

“THE WATERS OF REDEWYND.”

BY

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THE coloured “Plan of Chertsey Abbey Demesne, 14th century,” found in the Chertsey Cartulary, in the Record Office, has furnished interesting problems with regard to the identification of some of its features. The broad river in the background has been unhesitatingly pronounced to be the course of the Thames from Penton Hook, past Laleham, to Chertsey Bridge.

This, to start with, looks perfectly simple, but a considerable amount of history is attached to that part of the boundary. Behind the present Lock House, which is north of the river, are old watercourses defining a more ancient bed; these encircled meadows, now actually in Middlesex, but reckoned as Chertsey territory; and since they were the site of the original Chertsey Abbey and included in the Domesday Survey of Chertsey, they retain the name of “Dumsey Meads.”

The bridge depicted in the Plan is somewhat conventional and would represent a site considerably to the north-east of the present bridge—in fact, approaching the Walton and Shepperton Bridge. Aubrey throws some light on this:—“I was told by Elias Ashmole that the old current of the river Thames is changed (here at Walton), and that part of Middlesex which is over against this place was formerly divided, about two or three hundred years since, from Surrey when a Church was also swallowed up by the waves.”

In 1817, and again in 1868, labourers digging in the Upper West Field, Shepperton (about midway between Chertsey Abbey and Walton Bridge), dug up bones

and fragments of pottery; continuing their excavations about two feet lower, they exposed skeletons; and archæologists supposed the site to have been that of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

A traditional trace of the old river-course was a deep gully by the roadside, adjoining the Dumsey Meads, in connection with which a tragic incident occurred. A wedding had been solemnised in Chertsey Church, the bridal party were returning along the Shepperton Road, the meads were in flood and the highway also; the coach became engulfed in the gully and all the occupants were drowned.

The stream in the foreground of the Cartulary Plan is supposed to represent the Abbey River, issuing from the Thames by Penton Hook, flowing south and east round the Abbey meads, and re-entering the Thames alongside the Oxlake meadow. But again the true course does not tally with the Plan; instead of flowing south of the great Burway Barn, the Abbey River simply encircles the Laleham Burway and works the Abbey Mill, which correspondingly should be depicted much farther back.

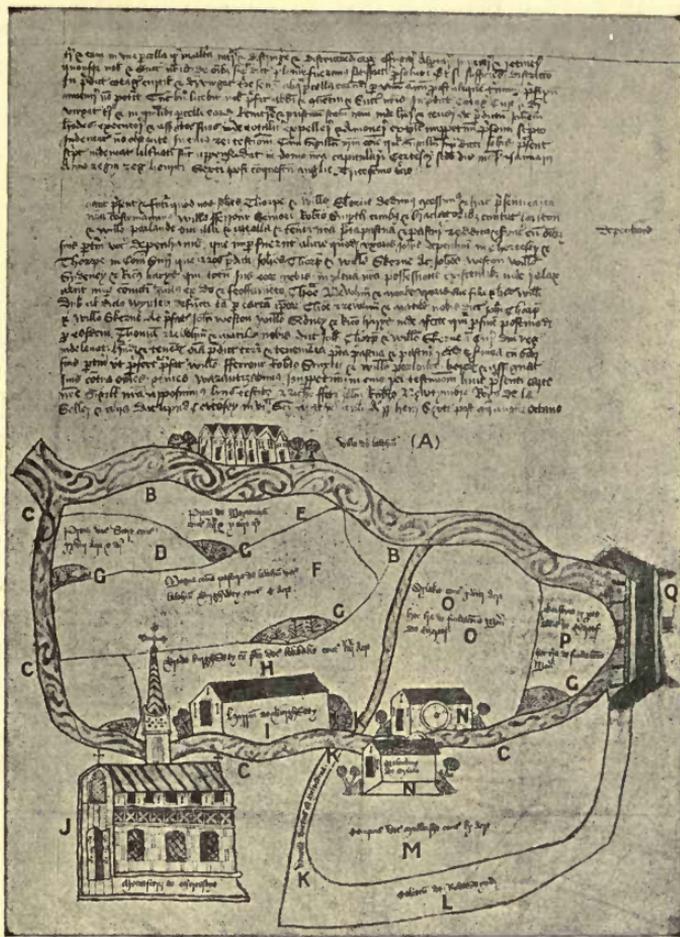
The *raison d'être* of the Plan is to show the extent of the Abbey territory, and the representation of the Abbey in the foreground does not show its true site, but simply is an index that the island behind it is "Chertsey Island," on which the Abbey stood.

The Redewynd formed the boundary between the Abbey and the town. The town was intersected with streams, many of which have been filled in or diverted from their original course.

The approach to the Abbey from the town was a bridge over the Redewynd, on which was "the Gatehouse," which is believed to have stood on the east side of the parish church.

The Redewynd itself is known as the Bourne which flows from Virginia Water through Northlands Mead (Thorpe) near the Redewynd lands; it crosses St. Anne's Road, Chertsey, under Amperstones Bridge, flows through the Cowley meadows and cutting the main

Chertsey Street under Stephen's Bridge, winds through the Beomonds meadows round Stepgates and under Fordwater Bridge, ultimately reaching the Thames by the Wey-bridge.



PLAN OF THE SITE AND DEMESNE OF CHERTSEY ABBEY.

(For Key, see p. 37.)

This is “the Bourne” of the present day; but in mediæval times a subsidiary branch, which now flows through the Thorpe fields and the grounds of “The Orchard” of the old Abbey, was of far greater volume and much more in evidence than now. It is seen in its

greatest bulk opposite the Infants' School in Windsor Street, where it encircles three sides of the "Cricket Field," as it was known in the 'sixties, otherwise called the "Fore-Field." It formed the old Abbey Moat, and at the top of "Colonel's Lane," its east boundary, stands one last remaining Lombardy poplar, marking the termination of the Abbey precincts.

The Redewynd then entered a culvert beneath the Abbey Green, evidently reappearing near the "Gatehouse," and flowing behind the present houses on the north side of London Street.

Many traces of its course remain—for instance, small streams may be seen between the Town Hall, the Bank House adjoining, and the Snuggery on Abbey Green, along the Willow Walk and the backs of many London Street gardens—but that is all.

About the centre of this locality stood a manor house, and undoubtedly these waters formed its moat. It was probably the "Hall" of the Domesday Survey for which "a forge worked," and also a mill, which would be the foremost of the two shown in the Plan. The "Hollows" field, in which it stands, takes its name from the "Hall-house," and was originally called "The Hallowses." The Abbey Mill would have been worked by the Abbey River, which is clearly shown behind it as it enters the Thames; but the Oxlake Mill, presumably, was turned by the Redewynd, present tracings of which are not so clear.

The *Calcetu de Redwynd* corresponds to the Bridge Road of to-day, and on its east side traces of ancient watercourses have been found at a considerable depth, and these would have been connected with the Bourne channels through Chertsey Meads. The chief puzzle of the Plan is to disconnect the Abbey River from the Redewynd. If one could clear away from mental vision all the modern houses and picture the "Village" as it was in the 17th century, it might be possible.

In 1610 Dr. John Hammond, Court Physician, was granted the Chertsey Abbey property, which included "all the house, site and circuit of Chertsey Monastery." Later additions acquired were the Oxlake Mill and the

would have been a distinct dip to the lower level of the "Miller's Field." In this meadow there were fishponds, and the whole of this pasture land, extending to Chertsey Bridge, has been, and still is, continually subject to floods.

The Abbey River is shown to enter the Thames on the west side of the Oxlake Meadow, beyond the Mill Lane; but the Redewynd, flowing further south, reached the Thames near the present Chertsey Bridge.

The continuation from the end of London Street has been lost sight of in recent times, but another connection of the Redewynd with the Abbey River is worthy of notice.

A culvert or tunnel between Colonel's Lane and the Abbey site has been excavated, and shows not only the eastward course of the Redewynd but a connection in that part with the Abbey River from the north-west. The Willow Walk and the Hollows have benefited by this and have furnished a nesting-place for swans; but again another subterranean course exists, for swans who have reached the south termination of the stream reappear later on the Pound Pond, the Stepgates Bourne. Here the Bourne has become much circumscribed during the past fifty years; it flowed past and under what is now the Pond House, another pond lay at the entrance to the Bridge Road, and a ditch ran opposite the "Miller's Field." Near Bridge Cottage traces of an ancient water-course have been found at a great depth. Thus the *Calcetu de Redewynd* justifies its name.

The remaining features of the Cartulary sketch are quite easy of identification. Curiously, the "Villa of Laleham" might well pass muster as a photograph of some quite recent erections. The Mixtenham (or Mix'lams) were meadows across which lay a well-worn track leading to Thorpe Church, much used by the monks for their lay ministrations in that direction. They were also a favourite fishing ground of Charles Dickens, on his week-end visits to Albert Smith at the Gogmore Cottage. The meadows of the Stert and the Burway continue to yield "the best hay in England."

The Burway of 160 acres was granted to Laleham “tithe and tax free” as a return for supplying the Abbey with necessaries in a time of great scarcity and mortality.

The marshes in the meads are in evidence to this day, and the great Burway Barn exists; but that of the sketch might be a facsimile of a second barn, known as Waterer’s, and said to have been the great tithe-barn. The meadow quite to the east, “the land of the Monastery foundation,” lies on the side of the Shepperton Road, to the north and east of the present Chertsey Bridge.

In Tombleson’s volume of *Picturesque Views of the Thames*, that of Chertsey Bridge shows a house in the corner of this Dumsey meadow; it is now no longer in existence, but it represents the temporary shelter of Oliver Twist to which Bill Sykes brought him on his unwelcome visit to the locality.

KEY TO PLAN (p. 33).

DATE 1454.

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|---|------------------------|
| A—Laleham. | I—Burway Barn. |
| B—River Thames. | J—Abbey Church. |
| C (upper)—Abbey River: Penton Hook to Burway. | K—Mill Lane. |
| C (lower)—South of Burway = Redewynd. | L—Redewynd Causeway. |
| D—Stert Meadow. | M—Mill Meadow. |
| E—Mixtenham. | N (upper)—Abbey Mill. |
| F—Laleham Burway. | N (lower)—Oxlake Mill. |
| G—Osier Beds. | O—Oxlake Meadow. |
| H—Lodderlake Mead. | P—Bos Eyte. |
| | Q—Bridge over Thames. |