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PULVERTAFT PAPERS

A Newsletter on the Pulvertofts & Pulvertafts

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No 1

EDITORIAL

With the start of Volume 2, I break from my previous practice of printing these papers myself on two ancient presses and have typed it on an electronic typewriter and had it photocopied. It will certainly save me a great deal of time which I used to spend setting & distributing the type before and after each issue and it will probably give me a more consistent end product. In the next issue I hope to control the typewriter from a micro-computer so that it will be even easier to fit the articles into the space which is available. Two small steps into the 20th century!

With this issue I also forward a title page and contents list for Volume 1. The index to the first volume will follow once I have acquired - and mastered - the personal computer. Whether this will be with the next issue or not will depend on a combination of cash flow and the speed with which I master the new machine.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas.

D.M.P.

PULVERTOFT SWAN-MARKS

The first suggestion that members of the Pulvertoft family had been swan-keepers was found in the will of Gilbert Pulvertoft, gent of Witchingham, Norfolk, dated 20 Sept 1559 and proved that year in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Towards the end of his will he writes:

"Item I bequeath to William Pulvertofte my sonne my swannes mark. Item I bequeath to Gilbert Pulvertofte my sonne lxxx li to be paid to him when he comith to the said age of xxij^{tie} yeres"

The most authoritative writer on swans that I have found to date is N.F.Ticehurst, FRCS who became involved in the subject in 1919 and spent much of his spare time over the next 30 years studying the records which surrounded this 'royal' bird. He has written numerous papers in ornithological and historical journals, each of which provides a detailed analysis of the subject, generally on a county by county basis. In 1957 he drew these together in an authoritative book: 'The Mute Swan in England - its History and the Ancient Custom of Swan-keeping'.

The book explores many aspects of swan-keeping over the centuries; the origins and the royal status of the birds - the laws, ordinances and customs which governed swan-keeping - the Courts of Swan-mote and the post of Swan-master, whose duty it was to maintain the royal prerogative, to ensure that the interests of the birds were met and to safeguard the rights of private owners.

Private ownership was motivated largely because the swan was highly esteemed as a table bird - indeed, no large banquet was complete without one or more on the menu. There was therefore profit to be had in their

rearing and they were often used as distinctive gifts. Perhaps the fact that Gilbert Pulvertoft bequeathed his swan-mark to his elder son before a gift of £80 to his younger son is an indication of its value at the time. It was of course private ownership which dictated that the swans were marked - most often by cutting notches and designs in the upper mandible, but also occasionally by marks on the lower mandible or on the feet. The marks were recorded in Swan-rolls and it is these which formed the main source of Mr Ticehurst's study, many in public collections but the majority in the archives of the great landowners in the eastern counties of England. The manuscripts range from the 15th to the 19th centuries and some have delightful illustrations to record the owners' marks.

One of his detailed papers - 'The Swan Marks of Lincolnshire' - was published in 1934 in Vol. 42 of Reports and Papers of the Architectural & Archaeological Societies of the County of Lincoln & the County of Northampton and includes three swan-marks attributed to the Pulvertoft family:-

"357. THOMAS PULVERTOFT, of Boston, viv. circa 1550. The mark is given on eight rolls under the surname only and so probably descended in the family to his son Robert of Whaplode, alive in 1562, and Thomas of Whaplode (1561-1590), whose surviving son died a minor in 1604. In 1609 it belonged to Freckingham of Whaplode, but no christian name is given. Perhaps he was Clement, who was Vicar of Whaplode in 1577 and 1608. He differenced by making the stem of the cross a diagonal to the right edge and adding a gap at its end."

"358. PULVERTOFT. No christian name given. The earliest owner was Robert Everard of

Whaplode (viv. temp: Henry VIII) and then his son Henry from whom it came to the Pulvertofts, who must have been Robert and Thomas of Whaplode. After them it went back to Norfolk to the Oxboroughs of King's Lynn, Sir William Dramy and Benjamin Holly of King's Lynn, who was mayor in 1657 and 1665 (see N & N No 101)."

"359. WIDOW PULVERTOFT. As this mark is not given for any other owner I take it that she was Margaret, daughter and co-heir of John St. Poll of Carlton, and wife of Thomas Pulvertoft of Boston (No 357). She was forty years old in 1557. The widows of both Robert and Thomas of Whaplode married again."

The paper is illustrated with simple line diagrams, shown opposite in Figure 1.

One of Mr Ticehurst's source documents - a copy of the Bromehead Roll - was also located in the Reference Library at Lincoln and was found to contain similar sketches - see Figure 2. Each of the diagrams represents a plan view of the swan's bill with the 'nail' at its tip shown at the top and the 'knob' or 'berry' and nostril openings shown at the bottom. The 'differencing' described overleaf between Thomas Pulvertoft and Freckingham can be seen by comparing the two left hand diagrams.

While at first it appears that Mr Ticehurst knew a great deal about the local families, examination of the Pulvertoft information included in his paper suggests that his source was the pedigree of the Pulvertofts of Boston, printed in the Harleian Society's Volume 52 - Lincolnshire Pedigrees. As neither the Ticehurst paper nor the Bromehead Roll refer to Gilbert Pulvertoft of Witchingham, there is undoubtedly more to be found!

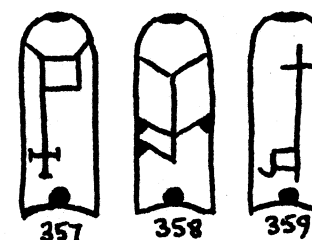
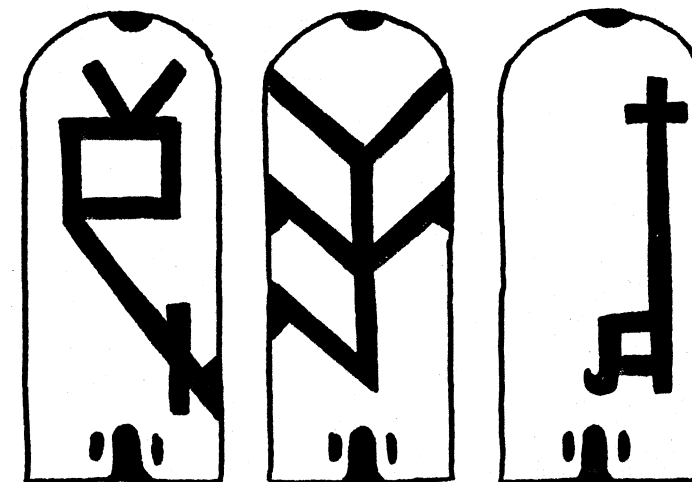


Fig. 1.



[Each sketch has a manuscript title:
1. Pulnertoft g. 2. Pulnertoft idem 3 Pulutoft widow
and a side note:
1. Freckingham 1610 2. Oxberreye 1622 3.]

Fig. 2.

FROM YOUR LETTERS

Mrs Peggy Leonard, daughter of Margaret Eleanor Pulvertaft (M26Q), has said for some years that there was a record of the marriage of Thomas Pulvertaft (M010) in the family, but it has proved somewhat elusive. Inspired perhaps by Thomas's photograph and personal details in the last issue, she has now tracked it down and forwarded it for the records. It is in the form of a transcript of the parish register:

"St Pauls Parish, Cork.

I certify that it appears by the register of St Pauls Parish, Cork, that Thomas Pulvertaft and Mary Anne Mahony were married in St Pauls Church on the 8th day of September 1840 according to the rites and ceremonies of the United Church of England & Ireland.
Cork Sept 8th 1840.

Wm D Griffiths
Curate of St Paul."

It is really very satisfactory to have established the details of the marriage of Thomas and Mary Anne, even though it was slightly disappointing that the transcript did not name the parents of the bride and groom, as this might have forged the link with the earlier Pulvertafts of Cork. The register entry also appears to disprove the family understanding that Thomas and Mary Anne were married at St Mary's Cathedral (see Issue 10, page 76); however, my trusted adviser in Cork affairs - Michael Leader suggests: "..... you should also check that the marriage did not also take place at St Mary's Cathedral: They did that sometimes to make doubly sure"! Now that we know the precise date, we can of course search the Cork newspapers around that date to see if any announcement was made and, if so, whether any extra genealogical information is included.

Michael Tunnard, Lincolnshire family historian and the original source of much of the Pulvertoft information writes, including a response to the article on the origins of the Pulvertoft name - Issue 6, page 48 - he says that it had been suggested to him some years ago that the Polver (Poluir, Pulver, etc.) element was a mutation from Old Norse "polder" - reclaimed land. He didn't much like the Norse origin and felt a dictionary definition is more helpful. A New English Dictionary - Oxford 1888 - gives:

"Polder. A piece of low-lying land reclaimed from the sea, a lake, or a river, from which it is protected by dikes; so called in the Netherlands; rarely used of similar land in other countries."

[1669 Somner. Rom. Ports & Forts Kent (1693).. The soil is moorish; boggy and fenny, such as our Ancestors have usually called Polder; i.e. a marish fenn, a meadow by the shore side, a field drain'd or gain'd from a river or the sea, and inclosed with banks.]"

If "de Polvertoft" etc. can thus be interpreted as "of a 'toft' or 'croft' (that is a homestead) on reclaimed land", surely we have an explanation of the name which would be appropriate to the fenlands of Lincolnshire.

He also points out, in the nicest possible way, that there was an error in the transcription of the extract from the will of John Pulvertoft of Algarkirk (Vol 1 p 68 & 69). The penultimate line line was transcribed as: "Itm' I give to Elizabethe my wife all my pailles and yeate to arraye aboute my groundes" This should have been ".....to occupie aboute my groundes", the word 'occupy' meaning to 'use'.

My thanks to these and other correspondents.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Under Notes and Queries in the last issue of these papers I mentioned William Trevor's short story 'The News from Ireland' in which he tells a tale of the Pulvertafts of Ipswich who moved to Ireland at the time of the potato famine. I wrote to Mr Trevor about the similarities between his fiction and the real Pulvertaft family but I regret to report that in his reply he says "I used to know Pulvertafts in Ireland, but disappointingly for you, I fear, my story is pure fiction".

The story was adapted for radio by Mr Trevor and was broadcast on Radio 4 on 13th October with Cyril Cusack playing the leading role of Fogarty, the butler. Some unusual publicity for the Pulvertaft study but, as the characters are all fictional, there are no extra facts.

Odd Entry

From the will of William Pulvertoft dated 1546:
"Itm' whereas mye cosyn Thomas Pulu'toft esquiar hath no neyd of any of my goods yettin reme'bras of love I geve hym mye gresell geldyng & mye sylver tothe and erepycke"

Correction

My apologies to John Felice Giardini for spelling his name incorrectly when his engagement to Caroline Pulvertaft was announced on page 80 of the last issue. They have now announced that they will be married in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales on 10th January 1987.

Obituary

It is with deep regret that the death is recorded of Robert Guy Pulvertaft, CBE, on 11th August 1986 at Duffield, Derbyshire.