

## CHAPTER VII

### SIR HUMPHREY PESHALL AND THE PESHALLS OF KNIGHTLEY

SIR HUMPHREY PESHALL, second son of Sir Richard de Peshall, Horseley and Chetwynd, settled at Hopton, which he had acquired through his marriage with Matilda (or Maud) Swynnerton. Matilda was the daughter of Sir Robert de Swynnerton of Swynnerton, by his first wife Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Nicholas de Beck, and heiress of Hopton and Teyne [now Tean], upon whose marriage with Sir Robert, the Beck estates and most of the Swynnerton estates were settled upon their issue. On the death of her mother, between 1369 and 1375, Matilda entered into possession of Hopton and Teyne. Sir Humphrey appears to have died in or before 1388, leaving his wife Matilda still a minor, and in the custody of his father Sir Richard Peshall at Chetwynd. Their son, Richard, succeeded to the estates, and married one, Elizabeth, who occurs later as the defendant in law-suits with the Savages for possession of her estates.

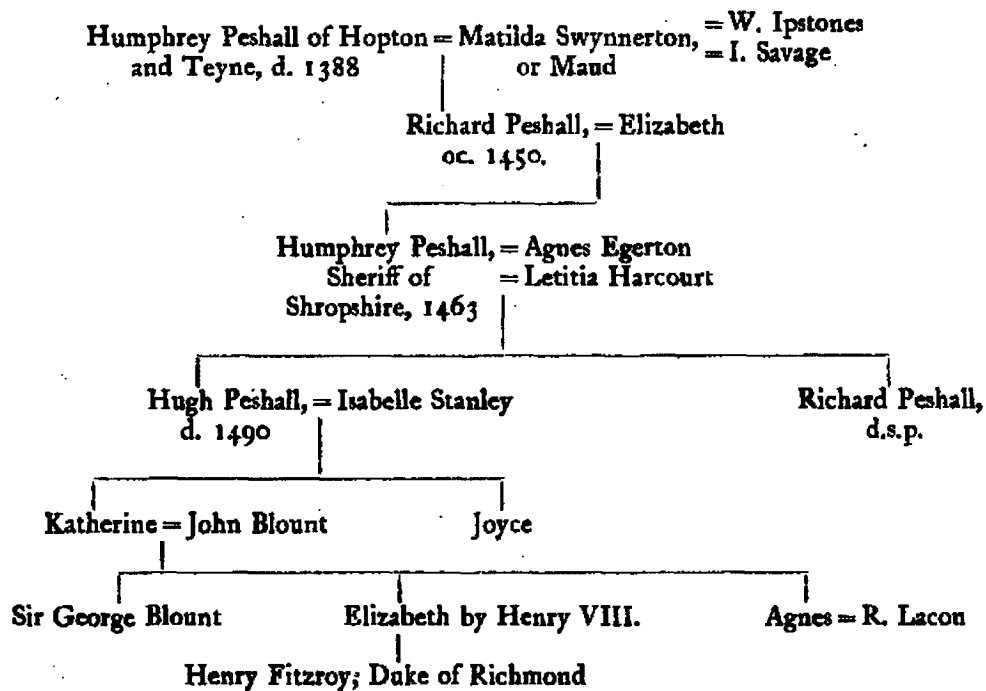
These were days of great licence, and during the reign of King Richard II. neither person nor property were secure from violence and rapine. While Matilda, Richard's mother, was thus residing at Chetwynd, in the year 1388, she was forcibly abducted by Sir John de Ipstones and married to his son, William, after signing away her estates to Sir John, who died seised of Hopton and Teyne in 1394.



ARMS AND CREST OF THE PESHALLS OF KNIGHTLEY



SIR HUMPHREY PESHALL AND THE PESHALLS  
OF KNIGHTLEY



The story is told in certain pleadings in a suit prosecuted at the Stafford Assizes in 2 to 4 Henry IV. In this suit Elizabeth, who had been the wife of Sir Richard de Peshall, is sued by John Savage and Matilda his wife for land in Hopton, Knighton and Tillington in Staffordshire. It appeared that 'on Dec. 8th 1388, Sir John de Ipstones took Matilda by force from Chetwynd to his castle of Ipstones, and imprisoned her there until she granted Hopton to him; and that he afterwards married her to his son William de Ipstones then only 15 years old, who thereupon entered into possession of Hopton. William had issue Christiana and Alice, and after his death the said Matilda came to his daughters and sought to be re-ensfeoffed of the said manor of Hopton, etc., and on their refusal, the said Matilda entered the manor and received the rents until she was dispossessed by force by the said Elizabeth, who had been the wife of Richard.' The jury found for Matilda, with damages of 40 marks. A compromise between the Peshalls and Savages must have eventually taken place by which such of the old Swynnerton estates in Cheshire as were inherited by Matilda under her father's marriage settlement passed to her son Sir John Savage<sup>1</sup> of Rock Savage, co. Cheshire, Knight; and Erdeswick states that the Savages also received, by way of compromise, a moiety of the manor of Teyne which was afterwards called Nethertheyne; while the Peshalls retained Overtheyne with Hopton, and the other estates in Staffordshire, which included a third of the manor of Alstonfield, and advowson of the Church of Checkley, etc.

It appears from the following record, in the Plea Rolls, Stafford Assize Court, 9 Henry IV.,<sup>2</sup> that Christiana, the eldest daughter of William de Ipstones by Matilda, married a Sir John de Arderne. 'Staff. : John Savage and Matilda his wife, sued John de Arderne, Kt., Christiana, daughter

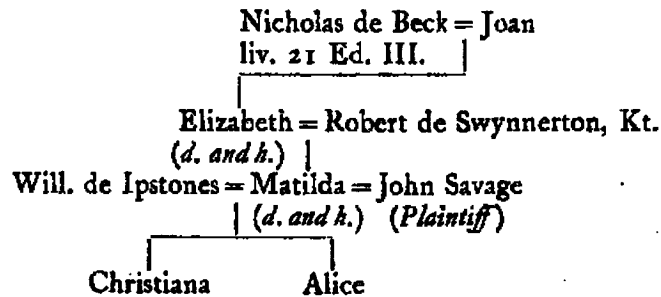
<sup>1</sup> *Staff. Hist. Coll.*, vol. xviii. New Series, p. 181; and *Staff. Hist. Coll.*, vol. iii. New Series, pp. 171-177.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xv. New Series, p. 210.

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of William de Ipstones, and Alice her sister, and others, for unjustly disseizing them of the Manor of Teyne.' The following pedigree is given :—



‘In 16 Ric. II. 1393-4, Roger de Swynnerton waylaid and slew John de Ipstones, kt. who was on his way to Westminster as knight of the shire, and it was ordered by the Parliament then sitting that he (“one Roger Swynnerton”) should not be released from the prison in which he had been immured, by bail, mainprise, or any other manner, until he had answered the said charge, and legally obtained his release.’ Canon Bridgeman is of opinion that this act of violence was committed by Roger de Swynnerton to avenge the above outrage perpetrated by John de Ipstones on his young cousin Matilda Peshall.<sup>1</sup>

Richard Peshall, therefore, came into possession of the Manor of Hopton, and is referred to in an Inquisition of Knights taken in 1428 as ‘Richardus Peshall of Hopton.’ He was knighted, and in 1436 received the title and arms of Knightley by special grant from his cousin, Joan, daughter of Roger de Peshall by Joan de Knightley. The actual document making the grant reads as follows :—

‘Noverint universi per presentes me, Joannam nuper uxorem Willelmi, Lee de Knightley, dominam et rectam heredem de Knightley, dedisse, concessisse, et hac presenti carta mea confirmasse Ricardo Peshale, filio Humfridi Peshale, scutum armorum meorum ; Habendum et tenendum ac portandum et utendum ubicunque voluerit sibi et heredibus

<sup>1</sup> *Staff. Hist. Coll.*, vol. xviii. New Series, p. 182.

suis imperpetuum ; Ita quod nec ego nec aliquis alius nomine meo aliquod jus vel clameum seu calumpniam in predicto scuto habere potuerimus, sed per presentes sumus exclusi imperpetuum. In cujus rei testimonium sigillum meum apposui. Datum apud Knightley die Mercurii proxima post festum Paschae anno regni Regis Henrici sexti post conquestum quarto-decimo.’<sup>1</sup>

(*Translation.*)

‘ Let all know, by means of these presents, that I, Joanna, lately wife of William Lee of Knightley, lady and rightful heiress of Knightley, have given, granted and confirmed by this present document, my coat of arms to Richard Peshall, son of Humphrey Peshall ; to be held, preserved, worn and used wherever he wishes by himself and his heirs for ever. Therefore neither I nor anyone else in my name can have any just right, claim or pretension to the said coat of arms, but are excluded by these presents for ever. In witness of the matter I append my seal. Given at the house of Knightley last day of Mercury after the feast of Easter, in the 14th year of the reign of King Henry VI. after the conquest.’

Richard’s cousin Joan had married one William Lee of Boninghall, Salop, a lawyer, and after the death of her husband in 1438 she settled the manor of Little Wyrley as well as that of Knightley upon Richard.

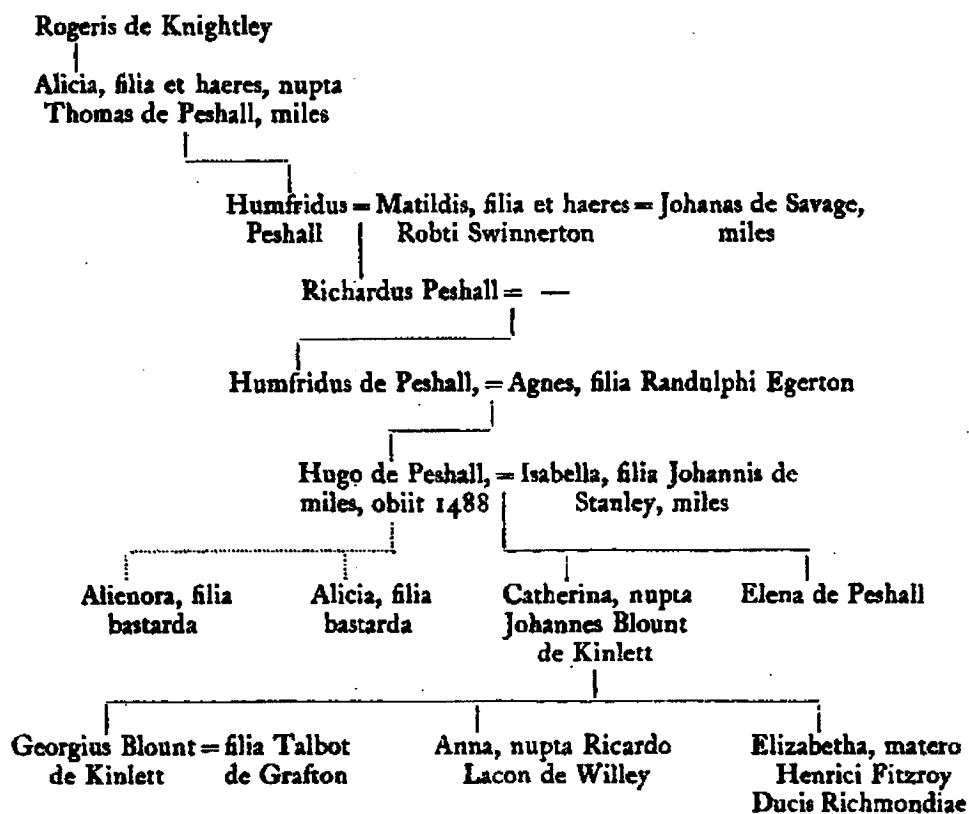
According to the Huntbach MS. at Wrottesley, ‘ the Manor of Little Wyrley was settled in 1438 upon Joan Lee for life, and after her decease to Richard Peshall, the son of Humphrey Peshall, and the heirs of his body, and for want of such issue to Richard Peshall, the son of Sir Thomas Peshall, Kt.’ ‘ This Richard Peshall, son of Humphrey,’ continues Huntbach, ‘ had issue Humphrey Peshall of Knightley, Lord of this Manor of Little Wyrley, who had

<sup>1</sup> *The Ancestor*, vol. ix. p. 220.

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PEDIGREE OF THE PESHALLS OF KNIGHTLEY—FROM  
THE 'STAFFORDSHIRE VISITATION' OF 1583

[From Harl. MS., No. 1415, fol. 133, in British Museum.]



issue Sir Hugh, whose daughter Katherine married Sir John Blount of Kinlet, Knight.'

Richard also held the Manor of Pattleshull for the term of his life, the property reverting to the Astley family on his death. An Inquisition of Knights' Fees in 1377 mentions 'Rich. de Peshale; I f. in Patteshul,' and a later Inquisition of 1432 mentions that 'Rich. Peshale de Patteshul ten' Hopton p. I. f.'

Richard's son, Humphrey Peshall of Knightley, was Sheriff of Shropshire in 1463, and owned, besides Knightley, the manors of Little Wyrley, Hopton, Teyne, Little Onn, Blythewood, Caldon and Waterfall, as well as other land and property in the town of Stafford. The Staffordshire property, he held in accordance with the custom of Borough English by which the inheritance passed to the youngest instead of to the eldest son. This Humphrey Peshall was twice married. By his first wife, Agnes, daughter of Sir Robert Egerton of Wrynehill, Staff., he had an elder son, Hugh, who died before him in 1490, as related below. By his second wife, Letitia,<sup>1</sup> daughter of Sir Robert Harcourt, who survived him, he had a younger son, Richard (born 1495), who, as youngest son, inherited the property in the town of Stafford, but of whom nothing further is known except that he died in 1520.

Sir Humphrey died in 1498, and the following is a transcript of the Inquisition after his death: 'Inquisition taken at Stafford, 7 September, 18 Hen. 7 (1502) to enquire after the death of Humphrey Pessall. The jurors say he was seized of the Manors of Knyghtley, Hopton, Theyne, Blythwood and Little Onne and the advowson of Chekkeley Church, and Manors of Baldon, Watnefall and one-third

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Burke's History of the Commoners*, which states that 'Letitia, daughter of Sir Robert Harcourt (descended from the ancient house of Harcourt, from which sprang the Earls of Harcourt, extinct in 1830, and which deduces its pedigree from Bernard, a nobleman of the royal blood of Saxony, who acquired in 876, when Rollo, the Dane, made himself master of Normandy, the lordships of Harcourt, Caileville and Beauficel, in that Duchy) married Humphry Peshal.'

part of Manor of Astonfeld, co. Staff. and so seized by charter conveyed the same to trustees to the use of himself and his wife Letice and the survivor and Letice still survives. He confirms the same by his will here quoted and dated 8 April 13, Henry VII. (1498). He held other lands (named) in said county. Humphrey died 26 May, 13 Henry VII (1498) and Richard Pessall was then his son and next heir male by said Letice and was aged 3 years. Now 12 June, 19 Henry VII. the said feoffees appear in the Court of Chancery and confirm above and say that Humphrey has issue Hugh who had issue Katherin and died in the lifetime of Humfrey, afterwards at Beudeley Co. Worcs. Katherin married John Blounte Esq. and is now aged 21 and more, and said Richard was born afterwards and the lands not entailed above should descend to Katherin as daughter of Hugh son of Humfrey. John Blount and Katherine both survive.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Humphrey's son Richard died in 1520, as shown by the following: 'Inquisition taken at Brewood, co. Staff. 17 Nov. 16 Henry VIII. (1524) to enquire after the death of Richard Persall. The jurors say that Richard Pessall was seized of a messuage and lands in Stafford borough. The said Richard died 10 August, 12 Henry VIII. (1520) and Richard Appulby, gent., son of Joan sister of Humfrey Pessall father of said Richard and Alice Lytelton, widow, daughter of Katherin, sister of the said Humfrey Pessall are next of kin of said Richard and his heirs and Richard Appulby is aged 60 years and Alice is aged 60 years. John Blunt Esq. has taken the issues and profits of the lands since Richard's death, but by what right the jurors know not.'<sup>2</sup>

Hugh Pershall, the elder son, married Isabella, daughter of Sir John Stanley, of Pype and Elford, by whom he had three daughters, Katherin, Joice and Isabelle. He died in 1490, and was buried in the Church of Grey Friars, London. His will is still preserved in Somerset House.

<sup>1</sup> Chancery Inquisition Post Mortem, 18 Henry VII., Series II. vol. 16, No. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Chancery Inquisitions Post Mortem, Series II. vol. 41, No. 50.

In the struggle between Richard III. and Henry, Duke of Richmond, this Hugh Pershall gave his services to Richard, the reigning king. After his death in 1490, his wife received a pardon from King Henry, and was enabled to retain her husband's property, which would otherwise have passed to the State. The letter granting the pardon is preserved in the Patent Roll of 6 Henry VII., m. 7 (13) : 'Pardon for Isabel Pershall : The King, of his especial grace, certain knowledge and meer motion, has pardoned, remitted and relaxed to Isabel, late the wife of Hugh Persale, late sheriff of the county of Stafford, administratrix of the goods and chattels which were the said Hugh's and tenant of the lands and tenements which were hers and the said Hugh's or which were the said Hugh's or otherwise granted to him or her, and all debts, accounts, profits, arrerages and sums of money whatsoever due to the said King by the same Hugh, in virtue of his office of sheriff of Stafford or otherwise, and all actions, executions and demands which may be brought against the said Isabel for the same Hugh for any cause touching the said office of Sheriff, and statute or order to the contrary notwithstanding. Witness the King at Westminster 10 March, [1491].

'By writ of Privy Seal, &c.'

The Manors of Knightley and Little Onn passed to Katherin on the death of her grandmother Letitia, as did also those of Hopton, Teyne and others which she claimed and recovered on her grandfather's death. She was married in 1491 to John Blount, Esq.,<sup>1</sup> the son and heir apparent of Sir Thomas Blount, Kt. of Kinlet in the county of Salop, to whom she brought her ample inheritance. The said John

<sup>1</sup> Vincent, in his *Visitation of Shropshire*, gives for Blount, a coat of twenty-nine quarterings, including (21) Argent, a cross patonce sable ; in a canton gules a lion's head erased, argent, crowned, or, for *Peshall* ; (22) azure, a chevron between three mullets or, for *Cherwynd* ; (23) Azure fretty argent, a fesse gules, for *Gareswell* ; (24) Quarterly, ermine and paly of six or and gules, within a bordure, for *Knightley* ; (25) gules, two bars ermine, for *Pantolph* ; (26) Argent, a cross patee fleury sable, for *Swinerton* ; (27) gules, a cross ermine, for *Beck*.

Blount, who was afterwards of Kinlet, Knight, died on 27th February, 22 Henry VIII. (1530-1), leaving the said Katherine, his wife; a son, George Blount, who was eighteen years of age and more at the time of his father's death:<sup>1</sup> and a daughter, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was a lady at Court and a mistress of Henry VIII., by whom she had a son, Henry Fitz-roy, Duke of Richmond.<sup>2</sup>

The following extract from the *Staff. Historical Collections* with reference to this Elizabeth Blount is of interest:—

‘Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Sir John Blount and Katherin Peshall, was a lady of great personal attractions. Lord Herbert says of her that “she was thought, for her ornaments of nature and education, to be the beauty and mistresspiece of her time.” In her youth she gained the affections of the young Henry VIII., and became the mother of his favourite son, Henry, Duke of Richmond. Halle, a contemporary writer, thus relates the affair: “You shall vnderstande, the kyng in his freshe youth, was in the cheynes of love, with a faire damosell called Elizabeth Blunt, daughter to sir John Blunt knyght, whiche damosell in syngyng, daunsyng, and in all goodly pastymes exceded all other; by the whiche goodly pastymes she wan the kynges harte: and she again shewed hym suche fauour, that by hym she bare a goodly manne childe, of beautie like to the father and mother. This child was wel brought vp, like a Princes child, and when he was VI. yere of age, the kyng made hym knight, and called hym lorde Henry fitz Roy, and on Sondaie beyng the XVIII daie of June, at the manor or place of Bridewell, the saied Lorde, ledde by two Erles, was created Erle of Nothyngham, and then he was brought backe again by the saied twoo Erles: then the Dukes of Norffolke and Suffolke, led hym into the great Chamber again, and the kyng created hym Duke of Richemond & Somerset: and the same daie the lorde Henry Courtenay Erle of Deuonshire, and cösyn germayn

<sup>1</sup> Inq. 23 Henry VIII., No. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Staff. Hist. Coll.*, 1912, vol. ii. p. 76.

to the kyng was created Marquis of Excester." [Fol. cxliii THE TRYUMPHAUNTE REIGNE OF KING HENRY THE VIII. (Halle's Chronicles—The Vnion of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre & Yorke—1550, Ed. Grafton.)] Henry Fitzroy was born at Blackmore, in Essex, in 1519, and Cardinal Wolsey was his godfather (*History of the Croke Family*). Dugdale, in his *Baronage*, says that Henry, Duke of Richmond, was the "natural son of King Henry VIII., begotten on the body of Elizabeth, widow of Sir Gilbert Tailboys"; but in this he is mistaken, for the birth of this child took place before her marriage with Gilbert Lord Talboys. Henry Duke of Richmond, who was made a Knight of the Garter, Lord High Admiral of England, Ireland and Normandy, and Lieutenant of Ireland, was present at the interview between his royal father and the French King, Francis I., in 1532. He was married in the following year to Lady Mary Howard, daughter of the Duke of Norfolk, but died without issue, on the 22nd of July, 1536, when he was only seventeen years of age, and was buried at Fromlingham in Suffolk.<sup>1</sup>

The following are four letters written by Katherin Blount (*née* Peshall) to Thomas Cromwell, a member of the King's Council.

(1) *State Papers, Henry VIII., vol. lxxiv. pp. 65-6. [1533.]*

Right wurshipfull Syr y Recommend one vnto yow I must beseke yow to be good maister vnto me as you have ben at Altymes. Wher hit pleasid yow to take the peyne to make an ende betwixt maist<sup>r</sup> Kytson and me for iiij hundurde markes, And after that hit pleasid the Duke of Norfocke by cause he had my Sonne yn warde, to Indent w<sup>t</sup> me that he wolde see Kytson paid at our Ladie Daye yn Lent. And his grace seid that Kytson shulde be content to tarie vntyll then. And so y bowt my sonn of my lorde, and

<sup>1</sup> Note from *Staff. Hist. Coll.*, vol. iv. Old Series, p. 79.