

ROCHE COURT AND ITS FORMER OWNERS.

PAPER READ BY MISS SKINNER, HIST. TRIPOS. (CANTAB.),
13th JULY, 1914.

In the account of Fareham—Fernham, a manor held of the Bishop of Winchester—in the Domesday Survey, seven hides of land are especially mentioned as held by one Radulfus. Probably these seven hides afterwards became the manor of North Fareham, also held of the Bishop of Winchester. However that may be, in 1225 we find that it was the manor of North Fareham which, on the death of the underlord, Sir William Fitz-Roger, gave Peter de Roches,¹ Bishop of Winchester, in right of his See, the wardship of Emma Fitz-Roger, whom he promptly married to his nephew, Geoffrey de Roches. Thenceforth the manor was known as Roche Court; which for about 100 years became the centre of the De Roches' life in South Hampshire. There is evidence of a considerable manorial residence there of which some of the stout walls, 4½ ft. thick, and a fine old chimney breast still exist. In 1342 when her brother William was found "idiot," it became the property of Mary de Roches, who married, first Sir John Borhunte, and secondly Sir Bernard Brocas, to whom she brought not only the De Roches but also the Borhunte lands.

We must now, very briefly, sketch the rise of the Brocas family in England. Edward I., England's greatest law-giver, gained much of his knowledge of statecraft as Governor of Aquitaine. There he made the acquaintance of Arnald de Brocas, a Gascon noble, who was with him in Sicily when on their return from a crusading pilgrimage to the Holy Land

¹ Or de Rupibus.



ROCHE COURT, NORTH SIDE.

they heard of the death of Henry III. Edward hurried back to England, faithfully followed by Arnald, who in 1314, just 600 years ago, in the month of June, was slain at the Battle of Bannockburn. Edward II., graceless though he was, was not unmindful of Arnald's services, and brought up at his Court the latter's three sons—John, Bernard, and Arnald. John, the eldest, became Edward III.'s great friend, his valetus, and master of his horse. He is a picturesque figure, clad in dark blue tunic and white cloth cape, busy in his master's service at Guildford, Nottingham, and Eton, buying horses, the names of some of which—Pomers, Le Brite, and Bayard—have come down to us, keeping stud farms, and helping William of Wykeham to build Windsor Castle, and chiefly lived at Clewer Brocas.² His name survives to this day in the Brocas Mead and Brocas Clump at Eton. He married and had three sons, the most distinguished of whom, Bernard, became as devoted a friend of the Black Prince as his father was of Edward III. In 1346 both John and Bernard Brocas accompanied their Royal Masters to France. Sir John's personal following was one knight, 14 esquires, and 24 archers.

The young Bernard fought at Crecy, Poitiers, and Navarete (1367), and tradition has connected the acquisition of the crest of the Moor's head with that last and hard-fought fight. But it was certainly used by Sir Bernard at least six years before that date. However, if we must put aside the story of his cutting off the "King of Morocco's head"—the story which the verger in Westminster Abbey told Sir Roger de Coverley—we can still retain the story of his wooing of the Fair Maid of Kent—Joan, Countess of Holland. In vain he pled his cause; the lady was adamant, and Bernard as a last resource begged his royal master to intervene in

² The Manor of Clewar Brocas, Berks, was the original seat of the Brocas family. It was sold by William Brocas to Sir Reginald Bray in 1499.—EDITOR.

his behalf. He did his best, but such were the lady's charms that he too fell a victim, and she owned that he, the Prince, was the only knight she had ever loved. The Prince confessed his dilemma to his friend, and somehow matters were straightened, for the Prince married Joan, and Bernard married Mary de Roches, also a King's ward, a far more suitable match. This marriage brought the Brocas family to Roche Court and gave them the hereditary mastership of the Royal Buckhounds, but for a time Bernard was still employed abroad as Constable of Bordeaux, where his master reigned as Prince of Aquitaine. Some years before his marriage to Mary de Roches, Bernard had bought from John de Pecche the manor of Beaurepaire, in the north of the county, and so close was his connection with Hampshire that he sat as Knight of the Shire in at least four of the Parliaments of Edward III., and in six of those of his grandson, Richard II., and was ever a good friend of that wayward youth, and served his Queen Anne of Bohemia as Chamberlain, a fact recorded on his tomb in St. Edward's Chapel, Westminster Abbey. In 1381 Mary died, and Bernard married Katharine, widow of Sir Hugh Tyrell, a brother knight of Sir Bernard's, who when the French took possession of the Isle of Wight in 1377 came forth from Carisbrooke Castle with such vigour that the French were utterly routed. In 1384 Sir Bernard, with the manors of Hoo and Hanyngton, founded a chantry at the Priory of Southwick, of which the terms of the Foundation are—"The Prior and Convent of Southwick are to pray for the King, the said Bernard and Katharine, his wife, while they live, and for their souls when they decease, and for the soul of King Edward III., and of Mary, late wife of the said Bernard, and for the souls of the fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, and ancestors of the said Bernard and Mary."

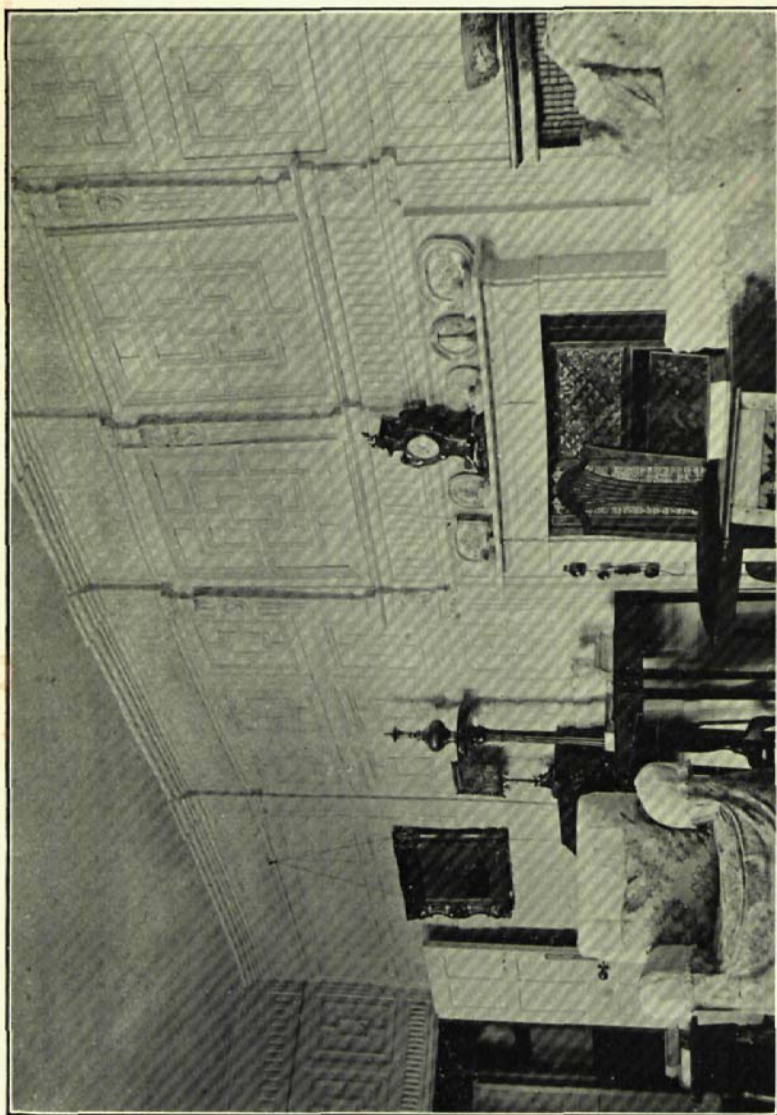
At Roche Court, Bernard was succeeded by his son, the second Sir Bernard, of whom tradition says he was carver

to the King; he was certainly one of the few knights who were faithful to Richard II. to the end; for him he conspired at Oxford, was seized, brought to London, asked to betray his fellow conspirators "*mais la ne respondit nul*," and was beheaded on Tower Hill (1400). The estates were sequestered to the Crown for one year. When Johanna, his widow, died in 1429, we have in the report of the escheators some description of Roche Court. There is "the manor or hall, with the houses annexed, the garner, with the house in which the garner was, and . . . which leads from the end of a certain barn on the west side of the court to the end of the latrina of the great gate there, the cow house, the great barn on the south side of the chapel, a garden called Chapel Garden," besides arable land, pastures, woods, heaths, the advowson of Whipstode, and a dove cot. This Chapel seems to have been endowed by the De Roches for the use of the people on their estate. It was called: "The Chapelry or Rectory impropriate of Whipstode St. James, in Fareham and elsewhere." At the Reformation in 1545, the chapel passed to the Crown and was pulled down, whilst the tithes passed to the heirs of the original donors. No trace of the Chapel now remains. It was Henry's best policy to make friends, and within a year of the sequestration the property was restored, and there in comparative seclusion the Brocasses lived. William, Bernard's son, married for his second wife Johanna Sandys, and received the Vyne as her dowry. He served both Henry IV. and V. several times as Sheriff and Knight of the Shire. He was succeeded by William, by John, and by yet a third William, who died in 1506, leaving two daughters, Anne and Edith, his co-heirs and King's wards. Just at that time the Court of Chancery was established, and amongst its functions was the care of King's wards, and in the Chancellor's (Wolsey's) office were two young men, George Warham, nephew of the Archbishop Warham, who owned Malshanger, and Ralph Pexall,

a relative of that Abbot at whose Monastery in Leicester the great Chancellor died.

These two young men married the two co-heirs ; but Anne died soon after her marriage to George Warham, and her share of the property reverted to her sister Edith, who had a son Richard, and to him or to his father must be ascribed the Tudor addition to Roche Court. He married Lady Elinor Paulet, a daughter of the first Marquis of Winchester, the builder of Basing House, and was succeeded by his daughter, who by marrying her cousin, Bernard Brocas, of Horton, brought back the name of Brocas to Roche Court. It was their son, Sir Pexall Brocas, who was the one black sheep of the Brocas family. He was so black that Elizabeth would never admit him to Court, and even James I. considered him scarcely reputable enough to continue Master of the Buckhounds. At one time he was condemned to do penance at Paul's Cross, and, in bravado, immediately afterwards marched with 30 men in scarlet to dine with the Mayor. Perhaps the picture of his jester, Hodge, the last jester to be kept in a private family, commemorates one of "the men in scarlet." The wisest deed of the graceless Pexall was his marriage to Margaret Sherley, for it was certainly due to her wise administration and that of her three brothers, her trustees, that the estates were kept together. His son, Sir Thomas, was a far soberer gentleman than his father, and the family seem to have been quite restored to Court favour. Charles I. bestowed his portrait upon Thomas, his Master of the Buckhounds, and Robert, Thomas's eldest son, married Jane Bodley, a maid of honour to Queen Henrietta Maria.

War broke out, and Beaurepaire was held for the King as an outpost of Basing House. Roche Court seems to have escaped molestation, perhaps because Thomas, the second son of Sir Thomas, was a captain in the Parliamentary Army.



ROCHE COURT, THE DRAWING ROOM,

Tradition says that Sir Thomas's remaining five sons all fought for the King (some must have been extremely young soldiers) and that William was slain at Newbury (1643), having captured a standard of flowered damask with the embroidered motto "Constanter et fideliter." Robert was slain at Oxford, leaving two little sons and a daughter Jane. At the Restoration the daughter Jane was alone living, and her mother, the former maid of honour, was not slow in presenting her at Court. Charles II., who was ever ready to be gracious and helpful, if it wasn't much trouble to himself, introduced her to Sir William Gardiner, one of the first Knights of the Bath, a loyal gentleman of Lancashire. He was a barrister, a clever and tactful man who welded together the dilapidated Brocas estates to which his wife was heir general, and established at Beaurepaire Thomas Brocas, the son of the Parliamentary Captain. From this time Beaurepaire descends in the junior line. Sir William Gardiner was succeeded by his son Brocas and his grandson William. With this last the Baronetcy became extinct, but was almost immediately revived in the person of John Whalley, the son of Grace Gardiner and Robert Whalley. Grace was the Grand-daughter of the first Sir William and daughter of Bernard Gardiner, an Oxford celebrity,¹ Warden of All Souls. John Whalley took the name and arms of Smythe and Gardiner. He was succeeded by his brother, Sir James,

¹ His wife Grace, daughter and heir of Sir Sebastian Smythe, brought the property at Tackley, Cuddesdon, etc., about 5,000 acres, into the family.

² The grant of arms of 2nd March, 1798, states that Sir James Whalley of Clerk Hill, Whalley, Lancashire, Baronet, was empowered to take and bear the names and arms of Smythe and Gardiner, viz. :—"That Sir James Whalley-Smythe-Gardiner be entitled to bear Quarterly First and Fourth Or on a Cheveron Gules between 3 Griffins' heads erased Azure, two Lions counterpassant of the Field, for Gardiner; second and third Per Cheveron Argent and sable three Anvils counterchanged, for Smythe; and for the crest of Gardiner, on a wreath of the colours, a Saracen's head in profile proper, the Neck erased Gules, Cap Or wreathed, about the temples Gules, and Azure." (As shown in the margin of the grant which is still in existence).

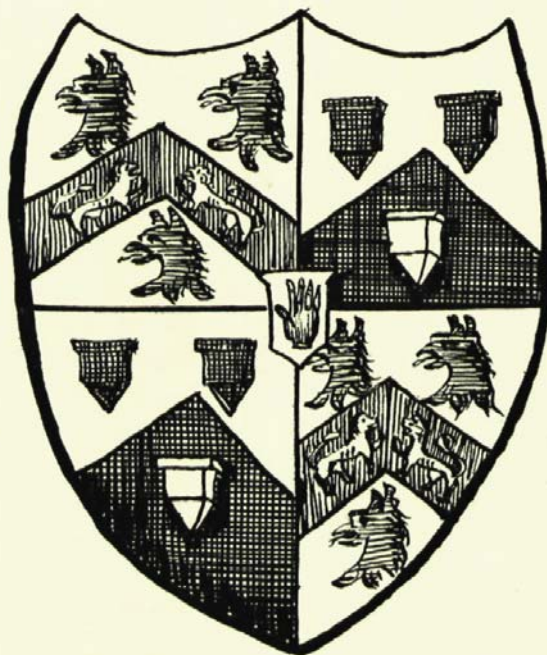
and he again by his son, a second Sir James, and he by Sir John, at whose death in 1868 the second Gardiner baronetcy became extinct.

Miss Skinner pointed out the various portraits hanging in the dining-room. The first is a portrait of Charles I. "Tradition tells us," she said, "that this portrait was given to Thomas Brocas, Hereditary Master of the Buckhounds, by King Charles, with an autograph letter. The letter is no longer extant. The portrait, especially the head, is a very fine painting. In all probability Van Dyck painted the face (he was painter in ordinary to the King from 1635-41) and his pupils finished the accessories. The George is rather roughly painted—Charles wore various Georges at different times; in some the horse faces to the right and in others to the left. In this one the horse faces the spectators' left, and if I remember correctly Sir Payne Gallwey's monograph on the Garter Georges, the George that Charles handed to Bishop Juxon on the scaffold was the same as this one. Thomas Brocas was outlawed for debt all through the Commonwealth. In 1633 he sold the Mastership of the Buckhounds to Sir Lewis Watson for £3,000 (that would be about £30,000 of our money). It is improbable that he sold it without Royal consent. Was the money for himself or for Charles? Even as early as 1633 Charles was trying to raise funds in order to rule without the aid of Parliament. If the money were handed over to Charles, the portrait may have been an expression of the Royal gratitude. In that case its comparative early date would account for Charles's *ruff*; he is almost always painted in a lace collar. The next portrait is that of Margaret Sherley, Lady Brocas, by Cornelius Janssen. Janssen was in England from 1618-65; he painted almost always upon wooden panels. His painting is characterised by great clearness and delicacy. This portrait illustrates his style exceedingly well. Note the exceeding delicacy of the complexion, of the white muslin yoke and

black lace. The next portrait has been handed down as Sir Pexall Brocas, but judging from its date, 1633 (Sir Pexall died in 1630), the age of the man, and the fashion of his hair and garments, I am very much inclined to call it Thomas, the son of Pexall and Margaret, that Thomas to whom Charles gave his portrait, and if so, I should like to call the portrait in the corner Robert, Thomas's son. Whichever Brocas this portrait represents, it is noteworthy that the lace collar contains the Moor's head and the Brocas lion. Taking next the very beautiful painting in the corner, we find it wrongly marked "Earl of Strafford, beheaded 1641." None of the well-known portraits of Strafford are in the least like the gentleman here depicted. It seems to me, however, that there is a considerable likeness to the gentleman of 1633, and when we consider that Robert, the son of Thomas, married a maid of honour of Queen Henrietta Maria, I think we may not unreasonably surmise that he was the dandy here depicted, and that his portrait was painted by the fashionable Court painter, Anthony Van Dyck. I should like to point out this portrait of "Miss Brocas," undoubtedly Miss Prudence Brocas, a daughter of Thomas, a lady who lived at Males Farm, on the outskirts of Wickham, and there built a "brick house." She died in 1661, and left a notable will in which various jewels and furs are left to different members of her family. Amongst them are pearls, probably the ones in the picture, and possibly they occur again in the bracelet round Mary Brocas's arm, her great-niece.

Next to these we have a group of four portraits, father, mother, and two daughters—Thomas, the son of Thomas the Parliamentary captain, his wife Mary Webb, and his daughters Mary and Anne. In 1678 the final agreement with Sir William Gardiner was made by which this Thomas gave £1,550 for the relinquishment of the Gardiner claims to the estates of Beaurepaire, &c., while he himself relinquishes all claim to the Roche Court estates. It is noteworthy that in

order to effect this arrangement Sir William lent Thomas £1,000 on a mortgage on Beaurepaire. Mary and Anne both died young, in 1687 and 1692, and their monuments are in the church at Sherborne St. John. It is perhaps interesting to note that it was the descendant of this Thomas, the son of the Parliamentarian, who rejected a baronetcy because he considered a peerage due to him on account of his ancestors' loyalty to King Charles. Next should be noticed the portraits of the two brothers, Sir John and Sir James Whalley-Smythe-Gardiner, the first and second baronets of the second creation. That of Sir James is signed T. Beach, and probably that of his brother is by the same hand. Thomas Beach was a pupil of Gainsborough, and had a good deal of repute as a portrait painter. At the opposite end of the room there are four very good examples of Sir Thomas Lawrence's crayon portrait painting. He did most of this early crayon work at Oxford, and at Bath he used to charge a guinea and a half for each portrait. The three brothers, Sir John and Sir James Whalley-Smythe-Gardiner and Thomas Whalley, were obviously his sitters. Below them is a contemporary portrait of Jane Seymour, Edward VI.'s mother. On the staircase the portraits especially interesting to the Hampshire Field Club are those of Sir William Gardiner, the third and last baronet of the first creation, and his sister Frances with her child. If the little daughter had lived she would have been heiress of Roche Court. In the drawing room, the chief picture of historical interest is that of Anne Boleyn, a contemporary portrait painted on a wooden panel, and given by the Queen to one of her maids of honour, as was then the custom. It formed part of the collection of the portraits of the Queens of England given by the ladies of England to Miss Agnes Strickland. The panelling in the drawing room should be noted. In the woodwork department of the Victoria and Albert Museum there is some of a similar pattern dated early 16th century. Undoubtedly Ralph or Richard Pexall built this Tudor



ARMS OF SIR JOHN WHALLEY-SMYTHE-GARDINER.

addition; I am inclined to think Ralph, for he had lived probably at Dean Farm, on the estate in his youth. Richard was far more at Steventon and Beaurepaire. He was a very prominent man: Sheriff under Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, and had very little time for life at Roche Court. Those of us who were present at the Winchester Pageant will remember the part that Henry Newbolt makes Lady Pexall take in the marriage festivities of Queen Mary and King Philip of Spain on St. James' Day, 1554. I think the staircase with its very uneven oak treads should be noticed and the little windows that light it. In the lower window is some stained glass with the arms of the Gardiners. They are thus described in Guillim's *Heraldry*, published before 1660: "He beareth or, on a chevron gules between three griffins erased azure, two lions counter passant of the field." Later a variation of the Brocas crest, the Moor's Head, must have been added. It occurs on the glass here, on china, and on pewter, &c., with the motto, "Mon Dieu est ma Roche."
