



# EDWARD DE VERE NEWSLETTER NO. 56

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## Was the annotated copy of Hall's Chronicle in the library of Robert Worsley, a lineal descendant of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford?

In 1940, Alan Keen, an antiquarian bookseller, purchased the library of a country house in Yorkshire, a rather routine purchase which turned out to have extraordinary consequences. In a bundle of uncatalogued books (containing an auction slip from a previous sale) was a copy of Hall's Chronicle with annotations which Keen believed could be attributed to Shakespeare. Unfortunately, the owner of the library was unable to provide Keen with any information concerning the auction sale at which the copy of the Chronicle had been purchased (Keen 92-3). Thus, one avenue by which the previous ownership of the Chronicle could have been traced was permanently closed off.

The volume itself has two marks of ownership. The first of these is the signature of a 16th century owner, Sir Richard Newport (d.1570). The name "Richard Newport" is written out twice in full; on another page, Sir Richard's initials appear beside the date "6 April 1565" (Keen 5). A second mark of ownership is the pressmark, a label pasted inside the front cover, bearing the letters "EEd". According to Keen, this pressmark, which dates from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, indicates that the Chronicle was once housed in a large library (Keen 91).

By 1953, however, thirteen years after his initial discovery, Keen had made no progress in locating this elusive library. Then, unexpectedly, a 17th-century volume with a similar pressmark came to light. In

*The Annotator*, Keen describes the circumstances in which this second volume was found in the library of the noted collector, C.K. Ogden:

[W]e must now return to the remaining item of *external* evidence, the pressmark 'E.Ed'.

For ten years this mark of ownership, though by its combination of letters it told of shelf-room in a considerable library, resisted all efforts at identification. . . . The label had been pasted inside the upper cover of the *Chronicle* when it was rebound, probably at the end of the seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Marks of such a large and recent library ought to be easy to find: but they have not been.

Chance eventually brought me the clue. One winter evening early in 1953 I was working with C.K. Ogden on the selection and cataloguing of the books which were to go from his library to University College, London. It must have been nearly midnight when, happening to turn over the cover of a calf-bound seventeenth-century folio, I caught a glimpse of a little label bearing the letters 'App'.

'That', said Ogden, 'looks very like your 'EEd' in Halle'.

And indeed it did. The book was *The Theory of the Earth*, London, 1691; and the label was identical in typeface and general character with my 'EEd'. Moreover, beneath it lay a late seventeenth-century signature, 'Robert Worsley'.

This is certainly little enough to go on; the signature is earlier than the label, and there is no reason to suppose that the *Chronicle* always lay in the same library as *The Theory of the Earth*. But at any rate there was equally no reason to suppose the contrary: in pitch darkness the faintest gleam is worth pursuing. So I resolved that night to work on the hypothesis that towards the end of the seventeenth century the *Chronicle* belonged to Robert Worsley, whoever he may have been (Keen 92).

The Worsleys were an ancient family dating back to the Conquest, with large properties in Lancashire (Burke 580-1). A branch of the family had settled in Yorkshire, and Keen's research led him to the conclusion that the seventeenth-century owner of Thomas Burnet's *Theory of the Earth* was Robert Worsley of Hovingham (Keen 93). However, another Robert Worsley appears to be a more likely candidate -- Sir Robert Worsley (1669-1742) of Appuldurcombe in the Isle of Wight.

James Worsley (d.1538), a younger son of the Lancashire Worsleys, came into possession of Appuldercombe in 1512 through his marriage with Anne Leigh. In his youth, James is said to have been a favourite page of Henry VIII, and in 1517, the King appointed him Captain of the Isle of Wight. His eldest son, Richard (d.1565), also Captain of the Isle of Wight, entertained Henry VIII at Appuldercombe in 1538. Richard married Ursula St. Barbe, later the wife of Queen Elizabeth's Secretary of State, Sir Francis Walsingham. His two sons by Ursula St. Barbe having predeceased him, Richard Worsley was succeeded by his brother John (d.1580), who is said to have further increased the wealth and prestige of the family. John was, in turn, succeeded by his son Thomas (1560-1604), "a brave scholar, a plain but worthy gentleman, and a most plentiful housekeeper".

Sir Richard Worsely (d.1621), eldest son of Thomas, was knighted and created a baronet by James I in 1611, and married a noted beauty, Frances Neville, daughter of Sir Henry Neville of Billingbeare. Their son, Sir Henry Worsley (1612-1666), married into another ancient family, the Wallops of Farley Wallop, whose later descendants were created Earls of Portsmouth.

Sir Henry was succeeded by his son Sir Robert Worsley (1643-1675), who married, in 1667, Mary Herbert (d.1693), grand-daughter of Philip Herbert, 4th Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery (1584-1650) and his wife Susan de Vere (1587-1629), youngest daughter of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Mary Herbert's father was James Herbert of Kingsey in Buckinghamshire, second surviving son of Philip

Herbert and Susan de Vere. James is depicted as an attractive youth in the magnificent Van Dyke family portrait at Wilton House, which shows the Earl of Pembroke and his second wife, Lady Anne Clifford, surrounded by the Earl's six surviving children by his first wife, Susan de Vere. Little else seems to be known of James Herbert, apart from a brief mention of him in the diary of his stepmother, Lady Anne Clifford, in 1669 on the occasion of a visit which he paid her at Appleby Castle ("it being the first time that I ever saw any of my second husband's children in Westmorland or in any part of my inheritance") (Lever 100). Mary Herbert survived Sir Robert Worsley, and married, in 1683, Edward Noel, Lord Gainsborough (1641-1689), by whom she had no children (Cokayne 599-600; St. George 51-5).

Sir Robert Worsley (1669-1742), the eldest son of Sir Robert Worsley (1643-1675) and Mary Herbert, was the probable owner of Thomas Burnet's *Theory of the Earth*. On his father's death, Sir Robert inherited Appuldurcombe and, in 1710, began an ambitious rebuilding program which "left not a stone standing" of the original house, and was eventually completed by his grandson, Sir Richard. In Sir Richard's time, Appuldurcombe was known as a "splendid mansion" with a distinguished art collection which included portraits of Tudor rulers and statesmen: Henry VIII (the portrait was said to have been presented to the Worsleys by the King himself); Mary Tudor and her husband, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; Edward VI; Queen Elizabeth; Sir Henry Neville; the Earl of Southampton, Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex; and Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery. By 1904, however, the great mansion which had been the seat of the Worsleys of the Isle of Wight for more than three centuries had been turned into a school. The art collection was broken up and sold at auction, and a large part of the library at Appuldercombe doubtless suffered a similar fate (Clinch 72-80; Davenport 213-4).

If the hypothesis that Sir Robert Worsley (1669-1742) of Appuldurcombe was the owner of Burnet's *Theory of the Earth* is correct, certain pieces of the

puzzle surrounding the annotated copy of Hall's Chronicle fall into place. Alan Keen theorized in 1954 that, because of the identical typeface and general character of their pressmarks, the Chronicle and *The Theory of the Earth* were once part of the same library. If Edward de Vere was, as has been suggested in issues 32-34 of the *Edward De Vere Newsletter*, the annotator of the Chronicle, it would not be surprising if the Chronicle had been passed down to, and at one time housed in the library of, his lineal descendant, Sir Robert Worsley, particularly when it is considered that Oxford was acquainted with at least one member of the Worsley family -- Edward Worsley -- to whom it is specified, in an indenture of January 30, 1575, that he owed a debt of £40 (*Essex*).

However, the correct identification of Robert Worsley will not resolve all the problems connected with the two pressmarks, "App" and "EEd". For one thing, the system underlying the two pressmarks is still unclear. It seems not to have been organized by author, or by title. The pressmark "App" may perhaps be an abbreviation for an estate, "Appuldurcombe", but if so, what is represented by the pressmark "EEd"? It would seem that all the pieces of the puzzle are not yet in place.

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## ANCESTORS OF SIR ROBERT WORSLEY

