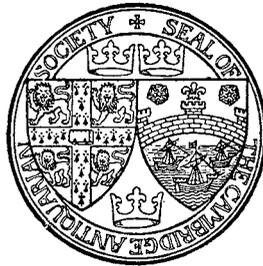


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

OCTOBER 1936-DECEMBER 1937



VOLUME XXXVIII



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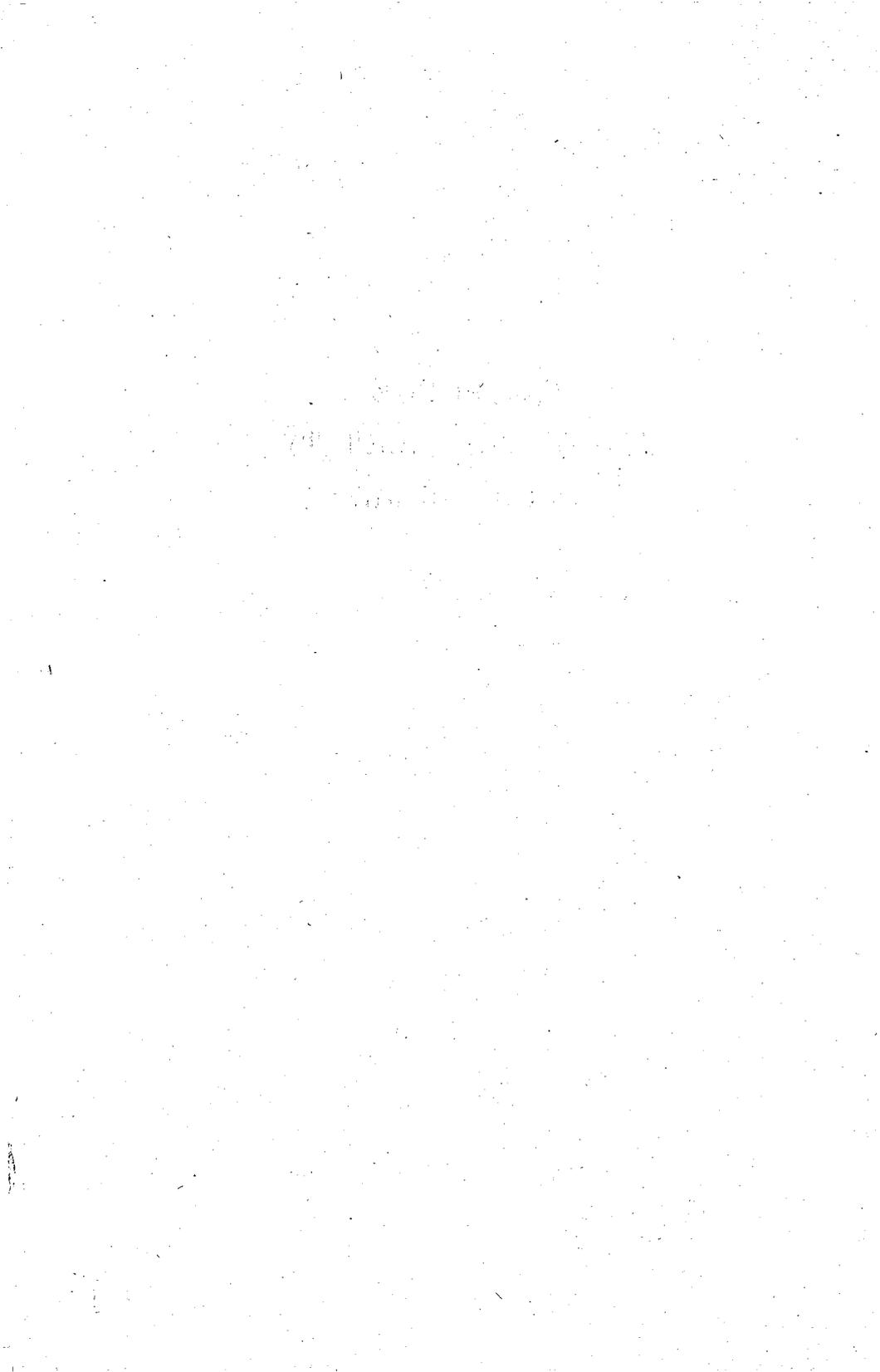
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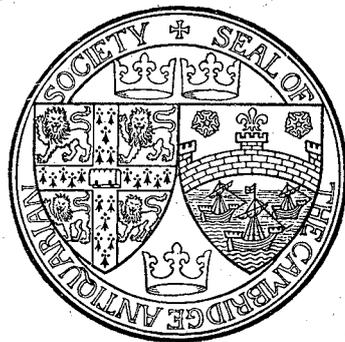
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CAMBRIDGE
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PROCEEDINGS



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OCTOBER 1936—DECEMBER 1937



VOL. XXXVIII

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THE FEN OFFICE, ELY

By LOUIS TEBBUTT, J.P., D.L., T.D.

ON May 29, 1935, the Cambridge Antiquarian Society visited the Fen Office which is situated in St Mary's Street, Ely. This office contains many Books, Manuscripts, Charters, Maps, Pictures, etc., which belonged to the Bedford Level Corporation. The Bedford Level Corporation Charter was granted in 1637 and in 1649 an Act of Parliament was passed authorizing "William Earl of Bedford participants and adventurers or any five or more of them after the said work of drainage should be adjudged have power and authority as Commissioners of Sewers within the Level".

The first real Assembly was held on September 29, 1656, at Ely, in the following January an assembly was held in Lincoln's Inn in the chambers of the Lord Chief Justice, and the Company afterwards met at "Mistris Henley's house"¹ until April 18, 1657, after which it met at the Fen Office, Inner Temple, London. On September 2, 1666 most of the original documents were burnt in the Great Fire. In 1667 the ground floor of No. 3 Tanfield Court, Inner Temple, was purchased. Later the office was transferred to No. 6 Sergeants' Inn, Fleet Street, where it remained till 1843. About 1800 the present Fen Office at Ely was purchased and in 1827 it was rebuilt, and in 1841-3 all documents etc. were transferred from London. The Bedford Level Corporation was merged by Act of Parliament into the Great Ouse Drainage Board in 1920, which was succeeded by the Great Ouse Catchment Board in 1931, the head office of which is Elmhurst, Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge.

The Fen Office, Ely is now used by the district engineer and occasionally for meetings; except for some of the volumes of the Proceedings of the Corporation which are at the Head Office in Cambridge, the whole of the papers are intact. They are contained in the two rooms, the board room and the ante-

¹ S. Wells, *History of the Bedford Level*, vol. 1, p. 321.

room. The board room has two safes, Nos. 1 and 2, and twelve cupboards on the north side, and a large cupboard on the south side between the windows, containing mostly maps and plans. Also in this room is a number of mounted maps and pictures. In the ante-room are three large safes, Nos. 3, 4 and 5, and two cupboards A and B on the south side; two cupboards C and D on the west side; three cupboards E, F and G on the north side. In the cellar¹ are four boxes.

When the Bedford Level Corporation was transferred to the Ouse Drainage Board, a list of papers, furniture, etc. was made. This list was very meagre and was lost for a time till found behind some books. It does not mention the Corporation Mace which had been deposited in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington in 1921.² See p. 156.

In 1934 the clerk of the Great Ouse Catchment Board instructed Mr H. I. D. Moore to go through and dust all the papers, etc. and make an Inventory. This Inventory in two volumes is at the Head Office at Cambridge. It has been rewritten and then typewritten and divided into three parts: (a) Manuscripts and Business Books, (b) Printed Books, (c) Maps and Plans.³ It contains many papers, duplicates, etc., which have no value: these should be sorted out in order to give more room for the remainder. The complete set of Financial Statements, except those burnt in 1666, is unique. Copies of the rewritten Inventory will be deposited in the University Library, Cambridge, and the British Museum.

¹ This is not a proper storage place for documents. W. M. P.

² The mace, which was presented to the Corporation by William, Earl of Bedford, soon after the enactment of 15 Car. II, always continued in the custody of the Sergeant, who placed the same upon the table immediately before the commencement of the business by the Board. He also preceded the Board and Corporation, when they attended at the April and Whitsun meetings, to hold public courts of the Corporation at the Shire Hall, Ely.

The Sergeant-at-Mace was elected annually at the April meeting by the majority of those who held at least one hundred acres of adventurers' lands at an annual salary of £10. 10s. 0d. One of his duties was that of delivering possession of lands sold for arrears of taxes.

Wells, *op. cit.* vol. 1, p. 570. W. M. P.

³ The pages of the three parts are numbered consecutively.

NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS. By W. M. P.

Illustration No. I. "Fen Office, Ely, from St Mary's Street." Photograph by J. H. Bullock. Only the portion with three windows on the right is now occupied by the Fen Office. The rest is used as the Girls' High School.

Before the year 1849 the whole of the building between the two classic doorways was occupied by the Fen Office. There was then a third doorway into the higher portion, where the two eastern windows are now shown. The front rooms were at that time divided thus. The doorway on the right with the arms of the Bedford Corporation above it led into the clerk's office, which had one window. The coat of arms was then probably over the central door, the next two windows were those of the registrar's dining room. Next came a wide entrance hall, the last three or four windows marking the registrar's office and the library. The registrar's drawing room was on the first floor. The clerk's office is now the ante-room, and the dining room the board room. The back rooms of the old Fen Office were thus arranged. Behind the clerk's office and the dining room were the kitchen and offices. Further west was the board room with its striking bay-window projecting into the garden, and beyond that a waiting room and a committee room.

With the exception of the central front door the lay out of the old Fen Office can be recognized in the school buildings.

Illustration No. II. "Back view of the old Fen Office." For the use of this photograph we are indebted to Miss Bertha Tilly, the Head Mistress of the Girls' High School, who also kindly allowed us to see over the school buildings. The photograph is undated, but was probably taken in 1905, the year when the building was first used as a school.

Owing to the erection of new buildings such a view could not now be taken. The bay-window of the old board room is shown, as well as the converted stables, the low building on the left. The fence running down the centre of the garden shows that the view was taken after the Fen Office was reduced in size. The lower rooms on the right were the former waiting and committee rooms.

At the office of the Great Ouse Catchment Board in Cambridge is a thin foolscap volume containing a detailed inventory of the contents of the Fen Office, Ely, when Samuel Wells died about March 1849. It is very thorough, taking room by room, dining room, drawing room, etc., and every lobby, cupboard and landing.



Fen Office, Ely, from St Mary's Street, 1938 (Photo: J. H. Bullock)



Back view of the old Fen Office, c. 1905
(from an old photograph)

There were eight bedrooms, including attics. In one of the latter were "eight copperplates engraved". The bulk of the furniture belonged to the Corporation, but some articles are said to be the property of Mr Wells.

The documents were then in the registrar's room at the left of the building:

"A wainscote case on the north side of the room in twelve compartments with pigeon holes, and patent locks to each part."

"Above, 4 maps in cases with spring barrels, lines and tassels", and "a stick with a hook to pull them down." This case and the maps are now in the board room.

Amongst the documents at Ely there is a ground plan of the offices made in 1864.

When the whole building was occupied by the Registrar's lodging and the Fen Office it was known as Bedford House.

Since writing the above notes further information about Bedford House has been given through Miss Tilly by Miss Fletcher, Head Mistress of the High School, 1905-29, and by Lt.-Col. Goodwyn Archer, whose great-grandfather followed Samuel Wells as registrar. About the centre of the building, corresponding to the fourth and fifth windows from the east, there was, before 1905, an imposing doorway with a flight of steps, pillars on each side and a low arch above. On the keystone of the arch were four lines of verse, the work, Lt.-Col. Archer says, of William Harrison, a Lincolnshire man, fen poet and B.L.C. official, 1831-71, a specimen of whose rhymes may still be seen over the pumping station at Prickwillow. When Bedford House became a girls' school in 1905, the doorway with arch and inscription was moved into the garden.¹ At one time there was a row of elm trees along the west side of the property, but they all disappeared as the school outbuildings increased. The last two of these to survive can be seen in the print. Miss Fletcher also mentions two quadrangles of well-kept grass, which gradually became covered. Lt.-Col. Archer knew the garden intimately before Bedford House became a school. He makes the curious statement that one of the paths was "made of knuckle-bones, myriads of them, only the tops showing".

¹ Dec. 19th, 1938. Miss Tilly reports that the inscribed stone has just been found at the back of a shed.

"At times the lofty arch is proudly reared
To some how lov'd, to some in life how fear'd
A grateful heart erects this humble pile,
To Bedford's Level, and to Ely's Isle.

S.W.

1846."

THE FEN OFFICE DOCUMENTS

BY W. M. PALMER, M.A., M.D., F.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

As far as we are able to find out, no list of the documentary contents of the Fen Office has yet been printed. This office seems to have escaped the attention of the Historical Manuscripts Commissioners and the various Commissions on Local Records. There is, however, in one of the last reports of the Royal Commission on Local Records a reference to the Bedford Level Corporation. In a report on the records of the Commissioners for Sewers it is noted that "the Governors, bailiffs and conservators of the Bedford Level were made Commissioners of Sewers for the Great Level of the Fens by 15 Ch. II, c. 17, s. 3, and presumably records exist for their courts".¹ As will be seen from the extracts given below this presumption was correct.

When Lt.-Col. Tebbutt offered his notes on the Fen Office for publication in the Spring of 1938, and they were accepted by the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, it seemed a good opportunity for adding some extracts from the Inventory. Owing to the short space of time between the inception of the idea and the sending of the copy to press, it has not been possible to check all the extracts with the documents themselves. When this has been done, a note has been added.

It should be distinctly understood that although the manuscript contents of the Fen Office are by means of this list being made known to the members of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, there is no official at Ely in charge of them, and all arrangements for consulting them should be made with the Head Office in Cambridge. At present opportunities for research are uncertain and limited.

The Inventory made by Mr H. I. D. Moore was a minute one and included furniture, pictures, and fittings. This part of the Inventory may be valuable in future years, but these extracts are not concerned with furniture or pictures. Mr Moore had no instructions to re-arrange the documents, or to set aside duplicates, and thus, although some of the cupboards are well arranged, the contents of others are not so; many documents having been abstracted in the past and returned to the wrong cupboard. Other documents had no endorsement and the cataloguer had to invent

¹ 2nd Rep. vol. II, Part II, p. 100.

one, so we have no means of knowing how often the same document occurs in more than one part of the list. The task which Mr Moore has accomplished will be understood to be one of some magnitude when it is found that the items in the part of the Inventory relating to manuscripts number at least 2500, an "item" being a single document, a bundle of papers, or a number of volumes.

The original Inventory was written on inferior paper and on both sides of a page, and if much used would soon have perished. Therefore it is to be hoped that students in the future will be grateful to Lt.-Col. Tebutt who had the original Inventory put into a more durable shape.

In the use of this Inventory a word of warning is necessary. Although it will be easy enough to find a bound volume from the Inventory, it will not be so easy as regards single documents. For instance, Shelf 12 of Cupboard C in the Board Room contains 374 separate documents, in unnumbered bundles.

It is hardly necessary to point out the value for historical purposes of the documents which have by the publication of this short list been brought to the notice of a larger public than has been the case before. The records of the proceedings of the "Adventurers" beginning in 1646, and carried on by their successors to modern times, offer an almost virgin field for the historian. The extracts given by Wells, *Bedford Level*, vol. I, p. 214, etc., concerning the use made of soldiers of Leslie's army taken prisoner at Dunbar in draining the Fens ought to tempt historians to work on the same source. To the student of place-names the sixty volumes of conveyances 1649-1815 will be found full of material, and the early memorials and petitions contain many old names. To the student of social conditions the bundles of petitions will be found full of interest. To the simple fen-man the "honourable board" with the "noble Earl" at its head, seemed to be all powerful. For the same village will be found complaining of excessive rainfall in one year and of a withering drought in the next, and asking to be saved from both. The student of economics is sure to find fresh material in the vouchers or bills which exist in hundreds from 1660.

The bulk of the records of the Fen Office belong to the nineteenth century and many of them may be duplicates. Some of these ought to be destroyed, but that is a matter which requires careful consideration. The extracts which follow chiefly relate to the older records as they are of most interest to the antiquary.

INVENTORY OF THE FEN OFFICE

The following extracts have been made from a typescript of a re-arrangement of Mr Moore's original Inventory. The Inventory extracts, which have sometimes been slightly expanded, appear in italics: notes and additions from MSS. in ordinary type. The latter could not have been made without the help of Lt.-Col. Tebbutt, who has a very useful knowledge of the contents of the Fen Office, excepting the contents of the Safes 1 and 2, which are not opened for inspection.

The following abbreviations may occur:

B.L. = Bedford Level.

B.L.C. = Bedford Level Corporation.

Bdle = Bundle.

M. & S. = Middle and South Levels. N.L. = North Level.

N.D. = No date given in Inventory.

In Moore's Inventory the cupboards are called lockers.

ACCOUNTS

p. 64¹ Board Room: Cupboard E, Shelf 1:

Account Books, 15 Vols. 11 papers 1653-1663

Board Room: Cupboard E, Shelves 2-13:

Account Books, 93 Vols. 1664-1749

Board Room: Cupboard E, Shelves 14-16

Board Room: Cupboard F, Shelves 1-9:

Account Books, 52 Vols. 1750-1901

These are slender volumes about 17 inches by 11 inches. Many of them, the earlier ones at least, are beautifully written. They contain receipts and expenditure on opposite pages, often in some detail, and abstracts of contracts etc. are sometimes given.

p. 64 E 1

The fifteen Volumes on Shelf 1 are as follows:

Vol. 1 "A two" of Mr Dalton's² general accounts, 1653-7.

¹ That is, page 64 of Lt.-Col. Tebbutt's typewritten Inventory, where exact references to Cupboard, or Safe and Shelf will be found. After these four items on p. 64 the references will be cut down to E 1, E 2-13 etc., and when no Room is mentioned "Board Room" must be understood. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are in Safe 2.

² See p. 150.

- p. 2 1653. Six souldiers coming from London 5¹¹
to dreyne the fennes at 13^s per week, paid
them on acct.
Given them to drink 1^s
To discharge the quarters of George
Moore, a sick souldier, 26^s
- p. 4 Gratuities to the soldiers, 1653—
To Col. Humphreys for himself and his 45¹¹
troope
To Major Tison for himself and company 20¹¹
To Corporal Ridgley for guarding the 5¹¹ 10^s
works at Swaffham, at 16^s a night
To Mr Jo. Wyard, clerk to the troop for 1¹¹ 15^s
defraying of Dutch prisoners' charges to
London
Att the pettie sessions at Cambridge about 8¹¹ 18^s 10^d
Swaffham and Wicken rioters
- At the quarter sessions the rioters were sent to gaol: the
lieutenant was given a dinner on his way to Swaffham.
- p. 7 House in London and service done by
Robert Henley, Esq^r.
For one year's rent of his house, due Mich. 25¹¹
1653
- p. 8 To John Skinner of Littleport for nursing 9¹¹ 11^s 00^d
James Cheny (or Cherry) a Scotch
prisoner's child from April 3rd, 1653, at
2/6 a week to August 1654
Aug. 28, 1654, W. Hopkinson's bill for a 2¹¹ 12^s 6^d
coppie of Mr Hayward's survey, 30^s, in-
cidents 1¹¹ 12^s 6^d
His bill for 12 skins of vellum to draw 12^s 8^d
maps on
- p. 9 Mr Richard Baddeley¹ for printing of St 48¹¹ 06^s 0^d
Ives Law and other charges for the
County

¹ He was a bookseller within Middle Temple Gate, 1650-3. H. R. Plomer, *Dictionary of Booksellers*, 1907.

	Mr Marshan, being money disbursed by him for printing of 500 sheets in answeare to a Pamphlet concerning navigation	3 ¹¹ 01 ^s 0 ^d
	Mr Pattison for writing 2 coppies. of the answeare to a pamphlet intituled Navigation proceedings of the Fen Drayners	1 ¹¹
	Mr Roger Jennings for transcribing 4 petitions and writing 20 Breviats in the case of the Level	1 ¹¹
p. 10	For 3 gentlemen's dinners at the White Swan in Downham, Norfolk	00 ¹¹ 06 ^s 0 ^d
	Ely, Apl. 6, 1654. Charges of witnesses, Mr Pedley, Mr James, and Mr Edwards, Horsemeat, ordinaries and Beare	1 ¹¹ 12 ^s 04 ^d
p. 11	Mr Herringe ¹ of Cambridge for conveying 500 ^{li} in a packe from London to Cambridge	00 ¹¹ 10 ^s 00 ^d
	Mr Fathorne ² in full for ingraving a mapp in Brasse	13 ¹¹
	Francis Burrowes in regard of his charge by keeping a guard of souldiers in Methwold Fens to suppress riots and carrying rioters before Justice Shadwell.	13 ¹¹ 06 ^s 08 ^d
p. 12	Charge of carriage and recarriage of an iron chest, 2 trunks and a portmantle, weight by estimation 15 C.	2 ¹¹ 09 ^s 06 ^d
	Hire of two horses for Mr Trench and Mr Dalton that rode with the waggon	2 ¹¹
	Their expenses, 3 days	1 ¹¹ 05 ^s 10
p. 13	[Allowances to members of the Corporation for their attending at meetings in the county at 6 ^s per day. Varying payments are made to the following: Sir Edward Partridge, Sir C. Vermuyden, Dr John Freer, John Latch, Wm Crane, Wm Adams, Baldwin and John Arthur, Samuel Fortrey, John Trafford and Robert Hampson, all called Esquires, Lt. Col. Under-	

¹ See p. 152.² See p. 150.

	addition; For shoes, stockings and necessaries	0 ^l 5 ^s 07
	Samuel Hockley in part of 20 ^l for his sufferings in the company's service is paid by company's order, May 7, 1656	10 ^l
Vol. 4 "D" Mr Dalton's 3rd acct. 1655-6.		
p. 3	To John Martin, joyner, for making Mr Dalton's clossett at Mr Henley's	1 ^l 02 06
	To Martin for setting up the studies at the office in the Temple	3 ^l 09 ^s 10 ^d
	For curtains, hooks and rods 6 ^s 6 ^d , to Smith the glazier 1 ^l 8 0	1 ^l 14 ^s 06 ^d
p. 4	Mr Robert Blanchard, ¹ Gouldsmith, his bill.	
	For Mr Edward Barber as a gratuitie;	
	Imprimis 2 silver canns ² cont. 74 ^{oz} less 6 ^d waight at 5 ^s 7 ^d	20 ^l 11 ^s 06 ^d
	For gravng the arms on them	00 ^l 12 ^s 00 ^d
	It. for one cup and salvall ³ cont. 43 ^{oz} less 4 ^d waight at 6 ^s	13 ^l
	For gravng the arms	00 ^l 12 ^s 00 ^d
	For Mr Randle Tayler as a gratuitie	
	One large can cont. 37 one qr. at 5 ^s 7 ^d	10 ^l 08 ^s 00 ^d
	For gravng the arms	00 ^l 6 ^s 00 ^d
p. 5	To Mr Robert Henley for one half year's rent of the house without Temple Bar	12 ^l 10 0

Vol. 5 "E" Mr Daltons 4th acct. Apl.-Oct. 1656.

Vol. 6 "F" Mr Daltons 5th acct. Dec. 1656-May 1657.

These last two volumes contain no general accounts, only payments to workmen.

Vol. 7 "G" Mr Daltons 6th Acct., Apl. 1657 to May 1659. Sparsely paged; about 1 in 20 numbered.

¹ He was an original adventurer: see pp. 127, 141. He was in partnership with his stepson Sir Francis Child. See *Dict. Nat. Biog.* under Child.

² At this date "cann" was used for a drinking vessel of any material, but was usually of wood. N.E.D.

³ Mistake for salver.

To Mr William Dugdale ¹ for service done and to be done for the Company, by warrant	60 ¹¹
To Tubs for coming to London to make oath of the trespass done at Sutton Mead- land	1 ¹¹ 10 ^s 00 ^d
To Mr Mingay for paper and books in re- lation to his appointment of receiver	1 ¹¹ 17 ^s 00 ^d

Vol. 8 "B" Middle Level. Sept. 1655.

Vol. 9 "C" North and Middle Levels. 1656-7.

p. 4. "Contract by G. Elliott, April 8th, 1657. Two cart bridges of good oak Timber to be layd on the 20 ft dreyne, the one at Sutton Gault, the other at Sutton Gravel, by 25th June next, and to be well and sufficiently maintayned and repaired for ever without further charge to the company and suffered to be a common way for all passengers."

[Edward Stacie, John Sisson, Giles Holt and Thomas Gunton of Sutton, yeomen, covenant to perform the contracts above mentioned. They are to have £30 paid down and £30 on finishing. In consideration of the undertakers having all the liggers² to be taken up at the two bridges on the 40 foot at Sutton Gault and Sutton Gravel, they covenant to make the water passage of the two bridges to be 30 ft each.]

p. 7. "Paid to Capt. Barnaby Moyes³ in full satisfaction of all wastes or damage committed by the Earl of Bedford and the trustees, and their agents, in new making or deepening of Popham Eau passing through the land of Moyes, and for all further claims of making or repairing any other bridge, tunnell or work under the said dreyne, the sum of £25. Jan. 28, 1656."

Vol. 10 "Vol. 1". 1659-60.

¹ Dugdale was the well-known royalist, who has been called the "Prince of Antiquaries". In 1657-9 he was at work on his *History of Imbanking and Drayning*. He was knighted in 1677.

² Scaffolding timber or plank bridges. N.E.D.

³ In 1650 Moyes had been in charge of the Scotch prisoners.

GENERAL ACCOUNTS

	li	s	d
p. 26 Sallaries, Sam ¹ . Fortrey, ¹ Esq., for one year's salary due Lady Day last, 1660	150	0	0
Lewis Godfrey, sasskeeper at Denver one year to Mich. 1659	30	00	00
Nicholas Knowles sasskeeper at Rossell and the stopp there	24	00	00
Robert Harman, sasskeeper at Hermitage	16	00	00
Wm Wrathall, sasskeeper for Stowe sluices	8	00	00
Wm Meacome ferryman at Littleport Chaire	8	00	00
Mr George Barnes imployed under Mr Fortrey for an addition to his salary which Mr Fortrey allows him for attending the public business of the Level	10	00	0
p. 27 For a piece of plate given unto Mark le Pla for service done in the flood	9	14	8
Mr Bailiff's salary to Mich, 59	50	00	00
His clark	20	00	00
Richard Lord Gorges ² to Lady Day 1660	450	00	00
John Mingay ³ " " " "	100	00	00
Thomas Bland ⁴ " " " "	100	00	00
1657. To Thomas Burchall for mending the Flegg ⁵ of the north bank of Bedford River	33	0	0
1657. Feb. Paid John Saffery for making a new pair of doors at Standgroundes Sass and to Humphrey Rowland for making the dam	83	15	10
1658. May. To Mr Gabriel Ellyott ⁶ for travelling charges to London to advise about the Mapp in Nov. 1657	8	19	4
To Gabriel Ellyot for 26 weeks Salary due Sept. 1657	52	10	0

¹ See p. 150.³ See p. 153.⁵ ? Flake, a wattled hurdle.² See p. 150.⁴ See p. 149.⁶ See p. 150.

	l	s	d
1658. Mr Jonas Moore for travelling charges to London upon company's business	61	00	00
To Lewis Godfrey for carrying away a cradge ¹ between the hundred and hundred and fifty foot rivers at the outfall near Denver ²	77	03	00
Vol. 11 Bedford Level Account Book: 1662-3.			
Vol. 12 Mr Mingay's accounts, Vol. I, May, 1659-May 1660.			
Vol. 13 Do. do. Vol. II, May, 1660-May 1661.			
To Samuel Fortrey, Esq., for charges about Somersham Ryots and other business	14	04	05
To Tubbs for damage done to his osier holt by making gangwaies to carry earth from the 20 foot drain	00	04	00
To Lewis Godfrey for fleake ³ and reed to reaire the company's house at Mepal	5	07	01
To George Barnes upon a bill of expenses of the justices and juries upon the inquest taken of the ryot at Methwold, 2 May, 1660	8	10	06
To John Brown, clerk of the troope that there attended the justice, for a gratuitie.	1	00	00
For clearing the drain spoiled by the ryoters	1	18	00
p. 20 To Jonas Moore for 2 mapps for the service of the company	5	00	00
To Francis Underwood, ⁴ Esq., for the expenses of Bayliffe and jurats at their meeting in Whitsun week, 1660	41	06	08
Vol. 14 Mr Mingay's accounts, Vol. III, May 1661-May 1662.			

¹ A small bank made to keep out water. N.E.D. Earliest example given A.D. 1854.

² c and cl in original. The latter probably a mistake for xl.

³ Perhaps flege = sedge grass. Halliwell, J. O., *Dictionary of Archaisms*, 362; or flake, a wattled hurdle.

⁴ See p. 154.

p. 15 To William Baxter in discharge of George Barnes Bill entered by him for grass for the troopers horses during their stay at Ely to suppress tumults 20 00 00

Vol. 15 Mr Mingay's accounts, Vol. iv, 1662 to 1663.

To Samuel Hockly, 26 Nov. 1661, for lyme and manure used at Sittinge the Sluice at the Hermitage 10 13 00

At the end of the volume amongst the remarks of the auditor is this:

Md. yt the 15^s demanded by Mr Mingay for fetching y^e 300^{ll} from Berry, ought not to be allowed by the Co. but should be paid by Mr Crane, who should have brought his money to Ely.

p. 64 E 1 *11 papers. 1653-63.*

These are abstracts of the sums paid away by George Dalton, May 1653-Nov. 1656, some in duplicate. They mostly concern the North Level, but no. 8 is a general account. No. 9 relates to Middle Level, and No. 10 is a criticism of the accounts by an auditor.

p. 64 E 2 Account of John Mingay, Dec. 1669-Jan. 1670. 1669, Feb. 12. To Mr Pedley of Lincoln's Inn as a present by Corporation order 10 00 00

p. 64 E 4 Accounts of Robert Mingay, 1678-Apr. 1679.

A legacy or perpetuity of £7 a year given by Mr David Offley¹ was thus divided, £5 to Corporation, £2 to poor of Ely [according to *Charity Commission Report, 1837*, this charity was paid up to 1812, and afterwards payment was refused].

1679, Apl. 14. To Ralph Hull for his bill for entertainment at the sessions of Sewers 18 18 00

To Ralph Pierson for the same. 5 00 00

For 269 gauges² of gault from Mepal laid 80 14 00

¹ See p. 154.

² From the context this was a definite quantity. The N.E.D. does not help. Perhaps gauge means a cubic yard. Gravel is still so sold.

upon the south bank of Bedford River,
between Smith houses and Broadbeat's
house

- p. 64 E 9 Accounts of John and Jacob de la Pla.¹
10 Apl. 1721. To Wm Bynn for entertain- 52 04 00
ing the corporation and their officers at
their meeting at Ely, and others who came
about business during the time of the
meeting, B. 8., no. 1
1720. To Mr Dingley Askham,² junior, 00 10 00
being so much allowed him for drawing
the presentments of the jury at a sessions
of sewers at Ely, 24 Aug. B. 9. No. 1

The salaries of the officials are shown in the accounts, thus in February 1661 the Lord Gorges, Surveyor-General, was paid £375 for the preceding ten months. The smaller gentry sometimes appear in contracts. In 1662 Ambrose Bening of Thriplow received money for mending the gulls in the bank at Brandon. Before 1660 many of the men occurring in these accounts claim military rank, but after 1660, as most of these men had fought on the wrong side, the "colonels" and "captains" disappear to a large extent.

- p. 65 E 12 *Mr Jessop's Account Book. 1650-1.*

Heading:

"Moneys recd. by W. Jessop to the use of the hon^{ble} the participants and adventurers for dreyning the Great Level of the Fenns."

Receipts and expenses on opposite pages. For the most part the items consist of sums received from or paid to individuals. Lt.-Col. Francis Underwood³ received much money which was paid away again "in the country".

¹ See p. 153.

² Mr Askham's father had come into possession of Conington Hall by marriage with a Cotton heiress. Askham senior is celebrated as having received this encomium from Cole of Milton, "...though a fox hunter, he was a regular sober man". Askham junior occurs several times as being employed on legal business by the corporation.

³ Created "Bailiff of the Great Levell of the Fenns", 1656, see p. 154.

“1651. Paid during March, April and May last for expenses in y^e journey for y^e hon. commissioners and others begun 17 March 1650.”

“1651, Sept. 22nd. Paid to Sir John Wollaston¹ and the rest of the ‘Treasurers at War’ 3200 li.”

Jessop was receiver of the company and also one of the adventurers. In some extracts from the order books of 1651 given in Wells, vol. 1, pp. 236–7, Jessop makes many payments to Scotch prisoners from Dunbar, who were working on the dykes. But they are not to be traced in the above account book.

Besides these bound volumes of accounts there is a fine series of separate accounts, bills or vouchers from 1660 to 1850, one hundred and fifty-eight bundles, of which thirty are earlier than 1700. All these are arranged in brown paper parcels in order of date. Cupboards A and B in the ante-room are full of them. There are also other vouchers not included in this series;

p. 136	*Accounts before 1653 claimed by new against old adventurers	1649–53
p. 115	*Accounts of expenses and receipts	1 Bdle 1651–5
p. 181	Ante-room F 1 Officers’ Accounts	1 Bdle 1738
p. 29	C 11 Particulars of Special Works	1 Vol. 1767–1806
p. 177	Ante-room E 1 A/cs of John Waddington and J. Drage	1756–66

[The last item printed in great detail.]

p. 177	Ante-room E 2 Flood Bills	3 Bdles 1739, 1778, 1795
p. 175	Ante-room D mid. „	1 Bdle 1768
p. 30	C 11 Expenditure M. & S. Levels	2 Vols. 1692–8
p. 31	C 11 Expenditure on Works	5 Vols. 1699–1806
	Summary of Expenditure	7 Vols. 1699–1847

* In Safe 2.

¹ Alderman and sometime Lord Mayor of London.

VOUCHERS FROM ANTE-ROOM A

Seven vouchers from the top left-hand compartment of cupboard A in the ante-room have been given as examples of what these vouchers contain. Mr Marriott's bill of costs in connection with the passing of the act of 15 Car. II is the most important. This bill is mentioned in C. N. Coles, *Collection of Laws* . . . 1803, prefatory note, p. xii. He says there that the manuscripts in the Fen Office are "now little known", and that must be always the case under present conditions. Mr Marriott's bill shows that a large number of scribes were employed, and that many counsel had to be paid fees besides their own counsel. Mr Samuel Pepys appears with a provisor about navigation, which may perhaps be found in the bill, but Samuel, although his Cambridgeshire relations were concerned in it, does not appear to have been interested in fen drainage. The door keepers of the Houses of Parliament did well out of the bill, as did Mr Marsh's clerk Dick. His name appears oftener than any other. The items for boat hire were for journeys between the Temple and Westminster. The charges for dinners vary much. When Marriott dined with Sir Richard Onslow "our counsell", who was also a bailiff of the B.L.C., the cost was 6s. 6d. each, but two dinners for the Speaker of the House of Commons cost much more. It will be noticed that some terms are used in the vouchers which are not fully explained by the N.E.D. Some of these have been pointed out. Judging by voucher no. 5, surveyors were difficult to come by in 1664, if it was necessary to go as far north as Rutland to find one. The Wings were an unusual family. Tycho Wing, who died in 1750, was coroner for Rutland, and edited the astrological almanac started by his father. It may be only a coincidence, but in the Fen Office there is a survey with a map of the North Level by T.¹ Wing dated 1749. A point to be noted about the larger vouchers is, that at the end of a page usually left blank for the purpose, is first a certificate by the contractor that the work had been done, next an order in Lord Gorges' handwriting for the expeditor to pay the bill. This order sometimes contains interesting information, such as the mention of Waterbeach in voucher 6. Lastly there is the receipt by the contractor whose signature is witnessed by the expeditor's wife. The vouchers were lettered and numbered to correspond with similar marks in the Account Books, and then tied into small bundles with thread. These small bundles were made into piles about a foot deep, covered with brown paper and labelled with the

¹ T. Wing in Inventory, but Lynam, *Maps of the Fenland*, states that the map was engraved by John Wing (*Victoria County History of Huntingdonshire*, vol. III).

years which they cover. It may be possible to produce a voucher for each payment recorded in the Account Books. The letters and numbers have been given with some of the items from Account Books in E 9. The care and patience which were spent on these documents in ancient times were truly admirable.

(1) "An account of the moneys expended in procuring the Act for Dreyning the Fens. 29 Nov. 1664." Endorsed "H 3 entred".

	l	s	d
Jan. 23, 1661. To Mr Walepole a councell and his clerk	03	05	00
[Four more payments of £2 were made to him]	08	00	00
For orders of the committee and copyes of vote	01	01	00
For a dinner for Sir Richard Onslow our Councell and myself	00	13	00
For writing petitions	00	03	00
To Terryll a witnes for 3 days attendance	00	07	06
For copyes of the bill	05	15	00
For a dinner for Mr Walepoole, other of our Councell and myself	01	10	00
To councell to make out the claymes	01	10	00
To Serjeant Glynne (3 payments)	06	00	00
To him for peruseing y ^e bill, & the Judicature	05	00	00
For a copy of an order of y ^e house of Commons	00	10	00
For a Dinner at the Crowne for severall of our Councell & myself	03	07	06
To Mr Bland ¹ y ^e moyety of 8 ^{li} w ^{ch} he paid	04	00	00
To Mr Throckmorton for copy of temporary Act	00	10	00
For severall dinners for Councell &c.	01	12	06
To Mr Amhurst a councell at y ^e committee	02	00	00
For goeing by water & by coach, porters etc.	04	13	01

¹ Thomas Bland, register, see p. 149.

	ll	s	d
To doore keepers at the House	04	04	06
Ditto at Crown court, 16 ^s ,		16	00
To John Dilworth for writing	26	00	00
To a Scrivenor at Westminster	01	10	00
To a do at the Hall doore	01	00	00
To others in the Strand	01	08	00
To Sybly a Scrivenour	00	11	00
To Sandford a Scrivenour in Chancery Lane	05	07	00
To Mr Waldron a councill	02	00	00
To Sir Thomas Atkins	05	00	00
To Serjeant Keeling	05	00	00
p. 2 For a copy of the order before ye King	00	02	00
Spent with ye printer &c about ye Breviats ¹	00	05	00
At the House			
For the Bill twice reading	20	00	00
For a dinner at the Sun Tavern	04	10	00
For the order of the committee for ye 6 countyes	00	06	08
For a copy of the bill	01	00	00
To Dick for a copy of Sir Edw. Walpoole and Mr Peapes provisoee for navigation	00	05	00
For a copy of the Country Judicature	00	13	06
For engrossing the bill	20	00	00
The Lord Chancellor's fee	26	00	00
To foure councill at the Lords' House	20	00	00
To Mr Winnington for waiting	02	00	00
To Mr Scrogg and Mr Williams	04	00	00
For two Dinners for the Speaker	05	00	00
There are numerous payments to Mr Marsh and his clerk Dick.			
To Dick Mr Marsh's clerk for six orders	03	05	00
To him more for waiting at ye committee	01	00	00
To Dick for attending the com ^{tee} (two payments)	01	00	00

¹ Usually lawyers' briefs: perhaps here abstracts of the case for the laity.

	li	s	d
More to him for copie of the amendments	00	10	00
To Mr Marsh for his paynes (altogether)	7	10	00
To Dick (two payments)	02	00	00
p. 3 Clerk of the Parliaments Fees & rewards			
For a copy of a short Act and orders at the Lords' house	01	08	00
To Wilcox for searches & copies of... ¹ acts	01	05	00
For copies of petit' orders and clerks' fees in the Lords' house	01	14	06
To Walker for his paynes at the Comtee and in the Report	03	00	00
To Mr Throckmorton for last order	00	07	00
For a copy of the report	00	14	00
Spent with Mr Gouldsbrough	00	17	06
Breviate writing			
To Mr Baker for writing breviatees	00	09	00
To a scrivener at Westminster	00	13	00
To another scrivener there	00	05	00
For writing Breviatees for the Lords	00	10	00
For copying the Bill twice	01	02	00
Doore Keepers' fees			
All the Lords' house	00	08	06
To six doore keepers there	00	15	00
To the Usher and his servants	01	08	00
To six Doore keepers another time	00	15	00
More to them at the last comtee	00	15	00
To them more for passing the bill	01	00	00
To Cooper at the house of Commons	00	10	00
Since the act passed			
Paid for engrossing it	01	00	00
Expended by accomptant and his man during this account for water & coach hire, porters etc.	01	07	09
The total is	241	00	06

¹ Query "temporary".

p. 4 Order by Richard Gorges to Mr John Mingay in Ely dated 2 Dec. 1664 for him to pay Mr John Marriott £61 upon sight & the rest of the £241 on Dec. 30th next
Receipt of Marriott for £61

[Notes on the people mentioned in the account will be found on p. 155.]

(2) May 4, 1663. A sheet of foolscap written on one side. Endorsed "Bundle 8". "A Bill for Makin a pare of new sea doores for Stanground Sluce & hangin them without a dame."

	l	s	d
Item 4 hares ¹ containing 70 foot	5	5	0
Item 2 low walls 8 foot long a peare containing 16 foot	01	02	00
Item 10 small walls for boath of the doores containing 45 foot	04	10	00
Item for swipes ² 14 foot long a peare & a foot square containing 28 foot	01	08	00
Item for windells ³ for to draw up the clackers ⁴ & the swipes for to open the door, cont. 8 foot	00	10	08
Item for 238 foot of 2 inch plancke	03	19	04
Item for 20 spickens ⁵ for to spicken the slackers ⁶ & the swipes	00	03	04
Item 500 of halfe crown nailles	00	12	06
Item for carrige & a boat to stand in to worke	01	10	00
Labour 57 days at 2/6, 2/-, 1/2½	05	18	00

(The whole bill came to £25. 14s. 0d.)

¹ Hares. Cannot find in N.E.D. in this connection.

² A bar for a sluice gate with a counterpoise. N.E.D.

³ Windle.

⁴ Clappers.

⁵ Spickens = spike nails. N.E.D.

⁶ Slackers; a shuttle or stop gate to hinder the passage of water. N.E.D. A.D. 1797.

“W. Mingay, I praye paye this bill to Mr Savery. S. F.”
 Receipt by John Saffery 21 Aug. 1669.

(3) A double sheet of foolscap, endorsed “H 5”, entitled: “Middell Levell Nov. 23rd, 1664. Muneys payd for opening the sluice and repaying the Banks belongen to Marshland Cutt as foloweth;”

The first 31 items concern the payment of labourers who were paid 16*d.* a day.

	li	s	d
Pd for 88 flors at 2 ^s 6 ^d per flore	11	00	00
Pd for 16 nights turning the turne mill at 16 ^d	01	01	04
Pd for a lighter	00	01	00
Pd for 4 men watching the dam	00	08	00
Pd for the use of a small boat for the caring the plancks too & from the work	00	04	06
p. 2 Pd for a longe spade to tack up the Dames	00	03	06
Pd for daming one of the dores next the Creek	00	01	06
Pd John Safery for 8 barowes and wheles & spickings and nayles and a days worke	01	17	06
Pd for halfe a hundred deales to Mr Simon Tayler	02	05	00
Pd to Thomas Nelson for his oversight of the work	01	05	00

(The whole bill came to £36. 14*s.* 4*d.*)

One of the workmen was paid for 38 days, so the overseer must have had other paid jobs in hand, or his wages were small.

Certificate by Richard Pretyman that the work in the above bill was done in Nov. last & that a like bill under Mr Edmond Welche's hand & his hand was delivered to the corporation in Whitsun week last: Augt 4 1665.

Order by Richard Gorges that John Mingay is to pay Pretyman £1. 14. 4, he having received in December last thirty pounds on acct.

Receipt by Pretyman. His signature witnessed by Susan Mingay.

Middell Levell

p. 3 Muneys payd for the mending the Sluce dores at the Eand of Marshland Cutt next Stowe Bridge & other things

ll s d

Pd Cristiane Derickson for his pay to tack up the Dore & boult every plank with boults 01 : 00 : 00

Pd John Still for 76^{lb} of Eyrne boults & sheeres at 5^d per lb 01 : 11 : 08

Pd Water Batman & his cumpany for Ferming¹ of London lode from Welneyould river to North Dale being 3 miles at 10^s per mile 1 : 10 : 00

Pd James Cutten for Sloping a gull² in the heyway leading from Dodington to Maney 0 : 06 : 00

(The whole bill came to £7. 18s. 0d.)

Certificate of work done, order for payment and receipt as on second page of document.

(4) On a piece of thin paper 7½ × 6 inches. Endorsed "H 12". "A Bill for work don at Erith Bridge that was fallen downe and at the Great Bridge and the Hermitage Sluce, Sept. 1664."

ll s d

For a planke 16 foot long, 16 inches wide & 9 inches thick for the bridg over the sas at ye hermitage 00 : 05 : 04

For 5 liggers 19 foot long a peice & 10 inches square for the bridg next Erith that was fallen downe 04 : 13 : 00

¹ Wright, *Eng. Dialect Dict.* says "ferming" means to cleanse. It was perhaps a more extensive operation than "roading".

² Gull = a breach or fissure made by a river. In use as early as 1553. N.E.D. At one time it meant an artificial cut. C. F. Tebbutt.

	ll	s	d
For twelve score and twelve foot of 2 inch & a half plank for the bridge at 35 the hundred	03	13	00
For carrage of the wood to the bridge	00	01	06
More for 6 railles for the Hermitage bridge, 12 foot long a peice, 5 inches one way & 3 the other	00	12	06
For 2 peices 14 foot long a peice, 7 inch and 5 inch square	00	09	04
[It took William Owin & his man 14½ days to do the work, his wages 2 ^s & his man's 1/8 a day]	02	14	02
Total	12	13	04

1664, Sept. 18. "This bill is due to Will. Owin." Sam. Fortrey.
 1664, Jan. 10. Receipt by Will. Owin.

(5) A double foolscap sheet. "An account of the charges for surveying the lands in Caldicoat." (1664.) ll s d

Imp. Mr Wing the surveyor one day goeing to the worke haveing his charges borne	00	06	08
It. one day doeing of the worke his charges borne	00	06	08
It. one day goeing home his charges being borne	00	06	08
It. four daye goeing & cuming & at Cambridge hee bearing his owne charges at 10 ^s the day	02	00	00
It. for his man three dayes to assist him	00	03	00
Total	03	03	00

Expenses

It. Expenses uppon the roade as we came to survey the grounds	00	00	05
It. at Halles of Yaxley	00	01	00
At Stilton for meales & exceedings	00	09	00
It. for horsmeate theyr	00	01	10
It. given Mr Wing to beare his charges &	00	05	00

H s d

his mans for one night they lay at Wansworth ¹ going home	
It. spent one other day at Halles of Yaxley	00 : 00 : 04
It. given to Hall for showing of us the grounds	00 : 01 : 06
It. for one other assistant one day	00 : 01 : 00
It. for a mesinger sent to Mr Wing to advise him to cum to Cambridg	00 : 01 : 00
	01 : 01 : 01

Dayes y^t I Will' Bourne was abroad about the worke

Imp. At March & Well to looke for a surveyor two dayes	00 : 10 : 00
It. For goeing in to Rutlandshire to Mr Wing & failing of a surveyor at Well two dayes	00 : 10 : 00
It. for goeing to the worke with him one day	00 : 05 : 00
It. at the worke one day	00 : 05 : 00
It. cuming & goeing from and at Cambridg 2 days	00 : 10 : 00
It. two dayes at Cambridg	00 : 10 : 00
	2 : 10 : 00
Sum totall	06 : 14 : 01

p. 2 Sept. 29th 1664

To Capt. Moyses for his charges at Cambridge as a witsesse for the corporation in Mr Reeves case	01 : 00 : 00
For my owne charges at the same time as a witsesse in the same case	01 : 00 : 00
To the messenger that came with a letter from my lord of Bedford about y ^e Corporation's business	00 : 04 : 00

Order for Mr Mingay, dated Sept. 29, 1664 to pay; signed

¹ ? Wansford.

by Rich. Gorges, Sam. Fortrey, Fran. Underwood, Rich. Marryott. Receipt by William Borne.

(6) A double foolscap sheet endorsed "Mr Barnes payment etc.", bundle 5, H 6.

A bill of charges of witnesses at Cambridge from March the 27th to March 30th 1665.

	l	s	d
Item. given to Thomas Hitch uppon summons	00	02	06
To John Munford, Thomas Sheild, Thomas Johnson & Joseph Hitch the same	00	10	00
It. paid a messenger for goinge from Ely to Meathold for Thomas Johnson	00	02	06
It. paid at Lawrence Pestells when Thomas Johnson & Joseph Hitch viewed the fen	00	02	06
It. for a horse hire for Tho. Sheild, 3 days, 3 ^s . do. for Thomas Hitch, Thomas Sheild, John Munford, each 3 days 10 ^s , do. for Joseph Hitch 4 days, 12 ^s , do. for Thomas Johnson 6 days 1 ^l	02	07	00
It. paid when the witnesses were at the Rose	00	03	00
It. for their diners & suppers on Tuesday & the like on Wednesday & their breck-fasts	01	03	00
It. for firinge Beere & Tobacco all the time	00	14	06
It. for horsmeate for 2 horses	00	03	02
It. for bread beere fire & tobacco & break-fast on Thursday morning	00	10	00

(The whole bill came to £8. 19s. 6d.)

At the foot of the bill is this:

Mr Mingaye

"You are to paye to Mr George Barnes the some of eight poundes nineteen shillings & six pence in full of his bill for his charges & the witnesses charges who were to have been used

DOCUMENTS WITH SEALS

- p. 113 **Charter granted to Earl of Bedford and others. 10 Car. I, without seal* 1635
 Printed in Wells, *op. cit.* vol. II, p. 120, etc.
- p. 114 **Exemplification of Cromwell's ordinance at request of William, Earl of Bedford. Picture of Oliver Cromwell; Seal damaged; requires protection* 1656
- p. 115 **Exemplification of Special Verdict 1 Vol. 79 acres of land, Norney Farm (1657)* 1659
- p. 113 **St Ives Law. No. 15. Richard Lord Protector, seal intact* 1649-60
Note, C as to interrogation. Apl. 1732
- See inspeximus of St Ives Law, 1637 by Richard Lord Protector, March 18, 1658; Printed in Wells, *op. cit.* vol. II, pp. 236-339.
- p. 141 **2 Commissions of Sewers. 14 Car. II, and Duchy Privy Seal* 1663
7 documents
- p. 113 **B.L.C. Act 15 Ch. II, with Seal in green box* 1663
- p. 113 **A Grant to John Dugdale. Portrait of Car. II. Seal in case* ?1673-4
- p. 147 **Grants and Commission for Sir J. Dugdale as Norroy King of Arms. In a green canvas box* 5 July 1675
1 lot

This man died in 1700; two wills which he made in 1675 and 1687, but were neither of them proved, are amongst the miscellaneous papers in Cupboard E, Shelf 2, in Ante-room: and in Safe 2, at the bottom, is the will of John Dugdale who died in 1656, grandfather of Norroy.

- p. 113 **Document No. 23 Hilary Term 26 & 27 Car. II. Seal damaged* 1686-7

* In Safe 2.

ENCLOSURES

- p. 191 Ante-room G 22 *Over Inclosure* 1 Vol. 1837
Swavesey Inclosure 1 Vol. 1837-8

These contain printed copies of the Inclosure Acts, Copy of allotments to B.L.C., and a sale catalogue of lands. Also a fine coloured plan of the great barrier bank.

- p. 192 do. G 23 *Mepal Commons Inclosure.* 1851
Draft Minutes. B.L.C. Committee 2 Bdles

This only concerns B.L.C.: not of much importance.

- p. 102 L 20 *Whittlesey Mere Inclosure, Papers* 1842
re Bill 1 Bdle
Whittlesey Mere, draft history 1 Bdle 870-1846
Mepal Inclosure, papers 1 Bdle 1850-51

- p. 223 *Cellar Fowlmere Inclosure.* 1845-6

Letter from Inhabitants—Poor of Fowlmere—Inclosure Act, 5 Vict.—Letter S. Wells to Lord Cl. Hamilton and reply—Draft notice to commrs—Letter from Parishioners—Brief for petitioners against bill—Propositions submitted by Poor parishioners—Draft petition—

- p. 224 *Letter of Labourers of parish—Inhabitants, petition to Parliament—Mr Ware's deposition—Letter of William Dean for labourers—Names of Commons and old inhabitants—Poor of Fowlmere list of occupiers—Abstract of claims. W. Wedd and Wilkerson's claims—Notice of Cottage property—Letter from Fees Office H. of C.—Wm. Wilkerson's letters—Letter of B. A. Greene concerning cottage proprietors—James Barker's claim* 1845-6

- p. 225 *Paper concerning rents paid for the Moor* 1845

Thriplow Inclosure Act

1829

Thriplow Inclosure Act

1840

These Fowlmere enclosure papers are described at such a length because they occur in an unexpected place, that is, in a box

marked "Nene commissioners" in a cellar at the Fen Office at Ely. They probably came to the Fen Office with the papers of S. Wells.

p. 227	Tin Box in cellar <i>Willingham Inclosure,</i>	1846
	<i>fees and expenses</i>	
p. 158	<i>Side Cupboard by Safe 2 Yaxley petition</i>	[N.D.]
	<i>3 copies</i>	
p. 93	K 7 <i>Account of the division of the Com-</i>	1665
	<i>mon Fen</i>	
	<i>Copy of Award for inclosing Yaxley</i>	1768
	<i>Fields 9 Geo. 3</i>	

A note says that these documents should go together. The division of Yaxley Fen and cow pasture, 1665, is a detailed terrier on parchment over two feet square.

p. 9	A 4 <i>Field Books</i>	2 Vols. calf	1656-9
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These are small octavo, arranged under parishes: barest description; they must be part of a series.

JOURNALS

p. 184	Ante-room F 16 <i>Journals</i>	3 Bdles	1712-40
p. 182	do. E 9 <i>Wm Wells deputy surveyor's</i>		1760-9
	<i>Journals (18)</i>	1 Bdle	
p. 184	do. F 16 <i>Journals</i>	4 Bdles	1770-1818
p. 184	do. F 14 <i>Registrar's diary</i>	3 Vols. calf	1837-43

LETTERS

p. 11	C 9 <i>Letter Books</i>	1686-1722
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Two volumes A and B, cardboard sides, parchment backs. Letter Book "A". At the beginning is a list of addresses in this manner:

"Samuel Fortrey, Esq, Byall Fen. To be left at the Crown, St Ives."

"Robert Freeman, Manea. To be left at the Wooden Bell, St Ives."

All the letters are signed by R. J. for Roger Jenyns.

The first is dated April 14, 1686, and is to Mr Green about Denver Sluice. Besides the two names given above, John Fincham,¹ Esq., and Hugh Underwood² received many letters. Damage done to banks or private property by floods, frost, or drought is the burden of most letters. It is rather amusing to find how often Mr Jenyns had to condole with contractors and workmen who had stated that they were so ill that they could not carry out their duties. There is a number of letters about the silting up of Stow tunnels for which Mr Jenyns had invented a pair of doors which were to save much expense.

Roger Jenyns was a conservator of the fens for many years and did so very well out of it, that he was able to purchase the Bottisham Estate (see Hailstone, *History of Bottisham*, p. 120, etc.), and see p. 96.

An earlier letter book is in the University Library, Cambridge: MS. 3598: date June, 1672–June, 1673. The letters in this are signed R. G. or Richard Gorges. See *The History Teachers' Miscellany*, vol. VII, pp. 95–6.

There are also other items relating to letters or correspondence:

p. 180	Ante-room E 11	<i>Correspondence of S. Wells</i>	1835–7
			1 Vol.
p. 231	In Box labelled "Corporation Title Deeds" in cellar	<i>Letters, 1730–1828</i>	10 Bdles
		<i>Mr Paxton's private letters</i>	1 lot
			1740–4

Ante-room C contains many original letters of the late seventeenth century.

LOT BOOKS

p. 124	* <i>W. Hayward's survey</i>	1635–6
	1 Vol. (<i>Original</i>) in leather;	
	1 Vol. (<i>Copy</i>) in parchment	

Printed in Wells, *op. cit.* vol. II, pp. 141–235.

do.	* <i>Survey and allotments 95,000 acres</i>	1637
		1 Vol.

* In Safe 2.

¹ He was a conservator, 1684.

² He was a conservator, 1679–89.

- p. 7 A 2 *Survey of 83,000 acres in Cambs. Isle of Ely, Hunts., etc.* 1 Vol. 10 Oct. 1668

Printed in Wells, *op. cit.* vol. II, pp. 486-518.

- p. 8 A 4 *The same sorted into eleven degrees* 1668
1 Vol.

- p. 7 A 4 *Adventurers lands: Schedule of 95,000 acres according to Counties and places, with owners' names* [N.D.]

- p. 5 A 5 *Schedule of same in parishes A to Z made in Woodward's time* [1745-57]

The last four give many field names, particularly the undated documents.

- pp. 5, 9 *Lot books 1721, 1728, 1750, 1760, 1788*

Lot Book 1828 printed in Wells, *op. cit.* vol. II, pp. 693-753.

MINUTES

- p. 69 G 1-5 *B.L.C. Minute Books* 64 Vols. 1672-1874

These have not yet been run to earth.

MEMORIALS AND PETITIONS

- pp. 89-90 I 9-10 *Memorials and Petitions*
5 Bdles A, B, C, D, E
(undated).

- do. I 10-16 *Memorials and Petitions* 20 Bdles 1652-1878

- p. 101 L 15 *Petition against the importation of Oats* 1815
1 Bdle

- p. 113 Safe 2 **Orders and Petitions by Commissioners at Cambridge* 1653-4

- p. 114 do. **Petition to commissioners at Cambridge before Act of Incorporation* 1652

- p. 119 do. **Petitions various* 1 Bdle 1665, 1722

* In Safe 2.

p. 142 do.	<i>*Petition of inhabitants of Waldersa</i>		1660
	<i>Petition of Disclaimers, Lord Gorges and others</i>		
p. 174	<i>Ante-room D Top Petitions</i>	1 Bdle	1770
p. 175 do.	<i>D Mid. Petitions</i>	1 Bdle	1769
pp. 196, 200, 207	<i>Ante-room H 14, 17 Reasons against unbanking Sutton Salt Marsh</i>		1719
p. 218	<i>Safe 5 Bottom Elm Petition, exaction of tithes</i>		1827
p. 119	<i>Safe 2 Brief of B.L.C. against bill for altering the Act of 15 Car. II. Certificate of Subscribers of Petition against same. Names of Petitioners—Draft petition of Duchess of Bedford and others against altering 15 Car II. Petitions (Copy) from Country against altering, etc. Petitions (Copy) of Freeholders against altering, etc. Consequences (Copy) of altering 15 Ch. II.</i>	1 Bdle	1722

* In Safe 2.

PETITIONS

Wells, *Bedford Level*, vol. I, p. 279, has these remarks on the petitions sent to the commissioners of adjudication in 1653: "The number amounted to upwards of two hundred. Their contents are extremely interesting and enable us to form a correct idea of the state of the Level, and the feelings of its inhabitants during the work of drainage. . . . the commissioners, in the first instance, generally directed a reference of the point in controversy to indifferent persons chosen by each party with power to examine witnesses. . . . The matter of these petitions is too voluminous for insertion in this work: but they would form a volume of deep interest to the antiquary, and to the reader, who, from local connection with the subject, or literary curiosity, might feel desirous of becoming acquainted with all the minute circumstances attending the drainage of the Great Level."¹

¹ These petitions may be in Safe 2.

The petitions to which the following notes chiefly refer belong usually to a humbler class than that of the original adventurers. As seen in the notes on the registers, many of the important petitions are transcribed therein, but the number is so great that it is impossible for them all to appear in the register, and when the document is endorsed "Nothing done" we should not expect it. Nor should we expect those to appear which are not even endorsed "Read". It follows that many of these petitions are unique sources of information.

The earliest petitions which could be found were dated 1664. The eighteenth-century label on this bundle gives 1652 as the earliest. In 1696 the lay clerks of Ely were complaining about the drowned condition of their fen allotments. Amongst the 1666 petitions is one dated 1766, sent up by the trustees of Wisbech Turnpike. Amongst the petitions of which no time was found to take notes, although they seemed worth it, were these: 1667 Mr Hasyll and others of Ely; "nothing done"; 1669 Wisbech; 1674 "undertakers" of Soham; 1679 Stretham, Over, Southery, Haddenham, Sutton and Mepal (Welch's dam); 1696 Manea, Willingham and Over, Swaffham Prior, Somersham (Crainbrook).

The notes from petitions are arranged in three classes:

1. Petitions of officers or men employed by the Company.
2. Petitions of private people.
3. Petitions of parishes or corporations.

1. *Petitions of officers etc.*

The Corporation did not always pay the expenses of their higher officials or the salaries of their lower officials promptly.¹ In a cursory examination of the earlier bundles, two petitions dated 1667 and 1679 were noticed from Robert Mingay Esq. receiver and expeditor general 1663-89, asking to be paid his out-of-pocket expenses. They are marked "Read".

1666. Petition of Theophilus Turtleby.

He complains that in order to expedite the work of making banks which he undertook to do between 1664 and 1667, he gave bonds to tradesmen. These would not wait so long as the Corporation made him wait for his money and had him arrested for debt. He encloses a bill of £22 for law ex-

¹ See the report concerning this printed under Miscellanea.

penses which he incurred in this matter and humbly beseeches them to pay it.

Endorsed "Nothing done".

1666. Petition of a Littleport man to be paid for work done in 1666. Total £10. 19s. 6d. Details given.

1667. Petition of Elizabeth Barnes widow of George Barnes gent. Her husband served your honours for many years "till itt pleased God to take awaye his bodily health and strength", and he was allowed compassionate pension of £20 a year. He received £10 for the half year to Michaelmas 1666, but died before Lady Day 1667, and so petitioner has lost that half year's pension. Her husband was an officer substituted under Samuel Fortrey Esq. conservator of the south part of the middle level, from whom he received his stipend, and at one time he overpaid a workman by £20, but Fortrey refused to allow George Barnes this on account. Asks that this loss may be made good to her, also that she may be paid the arrears of pension.

Marked "Reade".

George Barnes was Sergeant-at-Mace, 1663-7.

1667. Petition of Thomas Bullice, bailiff of manor of Ely Porta. The fishing called Sellers held by copy by widow Rowles at 5/- a year, was bought by your honours, they have had it fifteen years, and have paid nothing at all though it is yearly charged upon him as bailiff—asks to be paid.

Answer. "Will advise with counsell."

1667. Petition of Nicholas Knowles.

He had received no wages for two years for looking after Rossall dam.

1669. Petition of Roger Jenyns Esq.

That he is owner of 175 a. in Sutton Meadlands, part of the 95,000 a. That from the year 1649 to 1661 he paid all draining taxes for the same amounting unto near £3 per acre, which comes to near £500 and never made a penny profit, the country¹ keeping possession: that in the year 1661 the

¹ By "the country" he may mean the peasants.

Corporation got possession of that land and placed one Tubbs to keep possession which he kept for some time and then the country again took possession. Petitioner took possession from the country and let the 175 a. to Thomas Birchall and Thomas Owen, but several inhabitants of Sutton came in a riotous manner and drove away his tenants' cattle, some to the pound, some they killed and some they drowned. Whereupon petitioner was forced to pay Birchall and Owen £16, and he paid Tubbs for keeping possession £5. For the £500 taxes paid whilst he received no profit, he submits it to their consideration when the corporation's debts are paid. For the £21 paid to poor men as above he humbly prays them to bestow on him two old tunnels that lie deserted and of no use under the bank at Ramsey by the 30 and 40 foot, these are of small value, but petitioner hath some occasions for them and asks to receive them instead of the £21. Roger Jenyns.

“Mr Jenyns petition reade, 1 July 1669.”

This man was Roger Jenyns of Hayes, Middlesex. His petition shows that he was one of the early adventurers. He was one of the nine men who met at Lord Whitlock's house near Temple Bar on 31 May 1649 and contributed forty shillings apiece for the clerk's fees for passing and engrossing “The Pretended Act”. But he does not come into prominence until the Act of 1663, when he was elected one of the conservators. He was a bailiff in 1679 and surveyor general from 1686 to 1693. He was followed in his career by his son John who was elected conservator at the age of 25, bailiff eight years later and surveyor general on the death of his father in 1693. He held the post for over twenty years and might have laid the foundation for a rich fen fortune. But it was his younger brother who became Sir Roger of Bottisham Hall. Some extracts from John's first report as surveyor general are given under *Miscellanea*, p. 115.

1674. Petition of Laurence Pestell of Upware, keeper of the sluices of Reach, Swaffham and Bottisham. His wages are £4 a year and they have not been paid for several years.

1674. The petition of Thomas Aspland, John Brett, Thomas Brassett and John Bent. Read, 19 Nov. 1674.

“In all humilitie shewing”

“That your petitioners have taken in hand many greate pieces of Worke which have been long since taken upp by your officers Being so exactly finished as that they have given very good content; for the doing and perfecting whereof petitioners have been necessitated not only to disburse all their own stocks butt also to take upp greate sums of money upon their owne and their freinds creditts upon Bonds and other wages in hoape to have received their monies due to them from your Honours so timely as to have saved their owne and their Friends credditts and also to have kept themselves and their freinds from suits and troubles, But so it is Right Honourable That your peticioners have been withheld their monies so longe that they have quite worne out the pacience of their creditors, so that they have had arrest upon arrest, and have been put to very great charges and have had much adoe to keepe out of Goale hitherto. But now your peticioners are so hard put to it that if your Honours shall not be pleased to take some speedy course to help them to the monies due to them amounting to the summe of 2523^{li}. 4^s. 9^d., they and their families and many more families of their friends and creditors shall be utterly ruinated and undone.”

They go on to make a rather grovelling appeal for payment. They all sign the petition except Bent who makes a mark. The debt owing to these contractors represents over £30,000 in present day values.

For Brassett see Whelpmore petition 1677 (p. 104).

1674. The Petition of Thomas Worsley and Mark Turvill.

That they were employed in repairing several banks in the S. level, during which they lost sixteen lighters in one night worth seventy odd pounds; that between them they have spent £1325. 12. 6. on the work, which they expected would have been paid them according to one order dated 4 June 1674, but which order has not in any way been performed. They have been forced to borrow money and pay interest, and to suffer actions at the Common lawe. Ask that

they may be speedily paid their just debts and have an allowance for the loss of the lighters, that they, their creditors and their respective families may not be totally ruined.

“Petition read Feb. 11, 1674.”

With the petition is a certificate signed by 14 inhabitants of Sutton, dated Feb. 2, 1674, which states that in Jan. 1673 “upon a great distresse of weather about that time as they were tending upon the banks for feare the water should run over they did loose 16 lighters, some sunk and some broken against the bridges”. That the loss was seventy odd pounds. That Worsley and Turvill are careful men in carrying out the Corporation works, and live in good repute “and have brought themselves into much stratnes and truble thereby”.

1677. Petition of William Parrish of Littelpport, labourer.

Is very willing to serve their honours as ferryman over the great river near Littleport Charer, and to be very faithful therein, if he should be allowed the former “sollery” of £8 to buy a new boat, the old boat being much decayed; or he might be allowed £7 to buy a new boat or £6 and the old boat, and 20s. a year for the repair of the boat. He is contented to take the ferry for 10 years at 20s. a year. If his service is accepted he prays leave to build himself a house upon Mildennall Crones end and make up the ground 20 foot wide and 6 pole long; if he dies before the end of 10 years his heirs to be allowed to take down and carry away the house. “Read 5 Apl. 1677.”

1722. Petition of Abraham Byam to be paid his bill of £49. 1. 2 for entertaining the officers of the B.L.C. at the April Meeting 1722. He had been asked to take £5 less, but asserted that he had charged lowest prices.

N.D. Petition of William Lacy, free mason, asks to be paid for 10 tons of freestone supplied to B.L.C.

N.D. Petition of Ann and Elizabeth daughters of William Elstobb, land surveyor and engineer.

Say that long and continued ill health since the death of their father has “drove” them into extreme difficulty in providing necessary subsistence. Implore that a balance of

£77. 14. 3 owing to their father by the B.L.C. may be paid them.

Evidently the literary labours of W. Elstobb who published *Historical Account of the Great Level* in 1793 were not profitable.

2. *Petitions of private people*

1664. Petition of Margaret Wright, widow of Thomas Wright, doctor of Physic¹ and his son Thomas.

"Your officers have taken, cut and spoiled over five acres of good fen land to the value of £100." Ask for an allowance.

1666. Petition of Robert Vipan of Sutton, Ely, waterman. That his employment and trading being chiefly by water, his loaden vessells have, by stress of weather suddenly happening, sometimes been sunk, and at other times his goods have been stolen in his absence, which he could not avoid as he had no house near for himself or servant to live in. Asks to be allowed eight or ten pole of ground at Sutton Gault or some other convenient place on the bank, that he may build a cottage there. Promises to maintain such portion of the bank for ever.

1666. Petition of Ellin Northywell, widow, of Ramsey. She had a house standing upon the side of the load near the high bridge in Ramsey, but by the extraordinary press of waters since the embanking of the holt near Berry, she hath suffered much damage by the drowning of her barn and carrying away her hay, underpinning her other buildings, and endangering her dwelling house. Asks for a competent allowance towards cost of rebuilding etc.

1674. Petition of Charles Wren Esq., lord of the manor of Feltwell, Norfolk, concerning a quarrel between him and the heirs of Sir Thomas Gibbons about a bridge and drove.

1693. A 4 pp. foolscap sheet endorsed "Mr Bourne's report of Mr Woodward's² petition 14 Nov. 1693". The report considers that Mr Woodward has no grievance, but Mr William Bourne ends his report with a long paragraph "But

¹ Of Peterborough; M.D., Peterhouse, 1656.

² Mr Edward Woodward was a conservator in 1683.

least I should mistake the tunnell in the petition mentioned I humbly acquaint you with another tunnell at the upper end of Horscroft Bank within a dozen rod of Whittlesey fields which was long since laid there by the lord of Portland to take in water in dry times into the decoy. Of this tunnel there was some complaints some years since. Robert Bradford was then the lord of Portland's bailiff, and the tunnel was not regarded by him as it ought to have been, though I had often given him notice of it, and once it had like to have been very fatal, for at high water in the wash that tunnel did run so much and quick that the bank was in danger of breaking and Bradford left it and went away, not knowing what to do, so that I was forced to stop it myself, which I did with some trouble, but at their charge, which was not worth a couple of ducks to me or so much as thanks from them. This was about 6 or 7 years since."

1699. Petition of Elizabeth Mawe of Littleport, widow, Apl, 1699. Some years ago she lent the corporation £100 and has received interest for the same under their common seal. She has now urgent need of the money as she is moving to London and asketh that the loan may be repaid her.

She was the widow of Robert Mawe, vicar, who died in 1697.

c. 1700 The humble petition of the Rev Mr Leng, President of Katherine Hall and Dr Johnson of Trinity Hall, who are deputed by the rest of the conservators for preservation of the Navigation in the river Cham or Grant.

From the Queens Mill to Clayhithe Ferry they have made divers Locks and other works at a great charge which will prove effectual for the ends proposed, but now it appears that there are other impediments below Clayhithe which cannot be remedied by the conservators, but should be the work of the corporation of the Bedford Level. Humbly desire to take these matters into their consideration.

Signed "Ja. Johnson". "Jo. Leng"¹

c. 1700. Petition of Peter Jarvis of Wickin.

Has received damage to value of £20 by the cutting of

¹ John Leng was fellow of St Catharine's, 1688-1708.

two acres and upwards of his best fen land lying in Wickin fens on both sides of "y^e river of Grant" into ditches and banks; asks that he may be paid the value thereof. Endorsed "read".

c. 1700. Petition of Elizabeth Greene, widow.

Is owner of a small house on the corporation's bank of river Ouze at Hilgay, which her father Christopher Emerson built and gave to her. She lived in it herself for some time, and afterwards out of "meer kindness" allowed widow Pratt to occupy it as long as she lived. Then Pratt married a man named Pye, who would pay no rent and has sold the cottage to William Harvey. Asks for an order to pull down the house and take it away.

1764. Petition of Mary Kerrich and Catharine Patrick occupiers of 500 a. of land, "Warboys etc., G. Lot. 16" adjoining the river of west water. That the west water used to be sixty feet wide, and is now only eight feet wide. It used to run as a natural river by Benwick into the Nene and so to the sea. But the west water has been stopped up by the S. bank of Forty foot river. Petitioners' predecessors had built a water engine on the corporation's bank on the S. side of Forty foot; but the mill drain is now stopped up. Speaks of the ancient course of the west water river having become dry land.

Mary and Catharine show excellent signatures.

N.D. Petition of George Gould one of the lords of the manor of Stretham, asking to be allowed to build a bridge over the Ouze at Shepwash Gravel, for the use of his tenants and the public. Eighteenth Century.

3. *Petitions from parishes*

c. 1662-78. Ante-room E 2 The petition of the inhabitants of Ely, Stuntney, Thetford and Streatham.

That by reason of the present great scarcity of water your petitioners suffer very many inconveniences and losses, many of their cattle perishing for want thereof; and the navigation very troublesome and difficult notwithstanding the

endeavours used for our better supply by the penning of the Sleuce at Denver dam, and the present occasion for navigation being then usuall by reason of the late supply arrived att Lyn of Coale and Salte etc.

And humbly conceiving that the free coming of the Tyde is the only means for the redresse of those inconveniencies and for the supply of our great necessities we therefore humbly pray that your honours will be pleased to take the premises to your considerations, and give such speedy order therein

Signed, H. Brunsell,¹ Thomas Stewart, Thomas Hitch, John Dimock, Edward Hitch, Willie Dymock, Richard Hitch, Edward Sterne, and about 50 others.

1666. I 12 Petition of inhabitants of Mepal. Read 9 Nov. 1666.

Whereas the participants have been at great charges for the repair and maintenance of the bridges and causey in our town of Mepal, yet notwithstanding our town is very much troubled for want of passage in the times of flood, it being through the sudden fall of waters very difficult and dangerous. They therefore humbly pray that a man and a boat may be appointed to their assistance in their necessity. And that towards the charge your honours would be pleased to set up a chain and make a toll at the bridge, and take of strangers (such as belong not to the town of Mepal or to your honourable company) reasonable pay or satisfaction, viz. for a horse one penny, for a footman a halfpenny. "An because our Towne of Mepall recieves continual damage by Travellers passing through our common to the spoyling thereof and the distroying of our Gates and Fences (wher before the dreining ther was noe way nor passage)" they ask that as often as they have occasion they may be conveyed over the Wash without charge. Signed by Thomas Townsend, Rector, Thos. and Edmund Whinn, and others.

1671. Petition of inhabitants of Wisbech and towns adjoining.

They used to be able to send produce to Lynn, St Ives,

¹ Rector of Strettham, 1662-78.

Ramsey, Cambridge, and Thetford by the Elm Leame, which is now grown up and not navigable. Many signatures.

1674. Petition of Maney.

That a dam lately made by Mr Dymond over Dazey load (which is an ancient sewer for that side of the country,) hath been a great prejudice to the parts thereabouts that they cannot have passage along that load to Welney river. Two signatures only. Read 9 April 1674.

1674. Petition of inhabitants of Swavesey.

That they have twice made their addresses through Mr Pickering, lord of the manor, for the speedy redress of their grievances caused by the stopping of their waters by your bank and the non-repair of your sluice or Sass-head. Mr Pickering hath since importuned them to make an amicable agreement before they seek the remedy provided by Act of Parliament, yet they find that they are lately summoned by a process out of the King's Bench¹ to answer complaints made by their lordships. [This was for not obeying the "order annexed". This is not now annexed.]

Ask that the sluice may be amended and a defensive bank made on the west side of the Delf drain and then petitioners shall be content that the corporation shall have earth² within their liberty in some convenient place to repair the bank at the foot of their fen, and in the mean time the proceedings against petitioners should be stayed.

Eighteen signatures, inc. Wm Kemp, vicar, Clark East, William and Edward Alcock etc. etc.

Read 26 Nov. 1674. And an order of the corporation dated 26 June 1673 presented by Mr Pickering to be read.

1674. Petition of Whittlesey and neighbourhood.

Anthony Hammond, Esq. hath stopt up the 30 foot drain and declares he will also have the 40 foot drain stopped. Ask that the 40 foot and Bevils Leam may be opened and scoured. Five pages of signatures.

1674. Petition of inhabitants of Haddenham and Sutton...

¹ See under Miscellanea, p. 116.

² See list of documents, p. 118.

Ask for a bridge and sluice to be erected. The present arrangement "exposes many of us to the unaccustomed trouble and charge of boating to and from our fen ground and unless relieved we shall be put to the fatal necessity of starving or putting off our cattle for want of maintenance".

1674. Petition of inhabitants of Ely and Stretham.

The numerous company of fishing weirs that are placed on the Ouze from Haramore House to Ely and below Ely, together with the overfall at Rosshall, cause petitioners' lands to be drowned much worse and longer than if the weirs and overfall were taken up. Ask that the weirs may be taken up and not so speedily put down again.

Later than 1674. Petition of Thomas Castell Esq., Thomas Castell gent, and Thomas Talbott gent, for themselves and the Towne of Sutton.

Since the work of adjudication of the great level divers breaches have happened upon the north bank of Bedford River, so that they have lost their stacks of corn and hay and their animals have perished. By the rivers and drains recently made they are cut off from their lands "so that wee cannot secure our crops that God sends us in summer" etc.

Ask that the west water be scoured and bottomed "which will take away Cranebrook waters the which doth much offend us, and lyeth much uppon us etc."

In margin. "Reade 1 Oct., a venire dyrected."

1677. Petition of the tenants of Welpmore and Littleport...

Whereas your honours have for many years past maintained a boat for a ferry and have employed one Thomas Brassett as ferryman to take us over the Ouze, since Ladyday last Brassett has refused to set anyone over and says that he will not keep the ferry any longer. Ask for another ferryman.

The tenants of Whelpmore were often sending up petitions. Examples have been noted for 1665, 1667 and 1694 (2).

1677. Petition of inhabitants of Waterbeach, Stretham and Thetford.

Complaining of their drowned condition, "Our banks are

so low that every small shuft of water overflows and drounds our fens”.

1677. Petition of Swavesey. Read 28 June 1677.

That by an order of the Corporation there was a grant of £15 for repair of the Sasse-head in Swavesey bank, now the inhabitants find that the repair will amount to £30, therefore they ask to be allowed this amount, or else let their own agents repair it at their own costs now, and the inhabitants be enjoined to repair it in the future. “Only wee crave of this Hon. Corporation to signify what security they demand from the inhabitants for their soe doing, and that the said Hon. Corp. will declare to indemnify and save harmless the said inhabitants from any suit that may arise. . . . concerning the repairing of the said sasse, and whereas also by this Hon. Corp’s order in case of noe application, to take up the old sasse and to place a Draw Sluice there, of the dimension of that which formerly stood upon the bank against Over Loade, which Draw Sluice was only to dreyne middle Fenn being then banked round and noe other, but now there are two other draynes stopped by the corporation Bank which drayned Cowfenne, Marefenne and Mowfenne, which is impossible; that a Draw Sluice of foure foote wide should convey the waters in a flood tyme in two months, when the other may doe itt in few days”.

Signed by twenty two people, names similar to those in the 1674 petition. In the handwriting of William Kemp, vicar.

This was sent as a letter to London with this curious address.

“This to Edward . . . icke
Esqr in Linkolsin Feildes
Inn neare Turnestille
This deliver with care
at the six^t dore of Turn-
stile in Hoburne, London.”

Sealed (GM)

1677. To the Rt Hon^{ble} John Lord Berkeley, Baron of Stratton. The petition of your lordship’s tenants in Burrowe Great Fen.

They used to have a sufficient 12 foot drain between the Severalls and Peterborough great Common, but for the last 4 or 5 years this has been obstructed by Francis Underwood, Esq. by damming it up near Cats Water, to the great damage of your tenants and Gunthorpe, Paston and Eye townes. That the 12 foot drain now turned into Pepper's lake, will not do the work for which it was designed. Before the dam was made the water ran from the Severalls through Thorney fen in a straight line to Guy-herne and they were in a much better condition. The waters not going in their ancient course, run back, and had not Carr dike water (which ran over Rundle bridge) been stopped last whitsuntide by the inhabitants of Eye, the common of Burrow fen and the Severalls had been much under water.

Ask that the ancient straight course of the water through Thorney fen be restored. Read 29 Nov. 1677.

Signatures of Deboa, Dellamore, Dellahay, Vanney, etc.

Before 1700. Petition of landowners and occupiers of Haddenham, Wilburton and Sutton

That the banks of the hundred foot river from Sutton Gault to Charles Leeds house and the bank of the Ouze thence to Streatham Ferry are low and full of Sock holes. That the water runs through and over and damages their lands. That Streatham Lazure leam is much grown up instead of being 12 ft wide and 4 ft deep—they pray that the banks may be mended and that Mr Walker whose duty it is, should clean out the leam. Signed: Ralph March, Nevile Butler, John Towerson and others.

Before 1700. Petition of divers of Littleport

That they are perpetually damnified by the new drain which runs from Lakingheath and Wainford hardland through Lakingheath Stalwood fens and hath a tunnel under Lakingheath load into the s. side of Brandon River and so is carried down below Warwear howe in Sir Thomas Gibbin's severalls, and a tunnel made to carry the water into Feltwell fen, which tunnel doth not carry the water according to your honours expectations: but on the contrary bringeth back into Whelpmore and Burnt fen all the water out of Easwell

springs and Wainford hardland and likewise the tunnel at Dead Miles End: by reason of the said draines and tunnels their ground which used to be last drowned are now first drowned. They ask for their lordships consideration. Eight signatures. Endorsed "Nothing done".

Before 1700. Petition of inhabitants of Wicken

That they own hundreds of acres of fen land subject to tax, and Wicken Load is the only drain carrying the waters to the outfall into Burwell Load, and Wicken load is grown almost level with the quick soil and has been so for many years, and thus makes their lands of little use and causes loss of their navigation to Cambridge and Wisbech. They were unwilling to let slip so favourable a season as the last year was for that work "which possibly in the age of man there would not have fallen out", so they procured a sum of money and the assistance of one skilled in that work John Prigg and set a fit number of men to clean out the load, the cost being about £30. Ask to be reimbursed in that sum.

Signed by Anderson, Bridgman and Drage.

Before 1700. Petition of severall landowners in Somersham, Colne and Earith, to the Duke of Bedford, etc.

That about two years since they petitioned setting forth that there is a brook commonly called Crainbrook lying between Colne and Somersham which is a great and swift stream in time of floods which runs down Somersham load to Copin's corner and so down the west water into the counter west through a small tunnel; petitioners did also show that Somersham load and the west water were so grown up that the water of the Crainbrook could not pass and the lands adjacent to that brook, some hundreds of acres, lay drowned for the most part of the year, and the Crainbrook water overflows Somersham Bank (being the Kings highway and a very great road for drift of cattle and other passengers) so that the bank is almost washed away and the highway become impassable; several hundreds of acres in Somersham Fore and High fens are drowned, and so must lie until Somersham Load and West Water drain be scoured and enlarged. Humbly ask for a remedy to their grievances.

Signatures arranged in four columns: 1 and 2 Somersham, 46 names; 3 Colne, 21 names; 4 Earith, 14 names, including these; Samuel Saywell,¹ Thomas Skeeles, John Cranwell, Edward Townsend, Will^m Whittlesy, Robert Blinkcorne.

c. 1700. Petition of inhabitants of Soham and Fordham.

For several years past they have been damaged by the very foul and overgrown Clipswell River lying between Fordham Common and Soham. They have cleared their part of the river and ask that the Corporation should clean theirs.

Signed: J. Russell, Isaac Dowman, Wm Mayer and twelve others.

c. 1700. The petition of the inhabitants of Sutton.

That until December last "a very great bridge" spanned the great river at Sutton gault, but in that month a great inundation of water by the sudden breach of the frost, together with a mighty quantity of ice, not only totally demolished the bridge but carried it away. Ask that the bridge may be rebuilt.

Signed by 35 people including Will Cole, Joseph Vipan, Wm Marsh, Anth: Gregory, G. Peacock, Robert Peacock.

[18th Cent.] Petition of the inhabitants of Yaxley, Farcet and Whittlesey, complaining of the badness of their drainage. More than six feet of petition and signatures.

c. 1702. Petition of inhabitants of Welney

That a sluice set down through the twenty foot bank into Bedford River a little above Welney would be beneficial for us not only in draining and securing dry our home lands but also the "fiftys" both in Welney and Maney and since we have it reported that there is to be such a sluice set down, we desire that it be set down near Welney townsend but not half a mile above it.

Signed by Abraham Gill and fourteen others. [Gill's signature is finely written and the petition may be in his handwriting. Gill was a nonconformist minister. He was accused of having forged priest's orders in 1691, and accord-

¹ Died 1709, Rector of Bluntisham and Willingham.

ing to his enemies committed all kinds of irregularities. He was at one time arrested and forced to serve as a soldier. He was living at Welney in 1702. See *An Answer being the case of Abraham Gill 1707, 4to, pp. 46.*]

1703. Petition of inhabitants of Wicken. 7 Apr. 1703.

That they have until lately drained their fen lands and Barraway little fen by a Tunnell under Soham river into the new drain and soe into the Ouze at Prickwillow bridge; that about three years ago this tunnel was ordered to be closed, whilst the mills in Soham mere should be working and cast out the mere water into the New drain, that now the mere waters cast out are embanked and run into Soham river and thence into the Ouze, so that there is no reason for the tunnel to be closed, ask that it may be opened.

Signed by William Green on behalf of the Earl of Orford, John Chicheley, William Anderson on behalf of Col. George Carpenter, William Drage and John Bridgeman.¹

c. 1737. Petition of the "principal inhabitants of Cottenham" that about 162 poles of a bank in Chair Fen should be repaired.

Signed by 68 people including the Rector, T. Green (1737-80), four of the Graves, three of the Bulls and two of the Ivatt families.

c. 1740. Petition of occupiers in Chatteris, Sutton, Mepal and Manea.

That Mr Blatt of Somersham lately layed a tunnel out of Cranebrooke in Coppins corner into the Outring ditch leading to Holleads in Chatteris, which flooded the common, severalls and adventure grounds of Chatteris; that on petition the tunnel was ordered to be removed, that Blatt has got up a counter petition against the removal of the tunnel etc. etc. One hundred and forty-four signatures follow, all in the same hand, so this is a duplicate, not the original petition.

¹ John Bridgeman of Wicken was one of the jurats of 1656. John Chicheley was conservator in 1699, bailiff in 1700, and surveyor general in 1717. See p. 149.

MISCELLANEA

- p. 100 L 14 *Cholera at Ely. Letters & Papers* 1832
1 Bdle

Some of the letters are from Mr H. J. Adeane, M.P. for the County and Isle. Another correspondent says that there had been two cases at Girton.

There are three daily returns on printed forms for April 13th, 14th and 15th, 1832. From the beginning of the epidemic on March 17th there had been 116 cases, of which 46 had died. There had been cases at Witcham and Coveney. An interesting bundle.

- p. 99 L 12 *Reach sluice, various.* 1 Bdle 1655-1829

Contains brief extracts from early accounts, but they are chiefly of the nineteenth century and not very interesting.

- p. 107 M 8 7 *old Pedigrees* 1 Bdle

These are carefully drawn up documents, some of them relate to royal personages, some have coats of arms drawn. They are probably the work of Sir John Dugdale.

- p. 107 M 21 *Old Law Papers and Proceedings*
1 Bdle

These are of early eighteenth century.

- p. 176 Ante-room D bottom *Old Deeds, brown*
paper parcel

This consists of Sales and Leases 1664, and later years of Charles II.

- p. 222 Ante-room G *Arrears Rolls, Nos. 1-18* 1659-1846

They are loose on the top of the cupboard, outside. Some of these parchment rolls are as large as Pipe Rolls. They are wrapped up in brown paper, are in good condition and the writing plain. The contents are arranged in columns: Lot No./Place/Area/Purchaser/acres purchased/arrears still owed.

- p. 177 Ante-room E 2 *Miscellaneous Papers*
(old) 1 Bdle

This consists chiefly of reports on petitions and repairs to be done. There are some presentments at the Court of Sewers. Usually late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

"1674 Tuesday, March 31st. After having first pressed the arguments and reasons for and against cutting the dam over Popham Eau, about 10 o'clock in the morning we went to Denyer Dam where we met with Sir Roger Pratt,¹ Capt. Barber² and others who offered several reasons opposed to cutting. Wednesday morning early we went against Salter's Load when it was within an hour and a half of low water. Sat. 4 April, we went to the S. bank of Morton's Leame."

Several folio pages, last date April 8, 1674. Signed Roger Jenyns and Hugh Underwood [conservator].

p. 177 Ante-room E 2

A report on four foolscap pages by Lord Gorges, Roger Jennings, Samuel Fortrey and Richard Marriott on the arrears of salaries and the future salaries of the under officers of the B.L.C. dated Feb. 17, 1674, they having been asked to make the report in the previous June.

Richard Burton Sasse-Keeper at Standground at £2 a year, four years in arrears.

His duty is to open and shut the Sasse to lett your boats through and preserve it from others hurting it. To continue the same with his dwelling in the house.

Mr Richard Prettyman. Keeper of Popham's Eau Sluce at 30^s a year, three and a half years in arrear. To be referred to committee as to continuance.

John Ips, Sasse-Keeper at Well townsend at £5 a year, seven years in arrear. But in regard it hath not been used for many years, and may not be used in the future, "we judge ten pounds to be paid him in full".

John Saffrey, Sass Keeper at Well creek, Nordale Sluce, Bedford Sluce Sasse-head at lower end of 20 foot and the Sluces at the lower end of Marshland Cut at £30 a year, eighteen months in arrear.

¹ A well-known architect, he built Horseheath Hall and planned some of the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire. Members of his family still own fenlands on the Brandon river.

² Edward Barber of Denver, Esq. was chosen one of the jurats in 1656. See p. 149.

We propose that this officer be removed and the salary reduced and to try the title to the house if he deliver not possession.

Anthony Thwayts now husband of Susan Harrison, for opening and shutting the sluice on the N. bank of Bedford River near Welches dam at £1 a year, three years in arrear. Isaac Wheeler for looking to the Sluice at Meadland Hill in N. bank, B. River, to fill the counter wash and other Sluces, and to watch the N. bank and 20 foot bank in times of floods from Erith to Welches dam, at £20 a year, six months in arrear. To continue at £15 a year.

Widow Scott for keeping Sluice in 20 ft bank below Welney, and N. bank of B. R. from Welches dam to Denver, £15 a year; two years in arrear. A special report to be made concerning this.

The salary of £4 to George Cory for keeping the sass at the Hermitage is paid to Lady Day 1674. But the committee think fitt that there be paid to the children of Robert Larman the sum of £12 for the house he built to attend this Sass.

The salary of £30 to Lewis Godfrey for keeping the Sass at Denver Dam is paid up to the time of his death, July 1674. His son, Robert, to be continued in his father's place at £20 a year salary, if he gives up quiet possession of the house built to attend to that Sasse, and also to give him some recompence for his father's additions to that house, but if he will not give up quiet possession to put him out and try the title.

Due to Guybon Wratholl for looking to the sluices at lower end of Downham Eau, near Stowbridge, at 50^s a year, one years salary to be reduced to 30^s.

Due to widow Warren as keeper of Sass head at the lower end of Feltwell drain at 10^s a year for 3 years ended Lady Day 1674, 30^s.

Due to Thomas Brasset for keeping the ferry-boat at Littleport Chayne, for one year, £8.

This committee are of the opinion that this salary be continued, but that the Corporation be at no further charge for making or repairing the ferry boat.

Due to William Cosier for one year's salary at 30^s, as keeper

of the Sasse heads on the Welney river and at Littleport bridge.

Sass head at the lower end of Sams cutt: the com. to name the Keeper, the salary to be £1 a year.

Sass heads at Botsham and Swaffham Load ends, and the sass at the end of Reach Load. Younge Pestle to be keeper at £4 a year.

The sasse heads at the end of Modney drayne and at the end of Mayd Load to be kept by Mr Marriott's tenants at 10^s a year each.

Sass at the end of Bevill's Leame at Tower house. We adjudge this must have a Keeper, the com. to agree at what salary.

After studying the report no one will agree that the B.L.C. were generous employers or punctual paymasters. Of the ten under officers who were responsible for the principal sasses and dams, the salaries of seven were in arrears to the extent of 4, 3½, 3, 3, 2, ½, ½ years respectively. Two of these were widows, one of whom was three years in arrears. The grant of £12 to Robert Larman's children may seem generous, but the treatment of John Saffery, whose salary was eighteen months in arrears, and Robert Godfrey, a new tenant, seems to be harsh, unless John was a scoundrel. I cannot find that the wages of the higher officials were reduced.

The following four notes are taken from p. 97 L 9, or p. 177 Ante-room E 2.

1677. Jan. 28. "Thomas Tompson [Keeper of the sluice at Wellcreeke] his answer to Tho. Kirton his two Letters."

The two letters are not in evidence.

"That it happened on the 10th day of April last that one hang of Loyters goeing through the sluice at Well-creeke did run against the fresh doors and did breake open the planks which were nailed to keep them open withall and they presently shutt close and so continued for 4 or 5 hours.

As to the complaint of letting up the Tide it is not true, for the doors were neither tyed open with ropes nor sett with propps, for nothing else than a good cable will hold them. As for setting of horses to draw them open it is not true, there never was any such thing done since it was under my care.

He saith I chayned up the doors, and I confess it for the sea doors stood shutt 2 weeks and 3 days and were so silted up in that time by reason of great floods coming down the river Ouze that a boat could not pass etc. etc.

He further saith I have nobody to regard the sluice, whereas I have a boy above 16 years who doth nothing else in my absence, in all cases of difficulty or necessitie I hired a neighbour at mine own charge.

When Thomas Kirton and I had some words about the rising of the water two foot in four or five hours (which no rational man will imagine, when as it hath fallen but one foot and a half since) he plainly told me hee would doe my business for me, which seems to me a term of envy. . . ."

1678. In another bundle is a paper headed "View made of the North Level by Mr Anthony Hammond, Mr Samuel Fortrey sen. and junior in April 1678".

They began at Guyhirn on April 4th, and continued for three days. They considered a complaint of Col. Russell's tenants against Mr Le Plau and decided that they had no complaint. They plumbed the New South Eau, found it 6 foot deep and a well wrought drain. Their "View" finds little fault with the banks, so it is rather surprising that they submit estimates of work to be done costing over £800.

Anthony Hammond was one of the original adventurers of 1631 and a man of the same name, of Wilburton, was conservator in 1679, and bailiff in 1694, see p. 151.

Samuel Fortrey was one of the original bailiffs 1663. He lived at Oakington. The family was of Huguenot descent.

As soon as John Jenyns became surveyor general he received letters of request from his friends. Mr William Cole of Sutton who was elected a conservator in 1698, writes thus:

1693. "Ely, 14th Feb. 93. Worthy Sir, Such were my well wishes for your own success that I am now one of those that enjoyce in it and please myself with the hopes of our friend Capt. F. succeeding you, if the office doth not sute your conveniency for the future. And now that you are our chief officer I humbly reminde you of one small thing under your

care viz. the south bank of the Stooek river by the badness of which I suffer above ye loss of sixty pounds...etc. etc."

Directed "To be left with Sir Francis Child at Temple Bar".

In one of the bundles of Miscellaneous papers is a report of Mr John Jenyns, Surveyor General, on the state of the banks throughout the level, dated Nov. 1694.

1694. He starts from Ely high bridge and goes to Prickwillow, then up Mildenhall river to Soham Metland droves; finds a wooden tunnell 15 inches square, where a brick tunnel 3 foot wide ought to be, this will cost £30. Soon he comes to Dr Cookes, where the bank is in "pritty good condition, but a new tunnel which was ordered some years ago, has not been set because the mending of banks required the money. To Iselham Chaire which bank is low but may endure an ordinary flood, and so across Iselham Lands to Soham river which was very grown up, to Clipswell corner, from Soham to Barway and thence down E. bank of Ouse to Ely high bridge.

The East bank of the Ouze to Southery Ferry is repaired as far as the money allotted would allow.... We viewed Denver Sluice which is very tyte and good.... The Tongs banks on both sides of the wash are in good condition, but that bank on the marshland side we find the foreland thereof somewhat damaged by carting of turf from the several lots on that side. The names and times of carting I have a particular of, but they alleadge by Mr Drury¹ and Mr Saffery,¹ to whom I sent to know why the damage was done, that they ought to have two bridges which were ordered last Ely Meeting, but could not possibly be done this year, the money being so much wanted for the banks....

The bridge at Maney is in a sad condition and great complaints made, there being no passage over.... The Nene river is much grown up with mud from March to Flood's ferry although clear from weeds by roading,² and not above 6 inches of water for the most of the way....

¹ Men of these names were serving as conservators in 1718.

² Cutting the growth from the sides of a river or drain as the herbage on the sides of a road is cut.

We came down Horsecroft Bank to Elderswell,¹ this bank is in a very bad condition, nothing being done to it this year . . .

North Level. We went from Whittlesey with David le Pla, first to the N. bank of Moretons Leame and so to Mr Le Pla's house, and from thence to the crosse draine that meets Porsand water, and so by Clows crosse downe Shire draine to Hill Sluce. A little before we came to this sluce we saw a draine newly made which we are informed is made by the owners of Newton and Tydd St Giles, that leads from their lands to a tunnel they have laid thro' the bank into Shire draine, which we are informed is their designe to save their part of the charge of repairing Tydd Sluce.

Md. Mr Le Pla saith that my Ld. Gorges and himself know that the bank where the tunnel is sett is the corporation's and they may if they please dam it up . . .

"Being at Wisbech that night we met with some of the gentlemen and find that they are now preparing several ways to run their waters, that they may not be forced to contribute towards the repair of the Tydd Sluce at Sea."

p. 230 Tin Box in cellar *Ancient Folio written
in Latin* 54 sheets

This is a transcript in court hand from the *De Banco* roll of 1674. Concerns a trespass at Swavesey by Clark and Edward East, John Newman, William Brand, John and James Disbrow, Thomas Bedford, and others, against the Bedford Level Corporation. Case unfinished, on paper.

Amongst the bundle of miscellaneous Papers in E 2, there is a document which explains the particulars of this trespass.

The grievances of the Swavesey men were that the Corporation workmen were taking earth to mend the banks from a place where they had no right to do so, this was stealing, which was a felony, hence the production of the gallows; also that the raising of the banks might cause the town of Swavesey and those inside it to be drowned. Therefore they said they would rather be killed in fighting the army of 10,000 than be drowned in their beds.

p. 127 Ante-room E 2 Be it remembered that in pursuance of a warrant of Session of Sewers dated Sept. 15th, 1674, made at James Disborough's house and directed to me

¹ Probably Eldernell.

Ralph Peirson, on the Wednesday following ten laborers were set to work to cutt and digg in the dreyne and foreland on the west syde of Swacey great bank to repair it, which day they workt quietly without any disturbance than some threats from some single inhabitants of Swacey, who said that they should not work there above an hour longer, and that they would build a pair of gallows upon the bank and hang the workmen, and them that sett them to work, and that they would be with them in an hour, but the workmen workt all that day.

On Thursday morning about 5 of the clocke seaven laborers were set to work at the same place, and between six and seaven the same morning came about 20 of the inhabitants of Swacey, and fell violently upon the men and wrung the Barrowes out of their hands, unspindled them, stampt them in pieces and threw them into the river. The above warrant was shown and read but was sleighted, and they said that they could themselves call a Court in their town and make a more lawfull order than that was, and lay flatt felony to the workmen for stealing their earth, and sett up a paire of gallowes upon the bank to hang them upon that did so work there. And in this interim of time one Richard Hall violently wrung a spade out of William Granger's hand, and swore desperatly (when Mr Peirson bid the men goe to work) that he would be the death of any man that should offer to digg or cutt the sodd, and shakeing the spade and darting it at the workmen said, "If you be well keep yourselves so, or we will fill the dreine with your men as you raise the bank with earth", which put the workmen in an apprehension that they might do some violent act on them. Yet Mr Peirson bid the workmen reach a barrow out of the dreyne which was whole, and they ran violently upon William Rosse and thrust him into the river, besides other abuses in throwing of clodds at him. And they threatened if they would not leave work they would bring a greater number from the towns and said "If you bring 10,000 men we would stand in opposition to them, for we would rather die on dry land than the banks should be mended to drowne us in the Town". And they bid us begone and swore that if we did not,

and brought all the materials we had they would make a bonfire of them and fire us and our houses with them....

Ten men signed as willing to give evidence.

A list of the Swavesy men who disturbed the workmen is next given, they are the same as those mentioned in the "Ancient Folio".

Thirty-three subpoenas were issued for defendants to appear at Westminster on 3 Nov. 1674, but only seven of these were served personally: they were usually served on wife or maidservant. One man was in Cambridge Gaol, another was dead, two were not in the liberty. Concerning William Caldwell it was stated:

"We were at his house three times and whether he or his wife were at home we cannot tell, but we heard some people in the house, so we putt it in at the door, for they lockt the door on us and would not make us no answeare. Darcey Cisson, James Disbrowe, Thos. Drage."

OPINIONS

p. 63 C 14 *B.L.C. copies of Opinions* 2 Vols. 1668-1758,
1800-35

There are many opinions in Safe 2.

p: 134	* <i>W. Ellis's opinion on Waldersee Case</i>	1667
	<i>Case on right of haling [hauling]</i>	N.D.
	<i>Case re cutting turves</i>	N.D.
p. 135	* <i>Sir E. Northey on taking earth from Standground¹</i>	1698
	<i>J. Holt on Cambridge petition on Navigation</i>	1676
	<i>Mr Finch on Peterboro petition</i>	1665

* In Safe 2.

¹ The conservators were only allowed to take earth for puddling from five specified localities; two at Whittlesey, one each at Chatteris, Sutton and Roswell, Ely (Wells, *op. cit.* vol. I, p. 590).

ORDINANCES

It might have been expected that there would have been papers or books dealing with the laws and ordinances of the B.L.C., but the only item of this character to be found in the Inventory is this:

p. 195 Ante-room H 10	<i>Laws, Ordinances & decrees</i>	1666
		1 Vol.

ORDER BOOKS

p. 1 A 1	<i>Adventurers' proceedings (King undertaking) Drainage and Proceedings Committee</i>	1646-9
	<i>Adventurers' proceedings</i>	<i>Calf Vol. 1</i>
		<i>Vols. 2-8</i> 1646-62

ADVENTURERS' PROCEEDINGS

These volumes were apparently once bound with parchment documents for covers, but they are now substantially bound in rough calf. Loose inside the cover of volume one is a document of 33 Elizabeth concerning the practice of heraldry. The binding was carelessly done, because volume one contains portions of two volumes and volume three contains twenty-eight pages which really belong to volume one. A pencil note at the beginning of volume one states that the first page of the MS. will be found misplaced five leaves from the end.¹ The first fifteen folios were unnumbered, folio I being folio 16 of the MS. Some of the volumes are pagged and indexed, others have neither index nor pagination.

It was thought that some idea of the nature of the volumes would be best given by noting the contents of the first six folios of the first volume.

These six folios seem to be the beginning of the matter because the Earl of Bedford is questioned about his right to the work of drainage. Much discussion must have taken place before it was decided on June 30, 1646, that advantage would be received from draining the fens. The "View" projected on fo. vi was a survey, not a map. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about these pages is the large number of petitions received.

The records of the Adventurers have been freely used by S. Wells, *op. cit.*, and Dr H. C. Darby has made good use of them in his books on the fenland. The present writer, through lack of time,

¹ It is bound in between folios 27 and 28.

has only made a cursory examination in order to extract a few matters of general interest, or concerning the preservation of records or making of maps. Much more concerning the latter subject could be found.

In Volume VI, fo. 20, there is an entry which shows that the Adventurers would stand no nonsense from those who did not pay their taxes, outlawry was to be resorted to, if necessary. The full report concerning the unfaithful employees makes an amusing reading, but it does not state why "stout" Fynnimore was not qualified for service.

The giving of expensive presents of silver plate to Adventurers who had done good work, apparently without pay, seems strange considering how low the treasurer's funds usually were. Three cases have been noted, Barber, St John and Taylor, but there may have been others.

After the passing of the "Pretended Act" of 1649, the meetings of the Adventurers become more interesting. The names of those present are given; these varied from 5 to 44 or more. The business was of a varied character. There were new officers to be appointed and their salaries agreed on. At first there were the debts and workings of the original undertakers to be cleared off. Letters were received and answers sent. A message was sent post haste to Wisbech to prevent the stoppage of work there. Matters concerning the transfer of lots, and orders about the collection of taxes, occur frequently.

Volume I.

- fo. i (The unnumbered pages have been numbered in Roman figures. They form a continuous record.)
 Begins abruptly with this heading:
 "At the Committee for the fens, 16 May 1646."

The whole folio is taken up with resolutions to send letters to the various Sheriffs.

- fo. ii 20 May 1646.

ORDERED that the E. of Bedford should make it appear to this committee on Saturday next what pretences he hath to the work of draining, etc: and by what right, and what money he hath expended.
 23 May.

ORDERED that Mr Bacon, Mr Thorpe, Mr Trenchard, Sir Dudley North and Mr Roger North do examine the interest and title of the Earl of Bedford.

Adjournment until Monday sennight unto the Starre Chamber.

fo. ii 11 June 1646.

Mr Thorpe reported and exhibited a brief of the E. of Bedford's title.

fo. iii 1646. June 4th. The petitions from the following villages or groups of villages were read. 1, Cottenham, Willingham and Rampton. 2, Over. 3, Isleham, Soham, Wicken, Burwell, Swaffham Prior, Swaffham Bulbeck, Bottisham, Stow-Quy, Horningsey, Ditton, Waterbeach. 4, Another from the first seven parishes of No. 3. 5, Haddenham, Sutton, Mepal, Witcham, Witchford, Wentworth, Coveney, Littleport, Downham, Ely, Chatteris, Stretham. 6, Swavesey and Fen Drayton. 7, Hockwold. 8, Mildenhall. 9, Yaxley. 10, The six towns of the soke of Somersham. 11, Ramsey, Bury. 12, Stanton, Hunts. 13, Inhabitants by Nene river. 14, Chesterton and Allerton. 15, Fletton and Stibbington. 16, Warmington and Elton. 17, Peterborough. 18, Bottlebridge and Orton. 19, Eye. 20, Hundred of Nassaburgh. 21, Easter and Aylesworth. 22, Sutton, Cambs.

RESOLVED that whoever shall desire a copie of the ordnance for drayning the fens shall have it.

RESOLVED that on Wednesday next the ordnance shall be taken into consideration. And the chairman may receive such other petitions as shall be presented from the country.

At the committee of the Fenns 10 June 1646. Petitions from 23, Sawtre, 24, Ramsey.

ORDERED that such persons as desire the ordnance for drayning the great level to be passed, shall be heard on this day fortnight.

fo. iv verso. This day were also preferred to the committee petitions from 25, Glatton and Holme. 26, Halliwell and Needingworth. 27, Northwold. 28, Southery. 29, Helgey. 30, Sir Henry Willoughby.¹ 31, Swavesey.

¹ His land was near Hilgay.

32, Haddenham, Sutton, Mepal, Witcham, Wentworth, Coveney, Littleport, Downham, Ely, Chatteris, Stretham, Wilburton and Thetford.

1646 June 24. The committee met and adjourned till next day.

ORDERED that the chairman shall on request made send his warrant to produce witnesses, papers, records, etc.

fo. v This day were produced to the committee these petitions. 33, Soham and Barway. 34, Swaffham Prior. 35, Wicken. 36, Cottenham, Willingham and Rampton. 37, Burwell. 38, Bottisham. 39, Fen Ditton and Horningsey. 40, Swaffham Bulbeck. 41, Mepal. 42, Stow Quy. 43, Waterbeach. 44, The six towns of the soke of Somersham.

fo. v At the committee 30 June 1646.
It was decided that advantage would be received from draining the fens.

fo. vi 1646 July 4, 11, 14, 15.
It was decided that it be reported to the House of Commons, that a view be made of the Great Level of the fens by persons of ability and quality, no-ways interested neither as adventurers, sharers, or owners. That the view be taken under the Great Seal of England.

fo. x 1647 Nov. 15. "Mr Pepis¹ of Council for Cottenham, Rampton and Willingham came not to oppose the feazableness and the profitableness of the work in general but in right of those three towns that they might not be drawne into charges unless they may receive a proportionable benefit to the losse or charge they shall sustain."

Folio 1 of volume 1 proper is dated 1649 May 29th, being the day that the "Pretended Act" was passed between 10 and 12 in the forenoon. Next morning there was a meeting at Lord White-lock's house, Robert Henley, John Latch, Samuel Spalding and Anthony Hammond being present.

fo. 6 1649 June 13. Order for a warrant to collect all

¹ See p. 154.

mapps and writings concerning the Company and bring them to Mr Henley's house. Robert Goodfellow and Wm. Palmer to execute the warrant to Mr Fisher to deliver up all such mapps.

- fo. 7 1649 June 13. Mr George Smith appointed clerk at one hundred pounds a year.
1649 June 14. There were nineteen adventurers present.
- fo. 8 1649 June 16. RESOLVED to meet every day at 3 o'clock and as soon as five adventurers were present. (At many meetings only five were present).
- fo. 9 1649 June 18. Mr Turner and Mr Palmer were sent to seal up a trunk of writings concerning the company of Adventurers and Participants which were discovered at Westminster and bring the trunk and writings to Mr Henley's house.
- fo. 13 1649 June 22.
Mr Jennings acquainted the company that a Mr Parrolle¹ an artist in Hartfordshire is ready to serve them. He is to meet them at Peterboro on July 4th next. Mr Henley named another artist one Mr Moore, that offers to draw a mapp of the Level for 10li. He is also to meet them at Peterborough.
- fo. 14 1649 June 13. Sir Hamon le Strange is requested to procure Mr Fisher to bring all plotts, mapps and books concerning the Levell to Peterborough by July 4.
- fo. 22 The Earl of Bedford desired W. Palmer to bring a copy of the Lot book to Mr Henley's for the Adventurers' use, to the intent that the original might be sealed up and preserved from defacing.

Volume II. 15 Nov. 1649 to 20 April 1650.

1649 Jan. 28. The house of Robert Henley Esq. without Temple Bar appointed for the sale of defaulters lands.

¹ This artist unknown.

1649 March 2. Lt.-Col. Underwood's salary as expeditor fixed at three hundred pounds for him and those he should employ.

1650 March 28. These salaries are mentioned. W. Palmer, under-surveyor, 66li 13·4. W. Lake, clerk controller. 80li. Robert Burton, principal overseer, 100li. W. Palmer to send by some safe hand all books, papers and mapps lately brought from London to Wisbech, to John Hopkinson at Mr Henley's house.

Volume III. 15 Nov. 1649 to 20 April 1650.

Has an index. After which there are bound in 28 pages of the rough minutes of the "Committee for the Fens" 16 May 1646 to 17 Dec. 1647. These rough minutes give the additional information that the Committee met in the Committee Chamber for the Army; in the chamber of Mr Reynolds in the Inner Temple; frequently in the Duchy Chamber; and once in the Star Chamber.

Volume IV. 9 March 1649 to 17 Feb. 1650.

fo. 3 14 March 1649. Mr Henley moving the company that his journey to Wisbech might be spared in regard of his Treasureship and that he is not well disposed to travel; the company have left the consideration to himself, whether he go or send his son.

fo. 7 1650 March 27 and 28. Meetings at Wisbech.

fo. 16 1650 April 11th. At Mr Henley's house, Temple Bar.

Some of the minutes this year are signed by twenty or more adventurers.

fo. 26 1650 May 6. John Latch and Anthony Hammond agree to go down to the Great Level, to be resident there, in order to look after the company's business and are asked to accept 20li. a month.

fo. 45 1650 July 19th. A press to be forthwith made with several locks and keys to it, in which mapps, books and papers shall be kept.

fo. 55 1650 Sept. 16. The company are informed that Mr Neale an innkeeper of March, has several mapps of

parcels of the Great Level which belong to the company. Wm. Palmer is ordered to demand and receive them. There are other orders to bring mapps and surveys to Mr Henley's house.

1650 Jan. 10. Mr Trench became clerk controller instead of Mr Lake.

Volume vi. 28 Aug. 1652 to 8 April 1656.

fo. 20 1652 Oct. 28. Capt. Fisher and others on the N. side of Wisbech to be sued to outlawry for the money owing from that town.

fo. 21 Several entries about cutting and carrying away the earth from banks. Mr John Latch's opinion was obtained in writing and 20s. paid him for it.

fo. 37 etc. 1652 Jan. 22nd. A long report on the suitability or otherwise of fifteen officers of the company. Some extracts are as follows:

John Hatton and Robert Pinchbeck entrusted with the issuing of materials, appear to have been very failing of their duty.

John Carley entrusted to take up work, hath certified more money to be payable to workmen than was indeed due.

Edward Welch is considered able, but slow, and is much diverted from the company's service by his own private occasions.

George Barnes hath used to let out, take up and pay off works, which method is not fit to be allowed and is considered fit for examination.

Thomas Moore the clerk of the contracts is an officer useless, and besides he hath not managed his place with due respect to the ends for which he was employed.

William Palmer is seldom observed to be upon the works. (Later he was admonished and continued as under-surveyor.)

Henry Fynnimore is a stout man, but in other respects not well qualified for the company's service.

- fo. 39 1652 Jan. 22nd. It was decided to present Mr Walter St John with a dozen silver plates for his trouble when he was lately on the works.
- fo. 63 1652 March 12. A sumpter horse with trunks¹ was ordered to be provided for taking documents and treasure to Ely for a meeting there. Amongst the documents enumerated were: The original Lynn and St Ives Laws. Mr Hayward's survey. Three mapps. The original Lot book with a copy thereof. The original indenture of fourteen parts. Mr Henley was directed to take £200 with him and have £400 deposited at Ely for use if required. This large amount was for arrears of wages and to pay overdue bills. It was arranged that Mr Hugh Peters² and Mr George Cokaine³ were to accompany the delegation and the former was to preach at Ely, March 24th.
- fo. 89 1653 May. A dinner for the delegates at Cambridge cost £4. 5. 11.
- fo. 93 1653 June 8. Orders given to officers of soldiers who were being sent to quell unruly people at Swaffham.
- fo. 110 1653 Oct. 11. A meeting was held at Mr Dalton's house in Ely.
1653 Oct. 25. Back at Mr Henley's house in London Mr Hopkinson was ordered to bring all papers etc. thither.
1653 Nov. 16. Mr George Dalton to have £150 a year for being receiver and expeditor.
- fo. 121 1653. It was ordered that there be a mapp forthwith printed describing the bridges, sluices and dreynes made by the company of Adventurers and Mr Playforth⁴ the graver is to have 11li. for the doing thereof.

¹ Whenever a trunk was opened and any document temporarily removed, it was recorded in the minutes.

² Executed at Charing Cross, Oct. 1660.

³ A Bedfordshire man, B.A. Sidney College. Chaplain to Lt.-Gen. Fleetwood. A close friend of B. Whitelock. Arrested and fined after 1660. Died 1691. Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, p. 124.

⁴ Not mentioned in Bryan's *Dictionary of Engravers*. Mr Lynam thinks this map may be no. 9 in his *Maps of the Fenland*.

- fo. 123 Dec. 21. Meeting at the "Bell" Ely. Dec. 22, 23, Meeting at the "White Hart" Ely.
- fo. 126 Dec. 24, Saturday. Meeting at Mr Henley's house in London. There were different people present on Friday and Saturday.
- fo. 147 1654 March 31st. At the "Bell" Ely in the morning and at the "White Hart" in the afternoon. Mr Moore offers to present the company with one general map of the whole level.
April 3-5 at the "White Hart". April 11th. At Mr Fountayne's house, Boswell Court.
- fo. 157 1654. Mr Blanchard,¹ gouldsmith, was acting as a Banker for the company.
- fo. 204 1655 Jan. 26. Forty-four adventurers were present at the meeting.
- fo. 220 1655 Feb. 20. At Mr Henley's chamber, Elm Court, Middle Temple.
The treasurer of Middle Temple to be asked that they may be sometime longer in the chamber belonging to Robert Henley, Esq. deceased, until the company be elsewhere provided for.
- fo. 221 Mr Gorges and Mr St John to consider of a gratuitie to be given to Mr Barber of Denver for his paynes and care he hath taken of the Company's affairs.
- fo. 228 1656 Apl. 3. Mr Henley's offer of his house for the company to be accepted.
- fo. 233 Apl. 5. Mr Trenchard and Mr Latch to treat and conclude with Mrs Henley touching her house and to propose a price at the cheapest rent they can.
- fo. 167 1654. In a list of the officers of the company and their salaries are these names:
- | | |
|---|--------|
| Richard Gorges Esq. conservator of the Middle Level | 150li. |
| Jonas Moore overseer | 100li. |
| Edmund Welch, principal contractor | 60li. |

¹ See p. 70.

John Hopkinson, clerk	52li.
George Barnes, bailiff under Mr Hammond	30li.
Thomas Bland, solicitor	50li.

Volume VII. From April to October 1656.

- fo. 1 verso 1656 Apl. 20. "Forasmuch as old Mr Henley is now dead" Mr John Latch is appointed in his place to help Lord Gorges.
- fo. 2 1656 April. Mr Henley has agreed to let 4 rooms at his house without Temple Bar for £25 a year. It is ordered that the press wherein the records were kept in the late Mr Henley's chamber in the Temple, be removed to Mr Henley's house.
- fo. 4 1656 May 7th. Order that the money allowed to Samuel Hockly be paid out of the money due from Wisbech.
- fo. 16 1656 July 1. Meeting was held at Mr Henley's house without Temple Bar.
- fo. 19 1656 July 3. Meeting was held at Lord Chief Justice's Lincolns Inn.
- fo. 24 1656 Sept. 29 to Oct. 1st, at the "Bell", Ely, at which thirty-three Adventurers were present.

See Wells, *op. cit.* vol. I, p. 303.

Volume VIII. From September 1656 to June 1662.

The Adventurers met on Feb. 19, 1656 at Mistress Henley's house, also on March 14, 1656. On June 14, 1660, at the "White Hart", Ely. Only about a third of the volume has been used.

After the passing of the Act of 1663, the style of the authority changes into conservators.

- p. 72 G 17-24 *Conservators' Proceedings Order Books (Ely)* 1665-1809
41 Vols.
- Conservators' Proceedings Order Books (London)* 1663-1808
36 Vols.

CONSERVATORS' PROCEEDINGS

The London Order Books or Conservators' Proceedings are distinguished by numbers, there being fifteen books between August 1, 1663 and March 1698.

The Ely Order Books are distinguished by letters; Vol. A covering the period June 20, 1667 to April 10, 1672, and Vol. H the period April 1700 to May 1703. But there is an earlier Order Book for the period May 1665 to May 1667. This had been mislaid when the lettering was done and is now called "the first Ely order book". There are nine books between 1665 and 1703.

The reason for having two series of order books was that it was sometimes necessary to hold meetings both in London and Ely at the same time. All the meetings held at Ely are recorded in the London volumes although not in such detail. Thus both record that a meeting was held at the Shire House, Ely, on May 18, 1665. The Ely volume records a list of arrears of taxes on sixteen leavés, after which the court adjourned to Mr Partriche's house in the College. The London volume only records the bare facts of the meeting and adjournment.

More meetings are recorded in the London than in the Ely volumes. For instance in 1666 there are records of meetings in London on May 3, 10, 12, 17, 20, 24, 30, June 1, 6 and 21. In the Ely volume it is stated that a meeting was held in the Inner Temple on February 13, 1665 and adjourned to the following Thursday at 3 o'clock, which meeting was not held for want of a quorum of five. The only other meetings recorded up to the end of June were on June 7 and 28.

The Order Books, or Conservators' Proceedings, are paper volumes bound in parchment indentures. The cover of London Vol. 2 concerns Thomas Chicheley of Wimpole, 1660. All the volumes need repair, as the margins of many of the leaves are tender or frayed. Most of the volumes have no general title, but on the leaf just inside the cover of No. 4 of the London series is this: "Entries of proceedings of the Corporacon of the Greate Levell of the fenns".

As in the case of the Adventurers' Proceedings, notes of the contents of the first six folios of each series of Conservators' Proceedings follow. It is feared that they do not contain much of interest. "The commonalty", who now first appear at meetings, were adventurers who were neither bailiffs nor conservators, but some of them were important local gentry. At the close of each meeting it was always stated where the adjourned meeting was to be held. According to the record many meetings were held at

which no business was done. This may have been so, but the slackness of the clerk was sometimes at fault. The Ely Order Books record business which was not entered into the London Order Books of the same date.

London Order Book No. 1. 1 August, 1663 to 29 March, 1664.

- fo. 1 Aug. 1, 1663. At the Fen Office, Temple.
Amongst the local people present, Roger Jenyns, and Samuel Fortrey. Edmund Welch, appointed Surveyor of the North level at a salary of £52. 10.
- fo. 1-4 is taken up with the appointment of officers.
- fo. 4 Aug. 13, 1663. At the Inner Temple.
The names of people present. 1, The Governor. 2, Bailiffs. 3, Conservators. 4, Commonalty.
- fo. 5 Records of Officers being sworn.
The corporation seal ordered to be delivered to the Earl of Bedford.
- fo. 5 Lord Gorges and the Register to prepare a form of conveyance.
The register to procure an exemplification of the Act of Parliament establishing the corporation, under the Great Seal.
It is ordered that all taxes in arrear should be accepted without penalty if half was paid before September 10 and the rest by October 10.
- fo. 6-7 record meetings at Ely on September 20 and 30 when only formal business was done.
- fo. 24 Feb. 5, 1663. Amongst the commonalty the following local names appear: Sir Robert Henley, Sir Thomas Dayrell, Sir Thomas Willis,¹ Mr Duckett,² Mr D. Offley.

London Order Book No. 4. 20 October 1666 to 7 May 1668.

- fol. 1 "Mr Hampson's Chamber where the Fen Office was kept, being burnt in the dreadful fire, the company

¹ Of Fen Ditton.

² Of Steeple Morden.

were in a strait for a place to meet and made the use of Mr Moyle's chamber in Inner Temple Lane, 20 Oct. 1666."

Ely. "The first Order Book." 17 May 1665 to 30 May 1667.

- fo. 1 1665 May 17th. A meeting held at Ely and adjourned till the following morning at 6 o'clock in Mr Partriche's house in the College.
- fo. 1 1665, May 18. Present: Earl of Bedford, Bailiffs and Conservators. Richard Marriott was sworn in as auditor. Transfers of various lots took place.
- fo. 2 May 18th. Afternoon meeting held by adjournment at the Shire House, Ely.
The names of the officers present given.
- fo. 2 Mr Mingay receiver delivered in the schedules of arrears of taxes. These schedules take up both sides of folios 3 to 16.
- fo. 18 1665, June 1st. Meeting at the F.O. Inner Temple.
Nov. 23rd. Meeting held at the Philosophy School, Oxford, because of the plague in London. An adjournment was made to the first Thursday of the next term at the F.O. This was not held in regard of the continuance of the plague in London.
1665/6. Feb. 13th, Tuesday. Meeting held and adjourned till the following Thursday at 3 o'clock. This meeting was not held for want of a quorum of five.

No other meetings are recorded until June 7, June 28, July 20, 1666. At the last meeting five leaves are covered with the work done. Adjournment was then made to the Shire House, Ely, September 13, at noon. "This meeting was not held in regard that the dreadful fire began the second of September last had destroyed the office at the Temple."

The next meeting was held at Mr Moyle's chamber in the Inner Temple, on Thursday, October 25, 1666. Amongst the bailiffs present (5) was Mr Chicheley; amongst the conservators (5) Sir Robert Henley, Mr Fortrey and Lt.-Col. Underwood; amongst the commonalty (6) Mr Offley and Mr Hammond.

Ely Order Book A. 1667-1672.

- fo. 31 Meeting at the Fen Office, London, 22 Feb. 1671.
 April 10, 1672. Meeting at Dr Beaumont's¹ chamber,
 the College, Ely.

It will be noticed that there are so many references to the wandering of the evidences belonging to the Corporation, that it seems fortunate that so much has survived in the Fen Office. On the other hand, if some of the documents had not wandered, there would have been nothing left of a date earlier than the Great Fire of London, which is said to have consumed the Fen Office and all its contents. Fortunately, however, in 1663, Lord Gorges was allowed to remove some of the "evidences and accompts". These must have included all the Proceedings earlier than 1665, the early lease and account books, and the original petitions and vouchers of an earlier date than 1666. It seems that either the Fen Office was not completely burnt out, or Lord Gorges had prophetic insight.

- p. 62 C 13 *Index to Order Books London & Ely 1767-1813*
 2 Vols.
- p. 62 C 14 *Copies of General & Standing Orders 1675-1825*
 1 Vol.
- p. 2 A 1 *Commissioners under the Pretended Act July 1650*
 2 Vols. to
 June 1656

Vol. i. Proceedings of Commissioners under the Pretended Act, 10 July, 1650 to 5 Dec. 1651.

before fo. 1 Wee the commissioners whose names are subscribed appointed by the Act of Parliament for draining the Great Level.....appoint to meet tomorrow in the Middle Temple Hall, London, at two of the clock, to act, etc....9 July, 1650.

¹ Joseph Beaumont, D.D., Canon of Ely, 1646. Master of Jesus College, 1662, of Peterhouse, 1663.

- [1.] B. Whitlock }
 [2.] Ric. Keeble } [Lords commissioners of Great Seal];
 [3.] Jo. Lysle }
 [4.] Jo. Wylde [Chief baron of the Exchequer]
 [5.] Philip Jermyn [a justice of the King's Bench]
 [6.] P. Warburton do.
 [7.] Edw. Atkins [a baron of the Exchequer]
 [8.] Rich. Aske [a justice of the King's Bench]
 [9.] Edward Eltonhead [a master in Chancery]

- fo. 1 Wed. 10 July, 1650. First meeting.
 Present nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9 of above list with Mr Justice Patesson. The Act of Parliament was read and then the meeting was adjourned to Oct. 1st.
- fo. 1-4 Meetings were held on Mondays, Oct. 10th, Nov. 18th, Jan. 13th, Feb. 19th, Feb. 28th.
- fo. 5 A meeting held at the School house, Wisbech,¹ March 21, 1650. Present: Whitlock, Lisle, Eltonhead, Sir John Trevor, Sir John Boucher, Wm Leman, John Sadler, Jeremiah Whitecote and Talbot Pepys, recorder of Cambridge.

A sum of £50 was ordered to be paid for the removal of seven houses in Waldersea, to help the draining.

- fo. 5d After hearing a petition from Downham it was ordered that £200 be paid to that town to be employed as a stock for the poor. The poor's common had been cut through in making a drain.
- fo. 6d Upon a petition delivered by Col. Thomas Castle² on behalf of Mepal and Sutton, it was ordered that a sufficient Cart bridge shall be made at Mepal and another between that town and Erith either at Sutton Gault, or at some other convenient place.
- fo. 7d March 24, 1650. At the town hall, Peterborough, the petition of the University and Town of Cambridge

¹ See Wells, *op. cit.* vol. 1, p. 217.

² He had houses at Haddenham and Wilburton with seven and eight fireplaces respectively.

- was considered. Cooper, *Annals of Cambridge*, III, 445.
- fo. 9 Mch 25th, 1651. In the minster church.
- fo. 12 do. At the sign of the Angel, Peterborough.
- fo. 12d May 19th, 1651. At Middle Temple Hall. Meetings in June, October, December, February (2).
- fo. 19 Feb. 25, 1652.
Petitions of divers gentlemen, masterworkmen and poor labourers who were employed in making banks in 1641, when the late king was undertaker. Mr Latch expeditor had received the money but had not paid them.
- fo. 26 Mch 24th, 1652. At the town house in Ely.
At each meeting petitions of private people and parishes were considered and orders given.
- fo. 29-46 Orders issued at Ely, 24 March, 1652, about fifty in number.
- fo. 46d The meeting held "at the Sign of the Bell".
- fo. 47 Monday, May 30th, Middle Temple.
"On this day no commissioner attended."

Vol. II, 1655-6. This consists alternately of petitions and orders thereon, e.g.:

p. 1. Petitions read before the Com. in the Middle Temple Hall, 11 July 1655.

(1) "The humble petition of John Betts and others of Swaffham." They complain that their digging of turf for firing has been much interfered with.

(2) do. of Edward Smith gent. of Wilberton. (3) do. of Edward Bell of Outwell, Esq. (4) do. of John White of Littleport. (5) do. of Robert Peacock of Sutton. (6) do. of the inhabitants of Wicken, who complain that they are taxed more than the people of Thetford.

p. 8. Same date. The above petitions are considered and orders made thereon.

p. 16. 6 March 1655. Petitions and orders as before.

ORDERS OF SEWERS

- p. 1 A 1 *A leather bound volume with gold lettering containing copies of presentments of different courts of Sewers relating to the Bedford Level from 1362 to 1641.*

The first 74 pages contain copies of documents concerning sewers 1362-1600. Then there are several blank leaves. A long list of presentments at Wisbech and elsewhere in 1617 runs from p. 117 to p. 141. This is a specimen:

p. 117. "ITEM that there is a lake which hath been an ancient sewer extending from Clogg were to Ely Stonebridge and also the little borden bridge by Dawkin's house which is grown up with silt and earth and much hindereth the water course and wee think it verie needfull to be cast. Jeremy Hubberd owneth it."

p. 186. 23 May, 14 Chas. I, "A list of lands hurtfully surrounded by water" under counties.

Cambridgeshire takes up pages 193-7. Horningsey, Isleham, Rampton, Soham, Swavesey, Waterbeach, etc. etc.

- | | | | |
|----------|---|--------|-----------|
| p. 2 A 1 | <i>Orders of Sewers</i> | 1 Vol. | 1687-1716 |
| p. 2 do. | <i>B.L.C. proceedings as Commissioners of Sewers</i> | 1 Vol. | 1717-57 |
| p. 2 do. | <i>B.L.C. Minutes of proceedings as Commissioners of Sewers</i> | Vol. 1 | 1700-29 |
| p. 2 do. | <i>B.L.C. Minutes of proceedings as Commissioners of Sewers</i> | Vol. 2 | 1782-1801 |

There are many separate documents relating to Sewers in Safe 2.

- | | | |
|--------|---|--------|
| p. 139 | <i>*Court of Sewers. Order for removal of Tunnel, S. Eau bank</i> | 1709 |
| p. 140 | <i>*Decree of Sewers. Copied 1666</i> | 1616-7 |

Printed, Wells, *op. cit.* vol. II, pp. 42-58.

* In Safe 2.

p. 140	* <i>Order of Sewers concerning planning of Goats, drains etc. No. 32</i>	1634
	<i>Decree of Sewers at Huntingdon</i>	1638
p. 144	* <i>Decree of Sewers</i>	1674
p. 147	* <i>Law of Sewers Huntingdon</i>	1617
p. 147	* <i>Report concerning Sewers, Wisbech</i>	1637
p. 97 L 9	<i>Old presentments and precepts of Sewers</i>	N.D.
p. 113	* <i>Judgment of Sewers at St. Ives and Wisbech, No. 7</i>	1636

Printed, Wells, *op. cit.* vol. II, pp. 236-339.

p. 114	* <i>Ordinance for sewers, Wisbech</i>	1 Vol.	1638	
p. 115	* <i>Ordinance of Commissioners for Sewers Peterborough with Schedule of lands to A. Lowe and others. No. 1. 16 Car. I</i>	40,000 acres	1 Vol.	1640

LIST OF PRINTED WORKS

These include copies of many books about the history of the Fenland including Bentham's *Ely*. But the bulky portion of the library is of an unexpected character, as it consists of a complete series of the works in folio and octavo published by the Public Records Commission during the first half of the nineteenth century. These works were supplied gratis to such institutions as the Bedford Level Corporation. Included in the list are—Domesday Book (complete), Rymer's *Foedera*, Statutes of the Realm, the Hundred Rolls, Parliamentary Writs, etc. Some of the volumes are now scarce, and it would cost more than two hundred pounds to buy the complete series.

PASS BOOKS

p. 183 Ante-room F 10

An item for the curious is the leather-bound pass-book of the B.L.C. with Child & Co. 1761-71 which is in the Ante-room, Cupboard F. This firm have been the bankers since the first undertaking of the drainage of the Fens.

* In Safe 2.

Other pass-books of various dates have been preserved, such as

<i>S. Wells, Bank Pass Book</i>	1827-30
<i>Gurney and Co</i>	1837

PRIVATE AFFAIRS

These extracts from the Inventory concerning S. Wells (registrar ob. 1847) show that family life can be illustrated by the records in the Fen Office.

p. 225	Tin Box in Cellar	<i>Letters to S. Wells & Bond letters, etc.</i>	1844-5
p. 229	do.	<i>S. Wells Letter B'k, Private</i>	1 lot 1840-1
p. 230	do.	<i>S. Wells Bar certificate & Freedom of City of London certificate</i>	1831 1836
p. 226	do.	<i>Letters & inventories of Abode relating to S. Wells. Lawrence & Wells papers & S. Wells. Legacies</i>	
p. 226	Box in cellar	<i>Papers re S. Wells; Macdonough & Wells; Trustees W. Richards; W. Wright's estate at Warboys; J. Farey's exors, Chancery Suits etc.</i>	1 Bdle

PUBLIC NOTICES

The printed notices sent out by the B.L.C. may be of interest to some: there are about twenty of each of the following notices at the bottom of Safe 5 in the small room.

p. 214	Safe 5, Bottom	<i>Concerning damage done to works at Wisbech</i>	1722
		<i>Concerning damage done by cattle</i>	1732
	„	<i>collectors</i>	1729
	„	<i>taxes and tonnage</i>	1775

In this connection note the following item from cupboard H in small room:

p. 198	Ante-room H 17	<i>“Queries offered to the inhabitants of the S. part of the Isle of Ely”</i>	1757
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REGISTRY BOOKS

p. 112	Safe No. 1	<i>Index to Corporation Conveyances to 1815</i>	ante 1815
			1 Vol.
		<i>Index to Registry Book</i>	1 Vol. 1815-1920
		<i>Registry Books</i>	57 Vols. 1821-1920

? Where are the Volumes prior to 1821.

S. Wells, *op. cit.* vol. I, p. 549, seems to consider "the registry, minute, order and lot books" as being the chief records of the Corporation.

REPORTS

p. 87	I 3	<i>Old Reports. View¹ taken from River</i>	1708-84
			1 Bdle
p. 127		* <i>Mr Hampson's report: mentions that Mr Jonas Moore in 1651 did set out and divide 50 acres in Somersham²</i>	1667
p. 127		* <i>Mr Littleton's claim stated by Mr Hampson</i>	1650-9
p. 128		* <i>R. Hampson's report on the claims of Tollett and Vermuyden—two copies</i>	1665
p. 129		* <i>Holman³ & Hampson's report on the case, Temple v. Woodward</i>	1668
p. 129		* <i>Holman & Hampson's report on Col. Sandys case</i>	1676
p. 198	Ante-room H 17	<i>Humphrey Smith's⁴ report on Sluice drain and outfall north level. Plan</i>	1726
p. 200	do. H 17	<i>C. Labelye,⁵ rep. on View of N. Level</i>	1748

* In Safe 2.

¹ A surveyor's view, not a picture.

² Hampson was one of the original conservators in 1663, and was a bailiff in 1667.

³ W. Holman was one of the adventurers of 1652. Michael Holman was bailiff in 1668, and in 1664 had a house with twelve fireplaces at Chatteris.

⁴ Humphrey Smith was bailiff in 1731.

⁵ He was a Swiss and the architect of Westminster Bridge.

p. 199 do. H 17	<i>A navigator's observations on Wisbech outfall</i>	1768
p. 199 do. H 17	<i>Elstobb, Rep. on Navigation Clayhithe to Denver</i>	1778
p. 203 do. H 18	<i>J. Colborne's report on N.L. and Wisbech Outfall¹</i>	1769
p. 201 do. H 18	<i>Answer to J. C. by the Rector of Warboys</i>	1777
p. 199 do. H 17	<i>Rennie's reports on St John's Eau and Hundredfoot Wash</i>	1812
	<i>Do. on Wisbech Outfall</i>	1814
p. 208 Safe 5, 3rd from top	<i>Observations on whether elections should be at Ely or London</i>	1808

ROADS

p. 88 I 5	<i>Ely and Downham turnpike road</i>	1824
	1 Bdle	
p. 90 I 20	<i>Wisbech, Chatteris, and March Turn- pike Road</i>	1849
	1 Bdle	

SAFE NO. 2

This is in the Board Room, is opened by a separate key which is kept at Cambridge, and has a heavy desk placed in front of it. Judging from the list of contents made by Moore (pp. 113-48 of Inventory) it contains some valuable items, but much that is trivial, such as expired leases. Here are some of the 350 items, not mentioned elsewhere.

p. 113	<i>*Orders by Commissioners on petitions at Cambridge</i>	1653-4
	<i>First adjudication No. 11</i>	1657
p. 115	<i>*95,000 acres set by Pretended Act, 1649, allotted to Earl of Bedford</i>	1653
	1 Vol.	

* In Safe 2.

¹ James Colbourn was receiver in 1790, Sergeant-at-Mace in 1797, and engineer for many years.

	<i>Ordinance of Comrs. of Sewers, with Schedule of lands to A. Lowe and others. 40,000 acres No. 1 16 Car I</i>	1 Vol.	1640
	<i>Red leather Box containing two copper plates of Corporation arms and one brass and copper dies B.L.C. arms. For seal originally. Oak box for above, both with lock and key</i>		1818
p. 116	* <i>Expired leases</i>		1851-77
p. 117	* <i>Vermuyden's Discourse (1642), Dodson's Design (1665), Sir J. Moore's narrative (1685)</i>	1 Vol.	1650-1
	<i>Proceedings etc. before Comrs. re Waldersea receptacles, including Adventurers Meeting, Wisbech</i>	1 Bdle	
	<i>Downham Eau</i>	27 in 1 Bdle	1650-3
	<i>New drain from Downham Eau to Sam's Cut</i>	13 in 1 Bdle	1664
p. 121	* <i>Duke of Bedford's letter asking for harmony</i>		1730
p. 123	* <i>46 Indemnity Bonds. Seals cut off</i>		1668-1840
p. 124	* <i>Commissioners for Sewers: instruction for jurymen, Lovell's & Deeping Fen</i>	1 Bdle	1664
p. 125	* <i>Papers re proceedings between Old and New Adventurers. Report of J. Fountain¹</i>		1653
p. 125	* <i>Privy Council, Whitehall; accounts of Adventurers, etc.</i>		Oct. 1662
pp. 126-7	Twelve other Privy Council documents.		
p. 127	* <i>Agreement between participants² and men</i>		17 Dec.

* In Safe 2.

¹ Mr John Fountain was a sergeant-at-law and an "Adventurer".

² "Participants" were the men who joined with the Earl of Bedford in the reclamation scheme of 1631, and were sometimes known as the "old" adventurers, to distinguish them from the "new" adventurers of 1649.

- of Whittlesey; land at Northey and W. and drain from Standground Sluice to Northey Gravel* 1650
- p. 128 *Schedules and papers concerning claims between old and new adventurers, and scheduled owners of lots:
- Thos. Paynter (original adventurer) claims 70 acres, Littleport* 1672
- W. Ford (original adventurer) claims 185 acres, Joist Fen, Waterbeach* 1671
- S. Fortrey (original adventurer) claims 89½ acres, Block Fen* 1671
- R. Blanchard (original adventurer) claims 200 acres, Westmoor* 1671
- p. 137 *Depositions enrolled in Chancery. *E. Bellamy, Algernon Peyton, William Palmer* 1650
- Wells, *op. cit.* vol. I, pp. 214–26, prints the proceedings of the Commissioners of adjudication, but not the depositions.
- p. 139 *Certificate of riot at Wisbech concerning *Kindersley's Cut* 18 July 1723
- p. 141 *Swavesey agreement with Corporation *conc. repairing a Sluice* 18 Dec. 1677
- p. 145 *Swacey—Sir John Cutts' bill, 15 papers* N.D.
- p. 141 *John Dugdale's Will 1656
This is the father of Sir Wm. Dugdale.
- p. 129 *Engine at Tydd St Mary's, casting water, etc. 1649
David Offly's bill for charges 1671
- p. 130 *Rt Hon. T. Chicheley's¹ lands at Soham (c. 1670)

* In Safe 2.

¹ In 1656, Thomas Chicheley, Esq. owner of 500 acres of land in Great Metlam, Soham was appointed one of the lords of the Great Level. A man of same name was a bailiff in 1663, and John Chicheley was auditor in 1711, surveyor-general in 1717. See p. 149.

p. 130	* <i>Mr Henley's</i> ¹ <i>accounts</i>	1655-7
	<i>Lord Culpeper's demands to be repaid expenses</i>	1673
p. 131	* <i>Lord C. and others re purchases</i>	1649-60
	<i>Mr Offley Lott 10- 300 A and Lott 18 purchases</i>	1651-8
p. 143	* <i>Earl of Portland & others, conveyance of land in Whittlesey</i>	1656
p. 147	* <i>Indenture of fourteen parts of Original Adventurers, No. 1</i>	1631

Printed in Wells, *op. cit.* vol. II, pp. 111-19. The local shareholders were: Earl of Bedford, two shares; Lord Gorges (Stetchworth), Sir Robert Heath (Soham) each one share; Sir Miles Sandys (Wilburton) and Sir Wm Russell (Chippenham) each two shares; Samuel Spalding, gent., of Cambridge, one share. The latter was a prominent Corporation official and a lawyer.

For other contents of Safe 2 see pp. 29, 34, 38.

p. 149	<i>Side cupboard next Safe 2 Act of P. 20 Car. II</i>	1668 80 copies
p. 62 C 14	<i>Seal Books</i>	2 Vols. Calf 1769-1884

These vols. are not so important as their title promises, as they only state briefly that the Corporation Seal had been affixed to leases. Why for such a restricted period is unknown.

TAXES

p. 7 A 4	<i>Tax Rolls</i>	2	1655-7
p. 9 do.	<i>Tax Roll Books Vol. A, with indexes</i>		1659
	<i>Tax Roll Books Vol. B</i>		1661
	<i>Tax Roll Books for 95,000 acres</i>		1672
		<i>Vols. C1, C2</i>	
	<i>Tax Roll Books for 95,000 acres Vol. D</i>		1680
	<i>Tax Roll Books for 95,000 acres Vol. E</i>		1697
	<i>Lot Book Vol. F</i>		1721

* In Safe 2.

¹ Robert Henley was one of the participants. He owned 500 acres of land in Burrrough Great Fen.

<i>Tax Roll Book</i>	<i>Vol. G</i>	1734
<i>Lot Book</i>	<i>Vol. H</i>	1750
<i>Lot Book</i>	<i>Vol. I</i>	1789

The series seems to end here. The next shelf contains volumes of a different series and the next contains lot books of 1821 and after.

Vol. A is a large folio 16 inches by 11 inches. Title:

“This Booke conteyning the names and severall proportions of every adventurer (appearing in the booke of entries) for the 95,000 acres of fen ground mentioned in an Act of Parliament printed and published 29 May, 1649, and was made the first of October 1659.”

There are many details of the lots, and also alterations in ownership are recorded for succeeding years.

A SELECTED LIST OF MAPS IN THE FEN OFFICE, ELY, JUNE 1938

In the Fen Office there are three hundred different maps and plans, and of some maps there are many copies. Dugdale is represented by two copies of the "Great Level as it lay drowned" and one copy of the "Great Level drained", both 1662. One copy of a "Map of the Marshland".

The chief treasures of the office are Payler Smith's copies of the maps of William Hayward, 1604, and Jonas Moore, 1654, both made in 1727. The list shows that the Fen Office has fifty-seven printed copies of Hayward's map.

Of Sir Jonas Moore's "Mapp of the Great Levell", 1663, the list gives seventy-three copies. C. N. Cole is represented by one hundred and four copies of his map of 1789, and S. Wells by nine copies of his map of 1829.

The items of this selected list have been numbered for convenience of reference. The maps at present bear no numbers, and until each map or plan is numbered, measured, and adequately described, the collection cannot receive the attention it deserves. The notes in ordinary type are from information given by Lt.-Col. Tebbutt, who has seen the items in this list; excepting Nos. 19, 32 and 40.

On the north side of the Board Room, above the record cupboards, copies of the following four maps are mounted on spring rollers: 1604, Hayward's map; 1654, Jonas Moore, The Great Level undrained; 1663, J. Moore, The Great Level drained; 1829, S. Wells, Bedford Level. These four maps were in the same position in 1849, as shown by an inventory of the contents of the Fen Office of that date. The maps of 1604 and 1654 were thought to be the original maps until critically examined in recent years.

WILLIAM HAYWARD

See Edward Lynam, *Maps of the Fenland*, V.C.H., Huntingdonshire, Nos. 2, 23, 24.

- | | | | |
|--------|----|--|-------------------------|
| p. 251 | 1. | <i>5 lithographed copies of Hayward's old map B.L. on canvas. 46 copies do. on paper</i> | 1604
51 ¹ |
| p. 255 | 2. | <i>Plan of Fens by Hayward. Canvas</i> | 1 1604 |

¹ Maps of reduced size and little importance.

- p. 265 3. *Lithographed copy by Smith of Hayward's Survey (1604). Paper* 1 1727
- p. 269 4. *Hayward's original map of Gt Level undrained, mounted on canvas* 1 1604

SIR JONAS MOORE

See Lynam, *op. cit.* Nos. 8-14

- p. 248 5. *4 maps (Sir Jonas Moore's). (1) Burnt and Middle Fen, (2) Stoke and Feltwell districts, (3) Well district, Manea and Littleport, (4) Swaffham, Waterbeach and Cottenham*
- p. 251 6. *Three maps in case by Sir J. Moore. (1) Doddington (Ransonmoor-Waldersley), (2) Chatteris, Sutton, Mepal, Haddenham, Coveney, (3) Whittlesey and Huntingdonshire* one lot 1663
Sir J. Moore's map of Level marked "C. N. Cole 1757". In case, mounted on canvas. (It is the map which Cole took with him on his fenland journeys) 1663
- p. 263 7. *Sir Jonas Moore's map of level in two parts:* 1663

<i>Outfall</i>	41 copies	}	<i>on paper</i>
<i>Levell</i>	32 "		
<i>Copies in full</i>	3 "		
- p. 265 8. *Sir J. Moore's Gt Map of Fens* 1663
26 copies
- p. 269 9. " " *Map B.L. (drained)* 1663
1 copy
 " " *original map of Gt Level (undrained), canvas* 1654
1 copy
10. *Sir J. Moore's Great Map (mounted)* 1663
1 hessian, 1 canvas 2 copies
- p. 271 11. " " *Map B.L.* 1663
1 copy

C. N. COLE AND S. WELLS

See Lynam, *op. cit.* Nos. 16-18.

- | | | | | |
|--------|-----|--|------------|-------------------|
| p. 263 | 12. | <i>C. N. Cole. Map of the Gt Level. Printed 1789.</i> | 104 copies | |
| p. 251 | 13. | <i>S. Wells' map of Level</i> | 81 copies | 1829 |
| p. 257 | 14. | <i>Map of B.L. Col^d by S. Wells. Alterations by H. Wells. Varnished on canvas</i> | 6 copies | 1878 |
| | | <i>Do. plain</i> | 1 copy | 1829 |
| p. 269 | 15. | <i>S. Wells, B.L. and part adjacent</i> | | 1829 |
| p. 271 | 16. | <i>S. Wells. Canvas on rollers</i> | | 1829 |
| p. 93 | 17. | <i>Executors of T. Telford and Sam^l Wells. Copy of Mr Telford's will. Illegally printing Wells' map</i> | 1 Bdle | 1839 |
| p. 254 | 18. | <i>Plan of new press for Books etc. in the Registrar's Room at Fen Office, Ely: drawings of entrance etc.</i> | 1 lot | 1845-7 |
| p. 264 | 19. | <i>Plan of Sir R. Heath's¹ Severals at [mid. Soham</i> | | [mid. 17th cent.] |
| p. 265 | 20. | <i>Elstobb's Map of Wisbech Channel and Sands. Mounted parchment</i> | | 1773-5 |
| p. 265 | 21. | <i>A sketch of Wilbraham, Fulbourn and Teversham fens</i> | | Old |
| p. 266 | 22. | <i>Col^d plan, lock & weir, "Dog in the Doublet," by W. Swansborough</i> | | 1823 |
| p. 267 | 23. | <i>Plan, Deeping Fen, Featherstone</i> | (5 copies) | 1763 |
| | | Interesting. | | |
| | 24. | <i>Map, Deeping Fen, Peakirk to Crowland</i> | | N.D. |
| | 25. | <i>Plan, Newborough—Northampton</i> | | 1823 |
| | | | (3 copies) | |

An interesting enclosure map.

¹ Sir Robert Heath died in 1649.

26. *Plan 100 ft. and Bedford—Bluntisham to Mepal* N.D.
- p. 268 27. *Plan Moretons Leam, Hillscut. Peterborough to Northey Gravel. (Parchment)* Old
A good specimen.
- p. 268 28. *Plan Wisbech Marsh and Gulls* 2 copies Old
- p. 268 29. *Map of N. Level attached to H. Smith's report* 1724
4 copies
- p. 268 30. *Map of Marshes in Walpole—Upwell fen—Lindsey L.* 1774
27-30 are very interesting documents.
- p. 269 31. *Large Map B.L., Toll-houses, Barrier Banks, etc. In Case* N.D.
Jonas Moore's.
- p. 271 32. *Plan for new drain—Lord Gorges, J. Moore, T. Samuel* 1661
- p. 206 33. *T. Wing's survey of N. Level. With map Lynam, op. cit. No. 47.* 1749
- p. 265 34. *Plan of Stort navigation Stortford to Cambridge* 1779-
2 copies 1880
An interesting document.
- p. 268 35. *Plan of Stort navigation, extension approved 1780* 1790
Rennie's proposal.
- p. 104 36. *Cambridge & Stortford Canal* 1811
1 Bdle papers
- p. 266 37. *Plan Wisbech Bridge, by Mackworth* 1761
9 copies
- p. 255 38. *Robinson's plan of East part of G. Level* 1758
2 copies
Shows much detail: Lynam, *op. cit.* No. 68.

- p. 258 39. *Sanderson's Harrison's copy of Badeslade's plan of Sands and outfall at Lynn* 1729

This is a coloured plan of Lynn Haven, being a copy of Badeslade's plan of the Sands and Outfall at Lynn, 1729. A beautiful piece of work showing churches and other buildings.

- p. 259 40. *Plan of the Ouse above Germans Tong's drain copied by Sanderson* 1729

- p. 260 41. *Plan of roads about Ely. (30) (poor)*

- p. 158 42. *Plan of road across Welland Marsh at Crowland. Branghill pits & J. Owen's plan. Plan of Walpole Salt Marshes & other plans & sketches* 1712-1847
1 Bdle

An interesting lot.

- p. 259 43. *Dyson's map of the courses of Rivers passing through the Level* May, 1825

An interesting original on paper.

ENCLOSURE PLANS

- p. 261 44. *Plan, Inclosure award Stretham. Paper* 1835
- p. 263 45. *Plan of Swavesey by Hills* 1838
- p. 265 46. *Plans, Witcham award. Paper 2 copies* 1838
- p. 266 47. *Plan, Witchford Inclosure. Paper* 1839
- p. 266 48. *Map, Littleport Inclosure. Paper* 1836
49. *Sutton award, plan of Meadland and Wash. Paper* 1840

These enclosure maps or plans are all lithographed. It was news to Lt.-Col. Tebbutt and the writer that such copies were ever made.

The maps and plans on pp. 251-268 of Lt.-Col. Tebbutt's type-written list are in the cupboard between the windows in the Board Room; those on pp. 269-70, are on the top of the cupboard. No. 17 is in K 8; No. 82 in H 14; No. 36 in L 23; No. 42 in side-cupboard in Board Room.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

These have been derived from a variety of sources, a few of which have been given. To have given all would have added too much bulk to a paper already over long. The particulars about the Offices held under the Bedford Corporation are taken from S. Wells' mine of information already freely quoted. The writer was much struck by the fact that there was no mention of the connection of some of these men with fen drainage in Peerage, Baronetage, or Biographical Dictionary, although that connection must have been an important part of their lives.

EDWARD BARBER, "of Denver, Esquire", was elected a jurat at the assembly at Ely on September 29, 1656. He must have been working for the good of the Company for a long time, because in the preceding winter he had been given as a gratuity pieces of plate worth over £34. In 1664-5 he was confirming contracts with workmen in the fen, and in 1667 he was appointed a commissioner of appeal under the Fen Tax Act of that year.

THOMAS BLAND was clerk, solicitor or register to the Adventurers and Corporation for thirty-eight years, 1654-92. His salary under the Corporation was £270 with many extra fees for searches, and abstracts of titles.

JOHN BRIDGEMAN, gent., of Wicken, who was chosen a jurat in 1656, may have been the father of John Bridgman, junior, who was appointed surveyor and taxor of reclaimed lands in 1668. In 1664 a man of this name had built a small house in Burwell and had a larger house in Fordham. In 1674 these were taxed at four and eight hearths respectively.

THOMAS CHICHELEY, of Wimpole, was elected a "Lord of the Fens" in 1656, his 500 acres being in Soham. He was appointed a Commissioner of Sewers in 1662, and was several times bailiff or conservator between that date and his death in 1694. He was several times M.P. for the county or town of Cambridge, and was knighted and made a privy councillor in 1670. After having been made Master of Ordnance he lived in Queen Street, Covent Garden, "eating in the French fashion", "with all things noble and rich about him", to the great admiration of Samuel Pepys. Perhaps as a result of this kind of life he had to sell Wimpole in 1686. He was followed in the Bedford Corporation by his second son, Admiral Sir John Chicheley, in 1682, and he by his son, John, of the Middle Temple in 1700, see pp. 109, 141.

GEORGE DALTON appears first in the records in 1652, when he did the work of the receiver, William Jessop, for fourteen days. Next year a meeting was held at his house in Ely and he was appointed expeditor in place of Underwood at a salary of £150. Several extracts have been given from his accounts up to 1659, when he must either have died or have left Ely, as he does not appear in the hearth taxes of 1661-4.

GABRIEL ELLYOT, of Peterborough, who went to London to advise about the map in 1658, was appointed a jurat of the Great Level at Ely in September 1656. He and the other jurats were to exercise such powers and privileges as the jurats of Romney Marsh, Kent. The laws for draining the Bedford Level were closely modelled on those used for Romney Marsh.

“W. FATHORNE.” This was William Faithorne, senior, a well-known engraver of portraits (Bryan, *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*), 1616-91. Mr E. Lynam thinks he may have engraved Jonas Moore's map of 1654. Mr H. R. Mallett has shown me in the Cambridge University Library a pictorial plan of London and Westminster by Richard Newcourt which was engraved by Faithorne.

THE FORTREY FAMILY were Protestant refugees from Brabant. Samuel Fortrey, who was an original Adventurer for draining the fens, was the great grandson of James the refugee. Samuel's father had been a shipowner in London but, on becoming interested in the fens, the son had changed his residence to Cambridgeshire. The first trace of his residence there is in the parish register of Oakington, 1650. Later from the hearth tax roll we find he had a house there with nine fireplaces. At the same time, 1661-74, he had as large a house at Witcham. This was the house in Byall fen, the remains of which are still known as Fortrey Hall. It was built of stud-work with turf between, and so was apt to be partly washed away in flood-time. Samuel Fortrey, who lived from 1622 to 1681, was a gentleman of coat armour, and of His Majesty's Privy Chamber. He wrote books, one of which, *England's Interest and Improvement*, ran to six editions, and was reprinted in 1856. Yet it will be seen that he threw himself heartily into the business of fen drainage, and his name frequently occurs in the fen records. After his death he was succeeded as conservator by his son Samuel (1650-88). The second son, William (1653-1723), then became a conservator, but he married a Leicestershire heiress and left the fen country. A full account of this interesting family may be found in *Fenland Notes and Queries*, vol. iv, pp. 352-8.

RICHARD GORGES was the third son of Edward, Baron Gorges of Dundalk, and was born in 1619. In 1637 he entered Clare

College, Cambridge, as a nobleman. In 1641 he entered the Long Parliament as M.P. for Downton, Wilts. Meantime his father had been a party to the indenture of fourteen parts in 1631, and thus was one of the original Adventurers. From 1646 onwards fen drainage became the chief business of Richard Gorges' life, as will be seen from the frequent mention of his name in the foregoing extracts. He succeeded his father as Baron Gorges about 1650. From 1663 to 1686 he held the office of Surveyor-General, which was then one of much labour and responsibility, and on resigning that, he was elected a conservator. He continued to act as such until he was over eighty years of age. Meantime, about the year 1669, he had bought the manor of Stetchworth from the Earl of Bedford. There he died in the year 1712, and was buried in the church. He left no direct heir. Wells, *op. cit.* vol. 1, p. 471, says he was created Viscount Dundalk by King James the Second, but the *Complete Peerage* knows nothing of this.

As is seen elsewhere, his salary was £450 a year, and critics such as those who attacked John Latch might well ask how out of that sum his lordship was able to save enough money to buy the large estate at Stetchworth. It must have been a fine chance for a land speculator to know which fen lots were to be forfeited for non-payment of taxes, and at the same time to know what they were really worth. In the Hearth Tax Rolls of 1661-4 he appears as the owner of a two-chimneyed house in Doddington.

ANTHONY HAMMOND. There were two or more men of this name interested in fen drainage, because my references cover the period 1631-1711. Anthony Hammond, esquire, of St Albans, Kent (*sic*), had two shares in the indenture of fourteen parts, 1631. In 1649 he informed the Company that he knew a man who would drain the fen for £30,000. This was probably Sir Edward Partheriche. In 1650 he was asked by the Company to go down into the fens with John Latch, and look after the Company's business. They were asked to accept £20 a month whilst thus engaged. In 1653 he, with Gorges, Fortrey and others, sent up a petition, dated at the "Bell", Ely, pointing out that they had ruined themselves in their estates "which were very great" in undertaking the drainage (*Fenland N. and Q.* vol. VI, p. 65). In 1654 he was appointed a conservator of the N.L. at a salary of £150. At the Ely meeting September 29, 1656, Anthony Hammond was elected one of the "Lords of the Fens", in virtue of his estate at Pyemore, Downham, and on the same day another Anthony Hammond, of Wilburton, gent., was elected one of the jurats. In that year also Col. Hammond was assessed at £120, and paid £12 tax, which was at a much higher rate than the upland gentry paid (Bodleian Lib. Rawlinson A. 35, p. 231). Anthony Hammond does not appear

amongst the bailiffs or conservators immediately after the Restoration, but he was a surveyor and taxor in 1668 and was a conservator from 1669 onwards, and the name last appears in 1711. His name appears frequently in the records. And although stated to be of Wilburton in 1656, his name does not appear as the occupier of a house there in the hearth tax rolls. Two Anthony Hammonds were lords of Somersham manor in the seventeenth century; one of them lived, died, and was buried there (*V.C.H. Hunts. vol. II*). The name "Hammond's Eau" may be derived from this family.

THE HENLEY FAMILY had no connection with Cambridgeshire or the Fens until Robert Henley, senior, one of the six clerks in chancery, became a Participant in fen drainage by the Pretended Act of 1649. His stake was a large one because, in 1656, it was assessed at £900 (Rawlinson MS. *ut supra*). But it is well known that the "Six clerks" were able to amass large fortunes. The family was a Somersetshire one, and when Robert Henley, junior, chief clerk for enrolling the pleas of the King's Bench, was knighted in 1663, he is described as being of the Grange, Somerset. Robert Henley, senior, was appointed treasurer in 1649 on the resignation of the Earl of Bedford, and, until his death about 1656, he exercised great influence in the affairs of the Company. This was plainly shown in December 1649 when, at a special meeting, the Company divided as to whether Sir Edward Partheriche or Sir Cornelius Vermuyden should be director of the work of drainage, twelve voted for the former and only Henley and one other for Vermuyden. Yet, owing to the skilful management of Henley, Sir Cornelius got the job. Mr Henley appears constantly in the extracts printed above, but I do not think the fens saw much of him. He was an ancestor of Baron Henley, a Lord Chancellor in the following century. Sir Andrew Henley, created a baronet in 1660, was the eldest son of Robert the Participant, and several times served as a conservator.

JOHN HERRING was living in Cambridge during the reign of Charles I and paid his taxes regularly. He does not appear in municipal affairs until the purge of 1662, when he was put in as alderman, and was soon afterwards mayor. He lived in a large house in Great St Mary's parish (twelve fireplaces), so I conclude he was an innkeeper. This would fit in with his charge for bringing the B.L.C. money from London.

ROGER JENYNS, see pp. 91-6.

JOHN LATCH took a prominent position in the business of the Adventurers, the Participants, and the Company, but drops out when the Corporation was established. The first and last references found relating to his work are slanders, we hope, against his business morality. In 1639 Latch was Expenditor General for the King's work in the fens; and it was stated that £24,000 had passed

through his hands, also that in May 1639 he still had £7000, which should have been paid to contractors, the children of whose workmen were starving. In 1662 when the accounts of the "new adventurers" were being discussed, it was asked "By what art had Mr Latch bought as many lands upon forfeiture of £300 tax, as soon after he sold, for £30000." Such artists, said the writer, "could make good lands bad, or bad good". These insinuations may none of them have been true.

In 1649 he attended meetings in London and Peterborough, and in December that year he voted for Partridge to be director of the drainage. In the same year he was appointed overseer of the work, and was asked to accept £20 a month for his trouble, whilst in the fens. Five years later this gratuity was reduced to six shillings a day, but there were then more Adventurers ready to visit the fens. In 1651 he was appointed with Robert Henley to arrange for the Scotch prisoners from Dunbar to be set to work in the fens. In the same year came another accusation, that of having misapplied a large sum of money, but it had no effect on his employers because he was still controller of the payments to Scotchmen. In 1652 also he was, with others, paid £2 for helping to draw up the adjudication of drained lands, and received £1 for a written opinion about taking earth for banks. In 1656 he was on a committee appointed to fix salaries under the new Act, and was asked to help Lord Gorges in place of old Mr Henley. And that is as far as he has been traced. It is not known where his lot lay, nor where he lived. He was probably a Londoner.

MARK LE PLA occurs several times in the extracts, showing that he was a person of importance in the fens, yet very little information about him has been found. James and Mark le Pla took the oaths required in order to be naturalized in 1662 (*Jnl. of Ho. of Com.*). Mark le Pla was appointed surveyor and taxor of reclaimed lands in 1668, and in 1674 James and Mark were living in small houses at Thorney. Mark died in 1697 at the age of 75. If the early records of the Adventurers and Conservators are ever published, much will probably be found about the Le Pla family.

JOHN MINGAY appears as expeditor from 1659 to 1670. He lived in Trinity parish, Ely, and in 1664 tried to cheat the tax collector of payment for one of his eight fireplaces. His salary was £100 a year, and when he was appointed surveyor and taxor in a new assessment in 1668, that meant extra pay. The order books contain many references to arrear rolls which he had to produce. According to Wells, ROBERT MINGAY, Esq., was appointed receiver and expeditor 1663, but his accounts do not begin until 1678-9.

DAVID OFFLEY is specially mentioned in the Act of 1663 for the purpose of giving him leave to sue in connection with his fen

holding, which was in St Mary's parish, Ely. No other holder is thus mentioned. In 1663 Offley attended a meeting of the Corporation as a commoner, and in 1669 David Offley, gent., was elected a conservator. He does not appear as a householder in the hearth tax. He died in 1670. See p. 74.

EDWARD PARTRIDGE or Partheriche of Kent was knighted in 1641. In 1645 he was one of the members of the House of Commons appointed to examine the petition of the "Adventurers" for an Act of Parliament to legalize their proceedings. After the Pretended Act was passed he appeared as a candidate for the directorship of the drainage of the Level. Although he was supported by most of the Adventurers, Vermuyden was appointed. He was one of the few Adventurers who lived in the district. His house in the College, Ely, contained nine fireplaces, and here the Corporation met in 1665. He was surveyor and taxor in 1665, but he does not appear in office afterwards, although he was living in Ely in 1674.

"MR PEPIS." This was John Pepys, second son of Talbot Pepys of Impington, son and brother of Recorders of Cambridge. He was LL.D. of Cambridge, 1647. He married the widow of Thomas Hobson, heir of the carrier, a match which allowed him to live in a house with a dozen fireplaces at Cottenham, where he died in 1692.

WALTER ST JOHN was of Wiltshire and Battersea. He inherited an ancient baronetcy in 1657. He married a daughter of Chief Justice St John, and died in 1708. According to the *Complete Baronetage*, he was famed "for piety and moral virtues". He was elected a "Lord of the Fens" in 1656, as owner of 500 acres of land in Whittlesey. He was nominated on the Commission of Sewers in 1662, but he appears to have taken no further share in the work of the corporation. Sir Walter must have taken much practical interest in drainage in his youth, because the Company gave him a present of plate in 1652.

THE UNDERWOODS were a family with extensive possessions and strong interest in the fens. They were Parliamentarians, and Francis Underwood gained unenviable notoriety by being in charge of the troops from Crowland who killed the Rev. Michael Hudson at the taking of Woodcroft House, near Stamford, in circumstances of great barbarity. William Underwood was elected a "Lord of the Fens" in 1656 in virtue of his property in Whittlesey. Francis was appointed expeditor in 1649 at a larger salary than anyone else ever had, but he resigned in 1653 and was shortly after elected a bailiff. He appears as very active during the Commonwealth in all kinds of fen draining business. With his record it was natural that the royalists should make a dead set at

him after the Restoration. With the widow of Michael Hudson as a witness, an effort was made in 1664 to bring against him charges of high treason both before and after the Restoration. But he was protected by the Act of Oblivion, and in 1666 Francis appears as a conservator of the B.L.C. In 1674 he owned a house with twelve fireplaces at Thorney. Hugh Underwood had a house of large size at Whittlesey,¹ whilst a Mr Underwood had a house nearly as large in Trinity parish, Ely. The family appears as office bearers in the B.L.C. until well on in the next century.

EDMUND WELCH was in 1652 a part-time officer, and reported able but slow. Two years later he was still principal contractor to the Company. In 1656 Edmund Welch of "Emley", gent., was elected a jurat. In 1667 he was still certifying bills. Welch's dam may have been named after him.

JEROME WESTON, EARL of PORTLAND, owned the manors of Whittlesey, which he inherited on the death of his father in 1635. He married Lady Frances Stewart, daughter of the Duke of Lennox, and so became allied to the royal family. The notorious fact that his wife was a Catholic exposed him to constant suspicion during the Commonwealth, and at one time he was committed to the Tower, and his estate sequestrated. But he was soon liberated, and is said to have lived quietly at Whittlesey until the Restoration. Portland House, near the Church of St Andrew, with its quaint statuary is a survival of his residence there. The earl bequeathed this house to his wife, in his will made in 1657. He died in 1663, his widow surviving him for thirty years.

NOTES ON PEOPLE MENTIONED IN THE ACCOUNT OF NOVEMBER 1664

Sir Edward Walpole belonged to the well-known Norfolk family. Sir Richard Onslow, 1601-64, "our counsell", knighted 1641, had been a colonel in the Parliamentary Army, and a member of the Convention Parliament of 1660. He was an intimate friend of Ashley Cooper. "Serjeant Glynne" was Sir John Glynne, 1603-66, a learned and impartial judge. He prosecuted the bishops in 1641, Strafford in 1642 and Sir Harry Vane in 1662. Throckmorton and Amhurst belonged to Middlesex and Kent. Their names appear as holding public office during the interregnum. Sir Thomas Atkins cannot be placed. There was a man of that name who had been Lord Mayor of London and knighted, who was alive in 1664. Serjeant Keeling or Keyling was a royalist who had suffered much under the Commonwealth and revenged himself on the Puritan party after the Restoration. He prepared the Act of Uniformity, 1662, and when he became a

¹ This was Portland House, with sixteen fireplaces.

judge, distinguished himself for his small knowledge of the law, his ill-temper and want of discretion. "Mr Scrogg" was most likely the notorious Sir William Scroggs, a creature of Danby, elevated to the position of Lord Chief Justice, notwithstanding his well-known looseness of life. He took great pleasure in baiting all dissenters who came before him. But his conduct became too bad for even Charles the Second's court, and he was removed from office in 1681.

From these notes it will be seen that the promoters of the bill had engaged lawyers of both parties.

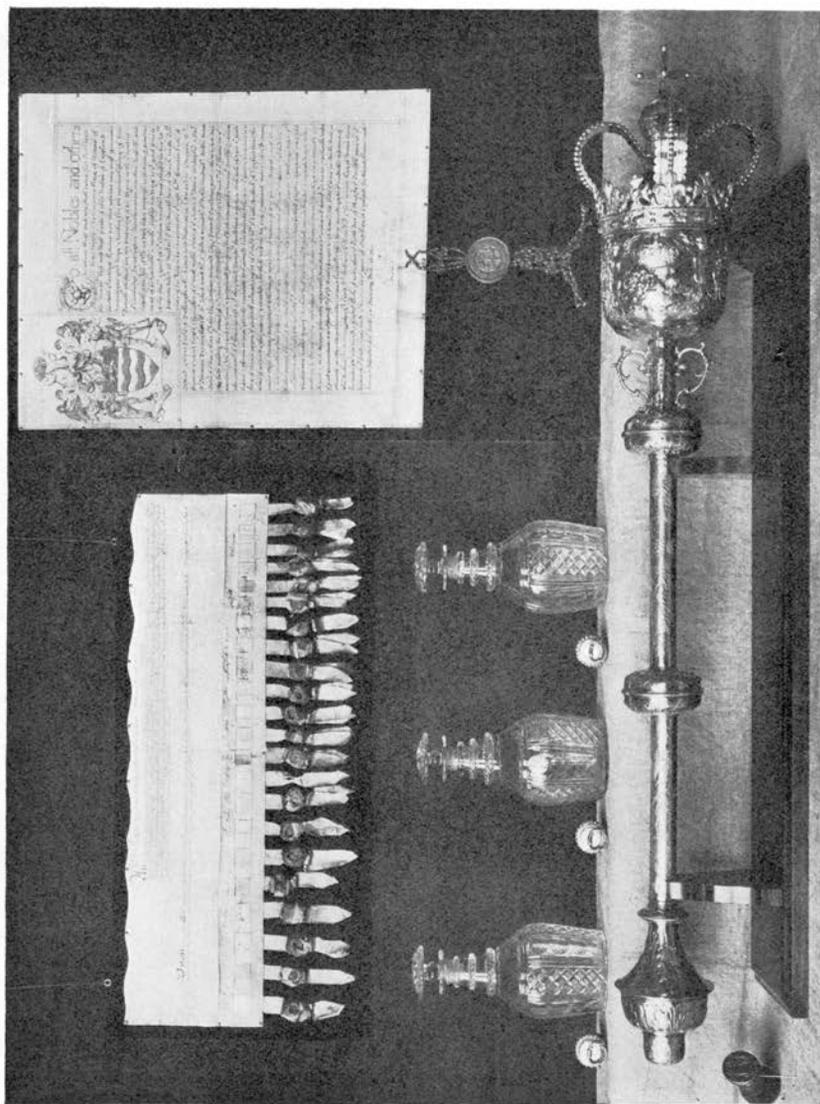
IN CONCLUSION

The publication of the two books on the Fenland by Dr H. C. Darby¹ will raise great interest in the Fen Country, and may cause some to study the documents here listed. Many of these are now for the first time revealed to the public eye. The authority in charge of them is in no way unfriendly towards research, but the present method of housing, partly at Cambridge and partly at Ely, is unsatisfactory. At Cambridge there is a records' clerk and the documents are promptly and cheerfully produced; at Ely there is no one in charge, and when the office is open the keys of the cupboards are not always available. Moreover the rooms there contain too much heavy furniture, and when several officials are engaged in making maps and plans, there is not much room for research students.

Anyone who has watched the amount of work done from the office of the Great Ouse Catchment Board must come to the conclusion that the care of its ancient records, as well as of its modern records which are rapidly increasing in bulk, should be a separate department. This would result in the destruction of useless material, and so give room for better methods of sorting and making of lists. It is quite possible that a carefully made list of the plans of rivers and drains, many of which have exact measurements and are quite modern, might be useful to the engineers of the present day.

For the curious illustration opposite the Society is indebted to Lt.-Col. Tebbutt. It is a reduction, by permission of the Director, of a photograph, 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ in., taken for purposes of record when the items shown thereon were deposited in the Victoria and Albert Museum by Harold Archer, Esq., the last Registrar of the B.L.C. The original documents have not been seen by the writer. It is fortunate that Lt.-Col. Tebbutt discovered the whereabouts of the mace and other items in time to be included in this paper.

¹ *The Medieval Fenland, 1939. The Draining of the Fens, 1939.*



Decree of Sewers, 1636. Hangs in the Store Library, V. and A. Museum. B.L.C. Seal.

Grant of Arms to B.L.C. 1636. Hangs in the Library, V. and A. Museum. B.L.C. Mace, presented 1672.

No. M 57-1921.

(Reproduced by permission of the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

Document on the left. This is a decree of the Commissioners for Sewers. A transcript in modern spelling is given. The document has appendant to it twenty-two tabs of which all but one have seals attached. Above each seal is the signature of the owner.

A law ordinance and decree of Sewers made enacted and indented

AT a sessions of Sewers holden at Peterborough the thirteenth day of June 1636, before the Right Hon^{ble} Earl of Holland, Oliver, Lord St John, Sir Rowland St John, Sir Beauchamp St John, Sir Hamond le Strange, Sir Myles Sandys junior, Robert Longe Esq., George Glapthorne Esq., Gregory Gawsell esq., Talbot Peapis, recorder of Cambridge, Humberston Marsh, Robert Peyton, and John Peapis esquires, Richard Foxton, mayor of Cambridge and others.¹

UPON our view and knowledge of the works and fens we conceive the great Level to be drained according to the purport and intent of Lynn law² and do so adjudge it. In witness whereof we have hereunto put to our hand and seals the day and year above written.

Document on the right.

A.D. 1636. Sir William le Neve Knight Clarencieux King of Armes grants to Francis Earl of Bedford, Oliver Earl of Bullingbrooke, Henry Lord Matravers, Edward Lord Gorges, . . . Sir Myles Sandys . . . Oliver St John, Anthony Hammond, esquires, Samuel Spalding gent., and others, who had by letters patent been incorporated into a body politic by the name of the Governors, Bailiffs, and commonalty, and conservators of the fens, having a common seal, these arms; Barry wavy of six pieces, argent and vert on a chief gules a lion passant gardant.

With crest and supporters as detailed in J. E. Foster and T. D. Atkinson, *Catalogue of Loan Collection of Plate*, 1896, p. 114.

The document has the signature of le Neve at the bottom, under which is appendant the seal of the College of Arms.

The corporation of Governors, Bailiffs, etc., did not become such by law until 1663.

Three cut glass decanters with glass stoppers and spare corks with silver tops. These are sometimes lent by the Victoria and Albert Museum as specimens of nineteenth-century cut glass.

The mace. This is fully described in Foster and Atkinson, *op. cit.* p. 114. It has no date mark. Length 45 in., length of mace head 9 in. It has on it the Royal Arms, the arms of the Earl of Bedford and of the B.L.C. It bears an inscription in *modern* lettering stating that it was given by the Earl of Bedford in 1663. But Foster and Atkinson give an extract with exact reference to a B.L.C. minute book stating that the mace was presented to the Corporation in Dr Beaumont's house in Ely, on April 10, 1672.

The Seal. Wooden stock, steel matrix, late seventeenth century.

¹ Seven names have been left out for want of space.

² Lynn law was passed June 1630-1. Printed in Wells, *op. cit.* II, 98.

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