

A Grant of a Manor in Studham.

BY JOHN EVANS, ESQ., D.C.L., P.S.A., &C.

The deed of which the following pages give a transcript and a translation has lately come into my possession, and may possibly be of interest to this Society. It purports to be a grant of the Manor of Studham in the Counties of Bedford, Buckingham, and Hertford, by John Sybley the elder, of Studham, to his son, John Sybley the younger.

Among the properties belonging to the Abbey of Saint Alban was a farm called Stodham, which with Redbourn, Langley, and other estates was given under Abbot Leofstan* about the middle of the 11th century, by Egelwine the Black and Wineflod his wife. The principal part of Studham however, including the Church, belonged to the Priory of Dunstable.† In 1286 we find the Prior claiming various privileges including view of Frank-pledge in Studham, in which place he had about ten tenants.

There was another Manor at Humbershoe, where was a Chapel of which Studham was the mother-church.

The Manor of Studham and Barwith or Barworth remained in the Priory of Dunstable until the dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII., when it was granted to William Belfield in fee, and the descent of the Manor is traced by Clutterbuck down to the time of John William, Earl of Bridgewater, whose representative, Earl Brownlow, is, I believe, the present Lord of the Manor.

What became of the farm or "prædium" at Studham, that belonged to the Abbey of St. Alban I am unable to trace. In the account of its lands and possessions in 1544, preserved in the Augmentation Office, and pub-

* Gesta Abbat, Mon. Sancti Albani, Vol. I. p. 39.

† Ann. de Dunstapliâ (Rolls ed.), III., p. 54.

lished by Newcome,* no mention is made of any lands or manorial rights at Studham. The surrender of the Abbey and its possessions by Abbot Richard Boreman took place however on Dec. 5th, 1539 (37th Henry VIII.), so that there was time enough for this property to have been granted away from the Crown between the time of the surrender and the drawing up of the list of the possessions of the late monastery. But the conveyance of John Shepherd to John Sybley, on which he rests his title, is dated the 28th of March, in the 35th year of Henry VIII., that is to say 1544; though it does not appear how far Shepherd's title went back. What I would suggest as possible, if not probable, is, that the Studham property of the Abbey was shortly after the dissolution granted to some courtier, who sold it to John Shepherd of Offley, from whom John Sybley bought it.

The name of John Sybley is not unknown in the Chronicles of the City of St. Alban. In the Charter of Incorporation granted to the town by Edward VI., John Sybley appears as one of the principal Burgesses, and in 1569 he was Mayor of the town. I cannot of course identify him with either of the two John Sybleys of the deed, but if neither of them were the Mayor, they were probably of no distant kin. Cussans† says, that the family of Sibley is one of the oldest and most respectable yeoman families in Hertfordshire. In 1561, John Sybley and Nicholas Sybley are mentioned as freeholders in this County, the former in the parish of King's Walden, and the latter in Wheathampstead.

Of the witnesses to the deed not much can be said. Harry Halsey however appears to have been the fourth son of William Halsey, of Great Gaddesden, a direct ancestor of Mr. Thomas Frederick Halsey, M.P., who died in 1546. In his father's and his mother's wills, he is mentioned as of "Studham.‡" Of Slepe, who would seem to have drawn up the deed, nothing is known.

There is some difficulty in translating the passage—'talem bosci suum' in the deed, but Mr. G. F. Warner, of the Department of MSS. in the British Museum, suggests that the word 'talem' represents the French 'taillis' or lopwood. There seems to be an abbreviation

* Hist. of St. Alban's Abbey, p. 483.

† Dacorum Hundred, p. 353.

‡ Cussans' Dacorum, p. 122.

mark over the *m*, so that the word is possibly some form of 'talleicium.'

Possibly by calling attention to this grant of what appears at one time to have formed part of the large possessions of the Abbey of St Alban, some further particulars with regard to this Studham Manor may eventually be elicited.

JOHN EVANS.

1557.

Sciant præsentēs et futuri quod Ego Johannes Sybley senior de Stoham in comitatu Bedford yoman dedi concessi et hac præsentī carta mea confirmavi Johanni Sybley juniore filio meo; Totum illud manerium meum de Stodham ac omnia illa terras et tenementa mea, prata pascua et pasturas, boscos subboscos redditus reversiones et servicia quecumque cum wardis maritagiiis releviis, eschatis, sectis Curiarum et omnibus premissis et cum omnibus aliis pertinentiis prædicto manerio quocumque spectantibus in comitatibus Bedford, Buckingham, et Hertford, necnon totum illud boscum meum in Stodham Wood continent' novem carectas vocatum Charlwood prædicto manerio terras et tenementis pertinent' et spectant' habendum et capiendum tociens quociens tenentes villæ de Stodham prædictæ talem Bosci suum (?) habere et capere debent et Solent cum omnibus et singulis suis pertinentiis scituat', scive jacent' in villa et in campis de Stodham prædicto in Communitate [*sic*] Bedford, Buckingham, et Hertford: Quæ nuper fuerunt cujusdem Johannis Sheperd de Offeley; in prædicto comitatu Hertford et quæ quidem manerium terras & tenementa ac cætera omnia præmissa cum pertinentiis nuper habui et perquisivi de prædicto Johanne Sheperd prout per cartam suam inde michi factam cujus datum est xxviii. die marci Anno regni nuper Regis Henrici Octavi xxxv^{to} plenius constat et apparet habendum et tenendum prædictum manerium terras tenementa ac boscum vocatum Charlewood et omnia et singula præmissa cum suis pertinentiis universis præfato Johanni hæredibus et assignatis suis imperpetuum. Et ego vero prædictus Johannes Sybley pater et hæredes mei prædictum manerium terras et tenementa ac omnia et singula præmissa cum suis pertinentiis universis præfato Johanni Sybley juniore hæredibus et assignatis suis ad Opus et usum prædicti

Johannis Sybley junioris heredibus et assignatis suis contra omnes gentes warantizabimus et imperpetuum defendimus per præsentes. In cujus rei testimonium huic præsenti cartæ meæ sigillum meum apposui. Datum tercio decimo die mensis marcii; Regnorum Philippi et Marie dei gratia Regis et Reginæ Anglie; Hispaniei Francie utriusque Sicillie Jerusalem et Hiberne, fidei defensorum Archiducum Austrie ducum Burgondie, Mediolani et Brabantie, cowntes Haspurgie Flaundrie et Tirolie tercio et quarto Anno Dommi mill^o ccccclvj. Testibus Thome Hurste seniore Henry Hawsey, William Sorye junione et Thomas Slepe de Hatfeld Regis, alias vocato Hatfeld episcopi cum diversis aliis, Edmonde Forsey, William Sorey, Hughe Wyckeley.

Slepe.

ENDORSED—

Possessio et seisina capta et deliberata in præsencia Thome Hurste senioris de Walden Abbatis, Henry Halsey, Edmund Forsey, Willelmi Sorey, Thome Slepe de Hatfeld Regis alias vocato Hatfeld episcopi et Thome Hurste junioris cum diversis aliis die et anno infrascriptis.

Let all men present and to come know that I, John Sybley the elder of Stodham (*sic*) in the County of Bedford, yeoman, have given, granted, and by this my present deed have confirmed to John Sybley the younger, my son, all that my Manor of Stodham and all those my lands, tenements, fields, meadows and pastures, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions, and services whatsoever, with wards, marriages, reliefs, escheats, suits of Court, and all the premises and with all other the appurtenances, the said Manor in any way regarding, in the counties of Bedford, Buckingham, and Hertford, as well as all that my wood in Stodham Wood, containing nine cart-loads called Charlwood, to the said Manor lands and tenements, belonging and regarding, to have and to take so often as the tenants of the town of Stodham aforesaid are entitled and accustomed to have and to take cutting, of the said wood, with all and singular their appurtenances, situate or lying in the town or fields of Stodham aforesaid, in the Counties of Bedford, Buckingham, and Hertford, which were lately of one John Sheperd of Offley, in the said county of Hertford, and which Manor lands and tenements, and all the other things aforesaid, with their appurtenances I lately had and purchased from

the aforesaid John Shepherd, as is shown and appears more fully by his deed lately made to me, the date of which is the 28th March in the 35th year of the late King Henry the Eighth, to have and to hold the said Manor lands, tenements, and the wood called Charlewood, and all and every the premises with all the appurtenances thereof to the said John, his heirs and assigns for ever. And I indeed the said John Sybley the father, and my heirs the aforesaid Manor lands and tenements, and all and every the premises, with all their appurtenances aforesaid, to John Sybley the younger, his heirs and assigns, to the purpose and use of the aforesaid John Sybley the younger, his heirs and assigns against all persons will warrant and by these presents for ever defend. In witness of which I have to this present deed affixed my seal. Dated the thirteenth day of March, of the reigns of Philip and Mary, by the grace of God, King and Queen of England, Spain, France, both Sicilies, Jerusalem, and Ireland; Defenders of the Faith, Archdukes of Austria, Dukes of Burgundy, Milan and Brabant, Counts of Hapsburg, Flanders, and Tyrol, the third and fourth year, in the year of our Lord 1556. Witnesses:— Thomas Hurste the elder, Henry Hawsey, William Sorye the younger, and Thomas Slepe of Hatfield Regis, otherwise called Bishop's Hatfield, with divers others, Edmonde Forsey, William Sorey, Hugh Wyckeley.

Endorsed—Possession and seisin taken and delivered in the presence of Thomas Hurste the elder of Abbots Walden, Henry Halsey, Edmond Forsey, William Sorey of Hatfield Regis, otherwise called Bishop's Hatfield, and Thomas Hurste the younger, and divers others, the day and year within written. (Some modern endorsements omitted.)
