

TONY BOSTOCK'S LOCAL HISTORY NOTES: LITTLE BUDWORTH

MEDIEVAL BUDWORTH

1066 and all that

If there is one date that seems to be fixed in peoples' memory from school history lessons it is that of 1066, the year of the Battle of Hastings and the coming of the Normans. But the decisive battle did not mean that the new king had complete control of all England - far from it. Initially William concentrated his efforts in the south in subduing the earldom of Wessex, the lands of ex-king Harold. Then, in 1068, he moved north up the eastern side of England as far as York. Still there was fierce opposition to his rule. In 1069-70 in a determined effort to crush rebellions in the northern shires William led a ruthless campaign up into Yorkshire and Northumbria - his 'harrying of the north'.

Then during the winter months, early in 1070, William's army consisting of Norman, French and Flemish troops, crossed the Pennines into Cheshire intending to crush the forces of Edwin, the great earl of Mercia, who, in conjunction with insurgents from North Wales, was actively opposing his rule. Mercian opposition was crushed. The possibility of future revolt was eliminated by the almost complete dispossession of the native landholders and the redistribution of their wealth. On leaving Cheshire to move on Shropshire and Staffordshire William left Chester and its shire in the hands of a Flemish noble called Gherbod as its earl with the purpose of continuing the subjugation of the Mercian people. Not happy with his commission he soon resigned it and William then appointed his own nephew - Hugh d'Avranches. This Norman lord is often referred to as either 'Hugh the Fat' or 'Hugh Lupus' (the Wolf). He was allowed ultimate power in his earldom with his own court, exchequer and administration, with rights to impose taxes and raise his own army. He was the epitome of a medieval war-lord; in control of a compact block of territory, in essence a frontier zone created to control the unstable north-west of England and the Welsh Border - a bridge-head towards the eventual conquest of Wales.

The Saxon freeholding families lost their estates to new Norman, or occasionally French, overlords. Earl Edwin of Mercia's estates were seized by the new Earl of Chester and those of lesser men by Norman knights. Saxon lords such as Dot, Godric, Leofnoth, Osmer and Wulfgeat were replaced by lords such as Mainwaring, Malbedeng, Masey, Venables and Vernon whose family names suggest their Norman origins. A new hierarchy was thus imposed on the native Saxon population. For the common servile villagers it perhaps mattered little who their lord was, for one lord was much like another, especially if he was an absentee landlord who exercised his power through local officials. The folios of the great *Domesday Book* are testimony to this upheaval.

Domesday

If 1066 is a year known to many then perhaps as many have heard of the *Domesday Book* which was written 20 years later. It is a popular mis-conception that the book is a vast gazetteer of Norman England, whereas it is in fact a rare and remarkable survey detailing land-holding in the form of manors, the resources, including human resources, and the tax liability placed on the manor. It is our earliest public record and is unique with no other country having produced anything comparable in its scope at this period of time. From its pages historians can learn much about late eleventh-century England. For a local historian it is a boon. Whilst we are indebted to William, his commissioners and their clerks for undertaking and recording the survey, the book does not answer all the questions we might

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wish to ask: frustratingly there are many omissions. For one thing Domesday is a catalogue of manors or townships, not villages or hamlets, and so consequently many of the latter are not named due to the fact that they were a dependant part, or 'member', of the former. Some resources such as mills, fisheries, meadows and woods may not always be listed. Sometimes the ordinary peasant population go unrecorded. In some places the most obvious omission is a church, for although other evidence may suggest the existence of a pre-Norman church Domesday may be silent. Take for example the church of St. Chad in Over. Here there are the remains of Saxon crosses in the circular churchyard yet there is no mention of either a church or a priest in Domesday. The shape of the churchyard and the fact that it contains a number of wells are both suggestive of a much earlier and pre-Christian place of worship. The reasons for such anomalies are because the survey was in essence a record of taxation: if the payment of tax was exempted or accounted for by some other means was there a need to include the item? Probably not. And then of course there was, and still is, such a thing as tax evasion and mere clerical error.

So what does the Domesday Book say about Little Budworth. The description follows that of the neighbouring manors of Rushton and *Opetone* (Eaton) and precedes that of *Alretone* (*Oulton Lowe*¹), the entry read as follows:

The same earl holds BODEVRDE (Budworth). Dedol a freeman held it. There ½ a hide is taxable. The land is 2 ploughlands. It is waste. The woodland there is 1 league long and ½ a league wide.

What then does this entry tell us. The format follows a regular basic formula used throughout the Domesday Book that is: owner or tenant, previous owner or tenant, taxable value, quantity of arable land, population, the amount of arable being worked, the resources available and valuation.

First we have the name of the new owner - the powerful Earl of Chester. Then is entered the name of the Saxon predecessor who had been dispossessed. *Dedol* may have been a man of some substance as someone of the same name also held the important manor of Bunbury, half of Tiverton, and perhaps half of Cogshall near Great Budworth. I say perhaps because this manor is some distance away and in a different hundred and whilst it is reasonable to suggest that the nearby property owners are one and the same, this may not be so with a more distant property, even though the name is rare with its only other occurrence in Domesday being at Thealby in Lincolnshire.

Next we are informed of the 'geld' or tax assessment in relation to the number of 'hides'. It is often suggested that a hide can be measured in acres and a figure of between sixty and 120 acres is given. However the unit is more complicated than that and can include a variety of resources in addition to the land. At Budworth tax was paid on the basis of only half a hide whereas at the other three contiguous manors the assessment was based on one hide. Whilst the reason for this could be that Budworth was smaller manor, it is more likely that for some reason the burden of taxation had been reduced.

Next we have the quantity of arable land, or at least the land which might be ploughed. This is given as so many *carucata* (ploughlands). Once again figures in acres are attributed to this unit being dependent on the amount of soil a plough drawn by eight oxen could plough in a year - the lighter the soil the greater the acreage. A figure of 120 statute acres is often given but in Cheshire, on heavy clay soils this might only be about half that. Two centuries later, at Darnhall we have references to 'carucates' consisting of thirty Cheshire acres, equivalent to sixty-three statute acres and at Weaverham forty Cheshire acres or eighty-four statute acres. Here at Little Budworth there were two ploughlands which taking the figure for nearby Darnhall gives sixty Cheshire acres or 126 statute acres. It is often the case that these

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'carucates' were the precursors of the medieval, and later, 'town fields' a point which will be referred to later.

Following the assessment of arable land there is normally a statement concerning the population - the number of peasants, their status and the number of ploughlands they work, or alternatively the number of plough teams available to them.ⁱⁱ Here at Little Budworth there is no recorded population and therefore there is way of knowing whether all the available land was being used productively or not. On the neighbouring manor of Over an assessment was given: there were five ploughlands but only one was being worked, suggesting that the manor was not being used to its full capacity. Likewise at Tarporley there were four ploughlands but only two were in use. For Little Budworth the record is silent.

The lack of any mention of the ordinary peasant population in Little Budworth and also on the three neighbouring manors is interesting. On most manors there are references to *villani* (villeins - the ordinary peasants from whom we get the modern word 'villager'), *bordari* (smallholders), *servi* (the unfree labourers), *bovari* (ploughmen) and those termed as being a *radman* (a person who performed services on horse-back for his lord). Sometimes other occupations are mentioned: on twenty-four manors in Cheshire priests are mentioned; on six manors there were reeves who were the head villains responsible for the profitable working of the manor; there are smiths on four manors, though there will probably have been many more; and in one instance, at nearby Tilston, a miller, and this despite the fact that there were a total of seventeen mills referred to across the county. Close to our area, on the other side of the Wettenhall Brook, in Alraham there were three villeins and six bordars, and in neighbouring Wettenhall there was a radman, a villein and two bordars. Over the hill in Tarporley there were two slaves, four villeins and two bordars. So where had the people of the area gone? Is Domesday telling us that this land had been purposely depopulated, or that the labour force had been moved elsewhere, or even that the people had fled and abandoned their homes when the Normans arrived and never returned?

The manor is described as being 'waste' in 1086 and no monetary valuation is given. The Domesday entries often inform us of the state of the manor on two occasions: when taken over by the new owner around 1070 with the phrase *wast inven* (found as waste) or *wast fuit* (it was waste), and at the time the record was compiled *wasta est* (it is waste). The term 'waste' is often encountered in relation to manors in northern shires and has been taken to indicate those areas ravaged by King William's armies. However it may simply mean that a manor or township was unprofitable and rendered nothing for its lord or that it was common land. It is too easy to suggest that 'waste' infers devastation. Of course in some places this may be so. The pages of Domesday tell us that Chester was totally devastated with 205 houses less than there had been, that the three salt towns were derelict and the important comital manors of Weaverham, Frodsham and Macclesfield may well have suffered a similar fate. About half of the 300 or so manors in the county were described as being waste in 1070, and by the time of the Survey, sixteen years later, fifty-three manors, mainly on the poorer lands of East Cheshire, still remained so. Little Budworth along with its neighbouring manors here in Central Cheshire were four of these. Why? Is it possible that these manors were part of the Earl of Mercia's estates and that the Saxons mentioned were holding directly from him? Was this area devastated along with Earl Edwin's other properties? It is of course impossible to say and today we can only hypothesise.

A feature of many Cheshire manors in Domesday is the inclusion of woodland. A wood was a vital part of the manorial economy and would be used for timber, brushwood and the pasturing of pigs - as such it was often land held in common by all the people of the manor or township. This is frequently described as being so many leagues long and so many broad. The length of a league is by no means certain and may be anything between 1½ and three miles. Occasionally woodland is measured in acres (both as an areal measure and a linear measure of about four perches or sixty-six feet), furlongs (220 yards) and perches (twenty-two feet). The

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description for Little Budworth's woodland is a league long and an half wide which suggests a rectilinear area, but such a shape is highly unlikely and in any event only reflects a very rough estimate based on what was probably a visual survey. And are we to take it that what is recorded is a single area of woodland, or an aggregate value for a number of wooded areas within the township? On that point the woodland might even be elsewhere, a wooded area of another township, in which there were certain rights. So attempts by historical geographers to map the Cheshire woodlands are somewhat problematic. Here at Budworth it is possible from later evidence of minor place-names and field names to perhaps identify the wooded area.

Although not evidenced in Little Budworth, some Domesday manors list meadows measured in acres, hays which were hedged enclosures for keeping animals, especially deer, and eyries which were nesting area for birds of prey.

Whilst Domesday details something of late 11th century topography of Little Budworth, it does not describe the landscape. However, there is evidence from other sources, notably later field names, some of which survived into the 19th century, which allows an interpretation of the surrounding countryside.

The 11th Century Landscape

The area now covered by the townships of Eaton, Rushton, Little Budworth and Oulton Lowe was probably a large area of woodland and heath in which there were four, single township, manors. Each of these would have consisted of the lord's hall and a few small cottages with, in close proximity areas of open land that had been developed for agriculture. The woodland and heath often referred to as the waste lands would have created natural boundaries to these small areas of settlement.

The open-fields of the medieval countryside were divided into 'flats' or 'furlongs' and then further divided into 'selions' or 'lands' - the strips. Each peasant family will have farmed a number of strips scattered across the furlongs. These strips, comprising of an acre, had a characteristic reversed 'S' or reversed 'C' shape. The reason for this is due to the plough team of six or eight oxen having to take a sweeping turn as they approached the headland at the end of the strip in readiness to return. Many of our modern country lanes on the outskirts of villages twist and turn as they follow these ancient field boundaries.

Identifying the location of these common arable fields is not always easy. Most settlements had two or three such large open fields but in our townships there seems to have been only a single field. The strongest clues as to their locations are those areas referred to as the 'town field'. To the immediate south of Budworth Village lay the town fields, which were still laid out in Cheshire acre strips in the late 19th century. This area of strip fields covers some twenty-eight acres, but was probably once more extensive. When this area is added to the fields immediately to the north and east of the village then a figure of about 120 acres representing Domesday's two carucates is realised.

References to trees and woodland in field names are the most numerous and indicate both natural and managed woods. The Anglo-Saxon *leah* is the most commonly used element and means a glade or clearing in woodland. Names of places ending in 'ley' or 'leigh' suggest that a significant area of woodland existed in the immediate area. On the other hand 'wood' names indicate a wooded area or one-time woodland and Anglo-Saxon *graf*, meaning 'grove' or 'greave' indicates a small clump of trees, perhaps a managed coppice. Whilst it is generally difficult to date place-names it does seem that *-ley* names are certainly of the Anglo Saxon period, whereas '*-wood*' and '*-greave*' names are later and a name such as 'Wood Field' would indicate a later woodland clearance than a *-ley* name. Two other elements suggestive of woodland clearance are 'ridding' and 'stocking'. The first of these comes from the Anglo-Saxon *roding* which means to grub out woodland and the other refers to a place which once

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contained the remnants of felled trees – ‘stocks’ or tree stumps. The word 'breach' from the Saxon *brec* indicates land broken up and cleared for cultivation.

At Little Budworth there are several fields with the name ‘wood’ which are mainly along the eastern boundary, e.g. 'Wood Leasowe' (pasture) and 'Wood Field'. These names may indicate the Domesday woodland; infact a ‘worth’ seems to suggest a fenced enclosure in a wooded area. Alongside these lay 'Little' and 'Great Riddings', suggesting medieval clearance from woodland. To the south-east there is an area once known as 'Fenny Wood' and several fields and crofts called ‘Stoadley’ or ‘Studley’ – clearings for studs. Interestingly close by is a crossing over the Ash Brook called ‘Wildmareford’. To the south, along the Darley Brook there are areas known as 'Darley' - the deer's clearing and ‘Heatley’ – the heath clearing. To the west of the modern village lay 'Little' and 'Further Breaches' along with 'Near Breaches' also known as 'Common Field'. 'Near Glass Hayes' and 'Far Glass Hayes' lie to the south again suggesting enclosures in wooded areas. Also in Budworth there are fields known as 'Coney Greave' - the rabbit coppice.

The Forest of Mara and Mondrem

Almost from the start of his rule over the county of Chester Earl Hugh d'Avranches created the forest of 'Mara and Mondrem' which today is shrunk down to a fraction of its original extent and is known as Delamere. The Domesday Book records the fact that a number of manors were placed in the Earl's forest these were: about a quarter of the manor of Weaverham, and presumably that part which remained 'waste'; the 'wasted' manors of *Conersley* (now Whitegate); *Aldredelie* (Kingsley), and *Done* (a lost settlement in the Utkinton/Rushton area). An area of high ground which stretched from Tarporley to Frodsham and extended eastwards towards the river Weaver. Besides these a number of other manors were later also contained within forest extending the territory south towards Church Minshull, and these included Eaton, Rushton, Budworth and Oulton Lowe. Earl Hugh's successors extended the forest area in Cheshire by creating new forests covering the whole of Wirral and the uplands on the eastern edge of the county around Macclesfield.

In this context the term forest is a legal one, rather than botanical or geographical. It signified an area under a specific legal code. Spacially it might encompass within its bounds not only woodland and wild areas, but previously cultivated lands and meadows, heaths and moors, hills and valleys, villages, hamlets and farms. At their height it has been reckoned that a third of England was subject to forest law. There was no specific land type though generally it was the less densely populated areas. Woodland was not a criteria as some forests are areas entirely of moorland, such as Exmoor, Dartmoor and the High Peak; and some areas, such as the Wirral, had extremely little woodland.

The object of the forest law was to protect the beasts of the chase and to define an area in which they might have shelter and food. Such legislation has its origins in the days before Norman rule, but it was they who formalised the forest law. It was outside the rule of the common law - additional to it and incompatible with it. A man might enjoy lawful possession of his lands within the metes of the forest, but his use of that land was restricted. Ownership of the forest did not imply possession of the land, but a special jurisdiction over the people living within the territory.

Each forest was governed by a master forester who held property on condition of performing their duties. The district around Kingsley was granted by Earl Ranulph to his master forester of Mara, Ranulph, who adopted the name Kingsley for himself and his descendants. The office became hereditary and through marriage the master forestership of Mara and Mondrem passed to the Done family of Utkinton. In addition to the master forester there were a number of subordinate foresterships granted to the lords of manors within, and on the edge of, the forest.

Medieval Fields

There are some extant records from the fourteenth century which refer to a number of fields in the manor of Little Budworth.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Little Budworth references include:

- c.1300* *Deed of exchange. Warin le Grosvenor and William s Robert le Grosvenor. 5½ strips of which 3 are in le Witefeuld and 2 in le Berecroft. Item, 1 in le W above le Polfurlong next ½ strip which Margaret de Lewes holds and which extends above le Haslond near Baldewelle. Item, 1 between that which William Kayn held and the strip which Henry s Waren de Halwes held and extends to le Heth. Item, 1 below that which William Kayn held and the strip which Richard s Dekyn held, extending to le Homappeltresseawe. Item, in le Hallecroft between lands of Robert le Mareshal, held of Katherine, daughter of Warin le Grosvenor and the strip which Richard Balle held, extending to le Walkemulnepoul. Item, above le Blakeflatte, next that which Robert fitz Roger held, extending to the house of William fitz Robert le Grosvenor. 5 strips of which 3 in Dichefeul and 1 in Schepecroft and 1 in Hethilewes, above le Solmhurstesflotte near Clovenlowe. Witness include Richard Doune and Robert de Farnworth, chaplain.*
- 1314x1319* *Grant by Robert le Grosvenor to Mabel, widow of his uncle Thomas de Boddeworth, all lands belonging to Thomas, except the dower lands. Bounds: first at noim oren, along the hedge to the house called le Hayhous, thence to the hedge and ditch of le Brok, along le Brok to Wodeforfurde, along to le Stodleysiche to the hedge, along the hedge and ditch to the first point.*
- 31. 7. 1369* *Richard le Grosvenor to James Taylour mills and the millponds and right to fetch timber and earth for embanking.*
- 12.8.1369* *Grant to Cecilia, widow of Richard le Grosvenor by James Taylour of the same.*
- 1373.* *Release by the Escheator of Chester to Cecilia Grosvenor of her dower. 1 room at the end of the hall of Budworth. 1 messuage and field called Brodeoakfeld (10acres) Wodefordfeld with a haw called Haskethey (25a) A field, Hetheles, with a house called le Shepcote (10a) 12½ + ⅓ a. in Oldestodley toward Hasketley. ⅓ of Budworth Wood. A messuage which Richard Clement holds at 4s 4d. p.a. A messuage which William le Shermon holds at 7s. p.a. A messuage which Adam Dawesson holds at 40p.p.a. A messuage which James le Taillour holds at 6s. p.a. A messuage which John Balnchorn holds at 4s. p.a. A messuage which John Clement holds at 40d. p.a. Rent of William David 2s. 4 ¾ ⅓ of the Forestership of Mara, 13s 4d. ⅓ of all pasture and other rights.*

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- 14th C. *Warin le Grosvenor to Richard le Grosvenor his son. Grant of a plot of land. First, the corner between Duntun and the assart which Dogge formerley held in farm, following the ditch to le Dedecherlenche, up the ditch by the head of the assart which A de B formerly held in farm, along the ditch to Doggriding, down to the ditch between Doggruding and Duntun, to aforesaid corner.*
- 5.5.1449 *Grant by Elena widow od William Jenkynson and daughter and heir to Thomas de Budworth and Alice, to Joan widow of William Troutbeck. 5 half strips, 3 in Whitefelde and 2 in Berecroft. 5 half strips which Warin le Grosvenor gave to William son of Robert le Grosvenor.*
10. 12. 1324 *Agreement between Robert Daa of Budworth and William Venables of Brdawell, regarding lands which Robert le Grosvenor was enfeoffed by Warin le Grsovenor, his father, except a field called Wylanyscoft towards Rushton, and an empy plot lying between the waters which are the boundary of Rushton and the road from Rushton to Northwich and thus along the road to the byroad which leads from Budworth to Utkinton. That the lands belong to William Vernon and his wife Agnes, daughter of the said Robert.*

The Lordship of Little Budworth

Hugh Gyffylliog, the fifth Norman earl of Chester (1153-81), granted his manor of Budworth with a half share interest in the forestership of Mara to Robert Grosvenor at some time in the 1150s. The bounds of Grosvenor's bailiwick were described in 1361 as being 'from Stanford Bridge along the King's highway as far as Northwich, thence following the bounds of the forest as far as the Darley Brook, and thence following the Darley Brook as far as the bounds Rushton, and then following the bounds of Rushton and Olton as far as *Yemelegh* Mill and from the mill following the bounds between Eaton and Alpraham as far as the town of Tarporley and then following the bounds of the said forest as far as Stanford Bridge'.

The manor and township of Budworth, often referred to as 'Budworth en le Frith' (Budworth in the Forest) remained with the Grosvenor family for two centuries, until Richard le Grosvenor died in 1370 leaving an only daughter, Cicelia.

One of the problems of forest law was the restriction made on clearing waste land for agricultural purposes - the right to 'assart' - of for building. Earl Ranulph of Chester's charter of 1216 clarified the situation and allowed his barons and their men "to assart their lands within the arable areas of the forest and to grow crops on land formerly cultivated and free from wood, without payment." Despite this there were many problems of interpretation and arguments about areas that were formerly cultivated. The men of Delamere claimed that they were "always wont to assart in their own woods where, by the oath of the foresters and twelve lawful men, it could be done without nuisance to the forest, and to pay for each acre, between *Peytevinnisti* and Weaver towards Nantwich, five shillings and for every acre on the other side of *Peytevinnisti*, towards Frodsham, half a mark (6s 8d). For the moment suffice to say that *Peytevinnisti* was the name of a road leading from Tarporley in the direction of Weaverham, roughly along the line of the modern A49. Even though this right was granted and in some cases specifically so as regards a particular manor it could be challenged. The abbot of Darnhall (later Vale Royal) seems to have always been ready to complain about his neighbour Warin le Grosvenor. He accused him of "making purprestures (trespasses)...day by day... in the forest and upon the abbot and convent of Darnhall of eighty acres of land and more". In 1299, Warin's son Richard, had been subject to an official enquiry made by the forest officials for the enclosure of a certain piece of land "in the waste in the forest of La Mare", following allegations that despite being prohibited from "working any further in that

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place", he had "enclosed the whole place". These accusations were ill-made for Warin was able to produce a charter given by Earl Ranulph granting the Grosvenors the manor of Little Budworth with the right to cultivate, inhabit and make profit from the lands.

Cecelia married twice. Her first husband was Richard del Mere and by her she had a son William who eventually became heir to the manor of Budworth.

In 1347/8 Warin de Grosvenor lost the hereditary forestership in favour of John Hoofield due to misdemeanours committed in the Forest. John was then succeeded by John de Wettenhall in 1352 and a succession of others until 1431 when Sir William Troutbeck purchased the manor of Little Budworth and with it the role of forester from an heiress of the Grosvenor family.

In 1431-32, William sold his interest in the manor to William Troutbeck for 1000 marks (£666 13s 4d). It then remained with that family until, in the early years of the reign of Henry VIII Sir William Troutbeck of Budworth had an only daughter, Margaret, who married John Talbot and the estates passed to her husband's descendants who eventually became the earls of Shrewsbury.

A junior line of the Grosvenors also had lands at Budworth but not from the manor but directly from the earl of Chester, suggesting that at some time the manor had been divided. The last Richard of the main line had an uncle named Robert, who is sometimes referred to as Robert Daa, and he had three daughters. Margery married Thomas Elton, Katherine married William Venables of Bradwell and Alice married Thomas Venables of Alvanley. The Elton share of Roberts's property eventually passed by marriage to the Duttons and through them to the Molyneuxs of Sefton. This portion, which was located at the far western end of the township, consisted of a messuage, sixty acres of land, two acres of meadow and 200 acres of pasture worth forty shillings a year. Katherine and William Venables also had three daughters who married into the families of Berrington, Knipersley and Becheton. These three heiresses shared a small estate worth five marks (£3 6s 8d) a year and the youngest of these passed on to her descendants a messuage and 100 acres which was the basis of the Oulton Park estate, but more of this estate a little later. Thomas and Alice Venables share was an estate called 'Le Finney' (later known as Fenney Wood Farm) which was valued at sixteen shillings a year and contained a messuage and 30 acres of land. This small estate to the south of Budworth village was eventually purchased by the Egerton family.

As regards the Oulton Park area of Budworth. This was a distinct part and seems to have been in the hands of the Becheton family in the 15th century. Ormerod suggests that the family acquired it through marriage to an heiress of the Venables family of Bradwell and they from a marriage to a Grosvenor heiress in the 14th century. Certainly according to the inquisition post mortem of 1362 on William Venables' property he had possession of four messuages and lands in the manor of Budworth. Mathew Becheton and his wife, Katherine Venables, sold the property to Hugh Done of Olton and Utkinton whose only daughter, Elizabeth, married John Egerton of Egerton and as a consequence passed a messuage and 100 acres to that family: it was this land that was to become Oulton Park. In 1530-31 'the manor of ffernleghe otherwise called the manor of Olton' and the mill of Rushton called 'the noow Mylne' and other lands were subject of a settlement made by Sir Philip Egerton. These properties then formed what was to become 'Le Hall of Olton' with its demesne, and which by 1623-4 consisted of six messuages, ten gardens, 100 acres of land, twney acres of meadow, forty of pasture, ten of wood, 140 of heath, thirty of turbary in Budworth, Kelsall and Rushton all held as part of the Earl of Shrewsbury's manor of Budworth.

ⁱ Normally *Alretone* is identified as the Oulton Park area of Budworth, however I identify it as the modern township of Oulton Lowe which borders Little Budworth, Rushton and Over. The Saxon lord of this manor was a man named *Stein* and within the township a number of parcels of land were known until comparatively recently by names such as 'Stein's meadow' and 'Stein's croft'; names which have persisted since medieval times. Do these names refer back to the ancient Saxon landlord named Stein? One could quite reasonably ask what about Oulton Park, could that not be *Alretone*? My answer is that that area was always a part of Budworth manor and not a separate entity.

ⁱⁱ Historians vary on this point of definition but I favour the former interpretation.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cheshire Record Office: Records Held Elsewhere (than at the C.R.O.) No. 183 refers to a type-script listing of documents made for the National Register of Archives by Eric E. Barker, Esq., of 6 Mill View Terrace, Woking, Sussex. The documents listed refer to places in Cheshire and Albrighton, Salop. These notes were subsequently published for Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society in 1953 as volume CIII *Talbot Deeds, 1200 – 1682*.