

## SWAN MARKS.<sup>1</sup>

By EDWARD PEACOCK, F.S.A.

Since my paper on Swan Marks was printed, I have had the good fortune to discover two documents relating to the practice of marking swans, which will not be uninteresting to some members of the Royal Archaeological Institute. They have been preserved among some Court Rolls accounts and other papers relating to the manor of Little Carlton, Lincolnshire, which have been kindly lent to me by E. W. C. Amcotts, Esq., of Hackthorn Hall.

The first document is a letter from which a line or two at the end and the signature has been severed. It is, of course, impossible to identify the writer; the hand is of the latter part of the sixteenth century, and as it is attached by a pin to the drawing on parchment which the writer refers to there is not much doubt that it was written in 1594. I copy it at length, premising that the family of Cooke were for several generations lords of the manor of Little Carlton. Though they do not seem to have entered their pedigree in the Heralds' Visitation books they certainly ranked among the lesser gentry of the shire.

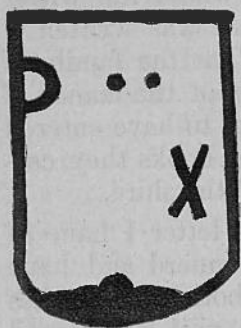
“Mr. Cooke, according to my fformer letter I haue of Sunday last Agreed w<sup>th</sup> the Quenes Swannerd and haue entered your name in his booke vppon bothe yo<sup>r</sup> markes and paid him his ffee for yo<sup>r</sup> entering vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> and Hyred you a deputy to Loke to yo<sup>r</sup> Swannes yearely, and you must pay him at michaelmesse next iij<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup> for his ffee and for the time past he is contēdit at my Request to Take nothing for your Swa<sup>n</sup>es marking. You haue this yeare but iiij yonge Swa<sup>n</sup>es, ij at Tointon, ij at ffrisckney the  $\bar{\Lambda}$  and no birds of the crose, wch is matched wth M<sup>r</sup>. Wray at Peny stonnes house in Northe Somercots, very near you, in y<sup>e</sup> marshe, w<sup>ch</sup> is not amisse, if you gett a deputy there

<sup>1</sup> Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Institute, Nov. 6, 1884.

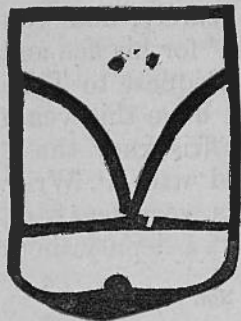
the better for y<sup>r</sup> Proffite. I send you yo<sup>r</sup> markes drawen in partchement to Remaine w<sup>th</sup> you for the iiij Swannes. they are to be brought to me this weeke whearof John vncle saith he must haue ij the one for him self and the other for M<sup>r</sup>. Baconn, and the other ij I will fiede for you against Christenmesse. I haue said nothing to M<sup>r</sup> ffayrffax, let him tarry to an other time. serue yo<sup>r</sup> first promises. your Swannerd must haue for taking vpp your iiij Swannes. and bringing to my house ij<sup>s</sup>. I pray you comend me to your mother to whome. as you knowe I haue bene A Long."

This letter shews that in a district ruled by a single royal swanherd one man might possess two marks, if his swans were in different pools or rivers. The passage "the  $\bar{\lambda}$  and no birds of the crose" is obscure. As to the correctness of the reading there can be no question. I think it relates to swans of different kinds or ages.

The accompanying cuts are copied from an accurate tracing of the "markes drawen in partchement" which is pinned to the foregoing letter. I have seen many rolls of Swan-marks, but have never heard of the existence of any certificate of such marks except the one before me.



"Charles Cooke gent. his marke in the easte fenn this yeare 1594. Four yonge Swannes.



Charles Cooke gent. his marke in ye northe marshe at penystones house in northe somercots."

The following memorandum is written at the bottom of the strip of parchment, it seems to refer to the second mark only—

"I haue entred this marke in my booke Jan. 30. 1651, and haue received my fee which is 0l. 6s. 8d.

Geo. Hill

Swannerd to ye Comonwealth."

It may not be out of place to mention that a modernized copy of the orders relating to the Swans on the river Witham was printed by the late Mr. Pishey Thompson in his *History of Boston*, 1856, p. 676. That industrious compiler does not, as far as I can see, inform his readers where the original which he rendered into modern English was to be found.

My friend the Rev. A. R. Maddison, who is working among the wills at Lincoln, tells me that in the will of John Copledike of Harrington, co. Lincoln, dated 23 June 1582, we have a bequest of all his household goods "seelings and glass plate armour swan marks and swans" to his brother Francis Copledike.

It is very interesting to find a swan mark left by will.

He also leaves his cousin Edward Billesby his hawk called "Clouds."