The Genealogist.

SIR ADAM GURDUN OF SELBORNE.

By JOSEPH BAIN, F.S.A. Scot.

In the division of the *History of Selborne*,[1] appropriated to the antiquities, records, &c., of the Priory, the excellent Gilbert White seems to have been puzzled by the great longevity of the above personage; his three marriages, and other circumstances of his life. When the lamented Frank Buckland brought out his beautiful edition of the *History*, it was hoped by some that Lord Selborne, on whom the department of antiquities appropriately devolved, would have given some more information about Gurdun. But possibly his lordship's high official duties prevented him from doing so. As Gilbert White dropped a hint that Gurdun, from his name, might have been a North Briton, I have always kept an eye on him while going through the Public Records; and, as the result of my notes during the last eight or nine years, I am able possibly to clear up a good deal that was inexplicable to the venerable historian of Selborne, when records were far from being so accessible. From these, it is unquestionable that there were *three* successive Adam Gurduns, all owning land in or about Selborne during the thirteenth century, and that the last of them left no legitimate male descendants, but was succeeded by a daughter.

Gilbert White's[2] account of Adam Gurdun from what he calls his "evidences," is that he flourished from 1232 till 1295, and his three wives were Constantia, Ameria and Agnes. The first was the companion of his middle life, and a person of considerable fortune, inherited from her father or uncle, Thomas Makerel, a gentleman of Selborne. The second, Ameria, calls herself *quondam* wife of Sir Adam, and names her sons under age. Now Gurdun (continues White) had no son. The third wife, Agnes, also calls herself the *quondam* wife of Sir Adam. But Gurdun could not leave two widows, therefore Gilbert White suggests that he had been divorced from Ameria, who had married and had sons by some other husband. Gurdun had a daughter Johanna by Agnes, who was his heiress, and he had also a bastard son. There is a certain amount of fact in the venerable

[1] The edition from which I quote is that of *London*, 1813, 4to.
[2] pp. 335-346.

historian's account, as will be seen on contrasting it with the following.

The first Adam Gurdun lived in the reign of King John, from whom he had a grant of 12*l.* "blanch" silver in Tystede.[1] He was very probably one of John's mercenary soldiers from France, as the surname is not unknown in Gascony. And this supports Gilbert White's conjecture that he was a soldier of fortune. He died before 7 August, 1214.[2] Who his wife was does not appear. He was succeeded by another Adam Gurdun, who, it may be assumed, was a son, as he also held lands in Tystede and in Selborne. On his death, before 12 August, 1231, Ralph Marshal had a grant of his land in Tystede, under burden of maintaining Ameria, Gurdun's widow, and her children.[3] In 1235-36 Ameria, the widow, had a grant of 9*l.* and seisin of Tystede and Selborne, till her eldest son Adam's majority.[4]

This third Adam is the man whose extra longevity puzzled Gilbert White. He first appears acting for himself in 1241, when, presumably having attained majority, he is a debtor at the Exchequer, along with John Oter and John Swele, for 34*l.* 2*s.* 11½*d.*, arrears of the rent of Aulton.[5] They were probably the King's farmers or bailiffs there. In 1254 he obtained a change of the tenure of his land, which his father had held by serving for 40 days in the King's army, to the more honourable one of half a knight's fee.[6] On 30 March, 1257, he paid the King half a mark of gold to have a confirmation of the bailliary of the forests of Wulvemere and Axiholt which the holder, John de Venuz, being stricken in years, and unfit for office, had granted to Adam with Constancia, his daughter and heir, Adam's wife,[7] with remainder to *her* heirs after Adam's death. In 1261, Gurdun, as keeper of Wulvemere forest, was commanded to give the Prior and Monks of Selborne sand in the forest for building their hall.[8] Thus Gurdun's official connection with these forests was through his wife. He had, however, on 10 Dec., 1253, a licence for life, as Adam son of Adam de Gurdun, to hunt the hare, fox, cat, and badger, in all the King's forests in Southampton, except in fence time, or in the King's or other persons' warrens.[9] Gurdun, as related by Mathew Paris and Trivet, took the side of the Earl of Leicester in the war between the King and the Barons. He had evidently been in the King's favour up to the last moment, for on 16 June, 1265, the charge of the Isle of Lundy was

[1] Pipe Roll, 10 John.
[2] Close Roll, 16 John.
[3] Fine Roll, 15 Hen. III.; Pipe Roll, 16 Hen. III.
[4] Pipe Roll, 19 Hen. III.
[5] Memoranda Roll, 25 Hen. III.
[6] Inq. ad quod dammum, 38 Hen. III., No. 18.
[7] Fine Roll, 41 Hen. III.
[8] Close Roll, 45 Hen. III.
[9] Pat. Roll, 37 & 38 Hen. III.

entrusted to him for 100 shillings yearly till All Saints' Day.[1] He may have been made prisoner by Prince Edward soon after the battle of Evesham, as these historians relate, but was not so soon received into favour, nor in the dramatic manner described by White on their authority.[2] On the contrary, on 2 April, 1266, a safe conduct was granted to him to come and treat regarding his peace till Pentecost following, at the instance of Henry of Almaine, the King's nephew.[3] On 12 January following (1266-67) Ameria, his mother, had just died, and Adam her son being then the Queen's prisoner, the Sheriff of Southampton was ordered to take Ameria's land (a carucate) in Aulton in seisin for the Queen.[4] However it was effected, he got into favour before long, and in 1 Edw. I., he and his wife Constancia were again in possession of the keeping of Woolmer forest, and their manor of Fowzele (or Fowrele),[5] and also had leave to enclose a park by paying ten marks.[6] For twenty years or more he constantly appears as a trusty servant of the King, in various capacities in the county, but chiefly in connection with the forest, punishing trespassers, taking stags, making presents of deer, goats, &c., to various persons from the King. One of these is curious from its connection with natural history. On 15 April, 56 Hen. III., a writ issued to the keeper of Woolmer,[7] directing him to give Sir Adam 12 pikes to stock his fish-pond of Selborne.[8] Gilbert White says that Sir Adam's daughter and heiress Johanna, was married to Richard Achard,[9] and made various grants to the priory of lands, goods, &c., the last being in 1307 (1 Edw. II). I have found a royal confirmation on 29 April, 14 Edw. I. (1286),[10] of a gift by *Robert* Achard and Johanna his wife to Adam Gurdun, of the manor of Noteleye [in Selborne] for his life, to revert on his death "to those who have the right (*jus*) thereto." Whether this Johanna was his daughter or not is not said. I should hardly think she can be the same who is named in a manumission of a serf 77 years later, presently to be mentioned. Sir Adam is said[11] to have been alive 30 Sept., 1295. The last original notice I have of him from the Public Records is an inquiry by a Selborne jury in 1292-3, who find it would not be to the King's damage if his liege Adam Gurdun gave for the weal of his soul, and that of the deceased Constantia his wife, 8 acres of land and a rent of 6*s.* ½*d.* in

[1] Pat. Roll, 49 Hen. III.
[2] p. 336.
[3] Pat. Roll, 49 Hen. III.
[4] Close Roll, 51 Hen. III.
[5] The word is doubtful.
[6] Memoranda Roll, 57 Hen. III., and 1 Edw. I.
[7] The pond or lake, I presume, as distinct from the forest.
[8] Close Roll.
[9] p. 346.
[10] Patent Roll.
[11] p. 345.

Hochangre to the Prior and Convent of Selborne, which land, &c., is held of William de Hochangre for [ ] yearly, and William holds of the King by serjeanty.[1]

It would thus appear from the original documents I have gathered, that the third Sir Adam Gurdun was probably born about 1220, and if he died about 1295, this brings him to a respectable, though not extraordinary, old age.[2] There appears to be no mention in them of his having had any other wife than Constantia, or of her relative Thomas Makerel. Gilbert White may of course have had evidence[3] that it was so, and that Agnes was the mother of his daughter and sole heiress Johanna. Of her I have observed the following :—On 27 January, 1363-64, Edward III., for half a mark, confirms Henry de Eston's manumission of one John Gobe, formerly a "nativus" of the Manor of Nuttele, in Southampton, belonging to Johanna, daughter of Sir Adam Gordon (so spelt), Knight, held in chief, who had demised him with his *sequela* to Henry in fee, and the latter had manumitted them all, without licence, wherefore John de Norton, now tenant of the Manor, had claimed him.[4]

Another interesting point regarding Selborne may here be noticed. The amiable historian[5] corrects Bishop Tanner for saying there was a market and fair at Selborne, and says there never was a "chartered fair" there, the place meant in Dodsworth's charter of 54 Hen. III., being Lekeborne, co. Lincoln, not Seleburne. But on referring to the original document, it is unquestionable that besides a weekly market on Tuesday at their Manor of Selcburne, Henry III., on 23 Oct., 1270, gave the Prior and Convent a yearly fair for three days, viz., on the vigil, the day, and the morrow of the Assumption of the B. V. Mary (14, 15, and 16 August).[6] So that the "jolly fellows," who, according to Gilbert White, found in an old almanack that there had been a fair in former days on the 1st of August, and accordingly set up one since the year 1681, were not far wrong in their information.[7]

Perhaps these remarks will not be unacceptable to those who, like the writer, have been admirers from boyhood of the naturalist of Selborne, and in later life have extended this admiration to the antiquarian portion of his delightful work as well. Gilbert White will ever be an English classic, although experts now tell us that swallows no longer hybernate in our ponds, but seek a thorough change of air, like many British Christians, across the stormy waves of more than one sea.

[1] Inq. ad quod damnum 20 Edw. I., No. 130.

[2] I have since noticed that on 25 Nov., 1296, a king's messenger carried letters under the great Seal to Sir Adam Gourdon, "Custos parcium maritimarum in Comitatu Suthampton. et Vicecomiti Suthampton." So he was then living. (Wardrobe Account, 25 Edw. I. *Brit. Museum*).

[3] From the records of Magdalen College, to which he often refers.

[4] Pat. Roll, 38 Edw. III.

[5] Charter Roll, 54 Hen. III.

[6] p. 340.

[7] p. 416.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON SIR ADAM GURDUN.

By JOSEPH BAIN, F.S.A., Scot.

I venture to supplement my paper (pp. 1-4 *ante*) on Sir Adam Gurdun by the following inquisitions,[1] which are interesting, as they shew his longevity to be quite as remarkable as Gilbert White supposed, and also prove some other points connected with his family. They were included in a long list, principally of Scottish documents, and thus overlooked at the time.

(1.) The first on the file is an inquisition, in pursuance of the King's writ of *diem clausit extremum*, dated Westminster 8th April, 1305, taken by a jury at Aulton, Hampshire, on the 29th of same month, who found that the lately (*nuper*) deceased Adam Gurdun held the bailliary of Alicesholte and Wolvemere Forest for life by the King's gift, by Great Sergeanty, and a payment of 13*s.* 4*d.* yearly at the Exchequer. That John de Venuz sometime (*dudum*) deceased, held it in fee of the King *in capite*, and by the King's leave gave it to Adam for life, to revert to his own heirs. That John de Venuz, his son and heir, aged 40 and more, was then entitled thereto. Value, 66*s.* 8*d.* And that Johanna, daughter of Adam Gurdun, was his next heir, and 45 years of age.

(2.) The second is taken also at Aulton on 13 April. The jury found that Sir Adam Gurdon, Knight, held the manor of Tistede *in capite* as half a knight's fee. He had a hall, grange and byre (*boveria*) covered with thatch (*stramine*); easements worth 4*s.*; sixty arable acres, worth 4*d.* each; eleven freeholders

[1] 33 Edw. I., No. 25.

paid 24*s.* 11*d.* at the four principal terms. Two acres of pasture at 6*d.* each; pasture for 50 sheep in common; total value, 49*s.* 11*d.* He also held some tenements in Seleborne of the Prior of Seleborne, paying 50*s.* *per annum*. He had a hall, grange, and cowhouse covered with tiles (*tegulis*). Value of the easements, 5*s.* 56 acres arable at 4*d.* each. A dovecote, 1*s.* 6*d.* 2 acres of pasture at 4*d.* each. Four freeholders paying 12*s.* 10*d.* quarterly. Total 38*s.* 4*d.* He also held certain tenements at "la Steepe," of Margaret Queen of England for . . . . as of the Hundred of Aulton. A thatched house is worth nothing. 20 arable acres at 2*s.* Total, 3*s.* 4*d.* The aforesaid Johanna was his daughter and heir.

(3). He also held a manor at Padindene, co. Surrey, of John de Hastings, as half a knight's fee, for a pair of gilt spurs, or 6*d.* Total value, 10*li.* 9*s.* 1*d.*

From these it appears that he may quite well have been 85 at his death; that Johanna was evidently, from her age, his daughter by Constantia de Venuz, not by Agnes, as Gilbert White said; and that the Venuz family resumed the office of hereditary keepers of the forest on his death. Let us first see what became of his daughter and her possessions. On 17 July, 1306, a jury at Aulton found that Johanna, daughter of Adam Gurdun, might transfer her manor of Nuttleye to James de Northon and Elizabeth his wife, reserving her own life-rent. The holding was by Great Sergeanty, viz., that Johanna, along with John de Venuz, who held East Worldham, should carry a staff of the Mareschalcy in the king's household.[2]

On Friday next after the translation of the Blessed Thomas, 1 Edw. II., a jury at Alresforde found that Johanna, now styled widow of Robert Achard, might transfer to the above James de Norton her manor of East Tistede, and 100 acres in Selborne, reserving her own life-rent. Besides other property it is stated she still held Selborne Makerel, a manor worth 10*li.*, for life, of the Prior and Convent of Selborne.[3]

From a paper by Mr. W. S. Ellis, on Hampshire Families,[4] the Venuz family seem to have been foresters of Wolvemere, &c., as early as 4 Richard I. (1193); and from the authorities given by him, with some others which I have also noted, it appears they continued to hold it after Sir Adam Gurdun's long life-rent ended, down to 37 Edw. III., when a John Maresecal, nephew of Nicholas and Hugh de Venuz, who had both died without heirs of their bodies, was found to be the heir of entail. I have not traced it further than this point, and leave some Hampshire antiquary to pursue the history of the keepers of the Forest.

[2] *Inq. p. m.* 34 Edw. I. No. 175. [3] *Inq. ad q.d.*, 1 Edw. II., No. 70.
[4] *Herald & Genealogist*, Aug. 1868.