

**DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE
PRIORY OF PENWORTHAM, AND
OTHER POSSESSIONS IN
LANCASHIRE OF THE ABBEY OF
EVESHAM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649378937

Documents relating to the priory of Penwortham, and other possessions in Lancashire of the abbey of Evesham by W. A. Hulton

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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W. A. HULTON

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EDITED BY

W. A. HULTON, ESQ.

PRINTED FOR THE CHETHAM SOCIETY.
M.DCCC.LIII.

Manchester:
Printed by Charles Simms and Co.

INTRODUCTION.

THE documents now presented to the CHETHAM SOCIETY relate to the possessions which the Abbey of Evesham held in Lancashire, and principally, of course, to the Priory of Penwortham. They have been drawn from various sources. The muniment chests at Penwortham and Werden have been with great liberality placed at the command of the Editor for the purposes of the Society. The Tower Rolls have been searched, and have furnished some documents, while others have been extracted from the great book of the Abbey now in the British Museum (Harl. MS. 3763.)

The latter work most probably passed at the dissolution of the Monastery into the family of the Fleetwoods, the grantees of the Priory of Penwortham, and remained amongst the muniments of that family until the early part of the last century, when it became the property of Lord Harley. This appears to have been the case from a memo-

random in the initial leaf of the book, in the following terms:

Memorandum: When Henry Fleetwood of Penwortham Esquire disposed of this book to my noble Lord Harley, he reserved to himself and his family a right of borrowing the same out of the Library whensoever upon occasion of contests with the bishops of Chester it shall be necessary to produce it at trials in public. And accordingly my Lord was pleased to lend it to Mr. Fleetwood for that purpose the last Sommer. In token of this covenant which was made with my privity, and for the certain information of posterity, I do hereby put my name the second day of March 17 $\frac{3}{4}$.

Humfrey Wanley.

But before discussing the grant under which the Priory of Penwortham was founded, it may not be altogether unprofitable to glance at the few remaining records which in any degree affect the previous history of the district in which the possessions assigned for that purpose are situated.

Of course, a search for written records previous to the Roman era would be fruitless. Beyond the mere fact that the district now so well known as Lancashire was then peopled by the Setantii, a tribe of the great Western Brigantes, written history is silent. But the traces of the aboriginal inhabitants may be sought for in their singularly expressive local designations. Nor are these wanting in this district. For instance, three important rivers, flowing from east to west, intersect it and empty themselves into the Irish Sea. At the precise point on each of these rivers where the first available ford is found, a local name is discovered, into the composition of which the term *werid* enters. Two of

these places still retain the word, with a Saxon suffix denoting the progress of civilization. And the Britannico-Saxon names of Werid-ton and Pen-werid-ham have come down to our days slightly changed into Warrington and Penwortham. While *Caer-werid*,⁽¹⁾ or the camp of the ford, on the Lune, suffered but a slight change in the hands of its Norman possessors when it was translated into the camp of the Lune, and became Lancaster.

But the written evidences of the Roman occupation are clear and distinct, and the pages of Tacitus record not merely the time occupied, but the means used, in reducing the Western tribes of Britain into permanent subjugation to the power of Rome. It is stated that at the end of the year 78, Agricola having subdued the tribes in North Wales as far as the river Dee, penetrated along the western coast into Scotland. The words of Tacitus are remarkable :

In⁽²⁾ the early part of the summer [A.D. 79] Agricola assembled his army and was present with them; he praised the forward, stirred up the slothful, and marked out the stations himself. He

(1) The name *Caer-weridd* is found in Camden, who says, speaking of Lancaster: *Hoc enim oppidum Britanni Caer Weridd i.e. urbem viridem dixerunt, a viridante forsitan illo colle, sed hoc viderint alii.* The doubt here alluded to refers most probably to the translation of the term *werid*. More reasonably it may be taken to refer to the ancient British and modern Welsh term *Rhyd*, a ford; or to another British word, *Wera*. The latter word is thus defined by Spelman: *Locus in fluvio qui porrectis ab utroque margine faucibus hiatum adeo angustum exhibet ut distento rete facile occludatur capiendum piscium gratia.* In this view the term *Wery wall*, which "cummith almost to Lune Bridge," has a peculiar signification.

(2) *Sed ubi aestas advenit, contracto exercitu, multus in agmine, laudare modestiam, disjectos coercere, loca castris ipse capere, restuaria ac silvas*

explored *the estuaries* and woods, and kept the enemy in continual alarm by sudden incursions; and when he had completely alarmed them, he stayed his operations to show them again the blessings of peace. By these means many cities, which till then had been free, submitted and gave hostages, and were surrounded by posts and fortified places, which were selected with so much skill and judgment that no newly explored part of Britain was ever before so peaceable.

The following winter was spent in the execution of the wisest designs. For, to pacify men, wild, savage, and rejoicing in warfare, and to incline them by idleness to pleasure, he exhorted them privately and assisted them publicly to erect temples, courts of justice, and habitations. And then by praising the forward and chastising the slothful he diffused a spirit of emulation which operated like a sense of duty. He instructed the sons of their chiefs in the liberal arts; and professed to prefer the genius of the Britons to the attainments of the Gauls. Thus those who lately disdained the Roman language began to cultivate its beauties. Our dress became the fashion, and the toga was frequently seen. And by degrees they yielded to the charms of vice, the porch, the baths, and elegant

ipse pretentare: et nihil interim apud hostes quietam pati, quo minus subitis excursibus popularetur: atque, ubi satis terrerat, parcendo rursus irritamenta pacis consistere. Quibus rebus multe civitates, que in illum diem ex æquo egerant, datis obsidibus, iram posuere, et presidiiis castellisque circumdatae, tanta ratione curaque, ut nulla ante Britannie nova pars inaccessita transierit.

Sequens hiems saluberrimus consilii assumpta, namque ut homines dispersi ac rudes, eoque bello faciles, quieti et otio per voluptates adsuescerent; hortari privatim, adjuvare publice, ut templa, fora, domus extruerent, laudando promptos, et castigando segnes: ita honoris æmulatio pro necessitate erat. Jam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire et ingenia Britannorum studiis Gallorum anteferre, ut, qui modo linguam Romanam abnuebant, eloquentiam concupiscerent: inde etiam habitus nostri honor, et frequens toga, paulatimque discessum ad delinimenta vitiorum, porticus, et