

BOARHUNT, AND SOME OF ITS EARLY LAND TENURES.

[From the *Hampshire Independent*.]

We have here one of the oldest buildings in Hampshire. The walls of this church were standing much as they stand now in the time of the Anglo-Saxons—most of the windows have been altered, but one small window of the Saxon style remains, and you will notice that it is situated at that part of the building which would be least exposed to the rain. The walls of the church are probably in the main the same as those in the time of Edward the Confessor. How much earlier they may be, we cannot say, but as this church is mentioned in Doomsday Book we cannot be far wrong if we assign to it an antiquity of about 900 years. I do not know which to admire the most, the church with its Saxon window, or the yew tree, which I have no doubt was either planted when the church was built, or growing here when this spot was selected as the site of the church. Since that tree was planted centuries passed while it was growing, and centuries have passed while it has been decaying. It is probably some centuries older than the church itself. My reasons for this opinion are as follows:—The growth of the yew is very slow, and it is a tree which decays slowly. We have a record of the planting of a yew tree in Hampshire which affords us some information as to the rate of the growth of the tree. Bishop Ken, the author of the well-known Morning and Evening Hymns, planted a yew tree in East Woodhay churchyard, in this county, when he was vicar of that parish, about 1670. When I last measured that tree in 1888, it was 91 inches in girth a foot or two from the ground. Its diameter would consequently be something less than 30 inches. The diameter of this aged tree cannot be less than nine feet, and it is very hollow. The time required for its decay was perhaps almost as great as that for its full

growth, and as both trees were planted on soil which were to all appearance equally congenial I cannot place the age of this tree at less than 1,000 or 1,200 years.

The Domesday account of this parish is as follows :—

Earl Roger holds Boarhunt of the king, and three freemen held it allodially of King Edward. It was then assessed at $11\frac{1}{2}$ hides and now at 4 hides and $\frac{1}{2}$ a yard land. Here are 10 ploughlands, 2 in demesne, and 10 villeins and 6 borderers, with 3 ploughlands, also 6 servants, 1 church, 1 mill which pays 42d., another for the use of the court, and 2 salterns worth 22s. 4d. Of this land a knight holds one hide, and there he has a ploughland worth 10s. The value of the whole manor in the time of King Edward and afterwards was £11 and now £14, but it pays £17. Hugh de Port holds a hide in Boarhunt and Tezelin holds it under him, and Lefsi and Meruen held it allodially of King Edward as 2 manors. It was then as now assessed at 1 hide. There is one ploughland in demesne and 2 villeins and 2 borderers with half a ploughland, also a mill which pays 5s. and $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre of meadow. It is worth 20s. The monks of the Bishop of Winchester hold half a hide at Boarhunt belonging to the bishopric, and it is for their support, and assessed at half a hide. Here is only 1 villein and it is worth 6s. 6d. Odo of Winchester claims half a hide of this manor which he says does not belong to it.

The chief lord of Boarhunt at the time of the Domesday Survey was Roger, Earl of Montgomery and Earl of Arundel, one of the leading Norman nobles in England during the period following the Norman Conquest. The account given of this place in 1086 shows that it contained then as it did subsequently several manors. That held by Earl Roger was by far the most important, but a smaller manor was also held by the great Hampshire baron, Hugh de Port. The Domesday account of Boarhunt shows also that at the time of the survey this part of Hampshire was a cultivated area. From the high assessment of the land held by Earl Roger it must have been in a high state of cultivation and not recently taken out of the forest. The parish of Boarhunt therefore must be considered some of the oldest cultivated land in the county.

In the time of King Edward the Confessor the land of this parish was held by Saxon thanes. Earl Roger's land was held by three freemen of King Edward by thane service or as the Domesday entry says allodially. Hugh de Port's land was also held directly of King Edward by two thanes named Lefsi and Meruen.

These five thanes represented the old Saxon landholders who had been settled at Boarhunt for centuries before the Norman Conquest. The conditions of their land tenure were

those of the most ancient kind known in England. The obligations of a thane were three. He was obliged to repair bridges, to repair local defences, and in case of war to assist the king against the enemy. The Domesday record does not tell us whether the thanes of Boarhunt ever recognised King Harold as the successor of King Edward. It is silent in regard to Harold in many instances, and where it does mention him, it is curious to note that the Norman scribe is careful to describe him as Earl Harold. The Domesday account of Hampshire nowhere describes Harold as having succeeded to the estates of Edward the Confessor. We know that the Conqueror regarded him as a usurper, and this record relating to Boarhunt is a good illustration of this point. The account makes it quite clear that the land in this parish passed from Saxon into Norman hands after the Conquest. The thanes are certainly dispossessed. Whether they took part in the battle of Hastings is doubtful, but if they recognised Harold they probably did so, and as they lost their land it is certain that they gave no assistance to the Norman cause. The Norman Conquest therefore brought a great change to Boarhunt. The old lords and their families, those who themselves or their ancestors built this church were dispossessed, and new lords of foreign origin were put into possession in their places, under the system of feudal tenure.

That tenure was of a very different kind from thane service, and the vigour of the feudal system must have been severely felt in this parish. Earl Roger was evidently a rigorous landlord. The high rent paid by this manor at the time of the survey was £17, whereas its value in the time of King Edward was only £11, and as the Norman inquisitors tell us at the time of the survey, £14.

The villeins and borderers mentioned were those whom we should now describe as small farmers and labourers, but these under tenants of the manors were not free men. They were bound to the land and not free to move elsewhere. Even the land which they had cultivated for their own sustenance in the time of the Saxon king had been diminished, for the Domesday record tells us that a knight had been put into possession of one hide of their land, and that he had a ploughland worth

10s. This land which had been taken away from the servile tenants at Boarhunt, and given to the knight, is one of the earliest examples in Hampshire of part of the common land of a manor being taken from the commoners. The knight was no doubt one of Earl Roger's military followers. The Domesday record shows us that the commoners of the chief manor of this parish must, in one respect, have been better off than others on neighbouring manors, for they possessed the very unusual privilege of not being obliged to grind their corn at their lord's mill. The lord had a mill, and there was another for the use of the court. That significant entry brings vividly before us the conditions of life in this parish. The court which is mentioned is the manorial court, the assembly of all the tenants, at which matters of importance to them were regulated by the custom of the manor, and one of these customs was that they might grind their corn at their own mill. Only four places in Hampshire (including this manor of Boarhunt) are mentioned as possessing this privilege at the time of the Domesday Survey. We shall pass Boarhunt mill presently, which is probably on or near the site of the chief ancient mill.

Soon after the Norman Conquest the building of Porchester Castle and the establishment of Southwick Priory in the neighbourhood had a considerable influence on the subsequent tenure of land in this parish. After the castle had been built provision had to be made for its defence. The tenure of a considerable quantity of land in this part of Hampshire was assigned for this purpose, and held by what was known as sergeantry for the defence of Porchester. From an inquiry made in the 13th century we learn that Herbelinus de Borhunt held a sergeantry of old feofment, by his service in Porchester Castle for 15 days. Adam de Wanstead held a sergeantry at Wanstead, by his service at Porchester for 8 days. Peter de Cosham held his land at Cosham by a longer service at Porchester of 40 days. Fulco de Wymering held his land by a similar service of 7 days. Other lands or manors at Hilsa, Pury, and elsewhere were similarly held by the tenure of defending Porchester Castle. The land which Herbelinus held in this parish became known by his name for centuries after-

wards, the manor being named Borhunt Herbelyn, or Borhunt Herberd and held by the same tenure long after the family of Herbelyn had ceased to possess it. As this land was stated, after inquiry in the 13th century, to be held by old feofment for the defence of the castle, the assignment of it for that purpose must have been made before the death of Henry I, all tenures of old enfeofments being those before the death of that king—those of new enfeofment being those granted after the troubled reign of Stephen.

The land appears to have been held as three manors or separate holdings for a very long time; these were known as West Boarhunt, Boarhunt Hereberd or Herbely, and East Boarhunt.

In the *Nomina Villarum* or list of manors and their lords drawn up in 1314 we find that West Boarhunt was held with Southwick by the Prior of Southwick—Boarhunt Herberd was held by Thomas de Boarhunt, and East Boarhunt was held by Richard de Belane. In the taxation of 1334 West Boarhunt was assessed to pay 54s. 11d., Boarhunt Herberd to pay 29s. 2d., and East Boarhunt to pay 30s. 10d., from which we may conclude that West Boarhunt in which the church stands was the largest of the three manors.

The manor which was held in this parish under the barony of Basing at the time of the Domesday Survey, viz., that under the lordship of Hugh de Port, continued to be held by the St John family, who succeeded the de Ports as Lords of Basing. In the middle of the 13th century it was held by Hereb. de Burhunta of the Lords of Basing at two knights' fees, *i.e.*, whenever war broke out two knights would have to be sent from Boarhunt to the contingent due to the king from the Lords of Basing. This manor is included in the return of the possessions of the barony of Basing in an inquisition taken in 1338. In 1341 it was held by Thomas de Borhunt, with certain tenements in Southwick and Porchester of the lordship of Basing, the lord of this Boarhunt manor having to render suit of court at Basing. Bourhunt Herbelyn manor was probably held by two persons in the early part of Edward III's reign, for the inquisitions tell us that Gilbert de Bourhunt held land in the manor in 1335 and that Thomas de Bourhunt,

who held it in 1314, died seised of it in 1341. In 1363 Richard Danvers, who held a carucate of this land by service at the Castle of Porchester, died, and seven years later an important change in the lordship of Bourhunt Herbelyn manor was made by special license of King Edward III. That king was at that time growing old, and Bishop William of Wykeham was his trusted counsellor. This change was probably brought about by the Bishop in his zeal for the Priory. The national records tell us that in 1363 the king gave by license to Bishop William of Wykeham the manor of Bourhunt Herbelyn, with all that belonged to it in Southwick, Wanstead, Porchester, West Bourhunt and Wymering, including both the land held by John de Bourhunt Knight, son and heir of Thomas de Bourhunt, and also the land that had been held by Richard Danvers, in order that the bishop might convey it to the Prior and Convent of Southwick, which had been founded by the king's progenitors, and which was still in the king's patronage, the prior and convent to hold the land on the same terms as it had hitherto been held, viz., by the service of providing a man-at-arms for the defence of the king's castle of Porchester for 15 days in time of war. Thus in the year 1363 the priory of Southwick became possessed of the manor of Bourhunt Herbelyn as well as the manor of West Bourhunt, and these two manors were held by the priory until its dissolution. This gift of Edward III by special license appears to have been made to the priory of his especial favour, notwithstanding the statutes of Mortmain, and it is interesting to note that in the 7 Richard II Bernard Brocas and others are recorded as holding the manor of Bourhunt Herbelyn for the Prior and Convent, *i.e.*, as trustees in order that the letter of the law might be complied with.

Boarhunt formerly had the privilege of a market and an annual fair, for in the 32 Edw. I a grant of market, fair, and free-warren was made to Richard de Bourhunt by that king. I think it probable that this fair and market was held at Staple Cross, a name which still survives in the northern part of this parish, and which name staple denotes a market.