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Transactions at Deerhurst

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TRANSACTIONS OF THE
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society,

AT THE SPRING MEETING, HELD AT DEERHURST,

17th June, 1886.

THE Spring Meeting of the Society was appointed to be held at Deerhurst on the 21st May, but during the night of the 14th an immense overflow of the Severn occurred. The whole of the Vale of Gloucester was inundated to a greater extent than had been known at any previous time during 30 years. The village schoolroom, in which the members of the Society were to lunch, was submerged between 2 and 3 feet, as was also the ancient Chapel which they were to visit afterwards. There was, consequently, no alternative to the postponement of the meeting, and accordingly it was deferred to the 17th June, on which day a large number of Members and their friends assembled at the Westgate Bridge Pier, Gloucester, at 10 a.m., embarked in the "Berkeley Castle" Steam Boat, which had been engaged for the occasion, and proceeded up the river. There were present: Sir WILLIAM V. GUISE, Bart., *President of the Council*, Sir JOHN MACLEAN; the Revs. S. E. BARTLEET, W. BAGNALL-OAKELEY, J. F. GREEN, J. M. HALL, F. E. B. WITTS, C. M. BROWN, F. PALMER, W. BAZELEY, *Hon. Sec.*; Colonel FORBES, Dr. PAYNE; Messrs. W. C. LUCY, E. H. PERCIVAL, E. P. PRANKERD, C. LORD-DENTON, J. D. ROBERTSON, S. H. SWAYNE, E. HARTLAND, *Hon. Treas.*; &c., &c., and many ladies.

On arriving opposite the Wainlode Cliff the Boat lay to for a few minutes to enable the passengers to observe the stratification of the section, to which attention was directed, and Sir William Guise kindly made some observations thereon. This remarkable section, which, again appears at Aust, has already been treated of, see ante. vol. x., p. 15.

On arriving at Deerhurst Pier the company disembarked and proceeded at once to the Schoolroom in which lunch had been prepared. Sir William Guise presided, and the whole party became seated.

As soon as lunch was finished an adjournment was made to the Saxon Chapel. In the unavoidable absence of the Rev. George Butterworth, who was a party to the discovery of this ancient structure, and the means of drawing it from its concealment, the Hon. Secretary directed attention to its chief features. We need not further enlarge upon it here, as Mr. Butterworth's carefully prepared Memoir, in which he treats of it very fully, will be found printed hereafter.

The party next visited the pre-Norman Parish Church, which they inspected with great interest. It is altogether a very remarkable structure, presenting many features well-deserving most careful study. Mr. Bazeley called attention to the Monumental Brasses of the Cassey family of Whitfield Court, in the North Chapel. These Brasses have been well described

by Mr. C. T. Davies in his "Monumental Brasses of Gloucestershire," and Mr. Bazeley will treat further of the same in the following Paper on the Cassey Family.

The Vicar of the Parish, though suffering much from an attack of gout here joined the party, and read his "Monograph on the Saxon Chapel" which will be printed *in extenso* in this volume, as will also a careful description of the Church by Mr. J. C. Buckler, the venerable and eminent architect, who is still alive though considerably over 90 years of age.

The Members, after having examined the Church as far as circumstances would permit, walked across the fields to Whitefield Court, when Mr. Bazeley made the following remarks on

THE CASSEYS OF WHITEFIELD.

WHITEFIELD (or Wightfield, as it is spelt in old documents) is one of the hamlets of Deerhurst, and formed part of the great Manor of Deerhurst given by Edward the Confessor to the Abbey of Westminster.

Whitefield is thus spoken of in the Domesday Survey: "Edui, a freeman, held one hide in Wiefield of the Manor of Deerhurst in the time of King Edward, Walter Pontherius holds it now."¹

I have no doubt that the Registers of Westminster Abbey contain many references to the tenants of Wightfield; but I have not yet had any opportunity of referring to them.²

During the reign of Edward III. Gilbert Despencer and John de Legh, Senr., purchased of Fulk de Birmingham, Knight,³ in fee, two messuages, 40 acres of arable land, 110 acres of meadow land, 20 acres of wood, and £6 rent in Wightfield and Appurley, held of the Abbot of Westminster, by the rent of 20s. per ann. Gilbert Despencer subsequently sold his portion to John de Legh.⁴

Now John de Molyn or John Mills had a market in Leigh and Corse in the time of Edward III., and was, therefore, I suppose, Lord of the Manor of Leigh.⁵ In the Heralds' Visitation of Gloucestershire, lately printed by the Harleian Society, John Mills appears at the head of the Mills of Haresfield pedigree as the father of Thomas Mills who married Juliana, daughter and heir of Thomas Rous, of Harsecombe, and had a daughter married to CASSEY, of Whitefield.⁶

On the floor of the north aisle of Deerhurst Church lie the memorial brasses of Sir John Cassey and his wife Alice, with the following inscription: "Here lies John Cassy, Knight and formerly chief Baron of the Exchequer of our Lord the King, who died on the 23rd of May A.D. 1400. And Alice his wife, on whose souls may God have mercy." There are two shields, one above and another below the effigy of Sir John Cassey, bearing, respectively, : *Argent, a chevron between three griffins' heads erased gules*, the

1 Domesday Survey: Rudder's Gloucestershire, p. 72.

2 Regist. Westmon. MSS. Cott. Faustina A. iij. f. 112, 113, 163, &c.

3 For "Birmingham" family, see Dugdale's Warwickshire and Hutton's Birmingham.

4 Esch. Gil. Despencer, 4th Rich. II. No. 41.

5 Rot. Claus. 14th Ed. III.

6 Vis. Glou. 1623. p. 216. see also Harl. MS. 1041. fol. 4b.; Harl. MS. 1543. fol. 17b.

family arms of the Casseys, and *Sa, three lions passant in pale argent*. There were two shields above and below the effigy of Lady Cassey, but these are gone.

If, as it seems most probable, she was the daughter of Thomas Mills and his wife Juliana Rous, the missing shields would have borne I. : *Ermine, a Millrind or Inkmoline sable* for MILLS; and II., quarterly: 1 and 4, as above, for Mills; and 2 and 3 : *Per pale gules and azure, three lions ramp. erm.*, for Rous.¹

Sir John Cassey was made Chief Baron of the Exchequer, 12th Richard II. (A.D. 1389), letters of Privy Seal for that office being ordered by the Council on November 13th, when payment was directed to be made to him for the time he was in Wales (or the Welsh Marches). On the accession of Henry IV., in 1399, he received a new patent, but he died in the following year.²

It is recorded in the Patent Rolls that A.D. 1395, certain Justices of the Peace, named Ruydale and Otho, gave false certificates to Judge Cassey against Thomas, 10th Lord Berkeley, and were heavily fined in consequence.³

This is all I have been able to gather about Sir John Cassey, who would seem to have been the first member of that family to reside at Wightfield, and hold the manor as tenant in fee under the Abbey of Westminster.

In 1427, Richard Cassey, Priest of Tredynton, near Shipston-on-Stour, was buried in that Church, and there remains in the middle of the Church on a marble stone inlaid with brass the effigy of a priest in processional vestments—cassock, surplice, almuce, and cope, praying, surrounded with the following inscription :

**“Exceptor legum jacet hic in carne Ricardus
Cassey rector erat hujus et ecclesie
Henrici quinti quondam fuit ipse sacerdos
Eboracensis canonicus.”**

The rest of the inscription is lost. There are two escutcheons in this Church, Nash says, bearing *A chevron between three griffins' heads erased*.⁴

I learn from some notes kindly given me by Mr. Butterworth, the Vicar of Deerhurst, that Richard Cassey, in his will proved 1427, mentions his brother Nicholas (perhaps lord of the Manor of Wightfield and son of Sir John and Lady Cassey). “In Droitwich Church, Worcestershire, in the middle aisle, on a plain stone without arms or portraiture,” Nash says, “is the following inscription : “*Hic jacet Johannes Cassy, Miles, qui obiit 22 Martii A.D. 1414.*”⁵

In 1494 Elizabeth Cassey, relict of John Cassey, the elder, died, and was buried at Deerhurst. In her will, proved the same year, she mentions her sons, John Cassey and William, and expresses her desire to be buried near the corpse of her husband.⁶

1 Compare Papworth's Ordinary, p. 170, with Harl. MS. 1041, p. 24b. and 1543, p. 17b.

2 Nicholas' Ordinances of Privy Council.

3 Pat. Roll. 18th Richard II. p. 1, mem. 26. See also Berkeley MSS. Maclean's Edition, Vol. II. p. 25. No. 4. and C. T. Davis's Brasses of Gloucestershire.

4 Nash's Worcestershire II. 430. 5 Ibid. I. p. 335. 6 Mr. Butterworth's MS.

The last mentioned John Cassey, known as John Cassey, Junior, died 17th January, 1507-8, seized of the Manors of Stratton, Compton Cassey or Little Cassey, 4 messuages and 200 acres in Chedworth, 100 acres in Elmston Hardwick and 200 acres in Sapperton.¹

I find this John Cassey taking part in the battle of Nibley Green as a supporter of William Lord Berkeley against Lord Lisle, and receiving as his reward an annual pension of 4 marks. This was in 1481-2, 21st Edward IV.²

John Cassey left his manor and estates to his son, William Cassey, who married Elizabeth Bruges, of Cubberley, and died in 1509, leaving Leonard, son and heir, aged 3½ years.³ There is a memorial brass to this Elizabeth Cassey in Deerhurst Church, bearing formerly the following inscription: "Here lyethe the Elizabeth Rowden sumtyme wyffe to Wyllm Cassey,⁴ of Whyghtfylde, Esquyer, after the dethe of the sayde Wyllm was married to Walter Rowden Esquyer, which Elizabeth dyed the xxvi Day of Januarie Anno D'ne mxxxv., for whose sowle of your charitic say a Pater Noster."

Bigland, who gives this inscription, states, that at the time of his visit to Deerhurst, one escutcheon remained of four, bearing quarterly: 1 and 4 Bruges, 2 de Chandos, 3 Berkeley of Cubberley.⁵

There is another brass effigy of a lady in Deerhurst Church, which was discovered during recent restorations, which I should be inclined to assign to the wife of John Cassey, Junior, father of William, or to Elizabeth Cassey, relict of John Cassey, Senior, which Elizabeth died in 1494. The costume is of the reign of Henry VII.⁶

Sir Robert Atkins says that Leonard Cassey died without issue, and that his brother William had livery of his father's manors and estates in 21st Henry VIII. (1529-30).⁷

I find, however, from the inquisition *post mortem* of Robert Cassey, who died in 1547, that the said Robert, by a deed dated 21st February, 1530, settled in the hands of Sir John Bridges, of Cubberley, and other trustees, his manors of Stratton and Little Compton to the use of himself and his wife Elizabeth and their issue; also in May of the same year he settled his manor of Wightfield on other trustees for himself, his wife, and heirs.⁸ Elizabeth Cassey was daughter of Richard Poole, of Salperton.⁹

Robert Cassey died 2 June, 1547, leaving his relict Elizabeth seized of his manors, Henry his son and heir aged 13, and daughters Elizabeth, Anne, Florence and Katherine.

Henry Cassey, who came of age in 1555, married in or before the year 1556 Dorothy Fettiplace.

1 Esch. 1st Henry VIII. No. 50. B. and 3rd Henry VIII. No. 77.

2 Berkeley MSS., Maclean's Edition, II. p. 135.

3 Esch. 1st Henry VIII. No. 50. B. and 3rd Henry VIII. No. 77.

4 The Parliament Rolls for 12 Hen. VII., contain the following entry "Persons apoynted to be comyssoners for the shires, and with Justices of the Peas to be associated, Glouc'.—Will'us Cassey Arm'."

5 Bigland's Glouc. I. 465. 6 C. Davis's Gloucestershire Brasses, Nos. 52, 57.

7 Atkins' Glouc. 445. 8 Esch. Robt. Cassey, 1st Edward VI. No. 106.

9 Harl. MSS. 1041, fol. 41, and 1543, fo. 33. Heralds' Visitation, 1623, p. 125.

Some painted glass still in the custody of the tenant of Whitefield Court, but which till lately was preserved in the windows of the drawing room, has the following armorial bearings: I. *Azure, a chevron between 3 griffins' heads erased or*, for Cassey, and II. The same impaling fess-wise: (1) *Gules, two chevrons argent*, for Fettiplace; and (2) quarterly: 1 and 4 *Argent, three torteaux*; 2 and 3, *a lion passant crowned or*;¹ this glass seems to commemorate the marriage of Henry Cassey to Dorothy Fettiplace.

Henry Cassey died in 1595, and his relict Dorothy died in 1609, and was buried at Deerhurst on March 8.²

The aforesaid Henry Cassey by deed dated 4th January, 23 Elizabeth, 1581, assigned certain manors to John Gifford and others, for the use of the said Henry Cassey, his son Thomas Cassey, and a certain Cassandra whom Thomas was about to marry.³ I find from a pedigree of the Giffords of Chillingham, County Stafford, that Cassandra Cassey was a daughter of John Gifford of Chillingham, and of Jocosa his wife.⁴ Thomas Cassey at the time of his father Henry Cassey's death in 1595 was 37 years of age.⁴

The Deerhurst Registers record the baptism of Thomas and Giles, sons of John Cassey in 1583 and 1590, and of Catherine their daughter in 1594.

They also record the baptism of John, Henry and Thomas Cassey, sons of John Cassey 1600, 1603 and 1611. This John Cassey, baptised in 1600, appears to have inherited the manor of Whitefield from his cousin Thomas Cassey in 1661, and sold them to Peter Fernor soon afterwards. In his will proved 1676 he mentions this sale; and he is spoken of in connection with William Cassey in an old Deerhurst deed kept in the parish Church and dated 1663.⁶

John Cassey died and was buried at Deerhurst in 1676.

James Cassey of Badminton, whose will was proved 1698, left lands in Apperley to his kinsman, Edward Cassey of Worcester, Gent.⁷

Atkyns says that in his time (1712), Thomas Cassey was residing in a good house at Apperley.

The Casseys gave their name to two hamlets in Gloucestershire, where they were lords of the manor. Little Compton called Compton Cassey, and Kilcot in Newent parish, called Kileot Cassey.

I would venture to express a hope in conclusion, that the owner of this manor will think fit to restore the painted glass to the windows, and thus preserve a very valuable memorial of the Cassey family, who were lords of the manor for nearly 300 years, and the builders of the present manor house, and also perhaps of its predecessors of which no doubt there are many remains.

1 Papworth in his *Ordinary of British Armorial*s, pp. 540-1, gives: *Arg. two chevrons gu.* Fettiplace. *Rudder*, co. Gloucester: *Gu. two chevrons arg.* Fettiplace, co. Worcester, and p. 1048: *Arg. three torteaux two and one.*—Gifford.—[We do not know of any family of Gifford who bore three torteaux. The arms of Gifford of Chillingham were: *Az. three stirrups with leathers or, two and one.*—Ed.]

2 Deerhurst Registers. 3 Inq. p. m., Henry Cassey, 38 Eliz. No. 106.

4 Harl. MS., 6128 fol. 26b, Visitation of, co. Stafford.

5 I am inclined to believe that Whitefield Court was rebuilt during the life-time of Henry Cassey, after his son's marriage with Cassandra Gifford. i. e. between 1581 and 1596.

6 Mr. Butterworth's MS.

7 Mr. Butterworth's MS.