

METHLEY

1443 - 1614

Edited by C. E. McGee

Introduction

Methley village and the adjacent Manor of Methley were located about eight miles southeast of Leeds near the confluence of the River Aire and the River Calder. The rivers, being navigable, facilitated the movement of people and goods, especially wool, which was the cornerstone of the local economy. Coal mining was sufficiently important from at least the early 14th century, that the Manorial Rolls had a section recording details of its extraction.

In 1410, Robert Waterton, who held several important offices during the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V, acquired the Manor of Methley from the Hospital of St. Nicholas of Pontefract in exchange for manors elsewhere. When he died in 1425, his grandson Sir Robert Waterton (1408-1476) became lord of the Manor of Methley. Knighted in 1434 and appointed High Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1441, he held the manor at the time of the celebration of Hogmanay recorded in the first of the following documents. The document is an account submitted at Michaelmas 1444 by Richard Whitwood, one of the collectors of farms for Sir Robert (as noted by R.E. Yarwood, "Hogmanay 1443 in West Yorkshire," *Folklore* 95 [1984]: 252-4). Most payments in his account are for repairs and most receipts are for rents, but because Whitwood also happened to be the supervisor of the lord's household that year; as a result, we have these unusual records of performance at Methley.

Richard Shann (1561-1627) of Methley kept his miscellany or 'commonplace book' as an annual recording of national events, weather conditions, developments in his garden, and local events. He also included his family pedigree, starting in 1422 with Robert Shann, parish priest of Methley. In this context, Richard remembered his father, William, as being "verie light and lyvelie in his youth, and would runn verie faste, his greatest delyte was in musicke, he coulde plaie of Organs & virginalls . . ." (f 83v). Writing his own obituary, Richard described himself as "verie light and Nimble of foote, his chefest delite . . . in plantinge and grafting all manner of herbes & trees. . ." He practiced physic and surgery; made illustrated books of herbs and a book of prayers and meditations; wrote on medicine and surgery; and "when he was three score and two yeares oulde, he made A booke chroniclewise (which he gethered out of verie Ancient Authours, and allso those of later tymes which was of good credit.) of manie notable thinges which happened in anie Age of the wourld" (f 84v). Here Richard's hand ends; his son Thomas finished the entry with an account of his father's death, a record of his burial with his father and grandfather at the Lady Choir end of the churchyard of St. Oswald's, Methley, and the notation, "He dyed A Romaine Catholicke" (f 88).

Shann included the unusual information about the source of the rushes for the parish rush-bearing in "The survaie and measure of all the whole groundes within the Manner of Methley, the Commans and wastes excepted." The date when the survey was done is not noted, but Shann indicates that he copied it in 1611 and supplied the names of the new owners of properties that had been sold.

These transcriptions appear courtesy of the West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds, and the British Library, London.

Texts

1443-1444

Manorial Roll

LEEDS, WEST YORKSHIRE ARCHIVE SERVICE

f [1] (23 October 1443 - 23 October 1444) (Payments)

...!

Soluciones solute per preceptum domini

...Et solutum xxxj die decembris magn' hagnonayse ^{xij}d & paru' hagnonayse viij d xx d Et solutum primo die mensis Ianuarij Pasy ministrallo ex precepto domini xij d Et solutum iij^{to} die mensis Ianuarij instrionibus Thome Haryngton¹ ex precepto domini xx d ...

...!

... Et solutum viij die mensis decembris ministrall' ex precepto domini xx d ...

...

1611

Commonplace Book

LONDON, BRITISH LIBRARY

f 19v

...

The Clarke²
Myer well Inge.

One peece of meadowe belonginge to the Clarke for strowinge greene Russhes in the Church vpon Whitsondaie

...

1614

ff 71-71v (13-16 June)

...

°1614 A <s>tage playe°

This yeare 1614. A verie fyne Historie or Stage Plaie called Cannimore and Lionley. was Ackted by xvijth men & boyes vpon Monday³ Twesdaie, Wednesdaie, and Thursdaie in whitsonne weeke,⁴ the names of the plaiers was these =

Richard dickonsonne. the Kinges partes. Graman &
Padamon.⁵

francis Shanne the kynges sonne. l

- 3 Robert Shanne the kynges daughter. called Lionley.
- 4 Richard Shanne the maid to lionley. called Meldina.
- 5 Thomas Shanne A kinght.⁶ called Brocadon.
- 6 Thomas Shanne A Duke, called duke Gurdon.
- 7 Thomas Burton.⁷ Earle Carthagan.
- 8 Thomas Scofeild. Earle Edios.
- 9 Francis Burton. [A] kinge Padamon sonne called Canimore
- 10 Thomas Iobsonne the first venterus knight.
- 11 Thomas Shann de hungait. the second ventrus knight.
- 12 Robert Marshall A knight, & ye sword bearer.
- 13 William Burton the Cuntri man & the Ideote.
- 14 William Burton his sonne. Invention the paracite.
- 15 Richard Burton
- 16 Thobie Burton. A page

Gilberte Roberte one of the *Commans* parte.

This plaie was Acted by these men in A Barne belonginge to the Pooke place hard by the parsonage. wher vnto resorted A multitude of people to se the same. the greatest daie was vpon Tewesdaie in whitsonne weeke. the tent parte of the people could not se it vpon that daie

Rush Bearing

There was allso A Rush bearinge the same Tewesdaie in whitsonne weeke, with A great compaine of verie fayre Titopps as we call them, most richlie bewtefied with Skaves⁸ and other silkes.

Vpon whitsonn even beinge the xjth of Iune ¹⁶¹⁴ my doughter Ann⁹ was verie sicke by reason of A desinesse that was in hir heade, but god be prased she did recover soone after, for she went to the church¹⁰ with the Rush bearinge

...

Document Descriptions

c1611 Richard Shann's Commonplace Book

London, British Library, Add. MS 38599; c 1585-1627; English; paper; iii + 154 + iii; modern foliation in pencil; 280mm x 200mm; good condition; re-bound in leather with blank folios added at beginning and end; almost all by Richard Shann (1561-1627) with some later notes added at the end.

1443-1444 Household Account

Leeds, City Archives, West Yorkshire Archives Service (WYAS), MS.

WYL156/MX/M6/3/11 (Mexborough archive); 29 September 1443 – 29 September 1444;

Latin; paper rolls (5 sheets sewn end to end) written on one side only, except title on outside; account roll of Richard Whitwood, collector of farms etc of Sir Robert de Waterton, lord of the manor of Methley; 1845 mm x 300 mm; condition good except top edge tattered

View of account of Richard Whitwood, collector of farms, lands and tenements ... and lands tenement and meadows of demesne late in husbandry not let to farm
Mich 22 – Mich 23 Hen VI

Notes

¹ Sir Thomas Harrington, of Hornby, Lancashire, held several important offices in the service of King Henry VI, to whom he was loyal for most of his life. He died, however, in 1460 at the Battle of Wakefield, fighting in support of the claim of Richard, Duke of York, to the throne. His players and those of his descendants appear regularly in the records of towns, households, and religious houses throughout the north of England.

² Possibly William Stonerd

³ 'M' written over 'T'

⁴ whitsonne week: Pentecost, the beginning of Whitsun Week, fell on 12 June in 1614.

⁵ Graman & Padamon: connected to one another by a preceding brace

⁶ kinght: for knight; the dot is clearly above the first minim

⁷ Burton: presumably cousins; Shann's first wife was Ann Burton

⁸ Skaves: probably for 'Skarves'

⁹ doughter Ann: born 25 June 1595

¹⁰ the church: St. Oswald's