

TWO XVTH CENTURY NEIGHBOURS IN EDLESBOROUGH, AND SOME COATS OF ARMS.

In response to the Editor's invitation to write a paper for this year's RECORDS, I had hoped and promised to complete a long and distressingly detailed account of the Ruffords of Butler's Manor, in Edlesborough. But I found my notes at once far too numerous and too incomplete to manage in the time. The identification of the many manors and small parcels of land also turned out to be unexpectedly difficult. Finally the devastating effects of a sudden house-moving upon my papers decided me to choose a single document from the confusion, and for the present to confine my remarks to the persons and places mentioned in it. My need for urging some such plea is shown by the unconscionable defects of some of the references which follow.

The Ruffords first came to Edlesborough in or before the year 1390¹ from Toddington; in Beds, where they had carried on their original business of bell-founding.² To the information about their bells and foundries given in Mr. Cocks' monograph and in his article in the Victoria County History for Bucks, I have only enough additional evidence to indicate that they came to Toddington in the employ of Thomas Peyvre, lord of that manor, and had previously (in 1375)³ been associated with him—no doubt as bell-makers for the churches upon his Bucks manors⁴—in fines relating to his lands in and near the town of Buckingham. Chilton, one of these manors of Peyvres,⁴ is close to Thame, and it is in connection

¹ Licence in Cal. Pat. Rolls, 8 Oct., 1390, for Thomas Boullok, of Edelesburgh, to enfeof John Rouland, parson of Tudyngton, John Swynstede, parson of Edelesburgh [the last *rector*, whose brass is now lying at Ashridge], and others, all clergy, of a messuage, 132 acres (in all), and 60 shillings rent in E., held in chief, which they were to re-grant in fee tail to Thomas Rufford, son of William Rufford, of Tudyngton, "belmaker," and Katharine his wife, dau. of Tho. Boullok, with remainder to Boullok.

² A tenement in Toddington retained for many years the name of "Belmakers." Early Chanc. Proc. bundle 20, no. 66, and bundle 38, No. 136, quoted in V.C.H. Beds, under Toddington.

³ As William *Belyeter* in F. of F., case 21, file 102, No. 16, date 1375, and as William *Bellemaker* in F. of F., case 21, file 107, No. 10, date oct. of Hil. and Trin., 1390.

⁴ The latter fine concerns Peyvre's manors of Astwode, Lavenden, Chilton, and half the manor of Weston Underwode.

with Thame that the earliest bearer of the name of Rufford (Roffard) first appears.⁵ Although dropped in the Peyvre fines and elsewhere in favour of their trade designation of "Belyeter" and "Belle-maker," the place-name of Rofforde, Rughforde, Rufford, etc., had been in use by them long before they came to Edlesborough; there, as "gentlemen of lands" (however small), they find it beneath their dignity to use any other. How they came to bear it is explained by the Inq. p. m. of the first Rufford of Edlesborough, Thomas (who died 27 July, 1420), son of William the bellmaker of Toddington. This was taken at Oxford on the 18th November, 1420,⁶ and shows that he held of the heirs of Dru Barentyne, as of his manor of "Chalgrauē," a messuage with sixty acres of (plough) land and three of meadows in *Rufforde*, by service of suit of court once yearly. It is a hamlet in the Oxfordshire Chalgrave, not of course in Chalgrave near Toddington, and although the latter Chalgrave happens to have been yet another manor of Thomas Peyvre's (acquired through his marriage with the daughter and heir of Sir Nele Loring, the famous Garter knight) the coincidence is merely one of those which so often vex the genealogist.

The bellmaker and his son may have come to Edlesborough in the course of trade, for the belfry here is of his time, and its upper stage closely resembles that of Toddington, an old tower re-modelled at this date. He may have had plenty of commissions hereabout, for the solitary survivor of the three towers once at Dunstable⁷—that which has always held the bells of

⁵ Cal. of Pat. Rolls 22 Edw. III. (1348), May 20. Commissions of oyes and terminer to certain persons on complaint of the Black Prince that a mob had attacked his men &c. at Thame. Among these thieves or rioters is Andrew Roffard. An earlier form of the place-name is *Ropforde*.

⁶ Inq. p. m. 8 Hen. V., No. 39, taken at Oxford 18 Nov., and at Dunstable and Edlesborough (?) on the Wednesday after St. Luke's Day, and on an illegible date after the same feast respectively.

⁷ Sir Nele Loring wills (3 April 1386) to be buried in the Priory ch. of Dunstable, although his tomb and effigy are at Chalgrave; he may have introduced his family bell-maker to the Canons. (Early Lincoln wills, by Alfred Gibbons; also wills in the Court of Husting, London).

the parish as distinct from those of the priory—the tower of Houghton Regis, and several others in the neighbourhood, are all nearly of one date and type. Once at Edlesborough, he laid the foundations of the family fortunes by marrying his son to the daughter (Katharine) of a franklin named Thomas Boullok.⁸

The grandson of this couple was Robert Rufford of the document which follows. In 1439 he succeeded his father Thomas in two small properties at Edlesborough,⁹ and a quarter of a fee in Potsgrove in Beds.¹⁰ In the inquisition his age is partly illegible, but as there seem to be traces of the word *septem* or *septin*-, and as it is unlikely that he could then have been twenty-seven years old, his father being only forty-four at his death, his age was probably seventeen only. To these small lands he added a small manor called Botelers or Butler's in Northall, which may have been his mother's or his wife's property, but was more probably purchased by him. Joan, his mother, and her second (or third) husband, John Fitz Geoffrey, of Blackborne Hall, in Thurleigh, Beds, join with him and his wife Margaret in a fine of 1450,¹¹ which is quoted in the inquisition after his death; by this it is acknowledged for the purpose of entail that the manor was the right of one William Pecke or Pekke, who re-grants in fee-tail accordingly to Robert and his wife. Botelers is "the seid Roberd Ruffordys place" so woefully mentioned in the petition to be presently set forth, and in the Heralds' Visitations and elsewhere the later Ruffords usually add

⁸ V. note 1. Boullok was descended from the Fitz Johns of Edlesborough and Marsworth, and apparently also from the Walronds. The site of Fitz John's manor was the moat of King's farm opposite the rectory moat.

⁹ Forty-two acres "parcella feodi de Walrondys," and the small manor then and still called Estbury (Eastbury fields), lying near the spring north-west of the church of Edlesborough, which was part of Boullok's holding.

¹⁰ Lovell's Bury or Manor, the abandoned and dry moat of which is on the top of the slope above the lane from Sheep Lane to Potsgrove.

¹¹ Fines, Bucks, 29 Hen. VI., No. 1, and Chanc. inq. p. m. 23 Oct. 12 Edw. IV. (the Writ is dated 29 Oct., 11 Edw. IV., a year before). For Joan (Rufford) and Fitz Geoffrey, v. p. 16 and note.

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the name of Butlers to their own as a territorial cognomen. The manor is probably identical with the land held of the *Rector domus de Assherege* early in the fourteenth century by Philip le Boteler,¹² and granted to Ashridge a few years earlier by Edmund Earl of Cornwall.¹³ In the inquisitions of the Ruffords, where the jurors do not declare that they are "profoundly ignorant of whom it is held," Butlers is consistently stated to be held of the Rector of the College of Ashridge, a fact which fairly conclusively establishes its identity with this particular Boteler holding.¹⁴ It has therefore borne the same name for some six hundred years.¹⁵

On the 14th July, 1465,¹⁶ soon after that crowning of Edward IV.'s queen which forced the King to look everywhere for friends, Robert Rufford had a pardon under privy seal of all offences committed by him and all debts and accounts due from him to the King. How these debts may have been contracted is plainly indicated by his titles in this document; he is, *imprimis*, "squire,"—a title which then, of course, had a military significance, and which did not belong to his father; he was also "late one of the collectors of the custom of wools, hides and woolfells in the port of London, *alias* one of the collectors or customers of the great custom in the said port and all ports and places adjacent."¹⁶ Light upon the nature of his offences may perhaps be afforded by the petition itself.

¹² Feudal Aids (R.C.). In 1346 Thomas Boteler held it (*ibid.*), and as Thomas le Botiller in 1342 granted 15 acres of this or other land in Edlesborough with certain rents and a mill in Eaton Bray to found a chantry in E. church. Browne-Willis wrongly states that the Ruffords acquired Butlers by a marriage with his daughter. But one John atte Greene married that daughter, and presented to the chantry as his heir in 1375.

¹³ Inq. ad q. d. file XIV., 24 18 Edw. I., concerning grant by the earl to the rector &c. of lands in Edlesborough, Barley and Nettle-den, and services of tenants, &c., in Pitstone, Barley, "Nettele," Cheddington, and Seabrook (in Ivinghoe). It was held by Boteler as a quarter fee.

¹⁴ For the "boni homines" seem to have had no other land in Edlesborough.

¹⁵ And probably had almost exactly the same acreage. On the map the wavering lines of its old boundary hedges, etc., are clearly distinguishable among the straight fences of the enclosure. Its old dispersed furlongs of demesne and copyhold were probably first thrown together and enclosed by John Rufford in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

¹⁶ Cal. Pat. Rolls, 14 July, 1465.

It is true that the date of it is somewhat later, *i.e.*, between May, 1467, and the day of his death in October, 1471.¹⁷

"To the right reverent (*sic*) fader in god my good and gracious lord the Bysshop of Bath and Wellys Chauncellor of Engulond,¹⁸

Mekely besechith you[r] poure Oratour Richard Smyth of Eddisborough in the Countie of Buk. that where on John Anneys seruant vnto Robert Rufford squyer with othyr malefactours the xith day of August last past at Edysborough made asaute vppon William Hamond seruant vnto your Oratour and there greuously bete hym and woundyd hym ayenst the kinges peas and there had slayn hym had not on Syr Thomas Morley pryste aben than in conseruacion of the kinges peas your seid Oratour wold not suffre the said William to goo out of his place but for to labur there as well for safegard of his body as for eschewyng of more hurtys that myght folwe and after that the seid John with othyr malefactours aforeseid bydyng in ther grete malyce the friday next after they com with billis and gleyves and there lay in weyte vppon your said besechers seruantys as they com out of the fyld with ther cartys and ther they fyll uppon them and wolde have slayne theym but they forsoke ther cartys and fled home to your seid Oratours hous for sauynge of ther lyues the seid malefactours pursuyng the said seruantz to the seid hous at that tyme there beyng the seid William Hamond laboryng in his shyrt accordyng to your seid besechers byddyng which that was hurt before be the seid John Anneys and othyr and than the seid John Anneys with othyr

17 The document is approximately dated by the following event. In 1467, according to Warkworth's Chronicle, the King "put out of the Chaunceler-sheppe the Bysshope of Excetre [Archbp. of York], brother to the Erle of Warwyke, and made the Byshoppe of Bathe Chaunceler of Englonde." The more conveniently to carry out so decisive an act of defiance, the King had sent Warwick off two days before on his intently futile embassy to France, and, after it, although the Earl and he were "acorded diverse tymes," "thei never loffyd togedere after." This was in May. The Bishop of Bath was Robert Stillington.

18 Early Chancery Proceedings, Bundle 46, No. 80. I have extended the contractions, but added no commas.

there seyng the seid William laboryng in his shyrt fyll uppon hym and wold haue slayn hym and than he fled fro them and they folowyd hym into the hall of your seid Oratour and there they wold haue born hym thurgh the body ayenst the wall and the said William seyng none othyr mene but lykly to dye toke a pesehoke there stondyng be hym and defendyd them and in his defence gaf the seid John Anneys his dethys wound forasmoch as the said William myght in non wyse other wyse (*sic*) avoyde the seid malefactours in sauynge of his lyfe as itis aforeseid than afterward the seid Robert Rufford com vnto your seid besechers hous with othyr and assautyd your seid besecher there brekyng vp his gate ouer a Mote seyng that he was causer therof which he neuer knewe it tyll it was don ner was nat ther present and ther wold haue slayn hym had he not fled into a Chambyr for the safe garde of his lyfe than it fortunyd that the Proctour of Charterhous which your seid Oratour is fermour vnto com vnto the seid place in the meane whyle ther for to take rekenynges of soch duetes as was due betweene them found the seid Roberd Rufford with othyr there entretyd the seid Roberd for your seid Oratour that he shuld do hym no bodely hurt and vndertoke that he shuld obbey the kynges lawes and to bryng hym vnto the seid Robert than the seid Proctour accordyng to his promes brought your seid Oratour vnto the seid Roberd Ruffordys place the morowe after and than the seid Robert sent your seid Oratour vnto the Gaole of Aylesbury fetyrd vnder the hors bely and there charchyng that he should not be maymeprysyd (*sic*) and so ther lyse in prison and ys lyke to lye with out your gracious lordshippe to hym beshevyd in this behalf Wherefor please yt your good and gracious lordshippe the premisses tenderly consyderyd to graunt a corpus cum causa to be directe vnto the shyryf of Buk. commaundyng hym to bryng vpp the body and cause of his arrest at acerten day be your lordshippe to be lymitted at the reuerence of god and in wey of charite." 19

19 Endorsed "Affidavit Coram Rege in Cancellaria sua die lune proxime futuro."

"Roberd Ruffordys place," as may be seen in the large scale Ordnance map, has two islands within a long quadrangular moat, very much like that at Apsley in Ellesborough. It lies just a mile westward of Richard Smith's "mote." A small brook, which rises in the yawning pit called Combe Hole, close to the edge of the upstart Icknield of 1798, once supplied it with water. At present it does so no longer, for in 1861 a guilty uncle of mine, thinking the moat a dangerous protection to his young children, filled up its ditches to within a foot or so of the ground level. Part of the south-east side, in front of the present farmstead of 1721,²⁰ had long been destroyed for the sake of free access. These moats with two islands, I have some reason to think, are not older than the early 14th century. The exact purpose of the smaller of the two is not known; although it gave a larger space protected from thieves, and the cross-ditch lessened the area which might have to be seriously defended, it is rather difficult to imagine any more plausible excuse for the labour it involved. Sometimes, as at Great Kimble, the smaller islet was reduced to very narrow dimensions indeed, sufficient only to contain stacks, carts, and so on.

Apart from transactions in land and legal business for his neighbours, such as the Brocas family of Horton, there is very little to be known of the 'squire's later history. But after Barnet, at all events, he finds himself compelled to "unhoke hys swerd from the wall." He has a commission of the peace! But he may have fought at that deadly "Ester day in the mornynge," for all I know. On the 18th April, four days after the battle, he has a commission of array, and another

²⁰ There is a stone inserted in the brick of the S.E. gable, bearing

B.

the date 1721, and the initials E.F. This and other parts of the house were built by the Brewster family, who in 1700 bought the manor of the ancient Edlesborough and Toddington family of Kidgell. But in the west gable and elsewhere appears the timber framework of a somewhat older building.

on the 11th May, a week after Tewkesbury. The other commissioners in Bucks at the latter date were the sheriff (Brocas), Humphrey Stafford, the Duke of Buckingham, Thomas Hampden, of Kimble, and others. In June he has orders to arrest Thomas Wellesburne (of Hughenden), but Wellesburne preserved himself alive,²¹ for he is afterwards escheator.

The war was now practically over. The men summoned to arms by the May commissioners had little more to do than to accompany the King to London, where his business was merely to knight the aldermen who had kept London against the men of Kent, and to murder King Henry. But hurt or unhurt by battle, Rufford died soon after, and was buried in London. In the church of the Grey Friars, according to the Register²² of sepulchral inscriptions existing there in Henry VIII.'s reign, his monument near the high altar was inscribed to "Robertus Rufford arm: ob. 11 Oct. 1471." Stowe's "Survaye" does not include it in his long list of memorials in the church, but he remarks that "all these and five times so many more have been buried there, whose monuments are wholly defaced." The inquisition²³ taken a year after his death at "Edyllysburghe" states that he died on the day after the translation of Saint Edward, King and Confessor, 11 Edw. IV., *i.e.*, the 14th instead of the 11th October. Thomas was his son and heir, aged sixteen "and over," and Margaret his wife survived him, holding "Botelers" during her widowhood.

There is no direct memorial to him in Edlesborough Church. His name was legible in Browne Willis's

²¹ The King's policy was to "hedd" the nobles and knights, and to fine the rest.

²² Cott. MS. Vitell. F. xii., printed in *Collectanea Top. et Gen.* vol. v., p. 274, etc.

²³ This inquisition, of which I have a copy, but have lost the exact reference, is dated 23 October, 12 Edw. IV. (1472), and was taken before Robert Pygot the escheator. It shows that Rufford held "Estbury" and "Botelers" with a house and two acres not belonging to these manors. There is no return for his Beds holdings.

time²⁴ upon the white incised slab to his son, but that has long been worn perfectly smooth. In the eastern wall of the Rufford chapel, however (where sang, no doubt, the chantry-priest of Crachale's and Boteler's foundation), there are some striking and beautifully-cut brackets for lights or images, which certainly belong to his time, and probably commemorate him as the builder, or rather *re-builder*, of the chapel.²⁵ Two of them are demi-angels with shields, one (in ordinary celestial garb) bearing the Rufford coat of (argent) a chevron between three slipped trefoils (sable), and the other in a "suit of feathers,"^{25A} carrying a shield with a double-tailed lion rampant. The latter coat, impaled by that of Rufford, once existed in glass in the north window of the chapel. Browne-Willis blazons it as sable, a lion rampant or, omitting the detail of the forked tail; the late Professor Burrows, in his work upon the Brocasses of Beaurepaire, accordingly claimed it as a coat of the branch at Horton, who were buried here.²⁶ He added, however, that "the lady cannot be traced with any certainty."²⁷ There is no doubt, of course,

²⁴ Cole's transcript of his collections for the Hundred of "Cotlow," Add. MS. 5840. It was not very legible then, for the inscription, as he gives it, makes Robert Rufford husband of his son's wife. It was still less legible in Powell's time, nearly a hundred years later. His description of it (Add. MS. 17456, fo. 176) is as follows:—"On a white stone is engraved in black lines the figure of a man in armour, very long and thin, at his feet a dog, and his wife on his right side, a shield between them [three trefoils]. An inscription round it of which I read *hic jacent Thomas Rufford armiger filius.*" The stone still exists in front of a pew just outside the chapel.

²⁵ Two of the other three brackets seem to have originally been crowned busts, but although both retain a luxuriant "growth" of hair, one is re-carved as a skull, and the other as an hour-glass (now mutilated). The middle bracket represents a dragon, not that (Roman) red dragon of the "Pendragonship" which Henry VII., who was anxious to be considered a descendant of Cadwallader, adopted as one of his many "beastes," but probably the black dragon of Ulster, a badge of Edw. IV. as descended from the de Burghs. I was told by the late Vicar, Archdeacon Brooks, that these sculptures were formerly lying loose about the church; but they were where they now are in Browne Willis's time, and, I think, have always been there. Mr. Brooks was probably confusing them with some architectural fragments of a monument to the Sankey family, which a few years ago were piled up under the tower. At present, some of them at least—painted with shields of the Sankeys and Pigotts—are outside in the churchyard.

^{25A} Therefore, I believe, St. Michael the Archangel.

²⁶ But in the north aisle. The casement of a fine XVth century brass remains.

²⁷ "Brocas of Beaurepaire," I. 174.

that the coat refers to the wife of a Rufford, but she was not a Brocas, for *their* lion was full-faced, and therefore not so much lion as "lybbard," and he had moreover a mere single tail. It is much more probably the coat of Kingstone, of Sparsholt and Childrey in Berks. They bore the same colours, but "de sable oue une lyon rampant dor ove le queue fourche" according to the bold and bad French of the so-called second Dunstable Roll; this is the coat that is still on the bracket, and was probably once in the window. The Rufford pedigrees in the Visitations, which as usual are quite inaccurate, do not help much, for they give only the lady's Christian name. But to Thomas, father of Robert, one of them gives to wife "Elizabeth, d. & Coheire of Edw. Cheldrye of Cheldry in com. Berks." ²⁸ Here the Christian name should be Joan, but otherwise the information is probably right, for the following reasons among others. The name of William Fynderne [of Childrey] occurs in a fine quoted in Thomas Rufford's inq. p. m. of 1439. ²⁹ Thomas Fynderne, kt., also occurs with his kinsman Thomas Delamare [of Aldermaston, Berks] in a fine to which Robert Rufford is a party in 1449, ³⁰ relating to Delamare's manor of Aldermaston, and again in the inquisition taken after Rufford's death, and elsewhere. Now William Fynderne undoubtedly married Elizabeth de Chelrey or Childrey, one of the three daughters and heirs of Thomas, lord of Frethorne's manor in Childrey (d. 1407). She had previously been the wife of Sir John Kingstone. The second daughter, Joan, whose only recorded marriage is that with Thomas Calston, of Littlecote, in Wilts, was probably his widow later, and *Thomas Rufford's wife*; after his death in turn

²⁸ Harl. 1533, copy of the Vis. of 1675; Harl. 5867, that of 1566, has much the same, but "Buck" for "Berks."

²⁹ License for fine in Cal. Rot. Pat. II. Hen. VI. (1433), July 15; fine quoted in Inq. p. m. of 28 Oct., 18 Hen. VI. (1439).

³⁰ Licence in Cal. Rot. Pat. 27 Hen. VI., pt 2. I have lost the reference to the fine itself.

she married John Fitz Geoffrey, of Blackborne.³¹ Heiresses in the fifteenth century were not long permitted to remain unattached! Childrey's manor in Childrey was inherited by a son of the Kingstone, not of the Fynderne marriage, and I have very little doubt that the wife of Robert Rufford was his own cousin, a daughter of Sir John Kingstone and Elizabeth (Childrey). This not only accounts most satisfactorily for the shield and illuminates other facts which I need not specify, but also goes some way to explain Rufford's need of a pardon at one point in his career, for these kinsmen of his were *Lancastrians*. On the 17th May, 1464, two days after the execution of the elder Somerset, William Fynderne ("Fynderum") and Edward, son or brother of Thomas Delamare, both came to the block at Newcastle, with that fierce lord, the lord "Hungarforde."³²

Another coat, quartered by the Ruffords in the Visitations, and on the Elizabethan monument at Edlesborough,³³ is invariably attributed to the Boteler or Butler family of "Botelers," but I am sure never belonged to them. It is unlike any Butler coat, and I have failed to find any trace of a Rufford marriage with a Butler. The quartering is argent, a fesse between three scallops sable. I do not know what the Childrey or Cheldrey coat may have been; it seems to have escaped record, unless it occurs somewhere on the monuments at Sparsholt or Childrey.³⁴ The Rufford descent from one of their co-heirs seems fairly certain, as I have explained, and the scallops point to some such pun of blazonry as is exemplified by the coat of *Shelley*. That

³¹ Their names occur in several documents relating to R. Rufford. His mother, Joan Fitz Geoffrey, predeceased her third husband. At her death in 5 Edw. IV. (inq. p. m. No. 25) she held Estbury, Bowelles, Botillers, and Lovellesbury, or parts of them, in dower. John Fitz Geoffrey married again, and the brass of himself and his second wife remains at Sandon in Herts, and is engraved in Cussans' *Herts*. He d. 3 Aug. 1480 (brass and inq. p.m. 20 Edw. IV., No. 53). His arms were a golden bull upon black, not the old Fitz Geoffrey version of the Mandeville coat. He first appears in Beds shortly before 1428, when he acquires the manor of Thurleigh, afterwards called Blackborne Hall.

³² MS. quoted in the Camden Society's ed. of Warkworth, p. 40.

³³ Formerly also in stone under the north window and perhaps contemporary with the other carvings already mentioned.

³⁴ It should be on the famous brass of William Fynderne and his Childrey wife, in Childrey church.

nothing in this way was too poor or far-fetched to please the fancy of the mediæval squire in quest of a "cote-armure" is proved by myriads of examples, among others by that of John Sewell, of Sewell, a few miles away. His effigy of about the year 1400, at Houghton Regis, bears a chevron on the jupon, perhaps in allusion to his lord Stafford³⁵ (whose *knots* he has tied upon a cord about his neck), and in distant allusion to his own name, which is still pronounced "Sool," he has three butterflies as emblems of the soul. Nearly all puzzling heraldic charges conceal a pun, and have no deeper meaning.

As for Rufford's own coat, I am as yet only upon the track of its origin. It was not derived from their earliest lords, the Barentines, for they bore eagles. Nor from Peyvre of Toddington, who bore three golden *lis* on a red chevron, in allusion, as I think I have discovered, to the shield of the Cantelupes. Whether the Rufford trefoils conceal a pun, refer to a territorial or other "lord," or are merely heraldic counters, I am still uncertain, but I know that they are first found *upon a bell*. Not, strange to say, upon a bell made by the Ruffords, but upon several of those made by a London founder of about the time that the Ruffords finally abandoned the trade. He had long been known only by the name William Founder upon his bells, but from the combined evidence of certain deeds and the stamp of two daws used by him, it was discovered by Stahlschmidt that his true name was Dawe. He it was who in 1385 supplied Sir Simon de Burley, constable of Dover, with guns and accessories during the well-known invasion scare of that year. Bells of his occur in many counties, principally about London, and there is little doubt that he belonged to the group of London founders with which the Ruffords were originally connected. He may possibly have

³⁵ He was squire to Sir Hugh and Sir Humphrey Stafford, and the Earl of Stafford, but did not, I think, hold this land of them, but of the Zouches. He last appears in connection with the Staffords in 1391.

learnt his trade from John de Rughforde,³⁶ or from William "Rofforde," father of the first Thomas Rufford, of Edlesborough; or again, it is possible that he bought up some of their stock-in-trade, or that he married a Rufford girl. At all events, I can hardly believe that the coat was not intended to refer to them. From the time of Robert Rufford down to King James's days (1610, 1611, etc.), when the last Rufford of Butlers, who, as might be expected, has a *London address*,³⁷ mortgaged and finally sold his land to Brudenell, of Stoke Mandeville,³⁸ the Ruffords use this shield unaltered. The existing *Ruffet* family of Ivinghoe Aston, Eaton Bray, etc., no longer concerns itself about such matters, although it is still remembered by certain old ladies that the moated house of Butlers was once "in the family." The main stock, however, remained—and disappeared—in London.

As for Richard Smith the petitioner, I am sorry to say that though I know a little about his descendants, I know nothing further about himself. For all I know he continued to pine in Aylesbury gaol, which must have been a crowded and uncongenial abode then as later—whether or not it already harboured the "Wat" and the deadlier and even less visible Sending of gaol fever. The "Mote," over which stood the gate³⁹

³⁶ I see I have not mentioned this person before, but it is only necessary to say here that he was probably father of William "Rofforde" of Toddington, and that letters patent of 1367, empowering him as "belleyeter" to impress workmen *de mistera sua* for the king's works, and warning the sheriffs and others to give him every assistance, are quoted in full in Mr. Cocks' monograph (p. 10). The *works* in question may not have been bell-founding, for this was the year of Najara or Navarete, in which Sir Nele Loring so greatly distinguished himself. Bells of his remain in three churches of Bucks, three of Beds, and elsewhere. He is not the John de Rufford of Anc. Petitions 10595-6, 10636-7, who had been Common Clerk to the City of York some little time before the date of the attached writ, 11 July, 1380, and probably derived his name from Rufforth in Yorkshire, or from one of the parishes of Rufford in Lancashire or Notts.

³⁷ Fatal to squires!

³⁸ B.M.: Add. ch. 23976-8, and others.

³⁹ Query, a small gatehouse. The only building on the island is a large 18th century brick dove-cote, now used as a pig-stye. The northward extensions of the moat were fish-stews, and the whole retains its full system of sluices. These, though not ancient in their present form, have long been out of use, and are partly broken. Their bricks are not the old thin bricks seen in much of the walling of the tithe-barn. But in one of the banks of the northern "lode" are some mediæval basing stones still in position.

which Rufford broke to get at him, is the great stirrup-shaped moat at the bottom of the slope north of Edlesborough Church. There is still another on the opposite side of the road, once enclosing the manor-house of the Fitz Johns. Smith's moat formerly contained the old Rectory, and is still perfect and full of water; its banks have now a most luxuriant growth of ivy-covered trees, which make it quite a beautiful pool. Outside is an immense many-bayed tithe-barn, some of the timbers of which are possibly as old as this old affray.^{39A} But the moat may date from the rectorship of John de Crachale or Crachely,⁴⁰ who in 1236, while canon of Lincoln, but not yet rector of Edlesborough, nor Archdeacon of Bedford, nor yet *domini regis thesaurarius*, tried to bring a suit of his concerning the church of *Edelsberg* before Bishop Grosseteste—unsuccessfully, however, because his adversaries objected that he belonged to the Bishop's "household and board."⁴¹ In 1247 he obtained the rectory in succession to Simon de *Edelsburewe*—"et eodem anno . . . coepit ibidem aedificare,"⁴² What he built was certainly not the present church; it is much more likely to have been the rectory. Violence was even then no stranger to the spot, for his predecessor three years before had his house entered by thieves, who stole two silver cups and a spoon,—to which he had every right,—and slew a son of his,—to whom I suppose he was rather less lawfully entitled.⁴³ Again, in 1260, the year of Crachall's death, his successor, David de "Frisetwyha," archdeacon of Derby, had the deputy who took possession for him forcibly ejected by Walter de Rudham, "superveniens . . . cum multis armatis." Rudham tempts me strongly to a further digression, but I have fortunately lost my note.

39A This *magnum orreum* is ten bays long, each bay of 16 feet; the roof is supported by immense pillars of squared oak, resting on short wall of stone projecting at right angles to the outer walls. Some of the brick filling in the walls seems to be late 16th or early 17th century work, and probably replaces some older filling.

40 Sometimes written Crakepole or the like, a variant which may have been a (? justifiable) nickname.

41 Roberti Grosseteste *Epistolæ*, Rolls Serr.

42 Annals of Dunstable Priory.

43 *Ibid.*

The Prior of Charterhouse, whose proctor we have seen so opportunely making his call for rent, acquired the rectory in 1382. It had formerly belonged to Bardney, and though that house spared it, it was and still is unusually rich.⁴⁴ The new owners accordingly saw to it that their grant included licence to appropriate, and as it beseemed the "religious" clergy to despoil the "lay," they promptly obliged the succession of *vicars* to exist on a much more modest provision. Their "fermour," our ill-used Richard Smith, does not appear to have forfeited the priory's favour, for he and his descendants continue to hold the rectory at farm, and the next vicar they appoint (William Smith, admitted 13 Aug., 1471) was no doubt a kinsman, and possibly a son.

Henceforward the Ruffords and the Smiths in their rival strongholds, farming lands divided only by a hedge and a ditch, kept up a feud which after several trivial but embittering dissensions, ultimately brought the Rufford of the first and second year of Queen Mary to a violent death by assassination, and his contemporary Smith, sadly mis-named Benedict, to the very doubtful honour of a statute all to himself. For in spite of the fact that he was "a ryche man, greatly frended and mayntened in the countye of Bukk.," it was expressly designed to prevent the possibility of his escape from the hangman.

But all this will very well wait another year, together with the peccadilloes of Robert Rufford's brother John, and much else.

FREDERICK G. GURNEY.

⁴⁴ In 1875 the tithes amounted to £478 13s. 7d. for the Vicar, and £1,129 19s. 1d. for the Lay Rector (Earl Brownlow).