



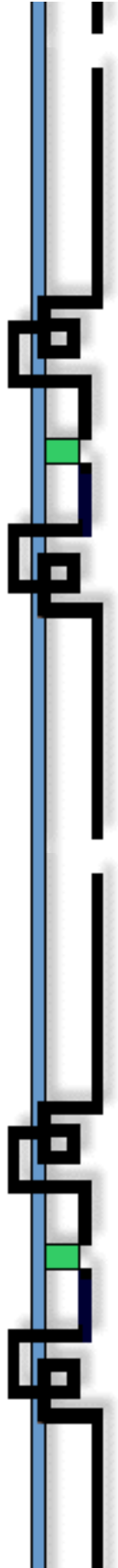
the Dutton Chronicle

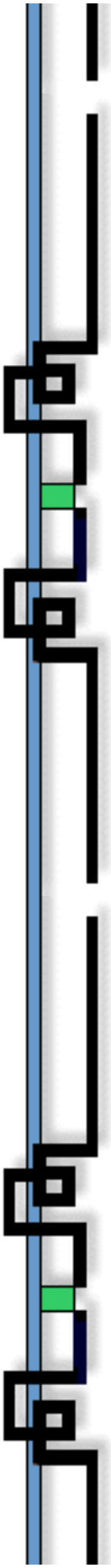
A Brief History of the Duttons of Dutton

by G.H.Buchan
1984

This work is dedicated to
T.D.S.K.Platt Esq.
And his family
Through whose valued friendship
I have enjoyed so many happy hours
Both in and around
Dutton Hall

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Preface

Anyone travelling today along the A533 and seeing the sign 'Dutton' could perhaps be excused for thinking that they were about to pass through a village which was hardly more than a name on the map. There is little visible evidence to support any view to the contrary. Few would be aware that within this parish of Dutton man has lived for more than 5,000 years. Few would be aware that while most of Cheshire was forest waste, Roman farmers cultivated crops on the slopes overlooking the River Weaver. Few would be aware that 400 years ago the village was of such importance that the Royal messenger frequently rode between Dutton Hall and Court of King Henry VIII.

Cheshire has been described as 'the seedplot of gentilitie'. Nowhere in the country is that more evident than at Dutton. The family founded at the Norman Conquest has produced a succession of Knights who have played a vital role not only in the affairs of the county but have influenced the course of the history of this nation. Among the Cheshire nobility, in wealth and prosperity they were unsurpassed. The Dutton estate in the 15th century was the largest in the country. Their home, Dutton Hall, was the finest Tudor mansion in the north west of England.

Of this great house only the name now remains. Yet for those who are familiar with the affairs of that aristocratic family which lived there for more than 600 years the place has an atmosphere which the ravages of time have failed to remove. If in some small measure the account which follows enable the reader to recapture something of that atmosphere then the writer's efforts will have been amply rewarded.

Chapter I

The story of Dutton stretches back into the mists of time, into man's primeval past. There is sufficient evidence available for us to believe that primitive man had his home here at least 2,000 years before the Christian era. We know almost nothing about these people. It is only by the artefacts they left behind that we can gauge in some small measure the kind of life they led. As time passed their reliance upon hunting slowly gave way to an agricultural based existence which would thrive in the rich soil of the Weaver valley.

The area would be sparsely populated, for the Celtic people lived in small tribal groups right up to the time of the major Roman invasion of 43 AD. By the year 70 AD Chester had become one of the three principal Roman first in the country and played an important role in the military affairs of the forces of occupation. Important industrial sites were established at Northwich and Wilderspool. The Roman road from Chester to Wilderspool passed close to the boundary of Dutton.

However, it is not until the 4th century that we have definite evidence of Roman occupation in the parish. Coins bearing the image of the emperor Constantine the Great, together with domestic artefacts show conclusively that there was a settlement here around the year 360 AD. What kind of a settlement that was we can only speculate. It is likely that there was a small villa and farmstead, for sites with a southern aspect overlooking a river valley were popular with Roman settlers. How long they stayed here following the departure of the legions we cannot at the moment say. Future evidence from the soil may answer that question. But it is quite conceivable that people continued to live here up to the influx of the Saxon invaders in the 6th and 7th centuries.

Chapter II

It is when we come to consider Saxon Dutton that we can become more positive in our assertions. The origin of the name 'Dutton' is disputed by scholars. Some say that it was called 'Duddatune' or 'Dudda's farm' after the Saxon who founded it. We know that by the year 1000 AD it was called 'Duntune' which would be translated as 'the farm on the hill'.

Around the year 1060 Duntune was divided between two land-owners, one named Ravenna, the other Edward.

As we know from our history books, in the year 1066 William, Duke of Normandy invaded England and defeated the Saxon King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. William thereby became king of England by right of conquest. He spent the next ten years going up and down the country imposing his will upon those of his Saxon subjects who found it hard to live under a Norman lord.

By the year 1086 things had quietened down and life was returning to some semblance of normality. William decided that he would carry out a survey of all his kingdom. To accomplish this he sent his servants across the length and breadth of England. They visited almost every parish, and recorded what they found there. This mass of information was written down in a book, the Domesday Book, so named because the records it contained would stand until the end of time.

When William's recorders came to Duntune what did they find? They found that everything belonged to the Earl of Chester who had divided it into three parts.

The first part was held by one of the most powerful men in Cheshire, William fitz Nigel, Baron of Halton. Before the Conquest it had been waste land. There were two families living there.

The second manor was owned by a Norman named Osbern, who leased it to Edward, it's former owner. Edward was a freeman and lived in Duntune with three other families.

The third and largest manor was held by Odard. It is in the story of Odard and his descendants that our interest lies, for Odard was the first of the Duttons, of Dutton. Tradition has it that Odard was a resident of Normandy, who in the company of Nigel, who became first Baron of Halton, was part of Duke William's invading army. He was probably given the land at Dutton in recognition of his services. The Domesday Book records that there were three families living on Odard's manor, and that there was a large wood with a hawks eyrie.

The Duttons of Dutton

I Odard
II Hugh fitz Odard
III Hugh de Dutton
IV Hugh de Dutton Adam (1150-1208)
V Hugh de Dutton Warburton of Arley
VI Hugh VII Thomas knight b 1249
VIII Hugh knight dd 1294
IX Hugh (1276-1326)
X Thomas knight (1314-1381)
Peter knight XI Lawrence knight (1339-1392) Edmund
XII Peter knight (1367-1433)
Thomas knight XIII John (1403-1445)
XIV Thomas knight (1421-1459) XVI Roger
Peter d 1459 XV John
XVII Lawrence (1475-1527)

Chapter III

An understanding of the story of the Duttons, of Dutton is made easier by constant reference to the family tree at the beginning of sections II, III and IV.

I. Odard came to England with William, the Conqueror. Probably as a reward for his services he was given the land at Dutton, held through the Earl of Chester.


II. Hugh, son of Odard inherited his father's land in Dutton.

III. Hugh, son of Hugh had the lands which his father held confirmed to him by William, Baron of Halton. Hugh had three sons. The second, Adam, was the ancestor of the Warburtons of Arley.

IV. Hugh de Dutton, son of Hugh married the daughter of Hamon Massy, Baron of Dunham Massy. He had four sons.

V. Hugh de Dutton, son of Hugh extended the Dutton holding by purchasing the township of Little Leigh, half of Barnton, and Preston nigh Dutton.

During his lifetime, in the 1216, there took place one of the most colourful events, not only in the history of the Duttons, but also in the history of Cheshire. It would appear that Randle de Blunderville, earl of Chester was besieged by the Welsh in the castle of Rhuddlan. He despatched a messenger to his Constable of Chester, one Roger de Lacy, to come with all haste to his assistance. At that time there was a large fair taking place in Chester. Roger gathered together not only his own men at arms, but also every fiddler, player, minstrel, lout and raggamuffin that he could find. He then lead this motley army out of Chester towards the Welsh border. When the Welsh saw the great multitude heading in their direction they raised the siege and fled. In gratitude, the Earl of Chester gave Roger de Lacy control of all fiddlers, shoemakers and vagrants in the county. Roger transferred control of the fiddlers to Hugh Dutton and his heirs. The custom gradually became one of licensing the musicians in the county. No minstrel could exercise his art unless granted a license by the Dutton Court, held annually on the feast day of Saint John the Baptist in Chester. The last court for this purpose was held in 1756.



VI. Hugh de Dutton purchased land in Aston which adjoined his estate at Dutton. There in 1236 he built a chapel of ease. It was situated between the River Weaver and Dutton Park at a place called Poos-eye. Poos-eye means literally 'a poole by the river'. The Prior of Norton promised Hugh Dutton that he would provide a chaplain to officiate and keep a lamp burning at divine worship. In 1315 Hugh de Dutton (IX) sued the Prior of Norton for failing to provide a priest.

We do not know exactly where Poosey Chapel stood. In 1660 it had fallen into decay, and all trace of the building has subsequently disappeared.

Hugh de Dutton (VI) died without issue and the estate passed to his brother Thomas.

VII. Thomas extended the Dutton estate in 1244 when he purchased the hamlet of Clatterwigge in Little Leigh. He appears to have found it a drag going all the way to Poosey Chapel, because he was responsible for building another chapel close to his manor house at Dutton.

VIII. Hugh, son of Thomas purchased the manor of Barterton. In 1281 he built a mill and weir on the River Weaver. He died in 1294.

IX. Hugh, son of Hugh was born on the eighth day of December, 1276, and the record of his baptism the following day in the church of Great Budworth is the earliest one recorded for the Dutton family.

X. Thomas, son of Hugh was born in 1314. It was during his lifetime that the fortunes of the Dutton family reached a peak. He purchased the remaining lands in the parish thereby becoming Lord of all Dutton. He died in 1381.

XI. Lawrence, son and heir of Sir Thomas Dutton married twice but had no issue by either marriage. In his will made at Dutton in the year 1392 he bequeaths his body to be buried at Norton Priory. On his death in 1392 the Dutton inheritance descended to Peter Dutton, eldest son of Lawrence's younger brother Edmund.


XII. Peter, son and heir of Edmund Dutton married Elizabeth daughter of William Butler, Lord of Warrington. He was pardoned by King Henry IV for taking part in the Hotspur rebellion. He died in 1433.

John, son and heir of Peter died in 1445.

It would appear that from looking at their history, the Duttons enjoyed a good fight. Where there was trouble there was invariably a Dutton.

In the year 1356 England was engaged in the 100 years war against the French. The famous chronicler, Froissart records that at the Battle of Poitiers on 19th July, a Dutton was one of the four Cheshire squires who fought with distinction alongside Lord Audley. The English, under the Black Prince, won a decisive victory.

And again, in 1415, at the Battle of Agincourt, Sir Thomas Dutton with ten men at arms and thirty mounted archers made their contribution to one of the most famous victories in English history, On Saint Crispin's Day 6,000 Englishmen defeated more than four times that number of French.



Some thirty five years later England was plunged into civil war, a series of battles which we call the Wars of the Roses. The first major battle took place just over the border in Staffordshire on 23rd September, 1459. It was one of the blackest days in the history of Cheshire. The battle was fought at Blore Heath and many Cheshire gentry and their followers took part on opposing sides. Amongst those killed were Sir Thomas Dutton (XIV), his eldest son Peter and his brother John.

After Blore Heath, Sir Thomas's second son John became Lord of all Dutton. He died childless and the estate passed to his uncle Roger (XVI).

The 17th Lord of Dutton was Lawrence, the son and heir of Roger (XVI). Although he had three illegitimate children, he had no legitimate heir. He gave his bastard son John Dutton a lease of life on the New Manor, Preston Brook, lands in Onston and all his purchased estates in Cheshire. Lawrence died in 1527.

Chapter IV

\On the death of Lawrence in 1527 there followed seven years of litigation over the Dutton inheritance. The contestants were the Duttons, of Hatton, near Chester, and the co-heirs of a branch of the Duttons, of Dutton. The law suit was settled by the House of Lords in 1534 in favour of one of the most colourful characters in the annals of Dutton, Sir Piers Dutton, of Hatton. As heir at law he gained possession of the Lordships and lands of Dutton, Weston, Preston on the Hill, Bartington, Little Leigh, Ness in Wirral, Little Mouldsworth, Acton, Hapsford, and lands in Clifton, Dunham, Stoke, Picton, Halton, Thelwall, Onston, Middlewich, Stanthorne and Runcorn.


The co-heirs were awarded Dutton lands in Kingsley, Norley, Cuddington, Barnton, Budworth, Whitley, Helsby, Frodsham and Chester.

Piers Dutton was the eldest son of Peter Dutton, of Hatton. He was mayor of Chester in 1513 and knighted by Henry VIII in 1527. At this time Henry was involved in a long and bitter dispute with the Pope. Matters came to a head with the result that the English Church severed its links with Rome, and Henry became its supreme head. Having broken with Rome, the king began the suppression of the monasteries and the confiscation of their assets. He appointed Sir Piers Dutton commissioner for assessing and disposing of monastic properties in Cheshire. Piers was instrumental in suppressing a riot at Norton Priory and imprisoning the ring leaders. So effective was he in the discharge of his duties that he received personal commendation from the King himself.

Sir Piers married twice. His first wife was Elinour, daughter of Thomas Leigh, of Adlington. His second marriage was to Julian, daughter of William Poyns, of Essex.

For five years Sir Piers and his family lived in the old manor houses at Dutton. This house stood between the road and the modern Dutton Hall. In 1539 Sir Piers commenced building his new house. He chose a position below the old house, over-looking the broad expanse of the Weaver valley.

The new hall was half timbered in the style of most of the Cheshire Tudor houses of the day. It was built in the form of a quadrangle and was surrounded on three sides by a broad, deep moat. The house had a most imposing porchway around which was inscribed 'Sir Piers Dutton Knight of Dutton and my lady dame Julian his wife made this hall and building in the year of our Lord God 1542 who thanketh God of all'. Inside the outer doorway was a massive, deeply carved oak door which was reputed to have been the great



door of the abbey at Norton. Above and around it were large carved bosses, having sacred signs. In pride of place, either side of the door, were the combined arms of the Duttons and Hattons of Hatton.

One of the most striking features of the house was the great hall and minstrel gallery. It was constructed with lofty clustered columns, supporting a beautiful roof. Round the cornice Sir Piers had carved, in large letters, a long account commemorating the building of the house. 'by the especial devising of Sir Piers Dutton.....and after long suit before all the nobles and judges of this realm by space of seven years the same Sir Piers was appointed heir male of all Duttons lands'.

The grand house was probably warmed at the marriages of two daughters of Sir Piers on the Feast of Saint John the Baptist 1542. On that occasion all the musicians and minstrels of Cheshire marched in procession before the happy couples.

The Duttons of Dutton

XVIII Piers knight d 1547

Hugh

XIX John (1538-1609)

XX John d 1614

John d 1608 Elinour (I) Robert - Lord Gerard

(ii) Robert Nedham - Viscount Kilmorrey.

Chapter V

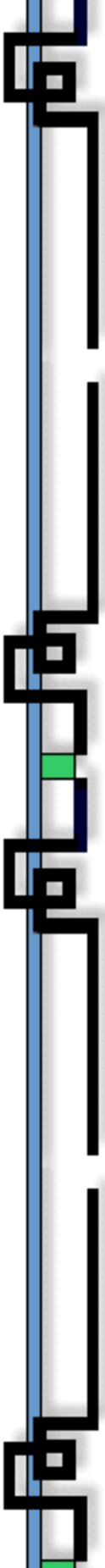
Sir Piers did not live long enough to enjoy the grandeur of his new hall. He died in 1546 and was buried in Our Lady Mary's Chapel, at Great Budworth. The Dutton estate passed to his grandson John who married Elinour, daughter of Sir Hugh Claveley, of Eaton.

John died in 1609 and his son Thomas inherited the estate. Thomas had two children. His son John was married at the tender age of 14. He was killed as he fell from a pony on his wedding day. He had married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Egerton, whose father was the Lord Chancellor of England.

Thomas Dutton's second child was a girl named Elinour. At the age of 13 Elinour married Gilbert, the second Lord Gerard of Gerards Bromley. On her father's death in 1614 she inherited the Dutton estate. She became a widow in 1622, and later married Robert Nedham, 2nd Viscount Kilmorrey.

Sir Peter Leycester, the famous Cheshire historian, himself a descendent of the Duttons, was a regular visitor to the hall. He records that Lady Kilmorrey beautified the domestic chapel at Dutton with handsome pews and kept a chaplain in the house. The chapel was used by the local inhabitants every Sunday. The Kilmorreys had a large family of five sons and seven daughters.

Lord Kilmorrey died on the 12th September, 1653 at Dutton Hall. Elinour outlived her husband by twelve years. She died on the 12th March, 1665, the day after the death of her daughter Katherine. They were interred together in the Lady Chapel in Great Budworth Church.



When the funeral cortege bearing lady Kilmorrey and her daughter left Dutton, it brought down the curtain on 600 years of family life and tradition. Never again would Dutton Hall entertain the rich and powerful of the realm.

Much of the Hall built by Sir Piers Dutton was demolished in the 18th and 19th centuries. What remained became a farmhouse, the home of a succession of tenant farmers.

In 1935 the Hall was purchased by Mr.J.A.Dewar, the whisky magnate, who had it taken down, beam by beam, brick by brick, and transported by steam wagon to Sussex, where it was rebuilt as an extension to his private residence.

Last year, I visited East Grinstead and drove out to Stoke Brunswick School which is accommodated in the Dewar home. I think it was one of the most poignant moments of my life when I walked up to that magnificent porch and read the inscription which Sir Piers Dutton had carved more than four hundred years ago. When I passed through that massive carved oak door which had once graced the Abbey of Norton. Standing in the great minstrels hall, I felt very close to the Duttons of Dutton, the family whose story these pages have briefly retold.

G.H.Buchan