



SOME PEOPLE OF NOTE

From time to time in the recorded history of the Parish we find it in ownership of, or connected with, a number of people and families of more than usual interest.

ALURED OF MERLEBERG, or Alfred of Marlborough, was the owner of Teffont Ewias at the time of the Domesday Survey (1086). He was one of the band of adventurers, most of them unscrupulous, who set out to make their fortune with William the Conqueror. He was rewarded by the grant of considerable estates, including that now called Ewias Harold in Herefordshire and the Teffont to which the name of Ewias was added later. Alured was not only tough, but was also very able, and he took a large part, as a Border Lord, in dissuading – somewhat forcibly – the Welsh from their predatory excursions into England. He was equally successful in annexing much of their land.

The Convent of Nuns at Shaftesbury Abbey was in possession of Upper Teffont and when the Domesday book was compiled. The abbesses were women of considerable importance in the country, and often were near relatives of the King. They were accounted Barons, and as such were summoned to Parliament but must at times have been a little exasperated in that they were not, being women, allowed to attend. They were, however, actively concerned in the administration of the Abbey and its vast properties.

ABBESS EULALLA in William the Conqueror's time, was of European renown, and very probably it was she who rebuilt the Abbey on a large scale.

ABBESS MARIE DE FRANCE sister in a left-handed way of our Henry 11, was an early and famous "blue stocking", though in no derogatory sense. She wrote quite charming, if naïve, love stories in rhyme, and versions of Aesop's fables meant to be recited by noble ladies, cooped up in castles and occupied mostly in killing time.

In one of the last years of Edward 1, on **MASTER ROBERT, RECTOR OF "DONYNATON (Dinton) AND UPPER TEFFONT**, was instructed by the Bishop of Salisbury to prescribe a "salutary penance" on some delinquent nuns of Shaftesbury Abbey. We are not told the nature of the delinquencies, but the occasion must have been pretty serious. From the nature of his instructions, it would seem that the Rector was the Abbess's Chaplain, and as such a man of considerable authority. For his services he received from the Abbess "6 quarters of frumetary and one quarter of barley, a dwelling house free, one trunk of dead wood at Christmas etc. but he had to find the candles for Mass". Most of his duties for Teffont were apparently carried out by a Vicar.

THE TREGOZ or TREGOSE, lords of the Manor of Teffont Ewyas: In the Cistercian Abbey Church of Dore in Hereford is a badly mutilated effigy of a man in chain armour of about 1265. The effigy is of ROBERT of TREGOZ, lord of the two Ewias manors in Hereford and Teffont. His father, also Robert, and also the owner of Teffont Ewyas, helped Richard Coeur de Lion in the building of "Saucy Castle" on the River Siena in France which was the admiration of Europe. The second Robert called on his Tenants in Teffont to join him in support of Simon de Montfort's army at Evesham and the death there of Robert himself it is probable they returned. His lands remained in the family as his son John made his peace with the King. John was a mighty fighter against the Welsh and Scots, again with the help of men of Teffont. One of his main aids to the King was in supply of horses. Later he was given the most important command as Constable of the Tower of London, and for that reason was responsible for the protection of the city. John's tenant at Teffont Ewyas was the Reginald de Huse (also spelt Husee, Hose, de la Huse) who was probably responsible for the building of Teffont Ewias Church, and who appears in the Bishop's Register as the final patron. He had trouble with John Tregoz's daughter Sibill (or Isabella) and her husband William de Grandison, who had stolen some of his "beasts" – whether cattle or horses we do not know.

THE HUNGERFORDS, a family famous not only on the West Country but also in English history, were the Lords of Lower Teffont for more than 150 years. WALTER, LORD HUNGERFORD, who appears in the Register of Rectors as appointing John Wheler as Rector of "Teffont Hungerford" as it was then, was at the Battle of Agincourt, and there captured the Duke of Orleans who makes such a sorry appearance in Shakespeare's play of Henry V. Out of the substantial ransom Walter built Farleigh Hungerford Castle. Walter held the responsible post of Lord High Treasurer of England under Henry VI, and amongst other activities he founded the Hospital at Heytesbury as alms house for men. The tomb of Walter's son Robert, who out-lived the sequence of five Rectors he appointed to the Teffont living is in Salisbury Cathedral. Another Walter, in Henry VIII's time was incautious enough to offend the King to the extent that he was accused of treason and was executed. Ironically enough Thomas Cromwell, the man who was largely responsible for his death, had his head cut off on the scaffold. The Hungerford estate was seized by the Crown and Teffont Ewyas was granted to, or bought by, the Henry Ley who's monument is in Teffont Church. The Hungerford Badge, with two sickles enclosing a "garb" or wheatsheaf, is often to be found in Wiltshire buildings and church monuments.

The early life of **HENRY LEY** was less placid than his later years. Left an orphan and possessor of a considerable wealth at the age of ten, he was for that reason seized by one of the Seymour family, from whom again he was annexed by Sir Anthony Willoughby and clapped into Wardour Castle. The boy was held prisoner there for a matter of seven years before he managed to escape. Evidently he had not been wasting his time, as he forthwith married Dionysia, the daughter and heiress of the Seymour who had first spirited him away. It is this lady whose name appears on the Ley monument. She is given as Dionysia "St Maure", an early and more correct version of "Seymour". After his marriage he sold his family property in Devon and purchased the Manor of "Teston Ewias" from the King (1545).

Most notable of the Ley family who lived in Teffont Ewyas Manor was **JAMES LEY**, Henry's sixth son. As the youngest son with no prospects he set out to make his own way in the world, and with such success that he has a vast monument complete with wife in Westbury Church. It would seem that he commenced a career as a lawyer at the age of 18 by accepting a stipend as Rector of Teffont Ewyas Church for seven years., the money enabling him to study in London. The family butler acted as parson. Ultimately James progressed by easy stages to position of Chief Justiciary of the King's Bench, Speaker of the House of Lords, Lord Treasurer, and shortly before he died Baron and Earl of Marlborough. His epitaphs, as given by contemporaries, read, "Though a feeble statesman, he was an able erudite and impartial judge, "and, "that good Earl." Which latter eulogy, coming from the stern John Milton, carries weight.

One of the **POTICARY** family lived in Teffont in a house near where is now the Memorial Hall. The Poticary's (also spelt Potticary, Pothearye) were one of the families which in later medieval days made the woollen industry of Wiltshire famous in England and on the Continent. The Poticary headquarters were at Stockton and Wilton and, being graziers as

well as clothiers, they kept sheep on Teffont Down. An essential to their trade was a plentiful supply of water, needed for scouring the white broadcloth in which they were mostly interested, and for which they were particularly noted, and in providing power for the mills. Richard Potheary, who kept sheep on the Downs in the early years of Queen Elizabeth's reign, was in trouble at Blackwell Hall, the marketing headquarters in London, for delivering defective cloth, probably the rough blankets for which he was well-known. Each clothier had by law to have his own distinctive cloth mark as evidence of his good faith and conscientious workmanship. The right to use this mark was jealousy guarded, and was of value in accordance with the reputation of the clothier. The Poticary's local market was Salisbury, which for hundreds of years a centre for the broadcloth industry in Wiltshire.

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