

ON THE MANOR AND CHASE OF WHADDON,  
WITH ITS "FINDS."

BY THE REV. C. LOWNDES, F.R.A.S.

The earliest information relating to the ancient Manor of Whaddon, upon which dependance may be placed, is that contained in the Conqueror's survey, where it is written "Wadonc;" but in other records "Waddun," "Waddon," &c. It is situated five miles north of Winslow, and mid-way between the County town of Buckingham and the Market town of Fenny Stratford, on the old Watling-street Road; and it deserves more particular notice by our Society than it has hitherto received, from the circumstance of its having been the site of several discoveries of relics of by-gone days; and of its possessing one of those ancient Chases (the only one in this County) in which the Norman Conquerors, and no doubt their predecessors the Saxons, as well as their successors, indulged in the pleasure of hunting.

In the reign of Edward the Confessor, this Manor was held by Edward Cilt, one of his Thanes or Knights, who had power to sell it; and in the time of the Domesday survey it had passed into the possession of Walter Giffard, who held it in hand. It was then assessed at ten hides. The land was ten carrucates, five of which, with five hides, were in the demesne, and five were held by fourteen villanes or copy-holders, and nine bordars or farmers. The meadow was five carrucates. There were ten bondmen or domestic servants; and woods for one hundred hogs. Its whole value, at the period of the survey, and previously, was £8.

This Walter Giffard was a near relative of William the Conqueror, whom he accompanied to England; and was, for his valour in that memorable battle fought at Hastings, against King Harold, in the year 1066, made Governor of this County, as the Earl of Buckingham. He was one

of the assessors of the survey, and for his zeal and attachment held many Manors of the Conqueror, and among them the Manor of Whaddon; for William seized the possessions of the ancient lords, and gave them away to his own friends and relations, and was most lavish in his gifts to Walter Giffard. On the completion of the survey, in the year 1084, Walter Giffard founded the Cluniac Priory of St. Faith, at Longueville, in Normandy, and afterwards bestowed "The Church of Whaddon, with its appurtenances, and the tithes of the demesne, lands, and of his woods, pannage, and venison, and all other profits from his woodlands and pasturage, for the cattle of the Monks of this Priory." Hence it has been remarked that the grant of the *Tithes of his Wood*, affords a strong evidence of the existence of Whaddon Chase, at least as early as the time of William Rufus. On the death of Walter Giffard, his son, Walter Giffard, succeeded to the title and estates, but dying without issue, his lands escheated to the crown.

The Manor of Whaddon, which had been separated from the Honour of Giffard, was granted by King Henry II. to Richard Humet, or Humez, as an appendage to the office of Constable of Normandy. His son, William Humet, obtained a renewal of the grant, and succeeded his father in the office of Constable of Normandy, and had livery of the Lordship of Whaddon. He was in possession of the Manor in the second year of the reign of King John; but falling under that king's displeasure, it was taken from him and was never restored. Three years afterwards, as William Humet died without issue, it was granted by King John to William, Earl of Arundel, upon whose death, and the death of his son, it was afterwards *inter alia*, granted in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Henry III, *in capite* to John Fitz-Geoffrey, and descended to his son John Fitz-John, and then to his second son, Richard, who, dying without issue, left his manor, park, and chase of Whaddon, to Emma, his wife, for her dower, which, after her death, became part of the inheritance of Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, his nephew.

In the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Henry III., Robert Giffard held a yard-and-a-half of land at Whaddon, by the sergeanty of keeping the lord's woods, at Whaddon, and 3s. 4d. quit-rent, or chief-rent. Robert Giffard was probably descended from a relative of Walter Giffard,

second Duke of Buckingham, who died without issue. His descendants, as the learned Camden informs us, were hereditary keepers of Whaddon Chase, under the De Burghs, Earls of Ulster, and were successively representatives of the County. John Giffard, anno 5. Henry V., was Sheriff of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. The De Burghs lived in the time of the first three Edwards, and were Lords of Whaddon from about the year 1250 to 1360, when the Manor and Chase passed in marriage with Elizabeth, sole daughter and heiress of William de Burgh to Lionel Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward III., whose only daughter, Philippa, married Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March; and their son, Roger Mortimer, leaving only one daughter, named Ann, the Manor descended in marriage with her to Richard Plantagenet, of Coningsbury, whose son Richard, Duke of York, and Earl of Ulster, being slain at Wakefield, in the year 1460, whilst fighting against the house of Lancaster, left this Manor, together with Nash, and the Chase of Whaddon, to his Duchess Cicily, in dower. The grant was confirmed to her, for the term of her life, by her sons Edward IV. and Richard III., and by Henry VII., on their respective accessions to the throne. During her life the Manor was made part of the dower of Elizabeth, Queen of Henry VII., who succeeded to it on the death of her grandmother Cecily, Duchess of York, and held it until her own death; when Henry VIII. made it part of the dowry of his Queens Katherine of Spain and Jane Seymour, his first and third consorts. No other grant being made by Henry VIII., the Manor, with the office of hereditary keeper of the Chase, together with the capital mansion called Whaddon Hall, descended in marriage with Margaret daughter and heir of John Giffard to the Pigotts, a branch of the Pigotts of Doddershall, and afterwards to the Lord Grey de Wilton. Of this latter family, Arthur Lord Grey of Wilton, was Deputy of Ireland, and suppressed the Earl of Desmond's rebellion. His son, being charged with a conspiracy against King James I., to deprive him of his crown, forfeited this estate, which had continued in lease from the crown until this time, when James granted to his favourite Sir George Villiers, "all this Manor of Whaddon and Nash, " and all his demesne of Whaddon and Nash, and the site

“of the same Manor, and the park of Whaddon, called “the Queen’s Park, and the Chase there, with all houses “and lodges thereunto belonging, and all deer and other “beasts of chase whatsoever, with all glebe lands, woods, “underwoods, Courts Leet, Courts Baron, and other appurtenances thereunto belonging, to hold to him and “his heirs for ever.” And by other Letters Patent, the King also granted to him Giffard’s manor, in Whaddon, and the little park, with the appurtenances belonging. Sir George Villiers having, in addition to the above grants, obtained by purchase the lease of the site of the old Manor house, and herbage of the park, united in himself the entire Lordship of Whaddon and Nash. Sir George Villiers was made Baron of Whaddon, and afterwards Duke of Buckingham, in 1623. His son George Villiers succeeded him, and dying possessed of the manor and estates, his trustees sold them by a decree in Chancery, eleven years after his death, January 5th, 1698, to James Selby, Esq., Sergeant-at-Law, and Thomas Willis, Esq., son of the celebrated physician of that name. In consequence of the death of Thomas Willis, in the following year, the arrangements respecting the partition of the property were not fully carried out until after Browne Willis, his son and heir came of age.

The yard and a half of land beforementioned, as being held by Robert Giffard, contained the whole site of the Hall and Hall-grounds, before Arthur Lord Grey added Old Lands and Old Lands Meadow to them, in the time of Queen Elizabeth. The Hall was situated on an exceedingly beautiful knoll of rising land, which commanded a view of all the adjacent country. And Arthur Lord Grey preferring this situation to Water Hall, near Fenny Stratford—which had been in the possession of his family 400 years—pulled down Water Hall, and carried the materials to Whaddon, to add to the buildings already erected by the Giffards and Pigotts. It was in the year 1568 that Arthur Lord Grey was honoured at Whaddon with a visit by Queen Elizabeth, on her Buckinghamshire progress; and she is said to have expressed herself greatly gratified with the sports of the chase in such a magnificent amphitheatre of wooded scenery. The old Mansion contained at this time the great hall, open to the roof, in length fifty feet, with a large chimney on the north

side, two large windows and a battlement porch on the south side, and three arched doors at the west end leading into pantries, cellars, &c., with about six other rooms on the ground floor. Part of the old mansion, adorned with a stone that had a bugle-horn carved on it, being part of the arms of Forster, first wife of Sergeant Pigott, existed in the time and in the recollection of the Rev. W. Cole, rector of Bletchley, from whose manuscripts this account has chiefly been taken; but it was demolished by James Selby and Thomas Willis, on the division of the property. Two parts in three of the house falling to the share or purchase of James Selby, Thomas Willis agreed to pull down his part; and had, at the time of his death, in the year 1699, accordingly tore up most of the floors above stairs, and beat down the ceilings. The Hall remained in this condition for some years, inhabited only by a dairyman, until Browne Willis, only son and heir to Thomas Willis, came of age, in the year 1704, when he purchased of Sergeant Selby the other part of the Hall and Hall-grounds, new ceiled and floored the remaining chambers above stairs, and rebuilt the front in the picturesque style represented in the accompanying print. On the east and west sides of the old Hall were some remains of ancient gothic windows with stone mullions, and some arms in stained glass. The tower in the background of the picture formed a corner staircase of a still older mansion of great antiquity. Browne Willis gloried in having rebuilt the stables and part of the office adjoining the kitchen with the materials of a dissenting chapel, which he bought and pulled down at Fenny Stratford. On the south side of the garden there was a most venerable oak tree, which was much cherished by Browne Willis, who used to say that Spencer, who was Secretary to Lord Grey, composed his "Fairy Queen," under it; and not far from this oak, and in a close adjoining the yard, there was a remarkable ash tree, which suffered considerably in the high wind, the same month in which Browne Willis died.

Mr. Sergeant Selby was succeeded in his estates by his son, Thomas James Selby, who purchased of the representatives of Browne Willis the Hall and grounds, and the pastures called Old Lands and Old Lands Meadows, and thus again united the Manor of Whaddon and the

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whole estate. Thomas James Selby died a bachelor in 1772; but in the year 1768, desirous that the estates, which had been purchased and enjoyed by his family, should descend to some person of the name and blood of Selby, devised them with all his Manors, Whaddon Hall, Whaddon Chase, and Whaddon Park to his "right and lawful heir," for the better finding of whom, he directed advertisements to be published immediately after his decease in some of the public papers; but should it so happen that no heir-at-law was found, he then constituted and appointed William Lowndes of Winslow, his "lawful heir," on condition that he took the name of Selby. In consequence of this remarkable bequest, advertisements were published according to the directions, and numerous claimants from all parts of the country appeared, but none of their claims were established. In 1773 the Court of Chancery appointed Mr. William Lowndes receiver of the estates, while the claims of the several parties were considered; and in 1783 made a decree in which it was declared that the estates should be considered as belonging to him, that he should be put into actual possession of the property, and that the rents which had, up to that period, been paid into the bank, should be handed back to Mr. W. Lowndes, who had then assumed the name of Selby. Consequently in the spring of 1783 Mr. W. Lowndes Selby took possession of Whaddon Hall, and was on that occasion accompanied by a procession of his friends and dependants, together with a band of music. In Trinity Term, in the following year 1784, he levied a fine with proclamation, and retained possession. Actions of ejectment were however brought against him by parties claiming the property, but they were all uniformly decided in his favour.

Mr. W. Lowndes Selby was Lord of the Manor of Winslow, and great grandson of William Lowndes, Secretary to the Treasury in the reign of Queen Anne, and for many years Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons. He died May 3rd, 1813, when he was succeeded by his son William Lowndes, one of the Knights of the Shire in Parliament for this County, who took the name of Selby, June 11th, 1813, and resumed his family name of Lowndes by license. A writ of right was brought against this Mr. William Selby Lowndes in the

Court of Common Pleas, and was tried at bar, April 23rd, 1835, when a verdict was returned for the tenant in possession. This was the last writ of right that could be tried; a recent act of Parliament having abolished all proceedings in future in this form. A bill of exceptions was however taken to that portion of the charge which related to the subject of the demandant's pedigree; judgment upon the exceptions was given by the Court of Error in favour of the demandant, and a *venire de novo* awarded, under which a second trial took place on November 28th, 1838, by a Jury of the Grand Assize. This was a form of trial peculiar to the Court of Common Pleas, and was one of the most ancient of our legal institutions. Four Knights of the County, girt with swords, were selected, and were sworn in Court to choose twelve others; these were called "Knights recognitors" and being sworn as the "Grand Assize" were empanelled to try the question between the two parties who were termed "tenant" and "demandant." The great distinction in this form of trial was, that four judges presided in Court. The trial lasted several days, and upon this occasion, as upon the former, a verdict was returned for the tenant. In the evidence on the trial, it was stated that when Mr. W. Lowndes Selby took possession of Whaddon Hall in the year 1783, a may-pole was erected, that great rejoicings took place, with music, dancing, and various entertainments, and that "Mr. Lowndes Selby joined in the dancing with the pretty Buckinghamshire girls at old Whaddon Hall."

Although the second trial had been decided in favour of the tenant, a bill of exceptions again went up to the Court of Exchequer Chamber; but between the date of the verdict and the allowance of the bill of exceptions, Mr. Selby Lowndes died. On the 8th of February, 1843, therefore, the demandant sued out a writ of right against Mr. William Selby Lowndes, son and heir of the late tenant. This writ of right was compromised three years afterwards by Mr. W. S. Lowndes, the present possessor, in whose heirs the estate is now vested.

Whaddon Chase was the principal woodland in the northern part of this County, and contained 2,200 acres of coppices, interspersed with oak, ash, and other timber. It was considered sufficient to maintain 1,000 head of

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WEEDON HALL in BROWN WILLIS'S TIME

From a drawing by J. Henner, Esq. <sup>sc</sup>



deer, but the Lord of the Chase had power to stock it with as many more as he pleased. Right of Common in the Chase was claimed and exercised by several villages in the neighbourhood, insomuch that the reporters of the agricultural state of this County in 1794 complained that the young timber was much destroyed by the deer, and the commoners' cattle.

The Chase, secluded as it was, and so covered with underwood and forest trees, afforded, no doubt, a secure retreat to the ancient inhabitants; and now that the greater part of it has been enclosed and brought into cultivation, it is not at all surprising that relics of former days should be frequently discovered—and that treasures concealed underground for the sake of security, or from the miserly propensities of individuals, should be brought to light. And such indeed has been the fact, a brief record of which is added to this paper.

In a part of the Chase called "Narbury," a number of British gold coins was turned up by the plough, on February 14th, 1849; an interesting description of which has been given in the "Records of Buckinghamshire," vol. I, p. 15; and also in the "Numismatic Chronicle," No. XLIV, page 1. These coins are of a later period than those of Cunobelin, with the wheat-ear and rampant horse: they belonged to the rude and degenerate class of ancient British money, and not to the earliest period of our primitive national coinage. It is not improbable that these coins were struck in haste and emergency, and this might account for the rudeness of a type at so late a period. The extent also to which they were alloyed, favours the belief that they were hastily prepared, probably by melting down vessels and ornaments. Of these coins 320 reached the hands of W. S. Lowndes, Esq., the Lord of the Manor; and but for the law of treasure-trove (a relic of the feudal ages, which gives the property of such antiquities to the owner of the soil, and not to the finder) it may be presumed that a much larger number would have come into his possession, for it was supposed at the time that about double the number were secretly sold, and found their way into a dealer's hands: they were probably soon melted down.

In a coppice adjoining Narbury, there are indications of a large rectangular encampment, evidently Roman, en-

closing a space of about five acres, with its vallum and fosse quite perfect. This encampment was no doubt attached to the larger stations at Stony and Fenny Stratford, on the Watling-street road, which the Romans had established when the resolute struggle of the Britons for their independence was ended in this part of the island. Hence many Roman coins, and other relics, have at different times been found at and near these stations, and also in the neighbourhood. Cole mentions that several Roman coins have been found at Fenny Stratford, and that he added to his collection above one hundred from that spot, besides various other ancient objects. Three miles west of Whaddon, and near the site of the battle, which is said to have been fought by Cunobelin, at Thornborough-bridge, are two tumuli or barrows, one of which was opened in 1842, when many Roman vestigia were discovered.

In the autumn of 1857, near the site of the old Priory of Snelshall, on the borders of the Chase, and between Narbury and the Watling-street Road, an earthen vessel was discovered by some drainers. It was unfortunately broken to pieces; but it contained about 140 Roman small brass coins, which relate to the troublous times that followed the close of the reign of Gallienus, when in consequence of the looseness of his government, all the provinces revolted, and a number of hot-headed usurpers assumed the purple, and devastated the whole country. This "find" consisted principally of the coins of Gallienus, Tetricus senr., Tetricus junr., Claudius Gothicus, and Victorinus—all of which coins are in the possession of the Lord of the Manor. Also in the Autumn of 1858, as some men were grubbing the root of a tree in a part of the Chase, near Salden, about one mile from Narbury, they found a small brass box, of an oval shape, containing three gold coins—guineas—of Charles II., in a perfect state of preservation. These coins are also in the possession of the Lord of the Manor.

Not far from the Chase, and in the direction of Winslow, a so-called fibula (from the drawing it is not a fibula, but an armilla) of copper was found, on the estate of William Lowndes Selby, Esq., in the month of June, 1793, in a bed of solid clay, at the depth of five feet below the surface of the ground, and by the side of a rivulet. This fibula is figured in the *Archæologia*, Vol. XI, page 429.

An interesting "find," on December 31st, 1858, may here be recorded as a conclusion to this paper. North of Whaddon, in the Parish of Weston Underwood, near Olney, an earthen vessel was discovered by some labourers in White's Close, containing Roman coins. Sir Robert Throckmorton, as Lord of the Manor, claimed them for treasure-trove, and obtained possession of 166 Imperial Denarii, 4 Legionary coins, 1 small brass coin of the Lower Empire, 1 of Augustus B.C. 42, and 4 of Mark Anthony B.C. 30. A few others found their way into the hands of local collectors. Most of the Denarii were in a good state of conservation, and they consisted of the following Emperors :—

Nero .....	1	Hadrian .....	36
Galba .....	5	Antoninus Pius ..	24
Vitellius .....	1	Faustina Senr. ....	15
Vespasian .....	17	Marcus Aurelius ..	16
Titus .....	6	Faustina Junr. ....	5
Domitian .....	5	Commodus .....	2
Trajan .....	33		

Many pieces of Roman pottery, and men's and horse's bones were found at the same time: and they have been sent by the Lord of the Manor to this Society, together with a few pieces of the vessel in which the coins were found; but they are not sufficient to supply a description of its shape or size. Sir Robert Throckmorton has also presented to the Society eleven of the Imperial Denarii. The whole of these coins have been described for the owner, by Vice-Admiral Smyth.

