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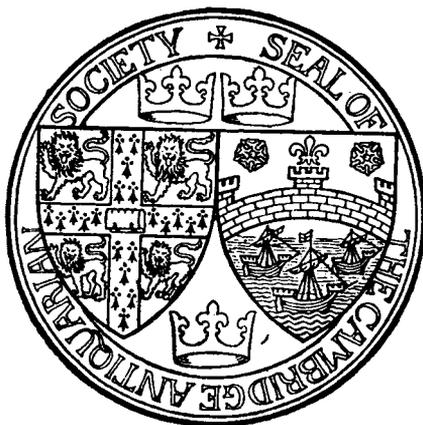
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**CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY  
PROCEEDINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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VOL. XXIII.



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## CAMBRIDGESHIRE "FORESTS."

By the Rev. H. P. STOKES, LL.D., Litt.D., F.S.A.

(Read May 30, 1921.)

When the present writer was an undergraduate, he attended a lecture by the late Dr Lightfoot on "the Clementine Epistles." That distinguished divine began by saying that a former Professor of Geology, dealing with a certain "Greensand," had declared that it was neither "green" nor "sand." So (said he) with "the Clementine Epistles," they are neither by Clement, nor are they "Epistles."

Our subject to-day is "Forests in Cambridgeshire." It may be said by some that, neither in the technical sense nor in the popular phrase, are there any Forests in our county. Dr Cox, for instance, in his volume on the "Forests of England" has no section on Cambridgeshire, and accounts for the omission by saying "that there is practically no information with regard to any royal forests within its confines."

But it will be seen in the following pages that, taking the word Forest in the technical usage thereof, there are quite a number of records which may be quoted; while in the popular sense much may be written about the forests upon the East Anglian heights and not a little about the woods through which the Ermine Street ran its Cambridgeshire course.

The term "Forest" is, of course, generally used in connection with *trees*; and it comes, I suppose, as a surprise to most boys, when they first read Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne*, to find that delightful author in speaking of the royal forest of Wolmer, which formed so large a part of his parish, describe it as "consisting entirely of sand covered with heath and fern; diversified indeed with hills and dales; but *without having one standing tree in the whole extent.*" (Kearton's edn. p. 17.)

Wolmer Forest, however, and its sister Forest of Alice Holt,

are so-called in the official sense of the word. Take, for instance, Blackstone's definition (in his legal *Commentary*, i. viii), "Forests are waste grounds belonging to the King, replenished with all manner of chase and venery; which are under the King's protection, for the sake of his recreation and delight." A Forest, says another writer, is often "a wilderness rather than a wood." In these Forests—many of which were, however, densely wooded—were carefully guarded "the five wild beasts of venery," the hart, the hind, the hare, the boar<sup>1</sup>, and the wolf. The royal "Forest Laws" were special and rigorous; but need not be detailed here.

Then we have *Chases*, which were Forests but not royal; and offences in connection with which were dealt with by the Common Law and not by "Forest Law." The beasts of the Chase were "the buck, the doe, the fox, the marten and the roe."

Again, we have *Parks*, which were enclosed, by palings or otherwise. "A Forest and Chase are not, but a Parke must be, inclosed," says *Coke on Littleton*, § 378.

Next, reference must be made—especially, as we shall see, in Cambridgeshire—to *Warrens*. "*Libera Warrena*, free warren, was a liberty granted by the King to the lord of a manor, that within such an extent he should keep and preserve, and take to his own use, fish, fowl, and other game, which no other person should hunt or destroy without leave of the lord" (the definition is taken from Dr White Kennett's *Glossary of Words and Phrases*). In the warren were preserved, according to Lord Coke, "the hare, the coney, the roe, the partridge, the quail, the rail, etc."

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Here, before this Paper is formally entered upon, may the writer be allowed to say, how he came to deal with the subject? As Rector of the parish of Little Wilbraham, he has naturally

<sup>1</sup> It has been stated that "the reference to wild boars at Quy in the *Hundred Rolls* implied a Forest in that neighbourhood." The allusion is doubtless to the words "*ap' et taur'*" (*Hundred Rolls*, ii. 496); but this may be explained by the expression the "august animal" used by Maitland, in *Township and Borough*, p. 88.

looked into the history of that village and of its neighbour Great Wilbraham. He found that on one side, the N.W., the Wilbrahams were bounded of old by Fens; while, in the opposite direction, there were Heaths. He noticed in *Domesday Book* that the owner of his village was "Wluuinus venator," one of the Saxon King's huntsmen. To him William the Conqueror appointed, as successor, Alberic de Ver, the ancestor of the Earls of Oxford. It will be remembered that among other offices held by that great family was that of Steward of the Forests of Essex. The writer has not met with any document designating the Veres as bearing a similar office in connection with our County; but it will of course be remembered that the Forests of Essex and the Woods of the East Anglian heights of Cambridgeshire ran into one another.

Then it was noticed that in the notes to C. H. Pearson's *Historical Maps*, there are three Cambridgeshire Forests mentioned, and of these Wilbraham is one. Why? it may be asked; and the answer is apparently to be found in the frequent mention in the *Pipe Rolls*, during the reigns of Henry II and his sons Richard and John, of royal payments to a Forester in our villages.

Again, one of our manors was held by the custom of supplying the sovereign at certain times with a sparrow-hawk. This serjeantry looked in the same direction.

In later times when James I made himself a residence at Newmarket, the heath where the King hunted ran on either side of the Icknield Road for ten miles or more; and, as we shall see, the royal Keeper's name was linked with the Wilbraham villages.

Incidentally, it may be noticed that at Six Mile Bottom on the road just mentioned stands, and has long stood, an interesting countryside Inn, which bears the suggestive name of "the Green Man."

The hamlet of Six Mile Bottom, it may be added, is a part of Little Wilbraham reclaimed from the old heath-land on the S.E. side of the village. In old Terriers there are now and then allusions to the gradual enclosure of the Heath and its transformation into arable land.

After these introductory remarks, let us turn to the records which connect our County with the Pleas of the Forest and with Royal hunting grounds. We will deal with four such districts—with the overflow of the Huntingdon Forests into the Isle of Ely, with the Royal Chesterton Warren connected with the Castle of Cambridge, with Newmarket Heath, and with Royston Heath. These will be treated in order.

#### THE ROYAL HUNTINGDON FORESTS AND THE ISLE OF ELY.

If we turn to the Records of the Pleas of the Forest, we find items referring to the Counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon among others. It is, of course, true that these two counties were linked together from various points of view—such for instance as the appointment of a Sheriff; and it is further true that (as we should expect from its Royal Forests) Huntingdonshire is much the more frequently in question—yet Cambridge-shire does occasionally occur, as in the appointment of Justices of the Forest; Brian de l'Isle, for instance, being nominated to this office in the year 1229 for a list of counties ending with “Cambridge, Huntingdon and Oxford.”

While to take a special instance, we read in G. J. Turner's *Select Pleas of the Forest* (p. 16), under date 1254, the following record:

“It is presented by the foresters that William Turkil of Whittlesey and Bartholomew his brother of the same town, of the homage of the Prior of Ely, and other men, took forty roes in the marsh of King's Delph, within the metes of the forest on the Thursday (17 Dec. 1254) and Friday before the feast of St Thomas the Apostle in the 39th year...and the truth of the matter is inquired into by the foresters and verderers; and a certain Bartholomew Turkil of Whittlesey comes with others. A certain Bartholomew is said to be guilty; but whether it is this Bartholomew who is present or another Bartholomew who was at that deed they do not know; therefore he is committed to the steward of the prior of Ely that he be, etc.”

To take some other examples: we read in Dugdale's *History of the Embankment*, etc. (p. 366) that “the County of Huntingdon

being then a forest, the regardors did, in 34 Edward I (1306) by virtue of the King's precept, make the following presentment at the New Temple in London, viz. that...the tenants of the Abbot of Thorney, in Wytlesheye, and the tenants of the Prior of Ely in Wytlysheye, had wasted all the Fen of Kyngesdelfe, of the alders, hassacks, and rushes, estimated at a thousand acres, so that the King's deer could not harbour there, as they had before that preambulation. Likewise that the Abbot of Thorney had made a purpresture in the said King's Forest, within Farsheved Fen...and had raised a new bank without the town of Jakele...against the assize of the Forest."

Further, we read "that John le Wode, of Jakele, came, with the men of Wytlysheye, into the Fen of Kyngesdelfe, and set fire therein, which burnt in length and breadth about four miles, by estimation; which caused great loss to the King, in his harts, hinds, and goats.

"And likewise, that the men of Benewyk had destroyed a certain place in Kyngesdelf, of the alders and rushes, called Hertynnges, containing a mile in length and breadth."

Benwick and other of the places just mentioned are, of course, in Cambridgeshire.

#### THE ROYAL WARREN OF CAMBRIDGE (CHESTERTON).

We proceed to deal with "the King's Warren of Cambridge," and quote various records relating thereto in chronological order.

We learn from the *Pipe Rolls* of 8 Henry II (1162) that Danegeld was pardoned at Cambridge to various officials including the Warrener (*Warennerius viij<sup>s</sup>*).

Again from the *Pipe Rolls* of 22 Henry II (1176), under the heading "De misericordia regis pro foresta sua," various Cambridgeshire names occur: e.g. Yvo de Quarrel was amerced 20 *m.*, Roger de Valoignes *ditto*, William de Chesterton 2 *m.* for a default; the township (*villata*) of Cambridge was amerced 40 *m.* for the forest; the land of Earl Alberic (of Oxford) at Cheveley "redit comptum de ii *m.* pro defalta, etc."

Later on from the same *Rolls*, we note in 1198—in connection with the Pleas of the Forest—Walter the clerk of Papworth owes

1 *m.* and the Abbot of Ramsey owes  $\frac{1}{2}$  *m.*; in the next year the above mentioned William de Chesterton appears twice—all these being due to having dogs without licence. In the same year Gerald the clerk of Soham is fined *pro stult. plev. senesc.*

In the year 1205, we learn from the *Close Rolls*, that Peter de Beche, having been amerced in the sum of 100 marks "for our warren of Cantebruge," was, on the petition of the Bishop of Ely, pardoned half the amount.

In 1220, referring again to the *Pipe Rolls*, we read such Cambridge entries as: Fulk de Baiocis was amerced for having a bow and greyhounds against the Assize; William de Pirie owes 20s. for a crossbow found in his house; William de Georgio owes half a mark *pro stulte loquendo!*

In the *Hundred Rolls* (in two places—ii. 407 and 452) we find the boundaries of the King's Warren defined. Beginning at the Castle of Cambridge it ran along the King's highway towards Huntingdon up to a bridge called Syrebrigge or Serebrigge; thence it followed the course of the water to Westwick bridge; thence by the great way of Rampton to Ballassise or Belassise (i.e. the camp known as Balsar's Hill); thence to the bank of the river (Ouse), and so returned by the river towards an unidentified place called Squasselode (or Squappelode, or Sebasselode); and thence by the great river (the Cam) to the Bridge of Cambridge.

In the year 1341, we learn from the *Patent Rolls* (March 26th) of the appointment by the King of John of Windsor, his valet, to the office of Bailiff of his warren of Cambridge, with the ancient and accustomed fees during good behaviour.

Four years later (1345) the *Close Rolls* record a writ to the Sheriff of the County of Cambridge for the payment of arrears due to John of Windsor.

In the *Patent Rolls* for the year 1401, Henry IV issued two Commissions (on March 6th and April 14th respectively) concerning the Free-Warren belonging to the Castle of Cambridge in Chesterton, Milton, Histon, Cottenham, Girton, Landbeach and Waterbeach; as evil doers had hunted therein and carried off hares, rabbits, pheasants and partridges.

It will be seen later on that certain lords of the manors in

this district were granted free-warrens on their estates, within certain limits.

We go back, in chronological order, to the year 1286, to some very interesting records in the *Forest Eyre Rolls*. We quote from Mr G. J. Turner's remarkable volume of *Select Pleas of the Forest* published by the Selden Society; though it should be added that Dr Palmer printed extracts therefrom with racy remarks in the *East Anglian* xiii. 113, 4.

Under date 1 July 1286, under the heading *Pleas of the Warren of Cambridge at Huntingdon*, we read the following presentments:

"Philip de Colleville and his servants, whose names are not known, were wont to enter the lord King's warren of Cambridge, with the greyhounds of the same Philip, and to take hares in the same without warrant in the time of King Henry until his death, and also in the time of the lord king who now is, until the twelfth year of his reign. The same Philip did not come, nor was he attached; therefore the sheriff is ordered to cause him to come to Huntingdon on the first Tuesday in Lent (25 Feb. 1286). And he did not come; therefore of him £10."

[It may be added that the Colviles held the manor of Histon for several generations, and that they had property in the town of Cambridge (see *Studies in Anglo-Jewish History*, pp. 154, 5).]

Similarly, Henry the Son of Henry of Childerley, a county landowner, was wont to hunt and take hares in this warren.

"Robert the son of Roger, a clerk of the Bishoprics of Norwich and London, at the time when he was a scholar in the University of Cambridge, to wit, in the time of King Henry and also in the time of King Edward till the twelfth year of his reign, and used to come to Cambridge, and his servants were wont to enter the aforesaid warren with their greyhounds and to hunt and take hares in the same, the precise number of which cannot be ascertained. And he did not come, nor was he attached; therefore of him ten pounds."

A similar charge was made against "Magister Adam le Fraunceys, of the bishopric of Durham, when he was a scholar at Cambridge; and so against William of Sheepy, of the

bishopric of Ely, Master Thomas of Middleton, archdeacon of Norwich, Hugh de la Penne, clerk, of the bishopric of Lincoln, James de Moyon, of the bishopric of Bath, Thomas the son of Alan, clerk, of the bishopric of Durham, or of the archbishopric of York, and William d'Umfraville, clerk, of the bishopric of Durham, who at the times when they were scholars at the university of Cambridge frequently entered the warren aforesaid with their greyhounds; and they frequently sent their men into the same warren with their greyhounds; and they hunted and took many hares, each taking his share; and the number thereof cannot be ascertained."

Concerning Thomas of Middleton the matter is respited, because he is beyond the sea in the service of the lord King.

The names of others are mentioned, who claimed to have the franchise of warren in their lands within the lord King's warren aforesaid.

Still dealing with the Warren of Cambridge—"Eustace of Cotes and a certain Gosse his fellow were wont to enter the warren with nets and to take plovers and such like wild-fowl. Laurence Seman of Cambridge and Scrippe of Barnwell were wont to enter the warren with nets and scarecrows (*cum rethibus et sewell*) and to take wild-fowl. And they were not attached; therefore they are in mercy."

Mr Turner goes on to quote records from the *Plea Rolls of the Forest*, naming as offenders Richard, Abbot of Crowland (£10); William of Roding, *when he was sheriff* (£10); Leon Denning (1 mark); Thomas Bacun of Landbeach and others.

The allusions to the Cambridge scholars are very interesting, for we thereby recover the names of some 13th century undergraduates and other members of the University.

#### THE ROYAL WARREN OF NEWMARKET HEATH.

It has already been stated that away back in the 12th and 13th centuries there was a royal Forester in Wilbraham (part of which was included in what was afterwards called the Newmarket Heath).

In the *Pipe Rolls* for 12 Henry II (1166, 7) there is recorded the following grant: "et de ijs. et viijd. de servitio forestarii in

Wilburgham"; and this grant is repeated for more than 40 years, down to the 3rd year of King John's reign.

We do not know any details of this arrangement; though it has been stated above that at the time of the Conquest property in Little Wilbraham passed from the hands of Ulwin "the King's hunter" to Alberic de Ver; and that a manor in Great Wilbraham was held by the serjeantry of a sparrow-hawk.

The quotations from the *Pipe Rolls* probably led to the statement in Pearson's *Historical Maps* that at Wilbraham was one of the three Forests in Cambridgeshire.

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We must pass on to the days of King James I, whose royal residence at Newmarket and whose love for hunting on its heath are well-known.

In 1605, we find<sup>1</sup> from various official documents<sup>2</sup>, John Bancks was appointed keeper of *Wilbraham Bushes*, alias the New Warren, alias Hare Park, at Newmarket, and keeper of the game "within ten miles compass of the same," with a fee of 2s. "of lawful money of England, by the day, and 2s. a day for keeping the game there. The following year he was paid £73. 13s. 4d. for impailing the new warren between Newmarket and Shelford [or Thetford according to another reading], and for certain bridges thereabouts for his Majesty's more easy and safe passage." On 26 November, 1607, he received £100, and on 5 June, 1609, £46. 19s. 8d. for similar works.

[It may be noted that in a *Subsidy Roll*<sup>3</sup>, dated in the year last mentioned, John Bankes, gent., appears as the largest contributor in Newmarket. It may be added that his brother was the exhibitor of the celebrated Bankes's "dancing horse" alluded to by Shakespeare (*Love's Labour Lost*, I, ii, *Variorum Edition*). This horse and its owner were burned at Rome, by order of the Pope.]

<sup>1</sup> Many of the following quotations are taken from J. P. Hore's *History of Newmarket*.

<sup>2</sup> See *An Abstract of the Present state of the King's Revenue*, etc. (1651, p. 57), quoted by Cole, B.M. Add. MS. 5821. See also *Pells' Order Book*, 1606; *Docquet Book*, 1607; *Warrant Book*, ii. 1609, MS., P.R.O.

<sup>3</sup> *Exch. Lay. Sub.*, Camb. 821, m. 3, MS., P.R.O., quoted by Hore, i. 297.

In 1612 Sir Robert Vernon<sup>1</sup> obtained the reversion of the office held by John Bancks; this keeper died in 1625. In 1630, we find<sup>2</sup> a warrant issued to pay Sir John Carlton, Bart., the sum of £200 to repair the pale of his Majesty's newly erected warren called *Wilbraham Bushes*, and for the defraying of other necessary charges incident to the keeping of the said warren and game. In 1636 payments<sup>3</sup> are made to Sir Robert Huddleston for the preservation of game at Newmarket and thereabouts—the following parishes being specified: “Burrowgreene, Brinckley, Carleton cum Willingham, Weston Colvill, etc., Western Waterles, Westwattin, Westwickham, etc., neere bordering upon Allington Hill his Majesty's hunting place, when hee is pleased to reside att Newmarkett.”

A long Survey<sup>4</sup>, dated 1650, giving “Parcell of the possessions of Charles Stewart, late King of England,” mentions *inter alia* the Kennels at Newmarket, and “the Common Heath called Newmarket Heath within the severall parishes of Swasham Bulbocke and Burrow Greene in the said County of Cambridge, commonly called or known by the name of Hare Parke as the same was heretofore inclosed conteyning in the whole by estimacon Thirty and foure Acres bee the same more or lesse.”

At the Restoration, on 13 September, 1660, Sir Allen Apsley, Master of the Hawks, was appointed<sup>5</sup> Keeper of the New Warren of Wilbraham Bushes, with a fee of 1s. 4d. per day; also ordering 10s. per day for providing meat for the hawks. By another patent he obtained “£800 per annum, of which £200 was for the entertainment of four falconers at £50 a year each, viz. for the crow hawks—and £600 for provision of hawks of all kinds: the crow, the heron, the field, and the brook, etc.”

By a later patent<sup>6</sup> Peter Apsley, son of Sir Allen Apsley, was joined with his father in the office with reversion to the longer liver of them. Some years afterwards when Sir Allen died in 1683, this Sir Peter obtained the appointment, which he surrendered, probably for a consideration, to Thomas Felton and

<sup>1</sup> *Pells Office Inrolments*, MS., P.R.O., v. 19; Hore, i. 294.

<sup>2</sup> *Docquet Book*, P.R.O.; Hore, ii. 12, 13.

<sup>3</sup> *State Papers, Dom.* vol. ccxii-ccxiv.; Hore, ii. 28; and ii. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Hore, ii. 69-76.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* ii. 222.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* ii. 224.

William Chiffinch, Esquires, and these persons were accordingly appointed to the office by patent dated 20 June, 1675.

In 1683, Charles II issued an order<sup>1</sup> that "no Person do presume to Hunt, Hawke, Set, Course, or Shoot, between Lackford and the Seven Mile Ditch, without lease first obtained."

Most of the above references are taken, as may be seen from the footnotes, from J. P. Hore's *History of Newmarket*; from which interesting compilation the following notes are also extracted:

In 1623, "the Attorney-General<sup>2</sup> was to call before him the owner and tenant of a coney-warren at Foulmere, near Royston, which hindered the King's sport there, and to request them to have it diswarrened, etc."

In March 1624, a warrant<sup>3</sup> was granted to John Fyson his Majesty's Game Keeper at Newmarket of £40 towards the impaling and enclosing a piece of ground there for the feeding and holding of young fowl, etc. A further warrant to the same keeper was made for the preservation "of his Majesty's Game of Heron, Ducke and Mallard in and about Newmarket, Exninge, Lanworth, Snaylewell, Fordham, Chippenham and diverse other places thereabouts."

About 1638, John Tradescent<sup>4</sup>, a Dutchman, says that the Bustard "as big as a Turkey" was usually taken by greyhounds on Newmarket Heath.

Dr Fuller, in his *History of the Worthies of England* (1662), has some curious and characteristic remarks upon Hares, and upon "Hare-Park nigh New-market."

In a letter<sup>5</sup> dated at Newmarket 26 September 1677, Secretary Coventry says, "this morning we killed w<sup>th</sup> the K<sup>es</sup> begles three hares."

In 1682, there are some curious accounts<sup>6</sup> of highway robberies upon Newmarket Heath, about 3 miles away from that town.

<sup>1</sup> *London Gazette*, No. 1082; Hore, iii. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Hore, i. 243.

<sup>3</sup> *Docquet Book*, s.d.; Hore, i. 260.

<sup>4</sup> Hore, ii. 42.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* ii. 344.

<sup>6</sup> *London Gazette*, s.d. Nos. 87 and 88.

Newmarket Heath, on either side of the old Icknield Road, stretched for some miles to the south. Paterson's *British Itinerary* notes, between the 50th and 51st mile-stones from London, that here travellers "enter *Newmarket Heath*." But we have seen above, when quoting the payments made to "the Keeper of Wilbraham Bushes," that the New Warren lay between Newmarket and Shelford, which is a little more to the south. In a quotation from Cole's MSS. given in the *Cambridge Portfolio* (i. 197) the *Heath* seems to approach even nearer to the University town. In an alternative reading the name Thetford is substituted for Shelford; but this is probably a mistake.

It will be noticed that the New Warren is frequently and somewhat emphatically called "the Wilbraham Bushes." This title, together with some of the remarks made above about the connection of the Wilbrahams with Forestry, seems to hint that where now the hamlet of Six Mile Bottom stands, was formerly a kind of centre of the Warren. The curious fact that the old road-side Inn at that spot is called "the Green Man<sup>1</sup>" has already been noticed. It may be added that where the heath mentioned above approaches Cambridge at Cherryhinton we find another Inn called "Robin Hood and Little John."

It has been pointed out in the Introduction that old Terriers of the Wilbrahams and other villages give frequent examples of the reclamation of the heath-lands by conversion into arable lands, etc.

#### ROYSTON HEATH.

Besides the royal residence and the hunting grounds in the neighbourhood of Newmarket, the Stuart Kings had similar possessions in the vicinity of Royston.

Dr Palmer (to whom the writer is much indebted) has an interesting paper in the *East Anglian* (N.S.) xiii. 353, 4, on this subject; from which the following notes are taken.

<sup>1</sup> In Hore (ii. 382) there is a curious account of the scandalous conduct, in the days of "the Merry King," of George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, and John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, who disguised themselves as landlords of "the Green Man."

In August, 1660, Charles II appointed<sup>1</sup> Thomas Duckett, of Steeple Morden, Keeper of the King's Game of Hare within three miles of Royston; with a fee of 2 shillings a day—and including the keepership of hares and river fowl within seven miles of Thetford (?).

On the 30th October 1662, there is a Royal Warrant<sup>2</sup> to George Pike, Esquire: "Whereas we are informed that our Game of Hare, Pheasant, Partridge, Heron, and other wild fowle in and about our Countyes of Essex, Herts. and Cambs. is much destroyed by divers disorderly persons with greyhounds, mongerells, setting dogs, Gunns, Trammells, Tunnells, netts and other engines, contrary to the statutes of our realm in these cases provided...our game within six miles of your house called 'Sheene in Cambridgeshire'...therefore, etc."

Pike inherited (Dr Palmer notes) Sheen Manor in Meldreth from his father in 1658, not three miles from Royston. Therefore Pike and Duckett overlapped. Pike's manor had no privilege of *free-warren*; as had the manors of Lord Allington and the Dean and Chapter of Ely in Meldreth and Melbourn for 400 years and more.

Several members of the Meldreth family of Halfhyde<sup>3</sup> had been Game Keepers at Royston earlier in the century. In 1607–15 Henry Halfhyde and his son Henry were keepers at 2s. 6d. a day, and £3 a year for livery. In 1624 Robert Halfhyde was appointed at a salary of £100.

#### THE WOODLANDS OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Having dealt with the technical "Forests" of our County, and having recorded various official reports concerning them in the *Plea Rolls* and other documents, we now turn to Woodlands in a more popular sense. We proceed to deal with Forests and Woods, other than Royal; with Chases, and Parks, and Woods; as well as with Free-Warrens in private hands.

The Forests on the East Anglian heights to the east and south of Cambridgeshire; the Woods on the western hills in our

<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of State Papers*, under date.

<sup>2</sup> *Domestic Entry Book*, Charles II, ix. 36.

<sup>3</sup> *S.P. Dom.* and *Devon's Pells Records*.

County, including those through which the Ermine Street was cut; the lofty trees on the islands which rose out of the Fenland in the N.W. of the Isle of Ely—these have long been renowned in local, and even in national, history.

The remarkable Dykes which run across the old Icknield Road reached from the Fens on the west to the Forest-clad Hills on the east. As Camden (p. 407) says, speaking of "the Devil's Dyke": "it begins at *Rech*, beyond which the country is fenny and impassable, and ends just by *Cowlidge*, where woods stop all marches."

The *Domesday Book* is the first official document from which we can gather details as to the extent of Forests and Woods in our County. But this information is only indirect. The purpose of that great survey was to ascertain what property was geldable. We accordingly read of the value of woods for pannage, and for building purposes and fences; Castle Camps, for instance, has "a wood for 500 hogs" (*Silva ad quingentos porcis*), Bourn has "wood for the houses of the manor" (*Nemus ad domos curiæ*), as well as for "the hedges" (*Nemus ad domos et sepes*), and so on.

We give a list of most of such entries, from which it will be noticed that the chief Woods were situated on the East Anglian heights on the east and south of the County, especially in the Hundreds of Cheveley, Radfield, and Chilford. The high lands standing out of the Fens in the Isle of Ely are also represented; and so are the hills in the west of Cambridgeshire; while a number of villages on rising ground here and there supply wood for the hedges, etc.

#### THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE WOODS, AND THE PANNAGE SUPPLY.

##### The Hundred of Cheveley :

Cheveley, 32  
Kirtling, 60  
Ditton, 450  
Ashley, 12  
Saxon Street, 40  
Silverley, 20

##### The Hundred of Radfield :

Balsham, 277  
Borough Green, a Park  
Carlton, 134  
Dullingham, 104  
Stetchworth, 260  
W. Wrattling, 40  
Weston Colville, 312

## The Hundred of Chilford :

Abington, 30	
Shudy Camps, 11	
Castle Camps, 500	
Hildersham, 20	
Horseheath, 84	
Linton, 50	
W. Wickham } 162	
and Streatley }	

## The Isle of Ely :

Chatteris, 120
Doddington, 250
Downham, 100
March, 4
Sutton, 5
Wentworth, 20

## Hundred of Armingford :

Litlington, 20
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## Hundred of Long Stow :

Gransden, 40
Gamlingay, 10
Eltisley, 20

## WOOD FOR BUILDING AND REPAIRING.

The *Domesday Book* mentions in a number of places the capability of supplying wood for building and for fencing—using such expressions as *silva* or *nemus ad sepes, ad sepes reficiendas, ad sepes claudendas, ad domus curiæ, ad sepes et ad domus reficiendas, ad sepes et ad focum*, etc.

## THE HUNDRED ROLLS.

We next turn to the *Hundred Rolls*, a Survey made in the year 1278 soon after the accession of Edward I. Unfortunately, though the Cambridgeshire returns<sup>1</sup> are generally very full, there are gaps in the Hundred of Radfield and its neighbourhood, just in the district where the Woods abounded. But, omitting for the present references to the Free-Warrens, we may notice the following entries : Camps, 200 *acres* of wood, Hildersham, 20 ; Linton, 40 ; Streatley, 20 ; Silverley, 6 ; Ashley, 3 ; Gamlingay, 84 ; Eltisley, 12 ; Hatley, 15 ; Stowe, 5 ; Knapwell, 8 ; etc.

## THE WOODS THROUGH WHICH THE ERMINE WAY PASSED.

Here perhaps, as throwing light upon the state of the Woods in the west of our County, and indeed throughout the country, we may quote the following incident most graphically told in the *Liber Memorandorum Ecclesiæ de Bernewelle*. The picturesque Latin of the old Barnwell Canon is given in the late J. W. Clark's

<sup>1</sup> The writer desires to express his many obligations to Mr W. J. Corbett, of King's.

edition of the book on pages 145 and 146. The following translation of the narrative is quoted from Nichols's "History of Barnwell Abbey" (1786, pp. 32 and 33).

"The Prior of Barnwell has a wood in Brunne (Bourn), joining upon the way called Arming-Street, and it happened that on *feria quarta ante diem Paschæ* there came two noted rich merchants from about Stamford, and three strangers with them. They drank together at Caxton, and went on, and when they came under the Prior's wood in Arming-Street way (it was after sun-set, about such time as they went to church to perform that service which in those times was called *Tenebrae*) the strangers set upon the two tradesmen, knocked them off their horses, killed, and robbed them. The cries of the tradesmen were heard in Stow Church; but the robbers, having got all they had, came the same night to Royston (*ad villam de Cruce Roys*); and being asked how they came so wounded, and what made their cloaths so bloody, they said, 'that they had like to have been killed by thieves, and that they escaped their hands with much difficulty.' But the next morning, the men were found dead, and it was immediately reported everywhere, that the Prior's carpenters, whom he had sent thither to fell his wood, and who lay there in a hut night and day, had killed them. But when the coroner's inquest came to sit on the bodies, they acquitted the master carpenter, whose name was Peter de Burg, because it was proved that he was at Brunne church at the time when the murder was committed.

"The report of this murder coming to King Edward, and also how and when they were killed, he sent out an edict<sup>1</sup> throughout all England, commanding all the woods through which the common road lies, on both sides the King's highway, for the breadth of 60 feet, to be cut down; and there was a time fixed for the owners of the woods to do it in, under a heavy penalty. When the Prior of Barnwell heard of this, he caused all the

<sup>1</sup> As the editor remarks, the *Statute of Winchester* (1285) is probably meant; but in that it is enacted "that there be neither dyke, tree nor bush whereby a man may lurk to do hurt within 200 foot of the one side and 200 foot on the other side of the way." (Stubbs, *Select Charters*, 1895, p. 474.)

trees standing upon the banks of the ditches to be felled, and the ditches to be filled and leveled, and all the underwood to be stubbed up to the breadth of 60 feet, for fear of falling into the King's hands. And William Baldwyn did the same by his wood of Stow, opposite to it, and so made the passage there more safe than before."

#### PARKS.

In *Domesday Book* there are said to be two "Parks" in Cambridge, one at Borough Green, the other at Kirtling.

Borough Green had been one of the manors of Queen Editha, the consort of Edward the Confessor. Lysons suggests that she probably had a palace there for her occasional residence. The entry in *Domesday Book* is "Parcus bestiarum silvaticarum"; the *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis* reading "ferarum" instead of "bestiarum."

At Kirtling, the manor of which passed from King Harold (or Earl Harold, as *Domesday* persists in calling him) to the Countess Judith, the widow of Earl Waltheof, there was also a *Parcus bestiarum silvaticarum*; as well as *Silva lx porcis*.

The mention of Kirtling Park<sup>1</sup> suggests an allusion to the following entry in the *Patent Rolls*, under date 12 July 1374: "a Commission of oyer and terminer was issued to John de Cavendish and others, on the complaint of William Campo, earl of Warwick, against John Roger of Wilbraham and a number of others that they had broken the deer Park at Kertlyng, co. Camb., entered his free-warren there, hunted therein without licence, and taken deer from the park, and hares, conies, pheasants and partridges from the free-warren."

In the *Hundred Rolls* (1278) there are certain references to Parks; such as that (ii. 425) at Campes, where the park<sup>2</sup> is mentioned in addition to the 200 acres of wood. This park (we learn from *Esch.* 48 Henry VIII) was four miles in compass.

Other *Rolls* may be consulted, such as the *Close Rolls* (1241,

<sup>1</sup> See allusions to the buck-hunting therein by the members of the North family (*Life of the Lord Chancellor, the first Baron Guilford*, ed. 1826, i. 47).

<sup>2</sup> See a very interesting article by Miss Parsons, on "a Poaching affray at Castle Campes in 1556." (*Cambs. and Hunts. Archaeological Society Transactions*, vol. iii.)

p. 264), where we read of "a grant to Henry de Nuthale of 4 bucks and 20 does alive from the King's Forest of Huntingdon to stock his park at Eltesle."

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To turn to later times, allusion may be made to the afforestation at Childerley, in the reign of Charles I, when Sir John Cutts depopulated the whole parish for the purpose of improving his park, even demolishing the remaining church in the process. No wonder that Archbishop Laud complained of the proceedings; though the outbreak of the Civil War prevented any interference by the royal power.

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Coming to modern times, it may be remarked that the only Deer Parks at present in Cambridgeshire are those at Chippenham and at Peterhouse, Cambridge.

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#### CHASES.

There are perhaps no Chases mentioned in the records of our County. It is true that, under *Whittesford* (Whittlesford) in the *Hundred Rolls* (ii. 570), it is recorded that both Sir John de Aky and Sir John de Camoys claimed to have free *chases* and warren; but the use of the term is so exceptional that it is probably due to the word "chase" habitually employed in the question here answered.

So again reference elsewhere (as in Dugdale) to the Bishop of Ely's free Chases must be explained by the adjacent Huntingdon property at Somersham, etc.

#### FREE-WARRENS.

Permission to the lords of manors and others to claim a *Free Warren* on their estates was lavishly granted; so much so that in the index to some of the volumes of *Charter Rolls* they are said to be found "*passim*."

Cambridgeshire was no exception to this; and, as we have seen and are again about to notice, even on the King's own Warrens—such as that connected with Cambridge Castle (Chesterton), on Newmarket and on Royston Heaths—permis-

sion was granted to lords of manors therein, under certain restrictions.

The most privileged individual was the Bishop of Ely, who—in addition to his possessions in "the Isle"—was granted Free-Warrens in his demesne lands in various parts of the county; such as Balsham, Ditton, Horningsey, Shelford, Triplow, Hardwick, Willingham, etc. "provided that the said lands are not within the bounds of the King's forest." (See *Charter Rolls*, 1250, p. 367.)

In the *Hundred Rolls* (1278) there are, of course, frequently recorded the claims of lords of the manor to Free-Warrens on their lands; though, again and again it is stated that the jurors "do not know by what warrant" the grant is held; and, often too, the owners are said to exceed their bounds.

Free-Warrens, for instance, are mentioned at Whaddon and at Pampisford (*Hund. Rolls* i. 51, 52); at Abington, Badlingham, Barrington, Burwell, Camps, Childerley, Fowlmere, Gamlingay, Hinxton, Impington, Kennett, Kingston, Knapwell, Landbeach, Linton, Milton, Orwell, Rampton, Swavesey, Trumpington, Waterbeach, Whittlesford, Wicken, Wilbraham, etc. (*Hund. Rolls* ii. 423, 498, 425, etc., etc.).

In the *Hundred Rolls* the boundaries of some of these Free-Warrens are carefully described; such as those of Great Abington (ii. 423), Camps (425), Fowlmere (546) and Linton (418).

In cases, where the Free-Warren, granted to a lord of a manor, lay within a Royal Free-Warren, the limits of the grantee are emphasised, as, for instance—in the Cambridge Castle Warren—at Rampton, Milton, Landbeach, Waterbeach, Impington, etc.

Sometimes, in the same village, there were more than one manor to the lord of which a Free-Warren was assigned; as at Wilbraham, where Robert de Insula and John de Lovetot both held warrens on their demesne lands (see *Charter Rolls* 1264, p. 49, and 1277, p. 203).

It will be noticed that the last two references are to the *Charter Rolls*; and, of course, it should be added that, from those records and from many other official documents, many

confirmations and illustrations of such grants and privileges might be quoted. Take, for instance, the case of Linton, where (as Dr Palmer has pointed out) William de Say, the owner at the time of the *Hundred Rolls* (1278) or perhaps a predecessor of the same name, had in 1252 been licensed to hunt the wolf, the hare, the fox, the cat and the otter, with nets in the King's Forests on this side of the Trent, but to take no deer (*Charter Rolls*, under date). Again, we learn from a Post Mortem record in 1272 that William de Say had 3 leashes of greyhounds worth  $3\frac{1}{2}d.$  yearly, and 6 pairs of jesses worth  $8d.$ ; so, in 1279, he had 2 leashes of greyhounds and 6 pairs of jesses.

To Dr Palmer the writer is also indebted for the following very curious letter, describing a riot in the Free-Warren at Linton and some of the proceedings which ensued:

To the Right Reverend fader in God & my right  
good & gracious Lord the Bisshop of Lincoln  
(1475-80 & 1483-5) Chauncellour of England.

Humble besecheth your good & gracious lordshipp Thomas Saunders servant of Thos Brampton Squyer & Keeper of the Wareyn w<sup>t</sup>ynne the town of *Lynton* in the Shire of Cambrigge that where Thomas Thomas Cheveley & divers oder riotus & evyll desposed persones that is to sey Richard Shellis Thomas Gygell, the x<sup>th</sup> day of November last past abowte mdynghte riotusly w<sup>th</sup> bowes & arowys entryd the seid wareyn & therynne with hayes hunted conyes at which tyme your seid besecher & on Rawlyn Yong an oder servant of the forseid Thomas Brampton Kepyng the seid waryn came toward the seid mysdoers to let them of ther huntyng & the seid mysdoers perseyvng ther comyng oon of the seid misdoers shott an arow at the seid Rawlyn Yong & hym strook therw<sup>th</sup> whereof he was more lyke to dye than to live & there upon for fere the seid misdoers fled & left ther hayes be hynd theym be the which hayes the seid mysdoers were well knowen for the which the seid mysrewled persones malissiously ymagyned to vex & troble your seid besecher have gotyn a warant of suerte of the pece of oon John Alyngton ther master oon of the justice of the pece w<sup>t</sup>ynne the seid shyre & pryncypall berer & favourer of the seid misrawled persones & be vertu of the same have arrested your seid besecher & hym with grete malice stokked & fetered in the towne of *Lynton*, in ther owne ward owte of the comen gayle of the shyre & in nowyse wyll suffer hym to departe upon suerte & so have hym ther kept be the space of 5 dayes & hym intend to carry at ther will into oder places onknowen to the intent that he should not be takyn in Gayle to the grete hurt & utter ondoyng of your seid besecher please it therefore your good & gracious lordship the premyses to consider & to grant un to your seid besecher a wrytte of Corpus cum causa to be

direct as wel to the shireve of the shire aforeseid & the Keper of Gayle of the same shire as to all other constabull of hundreds & townes & to eyther of theym commandyng them be the same to bryng up the body of your seid besecher with the cause of the takyng at a certeyn day before the Kyng in the chaunsery ther to be directed & delyvered accordyng to the lawe reson & consiens & he shall pray god for the conservacon of your good & gracious lordshipp.

Endorsed Coram Rege in Cancellia sua 14 die Februar

Early chancy Proc:  $\frac{64}{160}$ .

In 1478 Tho<sup>s</sup>. Brampton of Lynton, Cambs gentilman, during pleasure, as controller of the great and petty customs in the port of Lynn the subsidy of wools &c.

Patent Rolls.

#### DISFORESTATION.

It is generally stated, and is doubtless true, that just as of old over the greater part of England there were vast forests, so on the Cambridgeshire hills there were formerly stretching woodlands—"a dense tangle of mixed forest and undergrowth forming an impenetrable thicket."

At the present day the woods existing in our County "are usually small and rather isolated patches, often occurring on the summit of ridges. There is considerable evidence that adjacent patches, in some cases at any rate, are the last remnants of larger woodland areas, which have been more or less completely cleared for agricultural purposes."

When did the clearance of our local woodlands take place? In certain parts of England there are historical records of disforestation—in times of war—after the Reformation—during the disturbances of the Commonwealth period—and so on. But in Cambridgeshire there are no special traditions, unless the carrying out of the *Statute of Winchester*, referred to above, be instanced. Prof. Hughes<sup>1</sup> remarks: "We can hardly imagine that our County boundaries on the South East could have been fixed while the Forest still existed, for they could not have been traced or marked with any precision when the dense growth of wood extended continuously over the whole plateau. Nor can we believe that the woods on the Cambridgeshire plateau were not cut down till the time of James I, when the continuation

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridgeshire*, pp. 95, 6, in the Cambridge County Geographies.

of our East Anglian heights, known as Bernwood or Brentwood, was cleared of timber. The work probably commenced very far back, and went on gradually down to comparatively recent times."

[The reference is to the orders (21 James I) to "the Commissioners for disforesting Bernwood Forest"; see Lipscomb's *Buckinghamshire*, i. 53. Reference may be made to any account of the Chiltern district.]

In the absence of any general orders for disforestation, it is probable that we must look for local clearances and individual examples of agricultural progress. Investigators should search the terriers and records of their special neighbourhood for evidences of the cutting down of timber or the ploughing up of heath-land.

The present writer, in dealing with his own neighbourhood, has come across—even so late as the end of the eighteenth century—such statements as the following from local terriers: "heath formerly, but now ploughed"; "eleven acres formerly Heath but now ploughed, abutting west on Coventry land and surrounded all other ways by the own Heath; with right of Sheep walk for 24 score sheep"; etc.

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Our subject—the Forests and Woods of Cambridgeshire—has been treated from an historical and archaeological point of view. There is another aspect—a still more obvious aspect—from which it might be regarded, viz. the Botanical side of the question. This, however, is not dwelt upon here.

But there is one curious coincidence to which allusion may be made.

If, on a map, there were marked the position of such Forests and Woods as we possess in this County, there would be noticed the stretch of hills on the South-east and the high ground towards the West. The East Anglian heights from Cheveley to Royston—skirting which runs the Icknield Road—would be noticed; and so would be the hills towards Huntingdonshire, through which the Ermine Way cut its route of old.

The Ash-Oak-Hazel Woods would be referred to as the dominant woodland on the calcareous Boulder Clay which covers

both these districts; only subsidiary allusion being made to the Oak-wood Associations on the sandy soil, and to the Beech woods which ran along the chalk.

But, if on a similar map it were desired to mark out the habitat of one of the most interesting of our local flowers—the Oxlip, it is remarkable that almost the same area would be coloured; for the *Primula elatior* coincides with "the shade-association."

We must content ourselves with reminding the reader of Mr Miller Christy's well-known paper on this plant. While reference may also be made to Mr R. S. Adamson's monograph on Gamlingay Wood, entitled "an Ecological study of a Cambridgeshire Woodland."

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