

HISTORY OF THE HEXTON TAVERNERS.

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1930. St Faiths well whose waters at one time were credited with miraculous powers now choked up. Vicar Richings digging ground supposed to be its site but had not reached any water when I visited Hexton in spring of 1930.

In the Ecclesiastical taxation by order of Pope Nicholas IV in 20th year of King Edward 1st AD.1291 the Church of Hexweston was rated at £8 per annum. At the dissolution of the Monasteries Henry VIII, that property was valued in the Kings books at £7.13.4.

In 1650 the Commissioners appointed by Parliament to enquire into the state of Ecclesiastical benefices found this vicarage was worth £17 per annum.

That Francis Taverner had two parts.

John Barber of Hexton one part.

There was no present incumbent.

There was no donative or chapel.

18th May 6th year of Edward XI (1553) Right of Patronage was granted to Sir Richard Lee K and his heirs to be held of the King as of his manor of More in this country by fealty only in free socage (tenure of lands by service fixed) and not in capite. From the time of this grant the Manor and Advowson appear to have gone together until John Crosse on 18th May 1721 conveyed the Advowson to Christopher Eaton, Clerk, and his heirs in consideration of his having been very officious in serving the Church, and of his having by his industry and pious offices propogated the congregation which sometimes heretofore was neglected.

In 1815 the Advowson was sold to Wm Young, Lord of the Manor of Hexton (the name of Young was changed from Latour Royalist refugee family which settled here at the time of the French Revolution)

The church has a nave with two side aisled. The interior is not particularly beautiful. There are no Choir stalls - the few choristers being seated on chairs in the Chancel and buffets provided them on which to kneel. The Chapel branches off from the Chancel and has recently been entirely renovated. It is called the Latour Chapel (see above note) there being a mural tablet to that family. There is also a mural monument of Purbeck marble having two shields with arms.

1. Shield argent or bend lozenge sable in the sinister chief point a torteaux Taverner.

2. Taverner impaling sable, a chevron engrailed argent between three plates each charged with a pallet gules.

Below is the inscription (the lettering re-done)

"Here lyeth buried the bodies of Peter Taverner Lord of this town of Hexton who maryed Frances the daughter of Thomas Docrwa of Putteridge in County of Hexford Esquire, which two had issue Thomas who dyed a youth, Frances, John, and Margaret maryed to Edward Wingate Gentleman the said Peter dyed 6th April 1601".

Frances the wife of Peter was grave, prudent, provident above her sex learned and religious matron who after she lived a widow 35 years to the good example of others and to the comfort and benefit of her children meekly and christianlike rendered her soul to God 2nd June AD.1636 aged 79 and was hereunder interred.

Hexton Manor.

For 500 years belonged to the Abbots of St Albans to whom it was bestowed by Sexi the Dane who had previously captured it by the sword. Consists of the town of Hexton and about 4000 acres. In 1593 it passed from Mr Sadlers hands to Peter Taverner in whose family

it remained till 1674 when:-

Edward Thomas John and Jeremy Taverner conveyed it to John Crosse of London whose son possessed it in 1728. Subsequent owners Capt Wm Francis Young, George Henry Hodgson, who spent an immense amount of money on improvements. Present owner (1930) Sir James Hill - a wool magnate of Yorks.

Old Manor house replaced by Georgian structure. Property well stocked with game. Fine lake near the Manor. Road to Hitchin bordered by laburnum trees called locally the Golden Mile. Near the house is a stone of antiquarian interest - at one time a flag was raised on it to call inhabitants to arms during civil risings.

Francis Taverner (who succeeded Peter) wrote as per MSS. in British Museum 6223 an account of the Hocktide revels which were celebrated yearly in the village - He says:-

Hocktide signifies a tyme of skorne and contempt which fell upon the Danes by the death of Hardicanute their King and was solemnized by the best inhabitants both men and women in Hexton in the fields and streets and strange kind of pastyme and jollities". He describes the game -

Pulling at the Pole.

It was played by men and women of the place on the slope of Wayting Mill. The game would last two or three hours but end by the women always bringing the pole to the Cross by the town house door after which a feast was held in the town house and a collection made, the proceeds of which were given in part to the poor, part to the churchwarden for the repair of the Church. The latter amounted on average to twenty shillings. There were further sports afterwards. Roughness of the play was sometimes objected to but Francis Taverner writes:- "These nice tymes of ours would not only despise these sports but also account them immodest if not prophane but these playne and well meaning people did solace themselves in this manner and that without offence or scandal".

HULL.

Mr L.M.Stanewell, in charge of Corporation archives reports (29th August 1930)

"All I can find is admission of John Taverner as a Burgess in 1421-2 when he is described as a Mariner. The name is of course of the oldest of Hull names. Mr Bidson in his "Wyke in 1293, page 42 mentions a Roger le Taverner held land in Wyke in 1293 and in High Street in 1320. Hugh le Taverner and his wife Ellen also held land in High Street in 1320. John T. Bailiff of Hull in 1347 - and Walter Taverner are both mentioned in the recital to the rental of Hull in 1347 and several Taverners held land in the town. The next I find are the above particulars of the admission of John Taverner as Burgess.

Extracts from Hull notes from local newspapers.

"It is unfortunate that John Tutburys records do not give the sixe of the vessels or the ports they arrived from. Some light is thrown upon the subject however, from the following:-

In 1449 Henry VI granted several privileges to John Taverner, a merchant shipowner, of Hull who had built the largest ship ever seen in England and which the King himself christened naming her "The Grace of God". A licence was granted to him that he should export wool, tin, skins, leather and other merchandise from the ports of London, Southampson, Hull and Sandwich belonging to any English and foreign merchants and freely carry the same through the Straits of Morocco to Italy, he paying aliens duty upon the same and upon such expectation he would in return bring such merchandise as were most wanted in England as bow-staves, wax etc, whereby a great increase of the duties and Customs of the Crown would ensue and much gain to the subject.

The description of ships which belonged to Hull at this time may be readily learned by anyone who will pay a visit to Holy Trinity Church for in the recess of a small window on the north side of the nave, may be found representations of two ships of the period, cut into the stone.

JOHN TAVERNER (chiefly from Dictionary of National Biography not traceable on genealogical tree of Hertfordshire family)
Known in Boston, Lines as "The Good Musician"
AD.1495-1545.

Some accounts declare him to have been organist of Boston Church. After the establishment by Wolsey of Cardinal College Oxford (known afterwards as Christ Church College) the Bishop of Lincoln recommended the appointment of John Taverner to the post of Master of the Choristers which was accepted by Taverner, who acted also as organist of St Fridewides Chapel connected with the college.

He received £10 per annum for his services with the addition of four yards of cloth annually at 3/4d per yard for livery, and 1/8d per week for Commons - Total £15 a year, a higher sum than was allotted to any officer of the Collect except the Dean and Sub Dean.

During this period taverner wrote his church music which gained the title he subsequently received as being the last of the pre-Reformation composers.

He was associated with Clerk, Frith and others when persecution started and was accused and suspected of hiding Clerks books under the boards of his school, yet the Cardinal excused him for his music saying he was but a musician, and so escaped with his life.

In a note George Foxe adds "This Taverner repented him very much that he had made song to popish ditties in the time of his blindness. Taverner wrote music for the words:-

"My harte my minde" Love wyll I (for 3 voices)
The Bella (for 4 voices)
for Wynkyn de Wordes book 1530.

The Carnegie edition of Tudor music contains 8 masses, 3 Magnificats, one Te Deum and 28 Motets composed by Taverner. He is supposed to have eventually returned to Boston and to have died there 1545.

RICHARD THE REFORMER.

Son of John and Alice (nee Silvester) of
Erisky Norfolk.
Born 1510, Died 1575.

During the religious persecution in Henry VIII's reign Richard appears to have visited Continental centres of learning favouring the new doctrine. Appears to have had some difficulty in making a living, wrote to Thomas Cromwell and through him secured appointment in - 1536 as Clerk of the Privy Seal to King Henry.

1537 was enabled to marry., Margaret daughter of Walter Lambert by whom he had 4 sons and 3 daughters.

On her decease he married:-

Mary daughter of Sir John Harcourt of Standon Harcourt - had
1-son Harcourt, and
1-daughter Penelope.

When in the Signet office Richard wrote several works including "Garden of Wisdon - selectionf from good authors.

1539. Published a translation of the O.N.T. sometimes called "Bugges Bible" (see passage in psalms - terror by night)

1540. Issued with the Kings authority a commentary on the Epistles and Gospels.

2nd Dec: 1541. Richard, his wife and Mother in Law sent to the Tower by order of Bishop Gardiner (for making some rude remarks about a lady Anne of Cleves, outside Court Circles) Not long in the Tower and on being released went back to the Signet office.

20th Jan: 1538. Dissolved Priory at Alvingham Lincs:
Afterwards - " " " Northampton.

and Nuns Acres Stanford Priory granted to Richard.

1544 acquired property and built Wood Eaton Oxford.

Remained Clerk of Signet during Edward VI's reign 1547/53.

1550. was paid £333.13.4. as wages for soldiers who had served at Boulogne

1552. Although a layman was licenced to preach in any place of his Majesty's dominion and is said to have preached before the King at Court wearing a velvet hornet or round cap, a damask gown and a gold chain about his neck. At this good preaching was so scarce that not only the Kings Chaplains were obliged to make circuits round the country to instruct the people and to fortify them against popery but even laymen who were scholars were employed for that purpose. Richard had the habit also of preaching in streets and of catechising children on religious subjects.

On Queen Marys accession Richard lost his situation at the Signet Office and lived in more or less seclusion at Nortibon Hall. In that reign however he is said to have appeared in the pulpit at St Marys Oxford with a sword by his side and a gold chain about his neck and preached to the scholars beginning his sermon in these words:-

"Arriving at the Mount of St Marys in the stony stage were I now stand I have brought you some fine biscuits baked in the oven of charity carefully conserved for the chickens of the Church".

an alternative manner of speech in great favour with both speakers and hearers in those days.

1558. On Queen Elizabeth's accession Richard addressed her a congratulatory epistle - was offered a Knighthood by the Queen but he declined. Served as Justice of the Peace and in 1569 was High Sherriff of Oxfordshire.

Richard was one of the witnesses who signed the instrument by which Mathew Parker signified his assent to his own election as Archbishop of Canterbury.

Died 14th July 1575 - buried with some ceremony in the Chancel of the Church at Wood Eaton, Oxford.

STATE PAPERS.

JOHN TAVERNOR - TAVERNER.

1604. July 22nd, warrant for £661.18.4. estimate for erection of new lodge Richmond Surrey.
1605. " " £56.13.8. timber for park Richmond Surrey.
1607. Nov 13th. £217.1.0. for impaling warren nr Hampton Court.
1607. Dec 21st. £88.8.3. imprest towards a years charge for works at Nonsuch Park.
1608. Feb 4th. £182.0.0. subjoined estimate for expense of conveying 130 loads timber for repairs to Great Lodge at Nonsuch Park.
1608. Feb 8th. £204.1.4. stuff for impaling the middle park at Eltham.
£182.0.0. for materials for enlargement of Great Lodge at Nonsuch Park.
1614. July 9th. £81.11.6. to Susan Westwood executrix of John Taverner late Surveyor of Woods South of Trent in lieu of Taverners moiety of a fine due from George Pollard Keeper of Game on Blakemore Wilts, but pardoned by the King.
1609. Feb 21st. Richard Taverner killed Bird in a duel.
1615. July 13th. Dick Taverner guilty of killing several persons is apprehended, but the Queen favours him.
1616. April 30th. Taverner condemned to death for killing Bird five years before.
1616. Nov 6th. Special warrant to G. Reynall to deliver Richard Taverner from Kings Bench prison.
Had ... three brothers Nathaniel (Barrister of Grays Inn) John of Soundness.
Edmund Sec: to Earl of Pembroke.
1621. July 10th. The publication "Withers Motts" not called in question till the first impression was sold and the second in preparation which Mr John Taverner licensed after striking out certain passages.
1626. Nov 2nd. Warrant to pay Edmund Taverner £20 for a diamond sold to His Majesty (Charles I) and given to Mons: Frogan.
- 1626 Nov 24th. Warrant for £400 for provision for Queens Masque shortly to be presented.
1628. Feb 11th. Westminster Warrant to pay £600 to Edmund Taverner towards expense of a masque to be presented shortly before the King at Whitehall.
1628. Aug 3rd. Southwick, Letter from Edmund Taverner to Nicholas.
- "This afternoon the King sent the Duke a message by Sir Philip Killigrew that he would go to Beaulieu and stay there until he hears from His Grace that he was ready to come down. When the Duke was sure he was to send word the day before and the King would meet him at Southwick. Taverners Lord commanded him to advise Nicholas thereof. Has sent to Nicholas' brother to come to preach on Tuesday.

1629. Edmund Taverner to Secretary Dorchester, soliciting a reward for Mons: Angier writes:-

"We acknowledge the skill of a violin or harper with good pensions and shall a useful instrument of State be unrewarded? The State has an interest in the encouragement of able and industrious honest Ministers".

SAMUEL TAVERNER - born at Romford Essex 1621.

Died August 4th 1696 aged 75.

Had command of a troop of horse and was occasionally stationed in Dover Castle under Cromwell 1643.

Called by his comrades Ironsides.

Governor of Deal Castle by commission from Cromwell 10th Feb 1635.

Whilst at Dover Samuel Taverner acquired portion of Dover Priory Used as a private churchyard being called "Taverners Garden". This was subsequently buried under the stables of a neighboring Grocers Shop. Now (1930) a playground for children.

(Note - Samuel Taverner is subject of a longish poem published 1806 by a General Baptist and lover of Peace and called "Taverners Ghose", printed by C. Stower, Paternoster Row.

Further notes regarding Richard (The Reformer) taken from Dictionary of National Biography.

Educated at Benet of Corpus Christi College Cambridge, but migrated to Cardinal College (Christ Church) Oxford, where his career is always confused with that of John Taverner - perhaps a distant relative Robert graduated B.A. 20th June 1527.

Returned to Cambridge and incorporated B.A. 1529 made a living there by teaching, but induced to become a student on Continent. The friend (perhaps Wolsey) who supported him there having died, Robert returned to England before 1532 in a destitute state Thomas Cromwell induced Duke of Norfolk to promise him a small pension and in 1535 Taverner was described at last year Master of Greek at Cambridge and now Cromwells clerk. Entered as student at Inner Temple and devoted to law, so as to enter Cromwells service.

1536. Thomas Cromwell secured his appointment as Clerk of P.S.

STATE COLONIAL PAPERS.

May 11th 1635. Sir Henry Martin to Privy Council, second report upon petition of Edward Kingswell concerning the victualling and usage of passengers in the Mayflower on their voyage to Virginia, the endeavours of Passall to take Kingswell from thence to Carolina and the repair of the George which should have accompanied the Mayflower. Seven witnesses affirm the victuals to have been good and sufficient. Henry Taverner Master of the Thomas was hired by Vassall to take 28 passengers in case any should die in the Mayflower. They arrived at Virginia in July 1634 but Kingswell had left for England in the preceding May.

THE HADDOCK GHOST.

(From Bishop Hebers life of Jeremy Taylor)

Thomas Alcock Secy to Bishop Jeremy Taylor gives the fullest account of the story related below and adds:-
This Taverner with all the persons and places mentioned in the story I knew very well and all wise and good men did believe it especially the Bishop and the Dean of Connor Dr Rust"

Late on Michaelmas night in the year 1662 a lusty, proper stout fellow called Francis Taverner about 25 years of age then servant at large, afterwards porter to Lord Chichester, Earl of Donegal, was riding to his house near Belfast from Hillsborough when he came to the drawn bridge near Drumbeg. At the foot of the bridge his horse stopped suddenly. Taverner dismounted, urged the beast forward and as he started again, was aware of two shadowy horsemen beside him. At the same moment a third horseman in a white coat was at his elbow and turning, Taverner perceived a resemblance to one James Haddock formerly an inhabitant of Malone where he had died five years before. Taverner asked the apparition who in the name of God he was. It told his name and bade him not to be afraid reminding him of an accident that happened five years before when "I and two other friends (referring to the two horsemen riding noiselessly on before them) were at your fathers house, and you, by your fathers appointment brought us some nuts". Taverner asked why he appeared to him rather than any other. He answered because he was a man of more resolution than others, and if he would ride his way with him he would acquaint him with a business he had to deliver to him which Taverner refused to, and would go his own way, for they were now at a quadrivial (i.e. 4 cross roads where the path from Dunmurry to Lismoyne crosses the Belfast road) and so rode on homewards. But immediately on their departure there arose a great wind and withal he heard very hideous screeches and noises to his amazement. Presently morning broke, the cocks crew and slipping off his horse Taverner knelt in prayer to God and so came safely home.

The next night as Taverner sat by the fire with his wife, the ghost of Haddock appeared again and asked Taverner to send a message to Elinor Welch - formerly his wife and now married to one Davis - that their son should be righted in the lease (half of the Lord Chichester and of which the son was deprived by his stepfather Davis) Night after night the ghost of Haddock appeared to Taverner sometimes when sitting up, at other times when in bed, though never visible to his wife. This lasted for a whole month until the neighborhood was full of the story.

At length Taverner went to Malone to the house of Davis but when in reply to his question if Mrs Davis maiden name was not Elinor Welch, she said there was another Elinor Welch beside her, Taverner took himself off without delivering the message. The same night being fast asleep in his bed Taverner was awakened by something pressing upon him and saw the apparition of Haddock with white coat as at other times, who asked him if he had delivered his message. Taverner answered that he had been there, whereupon the apparition looked more pleasantly upon him. But on learning that he had failed to deliver the message, it appeared in more formidable shapes and threatened to tear him in pieces if he did not deliver it. This made him leave the house where he dwelt in the mountains and betake himself to Belfast where he sat up all night at the house of a shoemaker named Pierce along with one or two of Lord Chichesters servants desirous of seeing the spirit. About midnight they saw Taverners countenance change and a trembling fell on him. He presently espied the apparition in the room opposite where he sat. Taverner got up took a candle and resolutely asked in the name of God wherefore it

threatened to tear him in pieces if he did not do so speedily, and changing itself into many prodigious shapes vanished in white like a ghost. Next day Taverner being much dejected went to Lord Chichesters house and with tears in his eyes related to some of the family the sadness of his condition.

Note - in evidence afterwards Pierce stated that a mist came over his eyes and what was spoken to Taverner was in a low hollow voice and he could not understand what was said.

This story was told to my Lords Chaplain Mr James South, who advised Taverner to go to Malone and deliver the message but first they went to Dr Lewis Downs Minister of Belfast. The three accordingly went to Davis's house where Taverner delivered the message, and thanking the two for their company visited his brother at Drumbridge. Two nights after, the apparition again appeared and asked Taverner if he had given the message. He said he had done so fully, whereupon he was told he must go to the Executors also. Taverner asked if it would do him hurt to which the spirit answered somewhat doubtfully at first, but at length threatened that it would hurt Davis if he attempted injury to Taverner, and so vanished away in white.

The day following Bishop Taylor was to keep Court at Dromore and told his Secretary Mr T. Alcock to ask Taverner to come along. There he was cross examined by the Bishop who came to the conclusion that his story was a genuine instance of an apparition of souls of the dead. Lady Conway and a fashionable company being at Hillsborough at the time asked the Bishop to have Taverner brought over and the case tried. This was done, and the Bishop gave Taverner a number of questions to ask the ghost when it appeared. Taverner along with his brother was then sent to lodge the night at Lord Conways house in Lisburn. About 9'clock as Taverner and others were talking indoors, Taverner had a fit of trembling as before, and being loth to make a disturbance in Lord Conways house, he and his brother betook themselves into the courtyard where the former saw the spectre come over the wall clad in a white coat. Taverner gave the questions he was told to ask, but the spirit made no answer, and crawling with hands and feet over the wall again vanished in white with a most melodious harmony.

Notes - some of the Bishops questions were:-

Why do you appear in so small a matter when so many widows and orphans in the world are defrauded of greater matters?

How are the spirits of the other world regimented?

The lease was eventually made over to the boy Haddock after a formal trial of the case in Belfast.

