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THE LATER HISTORY OF LITTLE BERKHAMSTEAD.

By C. E. Johnston.

In a previous article ¹ we traced the descent of the manor of Little Berkhamstead to the year 1539, when it passed to the Crown on the attainder of the Marchioness of Exeter.

On December 7, 1539, Henry VIII granted for life to Anthony Denny, chief gentleman of his Privy Chamber, the stewardship of the manors of Bedwell and Berkhamstead and the custody of the mansion of Bedwell and of Bedwell Park and the wild animals therein, at a fee of £12 a year receivable out of the said manors, together with the herbage and pannage of Bedwell Park and free warren of conies within and without the park in the parishes of Essendon and Berkhamstead, and two pastures adjoining the park called Great and Little Copie. ²

¹ *Home Counties Magazine*, vol. xi, p. 266

² Letters and Papers, Henry VIII, 1539, vol. ii, p. 300, and Patent Roll 690, 331 Henry VIII, m. 34.

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In 1543 100 fallow deer and 12 red deer were removed from Bedwell Park to the King's park at Waltham. ¹

Sir Anthony Denny ² was one of Henry VIII's executors and one of the guardians of Edward VI; shortly after Henry's death he was using this position to secure grants of lands for himself. On June 12, 1547, desiring to have the manors of Bedwell and Berkhamstead, he put in valuations as follow : ³

	£	s.	d.
Rents of assize of free tenants in Bedwell yearly		7	5½
Rents of copyhold tenants in	8	0	5
Rents of tenants at will in	6	6	8
Rents of assize of free tenants in Hatfield Woodside yearly		2	0
Rents of copyhold tenants in	7	8	6
Rents of assize of free tenants in Berkhamstead yearly	2	13	7½
Rents of copyhold tenants in	12	0	9
Ferm of demesne lands demised to divers tenants	3	13	4
Perquisitions of Courts	1	3	4
	£ 41	16	1
<i>Less.</i> Fee of Sir Anthony Denny	12	0	0
Annuity of Rob ^t Page by letters patent of the King	13	4	
Tithe to the Vicar of Berkhamstead	10	0	
Hay making and Carting	1	16	8
		15	0 0
Clear yearly value	£ 26	16	1

The warren of conies and the herbage and pannage of Bedwell Park, which were Sir Anthony Denny's for life, were each valued at £6 13s. 4d. yearly.

On June 28, 1547, the Crown granted ⁴ to Sir Anthony Denny and his heirs for ever " in full absolute and entire completion and execution of our dear father's mind and intention " the manors of Bedwell and Berkhamstead, with other lands in Nazing, Waltham, and Cheshunt. Sir Anthony died on September 1, 1549, ⁵ and left Bedwell and Berkhamstead to his third son, Charles, a young boy on whose death without

¹ Letters and Papers, Henry VIII, 1543, vol. xviii, p. 126.

² See a biography of him in *Transactions of East Herts Arch. Soc.*, vol. iii, pt. 2, p. 197.

³ Particulars for grants, I Edw. VI, section I, No. 1572.

⁴ Pat. Roll, 807. I Edw. VI, m. 19.

⁵ *Inq. p. m.*, 4 Edw. VI., pt. I, No. 115.

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issue in 1566, they reverted to Sir Anthony's eldest son, Henry Denny, Esq., of Waltham and Dallance, Essex. Henry Denny died in 1574,¹ leaving two young sons, Robert, who died two years later, and Edward who eventually succeeded to these manors. Sir Edward Denny² married Mary, daughter of Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter. In February, 1599, he wrote to Sir Robert Cecil:

I look to be called upon very shortly for my debt to her Majesty and finding no good means to furnish myself with money to that purpose but with the sale of Bedwell and Berkhamsted, I thought good you should have the first offer.³

There was, however, apparently some doubt about his title to these manors, and so on July 18, 1600, for a payment of 300, he secured from the Crown a fresh grant of Bedwell Louthes, Bedwell, and Little Berkhamstead.⁴ Within a month he sold to Humphrey Weld, Esq., Alderman of London, the manor of Little Berkhamstead with 60 acres of arable land, 20 acres of meadow, 10 acres of pasture, 10 acres of wood, 4 acres of heath and 20s. rent in Little Berkhamstead, Essendon, and Hatfield, but excepting *Watermeades* and *Waterfield* in Little Berkhamstead (in the tenure of William Potter the elder) and the demesne lands inclosed within the pale of Bedwell Park.⁵

Humphrey Weld was knighted in 1603 and was Lord Mayor of London in 1608-9. He died on November 20, 1610, possessed of the manors of Holwell Graye and Ludwickhall, held of the manor of Hatfield, the manors of Little Berkhamstead and of Panshanger, held in chief; lands in Chipping Barnet and East Barnet, Arnolds, Arnolds Grove and other lands in Edmonton, held of the King as of the manor of East Greenwich, and various tenements in London.⁶ He was succeeded by his son, John Weld, then aged over twenty-seven years, who married Frances, daughter of William Whitmore. John Weld was Sheriff of Herts in 1612 and was afterwards knighted; he died February 7, 1623.⁷ He had added to his lands in Little Berk-

¹ *Inq. p. m.*, 16 Eliz., Pt.2, No.85.

² He was knighted in 1589; created Lord Denny of Waltham in 1604, and Earl of Norwich in 1626; he died without male issue in 1637.

³ Hist. MSS. Comm. Reports, Salisbury MSS., vol. ix, p.63.

⁴ Pat. Roll, 1524, 42 Eliz., m. 16.

⁵ Close Roll, 1667, 42 Eliz., Pt. 23, and Fines, Herts, Mich., 42-43 Eliz., bundle 141.

⁶ *Inq. p. m.*, 9 James 1, pt. 1, No. 173.

⁷ *Inq. p. m.*, 21 Jas. I, pt. 2, No. 132. XIII

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hamstead a messuage, garden and 2 acres of land bought in 1622 of Nicholas and William Hooker and others. ¹ His eldest son and heir, Humphrey Weld, who was eleven years old on January 26, 1623, was afterwards owner of Lulworth Castle, Dorset, and Governor of Portland Castle.

On September 12, 1645, Sir John Weld's widow, Dame Frances Weld and others, sold to Phineas Andrews, merchant, of Crutched Friars, London, the manor of Little Berkhamstead with 64 acres of demesne lands (viz., 16 acres in *Berkhamstead Mead*, 20 acres of inclosed arable land called *Haycookes* and *Higoakes*, and 28 acres of arable land in the Common field) and about 65 acres of other lands, viz., *Culvergrove*, wood ground called *Haycockpiece*, a messuage and 10 acres adjoining, *Drybottom* meadow, 5 roods in *Berkhamstead Mead*, *Broome Close*, a messuage and close in *Millfield*, three closes in *Pondfield*, two closes "down to the river," two closes in *Greenepightell*, an acre in *Broadlands*, a close of 8 acres in *Fellhedges*, and a tenement with 1 acre of land. ²

Phineas Andrews was a royalist and was married to Mildred, sister of Thomas Fanshawe, of Ashford, Kent; his daughter, Elizabeth, married ³ Thomas, son of Sir John Wolstenholme, farmer of the customs and afterwards a baronet. Thomas and Elizabeth Wolstenholme had a son, John (afterwards third baronet), baptized at Little Berkhamstead in 1649: Thomas succeeded his father as second baronet in 1670, and died in 1691; he and his wife, who died in 1697, were buried at St. Margaret's, Westminster.

In 1650 Phineas Andrews paid £1,500 for Sir John Wolstenholme's assessment by the Committee for the Advance of Money. The following year Andrews himself was before the Committee on information that he had sent £50 in 1644 to his uncle, Sir John Harrison ⁴ of Balls Park, then at Oxford in very straitened circumstances, and that about the same time he had sent £100 to the King as a testimony of his affection; he was, however, released in April, 1652, on the Act of General Pardon.

Andrews had children baptized at Little Berkhamstead in

¹ Fines, Herts, Trin., 20 James I.

² Close Roll, 3336, No. 32 (21 Car. I, pt. 10).

³ Allegation for marriage licence dated January 31, 1645-6; Elizabeth Andrews was then aged seventeen.

⁴ Sir John Harrison was doubtless uncle of Mrs. Andrews through his marriage with Margaret, daughter of Robert Fanshawe.

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1647 and 1653; the last, a son named Phineas, only lived a few days. In 1655 he ¹ sold to George Nevill, Gent., of Staple Inn, London, for £3,600 the manor of Little Berkhamstead, with all the lands purchased from the Welds, and also the following copyhold lands acquired from Thomas Foster and called Jeremiah Roysterne, viz., Two closes of pasture and wood called *Cattalls* (10 acres) and *New Close* adjoining (8 acres); a small pightell (1 acre); *Millfield Close* (7 acres) lately inclosed out of the Common field called *Millfield*; *Fouracrepiece* in *Millfield*; 5 acres in *Sprowsfield* and *Idlemanshott* (6 acres) in *Sprowsfield*; *Millfield Bottome* (3 acres); *Millfield Spring* (2 acres); 8 roods in *Berhamstead Mead*; *Pollards Spring Grove* (3 acres); *Broadlands Grove* (2 acres); land called *Hounds* (4 acres); and a messuage formerly in the tenure of Thomas Foster. ²

George Nevill was elder son of Richard Nevill of Halstead, Essex, and was descended from a younger son of Richard Nevill, second Lord Latimer. His son, Richard Nevill, was buried at Little Berkhamstead in 1664, and he himself died in 1679, aged fifty-eight, and was buried in the chancel of Little Berkhamstead Church; his widow, Elizabeth, who was youngest daughter of Sir Henry Trotter of Skelton Castle, died in 1685, aged sixty-one, and was buried near him.

The manor of Little Berkhamstead devolved on George Nevill's only daughter, Elizabeth, who had married ³ Cromwell Fleetwood, son of Lieutenant-General Charles Fleetwood and Bridget, daughter of Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell Fleetwood seems to have been the only son of this marriage and to have been born in 1653; his mother died in 1662, and his father, who married again, lived a retired life at Stoke Newington, being incapacitated from public office after the Restoration. Cromwell Fleetwood was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1671; in 1673 he was "received into Church fellowship" in the Congregational Church in Bury Street, Duke's Place, under Dr. John Owen, where the rest of his family were members. ⁴ He died without issue in 1688, and was buried in the chancel at Little Berkhamstead, where his widow was

¹ Andrews afterwards bought the manor of Denton, Kent; he was M.P. for Hythe 1660, died in 1661 and was buried at Denton.

² Indenture of July 23, 1655. (Close Roll, 3873, No. 20).

³ Allegation for marriage licence February 22, 1678-9; Fleetwood was then aged "about 26" and Elizabeth Nevill "about 24."

⁴ *Transactions of Congregational Historical Society*, No. 1; quoted in *Hertfordshire Mercury*, March 7, 1908.

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laid to rest in 1692 "adjacent to y^e body of her vertuous husband."

Elizabeth Fleetwood left by will ¹ £5 to her "Aunt Fulthorpe," £300 to her kinswoman, Mary Fulthorpe, who had been living with her, £10 to her "sister Bendish" (Bridget Ireton, half-sister of Cromwell Fleetwood), £500 to her cousins, Thomas Burkitt and Sarah his wife of Sudbury, £20 to her "worthy friend" Mr. Hayworth, £3 to the poor of Little Berkhamstead, £20 to poor Nonconformist Ministers and Ministers' widows, and £50 for a large gravestone to be placed over her and her husband and for a monument on the wall of the church. There is no such monument to them, but the gravestone in the chancel floor has the arms of Fleetwood quartering Nevill and the following inscription:

Here lyeth the body of Elizabeth Fleetwood, widow, (who died the xxvi of April MDCXCII) adjacent to y^e body of her vertuous husband, Cromwell Fleetwood Esq, who died y^e 1 of June MDCLXXXVIII. This Elizabeth was sole daughter of George Nevill, Gent., and died without issue.

The manor of Little Berkhamstead was left to George Nevill, eldest son of Mrs. Fleetwood's cousin and heir-at-law, John Nevill of Ridgewell, Essex, when he should come of age, and, until such time, the revenue, after meeting her debts and legacies, was to go to John Nevill. The revenue, however, proved insufficient to meet the charges upon it, and the trustees obtained a private Act of Parliament ² to enable them to sell a portion of the estate to meet these charges. There were two very good houses there, the Manorhouse, and the Brewhouse, "which is the mansion house and is very large and a burthen to the estate to keep up;" and on September 16, 1703, ³ the trustees for a nominal consideration conveyed to John Nevill, in satisfaction of moneys owed to him by the estate, the Brewhouse, with orchards, gardens malthouse, dovehouse, etc., and *Dobbs Close* (10 acres) adjoining the house, 7 acres in *Berkhamstead Mead*, *Sandpit Close* (2 acres), and *Penly Park* (5 roods).

The Brewhouse and Dobbs Close afterwards passed into

¹ Will (P.C.C. 105 Fane) dated May 23, 1691 and proved June 4, 1692.
There is no entry of her burial in the parish register, which is defective at this period; the date on her tombstone seems to have been altered from 1693 to 1692.

² Local Acts, 7 and 8 Will. III, Record Commission, Statutes, vol. vii, p. 159, No. xiii.

³ Close Roll, 4920, No. 10.

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the possession of John Brassey, citizen and goldsmith of London and owner of Roxford manor in Hertingfordbury; he sold them in 1722 ¹ to John Moore, Gent., of St. James's, Westminster, who also acquired from Ursula French, widow, a farmhouse and 4 acres of land in Little Berkhamstead, *Pondfield* (3 acres), *Redducks* (4 acres), *The Danes* (5 acres), 7¼ acres of common arable land, 3 roods of meadow and 1½ acres in *Berkhamstead Mead*. Moore sold his lands to Maurice Hunt, Esq., of Cavendish Square, London, who died in 1730, and whose name is kept in remembrance in Little Berkhamstead by the charity which he left to the poor; the Brewhouse and his lands in Little Berkhamstead he left to Alice, wife of William Morehead, Esq., of St. George's, Hanover Square, London, who sold them in 1738 ² to Beverly Butler, Esq., of the Inner Temple. On Butler's death in 1754, the property passed to his widow, Martha, who died in 1762, and left this property to her "dear friend" Mary Durnford, who married in 1766 John Searancke, Esq., of Hatfield. Mrs Searancke died in 1787, and the Brewhouse and lands passed into the possession of John Stratton, Esq., of The Gage, who pulled down the Brewhouse and erected on its site in 1789 the existing circular tower of red brick.

George Nevill married Jane, daughter of William Guyon, of Great Yeldham, Essex, and in 1713 ³ sold the manor of Little Berkhamstead and about 165 acres of land to John Dimsdale the younger of Hertford, who was knighted in 1725, and died in 1726, aged sixty-one, without issue, leaving this manor to his cousin, Thomas Dimsdale, afterwards 1st Baron Dimsdale, with whose family the manorial rights still remain.

¹ Close Roll, 5329, No. 20.

² Close Roll, 5615, No. 21.

³ Close Roll, 5051, No. 5.