

BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

CATTESHILL AND ANOTHER USHER SERJEANTY IN THE PURCEL FAMILY

IN his account of the Catteshill serjeanty¹ the late J. H. Round made several errors in detail and failed (not having the necessary record material before him) to notice that there were two distinct usher serjeanties in families (probably the same) named Purcel.

Round began by quoting the record of the year 1212 (*Testa de Nevill*, p. 225) :

Henricus Rex senior dedit Cateshull Dyvo Porcell patri Radulfi (*sic*) de Broc et Henricus Rex (II) pater domini Regis fecit cartam suam Radulfo de Broc tenere de eo *per serjanciam hostiarum de camera domini Regis* ut de R(ege ?) [*recte, ut dicitur*] et post mortem ejusdem Randulfi Stephanus de Turneham habuit predictam villam cum filia ipsius Randulfi per predictum servitium.

On this passage he made two comments : ' It is in the first place difficult to imagine what name is represented by " Dyvo," and, in the second, difficult to believe that this Porcell was father of Ralf (*sic*) de Broc.' Round went on to say, ' I suspect that, in the *Testa* entry above, we should read, " patri Radulfi *Purcel*," for in a Charter assigned by Eyton to 1155, Henry II granted to Ralf Purcel, his usher, the office of Robert Burnel, his uncle (*Cart. Ant.*, F. 19).' ' Very possibly,' he concluded, ' Randulf de Broc, who was in favour with Henry II, secured Catteshill, as he did other lands in the neighbourhood, by grant of Henry II and not by inheritance,' noting also that de Broc ' came into prominence in the Becket quarrel by being put in charge of the possessions of the See of Canterbury.'

It is possible to correct some of these statements and inferences. In the first place, there is no doubt that Ranulf de Broc was a Purcel. Round, though he quoted from ' *Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus* ' ² the confirmation in

¹ *The King's Serjeants*, pp. 98-108.

² P. 339.

CATTESHILL AND ANOTHER USHER SERJEANTY

1206 to Stephen de Turnham and his wife Edeline, daughter of Ranulf de Broc, of the grant by Henry II to the said Ranulf, his usher and marshal ('hostiario et marescallo suo'), of all the land and office of his (Ranulf's) father of whomsoever held, omitted to notice that the corresponding entry in 'Rotuli Chartarum' of 1205¹ expressly calls Ranulf de Broc the son of Oyn Purcel ('filius Oyni Porcelli'). Here we have the confirmation of the 'Testa' entry and the explanation of the name 'Dyvo.' It is an error in transcription for 'Oyno' as, indeed, the new edition of the 'Book of Fees' points out.²

Ranulf de Broc was granted, then, in Henry II's reign the office of usher, held by his father Oyn Purcel in Henry I's reign, taking, perhaps, his name de Broc from his mother's family. For we learn from the same entry in the charter roll of 1205 that a certain Guy had, with the consent of Nigel de Broc and his brothers, given to his nephew Ranulf de Broc, son of Oyn Purcel, the whole land of Angmering, Sussex.

Leaving aside for the moment the position in the pedigree of the Ralf Purcel mentioned above, and a discussion of Round's conjecture that Ranulf de Broc got Catteshill and its serjeanty by grant of Henry II and not by inheritance, let us turn to Round's account of the early history of the serjeanty. He found 'a sure starting-point' in an entry on the pipe roll of 1130.

Gaufridus porcell(us) redd. comp. de xx marc. arg. pro terra patris sui de Gateshela.

'Clearly then,' he wrote, 'in 1130, Geoffrey Porcel had succeeded his father in possession of Catteshill, which, therefore, had been severed from the royal manor of Godalming.' I may add that a writ³ addressed to Richard Basset and A(ubrey) de Ver, the sheriff, and the burgesses of Guildford, directs that the men of Geoffrey Purcell of 'Chattishill' and 'Chedelingafelt' (Chiddingfold) shall be as free of toll and custom as in the time of Geoffrey's father. 'This Geoffrey,' Round continued, 'appears to have given a hide of land at Windsor to Reading Abbey, the great foundation of Henry I, and to have there taken the cowl. His gift was confirmed by the empress and then by Henry II (*Testa*, p. 128).'

Round did not quote the confirmations which exist of this gift by the Empress Maud and by Stephen;⁴ that of Henry II has not, apparently, come down to us. They were printed by Mr. Albert Way,⁵ who assigned that of the empress to the year 1141. These confirmations were of the land of

¹ P. 160 b.

² Pt. i. p. 67.

³ B.M. Add. Ch. 19572, dated by Farrer in the year 1130, 'Itinerary of Henry I,' *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xxxiv. 555-6.

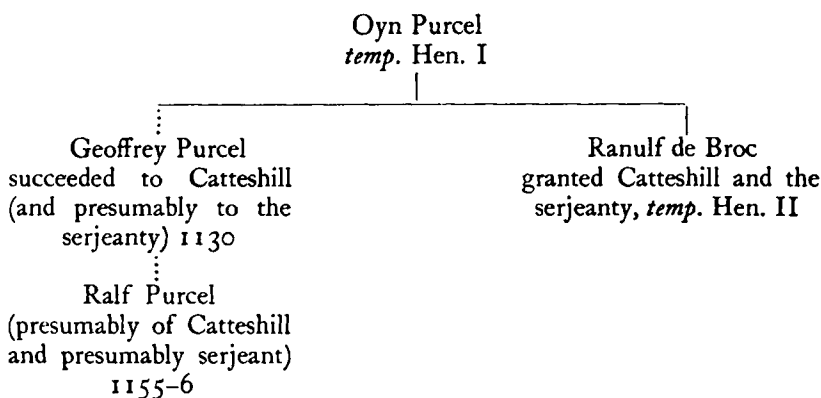
⁴ B.M. Add. Ch. 19576 and 19584.

⁵ *Arch. Journal*, xx. (1863), 281 sq.

IN THE PURCEL FAMILY

Windsoris and of Cateshella, which was of Geoffrey Purcelle, which he gave to the monastery of Reading when he became a monk there. Stephen's confirmation arranged also that Ralf Purcelle should hold of the abbey land to the value of 20s. a year at Windsor, as he had made a fine thereof ('sicut inde finivit') with the monks. The witnesses to this confirmation included Ralf Purcel himself and Robert Burnelle, whose significance will appear presently. We may perhaps assume that this Ralf Purcel was Geoffrey's son and successor. For, as Round noted, a Ralf Purcel had remission of danegeld on 5 hides in Surrey in 1156.¹ This is presumably Catteshill.

Though there is no more precise indication of Oyn Purcel's date than that he lived in Henry I's reign, it seems probable that he was the predecessor of Geoffrey Purcel, who succeeded to Catteshill (and presumably to the serjeanty) in 1130. If that be the case, we should have the following scheme :



We may now inquire how Catteshill and the serjeanty, which seem to have been in Ralf Purcel's possession in the beginning of Henry II's reign, came into the possession of Ranulf de Broc. The points we have to bear in mind are :

- (1) that Catteshill and its serjeanty appear to have been in the hands successively of Oyn, Geoffrey, and Ralf Purcel from Henry I's reign to the first years of Henry II, when a Ralf Purcel occurs for the last time in Surrey (*i.e.*, apparently, Catteshill) ;
- (2) that at some unknown date in Henry II's reign the king gave Catteshill and its serjeanty to Ranulf de Broc, son of Oyn Purcel ;
- (3) that in 1155, the year when Ralf Purcel occurs for the last time in

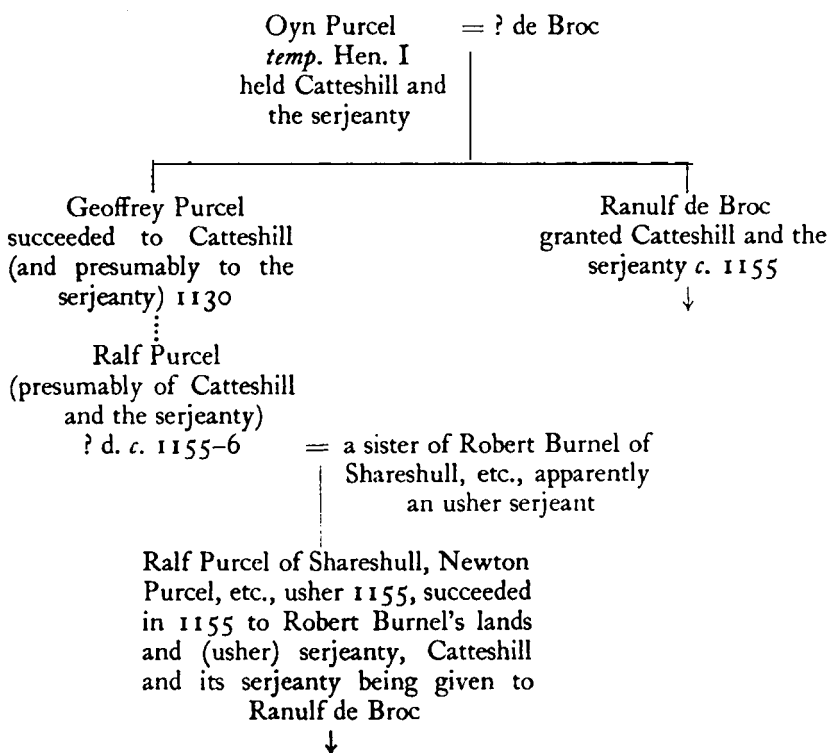
¹ *Pipe Roll*, 2 Hen. II, p. 12.

CATTESHILL AND ANOTHER USHER SERJEANTY

Catteshill, the king granted to Ralf Purcel, nephew of Robert Burnel, the lands and office of his uncle Robert ;

- (4) that, as I shall show, this Ralf Purcel was son of another Ralf Purcel, and that an usher serjeanty (presumably the office of Robert Burnel) continued in the line of his descendants.

The inference from all this seems to be that the first Ralf Purcel died in the first years of Henry II ; and that, for some reason, Henry thereupon gave Catteshill and the vacant serjeanty to his favourite Ranulf de Broc, compensating Ralf Purcel's son Ralf with the lands and office of his uncle Robert Burnel. If this be the correct interpretation of the evidence, it would follow that Ranulf de Broc acquired the serjeanty in 1155, and the sketch pedigree above should be expanded as follows :



It is at least certain, as will appear below, that another usher serjeanty continued in the line of Ralf Purcel ; and it seems fairly certain also that this serjeanty was derived from Robert Burnel, to whose office Ralf Purcel succeeded. Round himself noted that ' Robert Burnel duly appears on the Pipe

IN THE PURCEL FAMILY

Roll of 1130 as excused payment of his Danegeld under Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Northants, and Bucks, which accords with his being the holder of some office or serjeanty.'¹

The amounts indicate a holding of $3\frac{1}{2}$ hides in Oxfordshire ; 3 hides in Staffordshire ; $\frac{4}{5}$ of a hide in Northamptonshire ; and 1 hide in Buckinghamshire. These figures correspond well enough with the estates subsequently found in the possession of the Purcels of Newton Purcel, Oxon., *i.e.* Newton Purcel and outlying property in Barton Hartshorne, Bucks. ; Sharesull and Covene, Staffs. ; and Colley Weston, Northants. (subsequently exchanged for 2 virgates in Shellswell, Oxon., adjoining Newton Purcel²). It seems likely, therefore, that all this property came to Ralf Purcel from his uncle Robert Burnel ; though in a lawsuit of 1282-3³ between Nicholas de Stafford, the overlord of Sharesull, and the abbot of Oseney, overlord of Newton Purcel, concerning the wardship of the Purcel heir of that date, the abbot declared that Sharesull and Covene had come to one Ralf Purcel through his marriage with the sister of Robert Burnel, and that before that time Ralf Purcel, his father, had been seised of the estate in Newton Purcel of the honor of St. Walery, whose *status* (as overlord) the abbot then held. Nicholas de Stafford acknowledged that Sharesull and Covene had come to Ralf Purcel by the marriage in question ; but he stated that the ancestors of the sister of Robert Burnel had held the said manors of his ancestors before Ralf Purcel's ancestors had held of the honor of St. Walery. These statements may be true ; but, as there appears to be an error in the pedigree given, it may well be that there was error also in the other statements. For though Ralf Purcel, the nephew of Robert Burnel, was probably son of a Ralf Purcel who married Burnel's sister, the latter was not, on the argument above, son of a third Ralf Purcel, but of Geoffrey Purcel.

At any rate, it appears that Round was wrong when he wrote, ' it seems to have been another Ralf Purcel [*i.e.* different from Ralf, Robert Burnel's nephew] who had such remission [of danegeld] on 5 hides in Staffs [in 1156] (*Pipe Roll*, 2 Hen. II, p. 29) and who was holding two-thirds of a fee of Robert de Stafford in 1166 (*Liber Rubeus*, p. 267), for this holding was in Sharesull and is found in the hands of the Porcels, his heirs.'

Leaving the pedigree aside, let us see what records there are of the second usher serjeanty in the possession of these Purcels. They are, arranged by date :—

1130. Robert Burnel excused danegeld in Oxfordshire, Staffordshire,

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 99 n.

² *Bracton's Note Book*, No. 156.

³ Wm. Salt Soc., *Collections*, vi. pt. i. (1885), p. 128.

CATTESHILL AND ANOTHER USHER SERJEANTY

Northamptonshire, and Buckinghamshire, 'which accords with his being the holder of some office or serjeanty.'¹

c. 1155. Henry II granted to Ralf Purcel, his usher, the office of Robert Burnel, Ralf's uncle.²

c. 1178-87. Ralf Purcel witnessed a deed of William Turpin, *de camera domini regis Henrici*, of land without Ludgate.³ William Turpin was *camerarius regis*,⁴ and the other witnesses are William FitzRalf, seneschal of Normandy, Stephen, seneschal of Anjou, William Crevecœur, Saher de Quency, Richard Giffard, Philip de Windsor, and other members of the king's household: Manasser Biset, *dapifer*, William de Hastings, *dispensator regis*, William Malet, *dapifer*, and Robert de Broc, clerk. We may assume that Ralf Purcel was at court as the king's usher.

1198. Oxfordshire; serjeanties: Ralf Purcell, in demesne 1 carucate in Niweton' (*i.e.* Newton Purcel), and it is worth yearly 40s.⁵

1200. King John conceded to Ralf Purcel, his usher, and his heirs in fee the office and land of Robert Burnel, Ralf's uncle, as Robert held them in the time of Henry II, as Henry's charter testifies.

1200. Ralf Purcel entered under Buckinghamshire (Newton Purcel is on the borders of Buckinghamshire and the Purcel estate extended into Barton Hartshorne, in that county) as giving the king 15 marks for having his office in the king's household ('hospicium') according to the charter of King Henry and the king's (John's) confirmation of it.⁶

1201. Payment to Ralf Purcel from the issues of Hallingbury, Essex; ⁷ this becomes in

1210-12 Ralf Purcel 60s. of land in Hallingbury by serjeanty in the King's household ('in hospicio regis').⁸ In the entry⁹ assigned to

1212-17 and in subsequent records this service is said to be falconry service, as was that in the same vill of Walter de Hauville, one of the keepers of the king's falcons.¹⁰ Perhaps the statement is due to confusion with the Hauville serjeanty. But this Hallingbury serjeanty, though held by the same Purcels, is not necessarily their usher serjeanty.

We get an instructive glimpse of these Purcels as ushers in 1227, when a fine was levied between Robert Purcel, son of the above Ralf, and Robert

¹ Above, p. 165.

³ Westminster Abbey Charter, no. 13844, for permission to consult which I am indebted to the Dean and Chapter and to Mr. Lawrence Tanner, Assistant Keeper of the Muniments.

⁴ R. W. Eyton, *Itinerary of Henry II*, p. 197.

⁶ *Rot. de Obl.*, 2 John, p. 83; noticed also by Round, who gives the date wrongly as 1210.

⁷ *Rot. Canc.*, 3 John, p. 146.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 457.

² As above, p. 161.

⁵ *Book of Fees*, pt. i. p. 11.

⁸ *Red Book of the Exch.*, p. 507.

¹⁰ Round, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

IN THE PURCEL FAMILY

Arsic (overlord of part of the Purcel holding in Newton Purcel), about Purcel's service to Arsic.¹ The services were defined as follows : Whenever Robert Purcel or his heirs may be the king's ushers ('hostiarii'), that is when Robert Arsic or his heirs may come to the king's court ('curia') and Robert Purcel or his heirs may be there and Arsic shall make known to Purcel his coming to court, Purcel shall go to meet Arsic outside the king's door ('hostium') and go before him with a rod ('virga') to the royal hall ('aula'); and on Arsic's departure Purcel shall call for Arsic's horse and hold his stirrup ('strivium')² in mounting. And if Arsic and his heirs send their messenger ('nuncius') to court, Purcel and his heirs shall assist the messenger faithfully, so far as they can in speech, in all things which he has to do at court.

Here we find the Purcels as ushers at court and promoting their lord's interest when he goes there. Either they did a similar service to the St. Walerys and their successors, the abbots of Oseney, for the portion of Newton Purcel which they held of them, or there was a confusion with the service due to the Arsics. In a lawsuit of 1247³ a jury, by consent of the parties, came to decide whether, when Thomas de St. Walery gave the abbot the services of Robert Purcel and his heirs for two hides of land in Newenton, he was seised of 24s. rent and the services of half a knight, as the abbot alleged, or only, as the Purcels alleged, of the 24s. and of the service of holding the stirrup ('estricum') of the said Thomas when he went backwards and forwards to the king's court, and of expediting the business ('expediendi negotia') of the said Thomas at the same court. The jury found for the abbot.

At this time Otuel Purcel was the defendant; but there are a few other references to Robert Purcel, his father, as the king's serjeant or servant. In 1224 Robert Purcel and William his brother are among the king's serjeants ('servientes').⁴ In 1232 Robert Purcel (with William Purcel, Gervase Purcel, and others) is called the king's serjeant,⁵ and again in 1237, 1239, and 1240. In 1243 Robert Purcel with Gervase Purcel and others ('servientes') were detained in Windsor Castle for the work of fortifying it ('in municione').

In conclusion, it may be shown how the place-name Newton (Purcel) is explained by its feudal history, in illustration of Round's dictum 'the topographer should always have a pedigree by his side, and the genealogist a local map.' Newton is not found in Domesday Book, but the discussion above

¹ *Feet of Fines for Oxfordshire, 1195-1291*, ed. H. E. Salter, p. 78.

² As corrected in a notice in *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, xlvii. 150, where, however, the writer is in error in calling Robert Purcel the holder of the Catteshill serjeanty.

³ Wm. Salt Soc., *Collections*, iv. (1883), 107.

⁴ *Rot. Lit. Claus.*, ii. 8 b.

⁵ *Cal. Lib. Rolls*, 1226-40, p. 190.

CATTESHILL AND ANOTHER USHER SERJEANTY

shows that it was held partly of the honor of St. Walery and partly of that of Arsic. The hundred rolls illustrate this most clearly. Here we read¹ under Nywenton that Otuy (*recte* Otuel) Purcel holds ten virgates of the honor of St. Walery, of the abbot of Oseney ; and that the same Otewer' (*sic*) holds of Robert de Grey of the fee of Serringeford (*recte* Fringford) eight virgates, and the same of the ward of Dover. Robert de Grey was the heir of Arsic, and the latter is the Arsic fee, the Arsic barony owing castle-guard at Dover. Part of Newton is obviously included in Domesday Book in the seventeen hides of Mixbury held by Roger d'Ivri (to whose barony the St. Walerys succeeded) and part is a separate estate of two hides in Fringford held by Wadard (to whom the Arsics were successors). Newton lies between Mixbury and Fringford, and is 'the new town' carved out of the two, subsequently to Domesday.

E. ST. JOHN BROOKS.

¹ *Rot. Hund.*, ii. 834.