Archaeologia

<http://journals.cambridge.org/ACH>

Additional services for **Archaeologia**:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

ARCHAEOLOGIA:
OR,
MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS
RELATING TO
ANTIQUITY.
PUBLISHED BY
THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQVARIARIES OF LONDON.
VOLUME XIV.

LONDON:
Printed by T. Baskerville, 25, Abchurch Lane.
Sold at the Society's Rooms in Bream's Buildings, and by Messrs.
Wells, Harwood, Stacey, Kemp and Barrett, Stationers,
Cannon and St. Dunstons, Leicester and Faversham.
MDCCCXIV.

XX. Remarks on Four Deeds, of the time of Henry VI., with Seals appended; and a Memoir of Sir William Oldhalle, Knight. In a Letter to Joseph Jackson Howard, Esq., F.S.A.

Weston Styleman Walford

Archaeologia / Volume 37 / Issue 02 / January 1858, pp 335 - 350

DOI: 10.1017/S0261340900003052, Published online: 25 January 2012

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0261340900003052

How to cite this article:

Weston Styleman Walford (1858). *XX. Remarks on Four Deeds, of the time of Henry VI., with Seals appended; and a Memoir of Sir William Oldhalle, Knight. In a Letter to Joseph Jackson Howard, Esq., F.S.A.* Archaeologia, 37, pp 335-350 doi:10.1017/S0261340900003052

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

XX. *Remarks on Four Deeds, of the time of Henry VI., with Seals appended ; and a Memoir of Sir William Oldhalle, Knight. In a Letter to JOSEPH JACKSON HOWARD, Esq., F.S.A. By WESTON STYLEMAN WALFORD, Esq., F.S.A.*

Read 10th December, 1857.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE great pleasure in furnishing you with some remarks on the four Deeds, with seals, of the time of Henry VI., which you propose to lay before the Society, and also with a brief memoir of Sir William Oldhalle, whose seals are appended to those documents. A subject, that has interested me so much, may not be without interest to others.

The first Deed is dated on the 10th of July, in the 18 Hen. VI. (1440); it recites that Brian de Sandforde, Knight, had become bound by a statute staple to William Oldhalle, Knight, in £100, and had granted to him and John Lavenham a tenement in the parish of St. Olave, in "Mugwel-strete," in the ward of "Farndone" within London, viz., between a tenement of the said William Oldhalle on the south, and a tenement belonging to the hospital of the B. Mary without Bishopsgate on the north; to hold to the said William Oldhalle and John Lavenham, their heirs, and assigns; and the effect of this deed was to make the statute staple void, in case Sir William Oldhalle and John Lavenham, their heirs, or assigns should *not* be evicted by any heir of Sir Brian de Sandforde from the tenement so granted to them. There is no witness. On a label is a circular seal $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter, of red wax; the device is a shield couché, charged with a lion rampant, and ensigned at the sinister corner with a helmet having ample mantlings, and for a crest a lion's head issuing out of a coronet. The legend is imperfect, but from what remains it should seem to have been *figillum Willelmi Oldhalle militis* in black letter. A woodcut of this seal is given in the margin.

SEAL OF SIR W. OLDHALLE.

The second Deed is dated on the 22nd of the same month of July; and thereby Sir William Oldhalle and John Vyncent demised to Sir Brian de Sandforde four

messuages in Thorpe Salvyne, which they lately had of the gift of the said Sir Brian; to hold to him, his heirs, and assigns, upon condition to be void, if Sir William Oldhalle and John Lavenham, their heirs, or assigns should *not* be evicted by any heir of Sir Brian from the tenement in "Mugwel-strete" mentioned in the preceding deed. It was witnessed by "Johanne Meltone, milite, Johanne Serleby, armigero, Nicolao Gouxille, armigero, et multis aliis." There are two seals, each on a separate label. The first is circular, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter, of red wax, having a very great resemblance to that on the preceding deed, yet apparently an impression from a different matrix; however, it has been much blurred by the matrix having been re-applied. The arms of Oldhalle, as given by Glover and others, are, Per pale *az.* (another *gu.*) and *purpure*, a lion rampant *erm.* It is a noticeable fact, that in neither of these seals is the partition line or any ermine spot shown. The absence of the former may be accounted for by the lion covering the place it would have occupied. The books are probably correct as to the arms; and, if so, we learn from these examples to be cautious how far we receive seals as evidence of coats even in regard to details of *form*. The second seal is octagonal, barely half an inch in diameter; the device is a bird, probably a raven, standing, and looking to the dexter, with something obscure in the beak; the legend, which is in black letter, I read *asfo . . rtw*, but cannot explain it. The supposed *f* may possibly be a *t*; and it is not clear that any letter is missing between the *o* and the *r*. This we may assume to have been attached as the seal of John Vyncent.

From these two documents, both of which are indented and in Latin, I collect that Sir William Oldhalle had purchased, in the names of himself and John Lavenham, the tenement in "Mugwel-strete" (more properly called, as it now is, Monkswell-street, from a well formerly there belonging to the monks of Garindon),^a with a defective title; and the object in taking the statute staple (then a common security) and the grant of the four messuages in Thorpe Salvin, a small village in Yorkshire, was to indemnify him in the event of his being evicted by the heir of Sir Brian de Sandforde.

The third Deed is dated on the 20th of February, 35 Henry VI. (1457.) This is indented and in English, and is in effect a contract by Sir William Oldhalle to sell to Thomas Saunder, citizen and brewer of London, a tenement with a garden in "Mugwel-strete," between a void "place of ground" pertaining to St. Mary Spital without Bishopsgate on the north, and the king's highway of "Mugwel-strete" aforesaid on the east part, and the tenement of Roger Chamberleyne, knight,

^a A Cistercian abbey near Loughborough, Leicestershire.

late (of) the said Sir William Oldhalle on the south, and the wall of the city of London on the west; Sir William was to make a sure estate in fee simple by the feast of St. Martin in winter next coming; for which tenement the said Thomas was to pay to Sir William 100 marcs, *i. e.*, to retain 25*l.* 16*s.* 9*d.* in satisfaction of all sums of money due to him the said Thomas by Sir William, and also pay to Arnold Berebrewer, 24*l.* in payment of all sums of money due by Sir William to the said Arnold, and to Joan Whitehede, late wife and executrix of Simon Whitehede, wax-chandler, 7*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.*, in satisfaction of all sums of money due to her by Sir William, and to Sir William himself 9*l.* 8*s.* 1*d.* in full payment of the said 100 marcs. There is no witness. Under the fold, on the sinister side, is the signature of Sir William Oldhalle, of which a fac-simile is here given. Upon a label is a circular seal, about half an inch in diameter, of red wax, evidently from a seal-ring, the device of which is a *Flote*, such as is to be seen in the arms of the Bowyers' Company and the Fletchers' Company, being a tool for smoothing the surface of wood-work, especially of bows and arrows; above and below this is a scroll, and on each scroll this legend, *mien l'y atain*, in black letter, which may be rendered *mine touches (or strikes) it there*; as if he had overcome some difficulty, or attained some object. (See woodcut in the margin.) At the end of the signature "W. Oldhall" is what is most likely an abbreviated word. I was disposed to read it *Knt.* for knight; but it looks more like *Snr.* for senior; which, however, the state of the family does not appear to warrant, there being then no other William Oldhalle in it, unless there were an unknown nephew or cousin of that name, or a son who died in his father's lifetime.

SIGNATURE OF SIR W. OLDHALLE.

SIGNET OF SIR W. OLDHALLE.

The fourth Deed is dated on the 3rd of September, 36 Henry VI. (1457); it is in Latin, and thereby Sir William Oldhalle conveyed to Thomas Saunder, Luke Broune, Brewers (*Pandoxatoribus*), Richard Holbeche, "Iremonger," and Wiliam Hunte, "Joynour," citizens of London, a tenement with a garden adjoining in "Mugwel-strete," viz., between the king's highway of "Mugwel-strete" and a tenement of the Prior of the Hospital of the B. Mary without Bishopsgate, and a void piece of land belonging to the community of the art or mystery of Goldsmiths, London,

on the east and north parts, and tenements late of the said Sir William Oldhalle, and then of Roger Chamberleyne, knight, on the south part, and a garden of the Abbot and Convent of "Gerondone" on the west part; which tenement and garden the said Sir William Oldhalle then lately had of the demise of Thomas Canynges, John Yonge, John Stodeley, and John Hole; and they had lately had them, with other lands and tenements, of the feoffment of the said Sir William Oldhalle. In witness whereof Sir William Oldhalle had affixed his seal, the said Thomas Canynges being then mayor of the city of London, John Stiwarde and Ralph Verney sheriffs, and Geoffrey Feldyng alderman of the ward. It was witnessed by the said Geoffrey Feldyng, Geoffrey Boleyne, John Middleton, Robert Caldecote, and Walter Brigger. On a label is the same seal as on the last preceding deed. There is no signature. The name "Plumer," which is engrossed at the sinister corner below, under the fold, was most probably that of the scrivener who prepared the document. On comparing the boundaries, it is evident these are not the same tenement and garden that are comprised in the preceding contract. It appears by the Rolls of Parliament, as we shall presently see, that Sir William Oldhalle had three tenements in Mugwell-street.

At this period deeds had lost much of their early simplicity. Troublous times had led to ingenious devices to avoid the consequences; and most estates became vested in feoffees for the use of the beneficial owners. One great object was to escape forfeitures for treason and felony; crimes which no man could then say he might not have imputed to him. The life of Sir William Oldhalle did not differ in this respect from those of most of his contemporaries. Having described the Deeds, I will give a brief sketch of his history; for he was of sufficient note in his generation to justify this, though the historians have not awarded him a place in their pages.

The family was settled in Norfolk a century and a half at least before the date of the earliest of these deeds; and the name still distinguishes two or three manors in that county, which once belonged to Sir William, or some of his ancestors. An Isabella de Oldhalle held half a (knight's) fee in Dersingham in 31 Edward I., and it does not appear to have been then a recent acquisition.^a A Nicholas de Oldhalle held the manor of East Derham early in the reign of Edward III.^b From him, it is supposed, was descended, either as son or grandson, a Sir William Oldhalle, who married Emme, a daughter and coheiress of Sir Richard de Bellhouse of West Bilney;^c whose son, Sir Edmund Oldhalle, married Alice, one of the coheiresses of Geoffrey de Fransham, and was the father

^a Blomfield's Norfolk, iv. p. 515.

^b Ib. v. p. 1184.

^c Ib. iv. p. 482.

of Sir William, the party to the deeds above described.^a Both these alliances augmented the possessions and importance of the family in the county. This Sir William was born, in all probability, near the close of the 14th century, hardly earlier than 1390; and should seem to have been either the eldest or only son of his father. There is some reason to believe he went out in the expedition under Henry V. on the invasion of Normandy in 1415; for he was there shortly after, as an esquire in the retinue of Thomas Beaufort, Earl of Dorset,^b who was subsequently Duke of Exeter. He does not appear to have been at Agincourt; but as the earl, though generally said to have been there, was left, it should rather seem, in command at Harfleur, his young esquire may have been in attendance on him at the latter place. The father was at that time a Receiver of the Duchy of Lancaster;^c which may account for the son being in the service of a Beaufort. In November, 1417, while he was in Normandy, his father died intestate, leaving him his heir. One William Shelton contrived to obtain authority from the Archbishop of Canterbury to administer his father's personal estate; and, by representing that the son had died abroad, he prevailed on the surviving feoffee of the father's manors of Narford and Bodeney, in Norfolk, to sell them, and hand over the money to himself; an act which certainly exhibited great simplicity, or something worse, on the part of the feoffee, who was the parish priest of Thornham. The son, after serving at the siege of Rouen in 1418,^d returned with the king in 1421; and, on finding what had taken place in regard to his father's affairs, petitioned the King in Parliament for redress; and the administrator was required to appear, and be examined as to the facts.^e The property should seem to have been restored, as Sir William Oldhalle several years after held some fees in Narford.^f

We soon find him again in active service. Having gone back to France, he was, in 1424, at the important battle of Verneuil, on which occasion he was knighted;^g he was also at the taking of Ivry, and was appointed constable of Mountseur (Q^y Montsoer) after the surrender of it to the Earl of Salisbury.^h In the same year, it appears, he was Seneschal of Normandy.ⁱ In 1426 he was

^a Blomfield's Norfolk, v. pp. 1002, 1184.

^e Rot. Parl. iv. p. 158 b.

^b Rot. Parl. iv. p. 158 b.

^f Cal. Inq. p. Mort. iv. pp. 170, 172, 274.

^c Blomfield, i. p. 409.

^g W. of Worcester's Itin. pp. 161, 282.

^d Will. of Worcester's Itin. p. 374.

^h Hall, 88, 92.

ⁱ This I learn from a MS. mentioned in a Catalogue of MSS. issued by Mr. Thomas Thorpe in 1844, p. 25, No. 128, where it is thus described: "Original Commission of Sir John Fastolf, Grand Master of the Household of John Duke of Bedford, Regent of France, &c. appointing R. Stafford and Rich. Conyngstone to take the muster of the Troops under Sir W. Oldhalle, Seneschal of Normandy. A curious document, on vellum, 3l. 3s. Alençon, 8th Nov. 1424." I am not able to state what has become of this MS.

Governor (*Capitaneus*) of the Castle of St. Laurence de Moitiers, in Anjou; and his name is found enrolled among the distinguished chivalry of the Regent John Duke of Bedford as knight and banneret, and governor of Argenten and Esse (Argentan and Essey), as well as of the last-mentioned castle.^a About this time he returned again to England, and seems to have risen rapidly under the patronage of Humphry Duke of Gloucester, at that time Protector of the realm, and governing in the name of the infant King, his nephew; for in July, 1426, shortly before the death of his former patron, Thomas Duke of Exeter, he was sent on an embassy to the Duke of Burgundy.^b The nature of the business is not mentioned; but, seeing that Jaqueline Countess of Hainault, the wife of the Duke of Gloucester, had just then fallen into the hands of her adversary the Duke of Burgundy, and that the quarrel between these two Dukes about the lady was then rife, it is highly probable that either her affairs or herself formed the subject of the embassy, though it is described as one that much concerned the public good of the King and his realms. In 1434 and 1439 Sir William Oldhalle appears to have been a privy councillor;^c and probably he had continued to be so during the whole intervening period. Shortly after, in 1441, he was one of several trustees in a grant of divers manors for the benefit of Richard Duke of York and his Duchess Cecilia;^d the first intimation we have of any connection between him and the house of York. This, however, was before the Duke of York had taken any active part in opposition to the court, being then engaged in France, where he had succeeded the Duke of Bedford as Regent.

Sometime previously Sir William had married Margaret, one of the daughters of William Lord Willoughby of Eresby;^e and about this time, or a little earlier, we may probably place his purchase of the manor of Hunsdon in Herts, and the neighbouring manor of Eastwick,^f as well as the house in Mugwell-street, described in the two earlier of the above-mentioned deeds. Hunsdon appears to have become a favourite place of residence. About 1447 he began to erect a castellated mansion there on so large a scale that it is said to have been never completed. However, it was carried so far towards completion as to afford a large amount of accommodation, according to the habits of society in his time. We are indebted to that early antiquary, William of Worcester,^g

^a Hall, 102, and No. 41 of MSS. in the Library of this Society, p. 7.

^b Proceedings of Privy Council, iii. pp. 201, 244.

^c Ib. iv. p. 212; v. p. 108.

^d Ib. v. pp. 136, 137.

^e Collectanea Topog. vii. p. 155.

^f Clutterbuck, iii. 164, 179.

^g W. of Worcester's Itin. p. 89.

who was in the service of Sir William's acquaintance and fellow-soldier Sir John Fastolf, for some curious particulars of the building. He calls it "*Turris manerii de Howndesdon per iiij. miliaria de Waar villa, cum aliis edificationibus ac cum stabulis de bryke factis.*" The tower is stated to have been 80 feet square, with seven very wide buttresses on each side, the height more than 100 feet, and the principal hall in it 80 by 24 feet. The range of buildings and stables was 80 of his steps long. From this it should seem to have been a structure of unusual type, consisting of a very large square tower, most likely of brick, with an extended line of buildings attached; something, perhaps, after the manner of Faulkbourne Hall, Essex, built by another of Sir William's fellow-soldiers, Sir John Montgomery, but on a much grander scale than that in every respect. The tower may have more resembled Tattershall Castle, which is of the same period. A long range of subordinate buildings may, after defence had ceased to be a principal object, have been less unfrequent than we are accustomed to suppose; but, having been generally of wood, they have disappeared. The novelty of these seems to have been due as much to their being of brick as to their length.^a They probably formed one side of a large court-yard, or of a space divided into several such yards, the other buildings having been of timber. In the measurement of the hall there is an evident mistake, as the thickness of the walls appears to have been overlooked: perhaps for lxxx. feet we should read lxx. The building cost, William of Worcester states, 7000 marcs 8 shillings and 2½*d.* which is, certainly, being very minute; but then he mentions having had his information from Humphry Paris, an officer of Sir William's wardrobe. Reckoned in pounds this is 466*l.* 18*s.* 9¾*d.*, which, taken at its relative value in the expenditure of the age, was a large sum, and probably equal to nearly 40,000*l.* at the present day.

Hunsdon church, close to which the house was built, is for the most part in the earlier perpendicular style; and there is reason to think that most of the churches in that style were erected before the wars of the Roses. It was once rich in painted glass, fragmentary portions of which still remain in some of the windows. From them it appears that Sir William was a benefactor. In all probability the chancel windows at least were contributed by him, if no others. In

^a So long a range of subordinate buildings of brick may have been thought remarkable, though W. of Worcester was no stranger to a large building of that material; for he had seen Caistor Castle erected by his master, Sir John Fastolf, of brick, coped with stone; which is said to have been about 300 feet square. (Paston Letters, iii. p. 352.) Brick was then coming into favour as a building material. Beside Tattershall and Faulkbourne, Hurstmonceaux Castle was of brick, and others might be mentioned.

the tracery lights of the east window are remains of saints and subjects; and in the upper parts of the principal lights, beside some quarries, are portions of

FLOTE
FROM A WINDOW IN HUNSDON CHURCH.

borders, consisting wholly of several of those tools or implements called Flotes, such as that on the seals of Sir William attached to two of the deeds above described, the once intervening pieces of coloured glass having been removed. In the more easterly of the south windows was, until it was recently to a great extent reglazed as a memorial window, part of a border also of these Flotes *in situ* (see a woodcut of one in the margin); while in the head there remains part of the original glass, which has been replaced, comprising a yellow fess between two white roses, each in a separate compartment. In the other south window, which has also been to a great extent reglazed for a similar purpose, there is left a white single rose, probably once a double one. In the tracery lights of the north window are, of the original glass, a white double rose and a yellow fess, and also the word **Margareta** reversed, in black letter, evidently out of place; which, it will be remembered, was the name of Sir William's wife. In a small building, with a crypt beneath it, on the north side of the chancel, now used as a vestry, perhaps once a sacristy, are windows with some of the original quarries, and on one of them a double rose with the outer petals

stained yellow. The windows of the nave would seem to have been filled with saints under canopies, now all missing; in the head of one is a white rose. The original glass throughout, though by different hands, is apparently of the same date, and as well from the nature of the material, as from the style and character of the painting, may be referred to about 1440 or 1450. A part of it, including some of the Flotes from the south windows of the chancel, having been submitted to Mr. Winston, unquestionably a most competent judge in such matters, he ascribed it to that period before anything was known of the person to whom it might be attributed. The white rose and the fess were, as is well known, badges of the house of York, to whose fortunes, we shall presently see, Sir William had attached himself about 1448. A man of his disposition was not

likely, at that time (when the church, we may suppose, was being glazed, and he was in full prosperity), to have given only two or three windows to his parish church, which stood so near to his own house. No trace of the motto, *mien l'y atain*, has been discovered in any of the windows. It was less likely to appear there than the Flote, though in all probability it was assumed at the same time as that device, to which it seems to refer. If it be understood as importing that he had overcome or had smoothed down (*i. e.* removed) some obstacles in the way of his advancement, his success in life had been such as to make it not inapplicable; or it might have been allusive to some act of skilful diplomacy in his mission to Burgundy. Such devices were then in vogue in that country; and the idea may have been suggested by the Plane which, a few years before, John Duke of Burgundy had assumed with the motto, *Mic houd* (I hold it), signifying that he would smooth the Knotted Staff of his rival, Louis Duke of Orleans, who had adopted that device with the motto *Je l'enbie*.^a

To proceed with Sir William's history. He was knight of the shire for Herts in the Parliament that first met on the 6th of November, 1450,^b and on the 9th of the same month he was chosen Speaker;^c which, as well as his embassy to Burgundy, implies that he was a man of considerable address. Being, as we have seen, a Norfolk man, it might be expected such an event would not be unnoticed in the Paston Correspondence. Accordingly, I find it announced to John Paston, Esq., by Damme and Gresham, in a letter commencing,—Please it you to wit that Sir W. Oldhalle is chosen Speaker of the Parliament, and admitted by the King.^d This was written on the 11th of November. Among other things in the same letter, we learn that it was said, the Duke of York should not come to Westminster this sevensnight, and, as men supposed, no sheriffs would be chosen till he came. A noticeable fact, because the historians in general have represented him to have continued in Ireland till the ensuing summer. To render Sir William's further career more intelligible, I must briefly mention the state of affairs when this Parliament met. In 1447 the Duke of Gloucester, who, we have seen reason to think, was his patron after his return from France, had died suddenly at Bury St. Edmund's, and was believed to have been taken off at the instigation of the Queen and the Duke of Suffolk, who governed in the name of the King; and the Duke of York, who had been previously recalled from France, had become the head of the opposition or popular party in the place of the Duke of Gloucester;

^a Monstrelet, ch. 35. Barante, ii. pp. 389, 407.

^b Clutterbuck, i p. xxvii.

^c Rot. Parl. v. p. 210 b.

^d Vol. iii. p. 100.

which may account for Sir William passing over so readily to the Yorkists, the Duke not having then openly aspired to the throne. In 1449 the Duke was sent as governor to Ireland, avowedly to quell an insurrection, but in fact to be out of the way. He soon restored peace to that country, and had leisure to contemplate the occurrences in England. Meanwhile the Queen and Suffolk became more and more unpopular; and in the last Parliament Suffolk had been impeached, but submitting himself to the King, he was, without trial, yet in reality with a view of protecting him, banished for five years. He was, however, waylaid at sea, and murdered off Dover on the 2nd of May, 1450. Close on this event followed the insurrection under Jack Cade, a Yorkist movement to ascertain the feeling of the country as to the dormant right of the Duke of York, as heir of Mortimer, to the crown. This had been suppressed in July. Instead of remaining in Ireland, as is generally supposed, from 1449 till about June 1451, there is very great reason to believe that he returned to England for a while a few weeks after that insurrection was suppressed, not only to take advantage of the death of Suffolk, but also to protect his friends who had been compromised by joining or assisting Cade. Beside the passage in the above-mentioned letter, showing he was expected at Westminster in November, 1450, the letter immediately preceding it, written evidently only a few days earlier, shows he was about to go into Norfolk; and he seems from another letter to have been named a little later in the commission to try some of the Kentish rebels;^a and even in the September previous, when the speaker in the last Parliament, William Tresham, was murdered near Sywell, in Northamptonshire, he was entrapped by being requested to go to meet the Duke of York,^b who should seem to have been at no great distance; which would hardly have been practicable or attempted had he not been known to be in England. This agrees with certain statements in William of Worcester's *Annales*,^c to the effect that the Duke returned from Ireland at the beginning of September (1450), and was near Northampton when Tresham was murdered; the authority which has been followed by Dr. Lingard. Whether the object of that crime was to facilitate the election of Sir William to the speakership is left to conjecture. The court party, weakened by the death of Suffolk, had recalled Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, from France, who arrived in November, 1450, about the time the Parliament assembled in which Sir William was speaker. According to the *Rolls*^d nothing worthy of present notice occurred except a petition by the

^a Paston Letters, iii. p. 136.

^b Rot. Parl. v. pp. 211 b. 212 a.

^c Liber Niger Scacc. p. 473.

^d Rot. Parl. v. pp. 211, 216.

widow of Tresham, detailing the particulars of the assassination of her husband, and asking for justice on the murderers; and a petition for the removal from court of divers persons of Suffolk's party; which was partially granted. This Parliament was continued by prorogations till May, 1451; shortly after which the Duke of York finally relinquished the government of Ireland. From the historians we learn, moreover, that Somerset on his return from France was accused of having neglected his duty there, and on the Commons petitioning for his committal to prison, the King complied, but released him as soon as the session terminated; and Somerset presently filled the place which Suffolk had occupied. His influence prevailing, notwithstanding the return of the Duke of York, Sir William Oldhalle was indicted for treason, being charged with having been implicated in Cade's insurrection; and on being found guilty, he made his escape, and was outlawed. Thus his estates were forfeited to the crown. The exact date of this conviction does not appear, but most likely it took place towards the end of 1452 or the beginning of 1453. On the meeting of Parliament in the latter year, in order to make sure of the forfeiture, his attainder was, on the petition of the Commons, confirmed without prejudice to the grants made by the crown of his estates, several of which are mentioned in the petition, and among them Hunsdon, which had been given to Somerset,^a and the three tenements in Mugwell-street, which seem to have been granted to Sir Thomas Tyrrell, knight, and others, most likely as trustees for some one else.^b The King having become ill in November, 1453, and soon after incapacitated for business, early the next year the Duke of York regained the ascendancy, procured the imprisonment of Somerset, and was appointed Protector. About Christmas,^c the King recovered, and resuming his authority in February, 1455, released Somerset; whereupon the Duke withdrew, and shortly afterwards took up arms. Sir William remained in difficulties and disgrace notwithstanding the restoration of his party for awhile to power, and he was probably for a considerable time in sanctuary at Westminster. For, after the battle of St. Alban's, May 22, 1455, in which the Yorkists were completely victorious, Somerset having been slain and the King made prisoner, we read in a Paston letter, written evidently in London or Westminster early in June following, that—Sir William Oldhalle abideth no longer in sanctuary than the chief judge come; for that time he shall go at large, and sue all his matters himself.^d From the same letter we learn that the Duke and the Earl of Warwick would

^a Rot. Pat. 31 Hen. VI. pt. 2, m. 13.

^b Rot. Parl. v. pp. 265, 266.

^c Paston Letters, i. p. 80.

^d Ib. i. p. 106.

wait the assembling of Parliament, the former at Ware, and the latter at Hunsdon, we may presume in Sir William's house at the cost of Somerset's representatives: the Earl of Salisbury, another Yorkist leader at St. Alban's, was about to take up his quarters at Rye, no doubt the Rye House. On the arrival of the chief justice, Sir William soon obtained the reversal of the outlawry, and was acquitted of the alleged treason. This is mentioned in one of the Paston letters, dated at Caistor the 7th of July, and written by William of Worcester.^a Parliament met on the 9th of July, and on the same day Sir William petitioned for the repeal of the Act of attainder against him. His petition, embodied in an exemplification of later date, is printed in the Rolls of Parliament.^b It states that he all the days of his life had been a true faithful liegeman to the King, and his father and grandfather, and had dispended his young days in the service of them and of other princes of their blood, as well in France as in Normandy and Guienne^c and other places; that he intending in his old age to serve God, and to live upon such poor livelihood and goods as he had of his inheritance and by his long-continued labour, certain undisposed persons, imagining utterly to destroy him, and by subtle untrue means to have of the grant of the king his lands and goods, caused him to be declared traitor by an Act passed in the last Parliament, by which it was supposed he had given false untrue counsel to the great traitors, John Cade and John Wilkins, and to one John Halton, whereof he was never guilty, "ne the said persons never knew, ne with them had communication:" he then proceeds to mention the indictment for treason and his outlawry, and that the outlawry had been reversed at his suit, and he of the same treason acquit by the oaths of twelve notable sufficient persons before the King in his bench. The prayer of his petition was, in effect, that the Act of attainder might be repealed, and he restored to his lands and goods; which was granted.

There is a remarkable letter in the Paston collection, dated St. Faith's (Oct. 6th),^d which mentions Sir William Oldhalle when in the height of his prosperity and influence. It must have been written while the Duke of York was in England, and at the time or on the eve of a general election, and in all probability before the Duke had openly claimed the crown. The editor was unable to assign to it a more precise date than between 1451 and 1456. He probably assumed it was not written in 1450, because the Duke was supposed to have been then in Ireland. In 1451, which might otherwise seem the most likely year, there was no parliament

^a Paston Letters, iii. p. 128.

^b Rot. Parl. v. p. 451.

^c His service in Guienne I have not found elsewhere mentioned.

^d Paston Letters, iii. p. 154.

summoned in the autumn. It could hardly have been later, as Sir William's history shows. Therefore I am induced to think it must have been written on the 6th October, 1450, about which time we have seen reason to think the Duke was in England; and the summonses for the Parliament in which Sir William was speaker were dated the 5th September, 1450. It was written by William Wayte, evidently from London, and was addressed to John Paston in right great haste. The writer was in the service of some Yorkist, but of whom does not clearly appear.^a It is too long to give *in extenso*. He mentions—he had been “in my lord of York's house,” and heard much thing more than his master had written of: he had heard much thing in Fleet Street; but “my lord” (apparently meaning the Duke of York) had been with the King, and he “visaged” so the matter, that all the King's household were afraid right sore, and his said lord had put a bill to the King, and desired much thing which was much after the commons' desire, and all was upon justice, and to put all those that were indicted under arrest without surety or mainprize, and to be tried by law as law will: insomuch that on Monday Sir William Oldhalle was with the King at Westminster more than two hours, and had of the King good cheer; and the King desired of Sir William Oldhalle that he should speak to his cousin York, that he would be good lord to John Penycok (who was one of the esquires of the King's body^b), and that he should write unto his tenants, that they should suffer Penycok's officers to go and gather up his rent-farms within the Duke's lordships; and that Sir William answered again to the King, and prayed him to hold “my lord” excused; for though he wrote under his seal of his arms, his tenants would not obey it, insomuch that when Sir Thomas Hoe met with the Duke beyond St. Alban's the western men fell upon him, and would have slain him but for Sir William Oldhalle being by; and therefore would they have fallen upon Sir William, and have killed him; and so he told the King.—The writer proceeds to state, that Sir “Borle” Yonge and Josse laboured sore for Heydon and Todenham to Sir William Oldhalle, and proffered more than 2,000*l.* for to have his good lordship. Heydon was recorder of Norwich, and had, with Sir Thomas Todenham (who had formerly been with Sir William in the household of the Duke of Exeter^c), and some other Lancastrians named Windham and Prentice, been guilty of some excesses in Norfolk, in the nature of extortion; and their trial seems to

^a Perhaps of Sir John Fastolf (see Paston Letters, iii. letter 31), who, though not an avowed partisan of the Duke of York, was suspected by the Queen's party (*ibid.* letter 29), and was most probably, like John Paston, a well-wisher to his cause at this time.

^b Rot. Parl. v. p. 237 b.

^c W. of Worcester's Itin. 370.

have been about to take place in May, 1451,^a and the letter goes on to recommend a great outcry to be made against them by the populace when the Duke of York went to Norwich, lest they should come to grace. There is then an offer to get John Paston favourably introduced to the Duke. After which the writer urges John Paston to stand for the county, and suggests persons by name as candidates for Norwich and Yarmouth, and returns to the subject of the outcry against the extortioners. A bribe of 2,000*l.* was a very large one at that time, and seems hardly credible, unless the accused had reason to expect to be very severely dealt with. Sir William Oldhalle appears, from this letter, to have been in attendance on the Duke when the affray beyond St. Alban's occurred. We learn, too, of his being with him in Wales (probably in September, 1450), from the correspondence which took place when the King and the Duke, with their armies, were near Dartford in 1452; for the latter, complaining of an attempt meditated against his person near Conway, mentions that the head of Sir William Oldhalle was to have been struck off on that occasion.^b

We do not find Sir William in any public situation after the reversal of his attainder. He should seem to have got into debt during his outlawry; for we have seen that he sold one of the Mugwell-street houses in 1457, and the greater part of the purchase-money went to pay some brewers and a wax-chandler. He had become a widower, but the time of his wife's death does not appear. The last notice of her as living that I have met with, is her having, in 1447, joined in conveying some lands at Baconsthorpe, in Norfolk.^c She was buried at the Grey Friars, London.^d If we may trust the date assigned to a letter about to be mentioned, his case was not so desperate during his adversity, but that a match was in contemplation with a daughter of Sir William Paston; for in one of the Paston letters, the date of which is ascribed to March 1453 or 4, and which was written by the lady's mother to her son John,^e it is stated that she had heard he had—been laboured to for Sir William Oldhalle to have his sister.—The lady was not unwilling, yet the marriage did not take effect; owing perhaps to his age and the state of his affairs. She afterwards (probably in 1458) married Sir Robert Poyning, who had also been in trouble about Cade's insurrection; and not without reason, as he had

^a Paston Letters, iii. letter 27.

^c Blomfield, iii. p. 714.

^b Holinshed, ii. p. 638.

^d Collectanea Topog. v. p. 282.

^e Vol. iii. letter 45. I question the date assigned by the editor to this letter; for in it the lady's mother suggests inquiries whether Sir William's lands were clear: whereas at that time he was attainted, and his lands forfeited. It is more likely to have been written in March, 1456, when the attainder had been reversed.

openly joined him, and acted as his sword-bearer and carver.^a After Sir William's restoration to Hunsdon, we find "my Lord of Canterbury" and Lord Bouchier (who was his brother) were to go for a week to Hunsdon, and hunt and sport them with Sir William Oldhalle;^b sufficient proof that his house was not in a very incomplete state, as their attendants must have been numerous.

His troubles were not yet over; for, continuing a zealous partisan of the Duke of York, he was again attainted, together with the Duke and many others, by the Parliament which met at Coventry in November, 1459. He does not appear to have been in arms against the King, but was charged with traitorously compassing his death, in conjunction with the Countess of Salisbury and John Vaghan.^c On this occasion his estates seem to have been granted to Humphry Duke of Buckingham.^d I find no special repeal of that Act of attainder; but on the accession of Edward IV. in 1461, the Acts of Kings Henry IV., V. and VI., with some necessary exceptions, were treated as void.

Little more is said of Sir William. It is not clear that he survived till the Yorkists' triumph in 1461. The last notice I have met with of him is in a Paston letter of 12th October, 1460, written from London by a servant of John Paston,^e in which he speaks of Colbine, apparently late a fellow-servant, but then out of employ, awaiting—upon Master Oldhalle the most part at Redre, at his place,—where it should seem Sir William was then living in retirement. By "Redre" was probably meant Redriff, *i. e.* Rotherhithe. The battle of Northampton took place in the preceding July, and dispersed the Lancastrians, leaving the King again a prisoner. The Duke of York, who had just landed from Ireland, where he had taken refuge after his attainder, now formally claimed the crown. Sir William may have survived him, and witnessed the accession of his son as Edward IV.; but if so, he was dead before 6th Edward IV.; for Walter Gorge, who married his only child and heiress Mary, survived him and died in September in that year, seized of his Norfolk estates, as appears by two inquisitions in the following October, and by a petition presented to Parliament by Edmund Gorges (as he was called) their son and heir, in the 5th Henry VII.^f From that petition it appears, that on Sir William's first attainder his Norfolk estates were granted to Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke.

Chauncy, and Clutterbuck following him, represent Sir William as leaving a son and heir, Sir John Oldhalle, who succeeded him, built the house at Hunsdon,

^a Paston Letters, i. p. 58.

^b *Ib.* i. p. 172.

^c Rot. Parl. v. 349.

^d Rot. Pat. 38 Hen. VI. pt. 2, m. 24.

^e Vol. i. p. 200.

^f Rot. Parl. vi. p. 435.

and fell fighting for Richard III. at Bosworth field, and was attainted the next Parliament. The inquisitions and petition just mentioned dispose of the question of his having left a son and heir; and I cannot discover that any one named Oldhalle was present at Bosworth field, nor whence this story was derived. No such name appears on the Rolls of Parliament among those who were attainted in the 1st Henry VII., or indeed afterwards.

The house at Hunsdon did not go to the heirs of Sir William Oldhalle, but remained in the crown, or was given up to the crown after his last attainder. It was granted by Henry VII. to his mother, Margaret Beaufort, and her husband, Thomas Earl of Derby, for their lives; and is said to have been converted by Henry VIII. into a palace, at great cost, for the occasional residence of himself and of his children. The Lady Mary appears to have frequently resided there in the reign of her brother. Elizabeth granted it soon after her accession to her cousin, Sir Henry Cary, whom she created Lord Hunsdon. It must have undergone great alterations, and the large tower been taken down long ago; for the print given by Chauncy of Hunsdon House, as it then was, bears no resemblance to what it was in Sir William Oldhalle's time. If any portion of it remain, it is very inconsiderable, and forms part of the present mansion called Hunsdon House, built about 1804, and now the property of Edmond Calvert, Esq., whose ancestor, Josias Nicolson, Esq., purchased the estate in 1743. The buildings taken down soon after that date, and supposed by Clutterbuck to have been part of the original house, were most likely of more recent erection, possibly part of the additions made by Henry VIII.

In conclusion, lest it should seem strange that I have not referred to Manning's *Lives of the Speakers*, published in 1851, I will mention that I did not see the work until I had nearly completed this memoir, and then I found the notice of Sir William Oldhalle so very deficient and inaccurate, that it did not afford me any assistance.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours, faithfully,

WESTON STYLEMAN WALFORD.

To Joseph Jackson Howard, Esq., F.S.A.