



The History of Ayton Castle

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authored by

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- c. 1160 Gilbert de Barlby acquired land at West Ayton, probably by inheritance
c. 1180 The first Ayton "castle" built by his son William de Aton
c. 1200 Gilbert de Aton married into the de Vesci family
c. 1250 Major rebuilding of the "castle"
1314 Battle of Bannockburn and breakthrough by the Scots; some doorways of the castle walled up.
1322 Second Scottish invasion; Ayton and other places in the Vale of Pickering ransomed
1324 Gilbert made 1st Lord Aton
1383 William founded chantry chapel at Ayton
1389 Death of William, 2nd Lord Aton, at the age of 90; the end of the main male Aton line
c. 1400 Existing castle built by Ralph Eure
1534 Ayton castle mentioned by Leland
1536 Pilgrimage of Grace; Scarborough Castle defended by Ralph Eure of Ayton
1537 The Ayton prophesies.
1549 The Seamer Rebellion .
c. 1575 The Eures cease to live at Ayton, preferring their house at Old Malton
1599 West Ayton manor restored to its original size by purchase of land after 222 years of division
1600 The Dawnays now living at Ayton Castle; the Hackness fracas
1619-20 The Norden Survey of the Honour of Pickering
1638-9 Lord Carnarvon's troops quartered at Ayton and elsewhere after the Battle of Newburn
c. 1640 Ayton Castle and land sold by the 4th Lord Eure to James Mauleverer
1647 Edward Stockdale of York took forcible possession of the castle
1651 Commonwealth Survey names James Mauleverer as holder of the Manor of West Ayton
1679 Death of Edmund Mauleverer; end of the occupation of the castle
1758 Ayton estate acquired by the Osbaldestons
1775 Stones from the dismantled castle used in the rebuilding of Ayton bridge
1796 Engraving of the castle (now in ruins) by J. Hornsey
1840 Ayton estate acquired by Marmaduke Langley
1851 Ayton estate inherited by Lord Downe
1912 Castle repaired by Col. Dawnay
1929 Castle scheduled as an Ancient Monument
1930 Castle and land sold by Viscount Downe to Scarborough Corporation
1958-61 Excavations by Scarborough and District Archaeological Society (Part II).
1959 Castle repaired by Scarborough Corporation .

INTRODUCTION

By Dr. E. A. Gee, m.a., f.s.a., f.r.hist.s.

In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, when castles were losing their value in England as a whole, a constant threat from the Scots led to the establishment of a considerable number of structures in the north, these consisted of a walled enclosure called the pele or barmkin for the protection of animals and crops, and in this enclosure was a rectangular tower-house.

The tower was usually of three storeys and the lower floor was vaulted with stone as a protection against fire, it was reached through a strong wooden door strengthened with iron on the outside. The first floor which contained the main living rooms, was reached by a stair in the thickness of the wall; the second floor provided the sleeping quarters. There were often machicolated bartizans at the angles.

The danger from the Scots was felt as far south as Yorkshire, East Gilling had a large tower-house and one was erected by Lord Scrope at Clifton-on-Ure near Masham. Church towers too, such as those at Danby Wiske, Bolton-on-Swale and Spennithorpe, had defensive features, Bedale and Thornton Watlass church towers both have vaulted ground floors, defended mural stairs and first floor rooms with fireplaces.

Ayton Castle, at the entrance to Forge Valley, is one of the most interesting structures in Yorkshire, it is a late defensive tower of the Northumberland-Cumberland type and it also has a barmkin. This is not really surprising for the co-heiress of the local Ayton family married Sir Ralph Eure, an important Northumberland man who almost certainly used a northern mason to build the new tower.

It is significant that not only was Ralph Eure friendly with Richard le Scrope who employed the famous master-mason John Lewyn to build his great castle at Bolton, but Eure had been associated with Lewyn at an earlier date and could have asked his advice both about Ayton Castle and his other castle at Witton in County Durham. Lewyn was perhaps the greatest expert in military architecture of his generation.

It is most gratifying that Mr. F. C. Rimington and the Scarborough and District Archaeological Society have not only helped to preserve this important building but by their excavations have also done much to elucidate so many of its architectural and historical problems.

THE HISTORY OF THE CASTLE THE CASTLE UNDER THE de ATON FAMILY

"From Scardeburg to Alton a 3 miles, wher cumming over Darwent I saw a Manor Place sumtyrne longging to a knight caullid Aiton, now to the best of the Yevers. At this Manor Place is a Tower or Pile. Then to Brunston a 3 or 4 miles and a 3 miles to Wilston wher is a Manor Place with a Tower longging to Cholmeley . . . moste of the Ground from Scardeburg to Pykering was by Hill and Dale, meate plentifull of Corn and Grasse but little Wood insight". Leland's Itinerary (Ed. T. Hearne, 3rd edition, 1768-70, Vol. I, fol. 70), composed'during the years 1534-43 and presented to Henry VIII in the 37th year of his reign, 1545.

Documentary information about Ayton Castle as a building, during the centuries of its existence, is extremely scarce. The Manor and village of West Ayton are frequently mentioned in medieval and subsequent records but the actual tower is referred to hardly at all. Thus its story must be gathered from that of its owners, about whom a considerable amount is known.

When in 1315, Sir Gilbert de Aton was proved heir to the great Vesey estates centred round Malton there is no evidence that he moved house to Malton Castle, indeed in all probability that building was in a thoroughly unpleasant state after its occupation by Bruce and the Scottish army following the English debacle at Bannockburn. Ayton remained the chief residence of the family and the other manor houses (Brompton, Wintringham, Barlby, etc.) would be occupied by married sons or used as dower-houses. When however, the Eures succeeded the de Atons in the late 14th century they increasingly made Malton (not the castle which by now was in ruins, but a later manor-house at Old Malton) their favourite residence, although they already had major houses at Stokesley and Witton. Ayton Castle, which the Eures had rebuilt, became a secondary family mansion but it is clear that some of the heads of the family held house both at Malton and at Ayton, e.g. Sir Ralph Eure, d. 1539 (p. 17).

The manor and village of West Ayton have since very early times been in the ecclesiastical parish of Hutton Buscel, while the village of East Ayton is in the ecclesiastical parish of Seamer. When, in

the 12th century a chapel was to be built because of the distance of the two Aytons from their respective parish churches, it was erected across the River Derwent in East Ayton, in Seamer parish. This would seem to imply that Ayton church was not founded by the nearby de Atons but rather by the Percy family at Seamer, who would doubtless not wish to see their tenants straying to the somewhat nearer church at Hutton Buscel. It is not known where the earlier de Atons were buried but at least two members of the later Eure family left instructions in their wills to be buried in the parish church of Hutton Buscel, though no monument now remains there to them. There is no mention of the Eures in the parish registers at Hutton Buscel; these survive only from about 1580 and are fairly complete up to 1640. This absence of the name of Eure would seem to confirm that the last member of that family to live at Ayton Castle was very probably Sir Ralph, M.P. for Scarborough, who was killed fighting the Scots in 1544-5 and buried at Melrose. The name "Ayton" means the "settlement by the river". The Domesday spelling was ATUN(E) and the same name-source is found in other parts of the country, e.g. Eton, Long Eaton, etc. In 1086 the land was held by the king and before the Conquest it had been part of the extensive estates of Earl Gamal. The importance of the site lay largely in the nearby ford (later a bridge) over the River Derwent, the only convenient crossing for miles on either side. There were two water-mills recorded in the Domesday survey, very probably on the sites of the two present mills (High Mill and Low Mill) which were working until a few years ago.

At the end of the 11th century the land at Ayton and nearby, which later became the manors of West Ayton and Hutton Buscel, was held from the king by Reginald Belet (who seems to have had the alternative name of Bushell according to the V.C.H.N.R., 2, 442) for 110 shillings annually and in 1334 his successor Gilbert de Aton produced a charter, temp. Henry I, to prove this. This Reginald Belet or Bushell had married the niece of Serlo the Prior of Whitby and of William Percy, the founder of Whitby Abbey. This association of the Bushell family with Whitby Abbey was of long standing; Hutton Church and part of the Bushell estate near Hackness called "Westcroft and the hermitage near" were granted

by Alan Bushell to the abbey in the early 12th century (Whitby Chart., 4, 49).

The family who later took over the West Ayton part of the Bushell estate and who thereby took the name 'de Aton' came from Barlby near Heming-borough, E.R. They are said by Dugdale* to have descended from an individual named Lagi. This Scandinavian personal name is found in the Swedish place-name Laggarp (earlier Laghatorp) and probably in the East Riding village name of Lowthorpe. The Domesday spellings of this name (Laugetorp, Logetorp) show that it probably originated as "Lagi's thorp or farm" (P.N.E.R., 93). Such an East Riding Lagi may well have been the one from whom Dugdale says the de Atons were descended, for Barlby and Lowthorpe are not far apart.

The first mention of the family at Barlby is in the Scutage (a tax levied on those who held land by knight-service) of 1160, when Gilbert de Barlby is described as holding of the Bishop of Durham half a knight's fee in Yorkshire of which three carucates were in Barlby (Burton 1888, 357). In Farrer's Early Yorkshire Charters, Vol. II, p. 320, this Gilbert is referred to as Gilbert de Aton and it would seem likely that he was the first member of the family to move to West Ayton. Certainly a few years later Gilbert's son William (who was invariably called William de Aton) was living there. Between 1179 and 1181 this William was engaged in a law-suit with his neighbours and relatives Alan and Richard much later (1334), another Gilbert de Aton refers to the Bushells as "my an-Bushell (V.C.H.N.R., 2, 442). The reason for this law-suit is not recorded but as, cestors" (N.R.R.S., III, 12) it is probable that the dispute was on a point of inheritance, both families claiming the same land. The result of the law-suit appears to have been a compromise, the Bushells retaining the Hutton half and the de Atons being allowed the West Ayton part of the estate. Eventually, about 1284, when Ralph Bushell was outlawed and, as a penalty, the manor of Hutton Buscel reverted to John de Vescy, then the primary feudal landlord, the Bushells left Hutton and removed to Whitby, leaving the de Atons very firmly entrenched in the district.

*It is regretted that this reference to Lagi in "Dugdale" has not been traced; Burton merely says "as mentioned by Dugdale" (Burton 1888, 357).

Later still, Gilbert de Aton, as heir to William de Vescey, acquired, along with other local Vescey properties, Hutton Buscel manor, which he entailed in 1327 (V.C.H.N.R., 2, 422).

Barlby stayed with the de Atons until that family died out in 1389. William de Aton in particular (c. 1240-1300) was most energetic in checking encroachments on his Barlby estate, usually by the Abbot of Selby. The last male de Aton, William, on the death of his son Gilbert in 1372, granted Barlby to the widow Margaret, as a dower house (Burton 1888, 357-9). It is obvious that these early de Atons would have built themselves a manor-house at West Ayton or utilised a building already there and excavation has proved the existence of such early buildings near the present castle (see Part II).

Gilbert, son of William, founded the family fortunes soon after 1200 when he married Margery, daughter of Warene de Vescey, Lord of Knapton and younger brother of Eustace de Vescey of Malton and Alnwick. The Vescey family was little less than regal, Eustace was one of the 25 barons who imposed the Magna Carta on King John, he had married Margaret, daughter of William the Lion, King of Scotland (Clay 1913, 227). The grandson of this marriage, William Vescey, was in 1289 one of the claimants to the Scottish throne.

John de Aton (not mentioned in Clay's pedigree), son of William and grandson of Gilbert and Margery, gave land at Irton near Seamer and at Wykeham to Whitby Abbey (Whitby Chart., 142 and 175). Among the witnesses to these transactions were John's grandfather Gilbert, William and Richard Bushell (this family was still living at Hutton) and John de Cayton. This latter would seem to be the John de Cayton who, about this time, gave land at Ayton "near the cemetery" to the altar of St. John the Baptist in the chapel of St. Mary of Ayton, to provide a light there (Whitby Chart., 359-360). Leland (1534), writing of Seamer, says "I saw yn the quire of the meane Paroch Cherch there a playn marble stone with an epitaphi in French, where wer buried John Percy and John de Aton".

John's elder brother William (who inherited, for the eldest brother Gilbert had died without issue) was styled in 1284 "Lord of Ayton" (V.C.H.N.R., II, 442). This presumably would mean Lord

of the Manor of Ayton, for the actual de Aton Barony was not created until 1324.

William, 1st Lord Vescy of Alnwick and Malton, the claimant to the Scottish Crown, died in 1297. Having no legitimate issue, he left his Northumberland and Yorkshire estates to his natural son William of Kildare. This William never obtained possession of the former, but he duly inherited Malton and other associated Yorkshire manors. Malton itself was left in dower to Lord Vescy's widow Isabel. William of Kildare was killed at Bannockburn (1314) and when William Vescy's widow died in 1315, there was a pronounced legal doubt as to whom the Vescy estates should descend. There were several claimants and at an inquisition at York in 1315 to enquire into the matter, the jury declared Gilbert de Aton heir to the Malton estates by virtue of having descended from the marriage of his great-grandparents Gilbert and Margery Vescy (V.C.H.N.R., 1, 533).

Gilbert's inheritance applied only to the local Vescy estates; inquisitions in other parts of the country favoured other claimants and the major properties in Northumberland (including the great fortress of Alnwick) were given by Anthony, Bishop of Durham, to the Percies (N.R.R.S., III, 223n), as a Northumbrian jury had found in favour of John, son of Arnald de Percy (Lay-Sub. 30 Edw. I, 52n). The Duchy of Lancaster had its own inquisition at Pickering in 1314 before John de Eure, Escheator beyond the Trent, to determine which local land had been held by William de Vescy on the day of his death. The verdict was that de Vescy had held within the Forest, the manor of Brompton, with land at Sawdon and woods in Troutsdale. The jury declared themselves entirely ignorant of the next heir to the estate (N.R.R.S., III, 221), but eventually Gilbert de Aton inherited all these properties.

The king (Edward II) took advantage of the disputed succession to allow one of his favourite ladies, Joan Comyn, to quarter her household at Malton Castle and to take £50 per annum from its revenues, but in 1318 it was ordered that the estates should be handed over to Gilbert de Aton (V.C.H.N.R., 1, 533). As late as 1321 however, Gilbert had to complain to the king that the Prior of Malton (who obviously did not approve of the jury's decision) as executor to the de Vescy estate, was withholding the keys and

deeds of Malton from him; a royal writ was issued ordering the Prior to deliver these to the now legal heir (Wheater, 20). Gilbert may well have gained the ear of the king on his matter at one of Edward's periodic visits to Pickering Castle.

In 1301 Gilbert had been assessed at West Ayton for the Lay Subsidy (a tax on goods and chattels) at 9/-; his neighbour at Hutton Buscel, now a de Vescy, was assessed at 6/- (see Appendix 3). Gilbert was created a knight by Prince Edward, later Edward II, in 1306 (Clay 1913, 3).

Although it seems very probable that Ayton Castle was attacked and damaged during the Scottish breakthrough after Bannockburn, there is plenty of evidence that no lasting harm was done to the manor and that the house was in full use during most if not all of the 14th century. In the second Scottish invasion (1322), when Edward II narrowly escaped capture at Rievaulx, the inhabitants of the Vale of Pickering, with bitter memories of the 1314-15 raid, acting as a single community from the River Seven to the sea, negotiated with Robert Bruce through the Earl of Moray for immunity against molestation and worse, just as the Bishopric of Durham had done on a previous occasion. It is significant that the leaders of this arrangement with the Scots were not the representatives of the chief towns of the area, nor were they the noble families of the district, they were the men of the eastern villages, John of Wykeham, William Wyem and the vicar of Seamer. The sum demanded was 300 marks and hostages were taken to Scotland to ensure the payment, a mark was then worth about 13/4 but would be worth enormously more now. It is recorded that several years later these hostages were still in prison in Scotland and the 300 marks still unpaid! Their ultimate fate is unknown (N.R.R.S., I, 3-4).

In 1338 an inquisition was taken at Ayton Castle to decide whether the king, as supreme landlord, would suffer if Stephen of Yedingham, Chaplain, gave to the Convent of Wykeham certain lands in Ruston and Wykeham for an annual rent of "five shillings and a pound of pepper". These peppercorn rents were not uncommon at this time; in an inquisition taken at Brompton in 1326, mention is made of a house at Ayton held by service of one rose a year and 9 acres of land held of Gilbert de Aton by annual

service of one clove (N.R.R.S., II, 262-3).

At this time, the mid-14th century, the de Aton fortunes were probably at their height. Sir Gilbert, with his son William and his daughter-in-law Isabel, are jointly mentioned in a fine (i.e. land transfer) of 1327 as possessing the manors of Malton, Ayton, Hutton Buscel, Brompton and Wintringham— Barlby appears to have been inadvertently omitted from the list (Clay 1913, 21 n). Gilbert's new title, Lord Aton (he had been created a baron by writ of summons in 1324) did not seem to be in general use and to the end, he and his son William (who became 2nd Lord Aton) were usually referred to as Sir Gilbert and Sir William respectively. Although Gilbert had led part of the Earl of Lancaster's (to whom he owed knight-service) rebellious army at the Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322 (Edwards 1924, 87), he does not appear to have been punished, for he received his barony only two years later and was summoned to Parliament in 1325 and again in 1341-2 (Clay 1913, 4). In 1324 Sir Gilbert overstepped himself; he was found guilty at a Forest Eyre (a court of enquiry organised by the justices of the Duchy of Lancaster, now in the hands of the king following the execution of the Earl of Lancaster in 1322) of causing his tenants to appear before him for having, without his permission, pastured their cattle in the forest. This, the justices maintained, Gilbert had no right to do, he was clearly usurping the privileges of the Duchy. They obviously thought the offence a serious one for they sentenced Sir Gilbert to a term of imprisonment. . . though he avoided this by the payment of a fine of £1.6.8 (N.R.R.S., III, 22). Gilbert also claimed the right to cut and sell timber from his woods in Troutdale (part of his manor of Brompton), such rights normally being in the hands of the Duchy; he also claimed the right to hunt the hare, wild-cat and badger within that part of the forest contained in his manor of Brompton—hardly anyone less than royalty was allowed to hunt the deer! These claims were allowed because the earlier de Vescy owners of Brompton had held the same privileges. Gilbert in 1334 also established his claim to honey and beeswax in the woods at Hutton and Troutdale, and was given the right to appoint woodwards in Hutton and Ayton (N.R.R.S., III, 22). He appears to have anticipated somewhat the granting of the right to appoint woodwards for in August 1333, William Page,

woodward of Ayton, together with Robert Corner of Scarborough, were caught by the foresters; having hunted and killed a deer in Ayton wood, they were carrying it home to Sir Gilbert! Corner was fined 6/8, Page was outlawed (N.R.R.S., II, 72).

In making these claims Gilbert de Aton was clearly attempting (as his neighbours the Percies were trying to do at Seamer) to evade the very oppressive Forest Laws and to assert that part of his estate at least possessed woodlands which were outside the jurisdiction of the officers of the Forest. Henry de Percy succeeded in 1338 in establishing his claim that "from time immemorial without interruption" his manor at Seamer had been outside the Forest and that he should have "the minerals and smelting places, cowhouses and sheepfolds in Seamer woods at pleasure" (N.R.R.S., III, 164).

Gilbert de Aton had considerable interests in Hull. As early as 1279 there is mention of "Aton Lane" (now Chapel Lane) in that city, "so-called after the ancient baronial family of Aton". In 1315 Sir Gilbert had a mansion in the High Street of Hull to which doubtless he retired when the Scots came as far south as Beverley after Bannockburn. The house was between that of Robert de Dripol and of Adam Helleward, both merchants—thus implying that Gilbert himself had mercantile interests. It was called "Aton Hall" and was let in 1347 to Alan le Clerc at £4 per annum (Frost 1827, 73). Gilbert left land to Malton Priory and to the Friars Minor at Scarborough but despite these gifts he directed in his will that he should be buried at Watton Abbey near Driffeld, where his niece was a nun (Y.A.J., 32, 258, 317).

At the time of Gilbert's death the Black Death was raging (1348-50) and in some cases (e.g. Flotmanby, E.R.) whole villages become depopulated. There is no hint of the pestilence in any of the Ayton or Pickering records; indeed local life, with its petty details of poaching and stealing, appears to have gone on much as usual despite the Scottish invasion and the plague. On the other hand there is more than a hint of the ravages of the Black Death in the lists of incumbents in the local churches; in the single year 1349 there were four vicars of Seamer and at Scalby there were three vicars in the two years 1348-9.

Sir William, 2nd Lord Aton, was, at the time of his father's death, a man in his late forties and a character in his own right. As a young

man he had killed his brother-in-law, Ignald de Fumeaux of Snainton, for ill-treating his wife, William's sister (V.C.H.N.R., II, 428). It is likely that, as son and heir, he had resided for a time at least at Barlby, for in 1349 he concluded an agreement with the Abbot of Selby about a crossing of the River Ouse. William was Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1348, 1349 and;1352 (Clay]1913, 4). He was summoned to Parlia-ment among the barons in 1371 and there styled Lord Vescy rather than Lord Aton. William was Governor of York Castle and married Isabel, daughter of Henry, Lord Percy (ibid. 4).

In 1375 Sir William disputed with Sir Robert de Boynton (Henry Lord Percy being the judge) the right to bear the arms "or, a cross sable, 5 bulls' heads argent", a variant which had arrived with the Vescy inheritance. Lord Percy found in favour of Sir William, who promptly, as a matter of courtesy, presented these arms to the Boynton family for ever (Burton 1888, 359).

In the Yorkshire Chantry Surveys, Vol II, 557, is mention of "a licence to William de Aton, chivaler, to assign 13 messuages and 8 oxgangs of land in Hoton Bushell and Aton to a Chaplain to pray for the said William in the Chapel of St. John Baptist within the manor of Aton in Pykeringlath, 20 Sept., 1383" (Pat. 1, Rich. II, p. 2, m.20). Although most authorities have considered that this refers to the present Ayton church, this would not be described as being within the manor of Ayton in Pickeringlythe, such a description would only fit West Ayton. There is no known evidence for the existence of a private chapel at Ayton castle but there would appear to be a distinct possibility that such a major residence would possess a chapel, certainly many much smaller houses did. Being so far from the parish church at Hutton Buscel would be an excellent reason for the granting by the archbishop of a licence for a private chapel and it seems unlikely that Sir William, in establishing a chantry would do so in a church in another parish. Although the dedication of East Ayton church is now that of St. John the Baptist, apparently it was not always so; according to the Dedication of Yorkshire Churches (Y.A.J., 1871, 2, 184) the old dedication was St. James but the Whitby Chart. (359), refers to the chapel of St. Mary in East Ayton and it is so-called in the will of John Eure in 1493 (see p. 00). There is no mention of a de Aton

chantry at either East or West Ayton in the York Certificates (1546-9) which Henry VIII commissioned in preparation for the dissolution of the chantries. Matthew White, the notorious Chantry Commissioner for Yorkshire, seized chantry goods at Ayton and Seamer in 1550, but there is no certainty of the precise chantries to suffer (Y.A.J., 34, 165).

Sir William had lost his only son (named Gilbert according to the invariable custom of alternation of names exercised in the family) in 1372 and in that year he granted Barlby as a dower-house to Margaret, Gilbert's widow (Burton 1888, 358). Sir William was called upon to give evidence in the famous heraldic dispute between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor (1385-89), and William's son-in-law, Ralph Eure (later to rebuild the castle at Ayton) also gave evidence in this controversy (V.C.H.N.R., II, 441). William's evidence was taken at Ayton Castle as he was unable to travel because of his advanced age; he said at the enquiry that he had borne arms for 60 years (Farrer II, 320). He died in 1389 at the (for those days) very considerable age of 90, and at once great complications arose. He had now no male heir and the estates were divided between his three daughters, Anastasia (married to Edward St. John), Elizabeth (married to William Place and later to John Conyers of Sockburn) and Katherine (married to Ralph Eure of Stokesley and Witton).

Although Clay (1913, 4) and others state that the de Aton properties were divided among the co-heirs with complete manors as units (Clay says "Anastasia seems to have had the Brompton, Katherine the Malton, and Elizabeth the Wintringham and Hutton Buscel estates on division"), the evidence is that each manor and other property was divided nominally into three parts, one for each of the three daughters and their respective husbands. At Barlby even a windmill was so divided (Burton 1888, 259) and certainly Malton Castle was; writing in 1540 Leland says "These men hath the Lordship of Malton in partition, The Lord Clifford*, Yevers and one of the Coniers. But Yevers hath beside the whole Lordship of Old Malton". This is generally taken to mean that the Eures had (through Katherine) inherited one-third of New Malton and the

*The Cliffords inherited through the Bromfletes from Anastasia's share

whole of Old Malton. The evidence however strongly favours the view that all the de Aton estates were first divided into three, but that in some cases (e.g. Old Malton and later Ayton and still later Barlby) an arrangement was made, by exchange or purchase, for the whole of the manor or other property to be reunited by one of the co-heirs. One-third of the castle and manor of New Malton was still being leased as a unit in Elizabethan times (Yorks, Feet of Fines, III, 99), and an indenture of 1490 between Dame Margaret Clifford and her son includes mention of "a third portion of the Manors of Ayton, New Malton, Barlby, etc.", i.e. Anastasia's share (Yorks. Deeds, CXI, 117). Hinderwell (p. 292) goes gravely astray when he says that the whole of the manor of West Ayton came into the hands of the Cliffords.

The division into three of the West Ayton manor-house must have presented its problems until some degree of reunification could be effected. At one time William Place, Elizabeth's husband, was living there (Test. Ebor. II, 9n), but it seems clear that during the next few years Ralph Eure and his wife Katherine had acquired the whole of the manor-house at Ayton if not of the land there. This latter retained its divisions until comparatively recent times. In a survey of the Forest of Pickering taken in 1651 at the time of the Commonwealth, it is stated that certain lands at West Ayton were still known as "Conyers' Lands" (i.e. Elizabeth's share). This portion had been retained by the Conyers family of Sockburn until Sir George Conyers conveyed it to Ralph Lord Eure in 1611 (V.C.H.N.R., II, 441). The current O.S. 6 in. sheets still give the name "Conyers Ings" to an area at the extreme south of West Ayton and Hutton Buscel parishes.

In the division of the Ayton estate following the death of Sir William, the title of "Baron Vescy", which had been inherited by the de Aton family from William de Vescy (the claimant to the Scottish throne) but apparently seldom used, seems to have passed with Anastasia's share. Her daughter (there were no sons) married Sir Thomas Bromflete of Londesborough and the son and heir of this marriage, Sir Henry, called himself Lord Vescy, obviously taking his de Aton descent very seriously (Clay 1913, 18). Sir Henry's daughter married John, 9th Lord Clifford (killed at Towton, 1461; the Battle of Towton was particularly unfortunate to

the Ayton Castle interests for a Eure, a Bromflete and a Clifford were all killed there), and so the Cliffords acquired an interest in the manor of West Ayton. This third of the Ayton lands was finally conveyed to Ralph, Lord Eure in 1599 by George, 13th Lord Clifford (who had commanded a ship against the Spanish Armada), and so the West Ayton manor was reunited, if only for a short time, after 222 years of division (Clay 1913, 26).

THE CASTLE UNDER THE EURE FAMILY

Ralph Eure's acquisition of the whole of the West Ayton manor-house shortly followed by a complete rebuilding. With the knowledge of the " done to the district at the time of the Scottish incursion of 1315.; strong Eure family tradition of border fortification, the new Aylon was built in the form of a Border Peel. Ralph Eure had not many local associations (Katherine de Aton was his second wife) and he probably lived at his houses at Stokesley and Witton. He went on many Scottish expeditions notably that led by John of Gaunt (1383) and with Richard II (1385); in 1399 he was granted an annuity of £50 as "King's Knight". He was sheriff of Yorkshire and of Northumberland twice, he was M.P. for Yorkshire in the Parliament of September 1399, which confirmed the abdication of Richard I and also in the first Parliament of Henry IV, which met six days later. Several times he was commissioned by Henry IV to negotiate peace with the Scots ; he retired from a very active public life when he was 65 (Parl. Rep-, MS).

On the death of Sir Ralph Eure in 1422 his son William succeeded. alternation of Ralph and William in the Eure family at Ayton goes on for centuries and is an interesting parallel with the Gilbert-William pattern of the de Atons. This William is described as of "Witton-le-Wear and Old Malton (Y.A.J., 39, 463). His association with Old Malton is not clear—it seems certain that by now the Eures had acquired the whole of the manor of Old Malton, but it is difficult to decide the precise position of the Eure residence there. As the future favourite house of the Eure family, it must have been a major building but the only trace of an old domestic site at Old Malton appears to be the scanty earthworks along Lacle's Lane,

although the attendant fishponds, "Doodales", are remarkable (Map Ref. SE 802728). These remains represent a mansion of the Lassells family rather than one of the Eurr, it is significant that William's second son Henry (d. 1477), styled "of Malton", married the widow of Robert Lassells of Sowerby (Clay 1913, 55) It is possible that this house came into the possession of the Eure family through this marriage.

William Eure was Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1445, and M.P. for the county in 1449. He had been at Agincourt under his father-in-law Lord Fitzhugh (Parl. Rep., 180). He appears to have had many local associations and was buried in the chancel of Malton Priory in 1466-7. This new-found preference of the Eures for Old Malton as a residence is reflected in the considerable number of their wills to be found in the Registry at York. It can be assumed that Sir' lived at Malton and that one of his large family (there were six daughters) lived at Ayton, possibly his eldest son Ralph, who was killed at Towton, 1461 (Parl. Rep., 180).

Sir Ralph's third surviving son John ("of Ayton") certainly lived at Ayton Castle; in 1493, in his will, he left 6/8 to the Chapel of St. Mary on the east side of the Derwent (now Ayton church), and also 40/- "to the works of the bridge there", thus giving a date for the building of possibly the first bridge on Derwent at Ayton. He asked in his will to be buried at the church i Buscel (Test. Ebor., 4, 83).

On the death of Sir William Eure, c. 1466, he was succeeded by his grandson William, as his eldest son Ralph was now dead. This new Sir William was Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1497 (V.C.H.N.R., II, 442). His younger son Henry 1476 to "my manor of Old Malton" (Test. Ebor., 3, 222), from which it would seem that the head of the family, Sir William, was at that time living elsewhere. As he was Receiver of the Honour of Picketing (N.R.R.S., I, 120), it would be necessary to have his residence in or very near the Forest, and as Ayton was [occupied by his brother John (Clay 1913, 56) it is likely that Sir William lived, while in office, at the family manor-house at Brompton. The condition of the Royal possessions during the Wars of the Roses can well be imagined and shortly after the Battle of Bosworth (1485) Henry VII, having perceived the neglected state of the Honour of Pickering, sent, with true Tudor efficiency, a member of commissions to major office-

holders demanding an account of their stewardships. Thus Sir William Eure, as Receiver or Treasurer of the Duchy estates at Pickering, was commanded on 22nd March, 1493, to present his accounts before "our seid Chauncellor at our Palays of Westminster at the XV of the Holy Trynyte next cumming, not failyng as ye wol avoide our High Displeasure' (N.R.R.S., I, 125). Apparently Sir William rashly ignored this demand for on 12th April following, he received peremptory instructions to appear personally before the King "to make youre accompte and answer unto our seid contempt, not failyng hereof upon payn of fyve hundred pound". This had to be done within eight days, and in the meantime no more rents or dues were to be paid to Sir William until the matter had been settled (N.R.R.S., I, 127).

It is not known what was the outcome of this enquiry for shortly afterwards (probably in 1498) Sir William died, to be succeeded by his son Ralph. Already Ralph was living at Ayton (his uncle John having died there in 1493) and as early as 1490(SIC) he, Ralph, had rented the fishing of the River Derwent for nine years (N.R.R.S., I, 119). This Sir Ralph was Sheriff of Northumberland in 1504

would seem therefore that at this time he was living at the family's northern house at Witton) and Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1506-10. He is described as "of Ayton" (V.C.H.N.R., I, 533) and later he also held the royal manor of North-stead, for in 1537 he was said to be suffering this manor and its house to decay I r.CJ/JVU?., I, 479). Sir Ralph's will is dated 1533 (Test. Ebor., VI, 183), he died in 1539 and in the will he directs that "my bodie to be buried within the chauncell of the parishe church of Hooton Busshell ... all my maners in Stokesley, Inglebye, Eysbye, Kyrkny-in-Cleveland and Barlebye-next-Selbye" ire to be left to his wife Agnes. "Also to my wif and my sonne Sir William Ewrye knyght, all my household stuff and goodes at Aton and Malton equally". Despite the group of Eure manors left to her by her husband, Agnes, Dowager Lady Eure (she was Sir Ralph's second wife) was in 1545 living at Ayton Castle and was assessed there for the Lay Subsidy tax (V.C.H.N.R., I, 441).

In 1537 a charge was brought against John Dobson, Vicar of Muston, that he had repeated prophesies derogatory to the king.

These prophecies appear to have been written by Thomas Broadlay, priest of Ayton, who however stated in his deposition that he had first heard them from one Richard Stapleton in the battery of Ayton Castle (L.P. Henry VIII, 12, 1212). This reflects the dissatisfaction among the local clergy following the failure of the Pilgrimage of Grace the previous year, and shows that the unrest which gave rise to the Seamer Rebellion (1549) was by no means confined to the country people.

Sir Ralph's grandson, bearing the same name and described as "of Ayton", was Constable of Scarborough Castle, which he defended with a scratch garrison against the insurgents of the Pilgrimage of Grace (1536). Later he became M.P. for Scarborough (1541); he was killed fighting the Scots at the Battle of Ancram moot and was buried at Melrose Abbey, 1544-5 (Clay 1913, 57). His father, Sir William, who survived him, was created Lord Eure of Witton in 1544. It is perhaps significant that he chose "of Witton" for his baronial title, hinting that he preferred his northern residence at Witton-le-Wear to Malton or Ayton. He was Sheriff of Northumberland in 1527 and Warden of the East Marches, again showing that his main interests lay away from Yorkshire.

Certainly disturbing events were happening in the Ayton neighbourhood; c. 1548, Matthew White, a Chantry Commissioner for Yorkshire, seized land and goods at Ayton (Y.A.J., 34, 165), perhaps those connected with William de Aton's endowment of 1383. In 1549 occurred the Seamer Rebellion. The Edward-ian Reformation with its dissolution of the chantries and the free chapels and its later confiscation of Church goods, had left a grievance and a sense of loss which inevitably provoked resentment and resistance in the conservative countryside of East Yorkshire, where the ideals behind the Pilgrimage of Grace were still actively remembered. The whole of the country too was at this time going through a period of prolonged economic stress. Although the church at East Ayton had escaped major damage at the Dissolution of the Chantries, as it was more than one thousand yards from the parish church at Seamer, it had lost its endowments and had suffered some damage at the hands of the reformers. The old Percy manors of Seamer, Hunmanby, Irton and East Ayton had been surrendered to the Crown and this also may have increased

the unrest among the country people.

In July 1549 these resentments finally burst out into open rebellion in a small area of East Yorkshire bounded by Ayton, Seamer, Hunmanby, East Heselton and Wintringham—largely the traditional Percy and Eure manors. There were also risings, for similar reasons, in Norfolk, Devon, Cornwall and other places. Led by such fanatics as William Ombler of Wintringham and Thomas Dale, parish clerk of Seamer, the revolt rapidly swept through the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering. The rebels attacked the house at Seamer where Matthew White the surveyor and custodian of chantry goods was at the time residing, and carried him with three others a mile from the village and there brutally murdered the unfortunate four. Archbishop Holgate numbered the rebels at ten to twelve thousand gathered together by the lighting of Staxton beacon. The Government became thoroughly alarmed and the king offered a free pardon which by some was refused. Eventually the ring-leaders were caught and executed at York, 21st September, 1549. The cause of the outbreak was given at the time by apologists who wished to discount the basic dissatisfaction of the people, as a "Phantastical Propheci" which had become current in the district, that the king, the nobles and gentry were all to be destroyed and the country to be controlled by four governors appointed by Parliament—a remarkable anticipation of the Civil War of a century later (Y.A.J., 34, 151-69). It seems not unlikely that this prophecy was the same as the one for the spreading of which the Ayton priest Thomas Broadlay had been indicted in 1537. Matthew White's widow Dorothy was given special permission to retain Chantry goods not exceeding sixty pounds in value as some recompense for the loss of her husband (Surtees Soc., XCVII, 114n).

The will of William, 1st Lord Eure (1549) gave to Ralph Eure, his son, and to Thomas Eure, his grandson, as executors 100 marks each, to be taken "from my manors of Witton and Hamsterley" (Test. Ebor., VI, 185). William, 2nd Lord Eure, succeeded his grandfather, his father having been killed in Scotland. He was Warden of the Middle Marches and during the Rising of the Earls in 1569 he showed commendable caution in deciding to "tarry at my house at Ayton" so as to be amongst his

tenants and away from his main house while the issue remained in doubt. Obviously he thought that at Ayton he would be less accessible to his friends who were trying to persuade him to join the insur-rection (V.C.H.N.R., I, 441).

It seems likely that shortly after this the main line of the Eure family ceased to live at Ayton Castle and that it would be let to minor relatives. In 1561-2 Henry de Clifford, 2nd Earl of Cumberland, conveyed the "manors" of West Ayton and Brompton to George Dakyn and Ralph Pollard (an official of the Duchy of Lancaster) for an annual rent of £84, and in 1570 at the Inquisition P.M. of Henry de Clifford taken at York Castle, there was an enquiry as to of whom the manors of Ayton, Wykeham etc. were held (i.e. of the Crown or of the Duchy) and by what services. The jurors reported that they did not know and added, remarkably enough, that these manors were "worth per annum nothing". This enquiry refers to Anastasia's share of the 1397 division, now in the hands of the Cliffords (Y.A.J., 19, 386).

William, 2nd Lord Eure, in 1578 conveyed to a group of local gentry, including Sir William Mallory, Sir William Babthorpe, Francis Tunstall, Brian Stapleton etc., the manors of Old Malton, New Malton, Ayton etc. (Yorks. Feet of Fines, V, 122). This wholesale transfer of the Eure estates was probably as security for money advanced; certainly the Eure family fortunes were fast declining and the next two Lord Eures sold large parts of the Estates. Ingleby, Stokesley, Witton and Barlby were all sold but Old Malton was retained as the family residence to the end. When Ralph, 3rd Lord Eure was appointed in 1602 as ambassador to the King of Denmark, he protested his poverty for such a position; even by mortgaging large portions of his estates he maintained he could not raise £500 (Y.A.S., XVCI, 2, 26). He had married Mary, daughter of Sir John Dawnay of Sessay and Sir John's third son, William Dawnay, was living at Ayton Castle in 1600.

Lady Hoby of Hackness, in her Diary (p. 117) says "1 May, 1600; after private prayer I did eat and took my coach and went to Eaton (i.e. Ayton) to Mistress Daunies labour. There I dined and at 2 in the afternoon returned home". It may be indicative of a certain coolness between the two families that on 6th May, 1600, Lady Hoby refused the request of Mr. Dawnay to be godmother to the

child (p. 118). Nevertheless on 13th May, Lady Hoby attended the child's baptism (p. 119). In the parish register at Hutton Buscel is a record of the baptism of Mary, daughter of William Dawnay, 13th May, 1600. Another child "John, son of William Dawnay" was baptised on 26th April, 1602 at Hutton Buscel and buried on 2nd May of the same year.

It is to be noted that Margaret Hoby did not attend the birth or baptism of the second child, the two families had by then become estranged. In 1600 a riotous assault was made on Sir Thomas Hoby at his house at Hackness (this Hoby residence has now disappeared but is thought to have been near the present Hall) by an over-merry hunting party including William Eure (later 4th Lord Eure), Sir William Eure (3rd son of the 2nd Lord Eure and Member of Parliament for Scarborough) and William Dawnay of Ayton Castle, accompanied by one "Smith, yeoman falkner to the Lord Eure". The affair resulted in a law-suit before the Council of the North, but as the 3rd Lord Eure was president of the Council, Sir Thomas expressed a natural lack of confidence in its findings and took his plaint before the Court of the Star Chamber, where it was settled in Hoby's favour in 1602 (Hoby Diary, 270). It is evident that Sir Thomas, who headed a Puritanical household, was not popular among the local gentry; he says in his deposition that he was "sensitive to the attitude of his neighbours". It seems that the hunting party had come from Malton with falcons, to be joined later by William Dawnay from Ayton. It is not known how long the Dawnays lived at Ayton Castle. Sir John Dawnay had died at the family house at Sessay in 1598 and was followed there by his eldest son Thomas. Later in the succession (1680) the then Sir John Dawnay was created Viscount Downe (V.C.H.N.R., I, 448).

In 1619, John Norden the eminent land reformer and deputy to the Surveyor-General, was commissioned to make a survey of the Honour of Pickering (i.e. the castle, forest and all other local properties belonging to the Duchy) as part of the Duchy of Lancaster. In his list of manors within the Honour, Norden gives "Lord Vryes" (presumably an attempt at "Eures" or "Evers", Norden's spelling was highly inconsistent) as Lord of the Manors of Hutton Buscel and East Ayton—the latter obviously a mistake for West Ayton (N.R.R.S., I, 35).

The Eure third part of the West Ayton estate, presumably including the castle, was leased as "The Manor" to Matthew Hutton and Thomas Saville in the Spring of 1638-9 (V.C.H.N.R., II, 442). About this time Lord Carnarvon brought part of the Royal army, which had received severe treatment from the Scots at the Battle of Newburn, down the east coast and, because of the bad weather, he quartered some of the troops in February 1641, at Ayton Castle (Rimington 1961, 12). This seems to have been the only record of Ayton Castle being concerned with the military side of the Civil War, although it is likely that Parliamentary troops would be stationed at such convenient outlying points as Ayton during the two sieges of Scarborough Castle, 1645 and 1648.

THE CASTLE UNDER THE MAULEVERER FAMILY

A survey of the Honour of Pickering taken during the Commonwealth in 1651 as "part of the Possessions of Charles Stuart, late king" but by now settled on "Trustees for the use of the Common Wealch of England and held by them as of the Mannor of East Greenwich", gives "James Maylevery" as holder of the Manor of Ayton (N.R.R.S., I, 78). In the same survey the heirs of "William Vrrre Esq." (presumably Sir William Eure, Colonel of a Royalist regiment of horse, killed at Marston Moor), were said to hold certain lands at West Ayton known as the "Conyers Lands". This land, part of Elizabeth's old share, had been acquired by the Eures from Sir George Conyers in 1611 but by the time of the survey 40 years later, much of it had been sold and only a part remained with the Eure family. The heirs mentioned in the survey were the sisters Margaret and Mary, who later, being quite unable to agree on the partition of the Eure mansion at New Malton, had the house pulled down in 1675 and divided into two equal piles of stones (V.C.H.N.R., I, 532). Mary Eure had married William Palmes of Lindley in 1663 and their descendants still live at Malton.

The reason for the change of ownership at Ayton Castle from the Eures to the Mauleverers was that shortly before the Civil War, the Manor of West Ayton (apparently not quite the whole of the manor as Margaret and Mary Eure were still holding land there in 1651)

was sold by the 4th Lord Eure to James Mauleverer of Ingleby Arncliffe near Northallerton (Y.A.S., 16, 177). Mauleverer was a staunch Parliamentarian at this time of open disagreement between King and Parliament. The immediate cause of his quarrel with the Crown was the enforced knighthood that all wealthy men had to accept from the king—and pay for of course. It was legally necessary to accept the knight-hood—and this Mauleverer had no intention of doing—or pay a composition. To do this he had to attend the Court of Exchequer at Westminster. Mauleverer was delayed on the journey and on his arrival found that his case had been referred in his absence to the Commissioners for Yorkshire (with whom obviously he was not popular) and they had, in his continued absence, preemptorily fined him the enormous (for the 17th century) sum of £2,000 and costs. Mauleverer's wife, writing to her brother Matthew Hutton—who had leased the castle from Lord Eure a year or two before and had probably introduced the estate to his brother-in-law Mauleverer as a promising purchase—said, "In the beginning of these troubles which befell his estate for his knighthood money, he was in very little debt, but within two years he was forced to borrow several considerable sums upon hard terms and he felled much wood to his great prejudice" (Y.A.J., 16, 177).

When the Long Parliament met (1640) Mauleverer got a measure of justice for the wrongs done to him; on the motion of Edward Hyde, afterwards Earl of Clarendon, he received £3,509 from the Barons of the Exchequer as a solatium for his tribulations. Despite this, Mauleverer remained in debt and as a speculation he bought from Lord Eure Ayton Castle and its land, intending to cut and sell the timber. The hostilities of the Civil War commenced however before he could carry out his plans and the local Royalist commander, the Earl of Newcastle, not unnaturally would not allow Mauleverer, who by now was a colonel in the Parliamentary army, to derive any advantage from this purchase of ancestral land from a traditionally Royalist family.

James Mauleverer had borrowed money from Edward Stockdale of York, giving, it would seem, the Ayton Castle estate as security. Owing partly to Newcastle's veto on the sale of the timber he became bankrupt in 1651 and eventually died a prisoner for debt in

York Castle, 1664 (Y.A.J., 16, 202). In the register of the church of St. Mary, Castlegate, York is the entry "April 25, 1664, James Mauliverer Esq., prisoner in York Castle, buried".

Apparently Colonel Mauleverer had had other business dealings with the Eure family, for in 1653 he was claiming 1200 trees out of the 3600 for which he said he had paid the 4th Lord Eure and other members of that family at Malton. The Commissioners who were at the time discussing the sequestration of the Eure manors of Old and New Malton, decided that "the hands of the Common-wealth should be taken off the manors and the Eures and Colonel Mauleverer should take their remedy at law (Y.A.S., XX, 42).

Edward Stockdale's will, dated 23rd June, 1644, includes the following— "concerning my estate at West Ayton in Pickering Lythe, if Mr. Mauleverer pays in the £2,000 for the redemption, the same to be paid to my executors for my children living, equally; but if it is not redeemed then the interest to be paid to the children". In 1647 Stockdale considered it necessary to take the law into his own hands, he took forcible possession of Ayton Castle and expelled Edmund Mauleverer (son of James) who was living there. In the Quarter Session Records (N.R.R.S., IV, 273) is the entry "detailed presentation of the case of Mr. Stockdale and the York labourer for forcible entry on Mr. Jas. Malliverer's message at West Ayton and ejecting Mr. Edmund Malliverer then in possession of same, New Malton, 13th July, 1647". At the Helmsley Quarter Sessions, 11th January, 1648, recognisances were entered into by Stockdale and the case was closed.

Edmund Mauleverer was a Quaker; in the Quarter Session Records (Helmsley, 12th July, 1664) is the indictment "Edmd. Mauliverer among others assembled at the house of John Dickinson under pretext of religious worship". He was married according to the customs of the Society of Friends at the Hull Monthly Meeting held at Kirby Grindalyth, 1st March, 1661, to Anne Peirson of Mowthorpe—they had one daughter, also named Anne. Edmund died of consumption

at Ayton in 1679; he appears to have been buried in the graveyard of the Society of Friends at Pickering, for his burial is recorded at the Pickering Monthly Meeting, 28th September, 1679.

His widow married Matthew Watson, "both being of

Scarborough" (apparently she had left Ayton Castle after the death of her husband) at the Pickering Monthly Meeting of the Quakers, 7th July, 1681. The next year they (with Edmund's daughter Anne) left England and settled in West New Jersey, where the descendants of the marriage of the daughter, Anne Mauleverer to John Abbott are still living (Y.A.J., 16, 202).

THE FINAL YEARS

There can be little doubt that the castle at Ayton became uninhabited towards the end of the 17th century. It was, in any case, increasingly unacceptable as a dwelling with reasonable standards of comfort. The Mauleverer family had been reduced to a state of comparative poverty and most of their estates passed out of their possession. Probably the heirs of Edward Stockdale claimed the Ayton lands and proceeded to dismantle the castle soon after the death of Edmund. Certainly some of the stones from the castle, bearing the same masons' marks, were used in the rebuilding of the bridge across the Derwent at Ayton in 1775.

In 1704 two-thirds of the manor of West Ayton were settled under a trust deed by Dame Sarah Hewley and until recently they were still held by her charity. As this part of the manor did not include the castle building, it is tempting to think that the Hewley purchase corresponded to Anastasia's and Elizabeth's 1378 shares. The trustees of Lady Hewley's Charity sold almost the whole of their West Ayton estate in October 1951 to the late Mr. Arthur Thornton-Varley (d. 1953). The field between the castle and the river was sold by the Hewley Trust to the Scarborough Corporation in 1933.

The portion containing the castle (the original Eure share) was conveyed as "one-fourth of the manor"—the original third appears to have shrunk—in 1758 by Thomas Metcalf, clerk, and his wife Ann, to Richard Osbaldeston, Bishop of Carlisle (1747) and later of London (1762). The Bishop had inherited the neighbouring Hutton Buscel estate at the death of his first wife Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Richard Farside, the owner of most of the land at Hutton Buscel but not the actual Lord of the Manor; this office was held at that time by the descendants of Mary, daughter of Sir William Eure

and co-heiress of the 5th Lord Eure. The Bishop died childless in 1764 and the joint estate eventually passed to George Osbaldeston, the famous sportsman who sold it to the Hon. Marmaduke Langley in 1840 (he was the Hon. Marmaduke Dawnay until he changed his name on succeeding to the Wykeham estate, on his death in 1851 all his estates in Wykeham, Hutton Buscel and West Ayton passed to his brother, Lord Downe). Lot No. 1 of the Sale Catalogue, numbers 59 and 60 on the plan, refer to the field in which the castle stands as the "Hall Grounds".

By 1911 the castle buildings were showing serious signs of collapse and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, with some success, took up the matter of the repair of the structure with the then owner, the Hon. John Dawnay (see Appendix 5).

The castle was included in 1929 in a list of Scheduled Monuments (Y.A.J., 30, 188) and in 1930 much property in West Ayton and Hutton Buscel was sold by Viscount Downe; the field in which the remains of the castle and its out-works are situated was purchased by the Scarborough Corporation. In 1958 the building was again considered unsafe and at the suggestion of the Scarborough and District Archaeological Society, the Scarborough Corporation agreed to co-operate with the then Ministry of Works to effect the necessary repairs at an estimated cost of £250.

SUMMARY

The Ayton Castle site has been occupied by two outstanding and noble families, the de Atons from Barlby near Selby and the Eures from Stokesley. Later the castle was occupied with less distinction by the Dawnays of Sessay and the Mauleverers of Ingleby Arncliffe.

The first known building on the site was erected in the second half of the 12th century by William de Aton, the family from this time taking the name of their property as a surname. There was a major rebuilding and extension in the middle of the 13th century and a hundred years later the de Atons reached the climax of their importance, the first and second Lord Atons having an influence far beyond local limits.

The present castle was built about the year 1400 by the first of the Ayton Eures, Sir Ralph, who had married a de Aton heiress. The

main Eure line soon showed a preference for their new house at Old Malton but Ayton was still used by the family and eventually by their relatives, the Dawnays.

Just before the Civil War the castle was sold by the 4th Lord Eure to James Mauleverer, a staunch Parliamentarian, but 40 years later, in 1679, on the death of his son Edmund, the deterioration of the family fortunes caused the sale of the Ayton property to satisfy the creditors. This marks the end of the castle as a residence, the building was partly dismantled and was in ruins by the end of the 17th century.

