

A Muster Roll and Clergy List in the Hundred of Holt, circa 1523.

COMMUNICATED BY

B. COZENS-HARDY,
Hon. Excur. Secretary.

The title of this paper is not quite correct, as the document, with which it deals, is really only a Muster Roll, but it luckily contains in addition the names of all the clergy, beneficed and unbeneficed, in the Hundred and gives us some idea how the spiritual needs of the population were catered for a few years before the Reformation. The document, which is preserved at the Record Office, has as its official reference:—Augmentation Office: Exchequer: Miscellaneous Bk. No. 466. It is in book form, in very good condition, and of neat legible handwriting. It occupies 34 leaves, written on both sides. Bound together with it is a similar document, in different handwriting, relating to the adjoining Hundred of North Greenhoe, details of which may furnish a paper at some future date. The Roll is divisible into three parts—(1) list of all “able men

for the warres" in each parish, subdivided into archers and byllmen; (2) list of all "spirituall" persons with the value of their benefices or stipends; (3) list of all "temporall" persons with the value of their lands and goods.

The document bears no date, though on the modern binding the date is given as "temp. Hen. VI." Internal evidence proves this to be clearly wrong, and the official index more correctly describes it as of "Hen. VIII." We can arrive at the more exact date from the mention of Master Edmond Garrard as being parson of Kelling. His incumbency, according to Blomefield, was from 1521 to 1524. The water-mark of the paper, too, makes these dates possible. The Patent Rolls for 1522 contain reference to a Commission, which was issued calling for a muster to repel a Scotch invasion and appointing Commissioners for all the Counties and Hundreds. The Muster Roll can therefore be pretty safely dated 1522-23.

It will be remembered that Cardinal Wolsey had in 1520 negotiated with Francis, King of France, a somewhat flamboyant peace, which his royal master celebrated at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. In May, 1522, however, Henry VIII. declared war on Francis, and immediately danger threatened him on the flank—from north of the Tweed. These events made the taking stock of the military resources of the nation a necessity.

The method of procedure is indicated by a paper among the Stowe MSS. at the British Museum:—

"The King appointed Commissioners for every hundred, and these Commissioners charged the Chief Constable of the hundred, who in their turn gave orders to the Constable of each Parish in the hundred to appear on a certain day with certificates in writing of the names of all the men above 16 years of age dwelling in each

town, village and hamlet. All these were to appear before the Commissioners 'furnished and appareled in their best arraye for the Warre, that is to saye with bowes, arrowes, harnes and any other weapon, artillery or harnes for the Warre which they or anye of them have.'"¹

By the Assize of Arms, 1181, and the Statute of Winchester, 1285, military service for home defence was an obligation on every male citizen between 15 and 60 years of age, and at his cost. Service overseas, however, was not compulsory, and if a man served abroad it was at the King's costs.² It would seem that a man having "passed muster" would undergo some kind of training, though probably in times of peace such training was negligible. In the emergency, to which the present muster relates, the men supplied by the Hundred would no doubt soon be drafted to join a larger force nearer the place of conflict.

I.

The first list contains the "abled" men—presumably those selected for service. They were probably unarmed men, that is, those without defensive armour, who brought with them bows and arrows and rude arms, such as axes, billhooks, and staves. In most cases their financial resources were below the limit, which made obligatory the provision of "harness" or body armour, and which is referred to in the third part of the Muster Roll. In every parish the byllmen outnumber the archers. The return for the Hundred is 59 archers and 124 byllmen. The reason for this is probably that archery involved both more skill and more expense. The "byll" was technically a lance-hatchet, which by the end of the

¹ Stowe MSS., No. 570, fo. 165.

² See Norwich Militia in 14th century, Hudson, N.A., vol. xiv., p. 263.

century was superseded by the pike. In the musters of fifty years later the firearm, known as the harquebus, was displacing the bow. No firearms are mentioned in the muster now being described, nor is there anything so interesting in this respect as the entry in the Norwich Muster Roll of 1355 of "gunarium cum pulvere"—gunner with powder.¹

It may, I think, be taken for granted that there was some sort of physical test to decide whether a man was "able," though they had not invented those minute distinctions between, say, categories B1 and C2, with which we were familiar eight years ago. In days, however, when transport facilities were in their infancy, a commander must have seen the necessity of excluding from the ranks any who would reduce the rate of marching.

I give below an extract from the first list relating to the small parish of Glandford and also the heading of the list. The details for the other parishes are on the same lines.

The Hundred of
Holte

These being the names of all able men for the warres within the said hundred abled upon the musters taken before Sir John Heydon knight and John Brampton gentryman appointed Coñyssoners in the said hundred

.....

Glamforth

Roger Grene
Richard Bryghtwys

} Archers

Robert Cosyn
John Hyll
John
Willm Mathew
Edmond Goldyng

} byllmen

¹ See *Norf. Arch.*, vol. xiv., p. 294.

II.

The clergy list, which I give next, contains a number of incumbents (as distinct from chaplains and chantry priests) not noticed by Blomefield. It appears that each spiritual person doing duty in the Hundred attended before the Commissioners, was sworn and examined about his clerical and private resources, and then assessed. All except three seem to have answered the summons.

I have omitted, for the sake of brevity, the repetition of certain formal words which appear after every name. The first two entries are given in full, and in the original similar wording is adopted in the case of the remainder. A number of the money values are put in marks (13s. 4d.). I have reduced all these to £ s. d.

The names of those incumbents unnoticed in *Blomefield* are indicated by an asterisk.

Thes ben the valew of all spiritual persons inhiting
within the said hundred :

	£	s.	d.
Master Richard Jekyll* parson of Holt Sworn & examyned seyth and deposeth that the yerely valew of his benefice is worth by yere	10	0	0
Item in landys and tentis by yere	1	6	8
Item in movabull goode	50	0	0
Sir Thomas Alen Sworn & examyned seyth that his stypend by yere is	6	0	0
Item in movabullys goodes	4	0	0
Sir Henry Bakon parson of Eggefield benefice	12	0	0
lands & tentis	13	4	
goodes	40	0	0
Sir Robert Waller vyker of Bryston benefice	9	6	8
goodes	14	0	0

	£	s.	d.
Sir John Lodge parson of Hunworth			
benefice	8	0	0
lands & tent̄s		16	0
goodes	10	0	0
Sir John Webster parson of Stodey			
benefice
goodes
Sir Willm̄ Wadylove* parson of Thornage			
benefice	10	0	0
goodes	7	0	0
Sir George Webster parson of Burgh			
benefice	4	13	4
goodes	6	0	0
Sir John syngyng at Byrnyngton			
stypend	5	6	8
goodes	1	6	8
Sir John Skye parson of Brynton			
benefice	10	0	0
lands & tent̄s	1	3	4
goodes	50	0	0
Sir John Davy* parson of Gunthorp			
benefice	13	6	8
goodes	5	0	0
Sir Gyles Dawbeney parson of Sharyngton
Sir John Dawbeney syngyng at Sharyngton			
stypend	5	6	8
goodes	30	0	0
Sir Robert Nytinghale syngyng at Sharyngton			
stypend	5	6	8
goodes	2	0	0
Sir John Sagge syngyng at Sharyngton			
stypend	5	6	8
lands & tent̄s	1	13	4
goodes	13	0	0
Master Thomas Alabaster* parson of Bale			
benefice	10	0	0
lands & tent̄s		16	0
goodes	30	0	0

	£	s.	d.
Sir John Skarlett* parson of Langham			
benefice	8	0	0
goodes	13	6	8
Sir Nicholas Bothe parson of Saxlyngham			
benefice	13	6	8
goodes	6	13	4
Sir Willm Parishe parson of Marston			
benefice	20	0	0
goodes	200	0	0
lands & tent's	10	0	
Master Cleydon* parson of Blakney
Sir Robert Cleydon parishe preste there			
stypend	7	6	8
goodes	40	0	0
Sir John Clerkson syngyng at Blakney			
stypend	5	13	4
goodes	2	0	0
Sir Thomas Gressham parson of Wyffton			
benefice	16	0	0
Sir Roger Goodys parishe preste of Wyffton			
stypend	6	13	4
goodes	30	0	0
Sir Thomas Toke syngyng at Wyffton			
stypend	5	6	8
goodes	2	0	0
Sir Nicholas Marshall syngyng at Wyffton			
stypend	5	13	4
goodes	10	0	0
Sir Reynolde Thomson syngyng at Glamforth			
stypend	5	6	8
goodes	4	0	0
Sir John Bokenham parson of Letheryngsed			
benefice	13	6	8
goods	6	13	4
Master Edmund Garrard parson of Kelling and Patesley			
benefice	13	6	8
goodes	26	13	4

	£	s.	d.
Sir Roger Scottow parische preste there			
stypend	5	13	4
lands & ten̄s		3	4
goodes	10		0 0
Sir Henry Yarh̄m* vyker of Hempsted			
benefice	6	13	4
goods	2		0 0
Sir Richard Warner parson of Bodham			
benefice	12		0 0
lands & ten̄s		10	0
goodes	10		0 0
Master John Wyott parson of Cley			
benefice	16		0 0
goods	40		0 0
Sir Crystofer Barlow parische preste there			
stypend	7	13	4
goodes	6	13	4
Sir Thomas Johnson of Cley			
stypend	5	13	4
goodes	2		0 0
Sir John Westake of Cley			
stypend	5	13	4
goodes	1	6	8
Sir Robert Fever parson of Salthouse			
benefice	20		0 0
goodes	23	13	4
Sir John Rede			
stypend	5	6	8
goodes

* Not mentioned by Blomefield or Bryant.

Most of the clergy are given the courtesy title of "Sir," which was used of all the higher orders. Five of the incumbents are called "Master," which signifies graduate. The phrase "parish priest" presents a difficulty. It would seem to mean, either a curate assisting an incumbent or a curate-in-charge, where the incumbent

was an absentee. Both Blakeney and Cley-next-the-Sea were at that date sufficiently populous to necessitate extra clerical help, and Master Cleydon of Blakeney had the assistance of Sir Robert Cleydon, and Master John Wyott of Cley had a chaplain or curate of the name of Sir Christopher Barlow. On the other hand, Master Edmund Garrard was rector of Pattesley, as well as of Kelling, and probably resided at the former place, and Sir Roger Scottow was his chaplain-in-charge. Again, Sir Thomas Gresham, brother of the founder of the school at Holt, besides holding the living of Wiveton, was rector of Northrepps and Southrepps, and resided probably at Southrepps. He accordingly put in a parish priest at Wiveton and gave him a stipend of 10 marks (£6 13s. 4d.). The other class of cleric is that described as "syngyng at." It may possibly include a chaplain or curate, but more probably they were clergy, who primarily made a living by singing masses to carry out testamentary directions, and who took charge of church services in case of need. There were three at Sharrington—a very small parish—while Wiveton and Cley each had two. The number at Sharrington is surprising, and can only be accounted for by the existence of chantries.

Then, as now, there was a great variation in the value of the benefices. Apparently the value of the glebe was included under the heading of benefice, and where there is a separate entry for land and tenements, it refers to the private property of the parson concerned. The stipend of a "singing man" was usually about 8 marks 6s. 8d. (£5 13s. 4d.).

It is difficult to say what is the present worth of the money values in the list. Multiplication by about 12 would be a rough estimate. It must not be overlooked that the stipends were for a clergy, who were nominally,

at least, celibate.¹ Moreover, it is not unreasonable to suppose, human nature being in those days not very different from what it is now, that the clergy, no less than laymen, in making their returns did not exaggerate the size of their resources!

Why was it necessary to furnish a return of the clergy with their values? It must be remembered that most of the higher clergy and many of the lower clergy held estates unconnected with their benefices. In respect of these they were liable to the same obligations as a lay holder, as for instance, paying their proportion of a lay subsidy. For these they would be called upon to serve in arms themselves or find a substitute.²

Presumably, therefore, those clergy in the list whose estates in "lands and tenements" or "moveable goods" exceeded the exemption limit, had to make some contribution towards the equipment of the militia. There is no evidence that in this muster they were called upon to take up arms.

III.

The third list is of all "temporall men" with the value of their estates, *i.e.*, annual value of their land and capital value of their goods or personalty. After most of the names the words "in harnes appoynted" occurs, and this would seem to mean, either that they had actually furnished their quota of accoutrements and arms based on the size of their resources, or that the quantity and nature of their contribution had been settled. The list obviously does not embrace all the inhabitants or householders in a parish, but only those whom the Constable considered to be possibly assessable. It seems, however, that all the owners of land and tenements were included, even women; for instance, under

¹ See *Norf. Arch.*, vol. ix., p. 187.

² See "A Commission to arm and array the clergy in 1400," by Rev William Hudson, F.S.A., in *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, vol. ii.

Letheringsett, Mastres Agnes Curson, who was widow of Philip Curson, Alderman of Norwich and Lord of the Manor, heads the list. One gathers from a perusal of the whole list that a resident had to be worth more than 40s. in moveable goods to be liable for assessment.

In addition to these names, the return contains, in the case of most parishes, the names of the Lord of the Manor and of his steward. Reference is made to this later. I give now the return for the parish of Thornage, with the general heading to this part of the Muster Roll:—

Thes be valews of alle temporall men inhitid withiñ the said hundred taken as well upon the several othes as upon the estimaçon of the chefe constables of the said hundred and of the constables of every of the several towns and villages within the said hundred there unto also sworn before Sir John Heydon Knight, Raf. Verney Esquire and John Brampton gent. commyssoners of the said hundred.

Thornage.

The Bysshope of Norwyche lorde there.

Willm Mere of Norwyche his styward.

Thomas Bacon in londe by yere	£4
Itm̄ in movabull goods	£80
In harnes appoynted	
Willm Bacon in londe by yere	3s
Itm̄ in movabull goods	£10
In harnes appoynted	
Thomas Cam in londe by yere	5s
Itm̄ in movabull goods	100s
John ffreeman in londe by yere	3s
Robert Wadylove in londe by yere	6s 8d
Itm̄ in movabull goods	£6
In harnes appoynted	
Robert Grene in movabull goods	40s
Robert ffemlyng in londe by yere	13s 4d
Itm̄ in movabull goods	£8
In harnes appoynted	

Adam Knebroo in londe by yere	3 ^s 4 ^d
James Pekok in londe by yere	3 ^s 4 ^d
Itm̄ in movabull goods	£4
In harnes appoynted	
Thomas Abletts in movabull goods	20 ^s
John True in movabull goods	20 ^s

In several parishes, though not in the case of Thornage, the stock of the church or the gild is valued. The following are the entries:—

		£	s.	d.
Weybourne .	stok of the church	1	6	8
Edgefield .	the gylde stoke	2	13	4
Gunthorpe .	stok of the church	4	13	4
Bodham .	the stok of Sent John Gyelde	2	0	0
Holt .	stok of the church	2	0	0
Brinton .	do.	5	6	8
Stody .	stok of o' Lady Gyelde there	2	0	0
Briston .	the gyelde stok	6	6	8
Sharrington .	stok of the church	3	0	0
Bale .	do.	10	2	0
Kelling .	the gyelde stok of Sent Johns gyelde	1	6	8
Langham .	stok of the church	17	3	4
Letheringsett	do.	8	0	0
Salthouse .	do.	8	0	0
Wiveton .	do.	5	0	0

It must not be assumed that the list of gilds is exhaustive, or that the parishes omitted from the list had no "stok of the church." Stock cannot mean church plate or vestments, as places like Cley and Blakeney, which were richly endowed in this respect, are not assessed. The word is probably used for money or land in the possession of the gilds or the churchwardens, which were used for charitable purposes. The comparative richness of Langham is noticeable. There were, however, two benefices in this vill or township.

It will be observed that in the extract relating to Thornage "temporall men" the names of the lord and his steward are set out. This occurs in all except nine out of the twenty-eight townships. As several of the names do not occur in *Blomefield*, it may be well to place them on record. They are as follow:—

TOWNSHIP.	LORD.	STEWARD.
Bale . . .	The King . . .	Sir Thomas Lovell
Blakeney ¹ . . .	Crystopher Calthorp . . . Thomas Asteley	Thomas Asteley gent.
Bodham . . .	Sir John Heydon . . .	John Crane
Brinton . . .	The Bishop of Norwich	William Mere
Cley . . .	Sir John Lovell . . .	Thomas Abbes
Edgefield ¹ . . .	Sir John Willoughby . . . Prior of Binham . . .	John Languard Thomas Abbes
Glandford . . .	The King . . .	Sir Thomas Lovell
Hempstead . . .	Sir John Heydon . . .	John Crane
Holt ¹ . . .	Sir Thomas Lovell . . . John Gresham	Thomas Abbes
Hunworth ¹ Fincham John Branche	
Kelling . . .	Sir John Heydon . . .	John Crane
Letheringsett . . .	The King . . .	Sir Thomas Lovell
Salthouse . . .	Sir John Heydon . . .	John Crane
Saxlingham . . .	do. . .	do.
Sharrington . . .	Thomas Dawbeney	
Swanton Novers	Prior of Walsingham	
Thornage . . .	The Bishop of Norwich	William Mere
Weybourne . . .	Sir John Vere	
Wiveton . . .	The King . . .	Sir Thomas Lovell

The question arises, why was it thought necessary to make a return of lords and stewards? No value is placed on each lordship. Possibly the reason was that feudalism still existed, though more in theory than in practice. The lord was under a duty to the King or

¹ There were several manors in these townships.

his superior lord to render military service in return for his tenure of land, and any failure on the part of a parish to yield its quota of arms or men might, in the last resort, have to be remedied by the lord.

The King himself, it will be noticed, was lord of Bale, Glandford, Letheringsett, and Wiveton, and in each case that powerful Norfolk magnate, Sir Thomas Lovell,¹ of East Harling, was his steward. At first sight this seems inconsistent with what we know about the lords of these manors at this period. It is clear that the King did not hold them, except possibly Bale, in demesne. It would seem that the other three of them were originally granted by the King to the Giffard family and formed part of the Honour of Clare. They were subinfeudated, and the person lowest down on the feudal ladder was the actual lord of the manor, who held the manor courts. The interest of the Giffard family in the course of time passed to Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, who in 1521 was attainted and beheaded. Henry VIII. thereupon seized his possessions, and this accounts for the King being returned as lord of these townships, though the actual lord of the manor was another person.

Sir Thomas Lovell is given as lord of Holt and Cley. I am not clear how this comes about, as Thomas Lord Roos, subsequently Earl of Rutland, was lord at this date (1522-23). Possibly Sir Thomas had a lease of the manors from him, or was his trustee. That there was some close connection between the two men is shewn by the fact that Lord Roos was the chief mourner at Sir Thomas' funeral in 1524.²

I must express my indebtedness to the Rev. William Hudson, F.S.A., V.P., for many valuable suggestions on a subject to which he has given much study.

¹ See *Norf. Arch.*, vol. xviii., p. 46.

² See *Norf. Arch.*, vol. xviii., p. 73.