

An Account of Ottery St Mary by Daniel Lysons 1822

OTTERY ST. MARY, in the hundred of that name and in the deanery of Aylesbeare, is a market-town, six miles from Honiton, thirteen from Exeter, and 161 from London.

The market was granted in or about 1226, to the dean and chapter of Rouen, to be held on Tuesday; together with a fair for two days, at the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. (fn. 14) The market is still held on Tuesday for butchers' meat and other provisions: till of late years it was a regular corn-market. There are now three fairs; Tuesday before Palm Sunday; Tuesday after Trinity Sunday; and August 15. for cattle, &c. There was formerly a considerable manufacture of serges at Ottery, but it has much declined. There is still a large manufactory for spinning wool.

The number of inhabitants in the town and parish in 1801 was 2415; in 1811, 2880, according to the returns made to Parliament at those periods.

During the early part of the civil war, Ottery was occupied by the King's forces, who retreated on the approach of Sir Thomas Fairfax with his army, in the month of October, 1645. After having been quartered some time round Exeter, the General made Ottery his head-quarters, from the 15th of November till the 6th of December that year. A great mortality prevailing at this time at Ottery, eight or nine of the soldiers were buried in a day; and Colonel Pickering, one of the most distinguished of the parliamentary officers, fell a sacrifice to the sickness. (fn. 15)

The manor and hundred were given by King Edward the Confessor to the cathedral church of St. Mary, at Rouen. John Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter, having procured it of the dean and chapter of Rouen by exchange, in 1334 (fn. 16) , founded here a college of secular priests, endowing it with the manor and hundred, and the tithes of the whole parish. The college consisted of forty members; the four principal members, who ranked as canons, or prebendaries, were called the warden, minister, precentor, and sacristar: there were also four other canons, eight vicars-choral, or priest-vicars, two other priests, ten clerks, eight choir-boys, and a master of grammar. The canons were appointed by the Bishop of Exeter. (fn. 17)

Alexander Barclay, author of "The Ship of Fools," was a priest of this college. When suppressed, in the reign of Henry VIII., its revenues were estimated at 303l. 2s. 9d. clear yearly income. The site of the college was granted to Edward, Earl of Hertford. (fn. 18) The manor of Ottery continued, after this, many years in the crown. About the beginning of the seventeenth century it belonged to Burridge, whose heirs sold it to Yonge. It was purchased of the late Sir George Yonge, Bart. and K. B., by the late J. M. How, Esq., and is now the property of the Rev. Samuel How, subject to a chief-rent, payable to the Earl of Hardwick. A considerable part of the lands has been enfranchised. The warden's house and some of the college lands are the property of the Rev. George Coleridge; the chantry with the lands belonging to the warden and chanter belong to James Coleridge, Esq.

Knighteston, in this parish, gave name to a family, by whom, about the year 1370, it was sold to Bittlesgate. After continuing a few descents in that family, it was entailed on Lord Bonville, who enjoyed it notwithstanding a claim made by Anthony Widville, Earl Rivers, as next heir of Bittlesgate. Upon the attainder of the Duke of Suffolk, it fell to the crown. It was afterwards purchased by William Sherman, Esq., whose family resided here for several descents. From them it passed by a female heir to Copleston, and, by purchase, to Hawtrey: it is now the property of the Rev.

Dr. Drury, who purchased it of the trustees under the will of the late Stephen Hawtrey, Esq., in 1803.

Thorne, in this parish, gave name to an ancient family, whose heiress brought it to Coke. The Cokes continued here for many descents: the barton was afterwards in severalties. It now belongs to the episcopal school at Exeter; some part of it having been given by Messrs Rolfe, Vivian, and Pitfield, and the remainder purchased in 1776.

Cadhay also gave name to a family whose heiress married John Haydon, a bencher of Lincoln's Inn, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The Haydons continued here for several descents. Cadhay afterwards belonged to William Peere Williams, Esq., barrister-at-law, author of the "Reports." One of his co-heiresses married Admiral Thomas Graves, afterwards Lord Graves, of the kingdom of Ireland; which title was bestowed upon him for his gallant services in the memorable action of the 1st of June, 1794. Lord Graves resided at Cadhay, and died there in 1802. His elder daughter brought Cadhay in marriage to William Bagwell, Esq. It is now the property of Sir Thomas Hare, Bart.

Holcombe belonged to the Malherbes; afterwards to Moore: at a later period, it was, for some descents, the property and residence of the Eveleighs. It now belongs to Captain Charles Grant, R. N.

Ash was successively in the families of De Lupo or Wolfe, Treley, and Bonville. After the attainder of the Duke of Suffolk, it was granted to Walrond. It has since been in the family of Bennet, and is now the property of the Rev. Thomas Putt.

The barton of Bishops Court, said to have been the seat of Bishop Grandisson, having been held on lease by the family of Mercer, as early as the reign of Edward III., was purchased by them in fee, in the reign of James I., and is now held in jointure by the widow of Henry Marker, Esq., junior, whose grandmother was heiress of the Mercers. The Babingtons, a branch of the Derbyshire family of that name, had an estate in this parish by inheritance from French, and resided on it for some descents.

In the parish-church, a handsome structure of the early Gothic, is a handsome ancient monument, represented in the annexed plate, supposed to be that of the father of Bishop Grandisson; a grave-stone for John Cadwodleigh, prebendary of Ottery College, 1532; there are monuments also, or grave-stones, for the families of Haydon (fn. 19), Sherman (fn. 20), Coke (fn. 21), Eveleigh (fn. 22), and Vaughan (fn. 23), and the monument of William Peere Williams, Esq., (by Bacon,) 1766.

The small tithes, which were appropriated to the college, are now vested, under a grant of King Henry VIII., in certain governors, as described below. The vicarage is in the gift of the crown: the governors appoint a chaplain-priest, who reads prayers on Sunday and thrice in the week. There were originally two chaplain-priests; reduced to one by a decree of the Court of Exchequer, 40 Eliz. The great tithes belong to the dean and chapter of Windsor. There were formerly chapels at Ottery, dedicated to St. Saviour (fn. 24), and St. Budeaux; and the town is said to have been divided into three districts, called Ottery St. Mary, Ottery St. Saviour, and Ottery St. Budeaux. There were chapels also at Holcombe and Knighteston, of which there are some remains. The independent Calvinists have a meeting-house at Ottery; in 1715, the congregation were Presbyterians.

There was an ancient grammar-school at Ottery, under Bishop Grandisson's foundation. After the suppression of the college, King Henry VIII. granted the church of Ottery, the church-yard, vestries, cloisters, chapterhouse, the vicar's house, the secondaries-house, the cloisters-house, and the school-house; with all dwelling-houses, edifices, gardens, orchards, &c., belonging to the same; the whole being then valued at 45l. 19s. 2d. per annum, to four principal inhabitants of Ottery, to be called the four governors of the hereditaments and goods of the church of St. Mary Ottery; whom he incorporated and appointed to have perpetual succession. The governors were to keep all the said houses, &c., in repair; to pay 20l. per annum, to the vicar of Ottery, as a pension for the endowment of the vicarage; and 10l. per annum to a grammar-schoolmaster, and to provide a house for each; the school to be called "The King's New GrammarSchool of St. Mary Ottery;" the vicar to be named by the King, and the master to be appointed by the four governors and the vicar. In addition to this endowment, the master, from an early period, has possessed a field, called the Schoolmaster's Field, now worth about 9l. per annum.

In the year 1666, Mr. Edward Salter gave a messuage and some land, at Whimble, now let at 21l. per annum, for the foundation of an exhibition from this school. This estate, as long as can be remembered, has been enjoyed by the master of the school, who has taught in consideration two boys of Ottery gratuitously; and these have been for many years the only boys on the foundation.

In 1691, Thomas Axe, the parish-clerk of Ottery, vested certain houses in Southwark, in case the longitude should not be discovered within ten years after his death; to be distributed in twelve parts among his nearest kindred, and after their decease, as follows: one to the vicar; one to the vicar's wife, to buy drugs and plaisters for the poor; one to the chaplainpriest; one to the schoolmaster; one to the parish-clerk; three to form a stock for marriage portions; and the remainder for the relief of the poor. The clear income is now 100l. 18s. 4d. per annum. Mr. Axe gave also an estate at Blandford, in Dorsetshire, now 55l. 2s. per annum; three-fourths to the parish-clerk, and the remainder to provide medical or surgical assistance for the poor. This is now paid to the Exeter and Devon Hospital.

There is a charity-school on Dr. Bell's system, in which are 170 children.

The Rev. James How, who died in 1817, gave 400l. four per cents., to this school, subject to the legacy-tax. By a subsequent legacy from Mrs. Kestell, and a small donation from the parish, the endowment was made up 400l., and laid out in the three per cents.

Footnotes

14

Cart. Rot. 11 Hen. III.

15

Sprigge's England's Recovery, p. 155.

16

Pat. 8 Edward III. 27.

17

Mr. Oliver's Historic Collections, relating to the Monasteries in Devon, p. 84.

18

Tanner.

19

John Haydon, Esq., 1587; Robert Haydon, Esq., 1648; Gideon Haydon, 1663; Gideon Haydon, 1706. Mr. Incedon's Notes, taken in 1774, add William Haydon.

20

Some of the monuments of the Shermans were nearly obliterated in 1774. Mr. Incedon gives the date of William Sherman, Esq., 1542; William, his son, 1583: the dates of 1617, and 1647&-8, are still visible.

21

John Coke, Esq., 1632, (with his figure in armour, with large trowsers,) the monument put up by his grandson, John Misson. Mr. Incedon's Notes mention William Coke, Esq., 1652.

22

William Eveleigh, Esq., 1679.

23

Ann, relict of Hugh Vaughan, 1730; Charles Vaughan, Esq., 1736. Mr. Incedon mentions also John Curturtin, prebendary of Ottery College, 1432; Richard Channon, Esq., 1668; Joseph Copleston, 1759; Anne, wife of Gilbert Yarde, 1688; and Frances, relict of John Walrond, of Sidbury, 1714.

24

Near this chapel was a hermitage. See Mr. Oliver's History of Exeter.