

THORNTON-IN-CRAVEN

BYGONE DAYS IN AN ANCIENT PARISH

[III.]

(Continued)

History of the Parish Registers.

By A.H. Clegg

Previous articles appeared in the CRAVEN HERALD on April 26th, May 23rd, June 14th, June 21st, and August 23rd. Mr. Clegg here deals further with the parish registers and the local history they reveal.

OLD LOCAL SURNAMES

The following surnames are mentioned in the registers during the period 1566 to 1571, that is over three and a half centuries ago :-Aerton, Accarrenley, Bauldwyne, Bawle, Brown, Brears, Banks, Batty, Carr, Charyar, Cowgill, Craven, Dryer, Dixon, Ellis, Emot, Grandirge, Hartley, Hytchin, Higson, Heber, Hirst, Hargreaves, Jackson, Mytchell, Parker, Rippon, Riddihalgh, Robinson, Redman, Swyer, Smyth, Staw, Swynden, Swayne, Slater, Taylor, Towne, Wyndle, Wilcock, Watson, Willian, Wode, Whythead, Wright. Between 1698 and 1703, that is, nearly a century and a half later, the following surnames recur :- Ayrton, Brown, Cowgill, Craven, Driver, Emot, Grandorge, Higson, Hartley, Parker, Riddeagh, Staw, Slater, Smith, Swire, Taylor, Watson, Wright, Windle, and, in addition, the following are recorded :- Atkinson, Armistead, Boulton, Barrit, Barrett, Dodgon, Dodsyon, Edmundson, Flud (also Floodd), Howorth, Halstead, Johnson, Kaye, Kendall, Manknowllds, Morwill, Polard, Pate, Robert, Skakelton, Spencer, Sharp, Turner, Tillotson, Tonge, Wane, (alsoWaune and Wawne), Wilkinson, Whitwham, Wilson (Willson), Wormal, Waddington.

It will be noted that a good proportion of the above surnames survive to the present day in the locality, but many seem to have disappeared.

WOOLLEN SHROUDS

From 1683 to 1688 each entry of burial in the register is followed by the word "Certified" with the date. For example :

Sepulti, 1688
Christoper Whitwham Apl 22
Certified Apl 22

This certification is really an interesting link with the history and development of one of our oldest and still one of our most important industries, namely, the woollen industry.

A remarkable enactment was passed in 1687 in the reign of Charles II., the Merry Monarch, that all Englishmen should be buried in a woollen shroud. The enactment was in force from 1678 to 1815, and was intended to stimulate the growth of woollen manufacturing.

In the registers, no particulars other than the certification, are given, but it was the custom of those who were responsible for the burial to take an oath in a form somewhat similar to the following :- "A.B.maketh oath that C.D.of T, lately deceased was not wrapped, wound up or interred in any shirt, sheet or shroud, but what was made of sheeps' wool only, according to act of parliament in that case provided."

Witness my hand, A.B.
Sworn in my presence, X.Z.

EXCOMMUNICATION

Among the entries for 1694 a person who had been excommunicated by the Church is mentioned.

This carries us back to the time when moral and other offences were dealt with by the church. Such jurisdiction has now practically lapsed and many offences, which during the 17th and 18th centuries would have been presented by the churchwardens at the annual visitation and tried by the chancellor of the diocese, are now dealt with by civil courts.

Under certain canonical laws, if the person presented was convicted he was either ordered to perform penance or excommunicated.

Excommunication was a really serious matter, for it involved various civil liberties. For instance, no excommunicate could bring an action or be a witness. If excommunicate persons did not reform themselves "within three months they were, every six months ensuing to be denounced excommunicate in their Parish Church and the Cathedral Church of the diocese."

The denunciation was to be made by the minister at Divine service on the Sabbath.

Persons who were denounced in this way "could not make a will nor be entitled to a Christian burial."

PENANCE

If the person repented, he or she was assigned a penance which had to be performed according to a regular form or custom.

There are no particulars in the Thornton Registers of any penance so performed but a penance was performed in the Parish Church of Burnsall on 12th July 1791 in the following manner, and might prove of interest.

"The offender bareheaded, bare-footed and barelegged, having a white sheet wrapped around him from the shoulders to the feet, and a white wand in his hand, immediately after the reading of the gospel should stand upon some form or seat before the pulpit or place where the minister read the prayers and say after him a form of confession of the offence with a prayer for forgiveness."

The congregation then repeated with the offender the Lord's Prayer. A certificate that penance had been performed was then signed by the minister and the churchwardens.

Hundreds of such forms of penance are preserved in the Archbishop's Registry at York, and probably there are some relating to the parish of Thornton-in-Craven.

THE LISTER FAMILY

The Lister family were connected with Thornton for over 300 years.

In 1556 William Lyster, Esq., became Lord of the Manor. He purchased the manor from Henry, Earl of Rutland, and John Manners, Esq.

The transaction is given as follows in the "Feet of Fines for the County of York" :-

"1556-57, 3 and 4 Philip and Mary. Hilary Term. William Lyster, Esq., plaintiff, Henry, Earl of Rutland, and John Manners, Esq., deforciant."

The deforcians transferred the Manor of Thornton-in-Craven, sixty cottages and a watermill, with lands there and in Earby, Kelbroke and Hagh-in-Craven, and the advowson of Thornton Parish Church.

"Fines" were at that time the legal means of transferring property, and the plaintiff was the person to whom the property was to be transferred.

AN OLD WILL OF 1582

The will, dated 1st September, 1582, of the above mentioned William Lyster is given in "Yorkshire Deeds" and makes interesting reading. A portion of it is as follows :

"William Lyster, of Thornton, Esquire, sicke in body, but in whole and perfect remembrance, prayed be God, considering in my mind the surite of deathe and that there is nothing more uncertayne than the daye, houre, and tyme, myndinge by Godes grace and pemiSSIONe to give and render to God and man that thinge to him belonginge accordinge to the saying of the scripture, "Reddite que sunt Cesaris Cesari, et que sunt Dei Deo," do ordeyne this my testament conteynyng hearin my last will in maner and form following.

First and principallie I bequeath my soule unto Almyghtie God, my oneli saviour and redemer, and my body to be buried in the parishe church of Gisburne by the discrecon of my executours.

"And I will that all maner of duties be fullie given to the churche and all the ministers thereof, and the same to be taken and paide of my whole goodes without anie grudge, accordeinge to the lawes of God and the Church of England.

"Unto my son Lawrence Lyster..... my coal mynes and Silritt pyttes or mynes within the manor or hall mote of Colne in the countie of Lancaster, and all such righte as I have in the coal mynes of Trawden in the countie of Lancaster ; and all my tables, formes, bedstockes and brewinge vessel beinge at Thornton, with a third parte of my best beddinge (sic) at Thornton aforesaid or els where ; and also one salte which my grande father maide, one dosene of my best spones, and one faire dringing boyle gilte.

"Unto the pourest of the parishe of Thornton fyve marks, to be distributed at the decrecon of the curate their and the churche wardens."

He also left to Bartholomewe Lyster, his son, among other things the corn mill called "Barnoldswicke Mylne."

ENTRIES IN THE REGISTERS

The following entry occurs among the christenings for 1572 in the Thornton registers:-

"Edmund Lyster, son of William Lyster, Esq., 26th Sept."

According to the pedigree of the Lyster family given by Whitaker, this Edmund Lyster became a captain and died in Ireland.

Lawrence Lyster mentioned on the foregoing will eventually succeed to the manor of Thornton. He married Everilda, the daughter of John Sawyer, of Richmondshire, whose name is among the Recusants in Yorkshire in 1604. His will, dated 20th August 1609, was proved at York 9th December, 1609. Three of his children are mentioned in the registers as follows :-

1583. Christening. Jean Lyster, daughter of Lawrence Lyster Esq. 8th May

1591. Christening. William Lyster, son of Lawrence Lyster, Esq. 27th Nov.

1602. Nupti. Gylles Parker, gentleman and Anne Lyster. 19th Oct.

Gylles Parker was one of the Parkers of Horrockford, near Clitheroe, and was the last male heir of his line. They had an only son, Nicholas, who died in infancy.

The William Lyster christened in 1591 was heir and on the death of his father in 1609 became

Lord of the Manor of Thornton. He was knighted by James I. in 1615, and became M.P. for the borough of East Retford. His daughter, Frances, married John Lambert, of Calton, at Thornton, the entry in the register being as follows :-

1639. Nupti : Johannes Lambert et Frances Lister. Sept 10th.

Other entries relating to the Lyster family are :-

1603. Nupti : John Byram, gentleman, and Mrs. Ellyn Lister. 27th Jan.

1607. Nupti : Stephang Hamerton and Maria Lyster. 5th Oct.

These were both daughters of Lawrence Lyster. John Byram was of Byram Hall, Co. Lancaster, and Stephen Hamerton of Hellifield Peel, in Craven, Co. York.

THORNTON AND THE CIVIL WAR

We now come to the part Thornton played in the great struggle between Charles I and parliament.

John Lambert of Calton, became a famous parliamentary general. From the beginning of the struggle he supported the parliamentary cause, as did Sir Wm. Lister, M.P., of Thornton, Capt. William Lister, of Thornton, son of Sir William Lister, and Thomas Heber, of Marton. General Lambert sat in Parliament during the Protectorate, but at the Restoration was exiled, and forfeited his estates in the neighbourhood of Calton. According to Whitaker, he died on St. Nicholas Island in Plymouth Sound, in 1683.

During the Civil War he was for some time in command of the siege of Skipton Castle, which supported the Royalist cause. Eventually he became Major General of the five Northern Counties, a responsible position, which it has been said he filled with "great wisdom, moderation and justice." His wife was described as "most eloquent and accomplished."

Capt. William Lister, of Thornton, became one of General Fairfax's officers, and was killed in 1642 during a skirmish between Parliamentarians and Royalists at Tadcaster. Fairfax was in command of the Parliamentarians, and in his report to parliament he says : "We took seventeen prisoners in the fight, and on our part we lost six men and Captaine William Lister, a valiant and gallant gentleman, who was shot with a musket bullet in the head. "He also refers to him as "a religious and resolute gentleman, whose death is much lamented."

The following entries of soldiers buried are in the Thornton Registers for 1642 and 1643 :-

1642. Sepult. Duo milites occisi, Dec. 27

1642. Sepult. Hargreaves de Stothill, occisus, Dec. 30

1643. Sepult. Miles, die April 18 (given as April 16 in Whitaker's).

1643. Sepult. Tredicim milites, die July 26, 1643.

The thirteen soldiers buried on the 26th July were killed in the struggle for Thornton Manor House.

Sir William Lister, M.P., supported the Parliamentary cause, and during July, 1643, his house at Thornton - the old Manor House which was probably situated not far from the present Manor House - was besieged by a party of Royalists from Skipton Castle, under Lord Darcy, and captured. The following month it was retaken by the Parliamentarians. Soon afterwards it was burnt, along with the barns and stables, by Prince Rupert, and never rebuilt. Whitaker states that at the end of the 18th century some men, whilst digging among the ruins that were still lying about, discovered an apartment on the ground floor with the old furniture undisturbed.

In 1646 Sir William received a grant of £1,500 from Parliament for the damage done to his estate and for the loss of his son, Capt. William Lister, mentioned above.

Sir William Lister fought at Marston Moor in 1644, and in 1645 commanded the Parliamentary troops in Yorkshire.

He died in 1650.

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