

Bec-herlouin Tithes in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries.

By THE REVEREND A. H. COOKE, SC.D.

MILLO CRISPIN, between 1081 and 1087, granted "ecclesie sancte Marie Becco [in Normandy] suarum terrarum decimas quas in Anglia habebat." These tithes were for centuries paid over to the prior of Okeburn (Ogbourn in Wiltshire) as procurator for Bec in England. In 1422 Henry V "confirmed the gift of the spiritualities of Okeburn priory, with all the rectories, manors, lordships, lands, rents, etc., belonging to it, which were granted by Henry IV to his brother John, Duke of Bedford, and others to hold during the war with France, and subsequently John granted the same to the warden and canons of the King's chapel of St. George within the Castle at Wyndesore."¹ Mapledurham Chazey, the smaller of the two Mapledurham manors, and the other manors mentioned in the documents quoted below, must have been among them.

The name Bec-herlouin, as applied to these tithes, underwent many corruptions, some of which occur below. The farmers of Mapledurham, in 1757, called them "Back tythes" and "Black tithes," but afterwards settled down to the more intelligible name of "Windsor tithes." Old maps and terriers, e.g., of Whitchurch, bear the name of Beek or Beck written across certain of their fields.²

The following series of documents from the Powys-Lybbe MSS. show under what conditions certain of these tithes were farmed out in the reigns of Elizabeth, James I, Charles I, and George II. The price charged by the Dean and Canons of Windsor scarcely varies from 1517 to 1813. Probably the lessee was liable to all charges for rates and taxes, with the result that as these increased no higher rent could be borne. Especially

¹ *Liber albus* of John Arundel, St. George's College, Windsor, fo. 152 v., *Cal. Patent Rolls* 10 Henry V, p. 441: *Early History of Mapledurham*, A. H. Cooke, pp. 82, 103.

² R. J. Godlee, *A Village on the Thames*, p. 239: *Early History*, at sup., p. 105-6.

noteworthy is the report of the Parliamentary Committee of 1649, immediately after the suppression of all deans and canons, and the confiscation of their ecclesiastical revenues.

I. 18 June 9 Hen. VIII (1517). Indenture made between John Veysey,³ dean of the free Chapel royal or College of St. George within the Castle of Wyndesore and the Canons of the same and Thomas Payth, vicar of Mapledurham, Co. Oxon. The lessors let to farm their portions of Rotherfeld pipard (5s.), Mapuldereham (20s.), Whitechirch (26s. 8d.), Gatehamptone (10s.), and Stoke Bassett (19s.). Total 80s. 8d. No term of years is named.

Thomas Pethe (Pety, Pettie, Peith, Payth) was Vicar of Mapledurham 1500-1537.

In dorso of this document is written the following, in a contemporary hand:—

Rentale de porcionibus infrascriptis secundum

De porcione de Stoke Bassett	xls.	} Summa totalis vli. xs.
De „ „ Mapeltreham	xxs.	
De „ „ Whitechiche	xxvjs. viiij ^d .	
De „ „ Gatehampton	xs.	
De „ „ Rotherfeld pyperd	xiijs. iiiij ^d .	

showing a profit of 29s. 4d.

II. 10 July 38 Hen. VIII (1546). Indenture made between Master Wylton ffranklyn,⁴ clerk, dean of the kyngs ffrechapell of seint George the martyr within the Castell of Wyndesor' and John Oglethrope of Newyntone Co. Oxon, gentylman, concerning two-thirds of the tythe corne growyng uppon all the demayn lande in Hentone in the parish of Chynnor . . . cald Bekherwyne: the rent to be 8s. 4d. per annum.

III. 20 Oct. 8 Eliz. (1566). Indenture made between the deane and Cannons etc. . . . and Henry Harris of New Windesore: Lease of the Tithes arising from the Towne fields in the Hamlette and precincts of Maple Durham (20s.), Whitchurche (26s. 8d.), Garthampton (10s.), Adwell (5s.), and Chinnor (8s. 4d.), and

³ John Veysey or Voysey, alias Harman, dean of Windsor 1515-19 afterwards bishop of Exeter.

⁴ William Franklyn, dean of Windsor 1536-54.

known by the names of Beckherlewyns, Beckhervens or Beckherveste, for a period of 55 years.

IV. 20 Jan. 20 Eliz. (1578). Henry Harris of New Windsor, yeoman, lets to Christofer Betham of Adwell, in consideration of £10 paid him by William fforrest, parson of Adwell, the tithe of the portion of Adwell for a period of 20 years, at a rent of 5s. per annum.

V. 14 Dec. 9 James (1611). Henry Harris to Thomas Jeale of Newe Windesor. H.H. by indenture dated 20 Oct. 8 Eliz. (1566) held the Beckherlewyns Tythes of Mapledurham, Whitchurch, Garthampton, Adwell and Chinnor for a term of 56 years : he now conveys them all to T.J. for the remainder of that term.

VI. 10 April 19 James (1621). The Dean and Canons of the kings ffreechappell . . . etc. let to John Sonnibancke of Lyncolne's Inn Co. Middlesex, gent. all the tithes before mentioned, at the same rent as before, to be paid in the south porch of the said ffreechappell, for a term of 21 years.

VII. 10 Dec. 17 Charles (1641). In consideration of the surrender of a former lease granted to Gregory Baker of the Castle of Windesor, deceased, and for many years enduring, the Dean and Canons . . . etc. let the same portions of tithes of Mapledurham, Whitchurch . . . etc. to Joane Sonnibancke of newe Windesor, widdow, for 21 years, paying the same rent as before, in the place before appointed.

VIII. 3 Jan. 17 Charles (1642). Joane Sonnybanke of New Windsor, widowe, lets to Henry Knapp of Rawlings Co. Oxon,⁵ gent. the Beccoherlewin tithes before mentioned, arising from the mannor and ffarme of Whitchurche, at a rent of £13 6s. 8d., for a term of 13 years, to be paid in the place before appointed.

⁵ The Knapp family was associated with Whitchurch from 1562 onwards, and perhaps before. Originally yeomen, they became wealthy. Augustine Knapp of Rotherfield Peppard founded the present Knapp Charity in Whitchurch in 1602 : Henry was probably his son. There were Knapps of South Stoke and of Goring. Woodcote House was formerly called Rollins or Rawlings.

IX. Survey of the Tithes of Mapledurham Whitchurch Garthampton Adwell and Chinnor, late parcel of the possessions of the late Dean and Cannons of Windsore, by the Parliamentary Committee (copy).

[Aug. 1649] Oxon. Maplederham et al. A survey of those persons and parcels of tithes comeing or growing within the Townes fields Hamletts⁶ and precincts of Mapledurham Whitchurch and Garthampton in the parish of Goreing or els where in the County of Oxon called or knowne by the name or names of Beckharlwins Beckharains or Beckharvest tithes And also the tithes of Adwell and Chinnor late parcell of the possessions or late belonging to the late Deane⁷ and Cannons⁸ of the free Chappell of St. George in Windsore made and taken by us whose names are hereunto subscribed in the month of August 1649 by virtue of a Comission to us graunted grounded upon an Act of the Commons of England in Parliamt assembled for the abolishing of Deanes and Chapters Cannons Prebends etc. under the hands and seales [of] thirteen of the Trustees in that behalfe named and appointed.

Richard Libb⁹ Holdeth parte of the tithes belonging to
li s. d.

Whitchurch and is worth Communibus Annis ... vj viij iiij

Mr. Knapp Holdeth the other parte of the tithes of Whitechurch the tenth of the Mill and fower sticks of the fishing and is worth Communibus Annis xx. o. o.

Mrs. Joan Suniback Holdeth the tith of Maple Derham and is worth etc. x. o. o.

⁶ " Gattington which 1^o Eliz. was let to Michll Parmenhay at ye rent of 10s. and these particulars was let then to several persons Vid. Lib: Comp[ot]i Johes Somer Senescall.

⁷ Christopher Wren D.D. dean 1635-1658 (de jure).

⁸ " Both parties [i.e. presbyterians and independents] were agreed in hostility to bishops. Episcopacy was abolished by ordinance in 1640, deans and chapters were suppressed by an Act of 1649, and the episcopal and capitular estates were sold to private purchasers." (*Polit. Hist. England*, VII, 384).

⁹ Richard Libb (Lybbe) succeeded his father Richard Lybbe in the manor of Hardwick 1599. Sheriff of Oxon 1640, a strong adherent of the royalist party. Died 1653, buried at Whitchurch.

Edw. Whisler¹⁰ Holdeth Garthampton tithes and is worth
Communibus Annis x. o. o.

Mr. Leonard Kidd Holdeth the tithes of Adwell and is
worth Com. Ann. v. o. o.

Thomas Eustace Holdeth the tithes of Chinner and is
worth Com. Ann. viij. o. o.

Memorandum the before mencioned tithes were by the late
Deane and Cannons of Windsore aforesaid graunted unto Gregory
Baker by an Indenture bearing Date the thirteenth day of
November 13^o Car. [1627] to hold [in margin "Redd. iij*li*. xs.
j yeares unexpired in this Lease Michas next"] from Michas
before the date thereof for the tenure of one and twenty yeares
paying yearely unto the said Deane and Cannons [and] their
successors the summe of 3*li*. 10s. vizt for the porcion of Maple
Derham 1*l*., for Whitchurch 1*l*. 6s. 8*d*., for Garthampton 10s,
for Adwell 5s., for Chinner 8s. 8*d*.¹¹ att Michas onely and is worth
over and above the said Rent pr Annum ... lxxvj*li* iijs. iiij*d*.
with Covenants to pay all Taxes with forfeiture for non payment
of Rent within fourty days after Michas.

A true Copie Certd by mee

Jos Tirbridge Clk to Mr. Jessop.

X. 1757. "The measure of the college tithes In Whit-
church for Philip Powys Esq." A small manuscript book,
showing the exact acreage of the various lands in Whitchurch
on which the Bec (or Windsor) tithe was levied. The total
acreage is 398*a*. 2*r*. 12*p*., and is drawn up under the names of
the various landlords and tenants, the position and extent of each
holding and each separate field being exactly stated.

Amongst the larger fields are :—Gilham, Great Shepherd's
Close, The Lease, Culmne field, Nuttree piece and warren, Warren
Hill, Rose Lands, Maypole piece, Keep Hill (all in the possession
and tenure of Mr. Powys, and part of the present Hardwick

¹⁰ Son of John Whistler (1563-1626), Lord of the Manor of Whitchurch and founder of the Whistler Charity. Edward was Lord of the Manor of Gatehampton, died before July 1651, and was buried in the chancel of Goring Church, where many of his family rest.

¹¹ Error for 4*d*.

estate), Morend field, Costard's field, Great and Little Vintage, Great and Little Hamersly, Boasden field, East field, Pondclose, Clamclose, Chalkclose, The Upper Hitchen, Trencher Piece, Chainy Mead, The Upper Park, The Lower Parks, The Farther Park, Horscot Hill.

Philip Powys, eldest son of Sir Thomas Powys, married, 19 Dec. 1730, "Mrs. Isabella Lybbe," only child of Richard Lybbe and Isabella Twysden (authoress of the "Diaries") of Hardwick, and great-granddaughter of the Richard Libb of document IX.

These tithes continued in the hands of the Powys (or Lybbe-Powys) family until the time when they were all commuted for a lump sum. The only change in the rent appears to have occurred in 1813, when, on a new let, the old amount of £3 10s. was charged, "together with 72 gallons of the best clean and sweet wheat or its equivalent at the Market held in New Windsor next before the feast of the Annunciation, at the choice and election of the Steward of the said free Chapel," also with a sum of £3 10s. 5d. land tax on the said portions.