of Derby), two Knights' fees formerly held by Ralf "Parvus." He attests various charters granted by the Earl, one, for instance, which is at Hardwick Hall, another among the Gresley charters at Drakelow, and a third among those of the Chandos-Pole family. He had an *alias*, being also known from his Derbyshire Manor of Boylestone as Reginald "de Boilestun"; for it was common then, and indeed later, for a man to abandon the name of his family and adopt that of a manor which he held, or to be known alternatively by two names.* It was as Reginald "de Boilestun" that he was one of the witnesses to an interesting Berkshire charter of Robert de Bachepus, with whom we have already met as a witness to the Frilsham charter.†

We have now to see what was the claim of Reginald de Gresley to Frilsham, and who were Roger "Venator" and Ralf his son, whom our opening charter names as its previous tenants. As the date of this charter must be somewhere about 1166, we have a dark period to explore, if we would go beyond it.

Reginald himself was a member of that very ancient family, the Gresleys of Drakelowe (near Burton-on-Trent), which was also among the Knightly tenants of the house of Ferrers, and which is still represented by Sir Robert Gresley of Drakelowe. But to learn how Frilsham came to him we have to turn to a plea relating to Boylestone, co. Derby, and Draycote-under-Needwood, co. Stafford.‡ From it we discover that these lands came to him with his wife Hawys, daughter of Thomas, their lord, whose brother was Ralf "le Petit," huntsman to the Earl of Derby. Now we have

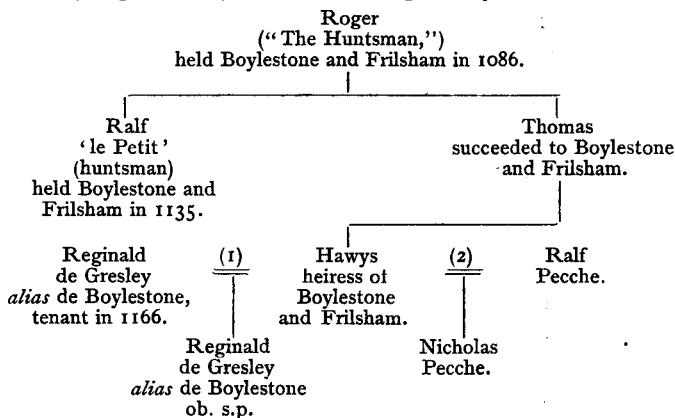
* A striking case is that of the Nottingham merchant of the next century named "Bugge," who, having purchased the Manor of Willoughby on the Wolds, took the name of "de" Willoughby, and founded the Willoughbys of Woollaton.

† A *facsimile* and the printed text of Robert's charter will be found in that valuable work, *Facsimiles of charters in the British Museum*, with notes from the skilled hand of Mr. H. J. Ellis.

‡ *Rydwere cartulary*, p. 257.

seen that Roger the huntsman (*venator*) and Ralf his son had been the previous tenants of Frilsham, and when we turn to Domesday we find that Boylestone in Derbyshire and Frilsham and "Hislalei" in Berkshire were all held of Henry de Ferrers by "Roger." My conclusion, therefore, is that Boylestone (of which Draycote-under-Needwood was an appendage) and Frilsham, with the lands in (East) Ilsley, descended together and are represented by the two knights' fees which Ralf "Parvus" had held in 1135 and which Reginald de Gresley held in 1166.* It should be observed how widely separated the holdings of a single under-tenant might be, for it is little realised how often this was the case.

The pedigree, if my conclusion is right, may be set forth thus :—



The plea mentioned above gives us the second marriage of Hawys and the names of her sons. The elder Reginald, her first husband, must have died not later than 1173, for at Michaelmas, 1174, we find Frilsham in the hands of her second husband, Ralf Pecche, who would hold it in her right.† In 1177 we find the wardship of Reginald's son and heir purchased by this Ralf Pecche, his step-father.‡

This Reginald the younger occurs in 1192 and 1194. On his death, without issue, Frilsham and Boylestone passed to the Pecches,

* *Red Book of the Exchequer*, p. 337.

† "xx s. de Fridlesham terra Rad' Pecc" (Pipe Roll, 20 Hen. II., p. 114). This is one of a group of entries relating apparently to those who had joined Earl Ferrars in rebellion.

‡ Radulfus Pecche redd, comp, de xx marc' et I detravio pro habenda benivolentia regis et terras Reginaldi de Griseleia donec filius ejus habeat etatem (Pipe Roll, 23 Hen. II., p. 48).

as his mother's heirs. These Pecches held, as their inheritance, the Suffolk manor of Kettlebaston, the tenure of which was thus united to that of Frilsham and Boylestone. The Pipe Roll of 1185 speaks under Berkshire of "Hawisa Pecche et Nicholaus filius suus," so that she was then still living. Of this Nicholas, we read in the Rydeware Cartulary (p. 292) "that in the time of King John" he injured his arm at Frilsham and at once went to Dunstable, where he lodged with a certain leech (*medico*), who was to heal (*sanandum*) his arm. The leech applied his remedies (*medicamenta*) to the arm, which only made the wound worse, and the loss of blood warned him that he would die, so he sent to Frilsham for his wife, Alice de Siffrewast, who came to him at Dunstable with his younger brother Ralf, who asked Nicholas to give him some means of support. This bears upon the difficult question of what became of the cadets in the middle ages, when the whole inheritance would descend to the eldest son. In this case Nicholas gave his younger brother a 'virgate'—that is a 'small holding' of some thirty or forty acres—in Frilsham, for which he was to render annually a sorel sparrowhawk worth two shillings. The previous tenant had held by rendering 'customary service' and eight shillings a year. Nicholas having died and been buried in Dunstable Priory, Ralf returned with the widow to Frilsham and took seisin of the land. When he was afterwards slain in Suffolk, another brother, Richard, a parson (*persona*) came and took possession of the holding, in which he was succeeded by his son Geoffrey. Between this Geoffrey and Maud Pecche, the daughter and heir of his uncle Nicholas there was endless litigation for this holding in Frilsham and for their respective rights in Kettlebaston. Apparently his father, the 'parson,' had been given the family living of Kettlebaston by his own father; such livings were very useful as a provision for cadets, which is doubtless the reason of the constant litigation concerning them.

As heiress of her father's land in Derbyshire, Berkshire and Suffolk, this Maud Pecche would naturally be sought after, and her feudal lord, the Earl of Derby, bestowed her as if she was a piece of land on Walter de Rydeware, younger son of a Staffordshire house, which took its name from Rydeware Hampstall, in that county, where it held under the Staffords. He received her "to have to wife with all her inheritance, which he and his heirs by her are to have and to hold for ever."* Maud was a long-lived woman,

* Rydeware Cartulary, p. 279.

and on Walter's death she married, as her second husband, Oliver de Eyncourt, head of the great Lincolnshire house which had its seat at Blankney. We have here the explanation of the entries relating to Frilsham in the Berkshire portion of the *Testa de Nevill*. Despite the importance of that volume for Genealogists and Topographers, insufficient use has been made of its contents on account of the confused way in which they are thrown together without dates or explanation. Another difficulty is caused by the eccentricities of its names; Frilsham, for instance, is playfully disguised as "Fride-theyn" and as "Fugleham"! It may be useful to Berkshire Archæologists to explain that the dates of the two surveys in which the tenure of Frilsham is given are 1236 and the winter of 1242-3. In the first (p. 119) Walter de Rydeware is given as the holder; in the second (pp. 109, 121) it is Oliver d'Eyncourt, and his holding is given with exactitude as two-thirds of a knight's fee in Frilsham and East Ilsey (*Estildestl'*).

We have here an excellent illustration of another snare for Archæologists. It might easily be supposed that Walter and Oliver were successively holding Frilsham in their own right; but at that period the husband represented and virtually eclipsed the wife. Indeed by 'the courtesy of England' his right in her land was such that he was entitled, should he survive her, to retain possession of it for life if issue had been born. On the other hand a woman often retained her maiden name after marriage. Maud Pêche, whose first husband died about 1241 and her second husband about 1245, enjoyed a long widowhood under her maiden name and earned the gratitude of genealogists by giving, as 'domina de Fridelesham,' to Reading Abbey the whole of the land in Frilsham, called 'la Hyde,' for the weal of her soul and those of Nicholas Pêche, her father, Alice Pêche, her mother, Sir Walter de Rydeware and Sir Oliver Deyncourt, her husbands deceased, Sir Ralf Pêche [her grandfather] and Hawys his wife, Nicholas and John her (own) sons, Alice her daughter, Roger de Rideware [her brother-in-law] and Alice his wife.* Her piety was rewarded in the usual manner by Abbot Robert and the convent, who, in 1270, unanimously made her a partaker of their spiritual benefits and undertook, for the space of her life, to have a special mass celebrated in the Abbey daily for her soul and those of her relatives.†

* Ibid. p. 288.

† Ibid. p. 283.

This land, which was partly built over, she had bought from Nicholas 'le Buteylier,' of Reading, and Juliana his wife (who had bought it from Roger Wylard) for fourteen marcs (£9 6s. 8d.)* In 1256 William de Ferrers, Earl of Derby, granted to Maud for the term of her life, the *dominatio* of her son Roger and his heirs, which possibly means that they were to hold her lands for her. This Roger was grandfather of that Thomas de Rydeware for whom the cartulary was compiled and who, with Margaret his wife in 6 Edward II. (1312-13) settled, by fine, the manor and advowson of Frilsham and the manor and advowson of Kettlebaston on Walter, their son and heir, and Joan his wife and their heirs.†

J HORACE ROUND.

* Ibid. pp. 281-2.

† Ibid. p. 297.

The Church of Blewbury.

APPARENTLY the earliest mention of Blewbury occurs in a grant of land by King Edmund to Aelfric ⁽¹⁾ (probably Bishop of Ramsbury. The date of the original document is A.D. 944, and it confers upon Aelfric one hundred plots of land ("*centum terrae mansas*"). Aelfric in turn presented the land to the Abbey of Abingdon. It is almost impossible to estimate the area included in this grant, for although the description given ⁽²⁾ is extremely minute, the boundary marks are in many cases trees, ponds, and other physical features which have long ago disappeared, the only name which can be unmistakably identified being "Ichenilde wege"—the Icknield way. King Edmund's grant refers to Blewbury in the following words:—"Centum terrae mansas et stilo perhenuv (?) trado, quodam in loco venerabili antiquitus et adhuc cognomine noto, Bleoburg appellato."

(1) "Historia Monasterii de Abingdon." Pub. in Rolls series. Printed from a M.S. of the 13th Century.

(2) "Metae de Bleobyrig" attached to the above grant.