

**'BEWARE OF GRAZING ON FOUL MORNINGS': A GENTLEMAN'S
HUSBANDRY NOTES¹**

by C.E. Moreton and Colin Richmond

As K.B. McFarlane pointed out some time ago, even the greatest landowners in late medieval England needed to take more than a perfunctory interest in the running of their properties. The term 'rentier economy' is often applied to this period, but this does not imply a lack of energy with regard to estate management.² Lower down the social scale the gentry were also often involved with the day-to-day business of their estates (although whether this was in part prompted by difficult economic circumstances is hard to say). One substantial Suffolk gentleman, John Hopton, would appear to have cared more for life at home than the role in county affairs to which his status entitled him, and the well-known Pastons, far more beset with the cares of the outside world than Hopton ever was, also involved themselves with the minutiae of managing their lands. Outside East Anglia, the Stonors owned an estate spread over several counties in southern England, the dispersed nature of which required their careful and detailed supervision, and a study of five prominent gentry families with lands in Warwickshire has indicated that they and their servants took an active interest in estate management (even if in the case of one of these families practice fell far short of the ideal). In a later period Elizabeth I's lord keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, followed in the footsteps of many medieval landowners by giving the same careful consideration to digging ditches on his Norfolk estate as he did to affairs of state.³

The notes transcribed below provide a further interesting example of an important and busy gentleman finding time to attend to matters on an estate from which he was often necessarily absent. They were discovered at the end of a sheep account for the period Michaelmas 1482-3. The sheep belonged to a prominent lawyer, Roger Townshend of East Raynham, Norfolk, and the account records the size of his flocks, the amount of wool produced and sold during the accounting year and summarises the receipts and expenses of the accountant, Townshend's sheep-reeve, William Howes. Now preserved in the Norfolk Record Office in Norwich, Howes's account fills nine of ten folios making up a paper booklet measuring about 23 x 31 cm.⁴ The notes in question are on f. 10r: written in Townshend's own hand, they are dated 13 August 1486.⁵ They are only partly connected with sheep-farming, so it is not clear why he should have made them in the booklet. Possibly he had intended to confine them to that subject (and so chose the booklet as an appropriate place in which to write them) but subsequently found that there were other matters worth recording. Another explanation is that the booklet with its useful spare folios was conveniently to hand when he took up his pen.

Although a wealthy landowner and sheep-farmer when he made the notes, Townshend was a man of lowly social origins who had bettered himself through the law.⁶ The eldest son of a yeoman farmer, he was born in about 1435 and entered Lincoln's Inn in 1454. He enjoyed a successful career, culminating in his appointment as a judge of the court of Common Pleas in 1485 and a knighthood the following year, a few weeks before he made his notes. He invested much of his legal earnings in land: by 1486 he owned nearly 20 manors and he had extended his estate still further by the time of his death seven years later. The estate, mainly situated in north-west Norfolk, was compact, making it well-suited to sheep-farming, an important commercial activity in this part of the country.⁷ As one of the great Norfolk flockmasters of the late 15th century, Townshend's prime concern was his sheep (of which he owned over 6000 in seven flocks in 1486),⁸ but (as his notes indicate) he also took a keen interest in other matters.

It would appear that his notes are primarily concerned with activities on the Raynham demesne⁹ although, typically for a late medieval landowner, he rented out much of his land. In them he bemoans the bad practices and other shortcomings of his employees, but it is likely that he was a hard master rather than a slack landowner, since he was posthumously complimented by the Tudor antiquary, John Leland, for his 'good husbandrie'.¹⁰ Not much can have escaped Townshend's critical eye, and with a lawyer's attention to detail he took care to ensure that his estate was properly run. His notes are in keeping with the competent, if unattractive, character we know him to have been.¹¹

NOTE: deletions appear between angle brackets, < >, insertions and interlineations between asterisks, * *, and marginalia are shown thus: /Shepref/. Townshend's handwriting is not particularly easy to read and his English is not always comprehensible: illegible or uncertain words and phrases are enclosed by rounded brackets: ().

<xj> xiiij^o die augusti a^o j^o h vij remembre for the Office of the Shipref¹² that myne Shipardes be good in everych place and that he be warre of maddy for[...]¹³

/Shepref/ Item that ij flokkes be at Westr' and hell'.¹⁴ Item that the tath¹⁵ be well approwed. Item that myne olde hirdeles¹⁶ be sold or fetched home.

Item that all thynges be redy a yens the accompt. And everch Sheppard *be* even at his accompt or fynde suerte to maketh even.

Item for ther tath that thei content them with thall and the remenaunt to the Shepref.¹⁷ Item that the Shepardes be warre of gresyng fowle mornynges Reynez and Stranys weder¹⁸ dogges¹⁹ and all other thynges. Item that the Rggynz²⁰ be gelte.

/Skeyner/ shall have myne Shepskyns for midsomer last unto midsomer next for xxjs. the C. And howeth of holde²¹ vli. ner vjli. to be paied at *Mihilmes next*

/Reparacion/ that the howse next the Slaughter hous be hirdeleth²² for the Skynnes and a litill dore made oust of the Slaughter hous unto the other hous a bove.

/Wryttes/²³ Item the wryttes make redy the bestes house a yens *the nexte* yere(s) and dresse up all other thynges now necessarie.

/bildyng/²⁴ Item that myne Tymbre may redy [sic] for the chambre to be made with Inne the mote. Item Scuman go to Milham²⁵ to se myne tymbre that wanteth and that I have gode trees for thoo that Swafham mene hadd and if I want to ordeyne more.

Item lyme and Stone and also tiell to be redy. Item to come with Masonz and Carpenters be fore to avised and whyt (one) other polityk manne to caste it and to avised to the best purpose that the cost be not loste and that it be *se* Suerly made in all thynges.

/Husbondrys/ that hardlond now somerlay²⁶ be kept for barly be cause it is not redy to wete now²⁷ for gret necligens of the bailif Brun²⁸ and if the barly be soele²⁹ be tyme it may be the nexte yere with wete but Breton and Bougeour³⁰ canne avise the contrarie be ther discrecion for it is better to have the *more* losse than the more.

Item myn londes be now harrowed thoroughly and that the ploughmen take nomore than thei may well doe and doet in seisinall tyme for and I myne lond were well tilleth it wolde bere as gode Corn as other mennez and for default of tillyng I lose all.

Wherefore if I myght lete³¹ myne lond I wolde doit everych dell³² or at the Most kepe but on plogh.

Item myne donge is to carie ouste myne londes to asye³³ and harrow yt be all ouste of plight to suele³⁴ in the More part.

Item the weders³⁵ in tyme of yere take ther wages and do not <the> ther werk but leve the brakes³⁶ lye Still in the lond that it may not *(lengwere)*

Item myne hegges and dykes new made that cost moch money³⁷ be not loketh to but the Spryngere distroieth and gretly hurt in many places.

Item myne Cartes and ploghes be not made or elles made *ouste* of tyme to myne grete *losse* and <case> none thyng done in season and to profit.

Item myne wode thakke redde in divers places lye and be all most lost and shuld be were not other menez loking to.

Item the Stuff of hussold³⁸ not bought be tyme ner on seison the Smyth not wisly Rekened with all ner any hede³⁹ *(to)* taken.

Item neither horsez ner harneys conveniently purveied in tyme ner well kept whan thei have it and long or thei come to ther werk and than doit so lecherly and untreuly that it were better oftyne tyme undone because of the gret losse.

Wherefore we must se these thynges amended or befall ouste.

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- 1 We are most grateful to the Marquess Townshend for permission to cite documents from his manuscript collection at Raynham Hall.
- 2 K.B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England* (1973), 229-31; C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity. A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society 1401-1499* (1992), 158.
3. C. Richmond, *John Hopton: A Fifteenth-Century Suffolk Gentleman* (1981); R.H. Britnell, 'The Pastons and their Norfolk', *Agricultural History Review* 36 (1988), 132-44; *Kingsford's Stonor Letters and Papers 1290-1483*, ed. C. Carpenter (1996), 19-20; Carpenter (1992), 163; *The Papers of Nathaniel Bacon of Stiffkey*, I, eds. A. Hassell Smith *et al.*, Norfolk Record Society, 46 (1979), xviii, 69.
4. Norfolk Record Office, Townshend 56 MS 1475 1F, Townshend sheep account of 1482-3.
5. Some jottings on the other side of this folio are also in Townshend's hand. Of no particular interest, they include estimates of his flock sizes in the late 1480s.
6. The following summary of Townshend's career is based on C.E. Moreton, *The Townshends and their World: Gentry, Law, and Land in Norfolk c.1450-1551* (1992).
7. For Norfolk sheep-farming, see K.J. Allison, 'The sheep-corn husbandry of Norfolk in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', *Agricultural History Review* 5 (1957), 12-30; M. Bailey, 'Sand into gold: the evolution of the foldcourse system in west Suffolk, 1200-1600', *ibid.* 38 (1990), 40-57.
8. Moreton, 225.
9. The building work referred to in lines 16-21 of the notes was probably being carried out at Raynham (see note 24 below).
10. *The Itinerary of John Leland*, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, 5 vols. (London, 1906-10), II, 12.
11. For the ruthlessness with which he pursued his own interests: Charles Moreton, 'A "best betrustyd frende"?: A late medieval lawyer and his clients', *Journal of Legal History* 11 (1990), 183-90.
12. Sheep-reeve. This officer had overall charge of Townshend's shepherds and flocks. John Rouse was the sheep-reeve in the accounting year 1485-6: N.R.O., Townshend 56 MS 1475 1F.
13. Illegible, rendering the last part of this sentence unintelligible.
14. West Raynham and Helhoughton. Townshend customarily kept breeding flocks of ewes in both places: Townshend 56 MS 1475 1F.
15. The tathe was the manure produced by the flocks. Tathing (the manuring and treading of the soil by flocks of sheep) was one of the main methods of keeping land fertile for crop-growing.
16. Hurdles; used for sheep pens.
17. This seems to indicate that Townshend's shepherds and sheep-reeve enjoyed the right to have their land holdings manured by his flocks.
18. Bad weather could be a problem. During the severe winter of 1480-1 lambing in Townshend's flocks was badly affected: Townshend 56 MS 1475 1F, account for 1480-1, f. 15v.
19. Marauding dogs were often a problem. In 1489-90, for example, dogs belonging to Henry Feltwell of Mileham killed 24 lambs belonging to Townshend's flock at Litcham: Townshend 56 MS 1475 1F, account for 1489-90, f. 2v.
20. Riggon wethers (half-castrated rams). Fully castrated males were known as clean wethers: K.J. Allison, 'Flock Management in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser. 11 (1958-9), 101n.
21. *ie.* 'owes of old'.
22. Constructed with, or surrounded by, hurdles; wattled.

23. Wrights, builders.
24. This probably refers to projects at East Raynham. Townshend undertook a substantial amount of building work there during the 1470s and 1480s, when he added a new tower to the manor house, had 'divers windows' glazed and put up various outbuildings: Moreton (1992), 145.
25. Mileham. 'Scuman' was probably John Skayman, but it is not clear if this was the servant who kept an early 16th-century journal of business on the Townshend estate, or his father and namesake: see 'Skayman's Book, 1516-1518', eds. Charles Moreton and Paul Rutledge, Norfolk Record Society, 61 (1997), 134, 143.
26. Summer fallow.
27. Barley was the pre-eminent crop in north-west Norfolk, where the soil was light and gravelly. Townshend grew much more of it than wheat, which was harder to grow in this region: Moreton (1992), 149.
28. William Brown was the bailiff responsible for Townshend's crops at East Raynham in 1485-6: Raynham Hall attic, box labelled 'Norfolk manorial — Raynham Haviles', account for East Raynham, 1485-6.
29. ?Sown.
30. Robert Bougeour became the Townshends' bailiff at Raynham at Michaelmas 1500 (N.R.O., Townshend 44 MS 1463 1 B2; 37 MS 1456 1 B1, m. 16.). John Breton, who was from Raynham and purchased wheat from Townshend on at least occasion in the mid 1470s (Raynham Hall library, drawer 58, account for East Raynham Haviles, 1475-6), was probably another employee.
31. Lease out.
32. Every part.
33. To sink down, to set.
34. ?Sown. See note 29.
35. Weeders.
36. Briers, thicket or broken branches.
37. Although the Townshends used enclosure as a means of improving their land, it was not as a practice widespread in their part of Norfolk, where the open fields were an essential feature of the foldcourse system.
38. Household.
39. Heed.

BARNABAS BARRETT, 1810–1883: NORWICH MONUMENTAL MASON

by G.N. Barrett

Barnabas Barrett, a sculptor and stonemason, was a Londoner by birth and came to Norwich in 1855 to help build the Public Library in St Andrews Street. He found the City and county to his liking and stayed until his death in 1883. In this period of twenty-eight years he executed many prominent pieces of monumental sculpture in the City and numerous funerary monuments in the county.

He came from a family of stonemasons which originated in Yorkshire. The small village of Warmfield-cum-Heath had, in 1745, a stonemason named John Barrett, whose son Barnabas departed to Doncaster and then to London. Here he married and had a son, John, who also became a stonemason. John married in St Clement Danes in 1798. His son Barnabas was born at High Holborn Lying-in Hospital on September 16 1810. Barnabas was baptised at the