

# SOUTHAMPTON RAMBLING CLUB AT BROUGHTON.

1414 B.  
INTERESTING PAPER BY MRS. SUCKLING.

In the delightful weather which favoured Saturday, July the 18th, some thirty members of the Southampton Rambling Club visited Broughton, by the kind invitation of the Rector, the Rev. Alfred Woodin, and Mrs. Woodin, who hospitably entertained them at tea in the beautiful Rectory grounds. Arriving at Horsebridge Station by train, the party proceeded by brakes to Broughton House, the residence of Mr. Wm. Steele Tomkins, where, on the terrace that she loved so well, the story of Anne Steele, the poetess, was told by Mrs. Suckling.

After the reading of this paper, in the most picturesque surroundings, Mr. Steele Tomkins conducted the party to the house called "Grandfather's," where his great aunt, the poetess, was born. A very interesting oil painting of his house, executed some hundred and fifty years ago, was kindly placed on view, when a fine columbarium, among some outbuildings in the direction of "Grandfather's," was pointed out, as possibly indicating the site of the old Manor House of Broughton. As is well known, few but lords of manors were granted the privilege of a pigeon house or columbarium. And since the present Broughton House has several ancient remains, it may stand on the site of the old house purchased by Thomas Dowse in 1590, but apparently never occupied by him or by any of his family. In some old deeds the place is called Pigeon House farm, which was probably in the time when the owners were non-resident. The house originally faced north, and was entered by a door looking on to the terrace. And to show how frequently the place had been altered, Mr. Steele Tomkins said that, in making his own changes, his work-people discovered no less than four brick ovens.

The present occupiers of "Grandfather's," the Misses Fletcher, showed various relics connected with Miss Anne Steele. Afterwards the church and columbarium were inspected, and the Rectory reached in excellent time for tea, which was greatly enjoyed.

Mrs. Suckling's paper was as follows:—  
Broughton, one of the early Saxon "tuns," is supposed to be identical with the ancient Roman station of Brige. The site of their old glass works at Buckholt is one of the most interesting in Hampshire, and may still be seen where the Roman road, from Winchester to Sarum, very much as they left it, crosses the old British highway from north to south of the county. It was along that same road, in August, 1066, that William the Conqueror rode, from Winchester, past Farley Chamberlayne, along Teg Down, and so, across the Test near Horsebridge, through Buckholt Forest to Salisbury Plain, where he met all the landholders of substance in the kingdom, who submitted to him, and swore him oaths of allegiance (1). Close to this road is a place now called Norman Court, recorded in Domesday Book under the name of Ching's Camp, where a Hampshire tradition says King Canutus encamped on that memorable occasion. It is also alleged that men of Broughton were among Harold's followers at the battle of Hastings, in company with the Saxon tenants of the adjoining Manor of East Tytherley, who are known to have met their death in that encounter. During the reign of the Saxon Kings, Broughton was a Royal Manor, and in the time of Edward the Confessor brought in annually £76 16s. 4d. The present church, said to have superseded the one mentioned in the Domesday Survey, was assessed at the last crusade in 1290 at £33 6s. 8d., and in 1341 was taxed for the French wars of Edward the Third, when the jurors sworn were John at the Mill, Simon le Tailour, and Thomas le Eye. At that time there was a Rectory house with a columbarium, or pigeon house, as part of its endowment, a privilege usually confined to lords of manors, and it is now the only Rectory in Hampshire with a columbarium.

In the church is a memorial, erected in 1625 by Sir Edmund Dowse, Kt. (2), (b. 1584, d. 1644, Cupbearer to Queens Anne of Denmark and Henrietta Maria), to commemorate his father, Thomas Dowse (b. 1555, d. 1602), lord of this manor, and Blanche, his wife (3), who died in 1603. She was daughter of Richard Covert, of Slaugham, in the county of Sussex, and is of special interest from the point of view of the genealogist, for not only was she a granddaughter of John (Thomas?) Cook (4), of Rushington, near Southampton, and a niece of Jane Covert, wife of Sir Francis Fleming (5) (who died lord of Broadlands in 1558), but she was cousin to that interesting person, Anne Goring, wife of Richard Gifford, who died lord of East Tytherley in 1568 (6). Thomas Dowse was, moreover, a younger brother of that Richard, of Moor Court (who married Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Thomas Paulet) (7), and he seems to have purchased the manor of Broughton in 1590 for the purpose of a marriage settlement for his eldest son, Francis

was occupied by the Rev. Giles Dowse (b. 1606, d. 1652), who was presented to it by his father, Sir Francis, in 1630, and there remained until his sequestration in 1646. The arms of the family, "Or on a fesse chequy, azure and argent, between three greyhounds sable," survive in the name of the present "Greyhound Inn," which once boasted a sign painted by the artist Recklsen, while staying there on a sketching tour. An interesting item of information connected with the Dowse pedigree is contained in the new "Victoria History of Hampshire" under "Longparish," where the Inkpen family long held lands called "Gavelacre." This explains the curious word "Gallaker" in the 1634 Herald's Visitation of Hampshire, where Alice, wife of Nicholas Dowse is said to have been "daughter of . . . Inkpen of Gallaker." The family also held lands at Nether Wallop in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. On the same authority, under "Broughton," it is stated that "a small estate in that parish called Oak, belonged to Richard Brent, who settled it upon his only child, Anne, and her husband, Sir Thomas Paulet" (9). And since the latter was father of a daughter, and sole heir, Elizabeth, who married Richard Dowse, of Moor Court, brother of Thomas, aforesaid, Oak probably belonged to her, but must have been sold later, since it is further asserted that "in 1675 Oak belonged to Richard Godfrey, whose eldest daughter and co-heir married William Steele, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and brought her portion of the estate into that family;" and "in 1758 an arrangement was made by the other descendants of Richard Godfrey who quit claimed their respective shares in the property to William Steele, grandson of the Chancellor." Lord Chancellor Steele (b. 1610, d. 1680) was "son of Richard Steele, of Sandback, in Cheshire, living in London in 1631." William was called to the Bar in 1637, and married Elizabeth Godfrey at Elmstead in Kent on the 15th of March, 1638 (10). She was his first wife, and the mother of his son Richard, who was living in 1707, and left a son, Richard Steele, afterwards M.P. for Stockbridge.

All this definitely connects the Kentish Godfreys with the family of that name, who were so long associated with Romsey in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and who owned the manors of Lee and Timsbury, with "lands at Broughton," until "Charles Godfrey, Esquire, of Lee," by will dated 1757, directed his Manor of Timsbury, and lands at Broughton, to be sold for the benefit of his "younger children." From the Kentish pedigree it appears that Richard Godfrey, the father of Elizabeth Steele, was M.P. for New Romney, in Kent, baptized at Lydd in 1592, and buried at Wye in 1641, under an inscription that still survives. His will, proved at Canterbury by William Steele in December, 1643, makes mention of his "daughter, married to William Steele, and of his grandchild, Richard." His brother, Thomas Godfrey, of Sellenge, in his will of 1664, alludes to his "nephew, the Right Hon. William Steele, the Lord Chancellor;" and Anne Godfrey, in 1707, refers to her cousin, Richard Steele (11). The rest of the story of Oak is told in the will of Mr. William Steele, brother of the poetess, and dated at Broughton House in 1785, where he mentions "My farm and lands, called Godfreys, which I purchased of the family of Godfrey, situated at Broughton, Lockerley, and East Tytherley" . . . (and) "the site of the Manor Farm of Oak, the messuage, farm, mansion house, and manor place of the said manor." The testator was fourth in direct descent from William Steele (born 1600, died 1663), who took an active part in the religious struggles in the village of Broughton, in the Civil War, and, finally, joined the Baptist community when it erected a chapel there in April, 1655. To this chapel his grandson, Henry Steele (born 1655, died 1700), devoted himself as pastor for forty years (12); and was "so much followed in his native village that, at the visitation, the Rector of Broughton complained that one, Henry Steele, had set up preaching, and had drawn

all the people after him," asking advice of the Bishop as to how he should oppose him." The Bishop said, "Go home, and preach better than Henry Steele, and the people will return." As this probably occurred "between 1699 and 1710, the Bishop was Dr. Gilbert Burnet (1689-1714)." Henry Steele, who died in 1739, aged 85, had been in business as a contractor for the Navy, purchasing timber for Portsmouth Dockyard, and was so prosperous that he was able to leave behind him a considerable fortune, and to endow the chapel that he loved with cottages and a burial ground. He was succeeded both in his business and the pastorate by his nephew, William Steele (born 1689, died 1769), who is said to have "preached to one congregation for sixty years." He resided in the house built by his ancestors, called "Grandfather's," with his wife, Anne Frowde, whose brother, the Rev. John B. Frowde, was a chaplain in the Navy at Trafalgar; and at "Grandfather's," in 1717,

(now gone), she wrote many of her best known hymns, particularly the one commencing "What soft delights the peaceful bosom warms." Her Bible is still preserved in the library of the Baptist Chapel, where is a fine collection of 1500 volumes bequeathed to it by a former member of the congregation. The pews of oak are said to have been made from the wreck of the Royal George, lost off Spithead in 1782.

"Grandfather's," said to date from early in the 17th century, was eventually left unoccupied, and falling into decay was let as two cottages until the late Judge Henry Mason Bompas (born 1836, died 1909), a great nephew of the poetess, who inherited it from his grandmother, Anne Steele (Mrs. Joseph Tomkins), of Broughton House (born 1767, died 1859). He completely restored it to its original dignified antiquity.

In conclusion it should be said that Mary Steele, the step-sister of the poetess (born 1724, died 1772), in 1749 became the wife of Joseph Wakeford, of Andover (born 1695, died 1755), whose son, William Steele Wakeford, about 1800, purchased the old mansion house of East Tytherley from Lord Rolle, and was lord of its manor at his death, in 1819. His sons, Robert and William Wakeford (bankers at Andover), disposed of it to Sir Isaac Goldsmid, Bart., whose wife was in occupation of the house when the machine riots took place, and a crowd of roughs besieged her. So intense was her fright that she departed as soon as possible, and never could be induced to return. It remained unoccupied for many years, and was finally razed to the ground by its present owner.

- (1) Shore's History of Hampshire, p. 100.
- (2) Visitation of Hants, 1634, Dowse.
- (3) Manning's History of Surrey, Vol. II, p. 440, Covert.
- (4) Berry's Hampshire Genealogies, Mill.
- (5) Visitation of Hants, 1634, and Hampshire Field Club Proceedings, 1906, p. 352.
- (6) Visitation of Hampshire, 1634, Gifford.
- (7) Victoria History of Hants, Oak Manor, Broughton.
- (8) See Berry's Sussex Pedigrees, p. 96, Dowse and Alchorn, also "The Landed Gentry," 1846, Vol. I, p. 343.
- (9) Victoria History of Hants, Vol. IV. Broughton and Recovery Rolls, Michaelmas Term, 27 Charles II., rot. 260.
- (10) Atkinson's Life of Richard Steele, p. 30, and Dictionary of National Biography.
- (11) Thomas Godfrey, of Sellenge, brother of Richard, was father of Sir Edmundsbury Godfrey, murdered in London in 1679. Will, P.O.C.C., 55, Barrett.
- (12) Memoir of Anne Steele, by John Sheppard, 1732.

her daughter, Anne, the future poetess, was born. Always frail of constitution, and of an unusually devout mind, Anne Steele grew older her father wrote poems, and room at "Grandfather's," fitted up for her and oak cupboards, which are still in place. Her first work, published in 1760, under the name of "Theodosia," and was so well received that she was able to apply the proceeds to her numerous charities. In 1760 they were re-issued in two volumes, with an introduction by Dr. Caleb Evans, and her complete works were again published in 1863, with a memoir by John Sheppard (13). After her father's death, in 1769, Anne went to live with her brother, William Steele (born 1715, died 1785) at Broughton House, which he had enlarged and repaired on his marriage, and there, on the terrace walk, under an avenue of trees

(b. 1576, d. 1638). The latter, who was knighted in 1603 at the Coronation of James the First, espoused Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Sir Hamden Paulet, daughter and heir of Sir John Paulet, of Nether Wallop, and in the same year, viz. 1603, upon Amabel, daughter of Sir Anthony Bonn, and in subsequently first to Antony Dowse, who died finally said to Henry Fane, in 1640, after Dean. Sir Francis Grey, Earl of Kent, Nether Wallop in 1648, was succeeded at Court by his second son, on his death at (1757-1834) (8) the will known ancestor of Francis Dowse in the Civil War the Rectory of Broughton