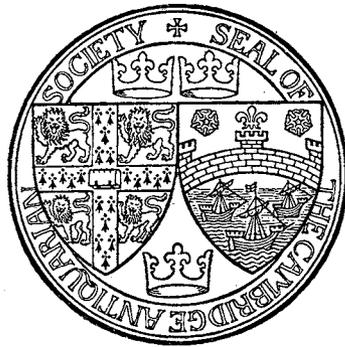


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY



VOLUME XLIV

JANUARY 1950 TO DECEMBER 1950

CAMBRIDGE
BOWES AND BOWES
1951

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY



PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY



VOLUME XLIV

JANUARY 1950 TO DECEMBER 1950

CAMBRIDGE
BOWES AND BOWES

1951

*Published for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society
by Bowes & Bowes Publishers Limited
Cambridge*

*Printed in Great Britain at the University Press, Cambridge
(Brooke Crutchley, University Printer)*

CONTENTS

<i>Officers and Council of the Society 1950-1951</i>	page vi
<i>Report and Summary of Accounts for the Year 1949</i>	vii
<i>List of Members of the Society</i>	x
Buckingham College	I
<i>By R. W. McDOWALL, M.A.</i>	
Painted Wall-Plaster from Roman Villas in the Cambridge Region	13
<i>By JOAN LIVERSIDGE, M.LITT.</i>	
Roman Pewter from the 'Old Croft' River at Welney	18
<i>By T. C. LETHBRIDGE, M.A., F.S.A.</i>	
Herewardisbeche	22
<i>By J. G. A. BECKETT, M.A.</i>	
Textiles of the Saxon Period in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology	26
<i>By GRACE M. CROWFOOT</i>	
An Account of the University Collection of Brass Rubbings in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology	33
<i>By G. A. E. RUCK, M.A., F.S.A.</i>	
Archaeological Notes	47
<i>By C. I. FELL AND G. H. S. BUSHNELL</i>	
<i>Index</i>	51

HEREWARDISBECHE

J. G. A. BECKETT, M.A.

With a note by T. C. LETHBRIDGE, M.A., F.S.A.

THE surviving Obedientary Rolls and Carte of the Benedictine Priory of Ely, now part of the muniments of the Dean and Chapter, provide a fruitful source of information on the subject of local medieval field-names and the names of fisheries and waterways. In the course of transcribing documents formerly contained in Compartment R of the fourth Chest of the Priory Carte I have found references to a particular fishery in the vicinity of Ely which is of some interest in that it appears to be the only local example of the compounding of the personal name 'Hereward' which can be dated as far back as the early fourteenth century.

The thirty extant parchment carte which bear the monastic filing endorsement *Cista IIII R. Brame* form part of a collection of title deeds relating to portions of the Brame Estate which lay between the River Ouse and the present Ely-Cambridge main road, a little over a mile to the south of Ely, and probably roughly comprised the lands now belonging to Braham Farm and Alderbrook Farm. These properties passed into the possession of the Priory as the result of a number of complex transactions carried out during the period 1332-53.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century the separate properties, which later became grouped together as the Brame Estate, were in the hands of Nicholas de Walsham, Thomas, son of Mainer le Baas de Dullyngham, John de Gacele de Brame and Sir John Moritz (or Morice) knight. Of these, the de Gacele property was purchased for the Priory in 1332/33 'for the augmentation of the Sacristy', the Sacrist at that time being Alan de Walsingham who, both as Sacrist and, later, as Prior, was the prime mover in this phase of expansion of the monastic estates.

Further purchases were effected in 1334/35 when the de Walsham and le Baas properties passed to the Priory, again 'for the augmentation of the Sacristy', through the agency of Simon de Sneylewelle, chaplain, and Nicholas de Glyntone, clerk, to whom the lands were first conveyed and who reconveyed them to the Priory after obtaining licence by royal letters patent. Finally, in 1351/53, the fourth and most substantial part of the Brame Estate, previously the property of Sir John Moritz, was sold to the Priory by Symon de Sutton, Richard de Barentun, Symon le Braseir de Ely and William de Herford.

The fishery formed part of the property which was acquired from the heir of Thomas, the son of Mainer le Baas de Dullyngham, and is spelt variously as 'Herwardbech'¹ 'Herewardbech'² and 'Herewardisbeche'.³ There is no available

¹ Ely Priory Carte no. 1171.

² Ibid. no. 1170.

³ Ibid. no. 1151.

documentary evidence for an exact siting of this fishery, but it seems reasonable to assume that it lay somewhere between the Newmarket line railway bridge and Braham Docking, and on the east side of the main Ely-Cambridge railway line, since the railway roughly follows the edge of the high land and separates it from the fen along that frontage. Another known fishery in the same area was 'Bramewere',¹ which is likely to have been situated near the main water access to Brame, Braham Docking, a cut communicating with the river and evidently of an early date, since the parish boundary follows the line of this waterway and then continues north-westward up the course of the Alderbrook.

It is perhaps relevant to note that the name 'Hereward' does not appear to have been common in the district in the fourteenth century, and, in fact, among the hundreds of recorded names of principals and witnesses contained in the Priority Carte I have observed only one instance of the name.²

The interpretation of the name element 'beche' or 'bech' presents considerable difficulty, but one is probably safe in construing it as a reference to land adjoining, or associated with, water.

The consolidated Brame Estate, which was finally built up into a whole by the energy of Alan de Walsingham *cum magno labore suo et industria ac sumptibus etiam permaximis*, amounted to 155 acres of arable land, 43 acres of pasture and 20 acres of marsh, with a number of messuages and rentals and two parts of a fish-weir (*gurges*) in addition to the fishery of Herewardisbeche. The purchase price given for the de Walsham and le Baas parts of the estate alone as shown in the Sacrist Roll for 1334/35 was £190. 13s. 6d., a figure which agrees with the record in *Anglia Sacra*, vol. 1, p. 644.

NOTE

Major Beckett's discovery adds one more link to a chain of evidence which has been long in the forging. For more than twenty years we have been trying to locate the site of William I's successful entry into the Isle of Ely in the face of Hereward's defence. In vol. xxxiv, p. 91, of our *Proceedings* I summarized briefly the facts at our disposal, and came to the conclusion that William's assault may have followed the line of the county boundary from Stuntney to Braham Dock. From dredgings of the river at this point many eleventh-century weapons have been recovered, including one of the finest spears in the country.³ The county boundary lies along a low peninsula of clay upland, which would never have caught the eye of any casual visitor. Before the shrinkage of the peat on either side of it, it can only have been known to fenmen by the different character of the vegetation on its surface. This may have been the secret way into the Isle, which tradition holds to have been betrayed to William. Opposite this peninsula is, or rather was, Alderbrook Farm. On the Alderbrook, now straightened into Braham Dock, there was presumably a landing place or hythe. This is a reasonable conjecture, for all similar sites had their hythes.

¹ Ely Coucher Book 1251.

² Robert Hereward, steward of Bishop William de Luda.

³ *C.A.S. Proceedings*, vol. xxxi, plates VII and VIII.

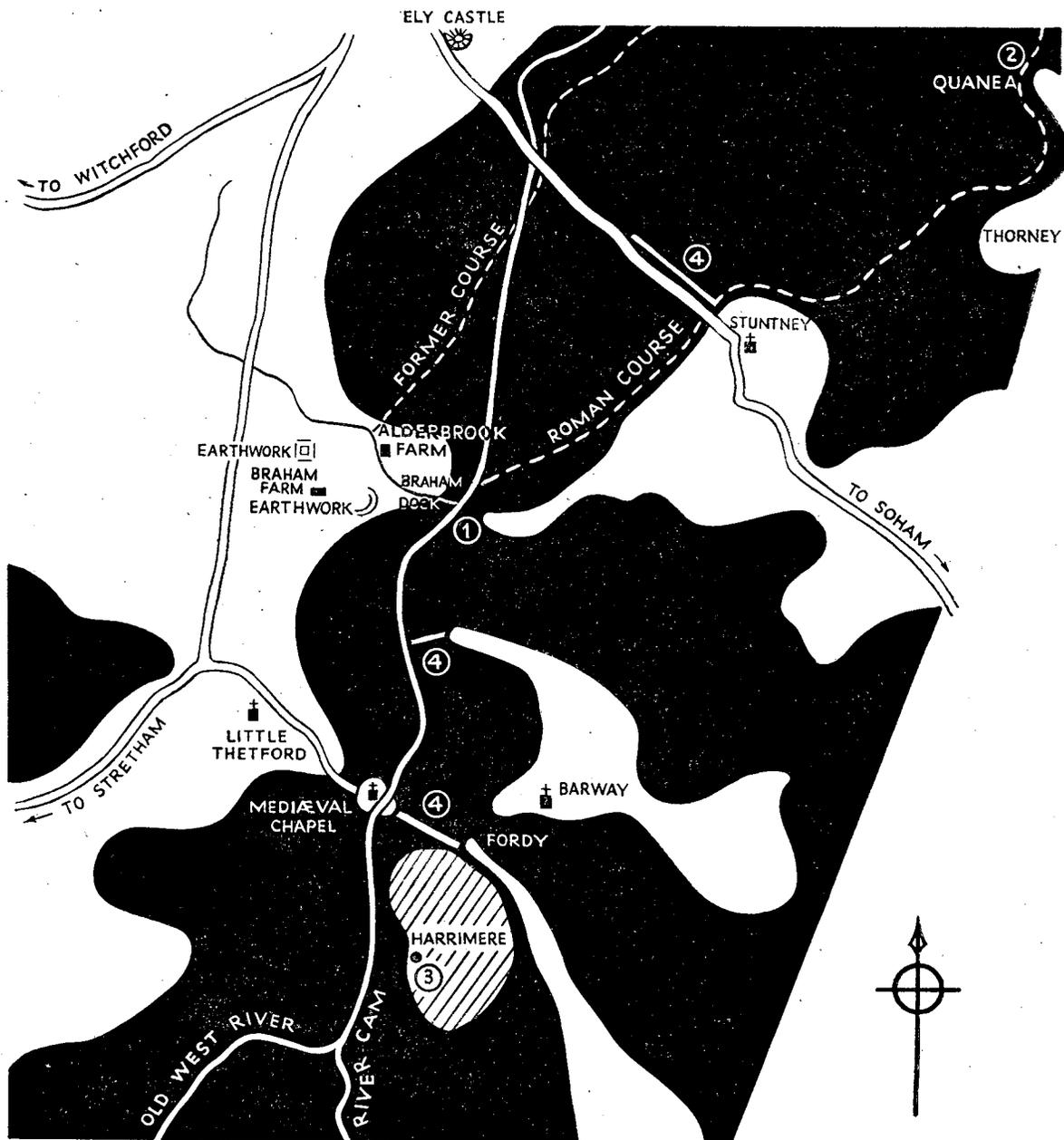


Fig. 1. Sketch map to show the crossings into the Isle of Ely from the east. Peat lands shown in black.

1. Eleventh-century weapon found.
2. Eleventh-century weapons, pottery and dam found.
3. Late Saxon pottery found on site of crannog.
4. Late Bronze Age causeways.

Traces of Tudor brickwork have been pointed out to me here by Major Beckett. Above Braham Dock and Alderbrook Farm stands Braham Farm with its curious medieval earthwork. Between the two farms are traces of another camp. This was in fact a way into Ely which needed watching.

I have already suggested that the Alrehede, or Alreheche, of the *Gestis Herwardi* is just as likely to have been on this Alderbrook as at Aldreth. Now Major Beckett has produced evidence for a Hereward's beche or brook on this same Braham farm.

In 1140, when Bishop Nigel had constructed engines near the water at Ely and surrounded a wooden fortification with a rampart of earth, he freed Alherede from its garrison. Alherede, Alrehede or Alreheche was therefore complementary to the castle at Ely and presumably not far away. We have not proved the matter yet, but we have gone a long way towards such a proof.

The *Gestis Herwardi* is our local saga. Prefaced as it is by mythical stories, it is often dismissed by historians as fable, although it is borne out by the descriptions in the *Liber Eliensis*. Both accounts may have been distorted in later times. If, however, there was an assault on the Isle of Ely at Braham Dock, it took place in William's campaign, for all the weapons so far recovered there are of eleventh-century date.

T. C. L.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

VOLUME XLIV
JANUARY 1950 TO DECEMBER 1950

15s. net.

CONTENTS

<i>Officers and Council of the Society 1950-51</i>	page vi
<i>Report and Summary of Accounts for the Year 1949</i>	vii
<i>List of Members of the Society</i>	x
Buckingham College	i
<i>By R. W. McDOWALL, M.A.</i>	
Painted Wall-Plaster from Roman Villas in the Cambridge Region	13
<i>By JOAN LIVERSIDGE, M.LITT.</i>	
Roman Pewter from the 'Old Croft' River at Welney	18
<i>By T. C. LETHBRIDGE, M.A., F.S.A.</i>	
Herewardisbeche	22
<i>By J. G. A. BECKETT, M.A.</i>	
Textiles of the Saxon Period in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology	26
<i>By GRACE M. CROWFOOT</i>	
An Account of the University Collection of Brass Rubbings in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology	33
<i>By G. A. E. RUCK, M.A., F.S.A.</i>	
Archaeological Notes	47
<i>By C. I. FELL AND G. H. S. BUSHNELL</i>	
<i>Index</i>	51