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Some Notes On the Visitations of Gloucestershire

by E. Conner
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SOME NOTES ON THE VISITATIONS OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

By EDWARD CONDER, F.S.A.

THE importance of registration in English heraldry at an early date is manifest to us by the number of Rolls of Arms compiled during the reign of Henry III.

From about 1235 to 1300 no less than sixteen MSS. are to be found at the British Museum, describing some hundreds of arms¹ borne by the principal families of the kingdom during this period.

Perhaps the earliest act for regulating their use is the proclamation of Henry V. immediately before the French campaign of 1417. It is there stated that no man should bear arms without proving by what ancestral right or by whose gift he bore them, and claims were to be submitted to officers appointed for that purpose: persons who had borne coat armour at Agincourt alone being excepted as a particular mark of favour. This proclamation was dated 2nd June, 1417.²

The dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. is usually regarded as the principal reason for that systematic regulation of armory and the compiling of descents in pedigree form known to us as "The Heralds' Visitations." The genealogies of the landed and gentle classes had been previously carefully recorded for legal purposes connected

¹ For example: The Glover Roll, circa 1240, with 218 coats; the Planché Roll, with 696 coats; the St. George Roll, with 677 coats; and the Charles Roll, with 486 coats.

² MS. WI. 196.—College of Arms Library, London. Henry V.'s mandate to the Sheriff of Southampton, forbidding the improper assumption of arms in the county, except by those who had served at the Battle of Agincourt. A^o. 5, *ej. reg.*—*Vide* Sir C. G. Young's MS. Catalogue.

with ecclesiastical property, and such evidence had been deposited with the charters and other documents, or registered, for safe keeping in the Religious Houses from very early days.¹

There are, however, other causes to be considered before a definite account can be given, but the above argument is doubtless to a great extent true.

In 1528 the first commission was issued to Thomas Benolte, Clarenceux King-of-Arms, to visit the Counties of Gloucester, Worcester, Oxford, Wilts, Berks and Stafford.

“To enter into all churches castells howses and other places at his discrecon to p’use and take knowledge survey and viewe of all mann’ of arms cognisaunces crests and other like devises with the notes of their descents pedegrees and marriages and the same to enter and recorde into a register or booke of arms . . . and further wee by these p’sents do geve and graunte full power and aucthorytie to reprove comptroll and make infamous by p’clamacon to be made at the assizes . . . all mann’ of p’son or p’sons that unlawfully and without just-aucthorytie vocacon or due calling doo or have done or shall usurpte or take upon hym or them any tittle of honour or dignitie as esquier gentleman or other.”²

According to Noble’s *History of the College of Arms*, Benolte delayed the Visitation of Gloucestershire until 1533. The county was “visited” next in 1560, again in 1569, and for a third time under Elizabeth in 1583. In 1623 the county was included in a Visitation made by Camden, Clarenceux, and his deputies under a commission of James I. The last visit from the heralds was that of 1682-3, when the county was

¹ MS. L. 17.—College of Arms. Sussex. “Armed men as well Horsemen as Footmen in the Rape of Hastings, 13 Edw. III.” Taken out of the 1st Book of the Abbey of Battell, folio 12, &c. MS. V. 6.—Boxgrave Priory, Sussex. Extracts from Register. MS. V. 6.—Lewis Priory, Sussex. Extracts from Register. MS. V. 431.—St. Edmundsbury Abbey, Suffolk. Extracts from Register. And others.—*Vide* Sir C. G. Young’s MS. Catalogue.

² Extract taken from the commission to Flower, Norroy King-of-Arms, issued by Queen Elizabeth.

taken by the deputies of Henry St. George, Clarenceux to Charles II.

Some years ago I obtained possession of certain MS. books, the property of the late Sir Charles George Young, Garter King-of-Arms, who died in 1869. From his private catalogue of MSS. preserved in the strong room at Heralds' College, London, I am now able to give a complete list of the Visitations and other genealogical MSS. relating to Gloucestershire deposited there by the heralds.

FROM SIR C. G. YOUNG'S CATALOGUE, VOL. II., FOLIO 61.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Press-mark (?)

- H. 20. Original Visitation by Thomas Benolt, Esq., Clarenceux. He set out from his house at Chiswick, Friday, 19th July, 1533. Bound up with his Berks, Oxford, Wilts, and Worcester.
- D. 12. Visitation by Robert Cooke, Clarenceux. With his Hereford and Worcester pedigrees. In tables and circles the arms painted. Gloucester begins folio 114, and concludes the book, 1569.
- No. 37. A fair copy of D. 12.
- G. 9. Another copy of 1569.
- No. 115. Vincent Cooke's Visitation, 1583. A fair copy. Begins page 29 and ends 49. With his Salop, Hereford, and Worcester.
- C. 17. Original Visitation in 1623 by Henry Chitting, Esq., Chester Herald, and John Philpott, Rouge-
Dragon, deputies to William Camden, Esq., Clarenceux.
- No. 14, 15. A copy of above Visitation, 1623.
- No. 16. Some pedigrees of this Visitation, 1623, together with Wilts.
- K. 5. Original Visitation begun by Thomas May, Chester, 1682, and George King, Rouge-Dragon Pursuivant, in Trinity Vacation, 1682, and finished by Henry Dethick Richmond and the said

Rouge-Dragon Pursuivant in Trinity Vacation, 1683, by virtue of several deputations from Sir Henry St. George, Knt., Clarenceux.¹

V., No. 184. Arms of Cooke's Visitation, with many others.

V., No. 446. Perambulation of the Forest of Hay.

No. 92. Vinct., fol. 36, 2nd index, Nomina Villarum for Gloucestershire, and at folio 32 Arms of Gloucestershire Gentry.

Pb. 23. Pedigrees and Arms of Gloucestershire families.

L. 8. Names and Arms of the Nobles and Gentry of Gloucestershire, 4 Henry VII. Folio 29.

L. 17. Church Notes taken by Cooke at his Visitation, 1569, viz. Gloucester, Tewksbury, Bristol and Elmore. Folio 199.

V. 6. Tewksbury Abbey. Chronicle of the Founders, &c. Folio 379.

R. 22. Ancient Arms in Thornbury Castle. Painted. Folios 77, 79, 96, 121.

V. 431. Deeds concerning the Forest of Dene. Folio 7. Some original deeds relating to this county in the Heralds' College.

The following note in the handwriting of Sir C. G. Young: "Gloucestershire Visitation of 1682.—*Notes and Queries*, 6th issue, vii., pp. 429, 437-8."

Besides the College of Arms MSS., there are in the Harleian Collection at the British Museum and in some other libraries certain MS. copies of Visitation notes and

¹ A copy of a summons issued for Gloucestershire by Thomas May, "Chester," and Gregory King, "Rouge-Dragon," deputies and marshalls to Clarenceux in 1682, is given by Noble in his *History of the College of Arms*, Appendix xix. From it we gather that a list of all baronets, knights, esquires and gentlemen was sent to the Bailiff of the Hundred of Crowthorne and Minety, requiring him to warn those named to personally attend at the Swan Inn, Cirencester, at nine of the clock in the morning of Wednesday, the 16th day of August, "and that they bring with them such arms and crests as they use and bear, with their pedigrees and descents, and such other evidence and matter of record and credit, as (if need require) may justify the same . . . and those persons who may not conveniently bring such their ancient evidences . . . but shall be desirous to have us come to their houses, upon signification of such their desires, . . . we, or one of us will repair unto them as soon as conveniently we may," &c.

pedigrees taken by the heralds or their deputies, possibly their rough note books or draft pedigrees, from which their "fair copies" for the College were made.

In most cases, however, these copies are very rough when compared to those in the College. They contain very frequently much additional matter, with names added subsequent to the period with which they treat; they are, however, not without their interest, and the additional notes are sometimes of considerable importance.

In the Harleian Library may be found the Visitation of Gloucestershire in 1623, and certain pedigrees from those taken in 1569 and 1583. Harl. MS. 1041 includes the whole of 1623, and parts of the 1569 and 1583 Visitations. Harl. MS. 1543 has the Visitation of 1623 with pedigrees taken from both 1569 and 1583, but some pedigrees given in MS. 1041 do not appear in MS. 1543 and *vice versa*.

In the MS. 1041 the two portions relating to the Visitations are entitled: "Arms and Pedigrees from the Visitation of the Countie of Gloucester, A.D. 1583, by Robert Cooke, Clarenceulx, as it seems with many Continuations and Additions by John Saunders and others," and "The Visitation of the Countie of Gloucester as taken A.D. 1623, by Henry Chitty, Chester, and John Philpot, Rouge-Dragon, for Will. Camden, Clarenx: done by the hand of John Saunders."

In the MS. 1543 the pedigrees are entitled: "The Visitation of the County of Gloster made by Robert Cooke alias Clarenceulx King-of-Arms in anno 1583, continued and enlarged with the Visitation of the same county, made by Henry Chitty, Chester, and John Phillipott, Somerset⁶, Heralds: Deputyes to William Camden, Clarenceux, in anno 1623, with many other descents, transcript per R. Mundy." Additional notes and enlargements were made to the pedigrees by Mr. Munday, Mr. Latton, Mr. Dale and others.

In Sir C. G. Young's MS. Catalogue he notes Harl. MS. 2230 as containing an imperfect copy of the Visitation of 1569.

⁶ Philpot was created "Somerset Herald" July 8th, 1624.

In 1885 the Harleian Society¹ published "The Visitation of Gloucester taken in the year 1623, with certain pedigrees from the Visitations of 1569 and 1582-3." This volume was edited by the late Sir John Maclean, Bart., F.S.A., and Mr. W. C. Heane. It contains all the pedigrees found in Harl. MSS. 1041 and 1543.

Among the MSS. in the library of the late Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart., were copies of the Gloucestershire Visitations of 1569 and 1682. A portion of the former was privately printed (p.p. 1-12) in 1854.

In 1884 the whole of the latter was issued, also privately printed, under the direction of Messrs. Metcalf and Fenwick, a portion having been previously printed in 1854-5.

In Sims's *Manual for the Genealogist*² a MS. Visitation, without date, is noted as being then in the library of Caius College, Cambridge, MS. 553, Art. 6. This MS. has been overlooked by most writers, but by the kindness of the Librarian, J. S. Reid, Esq., I am able to give the following particulars. Mr. Reid says: "There is no date mentioned in MS. 553, Art. 6, for the Visitation of Gloucestershire. At the head of it is a statement that 'Hen. VIII. did grant to Thomas West Lord Laware³ the right to hold a market every Monday on his manner of Warrewike in the County of Gloucester, and two fairs at our Ladydaye Assumption, at this present tyme is maior of the said toune of Warrewike Robert Dorney John Ford Constable and Thomas Holder Sergeant.' The charter is stated to have been confirmed by Henry VIII. vicesimo quarto of his reyn."

The pedigrees given in this MS. Visitation are in the following order:—

Holt, Cotton, Ffurneulx, Bassett. Dewhurst, Berewe (?), Wallrond. Veel, Hetipart (ffettiplace?), Matthews. Burke,

¹ Harleian Society, vol. xxi., London, 1885. ² London, MDCCCLVI.

³ Thomas West, Lord La Warr, lord of the Manor of Wickwar, obtained from Henry VIII. the privileges of a weekly market and two annual fairs in the 24th year of his reign. And I have seen an *Inspecimus* and confirmation of the last mentioned grants, dated July 4th, in the fourth year of the reign of King Charles the First.—*Vide* Rudder's *History of Gloucestershire*, pp. 818-19.

Poleyn, Hall, Burges. Berkeley, Madock, Strange, Poulett. Sandford, Barnard, Thorne, Hare. Bartlett, Halton, Viele, Oastwell, Huntley, Langley, Agilliams (Williams?). Burke, Osbaldeston, Sparling, Roberts. Joynson, Brydgeman, Pepwall, Walwaen (Walwen?), Reynolde. Okewolde, Gyse, Sheldon, Brayday, Snow, fflowke, Whittington. Stratford, Baynham, Wise, Kynne, Myle. Godwige, Daunte, Bageholt. Bradston, Stratford, Barnard, Grevell. Burke, Kyngescote, Hooke, Madocke. Lloyde, Brayne, Walson, Compton. Bromwich, Baynham, Retylby, Abington, Scroop, Vaughan.

There is little doubt but that we have here a copy of the Visitation of the county taken by Benolte in 1533.

This MS. has not been compared with MS. H. 20 in the College of Arms so far as I know, neither has it been printed. It is, I believe, the only "copy" of this Visitation outside the walls of the College.
