

THE ANCIENT BOROUGH OF NEWTOWN *ALIAS* FRANCHVILLE, ISLE OF WIGHT.

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In August, 1890, the Hampshire Field Club visited Newtown, when an interesting paper was read by Mr. G. W. Colenutt, and it having been thought that the history of the ancient borough was a subject worthy of some further research, the following notice derived from the records of the past, to which the writer as Steward of the Manor has access, is here attempted.

THE ORIGIN AND CONSTITUTION.

Newtown was the most ancient of the boroughs in the Isle of Wight. It is called a borough by prescription, that is, one the origin of which is lost in obscurity, but which existed prior to the first year of King Richard I. Newtown by its early name of Franchville (which means a village or town holding its lands and tenements at a fixed rent and free from obligation of performing any services to the lord of the manor, except suit of court) may probably have enjoyed municipal privileges before the conquest by the gift of some Bishop of Winchester. The Manor of Swainston, or Calbourn, was granted by King Egbert to the Bishop of Winchester about the year 826, and the boundaries of that manor, as specified in the grant, include the site of the borough, so that probably the town was not then constituted as a borough. In Domesday Book it is stated that "VII allodiani," or "free suitors," held certain hides in Calbourn of the bishop, and in the earliest Court Rolls and Records of the Manor of Swainston, then called "Sweyneston," from the 4th Henry IV. (A.D. 1402) until the borough was again absorbed in the manor in 1836, the mayor and burgesses of Newtown (Neweton) *alias* Franchville, were included in the list of free suitors or free tenants of the manor, and attended the courts. This list comprised, besides the said borough and

other owners of land in Newtown, the owners of Watchingwell, Lower Watchingwell, Durrants, Norris', East Shamblers in Whippingham, and Comden in Shorwell.

The first charter of which any record remains was granted by Aymer, Bishop Elect of Winchester, who though only a deacon was in possession of the temporalities of the bishopric, and so lord of the manor of Sweynston. It is dated at Donton on the Thursday after the Feast of St. Barnabas, A.D. 1256, and grants to *his* burgesses of the borough of Ffraunchevill in the Isle of Wight all liberties and free customs which were held by his burgesses of Taunton, Alresforde, Witten, and Farneham, and thus it appears to have been a grant of fresh privileges to an existing borough.

Aymer died in 1260, and after two other bishops, John de Pontissera was made bishop by the Pope setting aside the elections of the bishops by the monks of Winchester, and this led to a difference between King Edward I. and the bishop, which ended in the bishop surrendering the Manor of Sweynston to the king on the 5th of June, 1284.

In the following year (1285) Edward I. himself came to Sweynston attended by Roger Burnet, Bishop of Bath and Wells, his chancellor, William, Earl of Pembroke, his uncle, and others, and the burgesses of Franchville took the opportunity of producing the charter of Aymer and obtaining a confirmation which the king executed at Swainston on the 5th November, 1285.

King Edward II. in the first year of his reign granted Sweynston to his sister, a nun at Amesbury, for her life.¹ In his 6th year (1312) he granted it with all his other manors and lands in the Isle of Wight to his son, the Earl of Chester² (afterwards Edward III.) before he was four weeks old, and in his 11th year by a charter dated at Westminster, 3rd March, 1318, in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Winchester, the Earl of Pembroke, Humphrey de Bohun, Hugh Despencer, and others, he granted to his said son the privilege of holding a weekly market and an annual fair of three days' duration at the

¹ Worsley App., lxxxviii.

² Worsley, p. 79.

Manor of Newtowne. This charter, confirmed by a charter 2nd May, 2nd Henry V. (1414), is the earliest now in existence, and will be found at the end of this paper.

The charters of Aymer and of Edward I. (now lost) were confirmed by the inspeximus charters of 29th Jan., 16th Richard II. (1393); 28th June, 1st Henry V. (1413); 20th May, 19th Henry VI. (1441); and 7th July, 40th Elizabeth (1598).

By an extent of the Manor of Swyneston, taken by the king's escheator, 18th March, 31st Edward I. (1303), it is found that amongst other profits of the manor the following rents were payable by the borough of Newtown, at Easter and Michaelmas, viz. :—

	s.	d.
Rent of Assize	70	
For 26½ Acres of Land	17	8
For the Fishery	5	
For Pleas and Perquisites of Court	10	
	102	8

—which rent of £5 2s. 8d. appears in the earliest accounts of the Swainston estate in the time of Henry IV. (1405), and continues down to the dissolution of the borough in 1836.

The borough, although held under the paramount Manor of Swyneston by the payment of a rent and by suit of court, had nevertheless all the privileges of a manor, and held annually a Court Leet and View of Frankpledge. The rolls of the courts, as well as the records of the assemblies of the Corporation from 1636, are still in possession of the present Lord of the Manor of Swainston, Sir B. Simeon, Bart. We find there the names of burgesses, many of which are common to this day, and some, which have been identified with the borough from generation to generation, have only lately become extinct, *e.g.*, "Holbrook," and "Harvey." Other names, such as Slatford, Dubook Bide, Brewer, &c., have been given to burgage tenements, as shewn in the accompanying map.¹

¹ The map here reproduced is an exact copy of one on vellum in the possession of the writer. The original measures 4ft. 5in. x 2ft. 2oin. In the blank space to the right of the illustration, representing Democritus and his disciples, is the following:—"This piece represents Democritus who retired among the tombs of Aldera his country, and renounced all the employments of men, that he might, without distraction, meditate upon the structure of the world, which

Some entries illustrate the manners and customs of the times. At each Court Leet a jury was sworn who made presentments of, and imposed penalties for small nuisances and offences, or neglects of duty in mending hedges, cleaning ditches, and carrying stones for the highways. These presentments, made by the jury in writing, were afterwards reduced into Latin, and entered in the "Court Booke." The original rough papers, many of which are extant, are quaint, and though too long to be set out in this paper, a few extracts from the presentments of 1637 may be amusing—

"We present two pieces of timber taken up by John Perry, within the haven, belonging to the town.—Value 3s. 4d.

"We present Ffrancis Arnold for a blood shed upon Matthew Trickett ; also Henry Perry, for blood shed upon John Brewer. ' Ideo quilibet in mercia, iij s. iiijd.'

"We present that John Urry and Ffrancis Jefferey have lost theyr payne concerning theyr chimnies 5s. apeece. And we doo payne the same to be amended by St. Andrew next in 10s. apeece.

"We present that William Woodkoke shall keep no goates within the liberty of this towne in payne of 1s.

"We present that Sir William Mewes shall sufficiently skhower his ditch from Thomas Holbrooks street-bars down to the Marsh against Greene Close, to be done by St. Andrew's day next, payne of 10s.

"We present all the inhabitants of this towne to repayre the bridge called Caswaye (causeway) Bridge in the Highway by St. Andrew's daye, upon payne of 10s., &c., &c."

The actual constitution of the Corporation is not clear. There appear at the Court Leets three classes:—First, Chief or Capital Burgesses; second, Free Burgesses; and third, Inhabitants. Mention is also made of "in-Burgesses" and "out-Burgesses," but at the assemblies of the borough, when held separately from the Court Leet, Chief Burgesses alone appear to have attended, and to have elected the mayor, two constables, a sergeant-at-mace, and a hayward.

he fancied to have been formed by the subsidence and concurrence of certain small and pre-existent pieces, which he is pleased to call atoms. One of his place comes and puts near the philosopher a slate, on which he has written this verse,

ὅν μὲν δημιουργεῖν ἀνθρώπινον ἄλλα γεωργεῖν

'Man was not made to construct the earth but to cultivate it.' The husbandman and those who passing read this epigram, or hear it read, deride the philosopher. One shrugs, the other bursts out a laughing. All of them are sensible that we have received intelligence enough to regulate our works and manners, but that we can in no way understand what has been intrusted to our care. This is the result of this piece."

THE EARLY HISTORY.

There are not many events recorded affecting the town or borough apart from political questions.

It is said to have been burnt in 1001¹ by the Danes when they ravaged Hampshire and the South of England, under Sweyn, the father of King Canute, and made their winter quarters in the Isle of Wight, between A.D. 1000 and 1006. It is hardly likely that such a port and harbour as Francheville would have escaped them, but on this point there is no mention in any chronicle.

Newtown suffered from attacks by the French, especially in a raid made in the 1st year of Richard II. (1377, A.D.) when a French fleet sailed up the Solent and the Southampton water, burning and destroying as they went. Full particulars of this raid would form an interesting subject for investigation by the Hants Field Club.

The suggestion by Sir Richard Worsley² that the name of the borough was changed from Francheville to Newtown in consequence of its being rebuilt after some such attack has no foundation, and the name of Newtown occurring in the charter of Edward II. it more probably arose from the grant of a new constitution and new privileges by Bishop Aymer, in 1256. It is doubtful whether the town was ever rebuilt, or more than partially recovered its destruction by the French.

In or about the year 1657, a scheme was started for draining and embanking the haven of Newtown. The promoters appear to have been interested in the reclamation of Brading haven, under Sir Hugh Middleton, and to have been encouraged by the then success of that undertaking. After much correspondence, an agreement, dated 24th March, 1662, was entered into between Sir John Barrington, as Lord of the Manor of Swainston, and Mr. Edward Hutchinson, of London, arranging the terms upon which the latter was to be allowed to carry out the work, but it does not appear that anything was ever done, unless the embankment round the present Newtown marsh may have been the result, which is very doubtful. Possibly the breach in the bank

¹ Worsley, p. 156.

² Worsley, p. 156.

and consequent failure of the Brading haven reclamation deterred the adventurers at Newtown.

Newtown owed much of the little prosperity which it ever enjoyed to its salt works, of which there were, there and in the immediate neighbourhood, no less than five salterns in separate ownerships. Several of these continued to be worked within the last half-century, but partly in consequence of the competition of the salt mines in Cheshire, and partly, it is said, from the change of climate, the sunshine not being sufficiently continuous or powerful for the evaporation of the sea water, they have all now been abandoned.

The oyster fishery must not be forgotten, but it is unnecessary to do more than mention that Newtown oysters have still a wide reputation.

THE CHAPEL.

Newtown has always been part of the parish of Calbourne, but the accompanying map shews the site of a ruined chapel where the modern church of the new ecclesiastical parish of Newtown now stands. There is no authentic record of the date of the building of the chapel, or of its endowment with 40 acres of land in Calbourne, as recorded in Worsley's *History of the Isle of Wight*, pp. 156, 258, nor is there any mention of it in the return of the Dean of the Island to Bishop Woodcock, in 1305. It is probable therefore that it was not then built. In a deed dated on Tuesday, after the Epiphany, 8th Henry IV. (A.D. 1407), a piece of void land is described as extending from the "Heyghstreet" to "Goldstreet," and lying between the land of Henry Moody on the east and the "Churchyard of the Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene" on the west, which shows that the chapel was then standing and was dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene. Part of the land with which it was endowed was in Worsley's time known as "Maudlin Mead."¹

It is also remarkable that the fair, granted by the charter of Edward II., was to be held on the eve, the day, and the morrow of the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, and as it was usual to hold village fairs, feasts, and wakes on the festival

¹ Worsley, p. 258.

of the saint to whom the church was dedicated, it seems probable that the granting of the charter and the consecration of the church were in some way connected.

By an arrangement entered into in the 1st Edward VI. (A.D., 1547) between the mayor and burgesses of Newtown and the rector of Calbourne, the rector was allowed to hold the glebe land of the chapel, called Magdalene's croft, on his agreeing to maintain, with the favourable aid of the inhabitants of Newtown, at his own cost a priest up-rising and down-lying to reside in the house adjoining the churchyard.¹ One at least of the parties to this arrangement must have failed to carry it out, for by the Visitation Books in the Registry of Winchester, the chapel appears to have been in a state of dilapidation in 1663, and in 1724 the then rector of Calbourne returns that "Newtown being reduced to a few cottages, the chapel which was formerly supported at the charge of the inhabitants, has been out of repair for many years, so that no Divine Service could be performed in it. Before its decay it was served once a month by the rector of this parish." The burial ground however has continued to this day to be used by the inhabitants.

In the old Corporation books we find only three or four references to the chapel. In 1656 the inhabitants were ordered to meet together in the churchyard on the 13th October, for the purpose of making a rate for the repair of the Pound. In 1651, a Mr. John Harvey promised to pay a Relief due on an alienation "to the use of the church, to whom Mr. Denys, now maior, hath left it, and the whole company allotts it, and Richard Barton is appointed to receive it."

At a meeting of the Corporation, on 13th April, 1686, Henry Dore produced his accounts as churchwarden, on which there was a balance due to the next churchwarden of £2 os. 8d., and John Gustard was duly elected churchwarden of the Church of the Towne for the then present year, and on two or three occasions the churchwarden is appointed to superintend mending roads and bridges.

The rebuilding of the chapel will be mentioned further on.

¹ Worsley, p. 258.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY.

In the year 1585, it was thought fit by Queen Elizabeth and her Council to enlarge the Representation of the People in the Parliament by authorising the Sheriffs to summon a larger number of Boroughs to send up Members, and amongst others the Isle of Wight towns of Newtown, Yarmouth, and Newport became Parliamentary Boroughs, and it must have been a new sensation to the burgesses of the decayed town of Newtown to find themselves of some political importance. Sir Richard Worsley (App. xli.) gives a list of the Members for the Borough from 27th Elizabeth to 20th George III., 1780. In the Newtown "Courte Book" the first notice appears when at an Assembly of the Mayor and Burgesses on the 28th December, 1639, "It is agreed by a general consent of the Maior nowe elected and the company nowe assembled, that John Meux, esquire, shall be elected one of the Burgesses for the Parliament, and that the Right Honble. Earl of Portland shall have the nomination of the Burgess for the Parliament for this Borough upon condition as for the Burgesse to be nominated by the Earl of Portland, he be either a sworne Burgesse of this Borough, or doe come hither and take his oath of Burgesse before he be elected."

Accordingly on the 22nd March following, Nicholas Weston, esquire, son of the Right Honble. Richard Earl of Portland, deceased, was elected and sworne a free Burgess of the Borough, and afterwards the said Nicholas Weston, esquire, and John Meux, esquire, were elected Burgesses of Parliament for the Borough. This was the short Parliament summoned by Charles I., which met on 13th April, 1640, and was dissolved on the 5th May following.

On October 19th, 1640, an Assembly was held at which 20 free Burgesses were present, and the "Courte Booke," after setting out the warrant from the High Sheriff of the County, dated 14th October, 1640, contains an entry that the Mayor and Burgesses elected John Meux and Nicholas Weston as Burgesses. This was the election for the Long Parliament, and the Rough Notes before mentioned give indication that the turbulence of the time had not failed to reach even to this quiet borough. It appears from them that the election

of Mr. Nicholas Weston was opposed by Sir Thomas Barrington; that a poll took place, when N. Weston was elected by a majority of 11 to 8, by the following votes:—

FOR BARRINGTON.
Richard Barton, Mayor
Thomas Holbrooke
Richard Dore
Thomas Bull
Richard Rogers
John Grainger
John Perry
William Byde

FOR WESTON.
John Meux, Esq.
Stephen Marsh, Esq.
Thos. Baskett, Esq.
Peter Gard, senr.
William Jordan, gent.
Edmd. Cheke, Esq.
Edwd. Legh, gent.
Peter Gard, jun., gent.
William Harby, clerk
Humphrey Furney, Esq.
Richard Stevens

The supporters of Sir T. Barrington¹ appear for the most part to have been residents, and those of Mr. Weston the neighbouring gentry, who held burgage qualifications. On the following court day, held 26th October, 1640, there was a resolution proposed in the form of a certificate that "about the election John Meux, Esq. had demeaned himself honestly, discreetly, and orderly, and did not in all his observations use any menacing, threatening, or other unfit or indecent language or behaviour," which seems to imply that others had been guilty of such conduct. The election however did not end there, for in November, 1645, a new writ was issued for the election of two members in the place of John Meux and Nicholas Weston, formerly elected, but now by judgment of the House of Commons disabled longer so to continue, and upon which Sir John Barrington and John Bulkley were elected.

The Earl of Portland, who was Governor of the Isle of Wight and the brother of Mr. Weston, was removed from his office and committed to prison by the Parliament, when the Rev. William Harby, curate of Newport, one of the burgesses of Newtown, although he had voted for Mr. Weston, took a prominent part in exciting the Mayor and Militia of Newport to attack Carisbrooke Castle, for the purpose of expelling the Countess of Portland and her children from the Castle, where they had taken

¹ Sir Thomas Barrington was a first cousin of Oliver Cromwell.

refuge.¹ After the restoration the Earl of Portland, who had to "swallow an oath" to obtain his release, again writes a letter dated 19th March, 1660, to his very loving friend Thomas Holbrooke (Mayor of Newtown), recommending Daniel Oneale, Esq., as a Member for the Borough, and appealing to former civility and courtesy upon the same occasion. This Daniel Oneale was one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber to Charles II.,² but neither his merits nor the Earl's recommendation appear to have been appreciated by our burgesses, and he was not elected. A few days previous to the election of Sir John Barrington and Mr. Bulkley, at a Court held 23rd October, 1645, the following order was made:—

"It is ordered that from henceforth noo Burgesses of this Towne, unless he be a freeholder of this Towne, shall be chosen Maior or have a voyce in the Election of the Maior, or of any Burgesses for the Parliament, which order these heere named have signed with their owne hands—

Richard Gard, Maior
Stephen March
Richard Dore
Richard Barton

Thomas H Holbrooke
Richard 6 Rogers
William X Bide

—The three last being unable to write made their marks.

There are no Records of the Courts or Meetings of the Corporation between 1656 and 1671, but by a curious document, dated 24th March, 1662, under the hands and seals of Thomas Lord Culpepper, William Meux, Walter Slingsby, John Richards, William Oglander, and Edward Worsley, Commissioners appointed under an Act of the 13th Charles II., intituled an Act for the well governing and regulating of Corporations, it appears that these Commissioners held an enquiry at Cowes Castle as to the loyalty of Newtown, and ordered that John Hall (a steward of Swainston Manor), for refusing to take the oath, and also Sir John Barrington, Thomas Holbrooke, and Peter Gard, be expunged out of the Corporation, and that William Meux, James Leigh, and Francis Leigh be Chief Burgesses in their places; also they ordered that William Lawrence, John Maynard, Thomas

¹ Worsley, p. 115.

² Clarendon's Life.

Bowreman, and Samuel Ball be put out of being Burgesses, and that William Oglander, John Richards, Edward Worsley, and Thomas Knight, be Burgesses in their places, and that Walter Slingsby be made an "out-Burgess" in place of Francis Leigh. Lawrence and Maynard had been Members for the Borough in the Parliament summoned by Richard Cromwell, in 1658. Sir John Barrington was Member at the time of the enquiry, and had been Member in the Long Parliament, but it does not speak well for the impartiality of the Commission that the Commissioners, with the exception of Lord Culpepper who was Governor of the Island, put themselves into the Corporation in the room of those who were expunged as disaffected.

The privilege of sending Members to Parliament, though it added to the importance, probably did not add to the peace of the town. A bone of contention soon arose on the question to whom the right of voting at elections belonged. It has already been shown that in 1645, an attempt was made to secure the right of voting to the freeholders of the town, subsequently it is evident that an attempt was made to restrict the right of voting and give all the power to twelve persons. Also in 1676 and 1677 the Corporation assumed the right to disfranchise burgesses. Mr. Francis Leigh, "for absenting himself from making his appearance at Assemblies when summoned," and Mr. Peter Gard, "because he hath oftentimes acted against the interest of this Corporation, and still doth act and endeavour against the same," and on the 15th December, 1676, a new Mayor was elected in the place of Sir William Meux, "his Mayorshipp and in-Burgesshipp having been made voyd by an order of this Towne bearing date the 2nd November last," and it was then ordered that three locks be placed on the Towne Chest, the keys to be entrusted to three several persons. At the following Meeting a new seal was ordered, because the seale of the Corporation was maliciously detained, but "Sir John Holmes and Benjamin Williams were empowered to do and act in all things what they think desirable for the good of the town," and they probably composed the differences for the time.

In 1677 Sir Robert Holmes, of Yarmouth, who was Governor of the Isle of Wight, appears as a Chief Burgess, and was Mayor from 1680 to 1684. On his death John Lord Cutts, Governor of the Island and M.P. for Yarmouth, was elected a burgess in his place, and in 1693 was chosen Mayor. This Lord Cutts was accused of interfering too much with the freedom of election, and endeavoured not without some success to gain the nomination of the Members for all the three Island Boroughs. This led to "quarrels, lawsuits, and animosities," but peace was eventually made by an agreement of 17th March, 1697,¹ under which gentlemen of the Island were to have preference to the Governor's nominees.

On the 20th September, 1698, at Newtown, Lord Cutts being present, an enquiry was made as to the right of voting, and it was resolved that the restraint of the number of Chief Burgesses to twelve or any less number than the freeholders of the borough was illegal. The end of this resolution is torn out of the leaf of the Court Book. On the 16th October, 1700, burgesses were required to produce their deeds. Lord Cutts produced no deed, but was admitted to have purchased a Borough Land called Jefferys, and several burgesses were disfranchised for want of evidence of Title to Borough Lands.

On 13th October, 1715, the name of Barrington appears for the first time since the restoration, Sir John Barrington having produced his deeds and being unanimously admitted a Chief Burgess.

On Oct. 2nd, 1721, the question of franchise again came up before the Assembly, and the order of 20th Sept., 1698, was referred to as not only declaring that there was no restraint as to numbers, but also that every person holding a freehold of land and paying rent to the borough had a right to be admitted a burgess on demand, and it was then found that no such person "had any right to be admitted, notwithstanding any such land by him holden, without duly elected by a majority of the Burgesses," and the latter being part of the Order of 1698 was declared erroneous, and

¹ Worsley App. xlv.

was ordered to be erased, and was erased accordingly, which accounts for the mutilation of the leaf of the Court Book.

On the 23rd August, 1727, there was a very full assembly of the Corporation, sixteen being marked as present, and James Worsley and Thomas Holmes were elected to serve and sit in Parliament, but a petition was presented against their return, on the ground of the votes of certain holders of burgage tenements having been rejected; and according to Sir Richard Worsley¹ the House decided that the right of election was in the Mayor and Burgesses having Borough Lands, and that the petitioners, Sir J. Barrington and Charles Am Paulet, were entitled to the seat. This, however, did not settle the question, for Thomas Morgan's demand to be sworn Burgess in right of Borough Lands was unanimously rejected at a meeting, 17th October, 1729, at which only four Chief Burgesses were present. The matter was carried to the King's Bench, and in the following year Thomas Morgan was sworn a Chief Burgess "pursuant to a mandamus upon a verdict obtained, but was not elected by the Mayor or Corporation." It was no doubt in consequence of this decision that the number of Chief Burgesses soon rose to 26, and the Borough Lands *alias* Burgage Tenements were sought after and became valuable, for in 1775 Mr. Powell sold a Borough Land called "Slatford's," with 12 acres of land, let at £10 10s. per annum, for £950 15s., and a Borough Land called "Marshes," let at £1 per annum, for £679 5s., and in 1780, Lord Mount Edgemont sold two Borough Lands and a small coppice, which still bears his name, for £1,100.

From this time the "Courte Booke" becomes less interesting, being a bare record of the claims of persons to be admitted Burgesses, on production of their deeds of Title to Borough Lands, and of the Election of Mayors, Burgesses, and Members of Parliament, among whom was George Canning, elected 3rd Nov., 1806, and re-elected on taking office as Secretary of State, 1st April, 1807. There is in Worsley Appendix xli, a fairly correct list of Members of Parliament from 1585 to 1780, the most notable of whom was John Churchill, the great Duke of Marlborough.

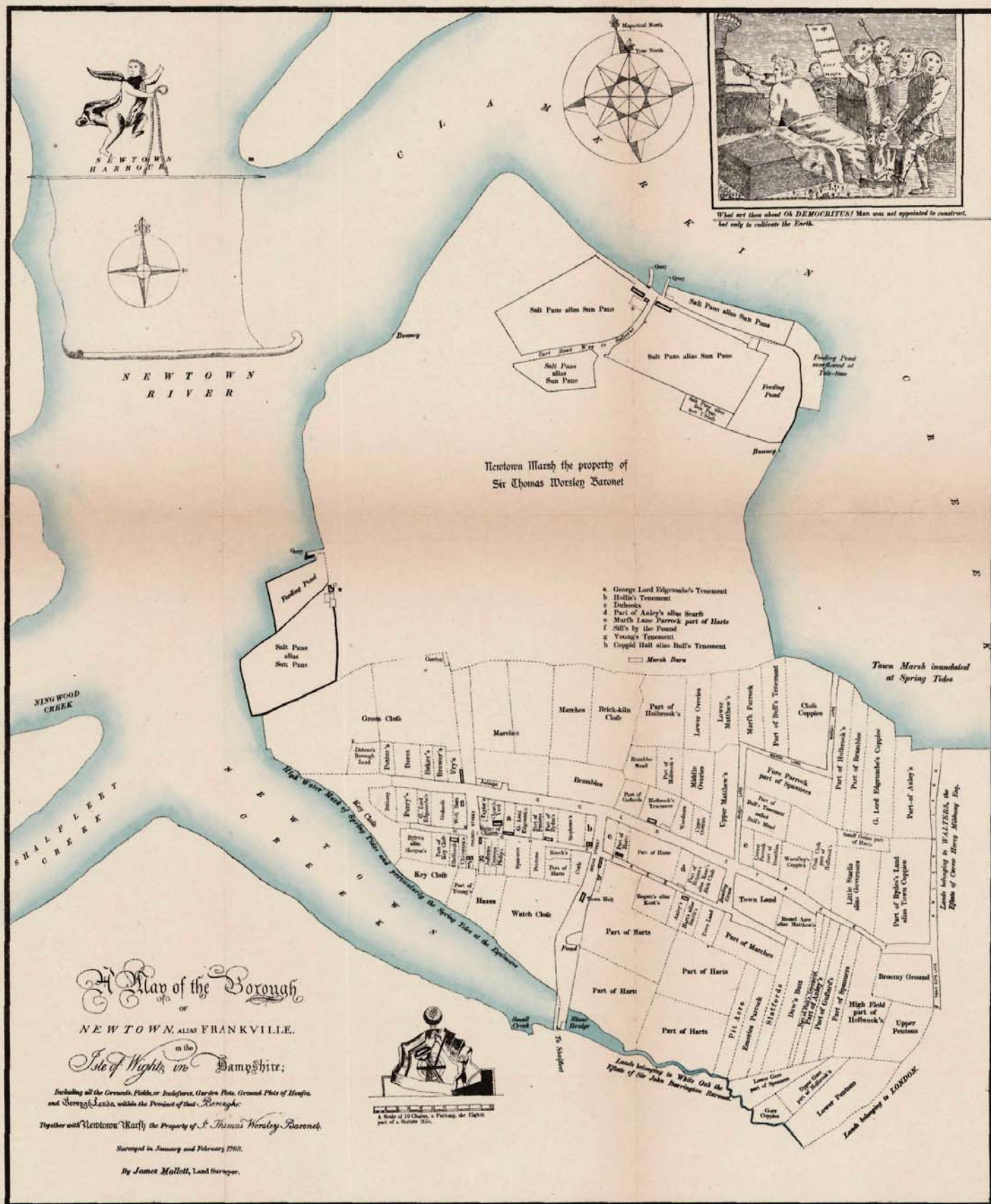
¹ P. 158 and App xlv.

It is known from other sources that the elections, for the last 100 years of the existence of the borough, were under the influence of the two principal families in the Isle of Wight, most of the Burgage tenements having come to their hands, and being granted by them to their friends and retainers for their lives. Sometimes they went to a poll, but generally there was a mutual agreement that each family should nominate a member. The elections were practically settled out of doors—not even the forms as described in the old records being observed, for, as related by one of the last burgesses to the present writer, the proceedings at an election consisted of a dinner at the Town Hall, after which the Mayor or Town Clerk rose, and pulling a piece of paper out of his pocket, on which the names were written, said “Now, gentlemen, we will drink to the health of our new Members, Mr. A. and Mr. B.,” and this was the first intimation to the assembly of their future representatives.

These dinners were doubtless regarded as a substantial part of the privileges of burgesses, though it does not appear at whose expense they were provided, but in all the ancient leases of the Fishery the lessee was under obligation to provide a good dish of fish, and a sufficient number of oysters for the Mayor's Feast. There may still be seen on the cupboard door of the old Town Hall the scores of the liquors consumed at some of these dinners.

THE MAP.

The Map, to which reference has already been made (p. 91) was exhibited at the Meeting of the Field Club in August, 1890, and is here reproduced. It is confirmed in its main features, though not in all its details, by a beautiful map of the Manor of Swainston, made 100 years earlier, in 1636; and the Tithe Map and Survey of 1840 correspond in almost every particular, even to the names of many of the tenements, which shews that for at least 200 years Newtown remained stationary. We may go back even further, and trace from this map the probable arrangement and disposition of the lands of the borough from Saxon times. It indeed illustrates the normal condition of an ancient village community. We



can trace first the group of houses gathered together on both sides of the High Street, and some, perhaps of a higher grade, on the north side of Gold Street, and it is not without meaning that in the deed of January, 1407, before referred to, the High Street is called "Vicus," and Gold Street "Via." Secondly, we can trace the arable lands, originally one or more common fields divided into strips by baulks of turf, such as existed in many places in the Island, and are still known as "landshares" or "furlongs." One of these was probably allotted to each household, and eventually became appendant to the house itself, was enclosed, and, as shewn by the Map, went by the same name. Thirdly, there are the pastures originally open and common to all the inhabitants, but subsequently enclosed, as indicated by the several names of Green Close, Key (Quay) Close, Gore Close, and Watch Close, and, lastly, there is the Common or Waste by the sides of the roads, and probably before its enclosure, the Marsh.

There appear to have been two tenements to which a much larger than usual quantity of land was attached, these were March's, held at a rent of 6s. 4d., and Hart's, held at a rent of 18s., but no clue has been found to show how they were acquired. Stephen March, who died 1650, held one tenement at a rent of 6s. 4d., and another (Slatford's) at 1s. 1d., and was succeeded by his son David and his grandson Lewis March, and the Tenement afterwards became the property of Harcourt Powell. William Harvey appears to have purchased Hart's of Sir William Meux, in 1651, and to have been returned as a freeholder, but was fined for non-attendance, for he said "he would be none of the Court nor none of the Councill." Hart's remained in the tenure of the Harvey family until quite lately, and Miss Harvey, the last survivor of the family, died August 7, 1890.

According to ancient custom the Court Leet acted partly as a legislative and partly as an executive body. It was the principal *Local Authority* of the community: was presided over by the Steward, and not by the Mayor, and even made orders on the Corporation. It made and enforced regulations for the Commons, prescribed and enforced the duties of

the inhabitants as to carrying stones for the repairs of the highways, ordered hedges and ditches to be made and cleaned, chimneys to be raised, houses to be repaired, nuisances to be abated. There are regulations that no "steere bullocks" above one year old, no "horse-beasts" or "pigs, unless yoked and rung," shall be allowed on the Common. That cattle driven for water shall be returned within an hour, and no cattle shall be allowed on the Common after "sun-sett." That all the inhabitants shall be summoned to clean the Clay pool, and defaulters reported. That no fire shall be carried unless covered, and no fuel be deposited on the Common to annoy the Highway, &c., &c.

From the evidence of these maps and other circumstances we may doubt whether the town was ever the important place described by Worsley and others. There were probably never more than fifty tenements in the town, and when Edward I. and Edward II. summoned representatives to Parliament the Bailiffs of the Isle of Wight received writs, but made no returns for Newtown. Again, when Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth thought it necessary to improve the defences of the Island, forts were built at Yarmouth, Cowes, and Sandown, but not at Newtown.

Some of the houses may probably have been built of wood and thatched, and so were easily destroyed when the place was attacked by the French, for there are few if any indications of the foundations of old stone-built houses. One old wooden house, at any rate, namely the one called in the map "Anley" *alias* "Scarfs" (Scarts?), was standing, and occupied for many years by a very old lady named Jenny Skeats, until it fell down less than ten years ago; but it may have been an old barn converted into a cottage. There is, however, one evidence of prosperity in the reign of Henry VII. in the Town Mace, which dates from that time.

THE DISSOLUTION.

In the Reform Bill of 1832 Newtown was included in the notorious "Schedule A," comprising Boroughs, which were

deprived of the right of returning Members to Parliament, ignominiously called "Rotten Boroughs," and it was afterwards resolved that the Corporate Property should be sold or surrendered by valuation to Sir Richard Godin Simeon, the then Lord of the Manor of Swainston, in right of his wife Louisa Edith, the daughter and one of the co-heiresses of Sir Fitzwilliam Barrington, and that the proceeds of the sale, with other subscriptions, should be applied in rebuilding and partially endowing the old Chapel of St. Mary Magdalen. Hence arose the present Church now called the Chapel of the Holy Ghost, which has been made one of the two small Churches of a new Ecclesiastical Parish, comprising Newtown and parts of Calbourne and Shalfleet. The amount of the purchase money was £970, and the amount expended in rebuilding and endowing the Church was £1608.

THE RELICS.

The Relics of former times which yet remain as memorials of the old Borough are:—

(1) The old Town Hall, now slowly falling into ruin and decay, though it was repaired in 1813 by the Patrons of the Borough at an expense of £443. In it are a well carved Royal Arms and a Pewter Inkstand, supplied in 1757, by Edward Hodges, Stationer, at the Ship and Crown, Water Lane, Fleet Street, London.

(2) The Charters before mentioned (except those of Bishop Aymer and Edward I.), with the black box in which they were kept since 1671, and handed down from Mayor to Mayor, as stated in the Courte Booke. Two of them are in duplicate, and the seals a good deal broken.

(3) The Seal of the Corporation engraved in "Worsley's History," in brass, also a small iron box in which it was kept, beautifully engraved with an ornamental design, and with a curious lock, which has four bolts.

(4) The Silver Mace (formerly partly gilt), of the date of Henry VII., an engraving of which appears in the "Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries," of 28th February, 1889.

(5) The Court Bookes of the Borough from the year 1636 to 1763, and the Accounts Book from 1761 to 1835, with an earlier account from 1752 to 1759. The last Court Book is missing.

(6) Duplicates of the Election Indentures of Members of Parliament, signed by the Sheriffs of Hants, the earliest being in 1685, and one or two Writs for the Election, the earliest being for the first Parliament of Charles II., 1660.

(7) Counterparts of many of the Leases of Borough Lands, the earliest in 1644. Sundry other documents, including the Agreement for Reclaiming Newtown Haven, and the Return of the Commissioners of Enquiry above referred to.

(8) A set of very handsome high-backed Chairs, in oak, formerly used in the Town Hall.

All the above are the property of Sir Barrington Simeon, Bart.

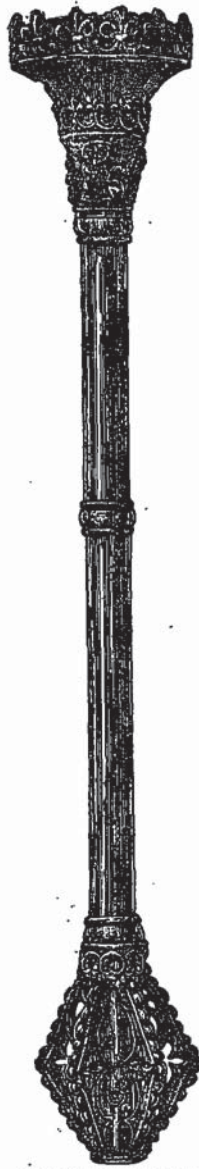
(9) The Map, which was never the property of the Borough, but belonged to one of the Patrons.

THE CORPORATION MACE.

Through the courtesy of the Council of the Society of Antiquaries we here give illustrations of the Mace above referred to, which, on the occasion of its being exhibited to the Society, at Burlington House, was thus described by W. H. St. John Hope, Esq., Assistant Secretary:—

“The Newtown Mace, which I am enabled to exhibit by the kindness of Sir Barrington Simeon, is one of the most beautiful and interesting examples of its class that I have met with.

It is of silver parcel-gilt, and 12 inches in length. The shaft, which is plain with gilt moulded bands, has at the top a bell-shaped socket with a cresting of nine fleurs-de-lis and surrounded by three crowned lions sejant. From this rises the conical mace-head, which is encircled by a coronet of twelve beautifully modelled fleurs-de-lis, enclosing a flat plate, on which are engraved the arms and supporters—a greyhound and dragon—of Henry VII., ensigned by a royal



MACE OF THE BOROUGH
OF NEWTOWN, ISLE
OF WIGHT ($\frac{1}{2}$ linear.)

coronet. Some traces of the red and blue enamel of the shield remain, and of the dark-blue field. The plate with the royal arms is loose, and on the reverse are delicately engraved the "State Arms," as borne under the Commonwealth, consisting of a cross (couped) of St. George and a harp for Ireland, side by side in a shield, with surrounding scroll-work. The lower end of the shaft is encircled by a small coronet, from which issues a short length, surrounded by five beautiful open traceried and crocketed flanges.

Nothing is known of the history of this mace, which is in very perfect condition, and evidently dates from the time of Henry VII. Its great interest lies in the additional step that it illustrates of the evolution of the civic mace from the war mace. In the Southampton mace, the flanged end formed the head, as shown by the figures of the lions. In the Newtown Example the broad button with the royal arms was considered the head, that end being, in this case, the one with the lions.

The gilt parts of the mace are the various bands and coronets, and the royal arms on the top. The flanges are left silver.¹



ROYAL ARMS ON NEWTOWN
MACE (Full size).



STATE'S ARMS FROM THE NEW-
TOWN MACE (Full size).

¹ Pro. Society of Antiquarians, Lond. 2 S. xii. 3, 3.

The following is the text of the Charter of Edward II., dated 3rd March, 1318:—

Edwardus dei gratia Rex Anglie Dominus Hibernie et Dux Acquitannie Archiepiscopis Episcopis Abbatibus Prioribus Comitibus Baronibus Justiciariis Vicecomitibus Prepositis Ministris et omnibus Ballivis et fidelibus suis Salutem. Sciatis nos concessisse et hac carta nostra confirmasse Edwardo Comiti Cestrie filio nostro carissimo quod ipse et heredes sui imperpetuum habeant unum mercatum singulis septimanis per diem mercurii apud Manerium suum de la Neweton in Insula Vecta in Comitatu Suthampton et unam feriam ibidem singulis annis per tres dies duraturam. videlicet in vigilia in die et in crastino beate marie magdalene Nisi mercatum illud et feria illa sint ad nocumentum vicinorum mercatorum et vicinarum feriarum. Quare volumus et firmiter precipimus pro nobis et heredibus nostris quod predictus Comes et heredes sui imperpetuum habeant predictum mercatum et feriam apud manerium suum predictum cum omnibus libertatibus et liberis consuetudinibus ad hujusmodi mercatum et feriam pertinentibus Nisi mercatum illud et feria illa sint ad nocumentum vicinorum mercatorum et vicinarum feriarum sicut predictum est. Hiis testibus venerabilibus patribus W. Cantuarie Archiepiscopo totius Anglie Primate J. Wynton Episcopo Cancellario nostro Adomaro de Valencia Comite Pembroch Humfredo de Bohun Comite Hereford et Essex Hugone le Dispenser seniore Bartholomeo de Hadelesmere Willielmo de Monte Acuto senescallo hospicii nostri et aliis Datum per manum nostram apud Westmonasterium tertio die Marcii Anno Regni Nostri Undecimo.

Per ipsum Regem. Duppl. Leyes.

TRANSLATION.

Edward by the grace of God King of England Lord of Ireland and Duke of Acquitaine to the Archbishops Bishops Abbots Priors Earls Barons Justices Sheriffs Reeves Officials and to all Bailiffs and his faithful people Greeting, Know ye that we have granted and by this our Charter have confirmed to Edward Earl of Chester our well



Borough of Newtown, alias Franchville, Isle of Wight.
Charter of King Edward II (1318). Two-thirds the size of the original.

beloved Son that he and his heirs may for ever hereafter hold a Market on Wednesday in every week at his Manor of La Newetown, in the Isle of Wight in the County of Southampton and a fair at the same place every year to last during three days to wit—on the eve, on the day, and on the morrow of Saint Mary Magdalene, unless such market and fair should be hurtful to neighbouring markets and neighbouring fairs. Wherefore we will and steadfastly enjoin for ourselves and our heirs that the said Earl and his heirs may for ever hold the aforesaid Market and Fair at his Manor aforesaid with all liberties and free customs which to such manner of market and fair do belong, unless such Market and Fair be hurtful to neighbouring markets and fairs as is aforesaid. These being Witnesses¹ the Venerable Fathers W. Archbishop of Canterbury Primate of all England, J. Bishop of Winchester our Chancellor, Aylmer de Valence Earl of Pembroke Humphrey de Bohun Earl of Hereford and Essex, Hugh le Despencer the Elder, Bartholomew of Haslemere, William Montagu Steward of our household and others. Given under our hand at Westminster the third day of March in the Eleventh year of our Reign

By the King himself. Duplicate. Leyes.

¹ The witnesses are Walter Reynolds, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Treasurer, formerly tutor to the King. John de Sandale, Bishop of Winchester, Lord Chancellor. Aylmer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, who may be regarded as Prime Minister at this time. Humphrey de Bohun seventh Earl of Hereford and Essex, Constable of England. Hugh le Despencer, a favourite with the King. Bartholomew, of Haslemere, and William Montagu, members of the Royal Household. According to Mr. H. Maxwell Lyte, Deputy Keeper ("per ipsum regem") denotes the authority upon which the Chancellor affixed the great seal. The Charter is a duplicate, and a contemporary enrolment is in the Record Office. (Charter Roll 2, Edward II., No. 19). *Leyes* is probably the name of the Scribe or of the Clerk of the Signet. The initial E is beautifully illuminated with birds and flowers, in gold-dust colour, with a figure of the King seated. The great seal, nearly perfect, is attached by a silken cord, green and red interchanged.—[Ed.]