The Conquest

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher(contd.)

Agriculture at the time of the Conquest and afterwards.

The method of farming was not changed by the Normans. There were no small farms, the villagers worked the land collectively. Each farmer or villein had strips in the common fields according to his status. The strips were not always side by side, as the soil differed in quality in various parts of the field. The lord of the manor may have had his land or part of it together round his manor house, this land being known as the demesne. The villeins or their underlings worked their lord's land. This was the condition of holding their own strips. The ploughing was done communally and the heavy plough needed a team of four, six or eight oxen to draw it. Each farmer had the right of grazing in the wastes and heaths, the number of his animals according to the size of his holdings.

Ploughing with oxen was carried on for centuries; much later than might be supposed, right into the eighteenth century. The writer of these notes had the interesting experience of handling an iron shoe of an ox. This was ploughed up in 1966, when a field of turf was broken to the plough on the farm of Mr. Wightman of Brascote House Farm. Oxen shoes can be seen in collections of old farming implements and utensils.

Customs of N.V.

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher(contd.)

Interesting Customs used in pre-Conquest days and afterwards -

Although nothing is yet recorded for Newbold, something of the regular life is known and would apply to our own locality.

Most villages had a village green. If there was a green in Newbold, it would be the wide-open space leading up to the church. Note how easily this could be defended. The domestic animals were driven on to the green for safety against wild animals and enemies, especially in time of war.

Notes

In Newbold, formerly, the expression 'end' was used, e.g. Church End, Middle End, Bottom End. "How could the end be in the middle?" asked inquisitive children. Actually, an 'end' mean't a cluster of houses built on to the outskirts as the population increased. Over the border in Warwickshire, Chapel End, Wood End, Church End, have become places of considerable size.

The chief domestic animal of these times was the ox. Oxen were used for ploughing. Horses were smaller and lighter; the heavy cart horse was not yet developed, and horses were ridden into battle, and for transport but only occasionally used for agriculture.

The plough used in these times was known as a caruca, a Danish word meaning a plough with a wheel, and a caracuta was a measurement of land, (varying with the nature of the soil), being as much as could be tilled with one plough with its team of 8 oxen in a year. Sometimes, this measurement was known as a ploughland.

To be continued...

looking Melanesian Christian Community.
(To be concluded)

Parish Boundaries

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher (Contd.)

Parish Boundaries - In early times, the parish boundaries followed the natural features, e.g. streams, woods, hills, etc., and were marked carefully in other places, so that there was no doubt in case of disputes. The beating of the bounds was an annual occurrence; it has been said that young boys were taken along and given a sound beating at strategic points, in order to impress the course of the boundaries on their memories. In medieval times, at Rogationtide, there were services in the fields, asking for blessings on the crops. It seemed to be meet to say, 'Please', to the Almighty, as well as 'Thank you', when the crops were gathered. In Newbold, the boundaries have somewhat altered over the years. Formerly, 'the Heath' was in Bagworth parish and was known as Bagworth Heath. At the time it became Newbold Heath, there were changes between Newbold and Barlestone parish boundaries. In the 1930's, the boundary between Kirkby Mallory and Newbold was changed. The three houses at the corner of Kirkby Lane were in Kirkby parish, Cottage Farm,(Mr. Wibberley's) was in Desford, and the boundary between Newbold and Kirkby was a short distance behind Desford Road. When Mr. Starbuck's house was first built, the front door was in Newbold parish and the back door in Kirkby. The School House Farm,(Mrs. Towers') was in Kirkby parish, together with the majority of the land. The boundary then was in Black Lane,(now known as Red Lion Lane) and certain cottages there were in Kirkby parish. Alterations have brought Mrs. Wibberley's bungalow, Cottage Farm, and the two cottages belonging to Kirkby Old Parks into

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher

Bertram de Verdun and the Third Crusade.

Bertram de Verdun was married twice; his second wife being Rohesia, of whom much more is to be written later. They had two sons, Thomas and Nicholas. In 1176 he was sent to Spain as ambassador of Henry II.

Henry died in 1189 and the new king was Richard I later known as Richard 'Coeur de Lion' or the Lion Heart, whose great desire was to lead a Crusade to the Holy Land.

In 1190 Bertram attended the king to the Holy Land (Third Crusade) and was present at the Siege of Acre, 1191. After Acre was taken Bertram was placed in charge as the queens of England and Sicily were then resident; also the daughter of the Emperor of Cyprus. (1) Queen Eleanor Richard's mother; (2) the widowed queen of Sicily, Joan, Richard's sister and (3) Berengaria, Richard's wife. They were newly married, and it is interesting to note that Richard was the only king of England to be married abroad. In 1192 Bertram died at Joppa and was buried at Acre.

The historian Burton tells us that Bertram founded the Abbey of Croxton Kyrial, one of whose abbotts was physician to King John. He also bestowed on the monks of St. Mary's, Axby York the church of Bosworth and two hides of land.

It was at this period that the knights' coats of arms were prominent. Bertram de Verdun's was described as 'gules fretty or'. This means a red fret on a gold background. The probable significance was 'hard to cross'.

Another comrade and crusader was Robert Parnell, Earl of Leicester, and he carried on his shield a cinquefoil on ermine which was the coat of arms of Robert de Beaumont. It was afterwards used by the citizens of Leicester as the centre device of the city coat of arms. The griffin was added later.

To be continued.....

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher

Lady Rohesia de Verdun. The second wife of Bertram de Verdun was Rohesia, sometimes spelt Royhesia. No dates are given of the death of his first wife Maud de Ferrers who brought Newbold to the Verdun family, nor the date of his second marriage. Neither is there any indication to which noble family Rohesia belonged. No children are recorded of the first marriage, but Rohesia had two sons, Thomas and Nicholas. Thomas held his father's position only four years and was followed by his brother Nicholas who in 1199 was head of his house. It is thought that Nicholas was at some time Abbott of Burton. Younger sons were often trained for the church.

Rohesia de Verdun is particularly remembered as the foundress of Gracedieu nunnery of which she was the first abbess. At that time wealthy heiresses had no choice in the selection of their husbands, often going into religious seclusion as an alternative to a marriage planned by the king who would receive a considerable amount of money from the alliance. She was also (jointly with her son Nicholas) foundress of the hospital of St. John near the town of Lutterworth. It was built on a piece of land at Misterton called 'the Warren'. It was intended for one priest and six poor men to keep hospitality for poor wayfarers; a mediaeval refuge for the destitute. Her effigy was placed over her last remains in the church at Gracedieu but subsequently moved to Belton church probably at the time of the suppression of the monasteries. In course of time the effigy crumbled away, and at the present time the Verdon arms are carved on the top of the tomb: 'Gules fretty or' = Red fret on gold.

Gracedieu Priory was once described as follows:- "The house stands low in a valley upon a little brook, in a solitary place, compassed round with a garden, in resemblance of that upon Mount Olivet, Gethsemane."

To be continued.

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

More about Lady Rohesia de Verdun. The previous account was from Mr. James Thompson, the famous Leicester historian. He was (and his father before him) Editor of the Leicester Chronicle and Leicestershire Mercury.

Nicholls gives a genealogical tree, and this shows that there were two Lady Rohesias de Verdun; grandmother and granddaughter. From this it appears that the second Lady Rohesia was the foundress of Gracedieu Priory. She married Theobald le Boteler or Butiller, by the command of King Henry III. However she kept her own name, de Verdun. This lady is thought to be the foundress of Newbold Church, or jointly with her son Nicholas, perhaps rebuilding on an earlier site.

Most fortunately at Newbold there is a list of incumbents, or Rectors, the earliest of which is recorded as Elyas in 1209. He was presented to the living by Nicholas de Verdon. Lists such as this are precious historical documents; so the second item of recorded history of Newbold is in church for all to see. In 1219 Thomas de Verdon was Rector of Ibstock, patrons being Robert de Garshale and Richard de Verdon. In 1224 William de Verdone was Rector of St. Peter's, Bosworth, the patron being Sir Nicholas de Verdon. There were two churches in Bosworth in those days, the older being that of St. Thomas and St. Anne, and the incumbent here is recorded as Ralph de Bosworde deacon presented by Richard Harcourt. In 1226 Robert de Alstone, sub-deacon, was Rector of Newbold, presented by Nicholas de Verdon. In 1242 Robert de Witewik, sub-deacon, was instituted to the Rectory of Newbold on presentation of Roysia de Verdun. In 1306 the Rector of Bosworth is recorded as Bertram de Verdon, presented by Sir Theobald de Verdon, the son of Rohesia. Notice the variation in spelling.

To be continued.....

Land Use (13

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

Leicester Abbey and Newbold. Kirkby passed from the Mallory's to Leicester Abbey and Nicholls quotes from the register of the Abbey of St. Mary de Praetis at Leicester. He gives a list of tenants, and in this list are given the names of three people living at Newbold - "Johannes Bosse of Brescot holds one close called Normanshey in the field there and pays XVd ¼ cock. Thomas Hall of Newbold holds one piece of meadows called Hypswell and another piece of ground called Mallery swong and pays ½d homagium. Walterus Denos lord of Newbold, for a right of way to his village of Broscote, going to and coming from, with his out of the way dwellings in the Heyth in the field of Kyrkby pays one pound of pepper."

The date given is 1220, 750 years ago. At this time most of the arable land was in large communal fields but sometimes a piece of land was enclosed and sometimes pigs were kept upon it for a time after which it was much easier to clear and cultivate. These were called dens or denes. There is nothing nowadays to indicate where the close called Normanshey lay. The piece of meadow held by Thomas Hall called Hypswell is today called the hipsalls, the far hipsall and the near hipsall. The ground here is wet and a spring in the locality is the source of "the Flat tail" brook. The Hypswells are today farmed by Mr.J.Wibberley. There is nothing to indicate the position of Mallery swong.

Homagium meant that at seedtime and harvest and other busy times the person who held the ground must send men to help in the sowing and the reaping of the harvest. Walterus Denos would be the lord of the manor and held his lands under the de Verduns. From this account he had lands at Brascote which were out of the way and difficult to reach, also in the Heyth that lay where Desford Road now is and the fields lying to the south, The Middletons, Gorse Hayes, etc.

Contd. at foot of p.5.....

HISTORY. (Contd. from p. 4.

One pound of pepper seems a peculiar way of making a payment, till we remember that in the Autumn the greater part of the animals were killed and salted down, and pepper would help to keep the meat and disguise the taste if the meat became 'high'.

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

Historical Evidence of Newbold de Verdun.

The list of Rectors hanging in Church is very precious historical evidence from 1209 to the present day. Apart from this there is nothing written connected with Newbold from Domesday 1087 for one hundred and thirty three years; and then in 1220 fascinating evidence of actual people living in Newbold in those days is found in the records of Leicester Abbey.

The Normans were great church builders. The first Earl of Leicester, Robert de Beaumont, Earl of Mellent, rebuilt Leicester Castle and the Church of St. Mary, now known as St. Mary de Castro.

The second Earl of Leicester, Robert Bossu, or the Hunchback, is remembered as the founder of the Abbey of St. Mary de Pratis, which he placed in the north-east of the town and so named from the situation in the meadows beyond the river. It was founded about 1143 and was richly endowed by Robert Bossu, and in course of time it possessed large estates in and around Leicester, besides others at a greater distance, including Kirkby Mallory, and as before stated part of Newbold was in Kirkby Mallory parish in those days, thus the connection of Newbold with Leicester Abbey. It had four granges or farms situated at Westcotes, Stoughton, Ingarsby, and Meadowplek in the High Peak of Derbyshire. At these granges the corn rents were deposited. Nichols tells us that in 1326 the number of lambs received by the Abbey as tithes was 237, and fleeces 426.

To be continued.....

Jan 73

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.
The list of Rectors informs us that in 1296 Theobald the lord de Verdun presented Adam de St. Bosco to the church of Newbold, which he held until his death in 1346. We read of this cleric again in 1313. The following extract is taken from Farnham's Leicestershire Mediaeval Notes Vol. II. - Dadlington. Coram Rege Roll 214. Michaelmas. Edward III, i.e. 1313.
"John de Horbeling, Master William de Hale, parson of Folkingham church, Master Adam de Saintboys, parson of Newbold Verdon church, Remige Menlin of Dadlynton, Simon, son of Richard Dadlyton, and many others (named) were attached to answer to Margaret, who was the wife of James Spigurnel, in a plea of taking £40 worth of her goods and chattels from Dadlynton on Monday after the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Edward II August 15th 1311. The defendants came and said that they had done no injury, for they say that Master William de Hale is the sequestrator of the Bishop of Lincoln, and because the said James Spigurnel, the husband of the said Margaret, died intestate, he, as sequestrator, together with the said John de Horbeling, and Master Adam de Saintboys, his clerks, came on the day and year aforesaid to the said vill of Dadlynton, and sequestrated the goods and chattels of the said James, deceased, according to the custom of Holy Church, and detained them, and caused proclamation to be made in the nearest churches to the vill of Dadlynton, that if the said James, deceased, was bound in any debt to anyone, that he appear before them on a certain day and at a certain place, and prove his debt as is the custom; and he says that the said Remige Menlin came before him and proved a debt of £10 in which sum the said James, deceased, was bound to him Remige, and he as sequestrator, in the presence of the said Margaret and with her consent delivered to the said Remige goods and chattels of James, deceased to the value of the aforesaid debt and the residu of the goods and chattels he delivered to

cont'd. at foot of Page 5..

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

More interesting items from the List of Rectors in church.

1359. 7th June. John Woodcock, presbyter, on resignation of last Rector, John de Boyleston. Presented by Thomas Furnivale, Lord of Hallamshire. At this time there were two churches at Bosworth, Saint Peters, and an older one dedicated to St. Anne, St. Anne being the mother of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Looking at the list of Rectors in Bosworth Church, John Woodcock was Rector of the old church till 1367. He was presented by Ralph de Ferrers. However, he was only Rector of Newbold for two years, but still Rector of Bosworth for the next six years. This suggests that he was in charge at Newbold during the interim.

Passing over several other Rectors, in 1398 John de Naneby was presented as Rector of Newbold by Lady Thomasine Furnivale. In 1401 November 4th, Licence of non-residence for three years granted to John de Naneby, Rector of Newbold Verdon. We have no knowledge of any locum; but "dimmittence fructus ad firman" means letting for hire the profit of his ground. His predecessor, Wm. Benete, was also granted the same licence for three years and this was renewed for a further three years. It is thought that at this time there was a village of Naneby; maybe having a small place of worship or chapel, of which there is no trace. Naneby today consists of one farm house known as 'Naneby Hall Farm'. A large field adjoining the spinney known as 'Botany Bay' is called at the present time 'Naneby Park' The right of way from Brascote to Cadeby passes through the farmyard directly behind Naneby Hall Farm. Could this be the ancient village street? A quarry has now been opened and is now being worked with much activity.

To be continued.