A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

The Descendants of the De Verduns.

Daughters of Theobald de Verdun, died 1316.
First wife, Maud, daughter of Edmund Mortimer
Johanne or Joan m. Thomas de Furnivale.
Elizabeth m. Bartholomew de Burgh.
Margaret or Margery, married twice or three times.
Second wife, Isabella m. Earl Ferrers of Groby.
Elizabeth, second wife of Theobald had for her dowry manors of Newbold and Lutterworth and land at Cotesback. She styled herself Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare, retaining the name of her first husband, a person of higher dignity than Verdun and yet calling herself Domina de Clare, not willing that her paternal name should be forgot. 1346 - Elizabeth de Burgh and her tenants were assessed 13/4 for a third part of a knight's fee in Botchardestone (Brascote) Newbold and Naneby, parcel of the fee of Verdun. After the death of Theobald de Verdun, Elizabeth married Roger Damory. They had a daughter named Elizabeth who was married to John Bardolf, knight, aged 30 years and more and is the heir of Roger. The reversion of the fee in Worthington and Newbold belongs to John de Croppehull and Margery his wife, the daughter and one of the heirs of Theobald de Verdun. The first husband of Margery was Mark de Hose. She afterwards married John de Crophill or Crophull, chivalier. A chivalier was a soldier, possibly one who had been on a crusade.

Patent Roll 21 March 1336. Edward III
Presentation of John de Swinford to the church of Cotesbach, in the diocese of Lincoln in the king's gift by reason of his custody of the lands and heirs of Theobald de Verdun tenant in chief.

In Norman times an heir who was still a minor passed into the crown's wardship, and all profit from his estate went for the time being to

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A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

The Procurations.

History tells us that in 1344 the procuration from Newbold was 7/6¾. The rectory was taxed at 15 marks; and 1/. was paid for Peter's pence.

At that time, confirmations then as now took the bishop about his diocese. The archdeacon was bound to make his regular visitations of the parishes. From the latter part of the 12th century, the rural dean was holding chapters of his deanery and moving about in it.

To a poor priest living in a meagre farm house of the period; a hall and a chamber, with live stock in adjoining buildings, the prospect of an episcopal visit must have been intimidating. But the bishop would probably have been just as alarmed as the priest at the prospect of lodging in a rural vicarage. Most parishes came to terms with the bishop or archdeacon, and paid a small annual sum known as procuration to exempt them from this burden of hospitality. The Pope, concerned that the higher clergy should not exploit the parish priest, issued rules for the guidance of visiting officials.

An archbishop must not be attended by more than 40 or 50 men, a bishop by more than 20 or 30, an archdeacon by more than 5 or 7, while a rural dean must be content with 2 horses only. Nor must these visitors take with them their hounds and hawks.

Archbishop Hubert Walter repeated these rules in his council at London in 1200.

The above extract is taken from "English Society in the Early Middle Ages, 1066 - 1307" by Doris Mary Stenton, wife of Sir Frank Stenton.

Peter's pence = a tax or tribute imposed by the Pope on the English at the beginning of the tenth century, of a penny for every hearth or house, payable at Lammas Day. Forbidden in 1534 but revised by Pius IX.

To be continued.....

JULY 73

 The Black Death

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

The Black Death. In 1349 the Black Death, within a year, had carried off at least a third of the population of England. Its immediate effect was a dearth of villein labourers and of free labourers. The free labourers who survived could claim a scarcity price for their labour. In a static agricultural community, when a third of the available labourers are killed, the produce from the land will be significantly less, and prices for that produce will be higher; money will decline in purchasing power. That was the justification for the higher wages the labourers demanded. The need of the manors was so great that in many places the labourers were given what they demanded.

The first Statutes of Labourers were enacted in 1349 and re-enacted at intervals through Edward III's reign. They demanded the fixing of wages at rates paid in 1346 (before the Black Death) and they obtained branding as part of the punishment of those who sought wages in excess of such niggardly rates.

The above conditions are the explanation of why so many villages became lost and deserted, many in Leicestershire. At Brooksby the site of the ancient street and cottages can still be seen. In Leicester 1348, upwards of 2,000, more than a third of the population died, and another visitation occurred in 1361. Henry de Knighton relates that 380 persons died of this plague in the parish of St. Leonard's, above 400 in St. Martin's, and above 700 in St. Margaret's, and in due proportion in other parishes.

In Newbold, as there were no records kept of births, baptisms, marriages and burials, the numbers who died from the Black Death are unknown. It is now known that this

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Mr Statham a Martyr's relation

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

A Brave Martyr.

Older residents of Newbold Verdon will remember the late Mr. Roland Statham who lived at Newbold Heath. He was organist at the Methodist Chapel for some time.

The writer of these notes recollects a conversation with him, when he disclosed being a descendant of the famous martyr John Huss (1369-1410) This must have been on his mother's side; so there may be people living in Newbold Verdon today who can also claim that honour.

With great fortitude John Huss was burned at the stake 6th July 1415. By his death he became a national hero. The University of Prague declared him a martyr and fixed his feast day on the day of his execution. He was born of a peasant family at Husinee (whence Huss) in Bohemia, the modern Czechoslovakia. Some of his teaching was identical with that of John Wycliffe (died 1384) in England.

For some years before he died John Wycliffe was the rector of Lutterworth, so has special interest for inhabitants of Leicestershire. He is particularly remembered for his translation of the whole Bible. Among other things he denied the doctrine of transubstantiation. He was denounced as a heretic by the clergy, for in those days the services were conducted in Latin. Printing had not yet been invented. In 1428 the Bishop of Lincoln carried out the decree of the council of Constance, and exhumed Wycliffe's body, burned his bones, and cast his ashes into a brook named Swift.

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher

The end of the De Verdun family in Newbold Verdon. In a former paragraph it is seen that the manor of Newbold descended from Margaret De Verdun to the Devereux family. Margaret married John de Crophull who had issue Thomas de Crophull, who had issue, Agnes, his sole daughter and heiress, married to Sir Walter Devereux, lineal ancestor of the Earls of Essex.

John de Crophull carried arms argent a saltier gules fretty or. argent = silver, saltier = a cross, gules fretty or = the de Verdun arms. This showed his own arms and those of his wife, gules fretty or, placed in one quarter of the shield.

1356. John de Crophull.

1371. John de Crophull enfeoffed his son Thomas de Crophull and Sibill his wife to the manor of Newbold.

1381. Thomas Crophull and his wife held the manor of Newbold Verdon. Thomas and his wife had daughter Agnes.

1382. By heir general this lordship came to the Devereux family.

1401. Walter Devereux and his wife held the manor of Newbold Verdon.

1416. Newbold and Brascote rated at £1.17s.6d.

1445. Same sum but an abatement of 6/6d.

1485. Battle of Bosworth Field.

1559. Walter Devereux, viscount of Hereford, afterwards Earl of Essex, held the lordship of Newbold.

1564. 15 families in Newbold, and two in Brascote.

1574. Walter, Earl of Essex, alienated = sold or transferred this lordship to the Earl of Huntingdon.

Thus all connection between Newbold and the de Verdons and their descendants is completely severed.

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

From 'Farnham's Medieval Notes'.
Cotesbach

Fine Hilary 31 Edward III 1357.
Between John de Crophill, chivalier, and Margery his wife, plaintiffs, and Ralph Crophill, parson, of Cotyngham church, defendant of the manors of Newbold and Cotesbach and the leet of Skeffington, co. Leicester, and the advowson of the priory of Grace-dieu and the advowsons of the churches of Skeffington and Cotesbach and a fourth part of the church of Bosworth in the same county. The manors, etc. are declared to be the right of Ralph, and for this acknowledgment Ralph granted the manors etc. to John and Margery and their lawful joint issue for ever.

De Banco Roll 494 Easter 48 Edward III 1374
John de Crophill, chivalier, versus John Fylding in a plea of fishing in the separate fishing of John de Crophill at Cotesbach and taking away fish to the value of 60 shillings.

Inquisition post mortem Agnes, wife of John Merbury, Esq.
File 75/32, Taken at Leicester, 29th April 14 Henry VI 1436. The jury say that a fine was levied in three weeks of Easter 5 Henry VI at Westminster, between Geoffrey Harley Esq., Richard Hulle Esq., and John Moynton, plaintiffs, and John Merbury Esq. and Agnes his wife, defendants, of the manors of Cotesbach

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A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.
Names of people who lived in the vicinity of Newbold five hundred years ago.
These notes are taken from Leicestershire Medieval Pedigrees by George Farnham F.S.A.

A.D.1416. Matilda Barnard, formerly wife of John Barnard, granted to Alured Lathbury and Alice his wife their heirs and assigns for ever a cottage and croft in Cateby between the tenement of the said Alured on the north and a vacant spot on the south.

Witnesses Giles Meignill of Cateby
Robert Humfray " "
John Walsheman " "
William Payne " "
Henry Crafte of Naneby and others,
dated at Cateby on St. Peter ad vincula 4 Henry V.

From another source we know that a Robert Crafte paid a sum of XVIIjd in 1327 in the Lay Subsidy Roll of that year.

A.D.1419 Matilda Barnard of Cateby, daughter and heir of Robert de Cateby, in pure widowhood granted to Reginald Lathbury, his heirs and assigns for ever, all the lands, tenements, meadows, etc. in Cateby which descended to her by hereditary right after the death of Robert her father.

Witnesses Alured Lathbury, Knight.
John Yns, John Marchall of Upton, John Cateby, John Shepey of Osberston, Richard Botiller of Cateby and John Walsheman of Cateby.
dated at Cateby 6 Aug. 7 Henry V.

A.D.1425 Reginald Lathbury esquire granted to John Marchall of Upton, William Marchall of Stretton and John Palmer of Stoke, their heirs and assigns, all his right in the manor of Cateby and in all his lands and tenements in Cateby Co. Leicester and in

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A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher. Early Enclosure.

Early Enclosures in Brascote, Naneby and Newbold Verdon. In an earlier paragraph it was noted how, after the Black Death the statutes of labourers led to the Peasants' Revolt. Apparently this was a failure. Fifteen leaders, including John Ball, were hung, drawn and quartered. The towns and cities where the rebels had been briefly successful were heavily fined. There are records of about 110 executions. The break-up of the manorial system and the commutations of feudal dues for money rent, and the change from serf labour to wage labour had increased. The great landowners realised that sheep could be looked after more cheaply than arable farming; so many of them turned their lands into large sheep farms; even at the expense of turning out labourers from their cottages. On Mr. Wightman's farm at Brascote, there are very large fields and this is a sign of early enclosures.

In 1490 the Marquis of Dorset was enclosing in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire as well as in Leicestershire. Wolsey's commissioners reported that in 1490 he enclosed for pasture thirty acres of arable in the parish of Wicken in Northamptonshire. In Warwickshire his enclosures were on a much larger scale. At Weddington in 1491 he destroyed ten farm houses and evicted sixty people by converting and enclosing three hundred acres of arable. Six years later he enlarged his parks at Chilvers Coton and Astley, called the New Park and Old Park respectively. In Leicestershire he also enclosed on his own estates at Bradgate and on his ward's manors of Brascote, Naneby and Newbold Verdon, which lay together in the west of the county.

The Marquis of Dorset = Thomas Grey. His ward was Walter Deveraux, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, then a minor; the owner of the manors of Newbold Verdon and Brascote.

Wool trade

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON by Mary Fisher.

The Wool Trade. Extremely large flocks of sheep grazed on the newly enclosed pastures, and enormous quantities of wool were purchased by the 'merchants of the staple'. The staple was a kind of union to which the merchants belonged for purposes of taxation when exporting the wool. Huge fortunes were made by these wool merchants. One of these was William Wigston, Mayor of Leicester in 1448. He belonged to the staple of Calais. John Wigston of the Newarke had a son called William the younger, having a cousin William 14 years his senior. William the younger, with his brothers, was the founder of Wigston's Hospital for twenty-four old people, twelve men and twelve women, 1520. He also founded a Chantry in the Collegiate Church of the Newarke, so that masses might be said for his soul, and he erected and endowed the Chantry House, a substantial dwelling, for the home and maintenance of two priests, who were in succession for ever to officiate at the altar on his behalf. This chantry house has been preserved and his coat of arms is above the doorway at the front of the house. The many Wigstons of Kirkby Mallory are thought to be descended from this family, and in Newbold Verdon there are connections with the Kirkby Mallory family. The writer's own family is descended from the Kirkby Mallory family through her paternal grandmother, as are other relatives in Newbold. Another person living in Newbold, Mr. Michael Mensley, is also a descendant of the Kirkby Wigstons through his paternal grandmother. There is a gravestone to the memory of a Wm. Wigston near to where the gate to the Hall used to be. In the poll of 1867 the name of Thomas William Wigston is included in the list of pollers from Newbold. The Leicestershire Archaeological Society 1949 states that taxable property in Leicester amounted to £2639 in 1524 and of this sum, the Wigstons owned rather more than one quarter.

First Parish Register.

A HISTORY OF NEWBOLD VERDON. by Mary Fisher.

The Beginning of the Parish Registers.

In 1538 Thomas Cromwell, (not the famous Oliver) Secretary to Henry VIII, directed that every clergyman shall for every church keep a book, wherein he shall register weekly every marriage, christening and death, any neglect being made penal.

A copy of the earlier registers was made at the end of the 18th century, and kept with the originals, but the ink was poor and the writing almost illegible.

The Newbold registers date from 1542.

This was at the time of the suppression of the monasteries. Until this period there were two churches at Bosworth; the older, St. Thomas and St. Anne, was suppressed in 1548. The first entry in the Newbold register is Humphrey Wolfreston baptized July 8th 1599 by John Abell who was presented to the living in 1591 according to the list of Rectors, by Humphrey Wolfreston of Newbold Verdon, co. Leicester, gentleman, by reason of a grant from Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury. Looking back to 1543 the Rector was then Edmund Wolverston presented by Francis, Earl of Shrewsbury.

Conjectures arising from the above. Abell is an old family name in Newbold. Could this family have descended from John Abell Rector who died in 1601, two years before Elizabeth I? Beyond Newbold Heath towards Bagworth, is a field known to older inhabitants of Newbold as "Cock Shabbey", or Cock's Abbey. The writer has never seen the name in print. Could there possibly have been, in ancient times, a small monastic establishment? An intriguing speculation!