

THE STORY OF THE ABBEY LAND

Abbot Bede Turner

[Maps to accompany this paper are not yet ready]

BEFORE 1802

FROM THE ELEVENTH CENTURY TO 1887 the township of Ampleforth had three divisions: Ampleforth St Peter's; Ampleforth Oswaldkirk; and Ampleforth Birdforth. The Ordnance maps published before 1887 show the portions which belong to each division. The claims of each division are made clear by the large grants of the Ampleforth Common, to the Vicar of Ampleforth, the Rector of Oswaldkirk, and to the Rev Croft for Birdforth. The Abbey Title Deeds and the Enclosure Award are the chief sources referred to in this story. The Award is written on '23 skins' with the map of the Common attached. It was signed at Northallerton on the 27th day of January, 1810 by Edward Cleaver, Esq, of Nunnington, and William Dawson, Esq, of Tadcaster, the two gentlemen appointed by the Crown to carry out the enclosure. It was also signed by Thomas Hornsby of Wombledon, Land Surveyor, and by William Lockwood of Easingwold, Attorney. Large portions of the Common were allotted to the Rev Antony Germaine, Vicar of Ampleforth in part for tithes of old enclosure: to the Rev John Pigott, Rector of Oswaldkirk in part for tithes of old enclosure: to the Rev Robert Croft as Lessee for the tithes of old enclosure: to the Prebendal Lord's rights in St Peter's: to John Smith, Esq of Ampleforth and to George Sootheran of Ampleforth Outhouses, as Lords of the Manor of Ampleforth in the Oswaldkirk parish.

In the eleventh century Ulf's Manor in Ampleforth had been granted to the Archbishop of York, and this manor supported the Ampleforth Prebend in York Minster. It is now vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The Roos family of Helmsley and Oswaldkirk held a manor in Ampleforth; and in 1565 a manor in Ampleforth was in the hands of Sir Nicholas Fairfax of Gilling Castle. The fields of these manors lay in the valley south of the road from Ampleforth to Oswaldkirk, and the labour of the Ampleforth villeins is still evident by the presence of the 'lands': relics of an old method of ploughing known as the ridge and furrow. Before the repeal of the Corn Laws the valley was one large wheatfield; and in August and September it must have been a 'Golden Valley.'

In the sixteenth century the feudal manorial system had begun to disappear. The farms large and small passed into the hands of many owners either on a freehold or copyhold tenure. The conveyance of the copyhold from one holder to another was a simple and cheap form of transferring ownership at the annual meeting of the Court Baron and Court Leet. These frequent transactions account for many of the fields being called by the name of the person from whom they were purchased. The old field names have in many cases been forgotten. It is only on those farms where the family has been in possession for a long period that each field retains its 'proper' name. Even on our own farm the original names have in certain cases been allowed to pass out. Some scheme has been carried out in a field and a new name has been attached to it, such as 'Ram' field and 'Brick' field.

The appellation of the 'Lord of the Manor' alone survived. Admittances amongst our Title Deeds show that up to 1865 the Fairfax family acted as Lords of the Manor and that from 1871 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners acted as Lords. The Steward of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners held the Court Baron and the Court Leet every year, collected the copyhold rents, admitted new holders of the land 'over the straw,'*1* and then presided at a dinner which he gave to all the copyholders¹. At the Court held November 21st, 1911 he expressed his regret that he would have to appoint a bailiff to collect the rents in future years: that the rents no longer covered expenses, and that admittances would have to be made at his office in York.

A short outline of Father Bolton's life must again appear in the pages of the JOURNAL to enable the reader to interpret correctly the passage in Abbot Allanson's Annals² which records the gift of thirty-two acres of land by the Honourable Miss Fairfax to Father Bolton.

In 1764 Father John Anselm Bolton, a monk of St Laurence's, Dieuleward was appointed chaplain to the 9th Lord Fairfax at Gilling Castle. Many chaplains had found Lord Fairfax a difficult patron, and many new appointments had to be made by the Benedictine Superiors. But Father Bolton from the very beginning of his appointment was acceptable to his patron. Lord Fairfax died in 1772 and his youngest child, the Honourable Ann Fairfax, succeeded to the estate. She had lost four brothers and three sisters, and she herself was delicate and of a nervous disposition. The confidence placed in Father Bolton by her father was in itself a sufficient reason why she should retain him as her chaplain and adviser in the management of her estates. He watched her interests in every direction. When trees were sold he saw that only those were felled which had been marked: he saw that rents were paid on audit day. But this influence exercised by the chaplain caused jealousy especially in the Pigott family. Nathaniel Pigott, her nearest relative, visited Gilling about 1775, and for a time undertook the management of her estate. He persuaded her to go to London for the winter. He induced her to sign a deed of agreement by which his youngest son Charles Gregory should inherit her estate and by which in fact she lost control of it. When she was in a better state of health to realise what she had done, she appealed to the Lord Chancellor to cancel the Deed. Father Bolton appeared as a witness and the Deed was cancelled. In 1778 the first Act for Catholic Relief was passed and Father Bolton took the oath of Allegiance under this Act. This Relief Act allowed Catholics to purchase land.

Our Title Deeds show that on November 18th, 1783, Father Bolton purchased from John Sootheran a dwelling house and nine acres in front of it called Agar's Close³, and that on May 19th, 1784, he purchased from Richard Wray a field of three acres in Aumit Lane⁴. But the Relief Act did not prevent a priest from being prosecuted. Father Bolton's enemies attempted his downfall in 1785 by bringing a charge against him of persuading a certain

¹ The previous holder handed a straw to the new tenant in the presence of the Steward of the Manor symbolising the transfer of the land.

² Peter Athanasius Allanson, O.S.B., was born in London June 11th, 1804, came to Ampleforth 1813, entered the novitiate May 31st, 1820, died January 13th, 1876.

³ The land between the Bounds and top cricket field sometimes called 'Tank' field.

⁴ The lane east of the infirmary

Mary Bentley to become a Catholic. He was imprisoned in York Castle and was brought to trial at the Lenten Assize in York in 1786 but was acquitted. Abbot Allanson after minutely describing the trial adds: ‘Three years later Lady Ann Fairfax⁵ determined to reward the long and faithful services of her chaplain by building a handsome house for him on the other side of the valley opposite the Castle: she then made it over to him with about thirty-two acres of land.... Father Anselm on the death of his benefactress left the Castle for his new House which was then nearly completed and ready to receive him.’ Allanson then adds in a note: ‘Mr Sootheran writes to Mr Bolton Febr. 7th, 1789. ‘All works go on very well both at the new House and at Gilling’ and he sent him the same information on the 24th of Febr. 1793. The Honourable Ann Fairfax died May 2nd, 1793, and was succeeded by her relative Charles Gregory Pigott. He took the surname Fairfax. In 1794 he married a non-Catholic and ‘allowed all his children to be baptised and brought up Protestants.’

This outline of Father Bolton’s life as chaplain at Gilling Castle makes it clear that as far back as 1783 he began to provide for the future by finding a site on freehold ground outside Gilling Castle control where he and his successors could live and serve the Catholics of the district. It is safe to presume that he consulted and obtained the approval of Miss Fairfax and that shortly after his trial at York she urged him to go forward with his scheme and that she gave him the money to cover his land purchases and the building of his new house. Her name does not appear in any of our Title Deeds. The transfer of the property was in every case made to John Bolton.

It is also safe to presume that Father Bolton was on good terms with the Sootherans⁶ who lived on the Ampleforth side of the land he had purchased, and with the Sotherans who lived on the Oswaldkirk side. William Sotheran carried on a tanning industry in Gilling and at Ampleforth. John Sootheran ‘had a shop and a place for making candles.’ Both would do business with Father Bolton for Gilling Castle would buy many candles and the tanner would try to secure the oak bark. Both would help him in his land purchases. The thirty-two acres were not bought at one deal. The first transaction took place in 1783, the last in 1793.

In 1783 Father Bolton purchased from John Sootheran a dwelling house and nine acres of land in front of it called Agar’s Close (1 and 12 on the map).

In 1784 he purchased from Richard Wray a field of three acres in Aumit Lane (not on map).

In 1786 he purchased from Thomas Rymer a field of three acres south of Agar’s Close (14). In 1788 he purchased from John Agar a dwelling house and three acres of land (2 and 13).

⁵ From 1773 to 1793 admittances to copyhold lands are entitled: ‘Manor of Ampleforth. The Court Baron and Customary Court of the Honourable Ann Fairfax, Lady of tile Manor aforesaid.’

⁶ In the genealogical table of the Sotheran family, compiled by Charles Sotheran of Manchester in 1871, John Sotheran (1720) of Ampleforth and Oswaldkirk had Timothy and Thomas as fifth and sixth sons. Timothy began to spell his name Sootheran and all his descendants have retained that spelling. Timothy’s son John is the Sootheran from whom Father Bolton in 1783 purchased the house and nine acres of land. Thomas’ son William lived at Gilling until he inherited the house and land now the site of the Science Block and Upper and Lower Building.

In 1790 he purchased from Catherine Prudams one acre and a half called the ‘Shoulder of Mutton’ (11).

In 1791 he purchased from John Sootheran three acres of land known as Aumit Leas (15), and four acres called Micklingdale Close (17).

In 1791 he purchased from William and Elizabeth Sotheran a close of land containing two acres abutting on Ampleforth Common and a messuage, house and cottage (3 and 4).

In 1792 he purchased from John Sandwith three acres called Simpson Close (16).

In 1793 he purchased from John Sandwith a quarter of a rood of land at the south end of Johnson Close (18). The north side of the wooden bridge over the Holbeck is built on this small plot.

All these small purchases, with the exception of the Wray Aumit, formed a narrow strip stretching from the Ampleforth-Oswaldkirk road to Holbeck. The land to the south of the brook belonged to the Gilling Estate. Before Father Bolton made these purchases there already existed the ‘Ings road’ from East Lane (Back Lane)⁷ to the north-east corner of Micklingdale. Lodgefield Farm on the Lion Wood hill had the right of way by Ings road to Ampleforth. The owner of Lodgefield is the lay Rector of St. Hilda’s church and is responsible for the maintenance of the chancel. In all probability before 1791 Father Bolton had paid the deposit money for Micklingdale and had Mr Sootheran’s consent to extend Ings Road⁸ and build the stone bridge.

In support of this inference there is the very definite declaration of the late Mrs Mary Drinkell of Ampleforth, the daughter of Myra Thompson (nÚe Fox) that her great grandfather and her great great uncle, Cornelius Fox quarried the stone in Gilling Castle quarry for the building of Father Bolton’s house. This tradition in the Fox family tallies with the letter of Mr Sootheran to Father Bolton saying ‘that all works go on very well both at the New House and at Gilling.’ It was a short and easy way for the haulage of the dressed stone from Gilling to the new house if a bridge was built at the south-east end of Micklingdale Close. The building of the brook bridge would be the first task the Gilling and Ampleforth masons were instructed to undertake.

If this inference is correct, and if Father Bolton preferred the Gilling stone to local stone a difficulty arises about the name of Bolton Bank. On page 273 of the History of Ampleforth Abbey the Bank is described as ‘the new short cut to Helmsley still called Bolton’s Bank.’ The author of the History cannot have had access to the Ampleforth Award and to the Ordnance map attached to it. These make it clear that ‘Bolton Bank’ was one of the public roads in or about the Common which was being enclosed. The Award gives a description of the public and private roads, and ‘Bolton Bank’ is mentioned under its original name of Grange Road among the public roads. The Award speaks of the public roads called the Wass Road, the Malton and Thirsk Road, the Ampleforth to Helmsley

⁷ Now generally known, through a corruption based on a misunderstanding of the local pronunciation, as ‘Bog’ lane. Its winter condition does nothing to encourage a re-emphasis of the original name.

⁸ This followed the same route as the tramway which many will remember, save at the south end where the rails were diverted to cross the newer wooden bridge.

Road, and the Ampleforth to Oswaldkirk Road. It then describes what is now called Bolton Bank in the following words: ‘Also one other public carriage road or highway thirty feet wide and herein called the Grange Road as the same is now staked out and laned off or bounded and branching from the said road called the Oswaldkirk Road at or near a place called Ampleforth Lodge, and extending in a north-east direction over the said Common to the said gate called Low Grange Moor⁹ gate.’

The Award is sufficient evidence that Grange Road had long been a public road connecting the Oswaldkirk Road with Grange Moor. Why is it now called Bolton Bank? In the summer vacation of 1910 one of the priests was just turning off the Thirsk and Malton road to walk down Bolton Bank when a carriage and pair drew up and the aged Earl of Feversham spoke to him and in the course of conversation asked him if he knew that his grandfather had allowed the College the use of that road. The priest should have replied by quoting a tradition: ‘Your grandfather tried to stop this right of way on Grange Road while Father Bolton lived at Ampleforth Lodge. Your grandfather obstructed the road by posts and rails. They were taken down by the farmers who used this road. Then your grandfather took the case into the law courts. Father Bolton defended the rights of the Ampleforth people. Your grandfather lost the case and that is the reason why people ever since that time have called the road Bolton Bank.’

On May 2nd, 1793, Miss Fairfax died, and Father Bolton then left the Castle to live at Ampleforth Lodge. At the very time he was taking possession of and furnishing his new home, the monastery of his profession in France was being suppressed. On May 19th, 1793, the municipality of Dieuleward had instructions to guard the monastery of St Laurence. On October 12th 1793, the house was sacked by the Revolutionaries. Many of the monks had already left. Of those who had remained some made their escape, others were taken prisoner. Those who reached England found a temporary home on November 21st, 1793 at Acton Burnell. From Acton Burnell the community of St Laurence’s tried to establish themselves at Birkenhead: then at Scholes near Prescot; then at Vernon Hall in Liverpool; then at Parbold Hall. At none of these places could land be bought. In 1798 Father Bede Brewer had to act as President of the English Benedictine Congregation and one of the first problems he had to deal with was the duty of finding a house and land for St Laurence’s. He himself was a Laurentian and he threw himself with vigour into the task of making a firm foundation for the monastery of St Laurence on English soil. After consulting Provincial Lacon he visited Father Bolton at Ampleforth. On June 19th, 1801, Father Bolton conveyed to John Brewer Ampleforth Lodge and all the land he had purchased and granted vacant possession for July, 1802.

In November, 1802, the last Council was held at Parbold from which the following ‘minute’ is cited: ‘On the 29th of November, 1802 all the community were called to meet in the chapel at Parbold. Father Anselm Appleton asked the Secretary to read the decree of his election to the Priorship of the monastery of St Laurence which had taken place at the General Chapter held in London on the 14th of July, and to read also the letter of the President confirming the election. After being installed according to the rule of the

⁹ The wood now called by us the ‘Triangular’ is described on all ordnance maps as ‘Grange Moor’ from Newton Grange with its chapel at the east side of the Moor. At one time Grange Moor extended to the angle near the Beacon Farm: and then it formed a strict triangle and not a quadrangle.

Constitutions he earnestly exhorted the community to be of one mind and begged them to strive wholeheartedly to restore the monastery of St Laurence in the place lately handed over to this community by Father Anselm Bolton. The place was situated in the County of York and was called Ampleforth.’ On December 11th, 1802, the small community arrived at Ampleforth Lodge and began conventual life that same day. Father Bolton’s share of the Ampleforth Common¹⁰ was a very small strip of ground (10)

This allotment made to Father Bolton’s land was the beginning of the ‘Monkwood,’ and up to 1887 was in the township of Ampleforth but part of the parish of Oswaldkirk. Seven other allotments granted by the Award now form the Monkwood. The allotment to William Hopkins was part of the parish of Oswaldkirk. The allotment to Jeremiah ffox was in the parish of Birdforth. The two allotments to Thomas Atkinson are in St Peter’s, Ampleforth. The allotment to John Smith was part of the Oswaldkirk parish and the allotment to T. Pulleyn was in the Birdforth parish. The Monkwood is a good illustration of the Parish fretwork of Ampleforth St Peter’s, Ampleforth Oswaldkirk and Ampleforth Birdforth.

ST LAURENCE’S COLLEGE

When Ampleforth Lodge became St Laurence’s Monastery and School in 1802 land was wanted for a home farm and for games. The Sotheran family had sold to Father Bolton some of their land because they wished to do him a personal favour. In his day the Sotherans would look upon Ampleforth Lodge as a Rectory or Parsonage such as Jane Austen was at that very time describing. They would sympathise with their old friend when he broke the news to them that he had to leave the Lodge. But they probably resented the arrival of refugee masters and boys and regarded them as an invasion into the Sotheran Sanctuary.

It was not from that generation of Sotherans that more land could be purchased. The College buildings were hemmed in on both sides by land belonging to the Sotherans. Seventy years would pass before the fields to the west could be purchased and one hundred and sixteen years would pass before the Sotheran land to the east could be purchased. From whom then could land be obtained? Fortunately many fields in the Ampleforth township belonged to no less than forty different holders of freehold and copyhold property. The enclosure of the Ampleforth Common put land at the disposal of many individuals. Further investigation may prove that the fields east and west of Aumit Lane were an ancient Common and had been granted in small allotments of three acres each to certain members of the townships of Ampleforth and Oswaldkirk.

A Gilling Estate Rental Book for the years 1749 to 1770 inclusive gives the names of tenants who paid rents to the Fairfax family for property in Ampleforth belonging to them.

¹⁰ The Award describes it thus: ‘Also we do allot and assign unto John Brewer of Woolton in the County of Lancaster, one rood twenty-five perches of land in the said Common and to be situated within and part of the township of Ampleforth in the parish of Oswaldkirk aforesaid bounded by lands herein awarded to Jeremiah ffox on or towards the the north and west, by lands herein awarded to William Hopkins on or towards the east and by the said road called the Oswaldkirk Road on or towards the south, and we do order and direct that the said John Brewer and owners and proprietors for the time being of this allotment shall make and for ever hereafter support and maintain the ditches and fences on the east and south sides thereof.’

There is a list of tenants in Ampleforth from whom tithe rents were collected and there is the list of copyholders who paid their rents every year at the Court Baron. A copy of the rents for 1760 is given in the Appendix to this article.

These rent rolls give the names of some forty holders of property; and it is from these that one small field after another has been purchased when a sale has been held to fulfil conditions set down in wills. The names in the rent roll also explain a number of our field names.

The first addition to the thirty-two acres was made in 1811 when Prior Robinson purchased nine acres of land (33 on map), from Thomas Flintoft of New Malton, the son and executor of Thomas Flintoft of Ampleforth. These nine acres are situated at the north end of Aumit Lane: three acres called Aumit Close on the east side of the lane and six acres also called Aumit Close on the west side of the lane. The bungalow of 1919, the Infirmary of 1927 and the two cottages of 1932 are built on these six acres.

From 1811 to 1821 no land was purchased but during these years the east and west wings and a third floor (now the Museum) were added to Father Bolton's house. In 1818 Father Laurence Burgess was elected Prior and Father Placid Metcalfe became Procurator in 1822. Both these were keenly interested in the Home Farm. The School had gained a great reputation under Father Augustine Baines¹¹ and more land was urgently needed to meet the increase in school and community.

The first purchase made by Prior Burgess took place in April 1821 from Jeremiah Fox (15). Our Title Deeds show that the Fox family was in Ampleforth in 1561.¹² Jeremiah Fox in the Deeds is described as a carpenter of Ampleforth and if he was the carpenter responsible for the construction of the roof of the east and west wings he was a skilled craftsman. His praises were sounded in 1904 by an expert builder called in to examine the roof of the 'Old Monastery.'

In 1817 Jeremiah had mortgaged his allotment to Barbara Clark of Helmsley for a term of one thousand years, but Barbara died shortly afterwards and Jeremiah found himself having to pay his mortgage interest to nine heirs-at-law of Barbara deceased, viz., John Clark of Helmsley, blacksmith; George Clark, carpenter; Richard Clark, blacksmith; Mathew Clark, shoemaker; William Clark, blacksmith; James Clark of Edstone, blacksmith; Job Clark of Thirsk, joiner; Benjamin Cole of Helmsley, labourer and Elizabeth, his wife (daughter of Barbara). Jeremiah redeemed the mortgage and the transfer to Prior Burgess is signed by Jeremiah and by all the Clarks and the two Coles. The Coles spell their name Coal in their signatures. This allotment, called 'The Firs,' is situated north and west of the small allotment given by the Award to Father Bolton's land. The monks' cemetery was placed in this allotment in Prior Cockshoot's time.¹³*3* Father Bernard Ryding was the first priest to be buried in it in September 1841. Before that date Fathers Coupe, Clarkson

¹¹ C. Almond, *History of Ampleforth Abbey*, Chap. 28

¹² In that year an indenture was made from the Earl of Rutland to James and Thomas Fox for part of his manor in Ampleforth

¹³ In his *Recollections* Abbot Prest gives to Prior Cooper the credit of placing the cemetery in this allotment.

and Rishton had been buried in the garden enclosure north west of the original chapel¹⁴ Their bodies were transferred to the new cemetery and placed at the entrance on the north side of the walk with Father Ryding on the south.

In the same year 1821 the Foster allotment (9) known as Hamperfield, and situated west of the hedge that runs from the road to the Ampleforth end of the Terrace, was purchased from William Foster of York. This William Foster was heir-at-law of William Foster, late of Ampleforth and afterwards a private soldier in the 15th Regiment of Foot. This soldier was the eldest son of Thomas Foster of Ampleforth. In his will Thomas Foster describes himself as a weaver. He bequeaths his looms, husbandry and gear to his son William and his will is proved at York by the Reverend Robert Peirson, a lawful surrogate and administrator, before the peculiar and Prebendal Court at York. The Title Deeds declare that the Foster allotment was granted to the heirs of Thomas Foster. A copy of the will is given but the address of his house is not mentioned. The weaving industry was carried on in Shallowdale. The ruined houses in the dale are still spoken of as ‘the weaving houses.’ Linen sheets woven there are still kept as heirlooms in several Ampleforth families. The numerous terraced gardens on which the flax was grown can all be traced. The field east of the farm with the stream running through it is the ‘bleaching field.’

The hamlet in Shallowdale was on the private road called the Highwood road which branched off the Wass road and passed the north east corner of an enclosure belonging to Edward Metcalfe. In the will of George Metcalfe proved at York 1787 he bequeaths to his beloved cousin Edward Metcalfe ‘all that close or parcell of ground lying and situate in the township of Ampleforth commonly called and known by the name of Quaker Meeting House Close.’ The weavers of Shallowdale are said to have been Friends and some of the walls of their Meeting House can be seen adjoining Snake Villa.

In the same year 1821 a field of three acres situated about 200 yards east of the Brickfield, and to-day called the Light Aumit, was purchased from Robert Light of Sproxton - a cooper. The field at the time was in the occupation of the Prior of Ampleforth and was being used as an additional pasture for the cows.

In 1824 the Atkinson allotment (14) adjoining the Fox allotment was purchased by Prior Burgess. The Title Deeds show that Mary Atkinson, widow, bequeathed in 1791 to her nephew, Thomas Atkinson, her personal and real estate. The Award granted to the Atkinson family two common shares west of that allotted to Jeremiah Fox with the Smith allotment between the two shares. Thomas Atkinson is described as a weaver when in 1810 he sold to John Smith of Ampleforth his allotment west of the Smith allotment.

On May 25th, 1818, his son Richard Atkinson, was admitted at the Court Baron to the allotment adjoining that of Jeremiah Fox. On the 14th of May, 1821, this Richard Atkinson is described as a yeoman of Sproxton when securing a mortgage of ú50 on his allotment; but in the Deed of June 28th, 1825, he is described as a labourer*5* of Sproxton when he and his mortgagees sell to Prior Burgess his common share allotment.¹⁵ The Atkinson

¹⁴ The Boiler House and chimney are on the site of the first cemetery.

¹⁵ This change of status is an example of what was happening all over the country during this period. The age of the Yeomen was nearing its end.

family whose name heads the list of copyholders from 1749 onwards has to-day no male representative in Ampleforth to pass on the line.

In 1825 the two allotments in the Monks Wood owned by the heirs of John Smith (12 and 13) of Ampleforth were purchased by Prior Burgess. In this allotment in 1890 a water supply was found by the divining rod. Relics of this scheme are to be seen on the north side of the low walk where the well hole is covered by a large flag. For several years the water was raised by a gas engine to a tank above the well constructed at the same level as the reservoir in Aumit Lane. Later the gas engine was abandoned: the water was piped to the Boiler House and then driven up by steam pump to the reservoir. In 1904 the District Council supplied water from Smith Hill Howl¹⁶ and the water from the Monks' Wood has not been used since.

THE SMITH FAMILY OF AMPLEFORTH.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Smiths and the Sotherans were the two leading families in the 'town' of Ampleforth. Lawyer Smith did not imitate his contemporary, Charles Sotheran by handing down to posterity the genealogy of the John Smith who paid two pence copyhold rent from 1749 to 1770. Possibly Lawyer Smith felt that some of his ancestors had not honoured the name, especially the one who gave a name to 'Tom Smith's Cross.'

The John Smith mentioned frequently in the Award was born in 1754. About 1780 he married a widow, Susannah Nawton. By this marriage he had two sons, John and George: and five daughters, Dinah, Mary, Hannah, Elizabeth and Sarah. The eldest son John married and went to live as a yeoman at Newburgh Park. George, the second son, studied for the law and practised as a solicitor in Ampleforth using the old home as his office. The house is now well known to many boys and guests of the school as 'Miss Welburn's.' Three of the daughters Dinah, Hannah and Sarah married. Elizabeth and Mary did not marry but kept house for their bachelor brother George. Their father died in 1810 and in 1824 their brother John, of Newburgh Park, also died. His daughter Jane Smith came to live with her Uncle George and Aunts Mary and Elizabeth. Lawyer Smith died in 1868 aged 72, Elizabeth died 1874 aged 81, Mary died 1877 aged 88. Jane, still fresh in the memory of the old members of the community, died in 1899 aged 83.

In the Ampleforth Diary for midsummer 1894 is an account of 'Awd Kits Berryin.' It is the funeral of Christopher Ludley at the College church and in the people's cemetery on the Hill in the year 1860. George Smith's coachman is the John who knocked at his master's door to ask if he might attend the funeral. The old lady who opened the door and gave the permission was George's sister. On John's return the three ladies listened to his tale how the priest 'digged and reekt Awd Kit.' Lawyer Smith passed the tale on to Mr Hall of the Birch Farm, Oswaldkirk, who in his turn passed it on to Father Theodore Turner.

With the death of Miss Jane Smith the family ceased to be represented in Ampleforth. Mr Robert Pearson of the Hermitage purchased the house and the land from George Smith Flintoft of Newark, New Jersey, U.S.A. Lawyer Smith's sister, Dinah, had married George Flintoft and a son or grandson was given the name of George Smith Flintoft.

¹⁶ See map. In this Howl (hole, hollow) the Holbeck rises.

AMPLEFORTH CORN MILLS

The death of John Smith of Newburgh Park in 1824 brought about the sale of the Smith allotment, mentioned above, and also the sale of the Moor (22) and Susannah Thwaite (23) to the Reverend John Partis Halsall of Easingwold for the sum of ú468. In 1825 Mr Halsall had to move to Sheffield and found in Prior Burgess a purchaser for his two fields and ‘the windmill lately erected (21) thereon and all the machinery and tackle to the same belonging.’ The map of the Ampleforth Award puts no sign for any building on the present Mill Farm site: nor any sign for the house and farm buildings which now stand near the lime kilns at the point where the Malton to Thirsk road crosses the Ampleforth to Helmsley road.¹⁷ History does not record what induced Mr Halsall to speculate in the erection of a windmill in such an exposed position: nor does it record its success or failure in its early years. In all probability the drifts of snow which frequently block the road leading to the mill in winter months discouraged many farmers from patronising it.

There is only one ledger of the period which throws any light on to the working of the mill.¹⁸ From this ledger it appears that the mill cottage and four acres of land were let to John Masterman.¹⁹ Folio 251 has the following account:

John Masterman, Miller.

	Dr.	£.	s.	d.
1839 Feb.5	To rent Michaelmas 1838 to Xmas 1838	4	8	9
	do. Xmas 1838 to Lady Day 1839	2	12	6
	do. Lady Day 1839 to Lady Day 1840 — 4 acres and cottage	8	0	0
	To cash	6	8	0
	To two small pigs		14	0
1839 Feb 12	To cash	1	18	0
		24	1	3

Folio 252 has:

		£	s.	d.
1838 Cr.	By two grindings of wheat, 6s.		12	0
Nov. 29	– four – of oats, 2s.		8	0

¹⁷ This farm was probably built by the Rev John Pigott for the tenant of the land allotted to the Rectory of Oswaldkirk. It has been misleading for it to be called ‘Beacon House.’ It gives the impression that it was erected on the site of the Ampleforth Beacon. The site of the Ampleforth Beacon is exactly north of John Smith’s house and in the fourth field west of the Mill Farm. (See Mill map). From that position in the Thwaites Road, York Minster can be seen: and that site was chosen as the best for the Ampleforth beacon fire to signal the alarm to York.

¹⁸ Ampleforth Archives, NX60

¹⁹ Thomas Wright, who is now in his seventy-fifth year and has worked in the tailor’s shop since 1883, cannot give any information about the mill except that his great grandfather John lived there as tenant. John Wright married Jane the daughter of John Masterman.

	– two – of wheat, 6s.	12	0
	– one – barley, 2s	2	0
Dec. 11	– one – wheat, 6s	6	0
26	– one – wheat, 6s	6	0
Jan. 2 (1839)	– one – wheat, 6s	6	0
Febr.5	Fly, Millstones, £20		
	Sundries, £1	21	0
	Ploughing		3
		24	3

On folios 255 and 257 of the same ledger accounts are opened with Chapman of Helmsley and H. Foxton of Nunnington for the grinding of the College wheat. This indicates that the final grinding at Mr Halsall's windmill took place on January 2nd, 1839. Evidently something put the mill out of action and as 1839 was the year of the 'Great Wind' it seems safe to suggest that the machinery collapsed in the storm. Mr Thomas Radcliffe often talked to the Brandsby chaplain (of 1902 to 1911) about his school days at the College in 1838 and 1839. He said that his father rushed up to Yearsley to see if the College had withstood the gale: and that the wind was so violent that it brought spray from the Irish Sea into the vale of York. From 1840 to 1880 the mill was used as a covered yard for oxen in the winter. In 1880 the walls were pulled down and the stones were used to build an extension to the College home farm. Many regretted the demolition of the distinctive landmark.

At some earlier period in the history of Ampleforth there had been a windmill in the field south of the new farm buildings as this field is still known as Windmill Hill. This windmill and the two water mills would be the corn mills over which the Lords of the Manor in the Middle Ages exercised manorial rights. It was to the interests of these Lords to see that the machinery was kept in good working order and that the banks of the reservoirs were maintained in a sound condition.

In the twenty-sixth year of Henry VIII the Prioress and community of Moxby leased to Henry Tennyson of East Nesse a capital messuage, dove house and four oxgangs of land in Ampleford for a term of thirty-one years at the rent of forty shillings. The Augmentation Office accounts show the income from their property in Ampleforth as:

From Cornmill	£1
Message, dove-house and 4 oxgangs,	£2.2.0
Tenement and 2 oxgangs,	£1.0.6
a cottage	5.0
a cottage	5.0
a cottage	3.0
a cottage	3.0
3 other cottages	9.0
5 cottages	10.0

On the north side of the village ford there is evidence in the glen leading to Smith Hill Howl of ancient reservoirs and part of the glen is called 'The Dams.' The Award mentions a mill at this place in the following passage: 'Also one other private road or way 15 feet wide if the same shall be fenced or laned off leading from the said road called Thirsk Road through

and over an allotment of three acres two roods and five perches of land herein awarded to Thomas Flintoft the elder to an ancient gate leading to the Bridle Road through and over an enclosure belonging to the said Charles Gregory Fairfax called Smith Hill to a mill called the High Mill within the said township of Ampleforth and belonging to James Flintoft.’ No relic at all marks the spot where the High Mill stood. Its very existence is not known to the present inhabitants of the village.

The Low Mill south of the village and near to Watergates can still be seen though it has not been worked since 1894. The last tenant of the Low Mill was Mr Rymer, father of Mrs W. Ludley of the College Post Office. He worked the mill from 1885 to 1894. He found that the small reservoir above the mill had no more than three hours supply. This made him break the Sabbath to make use of Saturday night’s flow of water. Every Sunday morning after the grinding he had to rush a change of clothes and get to his post as sidesman in the Parish Church. Since 1894 no flour has been milled in Ampleforth. One of Mr Rymer’s customers was Robert Garbutt of the Watergates Farm. When this farmer wanted a fresh supply of flour he would bring 18 stones of wheat to the mill and say: ‘You must get me 12 stones of white flour out of this, the other six in sharps and bran.’ Only once did Mr Rymer succeed in getting 12 stones of white flour out of 18 stones of wheat. When grinding for himself Mr Rymer preferred the brown flour, separating the bran only.

To-day one of the services rendered to the farmer by the tractor is to grind the oats and the barley for the cows, sheep and pigs. There is now full scope for the advocate of whole meal bread to erect a cornmill in Ampleforth and run it by motor power from the ‘Grid.’ But he must take care to obtain the ‘French millstones’ and know how to dress them for milling flour.

THE BYLAND ESTATE

At the Court Baron of November 7th, 1826, Prior Burgess was admitted holder of the ‘Common shares called Aumitts or Omits’ which he had purchased from the heirs of George Sigsworth of Golden Square in the parish of Oswaldkirk. These Aumitts are situated west of Aumit Lane adjoining the Lion Wood and measure twelve acres. The land purchases of Prior Burgess so far recorded in this story total 31 acres and these remain in our possession today. He made two other purchases by which in 1831 he claimed to have increased the estate from 31 to 458 acres. These transactions are recorded in Fr Almond’s History of Ampleforth Abbey and in Br Roche’s History of Prior Park. In 1824 he had bought a lifehold lease of 200 acres known as Painter Moor and College Moor and in 1827 he had obtained 208 acres at Byland Abbey.

From March 24th, 1823, to May 13th, 1830, the minds of Prior Burgess and Sub-Prior Rooker and Procurator Metcalfe were preoccupied with the agitation set up by Bishop Baines.²⁰ It began with a letter from the Bishop to the Prior: ‘I think it will give pleasure to some of my confrères at Ampleforth to know that the future Bishop of the Western District is to be a Benedictine Monk of Ampleforth. I received my Bulls of Episcopacy and Coadjutorship on the Feast of St Benedict, an omen (if we may believe in omens) that I shall always remain, so I hope and trust, a dutiful son of our great Father ... I am writing to

²⁰ For a full account see History of Ampleforth Abbey, ch. 30.

Mr Marsh about the foundation of Downside into a Bishop's seminary for the district. A seminary I have told them is necessary, and must and shall be established without delay, and if possible, at Downside; but not till a great dispersion of its present heads has taken place. I will make no attempt with such material. May I rely for assistance on Ampleforth as far as it can advantageously be given?' This letter has been cited here to show how early the project was put before Prior Burgess. Various schemes were put forward, and seven years were to pass before Bishop Baines succeeded in withdrawing from Ampleforth to Prior Park in 1830 the Prior, Sub-Prior, Procurator, Novices, Housekeeper, thirty boys and a herd of cattle.

It is difficult to understand how in this critical period these trustees could undertake the purchase of 200 acres and the lease of 200 acres and the launching out into a large agricultural enterprise when their own minds and those of the Community were agitated by the prospect of St Lawrence's being transferred to the south of England. It is possible that one of them, Fr Metcalfe, believed and hoped that the Bishop's scheme would not mature and that the securing of the Byland farms was an opportunity that should not be thrown away. He was a native of Wass*2* and his family knew the farms well; it is reasonable to infer that he was the one who strongly advocated the purchase of Byland. Abbot Allanson's memoir of Fr Metcalfe will throw some light on the transaction: 'Fr Placid was born in Yorkshire in 1792 and was professed at the convent of St Lawrence, Ampleforth, on the 25th of October, 1811, during the priorship of Father Gregory Robinson. He was ordained priest during the Ember Days in Advent in 1816. Father Placid possessed extraordinary talents for learning various languages. He was a master of the Hebrew language and was well versed in Syro-Chaldaic. He was a good Latin scholar, and was a first rate Grecian. He understood most of the modern languages in Europe having made himself master of the French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and German languages. For many years he continued to apply himself closely to his studies; and had he been able to persevere he would have become one of the first linguists of his day.²¹

On the promotion of Father Lawrence Burgess to the priorship soon after the chapter of 1818, he was appointed to the sub-priorship of the convent: but before the end of the quadriennium his health gave way and he was reluctantly compelled to abandon his literary pursuits. After the chapter of 1822 he exchanged his former office for that of Cellerarius. From this period he devoted himself to farming with the same ardour as he had before to his studies so that he became an excellent judge of cattle and was considered a first rate farmer ... He obtained with his two friends (Prior Burgess and Sub-Prior Rooker) an indult

²¹ In the list of monks of Byland Abbey at its suppression was one Thomas Metcalfe who received a pension Of £7 6s. 8d. The will of a George Metcalfe of 1780 describes him as a yeoman of Wass. He bequeaths land which belonged to him at Breckensaw near Pateley Bridge, at Wass and at Ampleforth. One branch of the Metcalfe family settled in Ampleforth village and built themselves a house on the south of the street opposite Mr Appleby's Garage. The house is distinguished by a cross over the door. Mr Radcliffe in his talks to the Brandsby chaplain about 1903 said that when the oak was felled in the Brandsby Spella Wood, women from Ampleforth and the Metcalfe women among them walked every morning to Spella Wood and worked all day stripping the bark from the oaks for the tannery. It was a stiff six miles walk morning and evening over Yearsley Bank. Mrs Greenwood has retained the family barking tool.

of secularisation on the 13th of March, 1830, which they accepted and left Ampleforth for Prior Park.

Father Placid had all along given the most unequivocal proofs of his attachment to his Alma Mater and of his disinterestedness in his services for its prosperity. And no sooner had he given his consent to abandon the House of his profession than he began to repent of the step he had taken. Even before he took his farewell of the place where he had religiously passed so many happy years he began to waver and admitted he had gone too far. But he felt himself in honour bound to stand by his own acts and from this period he became a disappointed and an unhappy man.'

After eighteen months at Prior Park the Fathers Burgess, Rooker and Metcalfe resigned their posts. The Bishop appointed them to missions in his district. Father Metcalfe made overtures to Father Glover to return to Ampleforth but Prior Towers 'who was interested in opposing his return as he would have found him a check upon his extravagances' suggested conditions which made Father Metcalfe think it 'prudent to relinquish the idea of returning to his convent for the present.' In 1847 he applied again to return and Dr Molyneux gave his approval. On his way to Ampleforth he assisted the Leeds clergy 'whilst the Typhus fever was raging in its most deadly form and carrying out of life so many of the Priesthood. Here he soon fell a victim to the fatal disease and terminated his chequered life in this holy cause on the 28th of May, 1847, in his 56th year'

This memoir has been given to suggest a kinder view of Father Metcalfe's farming than the verdict passed upon it in the 31st chapter of the History of Ampleforth Abbey. But this story is more concerned in giving the reader the exact acreage purchased than with the merits of monastic farming, or with the policy of land investment.

On page 328 of the History Father Almond states that: 'He (Prior Burgess) sold out stock and property to purchase the farms less than 200 acres at Byland,' and in a note on the same page is quoted a letter of Prior Burgess to Bishop Baines, dated May 16th, 1827, 'One thing we have done which I hope will be of service. Lady Harland of Sutton is dead and her property about Byland is on sale. We have purchased two farms of the best land containing 131 acres adjoining the old ruins.' (See Plan 4). In the History of Prior Park (p. 70) Brother Roche says: 'In the same paper²² Mr Burgess points out that the financial condition of Ampleforth had improved very much under his régime and that the land had increased from 31 acres in 1817 to 458 acres in 1830.'²³

Prior Cockshoot for General Chapter of 1846 gives details of the Byland Estate as:

	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Roods</i>	<i>Perches</i>
In our own hands	103	3	26
Cams Head	56	3	34
Abbey Farm	33	2	22
Inn and Land	8	1	8
House, Smith's shop and land	2	0	0
House and garden	1	20	
	205	1	3

²² Justification of our administration of Ampleforth, made 1831.

²³ Neither of the figures given by Fr Almond and Brother Roche agree with the acreage given in our documents

The acreage of our own land in 1830 may be summarised as follows:

	<i>Acres</i>
Father Bolton's purchases	32
Prior Robinson's purchases	9
Prior Burgess at Ampleforth	31
Prior Burgess at Byland	205
Prior Burgess' lease	200
	477

In his justification, the purchase of the Byland Estate could be reckoned a sound investment, and a most useful one as we were then barred from the Sootheran property immediately adjoining Ampleforth, but the inclusion of a lifehold lease of 200 acres of rubbish moorland can only be described as clutching at a straw to save himself. The deed granting the lease shows that Prior Burgess paid £245 for the lifehold of 88 acres of the Painter Moor and 112 1/2 acres of the College Moor (see Plan 5) with an annual rental of one shilling. The term of the lease is on three lives²⁴; of Charles Gregory Fairfax the elder, William Ridsdale, and Charles Gregory Fairfax the younger. Charles Gregory Fairfax the younger died 1871 and with his death our claim on the land expired. The transaction was a speculation on three lives. The lease might have expired in the first decade but it held on for 47 years. Some of the older inhabitants remember sheep from Byland grazing there, and potatoes being grown on part of it. Relics of wall fences and of cultivation can still be seen at the south end of the Painter.

Before leaving Ampleforth Fathers Burgess, Rooker and Metcalfe signed an agreement to give up everything held by them in trust for the College of Ampleforth including deeds, farming stock and cattle, except the cattle mentioned in the schedule attached to the agreement which belong to the said Edward Metcalfe exclusively, and are intended and agreed to be retained by him. 'On the same sheet of paper is the schedule of the cattle, and the price at which they were valued to Doctor Baines, and paid for by him to the College of Ampleforth amounting in all to £797 2s. These are the cattle which, report said, were forcibly and fraudulently taken away.' Presumably the schedule stated clearly the list that belonged to the College and valued at £797 2s.: and another list claimed by Father Metcalfe as his own. These were possibly pedigree cattle given him by his parents and friends or purchased by him out of his own peculium. On the morning of their departure the following memorandum was handed to them.

'That upon the retirement of the Reverend Thomas Burgess, Thomas Rooker and Edward Metcalfe from our Body in consequence of the Indult obtained by them from Rome they received at the time of surrender of the property into the hands of the Rev: Edward Glover, the superior pro tempore of our Establishment at that place £30 as a viaticum for their journey to Prior Park over and above the balance of the accounts delivered in. And that in consideration of their

²⁴ The leasehold granted by Charles Gregory Fairfax to Prior Burgess was a sub-lease under the lease granted by the Prebend of Ampleforth to him on April 21st, 1803, 'for and during the natural lives of the said Charles Gregory Fairfax then aged thirty-five years or thereabouts, William Ridsdale of Gilling in the said county of York then aged sixteen years or thereabouts (son of Richard Ridsdale of Coulton in the parish of Hovingham and county of York, farmer), and Charles Gregory Fairfax the younger then aged seven years or thereabouts the eldest son of the said Charles Gregory Fairfax party thereto and the life of the longest liver of them.'

labours during the years of their being members of our Body, it was given them to understand that notwithstanding their separation from us, we shall be prepared to afford them the same assistance and means of comfort, attention being had to that portion of their lives spent amongst us as is customary with us to render to our own brethren when age, infirmity or necessity come upon them.

signed Edward Glover
Richard Marsh
Thomas Robinson
Augustine John Birdsall (President General).

Ampleforth College, May 13th, 1830.'

Prior Cockshoot's statement for the chapter shows that we were farming in 1846 only 103 acres of Byland Abbey land. Some time after this we took over the Abbey farm of 33 acres. This was an old farmstead close to the Byland Inn and entered from the Oldstead road near the Gateway arch that spans the road. In 1853 the Council decided to erect a threshing machine driven by water power and in 1860 to rebuild the farmstead. On the Ordnance maps it has been called the 'College Farm.'

Of all our farm bailiffs at Byland Mathew Thompson is best remembered by the priests who visited the farm and gave a helping hand at harvest time. Mathew took special interest in trying to produce prime Yorkshire beef for the College table. When Father Romuald Woods visited the farm Mathew did his best to explain to him his method of feeding the beasts to get his good results; but as Father Romuald's face gave no signs of appreciation he would end in desperation by saying 'You see, sir, it is this way. Your occupation is to read books: it's mine to fatten the beasts.'

Tradition has it that in Prior Cooper's time there was a proposal that Byland should be the site for the new building schemes then afoot; and that the proposal was defeated by one vote. There was level ground for good planning and building: there was an abundant water supply: there was Coxwold station within easy reach. But a search in the minutes of the Council Book and in the letters of the period has failed to find any reference at all in support of the tradition. In the eighties and nineties on Goremire Day Mrs Sarah Richardson had tea ready for us at the Byland Inn. She talked about her days at the College under Mrs Bede, the housekeeper: and then she would speak about the good climate of Byland and give us the impression that she thought that the College had made a mistake in not transferring itself to 'Bellalanda.'

The Byland College farm was kept in our own hand until 1876. In 1871 after the purchase of the Sootheran farm Prior Prest wrote to the President for permission to sell the Byland estate. He was advised 'not to sell until there was prospect of securing land near the College.' In September 1872 Prior Prest wrote from Preston to the Sub-prior to place on the agenda for the Council: 'Would it be well to rent Harpers farm: it may be well to take it with the view of ultimately letting or selling Byland.' In the April of 1876 Byland College farm was let because the Home Farm had acquired 300 acres and was able to rent another 100 so that the distant farm was no longer needed. When the new monastery was built (1894-8), and when in 1900 Ampleforth was made an Abbey with its own Abbot, the need for retaining Byland for expansion seemed to have passed. Money was wanted to secure a freehold site in Oxford and in 1904 our property at Byland was sold to Sir George Wombwell of Newburgh Priory.

AFTER BISHOP BAINES

After Prior Burgess deserted Ampleforth for Prior Park, Dom Adrian Towers was installed as Prior of Ampleforth. No fields were added to the Home Farm during his term of office (1830-1834), nor during the Priorship of Dom Bede Day (1834-1838). Under the successful administration of Dom Anselm Cockshoot (1838-1846) Ampleforth showed signs of recovery from the injury inflicted upon it by the defection of Fathers Burgess, Rooker and Metcalfe. The Council Book of 1845 contains this record: 'A moiety of certain lands in the immediate neighbourhood of the College having been advertised for sale the following petition was sent to the Revd Dr Molyneux:

The Prior and resident Council of St Lawrence's are unanimously of opinion that the land in our occupation and now on sale should be purchased by the College, if possible, and that Dr Molyneux will render a service to his monastery by advancing the purchase money. We unanimously beg this favour at his hands."

Signed D. A. Cockshoot, Prior.

D.B. Jackson, Subprior.

D.B. Thomas, Junior Master.

D.B. Almond, Novice Master and Sub Procurator.

An answer having been received to the effect that he was willing to advance the sum of £1,700 in addition to and on the terms of his former investment the property specified in the petition together with a moiety of another adjacent field and also a house in the village of Ampleforth called the Manor House with certain lands thereunto belonging were purchased.'

The property near the College advertised for sale had been in trust for the benefit of George Sootheran's son William²⁵ and included:

(a) 'My two dwelling houses occupied by John Spence and John Thompson with the garth adjoining containing five acres.' This garth (1) of five acres is called the High Close in the deeds. For many years it was renowned as the Pigsty Field. The dwelling houses were demolished before 1870 but the foundations of one of them can be seen at the bend of the new road from the Upper Building to the Infirmary. The High Close or Pigsty Field is now intersected by various roads and pathways. For a long period this field gave the best run for tobogganing with its Ash Tree thrill in the hollow: and in the first golf course at Ampleforth the drive from the top of High Close over the Ash Tree in the hollow to the green in the South West corner of the field made it the favourite link.

(b) 'My close called Aumit three acres.' (2). In one of the deeds this close is called the Little Close to distinguish it from the High Close. It lies south of the Aumit purchased by Fr Bolton from Richard Wray. It figures in the Ordnance Map of to-day as the Bath Wood.

(c) 'My Close called Rough Aumit five acres and a half.' (3). This aumit lies east of the Sigsworth Aumits. The Lion Wood was planted on the south portion of the Rough and Sigsworth Aumits.

(d) 'My Close called Burnt Stocking seven acres.' (4). The footpath to Gilling after passing through the Brickfield and Willow Plantation runs through the Burnt Stocking from its north west corner to its south east. In the title deeds the field is described as the Broad Stockings or Burnt Stockings. At one time it was divided into two Closes. In the district there are many places called

²⁵ George Sootheran died in 1834. His son William died 1834. His son John died 1835.

Stockings. The road on the south side of the Triangle is called Stocking Lane. The assortment of forest land and old enclosures by grubbing up tree stocks and bushes was at one time carried out extensively. Land reclaimed in this way was called a stocking.

(e) 'My allotment called "Hill's" allotment two acres.' These two acres were allotted to William Hill in the award of 1809 and lie immediately north of the West Terrace bounded on the east by the private road called Quarry Lane and on the north by the Ampleforth to Helmsley road. In 1893 the south east portion of this allotment was quarried for the building of the New Monastery. The dÚbris from the working of the quarry was used by Father Wilfred Sumner for the extension of the terrace in the Monk's Wood.

The property in the village of Ampleforth advertised for sale had been in trust for the benefit of George Sootheran's son John and included: -

- (i) The Manor House and cottages west of it with the garth extending to Back Lane.
- (2) The small garden west of John Smith's house, the Broad Close of five acres north of John Smith's house and two thwaites four acres each north west of the Broad Close.

The deeds for the Manor House property go back to 1561. They are an indication that the Earl of Rutland as overlord was consenting to the conversion into ready cash of manorial rights in Ampleforth. The Earl of Rutland had succeeded to the Roos barony. Ampleforth-Oswaldkirk was in that overlordship. The Manor Houses of Ampleforth Prebendary and of Ampleforth-Birdforth belonging to Byland Abbey have disappeared. The purchase of this property brought with it a joint lordship of the Manor of Ampleforth with the rights, royalties and appurtenances belonging to the freehold manor: the right of two pews in the Parish Church, rights, royalties and perquisites of every kind over mills, dovehouses, warrens, parks, commons, fisheries, fowlings, etc.' The small garden west of John Smith's house was chosen in 1855 as the site for a Catholic school in the village, 'the stones of which,' complained (March, 1855) Lawyer Smith to Prior Cooper, 'are actually placed in my watercourse and are forcing the water into the wall of my foldyard.' Mrs. John Ludley attended this school, and remembers its first teachers, Mr Barker and Miss Hennesy. In a few years it was evident that a larger school was needed and some cottages west of the Manor House were taken down and the present school built on their site. Mrs Ludley and the rest of the children were the first to be taught in the new school by Miss Monaghan. In 1901 a Sunday Mass began to be said in the village. In 1904 St Benedict's Church was built in the Manor House garth. In 1913 a portion of the garth south of the church became God's Acre and in 1920 a Catholic Club room was erected in the grounds north of the church.

The two pews in the Parish Church that go with the Lordship of the Manor cannot now be identified nor did Prior Cockshoot or his successors claim them. If the Lords of the Manor were to attend a funeral in the Parish Church and asked for the two pews they would probably be asked to sit with the Lay Rector in the Chancel Stalls.

EAST THWAITES

After the collapse of the windmill in the Great Wind of 1839 John Masterman, the miller, left the Hill Farm and from that date the Moor and Susannah Thwaites have been part of the Home Farm. In 1840 Prior Cockshoot took a lease of two other thwaites west of but

adjoining the Susannah and Moor thwaites from John Atkinson of Oswaldkirk. The lease was drawn up by Lawyer Smith with many clauses about rotation of crops, managing and manuring the land and putting on so many ‘chaldrons of well burnt lime’ or so many ‘bushels of crushed bones.’ Prior Cockshoot had a clause inserted that if in case ‘the laws now in force affecting the importation of foreign corn shall be repealed or altered so as to render tillage land generally of less annual value’ a reduction on the rent would be given. Before the lease expired the Corn Laws were repealed in 1846. But by that time John Atkinson had given up farming in Oswaldkirk and had moved to Helmsley where he was interested in a brewery. Prior Cockshoot had advanced various sums of money on the two thwaites and in 1850 John Atkinson sold the two fields to the College. Attached to these two thwaites Atkinson had a private kiln in the lime quarry²⁶ near Beacon Farm which the College made use of for the farm land and for all the building work up to 1908.

PULLEYN ALLOTMENT

In 1860 the allotment awarded to J. Pulleyn of one acre, one rod and 35 perches was purchased from John Kirby. It lies immediately south of the William Hill allotment. On this Pulleyn allotment Father Sumner extended the terrace and formed the zigzag path to the low walk. Between the new terrace and the low walk many of the community have devoted their afternoons’ manual labour for the last thirty years.

THE BATEMAN LAND

In 1857 Austin Ferrers Bateman of Harrington Hall, Derbyshire, at the age of nineteen came to Ampleforth as a ‘parlour boarder.’ He had been educated at Oscott and Prior Park. In 1862 he purchased fifty-three acres of land east and west of Aumit Lane and offered them to the College for a life annuity. The fields were not of great agricultural value but their situation made it advisable to accept the offer and Mr Bateman enjoyed the benefit of the annuity until 1917. The Bateman fields east of Aumit Lane measure thirty seven acres and a half and are described in the deeds as Orchard Field (5), Cow Pasture (6), Great Bank (7) and Aumit (8). This Aumit lies south of the Flintoft Aumit (9), and has been joined to it under the name of Cherry Tree Field. The Bateman fields west of Aumit Lane measure fifteen acres and a half and are two ‘little aumits’ (10), south of the Bath Wood; three closes described as Crab Tree Closes now united in one (11) and known as the Brickfield and the Preston Aumit (12) which lies between the Light Aumit (13) and the north end of the Brickfield. The Bateman fields have not been requisitioned to any large extent for building or games. The north east corner of the Cow Pasture (6) has been leased to the Postmaster General for the erection of the automatic Telephone Exchange. The Hag Cottage orchard and garth (5) were sold to Mr Pearson in 1925 in exchange for Gentleman Close on which the New Farm was built in 1926. The Crab Tree Close (11) in 1893 gave its clay for the making of bricks for the building of the New Monastery. It also gave its

²⁶ These lime kilns have often been used by the boys for afternoon recreations in games of the Prisoner’s Base type. The lime quarry contains abundant fossils and situated near the College is used for first lessons in Geology.

shale which when burnt and ground with lime in the mill made an excellent mortar as all know who have had to cut holes in the monastery walls. In 1934 the brickbuilt shooting range was erected in the north east corner of Crab Tree Close. In 1867 a small aumit near the Bath Wood called Fisher Aumit (14) was purchased.

No dictionary of place or field names, no glossary of dialect words has ventured to enter *aumit* and explain its derivation. The Glossary of words used in the East Riding of Yorkshire on page 24 has the word ‘Aumus’ and explains it as a deficient or pitiful portion: ‘Is that all bacon we’re gannin to heve to braycast? What an aumus.’ In our deeds the aumits are invariably described as ‘aumits or omits, or common shares.’ In the 1809 award frequent mention is made of the ‘ancient enclosed lands.’ Perhaps that part of Ampleforth township called the Aumits was anciently a common, and by some enclosure act between the fourteenth and seventeenth century it was allotted in three acre parcels to the husbandi or cotmen or perhaps to emancipated bondage men. The commissioners awarding these allotments would stake out Aumit Lane as a private carriage road to give right of way to all the common shares. As a lane it ends at the north east corner of the Rough Aumit, but the right of way continues through Lodge Field Farm to Gilling. Mr Mumby, the agent of the Stapleton estate who lived at the Hermitage in the eighties, insisted on the College keeping the lane open. He maintained that it was the shortest route by which the Gilling people could ride to Thirsk.

The survey written about the year 1340, describing the property belonging to the Prebendary of Ampleforth, says: ‘He has also on the Halmheued leas ten acres of meadow.’ A second time the survey has ‘Also the bondage men with nine cotmen shall make the hay from all the demesne lands and all the hay from the Almheued leas.’ These Almheued leas were part of Lodgefield Farm and the owner of Lodgefield Farm is still the lay rector of St Hilda’s church and is responsible for the fabric of the Chancel. In the Abstract of Title of Charles Gregory Fairfax to his leasehold lands in Ampleforth dated September 1st, 1817, the word Almheued is not mentioned; but aumits and leas are given for many acres. Has Almheued of 1340 come down to us in the form of ‘Aumit’? One of Fr Bolton’s fields was called Aumit Leas.

THE SOTHERAN FAMILY

In the survey of lands belonging to the Cathedral Church of Durham for the year 1580 the name of William Sotheran occurs as holding tenements of considerable value. The genealogical table of the Sotheran family shows that the first Sotheran to settle in Ampleforth-Oswaldkirk was a Robert Sotheran, son of William and Catherine Sotheran of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Changes were taking place in many a countryside at this time, and this was the case in the township of Ampleforth-Oswaldkirk. Labour services were gradually disappearing, and the tenure of land was being put on to a rental system: often to ownership in the restricted form of copyhold. At the end of the sixteenth century merchants travelling between Thirsk and Newcastle would report that Pickering House in Oswaldkirk was falling into ruins, and that land could be purchased in the outlying manor of Ampleforth-Oswaldkirk. This was an opportunity which probably induced Robert Sotheran to leave Newcastle and establish himself halfway between the two villages. The oakwoods of Gilling

and Ryedale would tempt the prospective tanner to seize the opportunity. His descendants for the next two hundred and fifty years purchased field by field and cottage by cottage. By the profits of the tanning and chandling industry and from good and careful farming, the Sotheran family was able, up to 1830, to provide dowries for their daughters and to give financial help to those sons who left Ampleforth to seek their fortunes elsewhere. From 1840 a change had taken place. The tanning business had been given up; substitutes were found for the farthing dip; the repeal of the Corn Laws reduced farming profits.

When the Sotheran farmhouse and the eighty acres of land west of the College had to be sold in order that the proceeds might be divided among the six surviving children of Richard and Frances Sootheran no member of the family was in a position to purchase the whole and pay the other five the share to which they were entitled. The trustees had power to sell the estate by private treaty or by public auction. There was an additional reason why the trustees should decide upon a public auction, and why the estate should be offered in several lots. Richard Sootheran had a posthumous son. On his death bed he was asked if he wished to provide for the child that might be born after his decease. He replied: 'No. It is a poor hen that cannot scrat enough for one more chick.' The posthumous child was called John and his maternal grandfather John Sotheran helped his mother to 'scrat' for him by arranging that the proceeds of Princes Ings and Hagg Close should go to the 'one more chick.' The bill of sale advertised that Lot 1 included 'Ampleforth Lodge'²⁷ and eight fields, numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 on plan. This was an opportunity for Henry Sootheran the eldest son and occupier to purchase the original holding and frontstead of the family. The other five lots included seven fields without any buildings, numbers 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 on the plan. As soon as the sale was advertised Prior Bede Prest instructed Mr Henry Anderson, solicitor of York, to bid for the College. Mr Anderson engaged two of his legal friends to bid as well as himself, but told them to stop bidding when he gave them an agreed upon secret sign. In addition he engaged another friend not known to the other two nor to Prior Prest to carry on to the final bid. Only when the hammer concluded the sale and the auctioneer asked in whose name the agreement was to be made did Mr Anderson reveal that the outsider had purchased the six lots for the Prior of Ampleforth. No one was more astonished than Prior Prest himself. He thought that the sale had gone against the College.

It is said that Henry Sootheran was 'wild with rage' when he was told that his house and farm belonged to the College. The solicitor of the Sootherans had the greatest difficulty in getting him to put his signature to the documents and in getting him to accept the money as it was counted out in sovereigns on the large table in the farmhouse kitchen. He protested that the College had not bought it.

In 1825 George Sootheran built himself a new house more in keeping with the position he then held in the township. Tired of the old address 'Ampleforth Outhouses,' he gave his

²⁷ The reader may be surprised to find that the house in Lot 1. is described as 'Ampleforth Lodge.' In Father Bolton's time John Sootheran's address was Ampleforth Outhouses. 'Ampleforth Lodge' was the name given to Father Bolton's house in 1793 and that name was retained by the Community to a date between 1810 and 1815. This is evident from our Confirmation Register. In the confirmation of 1810 it is written that the Bishop confirmed 'in the Chapel of St Lawrence Ampleforth Lodge April 7 1810' but in the Confirmation of 1815 it is written that the Bishop confirmed 'in the Chapel of St Lawrence Ampleforth College Sept. 10 1815.'

new Georgian house the name of ‘Ampleforth Lodge,’ released by his neighbour since 1815. About the same time 1825 William Sotheran’s son John built himself a new house and called it Prospect House. Neither Ampleforth Lodge nor Prospect House gained much popular recognition, and when Mr Perry came to live in George Sootheran’s house in 1886 and asked the Procurator what the house was called he was told that the house had no name. It was then given the name of The Grange.

Our books give the purchase price for Lot 1 as £3,630 and for the other five lots as £2,727. On November 21st 1870, Abbot Allanson wrote to Prior Prest: ‘I congratulate you on the purchase of the Sootheran property which you could not have helped purchasing almost at any price. You have only to purchase Sotheran’s property on the other side of the College and then you will be able to rest satisfied. The purchase of the land was absolutely necessary and I must cordially join with you in trusting it may prove of great service to Alma Mater.’

But the Sotheran property on the other side of the College could not be purchased until 1918. The will of John Sotheran who died August 9th 1859, put this land in trust for his daughter Mary Ann, who had married Dr Joseph Spensley, and after her death for her surviving children. The will stipulated that she had no power to mortgage, sell, or otherwise anticipate the growing payments of the bequest. For sixty years Mrs Spensley scrupulously adhered to her father’s will. During these sixty years the College paid Mrs Spensley a good rent for the land: and the family appreciated the prompt payment of the half-yearly rents. No member was able or wished to buy the others out when Mrs Spensley died at Oldstead in her 101st year in 1918.

The six surviving children were all agreed that the College should have the first option. The purchase was made by private treaty and the transfer completed May 30th, 1918. The Sotheran or Spensley fields on the plan are numbers 17 to 28. Also number 1 belonged to John Sotheran and his will included this field as part of Mrs Spensley’s share, but by a codicil he bequeathed it to his daughter Frances free from any trust. Perhaps this was done to help her in ‘scratting’ a little more for the ‘one more chick.’ As it was free from trust she sold this five-and-a-half acre field called the High Ings to Prior Anderson at ú100 per acre.

The Sotheran fields have been used as follows:

Field 1. The High Ings.²⁸ When it was decided in 1873 to make a new cricket ground the High Ings was given to the Games to form its east-side. The site was probably chosen because it was the nearest possible - was in line with the College buildings and was sheltered by the Bath Wood hill. Unfortunately the surveyor of the ground did not replace the old stone culverts by large drain pipes to cope with thunder storms and heavy rainfall. In 1888 a new swimming pool was made on the north part of the High Ings. This failed and was transferred to the south-west of the field. In 1892 the Gasworks were transferred from the Kitchen Yard to the site of the abandoned pool.

Field 2. High Close. The first use that was made of the High Close was to transfer the original College farmstead from near the present ballplace to the north-west corner of the High Close. The present drive from the road to the Entrance Hall gave an easier gradient. Before the

²⁸ An Ing is ‘a common name in the North for a meadow, especially by the side of a river and more or less swampy and subject to inundation. ‘The High Ings is a good description of the field because it is more elevated than any of the other Ings and is further away from the Holbeck.

purchase of this field the drive was at right angles to the highway with a gradient of one in five. In 1893 the east side of this field was chosen for the site of a new monastery. In 1924 the west side was chosen for Saint Cuthbert's House.

Fields 4 and 5. The Boye Close and Calf Close were taken over by the Games for the rugby match ground in 1926.

Field 7. Mickle Ing. The junior House football ground.

Field 8. Johnson Close. For set games since 1890.

Field 9. Harwood Ing. Taken over by the Games in 1886 when old Ampleforth football yielded place to Association. From 1890 to 1935 it was flooded each year on the approach of the skating season.

Field 10. Wandale²⁹. In 1914 this field was chosen for the Preparatory School - now the Junior House.

Fields 14, 15 and 16. Prince's Ings and Hagg Close. These fields for a long time have been united into one and are now called the Ram field. In 1888 a Blake's ram was fixed in Hagg Close to raise drinking water found in the Swainder - a field north of the Molecatcher's cottage. This water gravitated to the ram in Hagg Close and was then driven up to the Reservoir. The field is now used for set games.

Field 19. Pybus Allotment. This field was chosen for the site of St Wilfrid's and St Edward's Houses in 1931.

Field 20. On the site of Sotheran's house and farmstead the Upper Building was begun in 1935.

Field 21. In 1926 the apple trees were grubbed up to make way for the new quadrangle.

Field 22. Tangarth. The Lower Building and the Rifle Range are built on the north of this field.

Field 24. The Busks. Busk is an old form of bush and the field gets its name from the tendency this field has for growing thorns and bushy grass.

Every field on the plan belongs to the Abbey except the one with the cross lines and marked S. This field belongs to the heirs of George Haxby Sootheran. It goes with a small holding in Ampleforth village, and is part of the property which George Sootheran of Ampleforth Lodge bequeathed to his third son George Haxby Sootheran. No Sootheran nor Sotheran now lives in Ampleforth or Oswaldkirk. Two daughters of Mrs Spensley live at Oldstead, and two grandchildren left the air raided Bridlington for Ampleforth in 1940.

BEDE TURNER OSB

²⁹ Wand meaning a stake, and dale or dole meaning a small share of a common arable field implies that in ancient Ampleforth this field was let out in allotments divided by wands as common shares to the free and to the unfree men of the village.