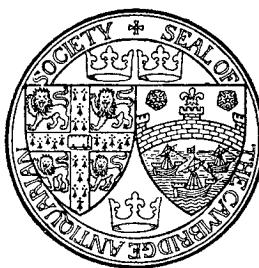


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

OCTOBER 1931—OCTOBER 1932

WITH
Communications
MADE TO THE SOCIETY



VOLUME XXXIII

Edited by E. A. B. BARNARD, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

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A HISTORY OF CLOPTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

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

About three miles from the Old North Road, in a meadow on the hill-side overlooking the Cam valley, and about midway between the churches of Croyden and Tadlow, is a long low mound about the size of the nave of an ordinary village church. A little further down the hill there is a higher mound of irregular shape surrounded by a moat, and lower still in the meadow is another moated site and the remains of earth-works for holding up water for turning a mill. By a field gate near the second mound are a few pieces of worked limestone. These are all the visible signs of the church, manor and village of Clopton. The nearest house to-day is a farm house on the Tadlow road, which, although in Clopton meadow, is called Croyden Farm.

The old Saxon road from Arrington through Croyden to Tadlow tower and Wrestlingworth formerly passed between the church and the manor house. The church was dedicated to St Mary, and in it was a chantry founded by one of London's lord mayors, with an income larger than that of some of the neighbouring parish priests. In this church the Bishop of Ely once ordained candidates for the priesthood.

The house was called Clopton Bury and was capable of standing a siege¹, and between it and the church was held a market every Wednesday. Not far away from the manor house and church were the rectory and the houses of eighteen tenant farmers with their families, at least a hundred people, and now there is nothing but the view, except for the imagination of the antiquary.

There are several places called Clopton in England, of which Clopton near Stratford-on-Avon and Clopton in Suffolk are the best known. Besides Clopton in Cambridgeshire, there is a Clopton in Northamptonshire; there is also a Clophill in Bedfordshire. The first syllable of the names Clapham and Clapton was originally "clop." These places seem too widely

¹ Early Chancery Proceedings, 509/31.

PLATE I



Fig. 1. View from the hill-side above the site of Clopton Bury manor. The moated mound is shown in the middle of the picture. Lower down is Canal Close where traces of the canal can yet be seen. In front of the three elm trees in a row are earthworks which may have been intended to hold up water for a mill. On the right of the picture is Croyden House Farm, which is supplied with water from a spring on the Bury site.



Fig. 2. View looking north over the Bury site. The medieval village was to the left of the picture, judging from the irregularities in the meadow.

distributed to have been derived from a personal name such as Cloppa, even if such a name was known to exist. There is a middle Danish word "klop" meaning "clod" or "lump"; so the best meaning which can at present be given to Clopton is "the town of clods," and it is a suitable one in that the soil is "heavy¹."

Some time in the eighteenth century the name of the village was changed from Clopton to Clapton or Clapham. In Bowen's map of 1778 it is still spelt Clopton, but in the first Ordnance Map, about 1820, it is spelt Clapham. The six-inch Ordnance Survey of 1886 marks Clapton Cottages, a part of the old village, as still standing, and puts the site of St Mary's Church in the wrong place. The 1891 one-inch map does not contain the name at all, but shows a building on the Bury manor site. Lysons's *Magna Britannia*, 1809, calls the place Clopton; Gardner's *Directory*, 1851, Clopton or Clapton; Kelly's *Directory* up to 1892 calls it Clopton, but in 1904 and since, Clapton. The only advantage in such a change of spelling is that it might help the postal authorities when villages with the same name are inhabited. At the present time the name Clopton as relating to a Cambridgeshire village is as lost in Cambridge, as the village itself is on the country side. In the Venns' *Alumni* the rectors of Clopton, Cambridgeshire, are referred to places of that name in Northants or Suffolk.

The site of Clopton may be reached by a grass track which leaves the Cambridge-Tadlow road at Croyden House Farm, but the best way to approach it is by a footpath or bridle way, once a cart track, which continues the road from Croyden church at the point where it joins the Hatley road. This track, once a Saxon highway, passes between the site of Clopton Bury and church and goes on to Tadlow Tower farm. In map No. 5 of Dr Cyril Fox's *Archaeology of the Cambridge Region* the road from Arrington through Croyden, Clopton and Tadlow to Eyworth is marked as Anglo-Saxon. But as the latest Ordnance Map knows not the name Clopton, that name does not occur in Fox's map.

¹ See English Place-Name Society, III, pp. xli, 23. Also Skeat, *Place-Names of Bedfordshire*, p. 25; of *Cambridgeshire*, p. 7; of *Suffolk*, p. 96.

THE MANORS.

In 1086 the parish of Clopton contained 840 acres of arable land. It was about a mile wide, bounded by the parishes of Tadlow, East Hatley and Croyden, and the river Rhee. The northern portion is about 200 feet above sea level, from which it slopes gradually to the river. The soil is clay, and there is a brick field near the river. In the time of Edward the Confessor there were two landlords, the Bishop of Winchester with 600 acres, Earl Gurd with 240. In 1086, the Bishop was still in possession but the Earl Gurd had given place to Eudo the Sewer, or Eudo FitzHubert¹.

The Manor of Eudo Dapifer, or the Sewer.

Eudo the Sewer, or Eudo FitzHubert, held many manors in 1086. His chief seat was at Colchester, where he founded St John's Abbey. He held a large tract of land in Cambridgeshire, which stretched from Gamlingay, through the Hatleys, Clopton, and Croyden nearly to the Ermine street. There were about 3000 acres, more than two-thirds of which were in Gamlingay. An unusual condition about this holding was that the Hatley St George portion was uncultivated, and that the portion in East Hatley, Clopton and Croyden contained no demesne lands. The Clopton manor consisted of 240 acres divided amongst seven tenants called bordars. There was enough enclosed meadow to graze 16 oxen, but only enough woodland to provide timber for repairs and fencing. The flock of 293 sheep was an unusually large one for the size of the manor, which had in 1086 doubled its 1066 value. The increase may have been due to the sheep, or perhaps to money payments of the bordars made instead of rents paid by labour. An unusual word in the description of this manor, "unus hercerarius," comes after the enumeration of the sheep. Hamilton (*Inq. Com. Cant.*) includes the word in his index under "Titles," as if it meant some kind of farm official, like the well-known "hercarius"—a harrower. But it is more likely to have meant something in the way of stock.

¹ *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiae*, p. 55.

Eudo lived until 1120, and as he left no heirs, his possessions came to the Crown and were added to the honor of Boulogne.

The under-tenant of Eudo in 1086 was a man named Humphrey. A Humiphrey de Anslavilla was a member of the Cambridgeshire Domesday jury, but he seems to be connected with the other manor. The land in Croyden and Clopton was all in the hands of tenants, but in Wimpole, separated only by the parish of Arrington from Croyden, he had a holding of 240 acres which was all in demesne and must have been worked from Clopton and Croyden¹.

The earliest known owner of Clopton after 1086 is Simon Ruffus or Rus, whose name occurs on the Pipe Roll of 1195. In the Chancellor's Roll of 1201 he holds half a knight's fee in Clopton of the honor of Boulogne. In 1215 William le Rus held it². He died in 1250, leaving a son Geoffrey, aged 36. He is called William le Rus of Bassingbourn, where he held a manor. In Clopton he held 2½ hides of land, half of which was held of the Abbot of Lesnes for a fifth of a fee and 50s. rent, and the other half of William de Cheyney for a fifth of a fee and 60s. rent³. Geoffrey Rus died in 1267, and on the Wednesday after January 25th and on March 5th in that year inquisitions were taken at Bassingbourn concerning his lands. He held his land in Clopton of the lord William Cheney of Morden and the lord Abbot of Lesnes. There were 21 acres which could be sown yearly worth 1s. an acre, and 3 acres of mowable meadow worth 4s. an acre. Geoffrey received from his free tenants, because he had no villeins (*quia non habuit villenagium*), twelve capons worth five farthings each. His messuage and the court of his tenants was worth half a mark yearly. Total 39s. 11d. (40s. 11d. really). It was held for half a fee, rendering 60s. to Sir William Cheney and 50s. to the Abbot of Lesnes. "And the bailiff of the honor of Boulogne holds view of frank pledge and takes two shillings for

¹ The time has now come for a study of the *Inquisitio* on the line of baronies. There is ample material; all Pipe Rolls for the twelfth century are in print, as are the Book of Fees, the Feudal Aids, the list of fees for 1236 in the *Liber Memorandum Ecclesie de Bernwelle*, and the Hundred Roll of 1279.

² Pipe Roll 62.

³ *Inquisitio Post Mortem*, C. Hen. III, 10/15.

the King's use¹." The interesting points about this inquisition are that a demesne farm of at least 60 acres has arisen where there was none in 1086, that the bordars or bondmen of Domesday have become free tenants, and the mention of the fee of two shillings paid to the bailiff of Boulogne, which will occur also in another place.

Geoffrey's son and heir, Robert, was only four years old at his father's death, and the King sold his wardship and marriage to Hugh de Bruey, King's yeoman, who may have belonged to the Steeple Morden family of that name. Hugh sold the wardship to Gilbert de Chelsey, the perquisites being reckoned to be worth £5 a year². In 1284 Robert held half a fee in Bassingbourn, but the Clopton land is not mentioned³. He was then just of age. Nine years later he sold the property in both villages to Hugh de Clopton. In the documents of sale the Clopton portion is described as a messuage, 40 acres of land, 6 of meadow and £1 rent in Clopton and East Hatley. The price was ten marks, or £6 13s. 4d. One reason for the low price given was that Gilbert de Chelsey and Agnes his wife held it for life⁴. As to the reason for Gilbert having a life interest in the estate, one can only suggest that he had used his influence as guardian to Robert to marry either his mother or sister. That was one of the perquisites.

In the enquiry into the privileges or regalia used by lords of manors, called the *Placita de quo warranto* 1298, Hugh de Clopton was summoned to show his charter giving him leave to hold a court leet in Clopton. He appeared, and said that he had bought the manor of Robert le Rus, who, and whose predecessors, had held the court before the memory of man. As he could show no royal charter, the case was, like many others, adjourned to the Michaelmas assizes at York. During the eyre held at Cambridge in 1298 the jury of the Hundred of Armingford had stated that Robert had alienated the manor without licence⁵. This was not true, the final concord mentioned above being a royal licence which had to be paid for. So one cannot believe all that the jury of the Hundred

¹ I.P.M.C. Hen. III, 34/15.

² Hundred Rolls, I, 51.

³ Feudal Aids, I, 136

⁴ Feet of Fines, 22 Ed. I, No. 10.

⁵ Assize Roll 96.

presented. Hugh had a short reign at Clopton. Where he came from and what his profession was, is not known. In *Vetus Liber Archidiaconi Eliensis*, p. 107 (Feltoe and Minns), he is styled Hugh de Clopton clerk, but his name does not occur in the Chancery Rolls as an official. On the same Assize Roll in which his title to Clopton was impugned¹ is the following case. The jury presented that Hugh de Clopton unjustly seized and kept six sheep belonging to Roger son of Roger the carpenter of Tadlow, and Elota and Mabel his sisters. Hugh replied that Roger and his sisters held land of him in villenage, the customary rent of which included the making of two quarters of malt for Hugh's use. He says that he had sent them two quarters of corn suitable for malting, but that they had kept the corn and sent him no malt. Therefore he had distrained the sheep, as he was by law and custom allowed. A special jury was summoned, who said that Hugh's statement was true. But Hugh does not seem to have been a favourite with the jury of the Hundred. At the end of the Assize Roll for 1298 is a list of fines owing: among them is a sum of 77½ marks owing out of a fine of 100 marks charged on Hugh de Clopton for conspiracy. He died in the early part of 1306, and the *inquisitio post mortem* was taken at Cambridge on April 28th. His holding in Clopton was larger than that of Geoffrey le Rus. He held a messuage and 80 acres of land of William de Bereford by the service of 13s. 4d. a year. He possessed another messuage, half of which, with 45 acres of land, 3 acres of meadow and a free tenant, paying 45s. a year, was held of the Abbot of Lesnes for 50s. a year; the other half with 60 acres of arable and 1 of meadow, of Nicholas de Cheney for one-eighth of a fee, rendering 60s. a year. He also held an eighth of a fee in East Hatley of the Trayleys. The increased acreage in each holding may have been due to breaking up the waste. Hugh's heir was Maud, the eight-year-old daughter of his kinsman William Taylour of Clopton². The two following notes have some bearing on Hugh's heir but exactly what is not clear. The first is from the *Calendar of Close Rolls*, 1305. Hugh de Clopton appeared before the King and sought to replevin to Richard le Taillour

¹ Assize Roll 96, m. 51.

² Calend. Inq. P.M. iv, No. 581.

of Clopton and Joan his wife, Hugh their son and Agnes, Alice, Maud, Julian and Christiana their daughters, and their lands in Clopton, which had been seized because of their default against Roesia, late wife of Alan de Clopton. The second from Assize Roll 96, m. 1. "Geoffrey le Rus now dead, father of Robert le Rus, was not seised of sixteen acres of land with appurtenances in Clopton and East Hatley, because a long time before he died he had enfeoffed Stephen, uncle of Agnes wife of Robert son of Alan de Clopton, and Agnes and her husband aré to keep the land."

The custody of Hugh's heir was sold to Hugh le Rus of Oakington for seventy marks¹, and in 1316² and 1318³ he appears as one of the chief residents of Clopton. In 1327⁴, John le Rous was in possession; his wife was named Alice, and she may have been one of the "Taillour's," sister to Maud heir of Hugh. From this John le Rous the manor got the name which survives in Clopton to the present day. A wood containing a moated site near the river is called Rowse's wood. In 1346 after an *inquisitio ad quod damnum* (File CCLXXV. No. 7) the Rous lands were divided, John retaining the Clopton portion and his son Philip the Bassingbourn portion. Only the latter is mentioned in the aid granted 1346⁵. John le Rous was alive in 1347, as he was rated at and paid five stone of wool in the tax of that year⁶. That is the last connection of the Rous family with Clopton which has been met with. The following entries may relate to this manor. In 1358 Richard de Boxworth, chaplain, William Childerly and Alice his wife, Thomas Chene or Cheine and Agnes his wife, sold 3 messuages, 300 acres of arable, 12 acres of meadow and 20s. rent in Clopton and East Hatley to Nicholas Brown, rector of Little Childerly for 100 marks. At the same time Thomas and William were dividing property in Oakington and Westwick, where the Rus family had possessions⁷. Alice and Agnes may have been John le Rous's daughters and heirs. In 1372 John atte Hill of Clopton and John Baudwyn

¹ Cal. Pat. Roll 1306.

² *Nomina Villarum.*

³ Lay Subsidy 81/7.

⁴ Ib. 81/6.

⁵ Feudal Aids, I, p. 171.

⁶ Lay Subsidy 242/8.

⁷ F. of F. 32 Ed. III, No. 27, 28.

pledged 160 acres of land, 8 acres of meadow, and 6 messuages in Clopton, Tadlow and Pincote to William Newport, Alderman of London, and John Poynant his son-in-law, for a debt which was paid off in 1387¹. In 1390 it appears from his will that William Newport owned the reversion of Rouse's manor (see under Bury manor). In 1392 Nicholas Monkton and Adam atte Wode, yeoman of the chamber, had a grant of Clopton's place, Cambridgeshire, which Thomas Childerly alienated when outlawed for felony, 10 Rich. II².

Baldwin de Bereford makes no mention of Rouse's manor in his sale to Newport in 1377, so that Newport must have acquired it separately. But in the lawsuit of 1399 the Hasildens claimed it apparently under the settlement of Edmund de Bereford in 1343. The manor is not mentioned in the claim of the coheirs in the lawsuit. In 1431 by a fine levied in the King's Court, a John Middleton, of whom we know nothing more, sold the manor of Rowsys, Clopton, to Robert Clopton, Walter Taylard junior, Thomas Burgoyn, Geoffrey Clopton, and John Clopton, for 100 marks. The record states that Robert Hakebech and Joan his wife held it for life³. It is possible that Middleton was only a feoffee to uses, that is, the manor had been bequeathed to him to be sold, and the proceeds put to pious uses. It is not known who Robert Hakebech and his wife were, but it may be guessed that Joan was the widow of the owner who had left the manor to Middleton. It will be noticed that a William Middleton was rector of Clopton at this time. This sale seems to be complete, yet in 1444 Robert Clopton obtained a remission from William son of Thomas Hasilden of all his rights on Rouse's manor⁴. Thenceforward the manor was united to the Bury manor.

*The Bishop of Winchester's Manor, or the
Manor of Clopton Bury.*

This manor was a portion of a block of 2480 acres which belonged to the bishopric in Abington Pigotts, Bassingbourn, Clopton and Steeple Morden, and half of which was in the

¹ Close Roll Cal. 1387, 343.

² Pat. Roll. Cal.

³ F. of F. 9 Hen. VI, No. 34..

⁴ Close Roll Cal.

last-named village. This large estate was still in the Bishop's hands in 1130¹. After that date there is a gap in the Pipe Rolls or balance sheets of the Exchequer, due to the troubles of King Stephen's reign. When they start again in 1154, the Danegeld which the Bishop used to pay is charged to Warin Fitzgerald, who is said to hold his land of the honor of Boulogne, which belonged to the King. From that date onwards the only connection which the Bishopric had with these 2480 acres was that it possessed the patronage of the rectory of Steeple Morden. No explanation of this loss of possessions to the Bishopric has been found. Even the *Victoria County History for Hampshire* does not help. Many writers on local history seem to do no original research but merely copy the opinions of their predecessors. The following is a suggestion as to why the Bishop of Winchester ceased to have property in Clopton. During the reign of King Stephen his brother, Henry of Blois, was Bishop of Winchester. He was a magnificent prelate to whom we owe much architectural work in that diocese, and no doubt he espoused the cause of Stephen as assiduously as he built churches and hospitals such as Romsey and St Cross. On his brother's death he retired abroad. I suggest that the price which the Bishopric of Winchester paid for its adherence to the usurper was the loss of the Cambridgeshire estate.

The barony of Warin Fitzgerald extended into many counties, and his personal connection with Clopton was small. But when he died in 1217, leaving a daughter Margaret, married to Baldwin de Redvers Earl of Devon, the village of Clopton entered into a family squabble of the feudal aristocracy. Margaret de Redvers was soon left a childless widow; meanwhile her sister-in-law Isabel de Redvers had married the Earl of Albemarle. On Baldwin's death Albemarle seized Margaret's lands in right of his wife, who, he said, was heir to the Redvers estates. But he seized the Fitzgerald lands as well, and Margaret brought a successful action in the King's Court to recover a knight's fee in Clopton and fees in other counties².

¹ Pipe Roll, 31 Hen. I.

² 53 Hen. III; *Abbreviatio Placitorum*, p. 160.

As Margaret had no children, the Fitzgerald fees went to her father's brother, Henry Fitzgerald, whose only daughter Alice married Robert de Insula, or de Lisle.

We now come to the mesne tenants of Clopton. The tenants hitherto dealt with were those whose only connection with the village was the receiving of a rent of £2 for each knight's fee. The mesne tenant was the man who had a manor house in Clopton, who farmed the demesne land and let out the rest to small holders. Several owners of manors here had other manors, so whether they ever lived in Clopton or not we do not know.

In the time of Domesday Book (1086) and before, this manor belonged to the Bishop of Winchester. It contained 600 acres of land of which 120 were in the home farm. The tenants, 6 villeins and 5 bordars, farmed the rest between them. There was enclosed meadow for 5 plough teams or 40 oxen, and common pasture for the cattle, but none are enumerated on the manor. In 1086 the whole value of the manor was £3 a year, in King Edward's time it had been £4, and between those dates it had been as low as £2 due to destruction of cattle and crops in some military operation. No tenant of the home farm under the Abbot is mentioned, but on the jury of the Hundred of Armingford, who gave the evidence on which the record was compiled, is the name Humfrey de Ansevilla. Eighty years later the tenant was Thomas de Andevilla and probably these two men were of the same family. There is at the present time a small town called Andeville near Cape la Hogue, from which the family may have got its names. But Léchaude D'Anisy, *Recherches sur le Domesday*, states that Humfrey came from Anneville in Val de Saire.

There is a good account of the family in W. Farrer's *Honours and Knights' Fees*, vol. III, pp. 207-9. In 1198 Hamelin de Andeville and Alice his wife appear in Hertfordshire; next year he occurs in Cambridgeshire as a "visor." In 1213 he claimed the advowson of Knebworth church against Richard his brother. Richard said that their father Thomas gave it to him, and produced a deed. Hamelin said that the deed must have been executed during his father's long illness,

or his mother, who loved Richard best, might have sealed the deed. He protested that the advowson was the head of his honor and without it he could not have seisin. It was decided that Richard should have the next presentation and no more¹. In 1236 Richard held the family estate in Clopton, Knebworth and Wimpole. In 1241 the names of Richard and his wife Clemency occur in an Oxfordshire suit, but in 1267 Alexander de Andeville had licence to hunt the hare, fox, badger and cat in the royal forests of that county. In 1275 Alexander claimed to have view of frank-pledge and assize of bread and ale in Clopton, in right of his ancestors, but showed no charter². Alexander was the last of his race. Chauncy, *Hist. of Herts.*, II, 402, calls him "Alexander Earl of Andeville in Normandy, also called Alexander de Andeville of Knebworth." He died before 1284, as at that date his widow Beatrice sold part of her dowry³. Dalloway, *History of Sussex*, II, p. 339, says that she was the daughter of Alexander, King of Scotland. Alexander de Andeville and Beatrice had an only daughter Beatrice, who before 1284 had married Sir Robert de Hoo of Luton Hoo, *Victoria County Hist., Beds*, vol. II, p. 355. In 1292 Robert had a grant of a market every Friday at Clopton, and of free warren, or game licence to be used there, at Eversden and Luton Hoo⁴. In 1298 his regalities were challenged like those of every other landowner. Robert said that he claimed view of frank-pledge etc. in right of Beatrice his wife, and the jury agreed that her ancestors had from time immemorial enjoyed these privileges, paying two shillings a year to the king's bailiff⁵. As to the weekly market and free warren he showed the royal charter which he had received six years before⁶. The year before these proceedings Robert and Beatrice had leased a messuage, together with 240 acres of land in Clopton, and the advowson of the church to William de Bereford for life,

¹ Curia Regis Roll, 15 John.

² H.R. I, 51.

³ F. of F. Cambs, 13 Ed. I, No. 4.

⁴ Charter Roll Cal. III, p. 42.

⁵ In 1357 the profits of the honor of Boulogne, at Clopton, are given as two shillings. Sheriff's Acct. 9/51.

⁶ Plac. q. w., p. 103.

at a red rose annual rent, the property to return to Robert and Beatrice or their heirs at William's death¹. In the Aid of 1302 William paid for the fee, and in 1314, Robert then being dead, his widow sold her rights in Clopton to William de Bereford, senior kt. for 100 marks². This sale marks the end of the Hoo connection with Clopton, but the Eversden manor was held by them until 1373. Robert was M.P. for Herts in 1308 and died in 1310³. Beatrice died in 1314. Both were buried in Knebworth church, where their arms, quarterly, sable and or, may still be seen.

With the entry of the Bereford family into Clopton there begins a most complicated piece of manorial history, the building up of the records of which must have been of great profit to the men of law for more than a century.

William de Bereford, who bought the Hoo estate in Clopton, was a lawyer and came of a legal family⁴. He was acting as an itinerant justice in Salop in 1292; in 1301 he was executor to Edward Earl of Cornwall, and of the King's Council; in 1305 he was one of those chosen to treat with the Scots. In 1308 he succeeded Ralph de Hengham as Chief Justice of Common Pleas. He died in 1326, leaving large estates distributed over eight different counties. These were fourteen manors, but there were many scattered pieces of property. Some were grants for life only; some were entailed to himself and his heirs by his wife Margaret; some were entailed to his son Edmund⁵. It was a very large estate for a judge to have gathered together, and it would have been interesting, if one had been writing his biography, to have found out who his predecessors were in some of the lands. But he was not one of the judges fined by King Edward for corruption, and the only complaint made against him was by John de Someri, who said that the judge had libelled him by publicly stating that Someri oppressed the people in the neighbourhood of his castle of Dudley. An excellent account of Sir William de

¹ F. of F. Cambs, 26 Ed. I, No. 1.

² Ib. 7 Ed. II, No. 109; De Banco Roll; Close Roll.

³ Chauncy, *op. cit.*, II, p. 402.

⁴ D.N.B.

⁵ Cal. I.P.M., p. 469, No. 748.

Bereford's career as a judge is given in a little book by W. C. Bolland, *Chief Justice Sir William Bereford*, Cambridge, 1924. Dr Bolland uses the year books or law reports for his facts and his picture of the Chief Justice at work is an attractive one. He was a judge for forty-six years, and Chief Justice for nearly twenty years, sitting to within a month of his death. His decisions had a lasting effect on English law. According to the *D.N.B.* William left two sons, Simon and William, but the *Inquisitio* quoted gives Edmund, aged 30, as his son and heir. But there was a Simon de Bereford contemporary with Edmund, who was escheator in the northern counties and to whom, after the death of Sir William de Bereford, the elder, the guardianship of the heir of Sir John de Argentine was given. Perhaps Simon was an illegitimate son. Baker, *Northants*, I, p. 682, says that William was the eldest son of the judge, was living in 1318 and died without issue. Besides Edmund the judge had three legitimate daughters, Agnes, Joan and Margaret, the descendants of whom eighty years afterwards fought a lawsuit for the entailed estates.

Edmund de Bereford was born in 1296 and died on Sept. 26, 1354. He succeeded to all his father's entailed property, and in 1327 had licence to fortify his manor house at Langley, Warwickshire, with lime and stone¹. In 1323 he acted as deforciant in the entailment of Horseheath Manor to the heirs of James Audley and his sister Margaret, and when John de Nereford² married John de Argentine's widow in 1327, to whom William and Simon de Bereford were guardians, Nereford was bound in £1000 to Edmund to act straight in the matter. Edmund paid ten shillings tax for Clopton in 1327, had a grant of free warren there in 1335 and paid ten pounds of wool in the tax of 1347. In 1343 Edmund executed a deed which had a far-reaching effect. By a final concord³ he entailed his Berkshire, Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire properties to (1) the heirs male of his body, (2) to Margaret

¹ On the Patent Roll for 1328 there is a presentation of Edmund de Bereford, clerk, to a prebend in Salisbury Cathedral, but he must have been a different man.

² *Sic.*

³ *Divers Counties*, 16 Ed. III.

Countess of Hereford for life, (3) to Baldwin, son of Edmund de Bereford and his bodily heirs, (4) to John, brother of Baldwin and his bodily heirs, (5) to his direct heirs. The estate was thus well tied up, and sixty years afterwards No. 5 inherited. We leave the effect of this entailment for the present. Dugdale, who says that Edmund made his will in 1351 (Islip, fo. 105), dying three years later, had seen a deed with his seal attached, argent, crusilly fitchy three lis sable; the judge bore the same arms¹.

The Cambridgeshire portion of his *inquisitio post mortem* is lost, but from those relating to other counties we find that he died Sept. 26th, 1354, that by a special entail of 1349 he had put his illegitimate son John into possession of most of his lands, with remainder to Baldwin, John's brother, and that his Berkshire property was to descend, as in the entail of 1343, to Margaret Countess of Hereford, etc. The jurors in each inquisition state, however, that his real heirs were his sisters, Joan, widow of Gilbert de Ellesfield, Agnes, wife of John Maltravers, late wife of John de Nereford, formerly wife of John de Argentine, and Margaret, widow of James Audley, all of whom were forty years old and more. After the death of Edmund de Bereford the Cambridgeshire portion of the Bereford estate descended according to the final concord of 1343, and became the property of Margaret, Countess of Hereford for life, but as John and Baldwin, sons of Edmund, were the heirs after her death, they will be dealt with first. As stated above, John inherited most of his father's property by special entail, but he died in Gascony about Michaelmas 1357, a widower and childless. His wife, Eleanor daughter of Richard Earl of Arundel, had predeceased him. The Cambridgeshire portion of this *inquisitio post mortem* is also lost, but in another county the jury found that his brother Baldwin de Bereford, kt., aged 24, was his heir. In another county, to which the special entailment did not apply, the jury state that he had no heirs because he was a bastard and died without heirs of his body lawfully begotten². Baldwin de Bereford, born about 1333, has a little more human interest for us than either of his brothers. Although the Cambridgeshire

¹ *History of Warwickshire.*

² Cal. I.P.M., x, p. 272.

estates of the family were in the possession of the Countess of Hereford, Sir Baldwin was the owner according to the Escheator's view, and in 1368 in a list of fees belonging to Robert de Lisle, Baldwin occurs as owning one fee in Clopton, Cambridgeshire, for which he had to perform suit at the court of Arkesden every three weeks. Baldwin held various official positions, such as lieutenant to the chief ranger of forests south of the Trent, but his most important post was that of body servant to the Black Prince, with all the campaigning which that involved. He was also a favourite with Richard II, who gave him the wardship of the heir of John de Odysingle, worth £100. With other favourites he was expelled from the courts by the merciless Parliament of 1388. In 1392 he had a grant of all the unmarked wild swans in the county of Cambridge¹. In the year 1399 he was doing public work in Northants and Oxfordshire and was living in 1401, but he died without heirs². He had by his wife Eleanor a son Baldwin, who died in his father's lifetime. In 1377 the two Baldwins sold their reversionary rights in the manor, advowson and one knight's fee in Clopton, to William Newport³. This brings in another name to confuse the history of this parish. Newport was a fishmonger of St Nicholas Olaf, Bread Street, London, Alderman of Queenhithe, 1376. By his will, proved in May, 1391⁴, he bequeathed his manor and advowson of Clopton and his manor of Rouses there to his daughter Margaret, wife of John Poynant, to be sold and the proceeds used for pious uses. Newport and Poynant appear in connection with a mortgage in Clopton some years before. This is the earliest date in which the two manors appear as united. Although Newport might have had actual possession of the manor of Rouses, he could only have owned the Bury as long as Baldwin or his descendants lived. The death of Baldwin junior made the sale of little real value, and when Baldwin senior died it was worthless, as the fourth

¹ Pat. Roll, Rich. II, iv, p. 230.

² Baker, *Northants*, i, p. 682.

³ Close Roll Cal. From the same source we learn that he bought the reversion of the manor of Arrington.

⁴ Hustings ii, p. 288.

clause of the entailment of 1343 came into operation. The purchase of such reversions was a pure speculation, but the London merchant probably got as much satisfaction out of it as the dabbler in stocks and shares does at the present day. The "pious uses" to be carried out by the chantry priests of St Nicholas Olaf bore the loss.

Dugdale says (*op. cit.*), "Baldwin had a bear for a crest and having no issue settled a great part of his estate by fine¹ upon John Hore and Joan his wife, which Joan was grandchild² by a co-heir to William de Ellesfield, and the grandchild of Gilbert de Ellesfield by Joan³, eldest sister of Sir Edmund de Bereford. John Hore was of Childerly, Cambs⁴, and likewise Gilbert his son." About 1494 their male line became extinct and Edith, cousin and heir to the last Gilbert Hore, "residing in her manor of Ellesfield near Oxford, having a special liking to Rowland Pudsey then a student in the university and a gentleman much accomplished took him for her husband." Baldwin thus made over his estate to the legitimate branch of his family.

We now return to the settlement or entailment of 1343. The first remainder in this was to Margaret Countess of Hereford for life, and it is necessary if possible to find out who she was and why she came into the settlement at all. She was the daughter of Ralph Baron Bassett and second wife of John de Bohun Earl of Hereford, who died without heirs. Bohun's first wife was Alice FitzAlan, a daughter of Edmund Earl of Arundel, and Edmund Bereford's son John married Eleanor FitzAlan, a daughter of Alice's brother, also Earl of Arundel. The relationship between Eleanor and Margaret was slight, yet it may explain Edmund de Bereford's interest in the young widow, Margaret Bohun. There may have been some difficulty in the marriage of a FitzAlan lady with the bastard grandson of a lord chief justice, and this grant to Margaret Bohun may have helped matters. The Countess lived to a great age, because it was not until 1405 that the "right" heirs of Edmund de Bereford took possession of Clopton. When she was left a widow in 1335, Margaret may

¹ Close Roll 1 Hen. VI, m. 4.

² I.P.M. 21 Rich. II, No. 30.

³ I.P.M. 30 Ed. III, No. 4.

⁴ F. of F. 8 Hen. IV.

have been only sixteen years old, which would make her eighty-six in 1405, not an impossible age. No mention of her has been found after the final concord of 1343, until the law-suit brought by the right heirs of Edmund de Bereford to recover the property assigned to her by that fine.

In 1383 a Countess of Hereford was travelling about the diocese of Ely with the Bishop, Thomas de Arundel, attended by Sir John Lovell and others (Roll in Bishops' Muniment Room). She may have been our Countess, and her connection with the Bishop was that she had succeeded the Bishop's aunt as Countess of Hereford. She was at least twenty-three years older than the Bishop, who was born in 1352.

In Hilary term, 1406, an action was brought in the common bench¹ by Joan Hore, John Loundes, Matilda Fitzwarin, Baldwin St George, and Philip St Clere, to recover the manors of Clopton, Crowmarsh Giffard, Oxon, and others, from Margaret, widow of Richard Hasilden. They quoted the final concord of 1343 and asked why after the deaths of Edmund de Bereford, of Margaret Countess of Hereford, of Baldwin and John de Bereford, these manors did not revert to the right heirs of Edmund. They stated that they were prepared to prove that they were the right heirs, thus: (1) Joan, wife of John Hore, was the daughter of Ann, daughter of William de Ellesfield, son of Gilbert de Ellesfield, son of Joan Bereford, sister of Edmund who died in 1356. (2) Joan, wife of John Loundes, was the daughter of William, son of Gilbert de Ellesfield, son of Joan, sister of Edmund. (3) Matilda, wife of Ivo Fitzwarin, was daughter of John de Argentine, son of Agnes, sister of Edmund de Bereford. (4) Elizabeth, wife of Baldwin St George, was daughter of John de Argentine, etc. (5) Philip St Clere was son of Joan, daughter of Alice, daughter of Margaret, sister of Edmund de Bereford.

Hugh de Hasilden, clerk, put in an answer for Margaret Hasilden and for himself. He did not acknowledge the above five claimants as heirs, for when the fine of 1343 was levied the Countess of Hereford was already seised of these manors and of them enfeoffed Margaret Hasilden. Moreover, he produced a charter dated at Clopton on the Thursday before

¹ De Banco Rolls, 580 m. 398; 581 m. 120.

Pentecost, 1399, by which Edmund de Bensted, kt., John his son, John Noreys, William Lewyn and John Waltham, clerk, granted by indenture to Richard Hasilden and Margaret his wife and their heirs with remainder to Thomas Hasilden, brother of Richard and his heirs, the manor and advowson of Clopton, the manor of Rouses and a water mill, with appurtenances in Clopton, East Hatley, Crawden and Pincote, which they had of the gift of William Smyth and John Fenbrigg, clerks. *Witnesses.* Baldwin St George, John Hobel-dod, Henry atte Strete, Geoffry Clopton, William Wakefield, Robert Spenser and Guy Moyne. [Of these, St George was a plaintiff in this suit and the other names are those of land-owners in Tadlow, Meldreth, Clopton, Melbourn, Linton and Weston Colville.] Now (proceeds Hugh) Richard and Thomas Hasilden are dead without bodily heirs, and Margaret can have only a life interest in the said manors because there is no possibility of heirs from her and Richard, therefore Hugh states that he is the nearest heir, viz. son of Roger, brother of Thomas, father of Thomas and Richard. The plaintiffs replied that Roger Hasilden, brother of Thomas and father of Hugh, was a bastard and so could not inherit. This they offer to prove. [The proof is not given in the record, the proof of legitimacy belonged to the spiritual court.] The verdict was for the plaintiff, and the manor of Clopton was divided into five parts. The records of this suit are long and wearisome. The descent of the manor is given, starting from the lease to Robert and Beatrice de Hoo in 1298. Points of law intelligible only to those learned in such matters are raised. But the result of the case is quite clear.

Before tracing the descent of the five parts, something must be said about the Countess of Hereford and the Hasilden family. The Hasildens came from Yorkshire. Thomas Hasilden of Wakefield bought a manor in Steeple Morden in 1369, and afterwards bought other manors in Guilden Morden. His relationship to Richard is not known. Thomas belonged to the household of John of Gaunt, and his wife came from the De Burghs of Borough Green, so the family were well up in the social scale. The easiest explanation of Richard's connections with the Bereford property is that he married

Margaret, Countess of Hereford. But that does not quite fit in with facts. It is a curious coincidence, however, that there should have been two Margarets of marriageable age connected with Clopton from 1343 to 1405.

The earliest connection of the Hasilden family with Clopton, apart from this lawsuit, is in 1392, when Richard and Thomas presented Hugh Hasilden, clerk, to the rectory of Clopton¹. The nearest recorded presentation before that date was in the time of Edmund de Bereford. The fact that Richard and Thomas presented jointly points to an earlier settlement than that of 1399. There seems to have been more than one Richard Hasilden, because in 1409 Thomas Hasilden, son and heir of Richard, was declared an idiot². Hugh Hasilden was not a landless man, although he lost his action. He had a small manor in Guilden Morden³.

Edmund de Bereford's right heirs and their descendants.

The descendants of the three daughters of the Chief Justice Bereford can be traced as follows.

(1) Agnes. She married Sir John de Argentine of Wymondley, Herts, and had a son John⁴. His heirs were three daughters, (a) Matilda, who married Ivo Fitzwarin and died in 1414, leaving one ninth (not one sixth, as the record states) of Clopton Bury to her daughter Eleanor, wife of Sir John Chiddock⁵. They had issue Sir John Chiddock who died in 1450. By an inquisition taken at Foxton before William Cheyne, escheator, it was found that, besides other property in Dorset, Somerset and Wilts, he held a third part of a third part of Clopton Bury, not held of the King but of whom unknown, worth 17s. 10d. a year. His heirs were Katherine, wife of William Stafford, armiger, and Margaret, wife of William Stourton, son of John Stourton, kt.⁶ After Sir John Chiddock's death, Eleanor married Ralph Bush, armiger, who died in 1441. By an inquisition taken at Royston, Ralph was found to hold in right of Eleanor his wife one third of a third of the Site of Clopton Bury, 32 acres of land worth 4d.

¹ Reg. Fordham, f. 35.

² Pat. Roll.

³ Feudal Aids, i, p. 190.

⁴ C.A.S. Proceedings, xxviii, p. 29.

⁵ I.P.M. 2 Hen. V, No. 28.

⁶ I.P.M. 28 Hen. VI, No. 26.

an acre, one acre one rood of meadow worth 2s. 6d., rent of assize 6d., rent of free tenants at will 3s. 6d. His heir was his grandson Robert Westbury, son of his daughter Elizabeth¹. The result of these marriages was that Matilda Argentine's ninth had been divided into three twenty-sevenths of the original manor. These portions became united in some way unknown to us, and were sold by Thomas Gylmyn and John Nichols to Robert Clopton II before 1457². (b) Elizabeth Argentine, the second daughter, married Baldwin St George. Her portion descended to William St George, who sold it to Geoffrey Clopton in 1433³. (c) Joan Argentine, third daughter, married Bartholomew Naunton, and their granddaughter, Margaret Bacon, married Robert FitzRalph. Robert and Margaret sold a third of a third of Clopton Bury and the advowson to Robert Clopton I in 1430 for 100 marks⁴.

(2) Joan, the second daughter of the Chief Justice, married Gilbert de Eldfield or Ellesfield, and her grandson, William de Ellesfield, died in 1398 leaving two daughters, (a) Anne, who was the mother of Joan, wife of John Hore of Childerly, who died in 1428, and whose son Gilbert sold half of a third of Clopton Bury to Robert Clopton I for 100 marks in 1444⁵. (b) Joan, the second daughter, married John Loundes. This half of a third part has not been traced. Perhaps it was included in the two-thirds which Gylmyn and Nicholas sold to Clopton⁶.

(3) Margaret, third daughter of the Chief Justice, married James Audley of Horseheath. Their daughter Joan married Philip St Clere of Ightham, Kent, father of Philip, the claimant in 1405. In the lawsuit Philip is said to be son of John, son of Alice, sister of Edmund de Bereford, who married Geoffrey Gamel, a complication which I cannot unravel. Philip married Margaret Lovayne and died in 1422, leaving Thomas son and heir, aged 21. By an inquisition taken at Swaffham Prior he was found to hold one third part of Clopton, with a third of the presentation to the rectory, of John Lyles. The site of the manor and the advowson were

¹ I.P.M. 19 Hen. VI, No. 9.

² Escheator's Acct. 25/4.

³ Lansdowne MS. 863, p. 57.

⁴ F. of F. Cambs, 9 Hen. VI, No. 33.

⁵ Ib. 23 Hen. VI, No. 68.

⁶ Escheator's Acct. 25/4.

worth nothing. There were 158 acres of land worth 6*d.* an acre, 6 acres of meadow worth 4*s.* an acre, rent of assize 7*s.* 5*d.* Twelve *nativi* each paid 10*s.* a year. A Court Baron held every three weeks was worth nothing beyond expenses. This inquisition did not satisfy the Exchequer officials in London, and they sent down an order to enquire as to who held the other two-thirds of the manor. The second inquisition states that they were held by St George and Hore¹. There had been some concealment here. Thomas Seynt Clere died in 1435 but the inquisition was not taken until the Wednesday after St Gregory in 1439. Apparently another concealment had been attempted. The jury, sitting at Royston, declared that he was seised of the manor of Swaffham Prior and of one-third of Clopton and, being so seised, he feoffed Thomas Cheyne, kt., John Aston and Geoffrey Motte, clerks, to the use of Seynt Clere and heirs, and so by fraud and collusion defrauded the lord of the fee of the custody of the manor and marriage of the heirs. Clopton was held of John Lyles. The heirs are Elizabeth, aged 15, Eleanor, aged 14, Edith, aged 13². A partition of the estate of Thomas Seynt Clere was made on July 8th, 1444, and the third of the manor of Clopton fell to the eldest daughter, Elizabeth, wife of William Lovell³. In 1457 William and Elizabeth sold their third to Robert Clopton II for £40. The whole of the manor was now in the hands of the Clopton family. It seems remarkable that the price at which portions of this manor could be bought had dropped. The Lord Mayor gave £66 13*s.* 4*d.* for the FitzRalph ninth in 1430, but Robert Clopton II only gave £40 for the Lovell third in 1451.

The Clopton Family.

Amongst the early Clopton records there occur items about a family which took its name from the village. It is not safe to identify every person who bore the name Clopton or de Clopton with this family, but it seems probable that there was a family of this name resident in Clopton from the end

¹ I.P.M. 1 Hen. VI, No. 30.

² Ib. 17 Hen. VI, No. 56 and Close Roll 1425.

³ J. G. Rokewood, *History of Hengrave*, p. 226.

of the twelfth to the beginning of the sixteenth century. The following are some of the entries relating to them. In 1195 Ralph de Clotton or Clopton was amerced¹. In 1233 Mary, widow of Humphrey, claimed from John Devon, whom Stephen de Clopton calls to warrant and who warrants him, 5 acres of land in Clopton and East Hatley as her dowry². In 1259 it was found by special inquisition made at Little Shelford that Humphrey de Clopton and others had disseised the Prior of Barnwell of his free tenement in Clopton³. In 1282 Thomas de Clopton entailed 3 messuages, 80 acres of land and 4 acres of meadow in Clopton to the heirs of himself and his wife Maud⁴. From 1293 to 1306 Hugh de Clopton is prominent and in 1299 there is Robert, son of Alan de Clopton, mentioned under Rouse's manor. Then the family which Hugh de Clopton tried to befriend in 1306 (*Close Roll Calendar*) may have belonged to this family: "le taillour" is merely an occupational name; if so, it would account for Maud (le Taylour) de Clopton being Hugh's heir. This would suppose the death of Hugh, Agnes and Alice le Taylour before the death of Hugh de Clopton. In the subsidy of 1318 no one named Clopton paid tax, but in 1327 John de Clopton paid tax only little less than that paid by John le Rous and Edmund de Bereford. In 1346 John, son of Roger de Clopton, held land by knight's service in Crawden⁵, and in 1347 he was rated at 2 stone 12 lb. of wool⁶. In 1371 Thomas de Clopton inherited from Richard de Gonshull and Alice his wife a messuage, 4 cottages and 27 acres of land worth 20s. in Clopton and Crawden, held of Baldwin de Bereford; a messuage, 18 acres of land and 4s. rent in Guilden Morden worth 26s. 8d. a year, and land in Eyworth, Beds. Thomas's father Richard had married Eleanor, daughter of Gonshull⁷. Richard de Gonshull, clerk, who was living in Clopton in 1356 (see p. 55), had been convicted of felony and that is why an inquisition was made concerning his property. He held the property in right of Alice his wife, who may have

¹ Pipe Roll 41.

² *Bracton's Note Book*, p. 236.

³ *Lib. Mem. de Bernwelle*, p. 108.

⁴ F. of F. Cambs, 10 Ed. I, No. 48.

⁵ Feudal Aids, p. 170.

⁶ Lay Subsidy 242/8.

⁷ Escheat. Inquis. 1/136.

been Alice le Rous. Gonshull is an unusual name, and it is worth noticing that in 1402 Robert de Gonshull held the manor of Kennett, Cambs, in right of his wife Elizabeth, late Duchess of Norfolk¹.

The first definite evidence of a connection between the Cambridgeshire Clopton and Robert Clopton, Lord Mayor of London, is Geoffrey Clopton, who was receiver of the Bury manor for Philip St Clere from 1408 to 1423². In 1430 his name occurs with those of Robert and John Clopton in the purchase of Rouse's manor. In 1433 he, with John Clopton, was in the list on the Patent Roll of those who had to be put on their oaths for good behaviour. In the same year he bought land in Clopton and East Hatley of William St George, which is supposed to be a portion of the Bury manor. In 1435 he possessed lands in Cambridgeshire to the value of £5, no other member of the family being mentioned³. In 1445 he and his wife Margaret sold land in Litlington⁴. The John Clopton mentioned above in 1428 held a small part of a knight's fee in East Hatley⁵, and was patron of Clopton rectory in 1450. He or one of the same name had his goods at Clopton assessed at £20 in 1460⁶.

In 1452 John Clopton of Wendy, gentleman (who must be the same man), was accused with many others of having attended a meeting at Royston where the dethroning of Henry VI and the elevation of Richard, Duke of York, in his place, was discussed. At the assizes a true bill was returned against them all⁷.

But the Cloptons were not all on one side, because Robert Kirkham, parson of Wimpole, a Yorkist, had a true bill returned against him for having with others broken into the house of Simon Clopton, of Arrington, whom they dragged into Wimpole field and assaulted with cries of "Alarum, alarum, alarum"⁷.

The origin of Robert Clopton, like the descent of his property and his relation to the other members of the family,

¹ I.P.M. 5 Hen. IV.

² Min. Acct. 766/9.

³ Lay. Subs. 240/268.

⁴ F. of F. 24 Hen. VI, No. 70.

⁵ Feudal Aids, p. 190.

⁶ Lay Subs. 81/103.

⁷ Early Indictments, No. 6.

is a difficult subject. The absence of the usual *inquisitions post mortem*, and his habit of not enrolling his settlements, are the cause of some confusion. Perhaps the Lord Mayor intended this confusion to happen in order that his heirs might not pay feudal dues. But they had to pay in the end.

Robert Clopton, draper, was M.P. for the city of London in 1439, Sheriff 1435, Lord Mayor 1441. There are many references to him in *Letter Book K* of the Corporation of London, as Lord Mayor but not otherwise. Where did he come from? It seems probable that he was related to the Suffolk Cloptons. In J. J. Howard's *Suffolk Visitations* there are voluminous notes about the Clopton family, but only one reference to "Robert." This is in a charter by which Robert Clopton, draper of London, gave to his kinsman Geoffrey Clopton and his son John (who are also mentioned in the Lord Mayor's will) his manor of Coddenham Hall, which he had in marriage with his wife Felicia (dated 1438). The device on the seal is of conventional type, and not the Clopton arms as in Wimpole church. Robert's name occurs in connection with William Clopton of the Suffolk branch in 1422; he bought the manor of Whatfield in 1427 and he and his wife Felicia held land in Shimpling in 1430¹. His purchase of Clopton manors has already been recorded. Before 1445 he had bought the manors in Wendy parish². According to his will he died between January and March 1447-8. It should be noted that his legacies to the poor include Suffolk. The will shows that he was married twice, and that his daughter Alice must have been the daughter of his first wife Felicia. As Alice had a daughter she must have already been the wife of Henry Chicheley (ob. 1490) grandson of William Chicheley, brother of the Archbishop. Their son Henry was not born until 1454. The will relates to his personal estate alone. The number of servants to whom he left legacies shows that he was in a large way of business. The executors are important; John Chicheley was probably his son-in-law's father. Geoffrey Clopton and John his son we have met before. No "inquisition after death" has been found concerning his real estate. This had been provided for in settlements: Rouse's manor, on

¹ Walter Rye, *Suffolk Fines*.

² Ancient Deeds III, p. 358.

Robert Clopton with remainders; the FitzRalph and Hore portion of Bury manor, on Geoffrey Clopton with remainders; documents exist for these. Wendy and Wimpole, we suggest, although there are no documents, were settled on his daughter Alice. This will is the only reference found to his possession of a manor in Wimpole, although his coat of arms was to be seen in old Wimpole church.

Lambeth Palace Wills (Stafford, 162).

The will of Robert Clopton, citizen and alderman of London, made 14th Jan. 1447.

To be buried in the church of St Peter, Cornhill.

All his goods and chattels in his messuage in Whitechapel, and in his manors of Wympole and Wendy, Co. Cambs, he left to his daughter Alice.

His vessels and jewels of silver and brass were to be excepted and divided into three parts, the first part thereof to go to Margery his wife, the second part to Alice his daughter, the third part to pay his debts &c. and out of it 40s. to St Peter, Cornhill, for the high altar, 40s. to the fabric of the same church for his tomb.

£24 to be distributed amongst the most deserving poor in Suffolk, Cambridge and London, according to the discretion of his executors.

All the ornaments of his chapel to Margery his wife for life and after her death to his daughter Alice.

One hundred marks to Margery daughter of the said Alice, and his executors were to be her guardians and to find sufficient security at the Guildhall London for the hundred marks, and they were to pay them to her when she came of age.

Six marks each to John Boteler and Robert Walter his servants. Forty shillings to his servants John Faunt, John Leman, Juliana and John Page; twenty shillings to his servants Anthony and William Cook; ten marks to his servants Felicity Belle and her sister Alice; five marks to his servant John Dekon; ten marks to each of his executors: ten marks to Henry Burnache; he forgave the debts of John Pernell girdler, and William Andrew formerly his servant; also he forgave all but a hundred shillings of the debt of William Bloom formerly his servant. He gave forty shillings to Thomas Clerk of London scrivener, to pray for his soul.

To his executors all right in the remaining term in all his messuages which he held of Geoffrey Yermouth citizen & paviour of London in Birchinchlane in the parish of St Michael Cornhill and out of the profits thereof they were to pay 12d. each to two poor almsmen of his, John Leman and John Mores. After his debts had been paid the residue was to be disposed of for the health of his soul and the souls of all the faithfull departed, and in other works of charity.

Executors, John Chicheley chamberlain of the Guildhall, London, Thomas Burgoyne and John Clopton son of Geoffrey Clopton his kinsman.

Proved at Lambeth 20th March 1447.

According to the records collected it seems that Geoffrey Clopton and John his son took precedence of the sons of the Lord Mayor, because Geoffrey was the only one of the name in Clopton in 1435; his son John was patron of the rectory in 1450, and the only tax-payer in 1460. John died before 1464, when Robert II was acting as subsidy collector. Robert had meantime bought the Fitzwarin and Lowel portions of the Bury manor and was now owner of the whole parish.

Lord Mayor Clopton spent much money in trying to build up an estate in Cambridgeshire and found a county family, but he was beaten by the failure of his family to provide male heirs. His will deals only with his personalty, no land at all is mentioned, or any male heirs, only a daughter Alice. Manors could not be bequeathed by will alone, and Robert Clopton had arranged for the disposal of these by a special entail. This was not enrolled in the Common Bench, and so does not appear amongst the Feet of Fines. But in the *inquisitio post mortem* of Robert Clopton II¹ we find that he had held Rouse's manor in Clopton of the grant of Robert Clopton, Alderman of London, with remainder to his brothers, William, John and Richard and their heirs. And when Robert Clopton II bought two-thirds of Clopton Bury manor in 1456, it was entailed first to his heirs by Eleanor Pigott, daughter of John Pigott of Abington, and failing them to his brothers, William, John and Richard and his cousin William Clopton². This was, no doubt, carrying out the wishes of his father. Who were these brothers, Robert, William, John and Richard? We must conclude that they were the illegitimate sons of Robert the Lord Mayor, who had now done his utmost to establish his family. He had married his only daughter to Henry Chicheley of Wimpole, and his eldest son to the daughter of the London merchant who was buying up the manors of Abington Pigotts. He had created an entail, guarded by five males, but they all failed to do their duty in the way of providing heirs, and their hold on Clopton ended in a blaze of law suits.

Robert II added to the family estates; he was a collector of a Cambridgeshire Subsidy in 1464, and died at Clopton

¹ I.P.M. 11 Ed. IV, No. 55.

² Escheator's Acct. 25/4.

in 1472 without heirs of his body, and his brother William succeeded. We chiefly know this from the law suits in which he became involved. In these he appears as an incompetent man, weak and devious in his ways. Before 1483 he married Juliana Segrave of Tilney, Norfolk, whose brother Gilbert was trustee of the dowry settled on her out of the manor of Clopton. She was a more vigorous person than her husband or her brother, as she outlived them all, but she had no children. William Clopton died before 1513, when his brother John had succeeded to the estates, and he, his brother Richard, and his cousin William were dead by 1524, when Thomas Chicheley, grandson of the Lord Mayor's daughter Alice, presented to Clopton Chantry¹. Between the death of Robert II and the succession of Thomas Chicheley, Clopton had probably passed through the most lively period of its history, the main facts of which will now be presented. William Clopton, second son of the Lord Mayor, was early in need of cash, and began to mortgage the estate piece by piece. He thus came into the hands of Thomas Thoresby merchant of Lynn. Thoresby, according to William's brother-in-law, was a sore and dreadful man at a bargain, but he need not necessarily have been that in order to get the better of William. A man who wanted to borrow money and having been handed the sum he asked for, had counted it and put it into a bag and signed a receipt for it, and who had then allowed the moneylender to take away both cash and receipt, was a man born to trouble. And that is what his brother-in-law stated that he did. Nor did William improve matters when, after having allowed himself to be "cohorted" into a bargain for the sale of his rights in Clopton, he changed his mind and sold them to another man. William may have thought it smart, but when the case went to arbitrators, they thought it was not straightforward and William lost heavily. It was about the year 1489 when William and Juliana sold the manor of Clopton to John Fisher, serjeant-at-law, for £200 down and a yearly rent of £10, to be paid in Our Lady's Chapel, Clopton, reserving to themselves the manor place of Clopton Bury, some closes, an orchard and a cottage called

¹ Bp. West's Reg. fol. 33.

Nicholas's. These were probably Juliana's dowry¹. William could only sell his life interest, as the sale would not be binding on his children or on his brothers, but, having got rid of the deep swearing Thoresby, he and Juliana probably thought that they could now eat, drink and sleep in peace. Alas, they had sold their rights to a London lawyer, a man with new ideas. He saw the advantage of producing wool rather than corn, and proceeded to enclose the arable fields and lay them down to pasture. Protests arose from the occupiers of the manor house, from the rectory and no doubt from the smaller tenants, but we find no record of the latter. Two documents printed later (pp. 48-9) give the grievances of two of the rectors, and there are three sets of Chancery Proceedings which show William and Juliana engaged in a tussle with the London lawyer, which ended in their utter discomfiture². Like most Chancery Proceedings, these are undated, but probably belong to the period 1500-1507. In the first two documents Clopton makes complaint against John Fisher, serjeant-at-law, and William Wimbish his farmer, for interference with the tillage of the Bury manor closes and the glebe lands. Whereupon Fisher was summoned to appear before the Court of Chancery. Then the Chancellor and one of the masters died (Henry Dean, Bishop of Salisbury and Chancellor, died in 1503) and the proceedings dropped. Then Fisher, "fearing nothing," brought an action in the local courts against Clopton for occupying the lands attached to the manor house, and put William to great expense. That is one glimpse of William's troubles. The other Chancery document is a complaint by William and his wife against John Fisher and the Sheriff for imprisonment in Cambridge Castle and forcible entry into the manor house of Clopton. The document shows that each party had stated his case before the Court of Chancery, and each had agreed to abide by the decision of the Chancellor, and the Cloptons had gone home. But Fisher, on what pretext we do not know, as we have no record of his story, took possession of the manor house and incited the Sheriff to arrest William and his wife. In the quaint words of the original "Your Suplicants departed to

¹ Early Chancery Proc. 124/45.

² Ib. 238/39, 40; 125/78.

their manor, and so it is, Gracious Lord, that Fisher with others of his company entered the said manor and taken suppliants and them imprisoned and all the goods and chattels of your said beseechers in their manor Fisher despoileth and converteth to his own use¹." The Fisher family now had the strong hand. In a few years' time we shall find the heavy hand of the Clopton heir pressing on the Fishers. It is impossible to tell now who was in the wrong. Fisher appears to be very overbearing, but the rector was on very friendly terms with the Fisher family in 1535, and William was a fool; and of him we find no more. We presume that he was alive in 1510, when John Fisher died, because the Clopton land passed to John's son Michael, which it could not have done if William's life interest had ended. The extent of the Clopton property which belonged to Fisher is given on p. 53.

By 1513 William was dead, as well as John and Richard and cousin William, because on that date Thomas Lamb and William Pynk, kinsmen and heirs of John Clopton, remitted to trustees all their rights in Clopton to Juliana Clopton for life².

All the persons named in the special settlements of Lord Mayor Clopton and his son Robert being now dead, the manors of Clopton, with the exception of Juliana's dowry, passed to the nearest heir of the Lord Mayor, his great-grandson, Thomas Chicheley of Wimpole. But others were in possession. Michael Fisher held the lands, and Juliana Clopton the manor house and closes. The latter was alive in 1524, because she paid subsidy in that year (see p. 60). Apparently Chicheley did not like to take any violent measures to dispossess Fisher whilst his grandmother's brother's widow was alive, but about 1525 he had begun to doubt this. She had made up her quarrel with Fisher, who was living in part of the manor house. She had been married over forty years and Fisher spoke of her as an old gentlewoman. Chicheley wanted a sight of her, but he was on bad terms with Fisher and was refused entry. Then in Fisher's absence Chicheley and his retainers broke into Clopton Bury in search of Juliana. Fisher

¹ Early Chancery Proc. 125/78.

² Deed enrolled in Common Bench, 4 Hen. VIII.

said that they ill-treated her, and by force kept him out of the manor house. Juliana died soon after, and the rights of the male branch of the Clopton family and their feoffees ceased. But Fisher stuck to what he considered his rights, and brought a chancery action to recover the deeds belonging to the estate, which had come into the hands of Thomas. This had probably happened because, in connection with the deed enrolled in the Common Bench 4 Hen. VIII, all title deeds in the matter had been delivered to the two judges who were appointed trustees, and when on the death of Juliana the trust was ended, the title deeds were sent to the person whom these deeds showed to be the heir-at-law, viz. Thomas Chicheley. Notes from three documents in Fisher's suit are printed on page 51. The result of the suit is not given therein, but law and custom were both on Chicheley's side, and later events show that he won on all counts. By 1527 Fisher had recognised the rights of Chicheley and bought him out. The property consisted of the manors of Clopton, Rouses and Wakefield, the advowson of the church, 500 acres of arable, 50 of meadow, 100 of pasture, 10 of wood and £5 rent, in Clopton and East Hatley¹. For all this Fisher gave £300. From Michael Fisher the estate passed through his granddaughter to Lord St John of Bletsoe, whose granddaughter took it to Lord Howard of Effingham. From him it passed to the Earl of Bedford, who sold it to Sir George Downing in 1677².

There are no early deeds relating to the Clopton property at Downing College. But there is a volume of thirty-two finely drawn large scale plans made by Joseph Cole in 1750 of all the farms on the Downing estate, including Clopton.

The Manor of the Abbey of Lesnes, Kent.

The earliest record of the connection of this abbey with Clopton is in a case of warranty in 1198. Simon Ruffus held a fifth of a fee there of the Abbot for 50s. yearly. He granted two-thirds of this fee to Ralf FitzEverard, and as much land in Simon's third as was contained in the capital messuage which Simon retained. Ralf was to pay 45s. a year and do

¹ F. of F. 18 Hen. VIII.

² Ib. 28, Ch. II.

military service for his portion. Ralf became the man of Simon and Simon the man of the Abbot¹. According to a confirmation on the Charter Roll², dated 1206, the gift to Lesnes had come from Robert de Rokella, who gave his lands in Clopton with all appurtenances to the Abbot. The identity of Robert is not known, but a man with nearly the same name, Philip de Rochella, occurs in the Pipe Rolls of 1194. He owed a fine, inflicted because he had married Alice de Tany without licence. Gilbert de Tany paid 100 marks for his relief in 1197. Alice was probably Gilbert's mother. The Tany fief was chiefly in Cambridgeshire, Essex and Herts; Kirtling and Whittlesford were part of Alice's dowry, but Clopton is not mentioned, and the origin of Philip's possessions there is at present unknown. In the *inquisitiones post mortem* of the Rus family, as seen already, the property is always given as a fifth of a fee. In 1361 an inquisition was taken concerning it because it had been alleged that the Abbot had received the gift without a proper licence in mortmain. The jury found that the Abbot had held a quarter of a fee of the gift of Robert de Rokella long before the statute of mortmain, and before the said statute they had enfeoffed Simon "Rusonn" for a rent of 50*s.*³ In a rental of 1431, the Abbey's revenue from Clopton is put at 45*s.*⁴ Other places in the county from which the Abbey had revenues were Cambridge, Gamlingay and Thorney. A later rental of the reign of Henry VII includes receipts from Cambridge, Bottisham and Gamlingay, but says nothing about Clopton⁵. Perhaps Lesnes had sold to Thorney between 1431 and 1486.

The Manor of the Abbey of Thorney, Cambridgeshire.

This house had some possessions in Clopton, but little has been found concerning them. They are not mentioned in the last edition of Dugdale's *Monasticon*, nor can they be traced in the manuscript register known as the Red Book of Thorney⁶. The abbey had also lands in Clopton, Northamptonshire,

¹ Cambs Fines, Record Com., p. 276. ² Charter Roll Cal., p. 164.

³ Close Roll Cal.

⁴ Min. Acct. 1108/11.

⁵ Letters and Papers, Hen. VIII, iv, 3537.

⁶ Univ. Lib. Camb. 3020-1.

which adds to the difficulty of tracing property in the Cambridgeshire village. In 1456 the Bury manor, the advowson and the manor of Rous are said to be held of the Abbot of Thorney, whereas in earlier times they are held of the Honor of Boulogne or of the King. In 1510 John Fisher held the manors of the Abbot (see p. 53)¹. In the year 1543 the account of the King's revenue from Cambridgeshire contains this item: "Reed. of Robert Turwytt ar. for a tenth part of lands and tenements in Clopton, late of the abbot of Thorney, granted to him by patent, 17s. 10d.²" In the grants on the Patent Roll we find this³: "Grant to Sir Robert Tyrwhite, King's servant, the possessions in Clopton or Clapton, Northants, belonging to the monastery of Thorney, Cambs." It looks as if Sir Robert benefited by the confusion of names, and the rent in Clopton, Cambs, slipped in with Clopton, Northants.

THE CHURCH.

The earliest mention of the church is in the taxation of Pope Innocent (1256) where the rectory is said to be worth £8, the value of the vicarage of Croyden being £10. In the taxation of Pope Nicholas (1288) these values are raised to £10 and £13 6s. 8d. respectively. This was said to be an overvaluation, and probably was so, because, when the Nonae Rolls⁴ were compiled in 1342, the rectory of Clopton was only worth £2 16s. The reason given for difference in value was that in 1288 the glebe lands were included. In 1536 Clopton rectory is valued at £4 9s. 6½d., the chantry there at £5, Croyden vicarage at £7 12s. 2d.⁵ It is not unusual to find the monetary value of a chantry greater than that of a rectory or vicarage, but there were no fees accruing to the former.

It cannot be expected that much can be said about the architecture of a building which has totally disappeared; we know, however, that a new church was dedicated at Clopton on October 7th, 1352⁶. That was a year of great activity in church building in this part of the country. The Bishop

¹ Exch. I.P.M.

² Min. Acct. 7295..

³ L. and P. 34 Hen. VIII, p. 397.

⁴ Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Scaccarii.

⁵ Valor Ecclesiasticus.

⁶ Bp. Lisle's Reg. fo. 65 b.

dedicated a new church at Papworth Everard on Sept. 28th, and consecrated new high altars at Little Gransden and Caxton on the two following days. On Oct. 2nd he dedicated a new church at Hatley St George, and on Oct. 4th a new high altar at Kingston. On Oct. 6th he dedicated Toft church, and on the next day came to Clopton, where he dedicated the church and admitted ten candidates to the first tonsure. This was as many as he admitted at any one church that year. He stayed the Sunday at Clopton Bury, dedicating the new church at East Hatley on the Monday, and the church at Arrington on Tuesday. These were dedication services, not reconciliations, as at All Saints' and St Bene't's, Cambridge, in the same year. This was a good record for thirteen days' work hardly to be surpassed in any age, especially as only a short time before the Black Death had thinned the population. The parish church of East Hatley has been much restored and partly rebuilt, but the style is that of the fourteenth century, and probably Clopton church was like it in form and style.

Just as the view from Clopton is a wide one, so Clopton church must have been prominent over a wide area, but only one instance of the church having been used as a sanctuary has been met with. On the Sunday after St Mark's Day (April 25th), 1352, says the Sanctuary Roll¹, William le Graunt of Clopton fled to the church there and stayed until the Thursday following, when the coroner arrived. Before him William acknowledged that fourteen days before Easter he broke into the barn of the rector of Clopton at night and stole three bushels of wheat worth 2s. 8d.; for this he wished to abjure the realm, and the port of Orwell was given him for his departure, and to this he had to travel barefooted.

Two lists of the church furniture exist. The earliest was drawn up in 1278 and added to during the next century². It enumerates twelve service books, one of which had been given by Robert formerly chaplain of Lyndesey. He may have been Robert Taylor, the rector who died in 1392. There was one chalice and a good chrismatory with three bottles. The processional cross was of bronze, the pyx of ivory. A silk

¹ Coroner's Roll 18, m. 38d. ² *Vetus Liber Arch. El.*, p. 107.

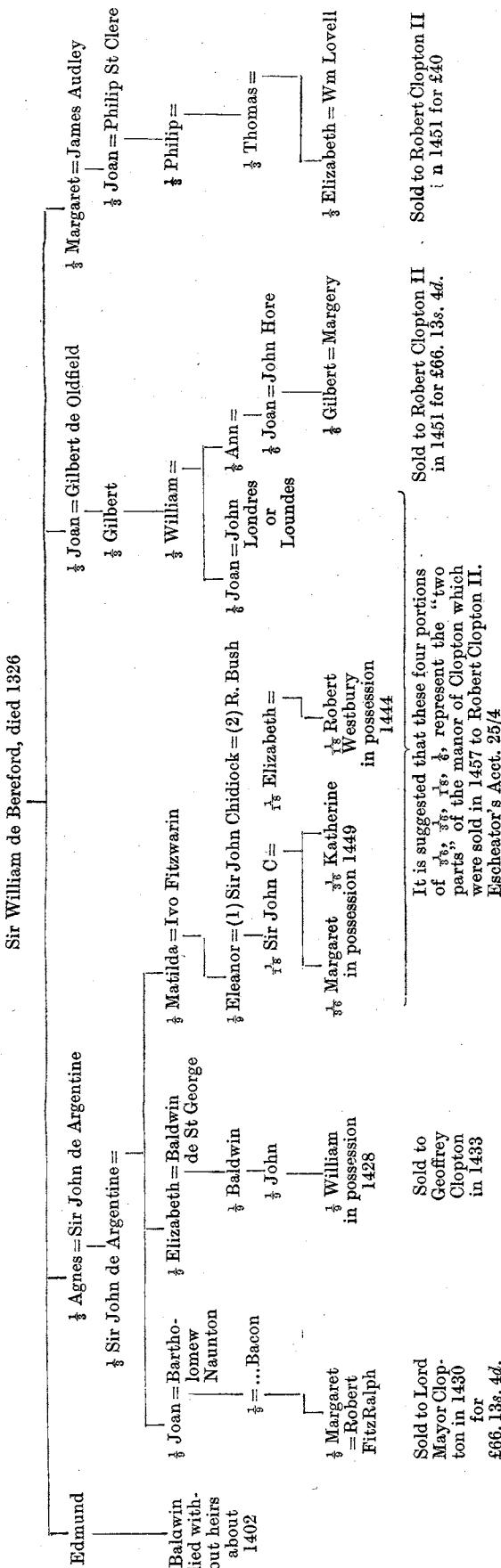
bag for the eucharist had been given by Dominus Hugh de Clopton, clerk, presumably the man who held Rouse's manor about 1300. The other inventory is in the report of the commissioners of Edward VI and is dated August 3rd, 1553¹. It shows that the church had already been robbed of many of its goods, as the only articles found were two old vestments and a small silver chalice. Even the bells had disappeared, the rector stating that Mr Oliver St John, the patron of the living, had taken away two bells the previous year; probably with the connivance of the rector, who, when he died in 1580, bequeathed his horse and his best silver spoons to "my good lord St John of Bletsoe." Service books were of course of no value in the changed order, but the leanness of the inventory suggests that the use of the church as a place of worship had ceased, and the commissioners note that none of the inhabitants came to meet them except the rector, William Warner.

Some stones in the churchyard of Tadlow come from Clopton church. They were removed thither by the present vicar of Tadlow, the Rev. Dr Stevens, who found them when a cottage near the site of the church was taken down some years ago. At the same time, during draining operations near the church, vaults were broken into and gravestones removed, broken up and used to mend roads. But this sacrilegious work was soon stopped by Dr Perkins, then bursar of Downing College.

At the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth the ecclesiastical revenues of Clopton, which had always been small, became smaller through the loss of the chantry. The population had also diminished through the enclosure of arable land into pasture, and with the loss of worshippers the rector's fees grew less. In 1561 the rectory was vacant, and there may have been some difficulty in getting a man to serve at the small stipend available. The patron of both Clopton and Croyden was Oliver St John, and he, in conjunction with John Clark, vicar of Croyden, presented a petition to the Bishop asking that the revenues of Clopton should be appropriated to the vicarage of Croyden and the cures united.

¹ Augmentation Book, No. 495, P.R.O.

Diagram showing the division of Sir William de Bereford's estate in Clopton amongst his daughters and their heirs, and the reassessing of the subdivisions by Lord Mayor Robert Clopton's family.



The petitioners stated that the revenues of Clopton hardly exceeded £4, the parish only containing two houses¹, and being only one English mile distant from Croyden. Evidence having been heard for and against (probably none against) the commissary decreed that Clopton should be annexed to Croyden, and that John Clark should be incumbent of both². The judgment, confirmed by the Bishop, states that the church of Clopton was ruinous, small and mean, and that the church of Croyden was roomy enough and well kept (*satis ampla et ornata*). We may well doubt the latter, because in August 1561, the very month when the Bishop issued the commission for his official to act in the matter, the arch-deacon's report with regard to Croyden was "The church is suffered to fall into ruins, the fault of the churchwardens, the chancel also, the fault of the impropriator. The place where the altar stood is not yet whitewashed³." There is no doubt, however, but that Croyden church was large enough to contain the inhabitants of twenty-one houses.

THE CHANTRY.

The chantry at Clopton is usually connected solely with Lord Mayor Clopton, who died in 1447, but there was an endowment of the church apart from the tithe before his time. In 1283 Robert de Hoo and Beatrice his wife, owners of Clopton Bury, granted to William de Clopton, chaplain, a messuage of two acres and a rood of land. For the grant William paid a sore hawk⁴ and undertook to do homage and suit twice a year at the court of Beatrice and her heirs at Clopton, viz. at the first courts after Hokeday and Michaelmas. The grantors gave perpetual warranty⁵. William may, of course, have been rector of Clopton, but more likely he was a parish chaplain. In 1347 William Bretonn, chaplain of Clopton, was assessed in the wool tax at one stone six and a half lb.⁶. In 1380 it is stated that a toft and a rood of land

¹ Croyden parish contained nineteen houses.

² Bishop Cox's Register, Nov. 4, 1561.

³ Comporta of Bp. Cox (Bishops' Munitment Room), fo. 68 and 89.

⁴ A hawk under a year old.

⁵ F. of F. 11 Ed. I, No. 3.

⁶ Lay Subs. 242/8.

called Quyrnslond in Clopton had been appropriated to the church without licence¹. A jury had been empanelled by the escheator to make a return concerning the lands of Sir Roger Heron deceased, and, the return having been made, the escheator probably asked the jury if they had anything else to report which the King ought to know, and some busybody thought of the chaplain's endowment. This had certainly been granted since the statute of mortmain of 1279, but one would have thought that the price paid for the final concord took the place of a licence. The escheator, however, took possession of the land and, apparently, put a perpetual fine on it. "Received one shilling of the profits of one toft and one rood of land in Clopton called Queneslond seized into the King's hands because of appropriation to the church without licence²." There was no chaplain at Clopton when the clerical poll tax of 1379 was levied, but in 1406 John Lasshe is returned as parish chaplain. In 1463 Robert Bustard, chaplain, had a salary of eight marks. This must have been Lord Mayor Clopton's foundation, the endowment of which consisted of London rents. In 1468 Thomas Brook was chaplain, in 1487 Henry Blanks paid 6s. 8d. as chaplain³. In 1525 Sir John Thorney, chantry priest of Clopton, died. He made his will in January and it was proved in the June following⁴. He desired to be buried in Clopton church "as nigh my brother Sir Robert as may be." To Great Shelford church he left £1 for a vestment, and 6s. 8d. to the bridge there. To Thomas Dalyson, steward of Shingay, 10s. and a pair of fustian blankets. "To my mastres Juliana Clopton, £4. To every servant in my mastres house, 1s." To Mr Spicer, parson of Clopton, £2. To have a dirige in Clopton church for ten years with six priests. "To every priest being at my funeral because I have no house to make them a dinner, 1s." To Sir William Brymly, chaplain in Shingay preceptory, 20s., his new medlysode gown and his camlet jacket. To Sir

¹ I.P.M. 3 Rich. II, No. 33.

² Esch. Acct. 23/8.

³ Bishops' Registers: Fordham, fo. 160; Gray, 115, 193; Alcock, 156 (Crosby's abstract).

⁴ Extracts only given from Cole, Addit. MS. 5861. For a full transcript see *East Anglian*, x, p. 284.

Edward Pemberton 20s. and his sad violet gown. To Trinity church, Richmond, "a masse book of prynt." Residue to Mr Wm. Spicer and other local clergy. From this will it appears that he was not a very poor priest, and that he lived on good terms with his clerical neighbours. After the suppression of the Knights of St John William Brymly was in 1558 presented by the King to the vicarage of Arrington. Edward Pemberton was rector of East Hatley. The admission of Thorney's successor in the chantry is recorded in Bishop West's register, fo. 33, with more particulars than usual. "Somersham, 26 July, 1525. Admission of Robert Illuck to the chantry in Clopton church founded by Robert Clopton alderman of London, vacant by death, presented by Thomas Chichely cousin and heir of Robert Clopton." This is the first mention of the origin of the chantry. It must have been founded by deed, as there is no mention of it in Clopton's will. In 1529 Henry Smith was the chantry priest. In 1543 nine shillings was extracted from the *cantarista* and eight shillings from the rector by way of benevolence. "Dat pro sua benevolentia," says the record¹.

The possessions of the chantry came to the Crown with all other revenues of that kind by Act of Parliament in 1547. The sole revenue of the chantry was an annual rent of £6 13s. 4d. from houses, shops, lands and cellars in the parishes of St Bene't's, Gracechurch street, and St Edward's, Lombard street, formerly belonging to Robert Clopton, lately citizen and alderman of London².

THE RECTORS.

The list printed below is an imperfect one, the gaps being partly due to the loss of some episcopal registers during the first half of the fifteenth century, and partly to the carelessness of the bishops' clerks in the following century in not entering all institutions. The registers at Ely begin in 1337. Few of the rectors appear in Venns' *Alumni*, and with the one exception of William Spicer they were probably an undistinguished lot of people. Parson William Middleton occurs amongst Fuller's *Worthies of England*, only because his name

¹ Lay Subs. 81/186.

² Min. Acct. Ed. VI, No. 54.

is in the list on the Patent Roll, at a time when lists of the ordinary people of a parish are rare. Fuller took the names on this list for the chief inhabitants, whereas they were only a mild kind of rebel.

Date of

Institution	Name of Rector	Patron	Authority
Before 1333	Peter de Clopton	—	Patent Rolls, etc.

Peter de Clopton died before the Feast of the Circumcision, 1333/4.

On the 25th of July previous a commission had been sent to John de Cantebrigia and Robert de Lisle to investigate the complaint of John Case, or Gase, carpenter of Cambridge. He had alleged that Master Peter de Clopton, parson of the church of Clopton and others assaulted him at Cambridge and robbed him of silver boxes, gold rings, linen and woollen clothes to the value of £300 (about £4500 in present value). A special assize was held at Cambridge on January 1st, 1333/4 to try the case, but it was reported that Peter de Clopton was dead, so the proceedings were dropped¹. The names of some of Peter's accessories are given: Roger del Howes, manciple, Walter de Berton, quystron (i.e. custron or scullion), Master Edmund Brundish, Bartholomew de Burgoyne, William de Hemenhale, the elder and the younger, Walter de Cumberton. These are not the names of common thieves and vagabonds, and the value of the goods stolen which were in the possession of a man who called himself a carpenter was so large that it is possible that there is something to be read between the lines which is hidden from us six centuries afterwards.

Betw. 1333 and 1337	Robert de Bryghtwell	—	Reg. Montacute
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Robert de Bryghtwell had licence of absence for two years at the instance of William Corbet, 1337, Sept. 17. It is assumed that Robert was being employed in some clerical capacity by Corbet. On March 6, 1339 he had an extension of the licence at the instance of the patron, Edmund de Bereford. Bryghtwell exchanged with Robert Wandak.

1341, Dec. 24	Robert Wandak	Dns Edmund de Bereford (also patron of	Reg. De Lisle, fo. 61 Shuttlewell)
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Robert Wandak, rector of Shuttlewell, dioc. of Coventry and Lichfield. On June 27th, 1342, he had licence of absence for two years, at the instance of the Lady of Oddyngsels. This lady may have been a Bereford. Baldwin de Bereford was made guardian a few years later of the Oddyngsels' heir whose lands were at Pirton,

¹ Patent Roll Cal. Ed. III, vol. II, p. 496; Assize Roll 108.

Herts and Cavendish, Suff. He had resigned before 1344 and in 1346 he was apparently acting as curate for William de Henly, the non-resident rector of Foulmire, where he had a horse stolen from him worth 18s.

Date of Institution	Name of Rector	Patron	Authority
1344, May 7	William de Wanton , Dns Edmund deacon	Reg. De Lisle, de Bereford	fo. 9

William de Wanton was also non-resident and had a post in the law courts, because in a writ issued at the palace of Downham on Feb. 15th, 1346/7, Bishop De Lisle promised not to molest him for absence from his church until he had had a personal interview with Richard de Kelleshall and William de Notton, itinerant justices.

Before 1379	Robert Taylor	—	<i>Cambs Subsidies</i> , p. 154
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Robert Taylor paid a poll tax of ten shillings for his benefice, said to be worth £20. He died rector.

1392/3, Jan. 10	Hugh Hasilden , clericus	Richard and Reg. Thomas Hasil- den	Fordham, p. 35
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Hugh Hasilden was the descendant of an illegitimate son, but quite ready to claim what was not his right. His career is given in another part of this paper. He soon found that the rectory of Clopton would not satisfy his ambition.

Before 1400	William Aldeth (died rector)	—	—
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1400/1, Feb. 4	William de Midilton , priest	John, Richard and Thomas	Reg. Fordham, fo. 70 and 201
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William de Midilton on June 27th, 1406 had the Bishop's licence for three years non-residence to study at Cambridge. In 1434 the name of William Middelton, parson, appears in a list of several hundred gentry and freeholders of Cambridgeshire including twenty-two parish priests who were required to take the oath not to maintain peace breakers. This may have related to the disturbances which took place after the Act of Parliament restricting the right of voting in shires to the forty shilling freeholder, a sum equal to thirty pounds of our money. A man of this name held the rectory of Digswell, Herts, from 1432 to 1435, when he died.

Date of Institution	Name of Rector	Patron	Authority
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— William Spenser — Rev. Walter Jones

"William Spenser, died 16th May 1436." This name occurs in *A History of Croydon-cum-Clopton* by the Rev. Walter Jones, M.A. 1904. He gives no authorities in his list of rectors, but he is reliable. The date should probably be 1456.

Before 1450 John Slay or Sly — *Fenland Notes and Queries*, XI, p. 248

John Slay or Sly exchanged Clopton with Hawnby for the vicarage of Soham. He died Vicar there in 1470, between August and November. He left a processional cross to the church of Clopton that the parish might pray for his soul. He was buried in Soham church. He mentions his kinsfolk, Master Ralph Sly, chaplain, John and Helen Sly.

1450, Mar. 27 Thomas Hawnby John Clopton Reg. Bourchier, fo. 26

Thomas Hawnby came from the vicarage of Soham, Cambridgeshire, which was then in large part mere and fen, but nevertheless had a higher value than Clopton. Perhaps Hawnby made the exchange to higher ground to escape ague.

Before 1489 Roger Chestre, died — Reg. Alcock, fo. 39
Rector

1488/9, Mar. 15 Master John Peeke William —
or Peke, B.Can.L. Clopton

Master John Peeke or Peke B.Can.L., resigned for Barton, Cambs, and was followed by

1496, Apr. 13 Dominus John Se-grave, Chaplain William Reg. Alcock, fo.
(resigned) Clopton 109

1499, Mar. 28 Master Reginald Swale, B.Can.L. William Reg. Alcock, fo.
1493/4 Clopton 118

Before 1506 William Spicer — Reg. Alcock, etc.

The name of William Spicer occurs in the Visitation Book as Rector in 1506, 1528, 1532. He was a man of outstanding merit, but hitherto, owing to the omission of the name of the village in Ordnance Survey and the scattered nature of the records relating

to him, he has not been properly known. The county should be proud of him, because he was born in it. We may safely assume this because in the deed of gift to Cuckfield School, the master was directed to pray for John Spicer and his wife, who lived at Haslingfield, and were probably his father and mother. The many references to Cambridgeshire in his will also point to a connection with the county.

Owing to the frequent absence of Christian names in the Grace Books of the university it is not possible to be certain of Spicer's academic career, but it is probable that he was B.A. in 1485, and D.Can.L. in 1494¹. And that he was of Catharine Hall is likely because of his references thereto in his benefactions. On March 14th, 1491, the Bishop sent a letter dismissary to William Spycer, acolyte². There is no record of his institution to the rectory of Clopton in the bishop's register, which at this date is frequently deficient, but he was in possession by 1506. During part of the time he was rector of Clopton he was also rector of Balcombe in Sussex, which was a more valuable living, and he may have been able to save out of the revenue of the benefices the money which he used so well for posterity. The earliest benefaction of which we have record is dated 1528. By this he almost doubled the income of Cuckfield School in Sussex. The Master of Catharine Hall was appointed a trustee to see that his wishes were carried out, and if there was any default, Catharine Hall was to take the emoluments. Elaborate directions are given about the method of teaching, which was to be after the usage at Eton; and about the duties of the schoolmaster, one of which was to pray for the good state of Master William Spicer, parson of Balcombe and for the souls of John Spicer and Joan his wife. One clause relates to the payment of £1 to a scholar recommended by the parson of Balcombe, who in the absence of the master should teach and keep order. This ushership is mentioned in the donor's will. In the *Victoria Co. Hist. of Sussex*, vol. II, p. 416, etc., many extracts are given from the original indenture, which show Spicer's remarkable prescience and love of order.

Spicer's affection in later years seems to have been turned from Catharine Hall and transferred to Clare and Trinity Hall, at least he did most for those societies. According to an undated extract from an indenture between Master William Spicer and the Master and Fellows of Trinity Hall he gave £83 6s. 8d. (125 marks) to found a scholarship in that Hall for Cuckfield School³. The scholar was to have as much stipend as any other scholar and half a mark more; but he was under the obligation to go into the chapel of Clare Hall weekly and pray for the donor⁴.

¹ Grace Book A, p. 200; B, p. 71.

² Reg. Alcock, fo. 79.

³ Warren's Book, p. 249.

⁴ J. R. Wardale, *History of Clare College*, p. 39.

An interesting provision in the indenture was this, that if there was no suitable scholar in Cuckfield School, another was to be elected either from Clare Hall, from the villages of Ickleton or Hinxton, or from Catharine Hall in that order. When the Chapel of Trinity Hall was beautified after a fire in 1729, the arms of benefactors were painted on the ceiling, amongst them those of Spicer, Sable, a chevron Erminois between 3 Castles each triple-towered Or. "Spicer of Exeter. We found these arms in Caius College Library, and for ought we know they belong'd to our Spicer¹." (The arms are still there.)

Spicer's greatest benefaction was his gift for building the new chapel at Clare Hall in 1535. He gave £100 for this purpose and his gift was as usual accompanied by many conditions. *Inter alia* the Master and Fellows were to keep a lamp burning before St Catharine's image in the Chapel from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and the Master of St Catharine's was to say mass quarterly in Clare Chapel and receive 8d. each time².

Spicer's interest in education is also shown in his will, in which he directs that his godson, John Humphrey, usher in Cuckfield School, should be elected his scholar in Trinity Hall, and provides ten marks extra for his needs. As John Humphrey's name does not appear in Venn's *Alumni*, we must conclude that he never became a graduate, and that Clare and Trinity Hall shared at least some of the ten marks.

With the exception of his quarrel with the lessees of the manor of Clopton mentioned above not much can be learned about William Spicer apart from his educational activities. The bed and bedding bequests in his will suggest that he was living in Cambridge at the time of his death, perhaps as fellow of a College. The fact that Master Johnston, fellow of Trinity Hall, does not appear in Venn's *Alumni* makes it possible that there were other fellows of that period whose names do not appear in the records. It is strange that his will contains no reference to Balcombe or Cuckfield, except the legacy to his godson. It was usual for a cleric to leave something to a church of which he had been incumbent, but in Spicer's will all the bequests relate to the Cambridgeshire neighbourhood.

Here follows a transcript of the will³. A short abstract appears in the Baker MSS. vol. xi, p. 74 (Harleian MSS. 7029) which has been copied by various authors. Many of the details given here are new, and probably further details concerning his scholarship and obit could be obtained from the muniments of Clare and Trinity Hall.

In the yere of our Lord God 1535 the first day of March, I, William Spicer parson of Clopton being in good and perfite memory loving be

¹ *Warren's Book*, p. 73. ² J. R. Wardale, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

³ Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Hogen, 38/1.

to God make my testament and last will in forme following, first I give and bequeath my soul to God almighty, my bodye to be buried in Clare Hall Chapel according to the mynde of their indenture yf their chapel be halowed afore my decease, and if I be buried in their chapel to every fellow present 3s. 4d. and Master 5s. if he be present, also I give to the place a salt of silver with a cover parcel gilt, or my nutt all gilt with the cover at the election of the Master and Fellows of Clare Hall which they like best. If I be not buried in Clare Hall this legacy to be null and void and Trinity Hall to have the nutt, and Katherine Hall the Salt. I give five pounds to be spent on my tomb if buried in Clare Hall Chapel at the advice and council of Clare Hall company, also as soon as I am departed John Humphrey of Balcomb my godsonne, hussher in Cockfeld Scole be my scoler in Trinity Hall according to their indenture if he be not elect before my death and Master Johnson of Trinite Hall to be his tutor (if it please him) or else suche one as the maister of Trinite Hall thinketh most profitable for my godsonne and he that is tutor to my godson to receive of my executors to thuse of my godson 6li. 13s. 4d. a quarter of a year after his admission, and he that receyved this money to make stipulation to the Maister of Trinite Hall with this money to help the childe when great neade requireth and also to make him graduate if God granteth the child so long life. If it fortune the childe to dye before he be graduate thone half of the 6li. 13s. 4d. that remayneth to remayne to thuse of the college of Trinite Hall and the other to be bestowed and disposeded in Clare Hall. And I will that Jasper my Kynnesman son-in-law to William Reigmunde of Litelbury have 40s. and Rauf Spicer son to John Spicer of Haslingfelde have 40s. and every of them others heire.... To Master Ridley of Clare Hall my goblet of silver with the cover parcel gilt. To the Maister and fellows of St. John's half a dozen silver spoones with acorne Knoppes. To Thomas Payne of Melbourn my great maser with the rose at the bottom. If I be buried in Clare Hall Chapell then Trinitie hall to have either the salt or the nutt and St. Kateryn's hall to have half a dozen silver spoones. I will that Manley of Potton have a silver spoon and his wife another and William his sonne scoller in St. John's the third. I will that John Whiting of Gamlingay and his wife have 40s. and William Whiting my godson all my household stuff not bequeathed and also half my bedding in Cambridge and John Spicer the other half, also that the said John Spicer of Haslingfeld shall have 20s. in money, and a shorte gowne, and my worsted doblet, lether doblet, tawney jaket and my best blue jaket, and his wife a shorte gowne to make her a gowne. And I will Sir Michael Fisher have my donne gelding and Maistres Agnes his nece a silver spoon, Michell a silver spone, Agnes Paxton a silver spoon and every servant in his house 4d. Item I will that Maister George Fage parson of Clifton have his pleasure of all my books during his life naturall and then to remayne to them that fortune to be my scolar at Trinitie Hall. And also I will that he have my best doblet, my best hossen, my best gowne and the election of my two littell masers and he to be my executor. I bequeath to Maister John Cousyn my daily spoon with the figure of St. James on the knop, and he to pay Richard his brother the crowne that I lent him, or else Richard to have the spone and Maister John to be content with the crowne. To the Prioress and Convent of Icklington 40s. for dirige and masse for my soul, and those that I am bound to pray for, also I will that my scoler that shall be in Trinitie Hall to have a bedde that is to say, a matteras, a bolster, a pair of blankets, a pair of shets

and a grene coverlett to his bed and a pillow of this stuff which is at Cambridge. To my sister that is at St. Eddys [? St. Neots] 40s. To Sir Henry Smyth 5s. To the vicars of Tadlow, Crawden and Wendy 5s. each. I will Mr. Johnson have my second best gowne and 20s. Item whereas I was mynded to be buried in Clare Hall, for faute the chapell is not hallowed, my mind is to be buried in Trinitie hall chapell, and such things and expenses as I wolde have ben doon in Clare hall at my burial I will these be doon in Trinitie Hall.—*Executors:* Maister Johnson, fellow of Trinitie Hall, Maister George Fage. *Witnesses:* Maister Lancelot Rydly, Roger Searll, Richard Stevynson, Alice Spicer and other mor. Proved 8 July, 1536.

An attempt has been made to identify some of the people mentioned in this will, a work of some uncertainty which would have been altogether impossible without the aid of Venns' *Alumni*. It ought not to have been difficult to recognise Master Johnson fellow of Trinity Hall, and one of Spicer's executors, but there is no mention of him in Warren, *op. cit.* or Malden's *History*, nor does any reference in the *Alumni* fit in. It is suggested that he was William Jonson who was made B.A. in the same year as Spicer¹, John Humphrey has already been mentioned. Master Ridley of Clare Hall was Laurence Ridley, D.D. 1541, rector of Willingham and Stretham, died 1576². Thomas Payne of Melbourn died in 1544, bequeathing a mazer to his son John. William Manley of Potton was B.A. 1536, and afterwards fellow of St John's³. The bequests to Sir Michael Fisher and the members of his family make it appear that he was living some of his time in the Bury manor house, as the chantry priest had done in the time of the Cloptons. This friendship with the encloser of common lands suggests that he had been compensated for the losses shown in his petition to the Court of Chancery. Mr George Fage, parson of Clifton (Beds) may have been "B.C.L."⁴ But a greater honour was to have been an executor of Dr William Spicer, the recipient of his library, of his best clothes and the choice of his little mazers. Master John Cousyn may have been "Cosyn, B.Can.L. 1534-5²." Other Cosyns, Edward and Thomas, are well-known, but John is at present known to fame only by this bequest to him of the silver spoon which Dr Spicer used daily, on the condition that he paid his debt.

Perhaps already enough has been written concerning William Spicer as this paper is an account of Clopton and not of benefactions to education, but will not some grateful son of Clare put together the full story of Dr William Spicer? His tomb had disappeared by Blomefield's time, 1750⁴. There is no reference to William Spicer in the index to the two large quarto volumes

¹ Grace Book A, p. 200.

² J. and J. A. Venn, *op. cit.*

³ Baker's *History of St John's College*, I, p. 283.

⁴ *Collectanea*, p. 108.

of 660 pages, *Clare College*, 1326-1926. There was a Thomas Spicer, vicar of Litlington, Cambs, 1483 and a Dionysius Spicer, vicar of St Botolph's, Cambridge, about the same time.

Date of Institution	Name of Rector	Patron	Authority
1535	William Warner	—	—

According to the Rev. Walter Jones, *op. cit.*, William Warner was at Clopton in 1535, a date which may have been obtained from the Visitation Book at Ely, but the earliest record of him that I have is that in 1553 King Edward the Sixth's commissioners came to view the church goods and he alone was there to meet them. In the certificate sent by Bp. Cox to Archbishop Parker in 1560¹, he is thus mentioned: "Clopton. Dominus William Warner, rector; he is a priest and resides on his benefice; not a graduate; not a good preacher, but maintains hospitality." He must have resigned soon after this, as in the visitation of 1561 the benefice is said to be vacant through the death of the last incumbent. So the Bishop's record. But Jones² gives an abstract of the will of William Warner, parson of Clopton, clerk, made May 10th, 1564 and proved in 1580³. To his "good lord" Lord St John of Bletsoe, he left £3 and half a dozen of his best silver spoons. To John Saint John my lord's son, his mazer. To Sir William Riddall Vicar of Eyworth, his fox-furred gown. To the parson of Abington his worsted cassock. He left several legacies to brother and cousins. Up to 1540 a Richard Warner appears in the Croydon tax lists, and the rector may have been a relation. It seems from the will that William went on living at Clopton after he resigned, probably in the rectory house, as his will mentions the "table and form in the hall." His will disposes of over £20 in cash; so he was not in poverty. Why his will was proved in the Prerogative Court in London and not at Cambridge is not explained by any clause of the will. A Warner was rector of Wendy in 1555, and another at St John's in 1548⁴.

ENCLOSURE BY JOHN FISHER OF THE COMMON FIELD.

This enclosure is not included in the list of inquisitions printed by I. S. Leadham in the *Proceedings of the Royal Historical Society*. The neighbouring village of Shingay is in that list, but that village consists mostly of low-lying ground, and so is very suitable for meadow land. What John Fisher did was to buy out all his freehold or copyhold tenants.

¹ Cole, Addit. MS. 5813, p. 78. ² *East Anglian*, x, p. 285.

³ P.C.C. Lofts, 17.

⁴ J. and J. A. Venn, *op. cit.*

Then possibly he suggested that the rector should allow all his strips of glebe land to be gathered into one or more large pieces. This suggestion if made had been refused, whereupon Fisher turned all his arable into pasture, leaving the rector's arable strips scattered about the fields unfenced, so that if the rector sowed his strips, the cattle from Fisher's pasture wandered into the corn. On the other hand, if the rector's horse was put on his strips and it wandered into Fisher's pasture, it was impounded as a stray. Agreements were made and broken by the stronger party. Spicer, who had taken a degree in law at the university, thought his only remedy was in the Court of Chancery. What success he had we do not know, as the rest of the proceedings are lost. But we may suppose that some amicable arrangement was reached, because Spicer was on friendly terms with Fisher in after years.

The two next documents relate to the enclosures, which ultimately resulted in the depopulation of Clopton.

(1) (Abstract.) *Early Chancery Proceedings* 223/25.

(About 1500.) Raynold Swale, parson of Clopton church made the following complaint in a Chancery Bill: that he had been possessed of 60 acres of glebe lands and meadow in Clopton and had let to fermors who had occupied the glebe as was lawful, but that of late John Fisher serjeant-at-law had enclosed the lordship of Clopton and had laid the same to grass, whereby orator and his fermors have great loss of tithe the corn from the field now enclosed, and have been interrupted from occupying the glebe land; that orator applied to the Bishop of Ely, who sent his official to view the lands and to call before him the most ancient and oldest persons of the same town and the next dwellers, and to charge them as they would answer before God to mark the glebe land acre by acre. This was done, and then Fisher "was sore discontented and moved in his mind" and "from the grete malice which he bore the auncient persons for making the said survey, has caused them to be endited at the sessions to their most utter undoing," bringing the action in the name of his fermor William Wimbish.

(2) (Abstract.) *Early Chancery Proceedings* 446/22.

In an undated chancery bill presented to Cardinal Wolsey between 1515 and 1518, William Spicer, parson of Clopton, makes the following statement: that he had been for a long time seised in right of his church of a mansion place and 45 acres of land and 3 acres of meadow, being in the fields of Clopton, all of which fields are now enclosed and laid to pasture and in the occupation of Robert Morgan and Robert Brockwell; that the said glebe he can in no wise occupy in tillage, for the finding of his poor house, as the residue of the lands in the fields be laid to pasture, and if he should sow the glebe lands it would have been destroyed by cattle, and if he had put any cattle on his glebe lands they would not abide upon it, because there be no hedges, and no defence made between the grounds of orator and the ground of the fermors, for the fields have always time out of mind laid open; that the fermors would not let him put his cattle in the whole field and he has had neither herbage nor corn for 6 years, the which was worth £4 to £5 a year; that because of this he was fain to make this agreement with the fermors; viz., that they were to have all the tithes of their own hay and of their cattle within the said field, paying yearly 8 marks and allowing orator to have two horses pasturing at all times of the year. But the fermors have broken the agreement and prevent him from pasturing his horse. He has no remedy at common law, so he prays the chancellor to summon the fermors before his honourable court etc. (Spelling modernised.)

THE TROUBLES OF WILLIAM CLOPTON.

Court of Requests 2/195. Undated, but in the time of Henry VII or VIII.

In poor condition. The portions transcribed are given in inverted commas, the rest in abstract.

"The deposition of Gilbert Segrave of the age of 60 years and more of the Town of Tylney in the countye of Norf. gentleman as he saith, sworn and examined, sheweth and testifieth that sone after the decesse of King Edward the 4th he went to sogorne at Clopton in Cawmbriggeshire with oon William Clopton gentilman the which had wedded oon Julian

sister to the said deponent and while he was with them they shewed him how they had leyde [? pledged] a place of theirs called the Ree Place with lands and tenements there belonging to John Marshall of London, mercer, for £68. 13s. 4d." also they mortgaged Grandfather's Place to him for £40. Afterwards Thomas Thoresby of Lynn, merchant, asked Seagrave to transfer this mortgage to him, and because "he was a mervailous man to displeasure" he did so. Thoresby also desired Seagrave that he would labour with Clopton, that he would lease all his land in Clopton and the manors of Clopton and Rouse's to Thoresby "who could in conclusion buy it in some season of need." And Seagrave did so. And upon this Thoresby sent his sheep and other cattle to Clopton about Whitsuntide following. At Michaelmas next after the second year of our now sovreign (1486) Clopton came to Lynne and a lease was made to Thoresby for seven years at £16 a year. Seagrave was seised of these manors as feoffee of his sister's jointure. Thoresby promised to lend Clopton £100 at his need, but then took of him no more than £4 owed in part payment for pasturing his cattle at Clopton before the lease and for 80 loads of hay in the barns there. After that Clopton departed and came again about the next Michaelmas and brought with him one Sir Henry Ledys, priest, before whom Thoresby and Clopton reckoned together, and agreed that Clopton had received of Thoresby only £27 6s. 8d. who had an obligation in writing of that amount. Nevertheless, Thoresby desired of Clopton another bill in his own writing for £27 6s. 8d. who made the bill according to Thoresby's desire. Then Clopton asked Thoresby to lend him £33 which he required to pay Robert Colville for lands and tenements bought of him in Clopton. Thoresby fetched the money and asked Clopton to count it, and it was put into a bag. Thoresby then asked Clopton to write the £33 in the bill which he had made before of the £27 6s. 8d. and he did so. Then Thoresby took up the bag with thirty-three pounds in it, the old bills and the new bill of £27 6s. 8d. and £33 and said that he would pay the £33 to deponent, but he or the said Clopton never had it. Thoresby occupied the manors of Clopton and Rouse for three years. After which Clopton told

this deponent that he "was cohorted and compelled to write a bill of his own hand to one Robert Thoresby brother to Thomas Thoresby, telling him how he should write a bargain of sale which he should make of the manors of Clopton and Rouses and all his other lands in Clopton unto Thomas Thoresby," and was also compelled to make a single obligation of £400 for the performing of the said bargain. Afterwards Clopton went to John Fisher, serjeant-at-law, and sold the manors and other lands to him. On finding this Thoresby "varied" with Fisher because he pretended a former bargain. Arbitrators were appointed consisting of Sir Henry Heydon Kt. and James Huberd, King's attorney. To these Thoresby showed a note of a bargain of Clopton's own hand for sale of the manors; a single obligation of £400 pretended to be made as a surety for performing the bargains; many bills of hand of Clopton for certain dues; a bill of £27 6s. 8d., another of £33 which was never delivered, and Thoresby swore so largely before the arbitrators that the £33 was delivered, coming to more than £60 which could not be due, but he swore so deeply before the arbitrators that all was due to him, that they made award that Fisher should have the manors and land and should pay Thoresby £60 for the supposed debt. As to the obligation for £400 "albeit he was not at the making of it, yet he thinketh Clopton made it out of dred of the said Thoresby and against his will, for the same Thoresby hath been a sore and dredful man in conditions and dealying to many men, the which the said deponent knoweth well."

THE TROUBLES OF MICHAEL FISHER.

Early Chancery Proceedings, 509/31. (Date about 1524.)

Bill of Complaint of Michael Fisher, esquire. The manors of Clopton, Wakefields and Rouses had been in the possession of his family for sixty years [under forty years as a matter of fact] and for twelve years have been leased to Robert Brudenell, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas and Sir Humphrey Coningsby Kt. to the use of Julian Clopton for life and then to Fisher. All the writings and muniments

belonging to these manors have got into the hands of Thomas Chicheley, Esquire, who "trusting to his corrupt and affectionate friends" on March 10th last, with Robert Gylett Chaplain, [of the Standon chantry in Wimpole Church, known to the villagers as "Great Sir Robert,"] Thomas Bury, Gamlyn Dykson; John Bruer yeoman, all of Wimpole, his daily servants and orators and others, entered on the possessions of Michael in the mansion place of Clopton, with swords, bucklers, bow, arrows, bills, daggers and other weapons, and in forcible manner, like men of war not servants, turned out Michael's servants, "and there manassed, thrett, and evyll intreyted one Julian Clopton being an old gentilwoman keeping within the said house by the sufferance of the said Michael, and would not permit him or his servants to relieve nor succor the said Julian in her extreme necessitie, which Julian is now dead.... And Chicheley has kept the mansion house like a castell or fortress of war, shewing and reporting that they would rather die than avoyde the possessions thereof."

Fisher craves that Chicheley should be summoned under a penalty to appear before the court and disclose what deeds he has, and also be forbidden from occupying Michael's possessions. Chicheley having possession of the deeds, Fisher cannot show his title and so the case is not determinable by the common law.

The answer of Thomas Chicheley, Esquire. He acknowledges that he has a copy of a prepensed will supposed to have been made by Robert Clopton, his great grandfather¹, also a release made by William Hasilden to Robert Clopton of his manor of Rouses², and a copy of a fine whereby Gilbert Hore and Margery his wife acknowledge that a moiety of a third part of the manor of Clopton with advowson should go to Robert and his heirs³ and no other evidence has he.

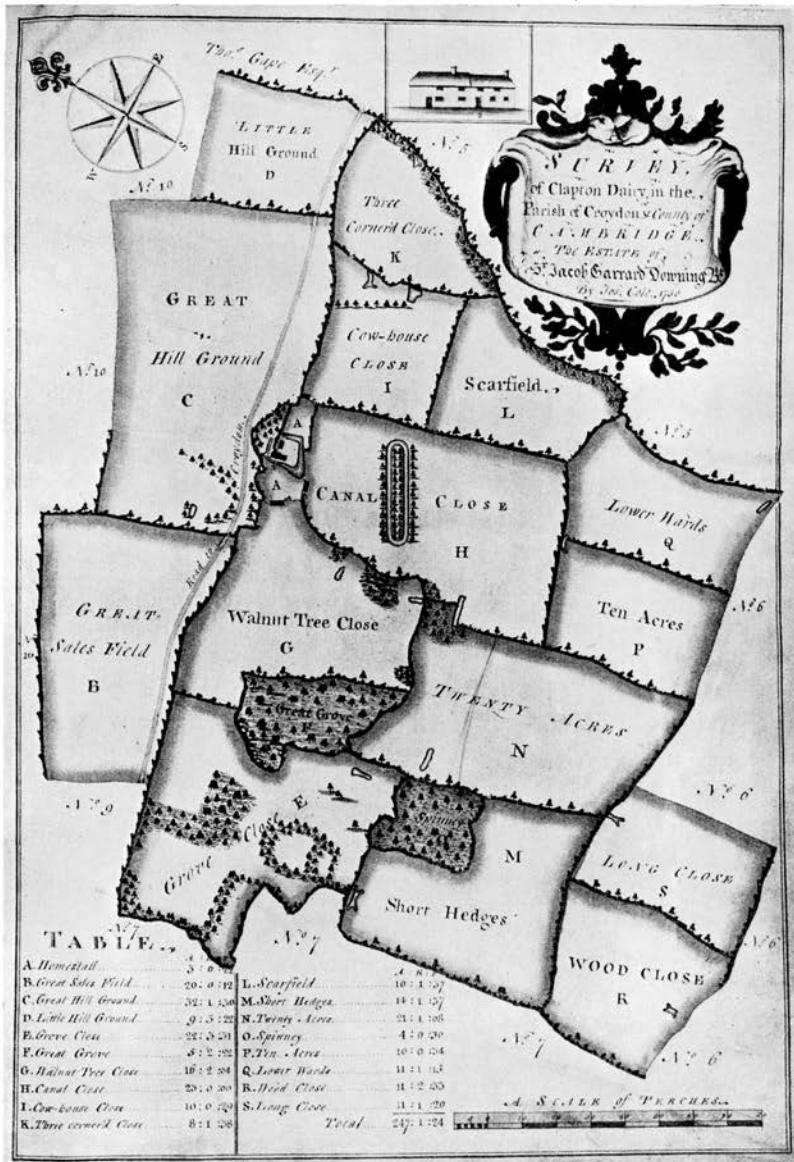
The replication of Michael Fisher, Esquire. In this he states that Chicheley at the Common Bench in Lent term in Sergeants' Inn declared that he had divers boxes of evidences relating to the Clopton land. He harps on the statement that Brudenell and Coningsby now have no power over the lands.

¹ See p. 27.

³ See p. 22.

² See p. 10.

PLATE II



This plan of Clopton dairy farm is taken by permission from a volume of plans in Downing College Treasury. The Bury manor house was between the letters AA; the church, according to the O.S., would have been near the lower A. The "Road to Croydon" near by was the only connection with the Old North Road, the lower road by Tadlow church having been made later. The farm house, shown in the inset on the top of the map, has no signs of antiquity about it. The houses on some of the plans are of a much older character.

He asks that Chicheley shall be punished for his perjury in swearing that he had no deeds, to the example of others, and that Thomas Polsted and Lancelot Rydell shall deliver up the muniments which they have belonging to the estate.

The rejoinder of Chicheley says that the case was slanderously imagined to wrongfully vex and trouble him, and that the matters can be determined by common law.

LANDS HELD BY JOHN FISHER, 1511.

In *MS. O.9.3*, p. 325, in Trinity College Library, there is an abstract of the *inquisitio post mortem* of John Fisher. The abstract is interesting because the copies of the inquisition in the Chancery and Court of Wards series are lost, and the Exchequer inquisition is practically illegible.

"Michael Fisher, son of John Fisher, sergeant-at-law, holds the manors of Clopton and Rouses, the advowson of the church, a messuage, one hundred acres of arable land, three acres of meadow, four acres of pasture in Clopton, East Hatley and Crawden, of the Abbot of Thorney, for what service is unknown. Also a messuage¹ in Clopton called Grandfather's Place and one hundred acres of land; also two messuages called Colville's, sixty acres of land and two crofts; also a messuage called Sergeants, one hundred acres of land, ten acres of meadow, twelve acres of pasture; also a messuage called Niceburgh, sixty acres of land, two acres of meadow and six of pasture; also a messuage called Castell's, one hundred acres of land, ten acres of meadow, twelve acres of pasture; a messuage called Derby's, eighty acres of land and pasture; a messuage called Grandesdens, sixty acres of land, three acres of meadow, four of pasture; a holding called Ewisdene containing fifty acres of land, six acres of meadow and two of pasture; another called Pekkys, containing forty acres of land, two acres of meadow and three of pasture; another called Widdows, containing forty acres of land, two each of meadow and pasture; another called Barnards containing fifty acres of land. All held of the Abbot of Thorney."

¹ The moated sites yet visible in the meadow below Clopton Bury may belong to this and some of the following messuages.

Inq: p.m. 2 Hen. VIII.

The abstracter of this document has also paraphrased it, leaving out such details as the date of the father's death and the age of the heir. The proportion of pasture land, not an eighth of the whole, does not appear excessive in a parish said to have been enclosed and laid down to pasture.

CLOPTON IN THE PLEA ROLLS.

The following list of abstracts from judicial proceedings show how rich these records are in items of local history. Even a small parish like Clopton appears again and again.

A.D. 1260. Laurence of Clopton was found hanged in the barn of Peter Taylor in Crauden. Verdict, suicide. His property was worth over £2 so poverty was not the cause.

Geoffrey the ostler was accused of being the cause of the death of a pauper who died from cold in Clopton field. He was found not guilty, but as he had run away all his goods were confiscated.

Margery Pestell was found by her mother dead of hunger and want in Clopton field. Verdict, misfortune. *Assizes held at Cambridge, A.D. 1260*, p. 2.

A.D. 1272. Two strangers were found killed in Clopton field. It is not known who killed them. And William de Conyton (the coroner) did not answer concerning the finder or the neighbours. Therefore judgment on him. No Englishry was presented. Judgment, murder on the hundred. And the villages of Shenegeye, Arinford, Hatle, and Bassingbourn did not come to the inquest as fully as they ought. Therefore in mercy.

In the County Court some time before, William the talker (le Parler) appealed Humfry atte Ree of Clopton of the death of his brother John, and the following people of aiding and abetting. Thomas atte Re, John Shepperd, William the porter, Adam de Ripa, Robert son of Warin, Walter son of Alice, Robert of Abington, Simon the valet, Thomas of London, William Carter of Shenegeye, William the Norris, Hugh Pagnot, William son of Sybil, Robert Herd, Luke atte Gate, Simon Prat, Fulk son of Bartholomew, and Fulk Bate. And William did not appear to follow his appeal. Therefore let his sureties, Henry de Horseth and another be fined. But Humfry appears, denies being responsible for the death and for good or evil puts himself on his country. The jury say that neither Humfry or the others are guilty because John is still alive. William evidently well deserved his name. (There is something behind this case which we cannot now understand, because Humfry had gone to the expense of procuring the King's writ for the case to be removed to the King's Bench. This may have frightened the jury into telling the truth.) *Assize Roll, 85.*

A.D. 1298. John Pof and William son of the Reeve of Clopton, killed John the Skinner in the village of Clopton. They have run away and so are suspected and are both outlawed. The goods of John were worth 21d. William had none. They were in the tithing of John Pouf of Clopton who is fined. John Cageweine who found the dead body did not come to the

inquest—his sureties are fined. William atte lane and Nicholas Chyngal two neighbours were also absent, and their four sureties were fined.

In the same year the village of Clopton was fined a mark for not coming to an inquest in a neighbouring village. *Assize Roll*, 96.

A.D. 1348. A child was found drowned in the moat round Edmund Bereford's house, that is, Clopton Bury. And a man was killed with the blow of a knife called a Thwytel under the right breast. *Coroner's Roll*, 18.

The record below gives a glimpse of Clopton as a village of an ordinary type; manor house and rectory on opposite sides of the road surrounded by walls and gates. The rectory being on the north side of the road probably abutted on to the churchyard. According to the custom of medieval law the inquest gives plenty of villagers' names. "Chariot" must here mean a waggon. If, as the record suggests to me, Robert was sitting on one of the shafts and driving five horses "tandem," he was certainly risking his life.

It happened at Clopton on Saturday after St. John the Baptist, 30. Edward III, 1356 that Robert de Swynarton, "Charioter" was found dead by other than a natural death by John son of Thomas de Clopton who raised hue and cry. His pledges are John atte Hill and Hugh atte Hill. And about this matter came Edward de Onyng, coroner of the Lord King on the Sunday following, and had view of Robert's body and diligently enquired concerning his death in the villages of Stepel Mordon, Golden Mordon, Tadelowe, Clopton cum Hattele, Crawden and Schenegeye cum Wendeye and by the following jurymen, namely John Bawdewyns, John Thomassone, Richard de Gonshull, John Bretonn, William atte Ree, John atte Hull, John Gosseline, Henry Fyssere, Walter Crane, Hugh Napton, William Bragg and William Diconn, who say upon their oaths, that on the Saturday aforesaid, the said Robert de Swynarton came into Clopton driving a "chariot" of the Prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem between the gate of the Rector of Clopton and the gate of the lord of the village with six horses, one of which was between the shafts (*in le lymours*) and leaned on one side, whereupon Robert who was riding on "*le lymours*" fell to the ground and the whole cart (*carreta*) went over him and squashed his head so that he died immediately. On being asked what was the value of the horses, chariot and contents, the jury says £13 6s. 8d. and being deadand were given into the custody of the village of Clopton to be forthcoming when required.

The four nearest neighbours were:

1. John atte Ree, pledges: Hugh atte Ree, and John atte Dam.
2. Thomas son of William, pledges: Hamo Godrich and John Godale.
3. John Friend, pledges: Hugh Napton and William Napton.
4. John le Rous, pledges: William Fell and John atte Ree.

The name of one of the pledges is interesting, John atte Dam. He must

have lived near the mill dam, the site of which is marked by the three large trees in the photograph looking south.

A.D. 1366. On Wednesday before Exaltation of the Cross, Richard atte Hill was loading peas into a cart with a fork in Clopton field. He was doing the job single-handed and was using a ladder to get to the top of his load. Whilst standing on this the horse moved, and Richard fell, the top of the side of the ladder entering his fundament. He languished until the following Tuesday and then died. The horse was worth 4*s.* the cart and the ladder 12*d.* These being the causes of his death were deodands, and were redeemed by the owner for the sums named. *Coroners' Roll*, 18.

A.D. 1382. The assize came to recognise of John Bawdewyn and William Toft of Tadlow unjustly disseised William atte Hill of Clopton of 160 acres of land and 9 acres of meadow in Clopton. A long suit. *Assize Roll*, 1494. Mem. 22-4.

There is an unusual entry in Domesday Book about a small piece of land in Clopton and, what is more unusual, this piece of land and the service attached to it are mentioned two centuries later. The entry states that Picot of Cambridge (the well-known Sheriff) held a certain garden in Clopton of the soke of King Edward, which found one man to guard the King's Sheriff. In the Crown Plea Roll of 1298 (*Assize Roll*, 96) it is presented that Humphrey de la Ryve held a tenement in Clopton which used to find one of the four men and a reeve who attend the judges itinerant on Gaol Delivery but that the service is now withdrawn.

THE PARISH ASSESSMENTS.

These assessments show the extent to which depopulation took place in Clopton between the early part of the fourteenth century and the early part of the sixteenth. Both I and II relate to personal property alone, the arms of a knight and the implements of the farmer being exempt. These were not poll taxes and no one with property of less value than 5*s.* was taxed in 1318, or of less value than 9*s.* in 1327. In I and II the left-hand column, as printed, belongs to Clopton alone.

I.

Lay Subsidy 81/7, 1318. CLOPTON-CUM-HATTELE.

The date is lost, but from internal evidence it must belong to the year 1318. The grant was a twelfth.

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Willelmo de Bereford	12	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	Johanne de Quy	2	6 $\frac{1}{4}$
Hugone le Rous	14	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	Willelmo Ingewis	3	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ricardo Jolif		11 $\frac{1}{2}$	Waltero Gernat		13
Johanni Keek		22	Ricardo de Cantabrigia		7 $\frac{1}{4}$
Gwydo Tulle		11	Adam filio Martin		12 $\frac{3}{4}$
Johanne filio Thomi		14	Henrico Robin		13 $\frac{1}{4}$
Alano filio Thome		16 $\frac{1}{4}$	Willelmo de Lodelowe		16 $\frac{1}{4}$
Nicholao Derabout	2	4	Galfrido Cok		17 $\frac{1}{2}$
Humfrido atte Ree	2	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	Gilberto Robyn		15 $\frac{3}{4}$
Rogerio Podifat		17 $\frac{1}{2}$	Gilberto Underwode		11 $\frac{1}{4}$
Caterina		14 $\frac{3}{4}$	Baldwino le Huntere		13 $\frac{1}{4}$
Hugone Monte		21 $\frac{1}{2}$	Albrico Palefreyman		7 $\frac{1}{4}$
Thome Graunt		6 $\frac{1}{4}$	Felicia le Redde		8 $\frac{1}{4}$
Matilda Weste		12 $\frac{1}{2}$	Ricardo le Rede		13 $\frac{1}{4}$
Willelmo Biglane	2	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	Ricardo le Somoner		10 $\frac{1}{4}$
Thome de Kengham		8	Ricardo le Giete		14 $\frac{3}{4}$
Johanne Bretunn	2	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	Adam Carpenter		6 $\frac{1}{2}$
Hugone Yermat		22 $\frac{1}{2}$	*Henrico atte Hoo		13
Adam de Monte	2	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	*Ricardo ate Re		9
Roberto Sibely		13 $\frac{1}{4}$	*Johanne de Kingham		8
Roberto Graunt		12 $\frac{1}{4}$			

Summa £4 2s. 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.* Taxatores.¹¹ A *De* has been omitted throughout.

II.

Lay Subsidy 81/6. CLOPTON-CUM-EST HATTELE.

Dated 1327. The grant was a twentieth.

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Johanne le Rous	8		Simone de Brunne	4	
Henrico de Stowe	8	6	Johanne de Queye	5	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ricardo ate Re	3	9	Matilda de Hoo		18
Humfrido de Hull		15	Johanne Robyn		18
Johanne Bouche		12	Alano le Rede		17 $\frac{1}{2}$
Edmundo de Berforth	10		Matilda Aubry		9 $\frac{1}{4}$
Hugone Germet		20	Amicia le Sonmour		7 $\frac{1}{4}$
			Rogero Bush		18 $\frac{1}{2}$
			Benedicto Bercario	2	7
			Hugone ate Hull		8
			Johanne Weste		8
			Ricardo le Rede		8

Summa £3 5s. 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.

III.

The Wool Tax. Lay Subsidy 242/8.

CLOPTON CUM ESTHATTELE.

Dated 1341. This assessment is the result of a grant by the Parliament which met in April 1341 of 30,000 sacks of wool,

which was to take the place of the second of the two-ninths which were granted in the preceding Parliament. 20,000 sacks only were to be collected at first. The assessment was made by government officials aided by men with local knowledge. The sack was to consist of twenty-six stones, each of fourteen pounds. The tax was to be paid by rich and poor alike, no one being spared, and so we get many assessments of two pounds and some of one pound of wool. Many people, of course, kept no sheep; these had to buy wool of those who had a surplus, the sellers being only able to charge according to Act of Parliament, *i.e.*, five marks a sack or half-a-crown a stone. The open market price was four shillings a stone. The amount to be collected from Cambridgeshire was 271 sacks, 10 stone, 2 lb. The commissioners for the county were Warin de Bassingbourn of Wimpole, Thomas Deschallers of Whaddon, Robert Bustlere of Hildersham, John Lucas of Over, and Edmund de Ovington. The latter is not recognisable as a local man, so he may have been a government official. The duty of these commissioners was to see that all wool was paid by Midsummer. In default their goods were to be seized, and, if necessary, their persons also and put into gaol.

The wool from this county was to be paid to the Marquis Juliers, Queen Philippa's brother-in-law, to satisfy a debt which the King owed him. The wool was charged to him at seven shillings and sixpence a stone, which represents a handsome profit for the King.

In some counties there were great difficulties in collection, but in this county the greater part was paid by Midsummer and practically all by Michaelmas¹.

	st. lb.
Edmundus de Bereford est dominus ville et assidatus ad	10
Johanne le Rous	5
Johanne de Clopton	2 12 quas debet
Willemo Ive	3½
Willemo Bretoun capellano	1 6½
Stephano Garnat	10½
Hugone atte Hill	1 12½
Lucia Evote	3
Johanne filio Thomi	8

¹ Calendar of Fine Rolls, vol. v, p. 282. *Finance and Trade under Edward III*, ed. George Unwin: The Taxation of Wool, 1327-48 by F. R. Barnes.

	st.	lb.
Wydoue Tulle		7
Felicia Sparc'		5
Thomo de Holm	1	7
Johanne Bouche	1	
Ricardo le Brond		9
Ricardo le Graunt		7
Willelmo Whityng		10
Galfredo Edwardo		$3\frac{1}{2}$
Johanne Dengayne		$3\frac{1}{2}$
Johanne atte Ree	2	et detinet 10 lib'
Alano Nobelot	3	8
Henrico le Carpenter		6
Waltero filio Lucie	1	7 et debet 4 lib'
Stephano Breton		11
Hugone le Reve	1	$10\frac{1}{2}$
Ricardo Jolif	1	5
Waltero Evote	1	7 et debet $1\frac{1}{2}$ lib'
Willelmo le Cartere	1	7 et debet $\frac{1}{2}$ lib'
Humfrido attehill	1	3
Johanne de Ware		$11\frac{1}{2}$
Johanne le Seriaunt	2	
Hunfrido Love		3
Hugone atte Ree	1	7
Galfrido le Rous		2
Johanne de Queye et Willelmo Horle	2	$\frac{1}{2}$ et debent 4 lib'
Willelmo Kynot	$1\frac{1}{2}$	
Willelmo le Prest		10
Ricardo le Bucher		3
Johanne de Hoo capellano	1	
Agmeta Kyng		2
Johanne Henryot	1	3 et debet $3\frac{1}{2}$ lib'
Anna Underwood		5
Willelmo le Wydewe		9
Johanne Robyn		9
Benedicta le Bercher	1	5 et debet $\frac{1}{2}$ lib'
Roberto le Bercher	$1\frac{1}{2}$	
Johanne le Bercher		10
Johanne Gernat		5
Johanne Joye		10
Willelmo le Duclagh	1	5 et debet 2 lib'
Ricardo le Rede	1	5
Ricardo de Ho		6 et debet 1 lib'
Nicholao de Kyngston		3
Matilda le Cok		$3\frac{1}{2}$
Emma Hulot		8
Ricardo le Kyng		4
Ricardo le Chapman		7

Summa 75 petrae 1 lib'.

De quibus solutis ante festum Sancti Michaelis 59 petris 5 libris et retro sunt 16 petrae 10 librae inde in manis (sic) subcollectorum videlicet Ricardi Chapman, et Hunfridi atte Hill 11 petrae $9\frac{1}{2}$ librae. Et sic debent ut patet 5 petras $\frac{1}{2}$ lib'.

IV.

In 1377 the number of people over the age of 14 in Clopton-cum-East Hatley was 104. Lay Subsidy 81/40. There are no records of the 1381 Poll Tax for Cambridgeshire.

V.

Lay Subsidy 81/129. Subsidy of 1524. CLOPTON.

In 1524 the method of assessment was charged altogether. One shilling in the pound was charged on land, sixpence in the pound on personality of from £2 to £20, and fourpence on personality of £2 or wages of £1 a year.

	s.	d.
Julyan Clopton assessed at £10 in lands paid	10	0
John Saroll " £1 in wages "	4	4
John Whiteside " " "	4	4
Richard Neelford " " "	4	4
John Gardyner " " "	4	4
William Grey " " "	4	4
Total 11s. 8d.		

1524 is the last date when Clopton was assessed separately as a parish. After the union of the ecclesiastical parish with Croyden in 1561 it is always assessed with that parish.

THE SITE OF CLOPTON CHURCH

The Ordnance Map marks the site of St Mary's Chapel (*rectius Church*) on a level with and near the Bury manor site. But a low oblong mound on the hillside above has also been pointed out as the remains of the church. A retired postman of Croyden, Albert Lee, aged 80, told me that he remembered a piece of the old church standing near the Bury mound; it was a foot or more high and of red brick—which does not seem like a building of the fourteenth century. He had also heard of a vault and graves having been found on the mound higher up the hill. Mr T. Lethbridge was sceptical about the latter representing a church, because of its wrong orientation and shape. So on May 13th, 1933, he had trenches dug through the mound and in the adjacent meadow, with the result that no traces of building or burials were found. Therefore the spot marked on the O.S. holds good.

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