



THE OLD CHURCH, BONCHURCH, 1794.



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## BONCHURCH PARISH.

BY DR. J. WHITEHEAD.

Bonchurch is confessedly among the fairest, if not the fairest spot on this fair Island, and has an interest both for the antiquary and the student of history.<sup>1</sup>

In early days this picturesquely placed village with its old Church must have presented a striking appearance, situated in a secluded valley and shut out from the rest of the world by the high range of downs on its northern aspect.

Of this part of the Undercliff in prehistoric times very little is known. We know that the earlier races did visit these parts, for they have left their tumuli as evidences along the southern chalk range between Shanklin and Chale in the several downs overlooking the district. On St. Boniface Down within the parish boundaries there are five round barrows grouped together and, though much degraded, still plainly discernable.

Of the British era very little has been discovered. We may be sure that the down-lands overlooking the Channel were occupied by the more wealthy Britons, and that they supported a native population. Of the two sources to which we look for information—the interments, and the place names—the first entirely fail, for there are no reliable local evidences of British interments at the back of the Wight, and, as to the second source, we find many traces of their language indelibly attached to some of the place names in the district, as in Luccombe, or Dunnose the well-known head-land, both situated within the parish boundaries.

<sup>1</sup>Boncher James, Letters Arch.

It is more than probable that the Romans had some settlement here. Many traces pointing to Roman occupation have been found from time to time in various parts of the district, with examples of interments appertaining to the Roman period.

No characteristic Jutish remains have come to light, and the recorded history of Bonchurch dates only from the compilation of the Domesday Book, and from it nearly all the knowledge we have as to the ownership, the area, and the value of the several manors in those days is derived. We find that the parish is recorded there as comprising two manors, Luccombe and Bonchurch, and it is the only known record in which this separate description appears.

#### OF LUCCOMBE MANOR.

The name is one of considerable antiquity, being of Celtic origin.<sup>1</sup> The Celts, as Mr. T. W. Shore has pointed out, have left their names among many of the Hampshire hills, in the word 'cwm,' a hollow between hills, later on transformed by the Saxons into "combe." The manor, in the time of the Confessor, was part of the Crown demesne, and was given over after the battle of Hastings, with the lordship of the Island, to William Fitz Osborne. After a few short years, it again reverted to the Crown by forfeiture and the record states that it is held by the King. It was not a large manor—the money value in those days was 3 pounds, but being "farmed" out, a rental of 4 pounds was obtained. In the early part of the 11th century the Crown farmed out its lands, but the system on which it did so is not clear.<sup>2</sup>

It is not possible to say if the King's rights in a given district were farmed out as a whole, or whether a number of manors, each representing a certain monetary value, were grouped together. It would have been locally interesting to know what other manors were grouped with Luccombe, as the "sources" to form a unit, from which the King received a certain fixed rent. In the early part of the Confessor's

<sup>1</sup>Hants Field Club, Vol. 3, Page 239.

<sup>2</sup>Vict. Jubilee Hist., vol. 1., p. 413.



reign, "the ferm had a known value of £76 16s. 8d., at a later period, the value on the mainland, was raised to £104 12s. 2d. We find, from the entries in the record<sup>1</sup> that the sources from which a "ferm" rent was drawn, was a wide one. Manors on the mainland being included, for instance, at <sup>2</sup>Oakley—"the King had, and has, 1 hide which belongs to (the sources of) the "ferm" in the Isle of Wight." Several of the Crown manors in the neighbourhood of Bonchurch are referred to, <sup>3</sup>"Messley, in Newchurch is recorded as belonging to the King's "ferm"—<sup>4</sup>Knighton and the Down—"the land is held by the King (included) in his "ferm."

The several extracts I have here given, favour the supposition that small manors were grouped together till a farm of a given value was arrived at. On the other hand, we find the following and other like notices, "the King holds <sup>5</sup>Freshwater, &c., but it is farmed for 30 pounds." "Stenbury and Winston, from these two manors comes 'a farm' of 18 pounds,"<sup>6</sup> &c., &c.

As regards the tenancy—the record tells us that "Sawin held the manor from King Edward allodially, and a further examination shows that he had eight other properties in various parts of the County. An inquiry into the varied tenure under which Sawin must have held these several manors would have been interesting, but the definite information as to the holding of 'manors' and of 'halls' in those early days leaves much to be inferred.

From what occurs in the context it is evident that Sawin was an Englishman, and, judging from the reduced assessments on his several holdings, was a "persona grata" with the Confessor. Like all the other native land-holders Sawin had his properties confiscated, or he was dispossessed of

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 423.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 510.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 521.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 457.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 517.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. p. 459.

them, in favour of some one or other of the Norman followers of Fitz Osborne. I find that of the eight manors in his possession before the Conquest, one only remained to him when the Survey in 1086 was completed, and even in this case, we shall see that Sawin was the only one of the original holders, able to retain his holding. The story is interesting; it appears on page 436 of the "Jubilee History." A thegn (Sawin) who still held, as he had done before the Conquest, half a hide in Rockbourne seems to have found 'King Edward's seal' a good title to his land. The Sheriff's Officers claimed it as belonging to the King's ferm—that is, as among the sources from which that ferm is raised,—but the Hundred and the Shire say that King Edward gave it him, and that he has his (writ and) seal for it." This, therefore, was clearly deemed to constitute a valid title. Of the other manors, the Conqueror held Luccombe and absorbed other three in the New Forest he was then making. Two holdings from the then Saxon Bishop of Winchester, at <sup>1</sup>Alverstoke and Basingstoke,—the Norman Bishop transferred to a William de Fécamp,—and to a knight whose name is not given. A Norman, named Pagen, and his son had other two of the holdings, and an under-tenant of Hugh de Port the remaining one. On the other hand, I find a small holding of half a hide from Gozelin Fitz-Azor at Roude, not far from Luccombe, which is recorded as held by him, and which had been possessed by one Alnod before the Conquest.

The great tithes of the Manor, together with the tithes of other of his demesne lands, at Arretton, Haseley, &c., were bestowed by the lord of the Island, on the newly founded Abbey of Lyra.<sup>2</sup> There is a Charter of Confirmation temp. Hy. 2nd, A.D. 1087-1100, referring to the tithes of Luccombe as granted to the Abbey. In the time of Stephen, A.D. 1150, Healdarius, the Abbott of Lyra entered into an arrangement with Gervase, Abbott of Quarr, by which for a yearly pension of forty shillings the several tithes in question were conceded to Quarr. This arrangement was renewed in 1239, a further sum of ten shillings being added for the

<sup>1</sup>Jub. Hist., p. 466.

<sup>2</sup>Chartulary of Carisb: Harl: M.S.S. Br. Mus.

support of the church at Carisbrooke. In a charter dated Sept. 4th, 1286, of Richard, Earl of Devon, referring to lands belonging to Quarr Abbey, "*Lovecombe*" is mentioned as the gift of Hugo de Magnaville. In the Tax: Eccl: of P. Nicholas, A.D. 1291, is the following notice, "*abbas de Quarreira. Apud Lovecombe, £8 os. od.*" In a Charter of Confirmation from Isabella de Fortibus, Lady of the Isle of Wight, reference is made "*to land and a tenement at Scce, belonging to the manor of Luccombe*"<sup>1</sup> Other confirmations follow of grants "*of lands and tenements at Luccombe.*" At the time of the dissolution, A.D. 1537, the monastery of Quarr, held, with other valuable properties—"the Grange of Lovecombe."<sup>2</sup> In the agreement for the Commutation of Tithes in the parish—confirmed in 1842, I find a clause, "the undermentioned lands of this said parish, which have been under the undermentioned circumstances exempt from tithes, that is to say, Luccombe Farm, having formerly belonged to the Abbey of Quarr, and so enjoyed by the said Abbey at the time of the dissolution, and ever since."

#### OF BONCHURCH AND THE MANORIAL LORDS.

The name is an abbreviation for Boniface Church. The shortening must have taken place at an early period, as the manor is found under the name "*of Bonecerce*" in Domesday Book, the final syllable 'circe' or 'cerce' being an early English form of the word church (Murray).

The earliest ground landlord of whom we have any certain knowledge as holding the manor is Earl Godwine, Earl of the West Saxons, who possessed Wroxall, Wolverton, &c., in the immediate neighbourhood, while his son Tosti, held the adjoining manor of Shanklin. The manor was a small one, and the area under cultivation of limited extent.

In the division of the English lands subsequent to the battle of Hastings, the Island was given over to William Fitz Osborne, who bestowed Bonchurch, with twenty-one other manors, on his follower William Fitz Azor. As the second manorial lord it will be interesting to learn what we can about

<sup>1</sup>Worsley, app: No. 77.

<sup>2</sup>Dugdales Monast:



him—which is very little. After the King, among the lay holders of land, there were but three tenants in chief, who between them, held more land than all the other landowners together, for we find William Fitz-Stur's holdings twenty-one, Gozelin Fitz-Azor's, eleven, and his brother's also twenty-one more.

It has been hitherto assumed that William Fitz-Azor came over in the train of William Fitz-Osborne.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Horace Round, in a charter he has seen, finds the name of one of the three lords—William Fitz-Stur—identified with an estate at Tourlaville in Normandy; and also from finding that the three great barons of the Isle of Wight, each held half a virgate<sup>2</sup> in the Bowcombe manor, the seat of the then lord of the Island, he claims them as coming from Normandy with him. These names have existed from early Norman times in Jersey—a typical Norman district—down to the present century. On the other hand our latest island historian, Mr. Percy Stone, "claims all three as belonging to undoubted Saxon families who held land in Hampshire as well." Mr. Stone writes:—"This brings us to the fact that the King, by escheat, held the greater part of the Island, either by himself or by his thegns, the rest being divided between the great Saxon families of Azor and Stur, who had held it under the Confessor, and had gradually swallowed up all the smaller fry."

An examination of the names of the tenants in chief and the several under tenants holding from them, mentioned in "Domesday Book," as given in the Jubilee History, shows, as far as I am able to gather, but two holdings, assessed at 5 hides and 1½ hides respectively, in the Andover Hundred, and another holding of 10 hides at Upton Grey, as *being held* from the Confessor at the time of the Conquest, and at *the completion of* the Survey two small tenures from Gozelin Fitz Azor, of one virgate each, both situated in Godshill parish, in the name of "Azor. There is a similiar reference to one

<sup>1</sup>Victoria Jub. Hist., vol. 1, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 408.

<sup>3</sup>"Early days in the Isle of Wight," *County Press*.

"Gozelin" as still holding  $1\frac{1}{2}$  virgates of land from Waleran, the huntsman, in the Fordingbridge Hundred, and one of three hides in Meonstoke from Hugh de Porth.

Whether he was Saxon or Norman, the freehold of the Bonchurch manor at the time of the Survey was vested in William Fitz-Azor. How long he retained these properties it is impossible to say, for we find<sup>1</sup> many of the manors possessed by the brothers William and Gozelin, are found afterwards in the reign of Henry 1st (1100-35), in the name of Jordan de Insula, a member of an important island family, affording room for conjecture that he was the lineal descendant of the Azor family. Worsley, in his "List of the principal manors, &c., their ancient and present possessors from the Conquest,"<sup>2</sup> omits Fitz-Azor from the category, and commences with the Lisle's, but earlier in his history he mentions "the manor of Bonchurch as belonging to Fitz-Azor."

I have met with considerable difficulty in tracing the subsequent descents of this family. The list of the attesting witnesses to the De Redvers charters, signed by many members of the de Insula family, and given in Hillier,<sup>3</sup> requires to be examined by an expert to fix the date of the several charters more definitely. Geoffrey, son and heir of Jordan de Insula, is found granting a charter, temp. Hy. 11, of land to Quarr Abbey, and is also mentioned as an attesting witness to the DeRedvers charters between 1135-56. He was succeeded by his son William de Insula, whose name is attached to the charters between the dates 1156-62. The next in direct descent is Walter de Insula, Bailiff of the Island, who also witnesses conjointly with his sons, Geoffrey and Jordan. A charter, temp. Hy. 3rd, giving land of his to Quarr Abbey, and witnessed by his son Geoffrey, is given in Worsley.<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey succeeded to the Estates on the death of his father, and was High Sheriff of the County, 1236-9. From this time onwards we can trace the family clearly in connection with the manor and as presenting to the living

<sup>1</sup>Worsley Hist, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup>Worsley, App: 80.

<sup>3</sup>Hist. of the I. of W., Part II.

<sup>4</sup>Appendix 64.



of Bonchurch and Shanklin as the vacancies occur from time to time.

"Sir John Lislle, of Woditon (Oglander Memoirs, p. 77) in the Isle of Wyght, wase ye last of ye linioll stem of that honorable famely of the de Lislies, or de Insula, takeing theyre name from ye placé of theyre aboad (after the Conquest) in this Island. He had only one dawghtor, which he maryed to Sir Roger Kingston, a courtior, and had a good place about ye Kinge. Sir Roger Kingston and his wyfe both died before Sir John, levinge but one dawghtor named Marie; this Marie beinge one of ye greatest matches then in England—whereupon Sir John Lislle desiringe ye continuance of his name and famely married this Marie Kingston to her coson Mr. Thomas Lislle, &c." (afterwards knighted). Sir Thomas Lisle presented to the Bonchurch living in 1527 on behalf of his wife. No surviving issue being left, the entailed estates reverted to the two sisters of Sir Nicholas—Agnes, married to Mr. Philpott of Compton, who had possession of the family seat and estates at Thruxton, and Alice, married to John Rogers, of Freefolk, co. Hants, who succeeded to the other moiety of the entailed estates. The issue of this latter marriage was two daughters. The eldest married a Mr. Samborne, who exercised the right of presentation to Bonchurch, A.D. 1568, and whose tenure was a brief one, since the living is found, A.D. 1570, in the gift of Mr. Dennys, the other inheritor, who had married the sister, co-heiress to the estates.

The members of the Dennys family took a prominent and active part in the protection and furtherance of Island interests from time to time. This was more especially so with Mr. Edward Dennys, who was afterwards knighted. Lord Conway, in 1628, appointed as his two lieutenants Sir John Oglander and Sir Edward Dennys to take the command in the two divisions of the Island in all meetings. I find the following comment in the Oglander Memoirs<sup>1</sup> "I wase often with Sir Edward Dennys at ye Counsell Boorde" and "the honest conceyt that I had to do my Countrey good browght

<sup>1</sup> Memoirs p. 8 and 9.

mee most mallice and ill will ; Sir Edward and myselve tooke upon us ye buisiness, wherein, although we dealte fayrely and honestlye, yet wee gained mutch ill will. Bee warned by example not to medle with ungrateful p'sons."

The manorial rights remained in the Dennys family for nearly a century, the connection coming to an end in an only daughter and heiress of Mr. Thomas Dennys, who married a Mr. Baskett of Apse, related to a family of some note in Dorsetshire. The issue of the marriage was a daughter, who married Mr. Richard Broad, of Newport and dying left a daughter, heiress to the Dennys estates of Shanklin, and of the elder branch of the Lises. I can find no trace of either of the gentlemen beyond the reference in Worsley's List, previously referred to, in which the names of Broad and Alchorn, and later, Popham and Hill, appear as successive holders of the Bonchurch Manor. The heiress, Grace Broad, married Mr. Alchorn of Southampton, Sheriff 1681, Mayor 1686, and their only child married Mr. John Popham, of Russley, co. Wilts, as his second wife.

#### OF BONCHURCH "OLDE CHURCHE."

Though the recorded history of the manor commences with the entry in the Domesday Book, the story of the church should begin at an earlier date than 1086, if any credence is to be given to the legendary account attributing the foundation of a church here to the 8th century. There is a consensus of opinion that whilst the story is admittedly legendary—as to certain monks belonging to the Abbey of Lyra, crossing over to the island, and building a small edifice on the woody plateau where the old church now stands—there yet exists a very strong basis of fact underlying it.

The occurrence of the name "Bonecerce," *i.e.*, the church of St. Boniface, would, as Mr. Odell<sup>1</sup> suggests, seem to show that a church existed here in the Confessors' reign, probably erected by the then owner for the use of his household and the tenants of the adjoining hamlets of Bonchurch, Luccombe, and Shanklin.

<sup>1</sup> Notes on Island Churches, &c.

Who actually built the old church, or the date of its erection, we shall probably never know for certain. Sir John Oglander, in his memoirs, written during the first half of the 17th century, says (p. 196.)—"This church wase erected in ye reigne of William ye Conqueror, by one Johannes de Argentin, a ffrenchman, to whom William Fitzosberon, aftor ye Conquest of this Island, gave all those landes in ye said p'risch, whoe for ye ease both of himselve and tenantes, Bradinge then beinge too farr, and also Nuchurch, Shanklinge then not bwylt," &c.

This story would appear to fix the date of the building within definable limits Boncher James (*Letters Historical*) says—"It would be unreasonable scepticism to cast doubt upon this statement, since Sir John may have found it in some documents belonging to the church, and had no reason to invent it." Mr. Percy Stone (*Arch. Antiq.*) says, "it is probable he found the old Saxon Church unfit for worship, and so obtained a faculty to rebuild it." One of the difficulties of the narrative is this, the manor is distinctly mentioned in Domesday record, as belonging to William Fitz-Azor, and there is, as far as I can learn, no documentary evidence to show how it could possibly be in the possession of the de Argentine family at this time.

Beyond its antiquity and the beauty of its surroundings, the old church offers no striking architectural features. The external structural appearance of the building has in all probability not materially changed with the flight of centuries. Canon Venables, says,<sup>1</sup> "the style of building well accords with the date (1070) tradition has assigned to the foundation—all the windows are of later date, but the chancel arch and south door are rude unadorned examples of the earliest Norman," and a later writer<sup>2</sup> says, "Norman architecture is rare in the Isle of Wight, nor, with the exception of the old church at Bonchurch, is there any complete building in this style."

<sup>1</sup>Guide to the Isle of Wight.

<sup>2</sup>Boncher James, *Letters Arch.* : &c.



In his valuable work in which all our island ecclesiastical antiquities are so exhaustively dealt with, Mr. Percy Stone, writes, "The building is of the usual type of private chapel, a chancel separated from the nave by a simple arch. The arch of the south door seems to have been patched up with voussoirs, whose different sizes and holdings point to their having been removed from elsewhere. The door itself is ancient and interesting, being formed in the usual early manner of planks placed horizontally within, and perpendicularly without, and studded with nails. The windows as usual have been replaced from time to time, and date from the 12th to the 15th century; that in the north wall of the chancel being a good specimen of an early single light." Some remains of fresco painting were discovered beneath the plaster of the north wall in the year 1847, and at the local meeting of the British Archæological Society in 1855, "these frescoes excited much interest, and would appear to represent the glory of the righteous and the condemnation of the wicked." Unfortunately no copy of the wall painting was made, and when Mr. Percy Stone inspected the building it had disappeared, together with the stained glass formerly in the windows.

The dimensions of the church internally are 48 feet 6 inches long, by 12 at its greatest breadth, and some 90 worshippers could be accommodated in the old-fashioned high pews. The service was held morning or evening, alternately in each week in conjunction with that in the church of Shanklin.

In December 1848 the old church which had for so many centuries received within its walls, on each succeeding Sabbath, a christian assembly, ceased to be opened for public worship, and the privileges attached to it as a parish church were transferred to the new building, and the old building is now used only as a mortuary chapel.

The following notices referring to the church appear in the Episcopal Archives.

A.D. 1284, in Bishop Pontisara's register, mention is made of  
"Ecclesia de Bonerhureth."

" 1291, a few years later, in the "Tax Eccles. Pope Nicholas IV."  
the entry "Ecclesia de Bonecherche" appears,  
and the living is assessed at £5 os. od.

- „ 1340, in the "Inquisitiones Nonarum" the church is found supplying one archer for the purposes of Island defence.
- „ 1410, in Cardinal Beaufort's Epis. register of Benefices for taxation, the "Ecslesia de Bonohureth" is valued at 100s.
- „ 1535 The "Valor Ecclesiasticus" temp. Henry VIII., the living was assessed at £6 15s. 3d.

The following list of pre-Reformation ritual accessories taken from Mr. Percy Stone's book is interesting and reads as follows "Inventory of Church Goods," 1553.

"The Certificate of the vewe of All Church Goods, plate, Jewells, Vestryments, bells and other ornaments within the Isle of Wight," takine by Richard Worsley, Capteyn of the said Isle, &c.

#### BONCHURCH CHURCHE.

P'cells remaying in the custody and chardg. of . . . . .  
First, one cope of of bleu saten of breges<sup>1</sup> borderid a bowts wt Redde satten of breges and spanglede wt flowers of corse silke and threde.

Itm. a olde vestment of Redde Doryux<sup>2</sup> playne wt the Albe to the same.

Itm. one surplus and one Awter cloth of Canvas.

Itm. to small bells hanging in the steple.

Itm. one Challis dowble gilt wiche was takin away of the French men.

#### A LIST OF THE RECTORS OF BONCHURCH "OLDE CHURCHE."<sup>3</sup>

At the time of Bishop Pontissara, A.D. 1282, the living is in the gift of the Abbey of Christchurch, Twyneham, an establishment of Secular Canons, having large holdings in Hampshire, which they held in the time of the Confessor.

<sup>1</sup>Saten from briges or breges, *i.e.*, Saten from Bruges.

<sup>2</sup>Dornix, a heavy stuff used for hangings or copes first made at Doernick or Towneray in Flanders.

<sup>3</sup>Derived principally from the Episcopal archives at Winchester supplemented by researches in the Record Office, &c., for which I am indebted to the Revd. Canon Midge.

How the living became vested in the Priory is not clear. Bonchurch may have been one of certain churches and chapels made over to Peter de Oglander, tempt. Hy 1st, on his appointment as Dean, by Richard de Redvers, Lord of the Island,<sup>1</sup> or it may have been that the patronage of the church had been transferred to the Monks on the supposition of their being the best judges as to what persons were most fitted to be presented to the living. In the following year the advowson passed to the De Insula family and their descendants, as is shown by the following record—

- Temp. Ed. I., Aug. 10th, 1283, Richard de Leckford, priest, inst. rector. Patron—Sir John de Insula, "de Bosco."
- " Ed. II., Ap. 5th, 1308, Simon Cordray, Acolite, inst. Patron—Sir John de Insula.
- " " " Aug. 8th, 1311, William Brooke, Acolite, inst. Patron—Sir John de Insula.
- " " III., Dec. 15th; 1331, John Gyscard, priest of the Chantry of St. Edmund de Wodytone, inst., vice William Brooke, the late rector who exchanges. Patron—Sir Bartholomew de Insula.
- " " " July, 1343, Hugh de Welleford, inst., to the living vacant by the death of John Gyscard, the late rector. Patron—Sir Bartholomew de Insula.
- " " " Dec. 4th, 1355, Allan de Welleford. The Bishop, William de Edyndon, presents to the living lawfully vacant by lapse of time, with the Chapel of St. Edmund de Woodytone.<sup>2</sup>
- No date John de Starrington's name occurs as rector, but the date of his collation has not been discovered.
- Temp. Ed. III., April 28th, 1368, Richard Eltone, priest, at Southwark, William de Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester collated, vacant by the death of the late rector. Patron—Sir John de Lysle, Kt.
- " Richd. II., Aug. 6th, 1680, William Bakere, capellanus, at Waltham, the same Bishop collated. Patron—the King in right of wardship of lands, and infant son and heir of Sir John de Lysle.
- " " " July 29th, 1684, Richard Hewere capellanus, at Southwark, the same Bishop collated to the living, vacant by resignation of its late rector. Patron—the King, in right of wardship, &c.
- " Hy. IV., Jan. 24th, 1404, John Lucas, priest, inst. rector at Waltham. Patron—Sir John de Lysle.
- No date. Simon Salet, inst. rector but the date of his collation has not been given. Patron—Sir John de Lysle.

<sup>1</sup> Victoria Jubilee History vol. II, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Wooditon was the island seat of the de Insulas, though not their residence. The Chantry referred to was erected by members of this family early in the 13th century.



Temp. Hy. IV., Jan. 1st, 1411, William Bursynburgh, Vicar of St. Peter de Veteri ponte, dio Chichester, who exchanges livings with the rector Simon Salet. Patron—Sir John Lisle.

" Ed. IV., Jan. 20th, 1466, Richard Lake, inst. rector. Patron—Sir John Lisle.

" " " March 4th, 1473, William Hore, inst. rector, vacant by resignation of the late rector. Patron—Nicholas Lisle, Kt.

" " " Aug. 26th, 1474, Thomas Bernys, inst., vacant by the death of the rector. Patron—Nicholas Lisle, Kt.

" " " Aug. 7th, 1478, John Taylor, inst. Patron—Nicholas Lisle, Kt.

At the beginning of the 16th century the living of Shanklin was attached to the rectory of Bonchurch, and so remained till the year 1853, when it was again made into a separate living

Temp. Hy. VIII., June 16th, 1517, Henry Botell, inst. Patron—Sir John Lisle.

" " " Aug. 3rd, 1527, Roger Hall, inst. to ch., Sti. Bonifacii cum capella, Sti. Blasii in par. de Bradyng. Patron—Sir Thomas Lysle.

The direct male issue of the Lisles, of Wootton, failed, after a period of over two and a half centuries, as patrons of the living. Sir Thomas Lisle exercised the patronage in right of his wife who died in 1529. The Manor and advowson then passed to the Dennys family.

temp. Eliz. May 18, 1568, William Strangeways, inst. rector—Patron John Samborne, in right of his wife.

" " Oct. 2, 1570, Anthony Reston, inst. rector, vacant, by death of the late rector—Patron, Michael Dennys, in right of his wife as joint coheiress.

" " Dec. 1, 1575, Richard Cooke, inst. to the living vacant by the death of the late rector—Patron, Thomas Dennys, Ar.

" James I, March 9, 1605, Wm. Hayes, inst. vacant by death of rector—Patron, Thomas Dennys, Ar.

" " Ap. 29, 1613, Wm. Greeves, inst.—Patron, Edward Dennys.

" " March 17, 1623, Thomas Hopkinson, inst.—Patron, Sir Edward Dennys.

No date.—Henry Bolds name occurs as rector, but the date of his collation has not been discovered. This period covers the time of the Commonwealth, and when the Puritans were in power, the rector of Bonchurch for the time being, was one of the light Isle of Wight clergy ejected, A.D. 1660, from their livings. I cannot find the name of the rector mentioned, but I infer that Mr. Bold was so in all probability.

1672, temp., Chas. II., William Torrie, inst., as rector, vacant by the death of the late incumbent Henry Bold—Patron, Alex. Frasier.

1719, " George I., William Downes, inst.—Patron, Sir John Popham.

|           |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1763,     | " | III., Cornelius Norwood, inst.—Patron, Miss Eliz. Popham.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 1766, . " | " | " Joseph Hewson, inst.—Patron, Popham and Hill.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 1805, . " | " | " Justly Hill, Archdeacon, inst.—Patron, Popham and Hill, and was the last rector of the conjoint parishes, and of which he was officiating minister for 47 years, dying in 1853—the year in which the separation occurred. |

In accordance with ancient law, glebe land for house and parsonage was provided, for we find, A.D. 1340, the church supplying a bowman for island defence. This was for the glebe land, a broad green pasture field in front and on the east side of the old church. A parsonage existed in earlier years, for I find from the parish registers the overseers levying a rate in 1750 for "The Parsonage." There is one portion of the glebe land—around which a halo of legendary mystery has grown—situated at the foot of St. Boniface down, and known as the "Bishop's Acre." The earliest reference is given in the pages of Albin.<sup>1</sup> "A gentleman, during a very heavy snow, having missed his road, and in consequence descending the steep Down of St. Boniface on horseback, was extremely agitated and affected from the danger of his situation; and accordingly he vowed, if he should reach the bottom in safety, to purchase the land, and present it to the church at Shanklin, as a lasting memento of the kindness of Providence." The particulars are varied in other accounts, "a certain bishop" in one, "good St. Boniface," in another, made the gift "to the church which bore his name." Canon Venables,<sup>2</sup> in alluding to the legend, says, "that the story does account in a manner not altogether incredible for the singular fact, that this little rectangular plot, lying by itself in the midst of other property, and not even in the parish of Bonchurch, has belonged to the rector from time immemorial." In the appendix to Worsley,<sup>3</sup> I find a charter of Walter de Insula, temp. Hy. 3rd, 1216-72, giving land to the monks of Quarr Abbey, on the side of St. Boniface, next to Luccombe, &c. Seal, a knight riding at speed, &c. It would almost seem that this is the land referred to. When the temporalities

<sup>1</sup> History 1795, p. 484.

<sup>2</sup> Guide, Isle of Wight.

<sup>3</sup> Worsley's History, App. 64.

belonging to the Abbey were dispersed, we have nothing—if such was the case—to show how this parcel of land became attached to the Bonchurch living. It was not unusual however, where monasteries had been previously established, to transfer the tithes, glebe, &c., to a church in the locality, from whence the offerings, &c., were derived, having first obtained the consent of the Bishop.

Sharing equally with the Church in the beauty of its situation and in the old world associations which have grown up around them, is the churchyard, one of the quietest and fairest—a veritable “God’s Acre”—enlisting the deepest sympathies of all visitors to the spot.

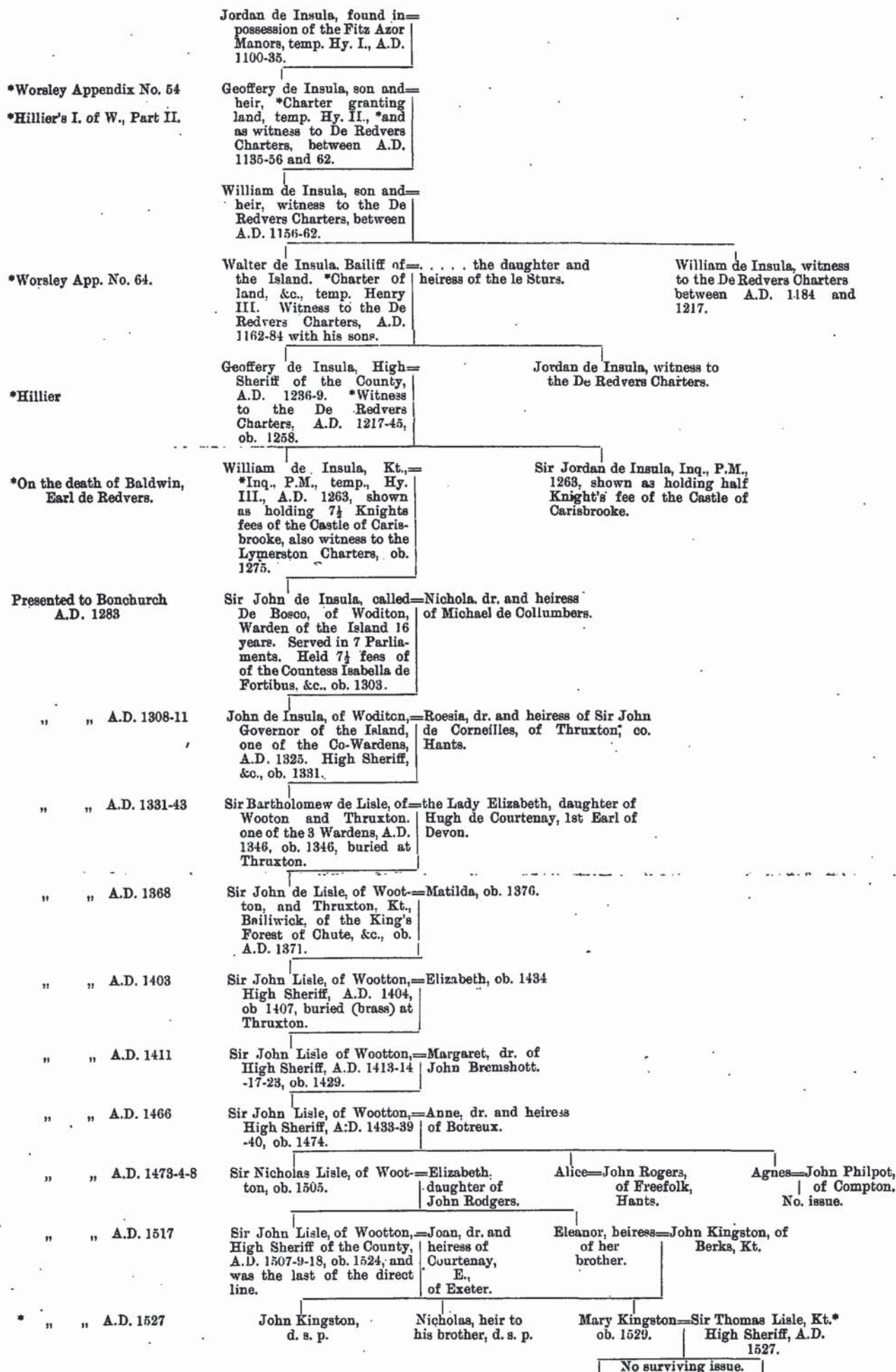
In earlier days the right of burial, &c. was one of the privileges entitling a place of religious worship to assume the rank of a Parish Church. When the parishes were large and scattered over a wide area, much hardship was entailed by this arrangements.

It is a matter of wonderment to some visiting the churchyard and knowing the many centuries since it was first used, to note the absence of more early memorials. The absence is partly accounted for by the quite late introduction of memorial stones in village churchyards. These were almost unknown till the 17th century, so that many generations have been laid to rest without any external notice. Of those present many bear the indications of antiquity, the grey ivy-clad stones mark the resting places of the rude fishermen and inhabitants of earlier days, many of the inscriptions being almost illegible. The earliest decipherable is one to “Thomas Mackut, who deceased at Lukkum 1616, beinge 81 years of his age,” a descendant possibly of an early ancestor, after whom one of the farms is called “Macketts Farm.

“ Whatever might have been their lot  
Who here are lowly laid,  
They’re neither slighted nor forgot  
Now nature’s debt is paid;  
It is so peaceful, so retir’d—  
So free from pomp and strife,  
That reason has become inspir’d  
And finds the proof, so long desir’d,  
Of an eternal life ! ”



SCHEME SHOWING THE CONNECTION OF THE DE INSULA FAMILY, OTHERWISE  
DE LISLES, WITH THE BONCHURCH MANOR.



SCHEME SHOWING THE RELATION OF THE LISLE, DENNYS, AND POPHAM FAMILIES,  
WITH THE BONCHURCH MANOR.

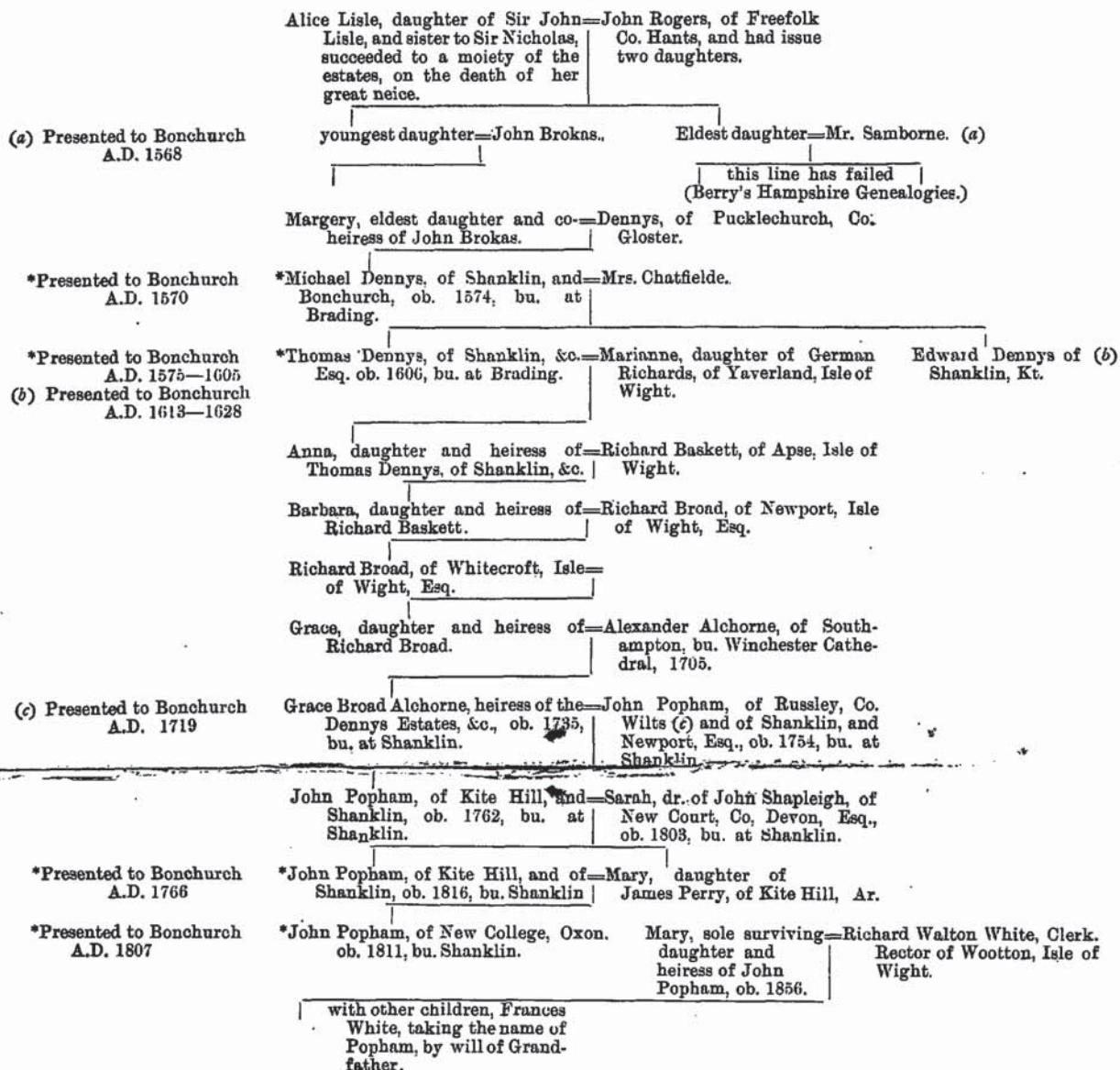
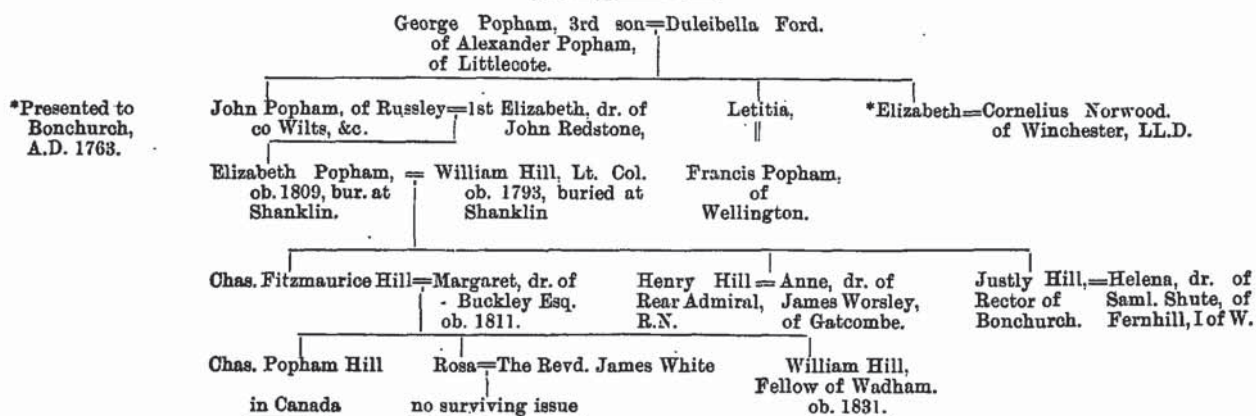


TABLE SHOWING THE RELATION OF THE "POPHAM" AND "HILL" FAMILIES,  
WITH THE BONCHURCH LIVING.



Some of the more recently erected memorials are singularly elegant. Here, where on the grey tomb-stone an iron cross casts an eternal shadow in the quiet grave, réposes the body of William Adams, ever to be remembered as the author of the beautiful allegories of "The Shadow of the Cross" and "The old Man's Home." Nearer to the wall on the west side is the tombstone of Carlyle's great friend the highly gifted John Sterling.

I cannot conclude these remarks on "the olde church" and its sweet environment better, than by giving the following extracts taken from a letter of a well-known authoress<sup>1</sup> to her niece Daphne, descriptive of a visit to the old church. "I spent an hour this sunny morning with a large company of young people and a few—a very few elders. There were many girls, and even many more young men, some just of age, some still younger, others in the prime of life, one who bore his sheaves with him in the form of books he had written. There were just a few children, one an only child, decked by its devoted parents with garlands of Spring flowers. In the quietest of voices they spoke to us, we heard the soft chatter of the girls as they merrily laughed together; or perhaps that was a sigh that the breeze brought to our ears as we listened, thinking of one, Ethel, who was nearly eighteen. How did I know their ages, Daphne? Because, dear, they were written on their graves in the quiet little sunny churchyard by the sea. Those young people lie together within sound of the booming sea, their God's acre surrounded by great sentinel trees in which the thrushes and robins sing, the blackbirds whistle. On such an exquisite morning it was good to think of Klopstock's line:

'Blest are the quiet dead.'

and to remember what a deep peace lay on the once restless hearts so safely covered in from the wild tumult of the world."

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Humphrey.

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