Enclosure in Leicestershire: 1485 -1607 by L.A. Parker - Unpublished paper

Extracts pertaining to Brascote

The Enclosure of Brascote and Naneby

P46 -

At the end of the year (1499) the neighbouring hamlets of Brascote and Naneby, a mile or two from the country town of Market Bosworth, were depopulated and enclosed. Both lordships belonged to Walt Devereux, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, but as he was a minor they were at that time in the custody of the Marquis of Dorset.

The marquis was summoned before the enclosure commissioners twice in August 1517 and. again a year later. According to the inquisitions taken on the 19th and 27th August 1517, Dorset enclosed in Brascote and Naneby on the 8th. October 1499 eight farms comprising eight carucates of arable land, each of which was forty acres in extent. The later inquisition is more detailed.

In both hamlets three farms were involved which amounted to160 acres in Naneby and 168 acres in Brascote, but the enclosures are said to have taken place on the 21st of November 1501. Since the findings in each were carefully kept separate. In the subsequent legal proceedings it is probable that the two sets of returns are dealing with different enclosures. Be that as it may, it is clear that both townships were wholly enclosed as their combined area was only 230 acres.

The legal proceedings began In Michaelmas term 1525, and Walter Devereux was summoned to answer for his guardian's actions. Devereux claimed the royal pardon granted, in 1523 for the offence committed on the ground that "the aforesaid enclosures were pulled down before the said feast of Easter in the said act (of par&rn) specified", i.e. Easter 1521., and that the eight messuages in Brascote and Naneby specified in the first inquisition and the three messuages in Brascote and the three In Naneby as declared in the second inquisition had all been rebuilt for the maintenance of husbandry before the 29th September 1522 as required by the act of pardon. This plea was upheld in each particular by the findings of a further inquisition taken in 1532 on the order of the court. Judgment was not given until 1546 when Devereux was acquitted. Nevertheless, we may cast some doubt on a genuine restoration of the two hamlets, for in 1562-4 Brascote numbered only two families and Naneby, though its population in those years is not known, possessed only one household when Nichols described it at the close of the eighteenth century'.

P60

We have now reached the point at which the main feature of the enclosure movement changes. The disappearance of a whole township becomes less frequent; at times the enclosure is merely piece-meal. At Newbold Verdon In the south-west the Marquis of Dorset on the 3rd. October 1509 pulled down one farmhouse and. enclosed for pasture forty acres of arable land, which belonged. to his ward, Walter Devereux, lord. Ferrers of Chartley'°'

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105. L.T.R.M.Rolle, Hilary]4 Hen.VIII. and. Michaelmas 17 Hen.VIII. (E368/296 and. 299.); which give an account of the proceedings taken against Walter Devereux in the Court of Exchequer. Devereux's plea that the messuage had been rebuilt before the quindene of Michaelmas 152L. and the forty acres reconverted.to arable before Easter 152L was upheld and he was acquitted.

106. Domesday

56. Domesday of Inclosures, vol. I, p. 231. The prior of Coventry enclosed and converted. seventeen acres on the 3rd July 1L1.99.

57. Ibid. vol. I, p. 2L.l. and L.T.R.M. Rol1 Michaelmas 17 Hen.VIII, E368/299. Chancery Common Law Pleadings, CLi.3/28/5.

58. L.T.R.M. Rolls, Hilary]4Hen.VIII arid Michaelmas 17 Hen. VIII E368/296 and. 299. Among the Chancery Common Law Pleadings there is a further inquisition taken on the 23rd. August 1518 according to which one Thomas Coke was seized of two messuages and. Forty acres of arable land. In Brascote; which the marquis of Dorset with the permission of Coke enclosed for pasture on the 10th November 1501 (CL1.3/28/5).

59. It will be seen later Ce. g. Noseley and Normanton Turville) that inquisitions taken in 1517 and. 1518 which appear to deal with separate enclosures on account of the chronology given In each were, It was subsequently claimed, concerned with the same and. not different enclosures. Note that if the above Inquisitions are relating to separate enclosures then the total area enclosed would be 61.i.8 acres. According to Nichols the combined. acreage of both townships is L.3O. The discrepancy between the two figures Is not conclusive proof that the returns are not dealing with separate enclosures as in any case all the acres are only estimations.

60. For the proceedings see L.T.R.M. Rolls, Michaelmas 17 Hen. VIII.

61. Nichols, vol. IV, pt. II, p. 522. In the 1562- 4 return of families Naneby is Included with Coton, Osbaston and Shenton.

P86

The Greys inherited in 1444 tithe estates of the last lord Ferrers of Groby, Including Bradgate where Thomas Grey, the first marquis of Dorset, enclosed in 1499. Dorset, we have seen, also enclosed Extensively at Brascote, Naneby, Cotesbach and Newbold Verdon whilst he held. the wardship of their lord, Walter Devereux, lord Ferrers of Chartley. All four manors had been inherited by the Devereaux's in 1436.