

WOOLSTON WITH MARTINSCROFT

Ulfiton c. 1147; Wlfiton, 1175–82.

Woolston to the west and Martinscroft to the east extend along the bank of the River Mersey, and together form a joint township containing an area of 1,566½ statute acres, of which Woolston proper has 1,225. [\(fn. 1\)](#) The township lies wholly upon the upper mottled sandstone of the bunter series of the new red sandstone. The high road from Warrington to Manchester passes through it, and the Woolston New Cut, a short canal belonging to the Manchester Ship Canal, passes through Woolston and shortens the waterway of the Mersey and Irwell Canal by avoiding some of the numerous windings of the River Mersey. In 1901 there were in the joint township 484 persons. There are a number of small landowners here, the land being let in small tenements.

There is a parish council.

The flat country is divided into fields with rather meagre hedgerows and scanty trees. The alluvial and sandy soil appears fertile, yielding good crops of potatoes and turnips, oats, wheat, and clover, whilst many a marshy corner is devoted to the cultivation of osiers for the manufacture of potato-hampers and 'skips.' In the north of the district there is a considerable patch of mossland, and here too there is a good deal of clay in the surface soil. By the river there are moist pastures. The inhabitants are entirely employed in agricultural labour and basketmaking.

MANOR

The descent of *WOOLSTON* corresponds with that of the neighbouring manor of Poulton. Both were in 1094 bestowed upon the abbey of St. Peter of Shrewsbury by Count Roger of Poitou, [\(fn. 2\)](#) and both passed—probably by purchase—to the lord of Makerfield about the reign of Henry II. From that date Woolston was held by a number of free tenants as of the barony of Newton in Makerfield. The names of those existing between 1175 and 1182 are recorded in a charter of Ralph, abbot of Shrewsbury, granting to them in fee the riddings or assarts of the 'Eyes' lying within a ditch by the water of Mersey for 21 pence yearly, and one 'land' or acre strip from each tenant for ever as an obit. [\(fn. 3\)](#) In 1292 twothirds of the manor were held by Robert de Woolston, whose ancestors had been enfeoffed by Robert Banastre, sometime lord of Newton in Makerfield. [\(fn. 4\)](#) The remaining third part was held by Richard de Moston, lord of Poulton, in right of his wife Alice, daughter of Gilbert de Haydock, whose ancestor had likewise been enfeoffed by Robert Banastre. [\(fn. 5\)](#) This third part descended in the same succession as the manor of Poulton. Some considerable part of it was held in 1292 by Richard son of Emma de Woolston by the yearly service of 8s. [\(fn. 6\)](#)



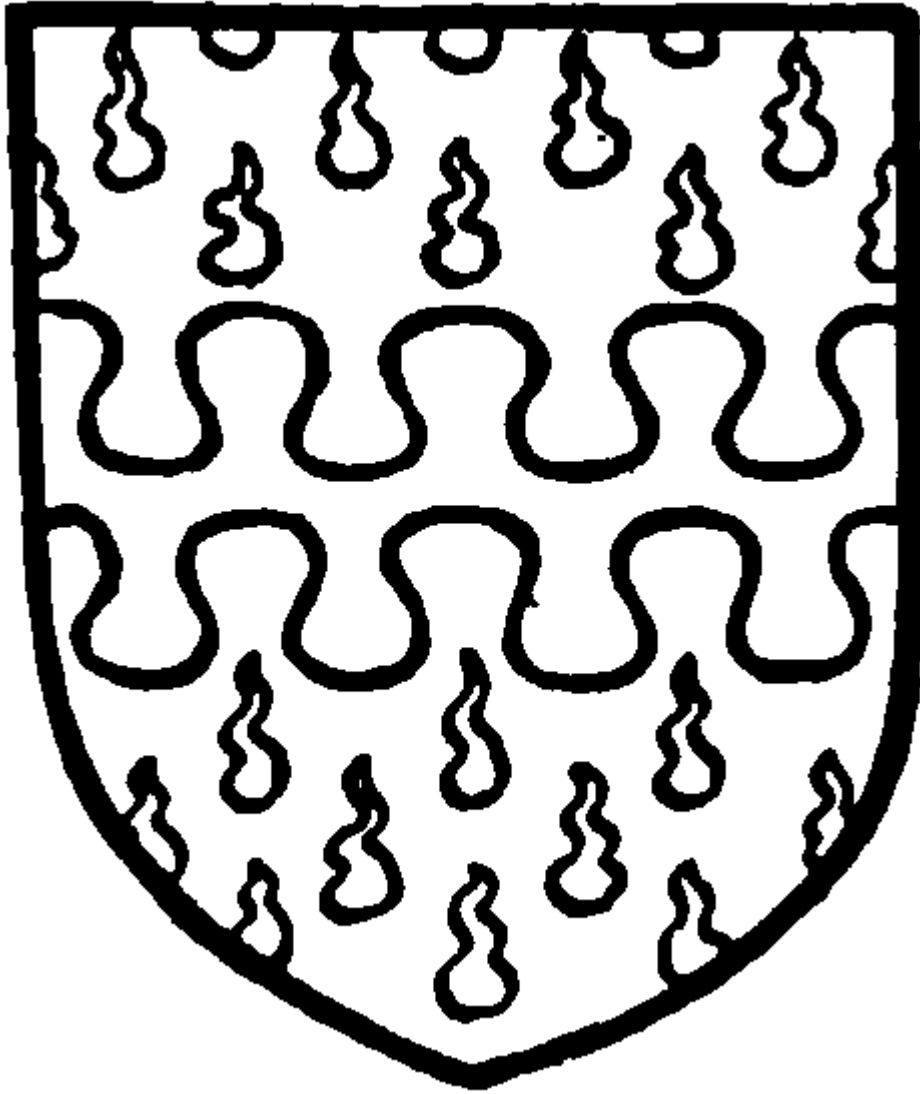
Woolston of Woolston. *Argent, a wolf passant sable.*

Robert son of Orm de Woolston, who was living in 1293, [\(fn. 7\)](#) had issue by Alice his wife four sons, Adam, father of Agnes, by his wife Ellen, whom he divorced; [\(fn. 8\)](#) Richard his heir, living in 1313, when he was suing Richard de Moston and Alice his wife for making sale and destruction in their common wood and turbary in Woolston; [\(fn. 9\)](#) Simon, living in 1309; [\(fn. 10\)](#) and John, described as John son of Robert Ormeson [\(fn. 11\)](#) in 1318, when Hugh de Woolston recovered against him and Alice his mother two messuages in this vill. [\(fn. 12\)](#) In 1326 and 1332 Richard de Woolston, Richard and Robert de Martinscroft, Simon son of Robert, Henry le Wolf and John de Hepay were the principal owners of land. [\(fn. 13\)](#) In 1349 Emma, relict of Richard de Woolston, was claiming her dower in the manor of Woolston against Robert de Woolston her son and Alice his wife, and in six messuages, 36 acres of land, and 30s. of rent in this vill against Alice, relict of Henry le Wolf. [\(fn. 14\)](#) Robert de Woolston 'of the Fernyheued,' died before 1367, in which year Agnes his relict was sued by Thomas de Southworth for a

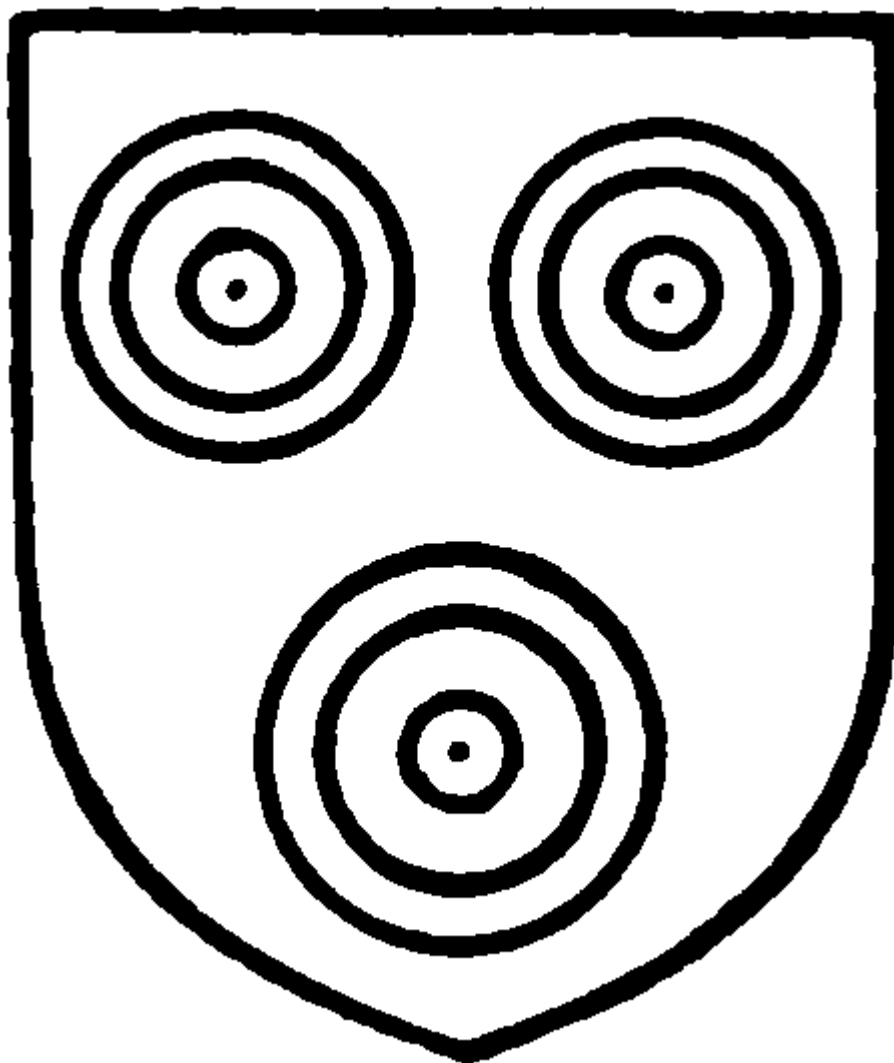
message and 100 acres of land which she held in dower, and for waste which she had made in the wood of Woolston.[\(fn. 15\)](#)

In 1359 the abbot of Shrewsbury brought a writ of novel disseisin before the justices at Lancaster against Robert son of Robert de Woolston touching tenements here, but did not prosecute his writ.[\(fn. 16\)](#) Four years later the abbot successfully traversed the finding of an inquest taken for the king to the effect that one of the king's progenitors had given a plat of land, called Wyldegreve, a fishery in the manor, and 20s. of rent in Woolston, to find a monk to celebrate divine service daily for ever in the chapel of Wyldegreve for the souls of the kings of England, which chantry had been withdrawn for many years past, the lands being worth yearly 24s. and the fishery 20s. An inquest found that the abbot and his predecessors had held the tenements time out of mind of the gift of Ranulf, earl of Chester, in free alms, whereupon judgement was given for the abbot with restitution of the tenements, the issues, and the fishery. [\(fn. 17\)](#)

The descent of the family of Woolston is somewhat obscure during this time. [\(fn. 18\)](#) In 1401 Hugh de Woolston was in possession of the manor. [\(fn. 19\)](#) By the marriage of his daughter Annabel (or Elizabeth) to John de Hawarden of Hawarden, co. Flint, the manor passed to the last-named family. [\(fn. 20\)](#) In 1432 John Hawarden and Elizabeth his wife were freeholders in Poulton and Woolston. [\(fn. 21\)](#) His son Thomas Hawarden [\(fn. 22\)](#) had a son Thomas, who died before 1513, in which year Joan his wife gave 20 marks for the marriage of her son John, which Sir Thomas Boteler claimed in respect of lands held of him in Warrington. [\(fn. 23\)](#) In 1523 John Hawarden was amerced for not appearing at a court held at Warrington to do his suit for the same lands [\(fn. 24\)](#) He died in 1556–7 seised of this manor and of lands in Halewood. [\(fn. 25\)](#) Adam his son, aged thirty years in 1556–7, entered his pedigree at the visitation of William Flower in 1567. [\(fn. 26\)](#) The manor was settled upon him by his father John Hawarden by fine in 1548. [\(fn. 27\)](#) He died 6 February, 1596–7, [\(fn. 28\)](#) his only son having predeceased him. Elizabeth, daughter of Adam, had married Alexander, son and heir of Edward Standish of Standish, in 1575, [\(fn. 29\)](#) and in 1581 Adam Hawarden and Alexander Standish had conveyed the manor and family estates by fine to trustees, [\(fn. 30\)](#) as Alexander Standish and Elizabeth his wife likewise did in 1609. [\(fn. 31\)](#) The manor subsequently descended with Standish until March, 1870, when the hall was sold to the present owner, Mr. John Bennett, by the Standish trustees, with the consent of the late Charles Henry Lionel Widdrington Standish. The 'manorial rights, if any,' were reserved by the vendors. [\(fn. 32\)](#)



Hawarden of Woolston. *Argent, guttée de poix and a fesse nebuly sable.*



Standish of Standish. *Sable, three standing dishes argent.*

In 1278 Robert son of Alan le Norreys of Halsnead and Agnes his wife claimed estovers in Robert de Woolston's wood in Woolston, which they had been used to enjoy. [\(fn. 33\)](#) John son of the same Robert in 1323 and again in 1332 sought to recover a messuage and two oxgangs of land here from Richard son of Hugh de Woolston. [\(fn. 34\)](#)

The family of Southworth of Samlesbury held an estate here from an early period. In 1432 Thomas Southworth died seised of lands held of John Hawarden and Elizabeth his wife. [\(fn. 35\)](#) Richard Southworth died in 1472, and Christopher his son in 1487, seised of the same, held of Thomas Hawarden by the yearly rent of 1*d*. In 1502 Ralph Anderton claimed the premises. [\(fn. 36\)](#) The subsequent descent is unknown.

Ralph Culcheth died in 1564 seised of a small estate here, which he held of Adam Hawarden in socage by a yearly free rent of 3*s*. [\(fn. 37\)](#) William his bastard son and heir alienated it in 1567 to Thomas Walmesley of Showley, [\(fn. 38\)](#) who died seised of the same in 1584. [\(fn. 39\)](#) It descended in 1612 to Thomas, son

and heir of Robert Walmesley of Coldcotes, [\(fn. 40\)](#) and probably passed with the other estates of this family.

MARTINSCROFT

MARTINSCROFT [\(fn. 41\)](#) was, as the name suggests, a several enclosure within the manor of Woolston. Gilbert de Martinscroft held land here in the time of Edward I, [\(fn. 42\)](#) and Richard his son was one of the largest contributors here to the subsidy of 1326. [\(fn. 43\)](#) By his wife Agnes, daughter of John de Shaw, he had issue two daughters, Godith and Margery, who with their husbands were claiming a messuage and lands here in 1346 against Robert, son and heir of the said Richard de Martinscroft, and Richard's widow, Margery de Edgeworth. [\(fn. 44\)](#)

Richard Houghton, Ellen Hawarden, Adam Hawarden, and Richard Bruch, as landowners in Woolston, contributed to a subsidy in Mary's reign. [\(fn. 45\)](#) The only freeholder recorded in 1600 was Alexander Standish. [\(fn. 46\)](#) Sir Peter Legh and Ralph Standish were the landowners paying to the subsidy in 1628, in Poulton and Woolston. [\(fn. 47\)](#) Richard Booth was in 1653 allowed to contract for two-thirds of his estate sequestered for his recusancy. [\(fn. 48\)](#) Richard Booth and William Caldwell, reedmaker, as 'Papists,' registered small estates in 1717. [\(fn. 49\)](#)

A family named Willme resided at Martinscroft in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; one of them, John Willme, who died in 1767, was a mathematician and astrologer. [\(fn. 50\)](#)

The land-tax returns of 1787 show that Edward Standish, Henry Pickering, and — Strickland were the chief owners of the soil.

The enclosure award (with plan) for the township is preserved at the County Council offices, Preston.

A Wesleyan Methodist chapel was built at Martinscroft in 1827.

The Hawarden family and their successors, adhering to the Roman Catholic faith at the Reformation, afforded shelter to the missionary priests during the times of proscription. [\(fn. 51\)](#) The domestic chapel of Woolston Hall was served by the English Benedictines until the beginning of last century, [\(fn. 52\)](#) when it was demolished. The present church of St. Peter, opened in 1835, is in the hands of secular clergy. [\(fn. 53\)](#)

Footnotes

- [1.](#) The census report of 1901 gives the total area as 1,623 acres, of which 47 are inland water.
- [2.](#) Farrer, *Lancs. Pipe R.* 270 et seq.

- [3.](#) Ibid. 287.
- [4.](#) Assize R. 408, m. 41*d.* About the year 1285 Robert Banastre gave to Robert de Samlesbury 3 acres of land with common of pasture in Woolston, beginning at the Lache towards the north by Levynge's Croft and continuing between the moss and the brook until 3 acres were fully completed; Raines MSS. (Chet. Lib.), xxxviii, 403, *n.* 2. In 1290 Robert lord of Woolston exchanged land in Woolston for other land between Helecroft on the east and the Outlone on the west, with William de Midelton and Ameria his wife, daughter of Robert le Boteler, of whose inheritance it was; Towneley MS. HH, *n.* 1835. As Robert, lord of Woolston, he gave to Robert son of Orm de Pesforlonc in fee 2 plats of land in Woolston, viz. (1) beginning at the land formerly Adam de Midelton's on the north, following the ditch which the same Robert raised there towards the east, to the highway leading from Poulton to the wood of Ferniheued, and so following the ditches on the south against the highway to the land of Adam le Rede of Rixton; (2) beginning at the same highway on the west, following in length by the land of Peter de Midelton to the land of Andrew de Midelton, and to the land of William Fox on the east, following ditches southward to the Outlone, with estovers and pannage quit in the wood of Ferniheued for 8*d.* at St. Peter's Chains. See Raines MSS. xxxviii, 411 (1).
- [5.](#) Assize R. 408, m. 41 *d.* 60.
- [6.](#) Ibid. m. 62*d.*; also m. 6 and m. 63*d.* In 1323 William de Moston released to Robert son of William son of Tylle (Tillesson) 9½ acres in Woolston and Poulton, which Richard de Moston father of William gave to Richard son of Emma; Raines MSS. xxxviii, 407, *n.* 3. See *Cal. Close R.* 1288–96, p. 252.
- [7.](#) *Lancs. Inq. and Extents* (Rec. Soc. Lancs. and Ches.), 276.
- [8.](#) Assize R. 423, m. 1 *d.*
- [9.](#) De Banc. R. 198, m. 56.
- [10.](#) Assize R. 423.
- [11.](#) In 1343 Robert son of Richard de Moston gave to Cecily daughter of Robert del Wode and to Richard her eldest son and his issue the lands and buildings in Woolston and Poulton which had belonged to Alice daughter of Richard Ormesson, mother of the said Cecily, with remainders to John son of Matthew de Southworth by Agnes Drynkale, to Gilbert son of the said Matthew, to Godith and Margery daughters of the said Matthew; Raines MSS. xxxviii, 409, *n.* 2.
- [12.](#) De Banc. R. 221, m. 57 *d.*; R. 223, m. 119.
- [13.](#) *Lancs. Lay Sub. bdle.* 130, *n.* 5 and 6. In Michaelmas term, 1328, William Lambe of Warrington sued in the King's Bench for 20 marks debt, Richard de Woolston, Richard son of Robert de Martinscroft, Richard son of Gilbert of the same place, John de Hepay of Woolston, Robert son of

Roger de Woolston, Henry le Wolf of Woolston, and Richard de Standys of Orford; De Banc. R. 275, m. 152; 276, m. 190.

- [14.](#) De Banc. R. 357, m. 118 *d.*
- [15.](#) Ibid. R. 429, m. 453; 432, m. 347. In 1353 Thomas son of Gilbert de Southworth withdrew a plea against Richard son of Robert de Woolston of the Fernyhead and Agnes relict of Robert de Woolston; Assize R. 435, m. 4. In 1336 Agnes daughter of Simon son of Robert son of Orme released to Thomas de Southworth a messuage in the Fernyhead in Woolston; Towneley MS. HH, *n.* 1934.
- [16.](#) Duchy of Lanc. Assize R. 7, m. 6.
- [17.](#) Co. Plac. Lanc. No. 10. See *Cal. Close R.* 1327–30, p. 478.
- [18.](#) In a complaint by Thomas Hawarden the elder in 1516(?) his pedigree is thus traced: Richard de Woolston—s. Richard —s. Hugh—s. Robert—s. Hugh—d. Annabel—s. Thomas Hawarden, the plaintiff, who had a son Thomas; Star Chamb. Proc. Hen. VIII, xxv, 330, vi*, 247.
- [19.](#) Pal. of Lanc. Plea R. 1, m. 7.
- [20.](#) In 1427 Richard Walker, rector of Warrington, and other feoffees restored certain of Hugh de Woolston's lands in Martinscroft to him, with remainder to Annabel, his daughter, wife of John de Hawarden; Towneley MS. OO, *n.* 1265. The same volume contains a few other deeds of the Hawarden family; thus John, son of Thomas de Hawarden and William his son about 1396 had lands in Cheshire; *n.* 1237, 1240. In 1474 John, son and heir of John Hawarden, late of Chester, held the manor of Statham in Lymm; *n.* 1246.
- [21.](#) *Lancs. Inq. p. m.* (Chet. Soc.), ii, 46. Hugh de Hawarden and Agnes his wife occur in a Warrington suit in 1357; Duchy of Lanc. Assize R. 6, m. 6*d.*, and (pt. 3) m. 1; *Final Conc.* ii, 156.
- [22.](#) Writ of *Diem clausit extr.* issued 16 Hen. VII(?); Towneley MS. CC. (Chet. Lib.), *n.* 723. The dates in the text do not agree with the Star Chamber Pleading of a preceding note. In 1485 Thomas Legh of High Legh appointed Thomas Hawarden one of the executors of his will (Rec. Soc. Lancs. and Ches. xxx, 23); and in 1486 John Hulton of the Park in his will describes him as his brother; *ibid.* 24. Thomas Hawarden purchased the Statham lands in Lymm in 1485–6, and Thomas, son and heir apparent of Thomas Hawarden of Woolston, made a further purchase in 1492–3; Ormerod, *Ches.* (ed. Helsby), i, 584.
- [23.](#) *Misc.* (Rec. Soc. Lancs. and Ches.), i, 27.
- [24.](#) *Lords of Warr.* (Chet. Soc.), 431.
- [25.](#) Duchy of Lanc. Inq. p. m. x, *n.* 33.
- [26.](#) Chet. Soc. lxxxii, 87. He held lands in Statham and Lymm of Richard Legh at the latter's death in 1582; Ormerod, i, 453.
- [27.](#) Pal. of Lanc. Feet of F. bdle. 13, m. 210.

- [28](#). In the inquest taken after the death of Adam Hawarden, 13 Mar. 1598, it was found that Anne Hawarden, Elizabeth the wife of Alexander Standish, Jane the wife of Thomas Flower, Margaret the wife of Richard Ashton of Bamfurlong, Ellen the wife of Edward Standish, jun., Isabel the wife of Hugh Adlington, and Clemence Hawarden, were his daughters and heirs; Culcheth D. in *Lancs. and Ches. Hist. and Geneal. Notes*, i, 156.
- [29](#). *Lancs. Inq. p. m.* (Rec. Soc. Lancs. and Ches.), i, 187.
- [30](#). Pal. of Lanc. Feet of F. bdle. 43, m. 59; the estate was described as twenty messuages, &c., a water-mill, a dovecote, 2,300 acres of land, meadow and pasture in Woolston, Fearnhead, Bruche, Poulton, Marscroft [Martinscroft], and Halewood.
- [31](#). Ibid. bdle. 75, m. 15.
- [32](#). Information supplied by Mr. Bennett, through his solicitors, Messrs. Robert Davies & Co., Warrington, who state that by his will of 1807 Edward Townley Standish made Charles Standish tenant for life with remainder to Charles H. L. W. Standish as tenant in tail male, which estate tail was afterwards barred.
- [33](#). De Banc. R. 24, m. 38 *d.* 67 *d.*
- [34](#). Ibid. R. 248, m. 149*d.*; 290, m. 143*d.*
- [35](#). *Lancs. Inq. p. m.* (Chet. Soc.), ii, 46.
- [36](#). Duchy of Lanc. Inq. p.m. iii, *n.* 41, 103.
- [37](#). Ibid. xi, *n.* 34.
- [38](#). Pal. of Lanc. Feet of F. bdle. 29, m. 96.
- [39](#). Duchy of Lanc. Inq. p. m. xiv, *n.* 72.
- [40](#). Ibid. xx, *n.* 34.
- [41](#). Martinscroft, Edw. I.
- [42](#). By deed s.d. Roger of the Hurst of Culcheth gave to Norman de Culcheth land in Symondeshurst in Culcheth, which he had by the gift of Richard de Martinscroft, and all his mast-fall and pasture in the land which was Ulphis' the son of Dolphin de Bedford, and all the herbage which Richard de Martinscroft gave him to the east of Glaze Brook, rendering 2s. rent; *Lancs. and Ches. Hist. and Geneal. Notes*, i, 22.
- [43](#). Lancs. Lay Sub. bdle. 130, *n.* 5.
- [44](#). De Banc. R. 348, m. 248*d.*
- [45](#). Masy of Rixton D.
- [46](#). *Misc.* (Rec. Soc. Lancs. and Ches.), i, 238.
- [47](#). Norris D. (B.M.).
- [48](#). *Royalist Comp. Papers* (Rec. Soc. Lanc. and Ches.), i, 209.
- [49](#). *Engl. Cath. Non-jurors*, 123.
- [50](#). For an account of him see *Pal. Note Book*, i, 117, 193.
- [51](#). A search by the priest-hunters at Woolston Hall in the early hours of a Feb. morning in 1584 is reported in Foley, *Rec. S. J.* ii, 117. In 1590 Adam

Hawarden of Woolston, though in some degree of conformity, was yet 'in general note of evil affection in religion and a non-communicant'; *Lydiate Hall*, 245 (quoting S.P. Dom. Eliz. ccxxxv, n. 4). A fair number of names appear in the recusant roll of 1641; *Trans. Hist. Soc.* (New Ser.), xiv, 244.

- [52](#). The Benedictines are known to have been in charge from early in the eighteenth century. The last of the line moved to Rixton in 1831; Gillow, in *Trans. Hist. Soc.* (New Ser.), xiii, 146.
- [53](#). *Liverpool Cath. Ann.* 1901.