

THE MANOR OF OXTED, 1360-1420

BY

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THIS essay is based on documents which illustrate the social and economic history of the manor of Oxted during the period 1352-1420. The main documents comprise three bailiff's accounts for 1360-1363, a rental of 1408 and two groups of court and view of frankpledge rolls for 1352-1364 and 1414-1420. There are also a few other documents of lesser importance.¹

These manuscripts form the early part of a large collection of Oxted deeds which are deposited in the Surrey Record Office. From 1948 to 1961 they were at the Public Library, Croydon. The collection includes documents from sixteen counties over a period of five centuries. In Surrey there are documents concerning Blechingley and Limpsfield as well as Oxted. Among the Oxted documents is a series of court rolls extending from 1352 to 1808; the series is not complete but there are long sequences of rolls especially in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The rolls are of various sizes; some may have been cut. One has a hole in it so that the clerk had to write round it. At some later date the court rolls were numbered but not in absolutely chronological order. The early rolls were, as was customary, written in Latin, nevertheless the presence of English or Latinised English words (e.g. blakhanked, euysdropper, mattok, vawew, redeared, wolpus) suggests that the language used in court was English. In the memorandum at the end of the rental the closing lines were extracted from a charter in the original Norman French.

On the court rolls there is annotation above the line in addition to correction of errors; the fines on individuals were generally noted in this way. These additions were probably made by the bailiff or the affeerors. The left-hand margins have catch words (e.g. '*Lex,*' '*misericordia*') for ready reference and there are a few scrawls or

¹ One document at least is still in private hands; it is the earliest (2 July 1299) and it bears its seal, an oak sprig on green wax. The Surrey R.O. has a photo copy, Ph.362a. These documents are identified as Surrey R.O. 87/-/-. They monopolise the footnotes; therefore, to save space, the Surrey R.O. has been omitted. They were all transcribed; any merit in the transcripts is due to Mrs. G. A. Ward, Ph.D., F.R.Hist.S., any faults are mine. Others to whom I am indebted are:—

Mr. J. N. S. Hoskins Master, the present Lord of the Manor of Oxted, and Mr. D. H. John, LL.B., representing the Barrow Green Estate Company, for permission to use the Oxted manuscripts; Professor E. Carus-Wilson, M.A., Professor of Economic History at London University, for her note on the spinning wheel (see Appendix, p. 94); the staffs of Croydon Public Library, the Minet Library, Camberwell, and the Shropshire County Library for their help; Miss D. E. Moore who prepared the map for publication and Miss M. Gollancz, M.A., and Miss L. Smith, B.A., of the Surrey R.O., without whose advice and assistance this essay could not have appeared.

signs to indicate something of importance. The 1408 rental has many later annotations showing tenancy changes. Each bailiff's account has, as is usual, a stock and grain account on the dorse. The earliest, for 1360-1, was probably the first drawn up by Richard Aleyn.² Another account, presented in 1417 by the bailiff Richard Yerde, has survived. This is very different from Richard Aleyn's accounts and will be discussed later.³

The writing varies in quality. Most of it is very neat and some of the pages are things of beauty; there is generally an attempt to elaborate the headings. A few of the rolls fall far below the usual standard; one roll was entirely rewritten on the dorse;⁴ another is only partly legible. Variations in spelling, especially place-names, need not suggest that the writer was unfamiliar with Oxted. The clerk who wrote out the bailiff's account was paid 6s.8d. each year.⁵ The cost of the parchment for the court rolls was 6d.⁶

These rolls were handled from time to time, especially in the sixteenth century. In addition to signs of wear and tear there are later notes of identification.

LORDS OF THE MANOR: THE COBHAMS

Before the Norman Conquest, Oxted, which included Crowhurst, was a royal manor held by Gida, mother of King Harold. In 1066 it was one of many manors given to Eustace of Boulogne. The manor later passed to a family who assumed the name de Acstede; it was held of the king as of the honour of Boulogne. Roland de Acstede was summoned to Parliament in 1290. He soon died and the manor was divided among his five daughters.⁷ The earliest document in the collection is the grant made in 1299 by Thomasina, daughter of the late Lord Roland, of her lands in Oxted and in Helegh (?) in Kent to Sir John de Hamme and his wife Alina, her sister.⁸ As two of Roland's daughters married men of the same name and a third married twice and a fourth sold her share to a brother-in-law who settled it on another sister-in-law the descent is complicated. Attached to the 1299 grant is a writ dated 15 November 1315 by which Claricia, daughter of Roland, answers to Henry, son of Thomasina, for one quarter of the manor of Oxted. Claricia was twice married: to Martin Shenche who died about 1310, then to Roger Wellesworth who died before 1317. Her sister Alina was closely associated with her. An exemplification of exchequer record, whose purpose was to record the payment of scutage, showed that in 1299-1300 these two sisters held a moiety of the manor by 2½ knights' fees; the remainder was held by Hugh de Nevile. Ten years later Claricia

² 87/2/1. See p. 76.

³ 87/1/4d. See p. 76.

⁴ 87/1/3.

⁵ 87/2/1, 87/2/2, 87/2/3.

⁶ 87/2/1.

⁷ *V.C.H., Surrey*, IV, 313.

⁸ *Surrey R.O.*, Ph.362a. and above, p. 1, n. 1.

and Alina held in chief in Oxted, 'and now Claricia holds all.'⁹ In 1310 the five knights' fees produced scutage worth £6 13s.4d. That all was not well in the family is shown by complaints by Claricia and her mother Christiana, widow of Roland de Acstede, that John de Hamme with a band of men entered their houses, took their goods, reaped their corn, cut down trees and fished their stews.¹⁰ At last, in 1342, John de Wellesworth, grandson of Roland, sold the manor to Sir Robert de Stangrave and his wife Joan, daughter of Sir Reginald de Cobham of Lingfield. The transfer was completed in May 1344 when Roger, parson of Oxted, and Peter de Estote granted to Sir Robert and Joan his wife, the deforciant, the manor for life and then to Reginald de Cobham and his heirs. Reginald's wife Joan was the daughter and heiress of William de Hever.¹¹ Another part of the manor, which had passed into the hands of the great Essex family of Nevile, was reunited with the Stangrave-Cobham part when, about 1350, Sir John de Nevile subinfeudated his land here to the Oxted family.¹²

The exemplification record shows that during the thirteenth century the relief paid on succession was £15. Therefore, when in 1321 Claricia succeeded to the share of the manor held by her late sister Lucia, she paid relief for one quarter of one fifth part of three knights' fees: fifteen shillings. The last entry in the record deals with the events which caused it to be made: the succession of the third Sir Reginald Cobham to the estate of his father and mother who died in 1403 and 1405 respectively. The manor was held in chief by a knight's service worth £20 a year.¹³

During the period 1350-1420 the Cobhams remained lords of the manor. Already the demesne land had diminished in area. In 1283 William of Oxted alienated in mortmain the Bursted estate to Tandridge Priory, and sometime in the thirteenth century Battle Abbey acquired Broadham.¹⁴ In 1270 Foyle was rented out for the annual rent of one clove gillyflower. Another large estate had passed out of direct control by 1299 when it is known that John atte Stoket was tenant of Roger le Sauvage.¹⁵ In the eleventh century Crowhurst in the heart of the Wealden Clay area was probably part of the manor; it was uninhabited and only developed as the forest was cleared. The first family to hold it for certain was the powerful Stangrave family; in 1338 it was conveyed to the Gainsford family who held it for 400 years.¹⁶

From 1360 to 1361 the lord of the manor of Oxted was Sir Reginald Cobham. The Cobham family held much land in south-east England and in Wiltshire, and this Sir Reginald was one of its most illustrious

⁹ 87/5/3.

¹⁰ Cal. Pat. R. 1292-1301, pp. 622-3.

¹¹ 87/5/1. Cf. *I.P.M.*, XI, 1361, No. 59, and *I.P.M.*, XII, 1369, No. 335.

¹² 87/1/4c. *M. & B.*, II, 385, gives the date as 1403. Cf. 87/1/2a dorse dated October, 1408. The last John de Nevile died in 1358.

¹³ 87/5/3.

¹⁴ See below, p. 72-3.

¹⁵ *V.C.H., Surrey*, IV, 317-8. For later Stokets, see p. 72.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, IV, 275.

members. Having served with the Black Prince in France he was created Earl of Cobham and rewarded with land. In 1342 he had made his home at Prinkham; the house was crenellated¹⁷ and renamed Sterborough. He died of the pestilence in 1361 and his tomb and those of other members of the family are the glory of Lingfield Parish Church. His wife, Joan, was the heiress of Thomas, Lord Berkeley; their son and heir Reginald was born in 1348. Joan was lady of the manor till she died in 1369. Her will¹⁸ has many sidelights on fourteenth-century social life. It mentions two members of her household at Sterborough whose names also appear in the documents. The most important was Richard Maubank, several times described as 'steward of the lady's household.' He was responsible for the central administration at Sterborough and he had his personal seal.¹⁹ By Lady Cobham's will he received a large silver cup and £20. His wife Margaret and their two sons were also remembered. The other beneficiary was Roger Dalyngerugge whose name occurs with Maubank in a bailiff's account. Also on the staff at Sterborough was Thomas Fullynge who appears to have been responsible for the production of wool;²⁰ at this time the rector of Lingfield was Amandus Fullynge who was mentioned in the will. Lady Cobham's household included members of the important Stoket family and in 1363 Roger atte Stoket, a student, was given board and lodging for 28 weeks at the schools (*pro communibus . . . ad scolos*) and two weeks at Sterborough and also hose and shoes.²¹ It was natural that there should be interconnection between the various Cobham manors in south-east England. Sterborough was the home of the family; stock was sent to it and passed through it from manor to manor. Near by was Hexstede, whither stone was sent for the mill.²² The rents of the tenants at Blechingley were recorded by the bailiff at Oxted.²³ In Kent were two manors which had recently come into Cobham hands: Vielston (alias Filston) in Shoreham parish²⁴ and Westcliffe near Dover;²⁵ from these manors various kinds of stock came to Oxted. In very close touch was Chiddingstone; not only were there reciprocal deals in stock and materials (timber, tiles and lime) but men were sent to work on farm buildings there and in 1361 the Oxted bailiff's account included arrears from Chiddingstone.²⁶

The life of the second Lord Cobham covered most of the period of the gap in the surviving documents. He died in July 1403 and

¹⁷ *I.P.M.*, XII, 1369, No. 335.

¹⁸ Flower, J. W., 'Notices on the Family of Cobham of Sterborough Castle, Lingfield, Surrey,' *Surrey A.C.*, II (1864), 115-94.

¹⁹ 87/2/1, 87/2/2, 87/2/3.

²⁰ 87/2/2.

²¹ The total expense was 25s.2d. It is possible that Roger went to a university.

²² 87/1/1, 87/2/2. See also p. 81-2.

²³ 87/2/2, 87/1/3.

²⁴ Hasted, E., *History of Kent* (1797-1801), 318. 87/2/1 has 'Vyel' and Fuleston within a few lines.

²⁵ Hasted, *op. cit.*, IV, 28. 87/2/2d has 'Westclyne.'

²⁶ 87/2/1 and d., 87/2/2 and d., 87/3/3 and d. Also see p. 84.

was succeeded by Reginald, third Lord Cobham of Sterborough (1381-1446), who fought at Agincourt. The Cobhams held Oxted till 1485 when the manor passed by marriage to Lord Burgh,²⁷ and in 1587 to Charles Hoskins, citizen and merchant tailor of London.²⁸ The old manor house or grange has given way to a farm house, Court Farm. In the seventeenth century Barrow Green became Hoskins' property and a mansion was built. In June 1960, after the death of Capt. C. E. Hoskins Master, Barrow Green Court ceased to be used by the family as a residence.

THE TENANTS

The general picture of Oxted in the later Middle Ages is an area on the downs where sheep grazed; the southern slope of the eight hundred-foot escarpment, where was most of the best arable land and therefore the demesne farm; the main road, village and church; and the fields and meadows and woods of the Weald consisting of large estates, farms and smallholdings of men who each worked for his own interest.

The 1408 rental names about 60 tenants, including some in the Lingfield area. They were mostly freeholders and copyholders; the nature of the tenancy did not affect the size of the holding or the importance of the tenant.²⁹

There are few indications of villeinage. Oxted is near the Kent boundary and the organisation of the manor followed the Kentish pattern³⁰ and never felt the full weight of villeinage. In 1292 customary services were valued at 47s.1½d. and there were also customary rents.³¹ In 1299 there were nine free tenants and three bondmen; the villeins' rents and services were worth 12s.10d. The bondmen were:—

Thomas Gurlawayn who paid 13d.; William le Wakere who paid 2s. and had to reap 7 acres of wheat or pay 2s., and give 2 hens or 2d.; Ralph Reynbold to pay 2s.4d., reap 8 acres or pay 2s. and send one man to the meadow or 2d., and give two fowls at Michaelmas or pay 6d.³²

The inquisitions taken when Lady (Joan) Cobham succeeded her husband do not refer to villeinage, and in the court rolls such references are confined to one year only, 1360; the term used was *nativus domini*. Four men were so described and one other was mentioned. He was Richard Averhurst who failed to perform his boon work; unless there is a coincidence in names he was recently the head reaper and therefore a man of some importance in the manor.³³ The next case shows the persistence of the status of a

²⁷ It was Lord Burgh who requested the exemplification, 87/5/3.

²⁸ *I.C.H., Surrey*, IV, 314, 87/5/14.

²⁹ 87/1/2a.

³⁰ For the Kent system: Gray, H. L., *English Field Systems* (1915), 402, and Vinogradoff, P., *Growth of the Manor* (1905), 317-8.

³¹ B.M. Symmes MSS. 325.

³² *Ibid.*, 326.

³³ 87/1/1, 87/2/1

holding. In 1360 William Beneyt, villein, was distrained for fealty and at the same time received land in bondage from the lord. In 1408 William Beneyt was holding land in villeinage, and in 1416 he was included in a list of suitors as a villein tenant.³⁴ At the court with William Beneyt in October 1360 were Elyas Maldon, a villein who was reported to have absconded and another villein, John Melleward,³⁵ who was fined, with many others, for breaking the assize of bread. Lastly there was Walter Bisshe, villein, distrained for default. The same name appears half a century later, and it may be the same man because in 1417 he was released from his tithing obligations owing to old age. He was named in the 1408 rental and he died in 1419.³⁶ In all these later documents the words *nativus domini* do not appear.

These references, so few in number, suggest that serfdom was virtually non-existent in the manor, despite the memorandum of 1408 which has an extract from a charter about the customary tenants 'under the yoke of servitude' at Stonhurst and elsewhere.³⁷ It is a pity that no custumal of the manor has survived.

The map³⁸ (opp. p. 74) endeavours to show the estates held by the larger tenants according to the 1408 rental. The tenants so named paid as follows: those marked with a (c) held some of their land by copy; Aleyn (c) 13s.4d.; Baker (c) 16s.1½d.; Abbot of Battle 51s.; Bisshe 8s.2d.; Bucton (rector) (c) 4d.; Chaury (c) 17s.7d.; Coupere (c) 70s.11½d.; Lee 47s.1d.; Moushurst tenants 12s.; Screvayne 31s.1¾d.; Sharp 6s.11d.; Prior of Tandridge 36s.9d.

In the south-west of the parish William Baker held Rose Farm for the familiar whimsy-rent of a red rose and one halfpenny, and Gibbsland for which he paid 16s.; this large land holder appears in only one of the court rolls: for default and election as tithing man for Homewood. In 1414 Roseland and Gibbes were alienated in fee simple to Thomas atte Herst.³⁹ In 1418 Geppisland and Geppismede were let in fee simple to Richard atte Yerde the bailiff.⁴⁰ Nevertheless the name Baker survives in the fields along the stream.

Adjoining these fields was Hontes, now Sunt Farm.⁴¹ It was part of the considerable holdings of Thomas Screvayn in the southernmost part of the parish.

³⁴ 87/1/2a, 87/1/5.

³⁵ 87/1/1.

³⁶ 87/1/1, 87/1/5, 87/1/2a.

³⁷ 87/1/2a d.

³⁸ It is based on the Six-inch O.S. Map by permission of the Controller H.M. Stationery Office. In locating places a 1576 view and survey (87/1/13), the 1839 tithe map (by permission of the Oxted Parish Council) and *The Place Names of Surrey*, E.P.-N.S., XI (1934) have been used. That the description of the demesne farm is based on records of 1360, while the map is based on the 1408 rental, makes little difference; the names of some tenants are different but the picture is the same. Modern names have been added and modern spelling used for the sake of clearness.

³⁹ 87/1/3.

⁴⁰ 87/1/5.

⁴¹ *Place Names of Surrey*, E.P.-N.S., XI (1934), 335. 'Merrells al Hunts al Scrivens.'

In the south-east of the parish was the important estate of the Stoket family who had been in possession since the end of the thirteenth century. Before 1312, Martin Shenche leased to John Stoket, uncle of the 1408 John Stoket, Perrysfield and Hereberdeslonde.⁴² In 1332 John and Simon Stoket were among the twenty-seven Oxted persons ordered to pay the statutory tax on moveables.⁴³ In 1338 John Stoket acquired land at Clerkes, Simon being one of the witnesses to the transaction.⁴⁴ John and Simon Stoket died in 1360; the heirs were minors so the lands and mill were taken over by Lady Cobham's steward and crops and stock were included in the statistics of the demesne farm.⁴⁵ In Lady Cobham's will, 1369, bequests were made to Katherine Stoket, her principal chamberwoman, and Eleanor Stoket, also in her service. In Lingfield church there is a simple brass to Katherine's memory.⁴⁶

According to the 1408 rental the Stoket estate included Stokets, a capital messuage, Perrysfield, Clerkeslond, Lacysmede, Cokeslond, now known as Jincocks (the rent was 6s.7d., later 7s.) and Hereberdeslond (rent 2s., reduced from 3s.6d.). The total annual rent was £1 12s.3d.⁴⁷ In 1478 John Stoket's daughter Dionysia, wife of Robert Chappell, yeoman, leased the whole estate to her mother Joan, by her second marriage wife of William Chappell of Oxted. Henceforward the name Stoket has referred only to the place, not its owner.⁴⁸

Also in this area was 'la ffoyle,' Foyle Farm. In 1408 it was held by Stephen atte Lee to whom John Marchaunt, long before his death, so the court agreed, alienated all his land in fee simple.⁴⁹ Between 1362 and 1422 there were several changes in tenancy and it was not till 1426 that the whole estate was in Stephen atte Lee's possession.⁵⁰

To the north of the Stoket estate, in the Hurst Green area, was Herstelond, held by John Chaury for 9s. together with a long croft on the parish boundary.⁵¹ He also rented a large holding 'lately John Smith's.' It must have been his son (a John Chaury junior is mentioned in 1419) or grandson who was among the many followers of Jack Cade in 1450; he was a husbandman and constable.⁵²

Near Broadham Green, on the parish boundary south of Southlands Lane, was Riddings; today two cottages bear the name. This may be 'la Redone' occupied by Walter atte Bisshe.

The next large estate was held by the Abbot of Battle. In 1066 the new Battle Abbey received many manors, including Limpsfield.

⁴² 87/1/2a. The rental has a special memorandum about this.

⁴³ Sy. Rec. Soc., *Surrey Taxation Returns*, Part II (1932), 91. Of the 27, 10 can be identified in the court rolls of 1352-64 and 7 more have similar surnames.

⁴⁴ 87/8/1.

⁴⁵ 87/2/2 and d.

⁴⁶ *Surrey A.C.*, II (1864), 181 and 129.

⁴⁷ 87/1/2a.

⁴⁸ 87/8/2.

⁴⁹ 87/1/3.

⁵⁰ *V.C.H. Surrey*, IV, 317-8.

⁵¹ 87/1/2a.

⁵² *Cal. Pat. R.*, 1446-52, 345.

An undated charter now in America states that Roland of Oxted sold the lands formerly held by Augustine of Broadham to Sampson whose son Gregory, a cleric, gave it all to Battle Abbey.⁵³ Gregory was fined for a forest offence in 1246; this helps us to fix the approximate date of the gift.⁵⁴ This Roland was the father or grandfather of the man who represented the county in 1290. Other grants of land in the area were made, so that it would appear that from the middle of the thirteenth century Battle Abbey was extending its holdings in Broadham. In 1312 the abbot was paying the lord of Oxted 51s.; this sum is repeated in the 1408 rental. The Broadham sub-manor was a capital messuage of more than 250 acres, with 22 tenants, among them John Stoket and the prior of Tandridge who held a villein tenement and paid 12d. rent for four acres.⁵⁵

Immediately after leaving Oxted mill the stream formed the western boundary of the abbot's Broadham estate. Then, obviously to safeguard the flow of water for the abbot's mill (now Coltsford), the boundary was moved a short distance to the west.

The prior of Tandridge rented for 36s.9d. a large area adjacent to the priory lands.⁵⁶ It is possible to fix the boundaries of this holding with some assurance because, after the Dissolution, the sub-manor of Bursted descended intact right down to the nineteenth century when it was bought by Sir William Pepys whose lands are shown on the 1839 tithe map. In 1537 the rent for 'Barowe' was 35s.8d. and there were other holdings in the parish showing that between 1408 and 1537 the priory extended its territory in Oxted.⁵⁷

The next estate is the Borgh or Barrow Green; its tenancy at this time is puzzling. In the 1408 rental 'the tenants of the lands formerly of Richard Moushurst' paid 12s. rent.⁵⁸ However, Moushurst attended at the manor court in May 1414,⁵⁹ and it was not till June 1417 that, on his death, two crofts in the Borgh were taken in wardship; there was considerable delay in handing over the heriot.⁶⁰

Another holding in this part of the manor was a messuage and 26 acres once held by Agnes de Bergh; by reason of her idiocy the estate was in the king's hands.⁶¹ In the 1360's the tenement 'formerly of Agnes de Berghsted'⁶² was held by John Skinner. Agnes died in 1377 and in 1408 Richard Coupere included in his extensive estate, at the same rent, the holding which still bore her name.

In the Borgh, too, in 1537, Tandridge Priory was paying rent to

⁵³ Huntington Library MSS., B.A. XXIX, f. 210.

⁵⁴ B.M., Add. MSS. 6344, 59. I owe both these references to Mrs. K. Percy who is working on Limpsfield documents.

⁵⁵ Bird, S. R. Scargill, *Customals of Battle Abbey*, Camden Soc., New Ser. 41 (1887), XLV and 160. *Surrey A.C.*, IX (1885), 74.

⁵⁶ 87/1/2a.

⁵⁷ *Surrey A.C.*, IX (1885), 62, 72, 73.

⁵⁸ 87/1/2a.

⁵⁹ 87/1/3.

⁶⁰ 87/1/5.

⁶¹ *I.P.M.*, XIV, 1376, No. 243.

⁶² 87/2/1, 87/2/2, 87/2/3.

'the lord of Borowgh' for 14 acres of land and 13 of pasture, some of it at Robins Grove, which were let out by indenture.⁶³

At the confluence of the two Oxted streams is Oxted mill; it was held by Walter Melleward.⁶⁴ Between the mill and the main road was Hoderes, one of seventeen holdings on both sides of the main road the combined rent for which was 71s. paid by Richard Coupere, a tanner. Probably his son and grandson, 'tanners of Oxted,' went with John Chaury to join Jack Cade in 1450.⁶⁵

To the north, in the Upper Greensand-Gault Clay region was the best agricultural land in the parish. Here was the demesne or home farm;⁶⁶ the demesne lands were listed separately in the rental and some of the fields can be identified. The home farm is never so named but Court Farm may claim to be the site of the grange occupied by the steward; the lord of the manor resided at Sterborough. The present Court Farm has no pretensions to antiquarian interest but its position, its proximity to the church and its name justify the conjecture. In 1299 the grange consisted of a hall and solar with two small rooms; there was also a garden and dovecote.⁶⁷ In the 1360's the hall was repaired and four large windows put in, while ditching and fencing were carried out to separate the house from the cemetery.⁶⁸ Fifty years later the hall and the new hall were renovated.⁶⁹ The bailiff's office may have been separate.⁷⁰

John Bucton, rector since 1399, had in 1408 a new house next to the cemetery. Little is known about him; in 1414 he was concerned in an important transfer of land.⁷¹

West of Chalk Pit Lane, Richard Coupere held by copy Lovekyns-londes and some adjacent fields. Thomas Sharp held Ryewood and a small message.

As the escarpment reaches its steepest rise to the top of the downs, arable fields gave way to the common pasture where in 1408 the lord had 500 sheep. Here also is the chalk pit.⁷² Along the underside of the downs, about 400 feet above sea level, ran the famous trackway now misnamed the Pilgrims' Way.⁷³ As it was not a public highway there is no allusion to it in the court rolls. A regular highway up the hill, today no more than a bridle path through the wood, was Hogtrough lane, so called in the 1576 view and survey.⁷⁴ In 1419 the bailiff was

⁶³ *Surrey A.C.*, IX (1885), 73-4.

⁶⁴ 87/1/2a. See p. 84-5.

⁶⁵ Cal. Pat. R., 1446-52, 345.

⁶⁶ 87/1/2a, 87/1/3.

⁶⁷ B.M., Add. MSS. 6167; Symmes MSS., 325.

⁶⁸ 87/2/2, 87/2/3.

⁶⁹ 87/1/4.

⁷⁰ 87/2/2.

⁷¹ 87/1/2a, 87/1/3.

⁷² 87/1/2a. See p. 82.

⁷³ Hooper, W., 'The Pilgrims' Way and its supposed Pilgrim Use,' *Surrey A.C.*, XLIV (1936), 47-83. Crump, C. G., 'The Pilgrims' Way.' *History*, XXI, No. 81 (June 1936), 22-33.

⁷⁴ 87/1/13.

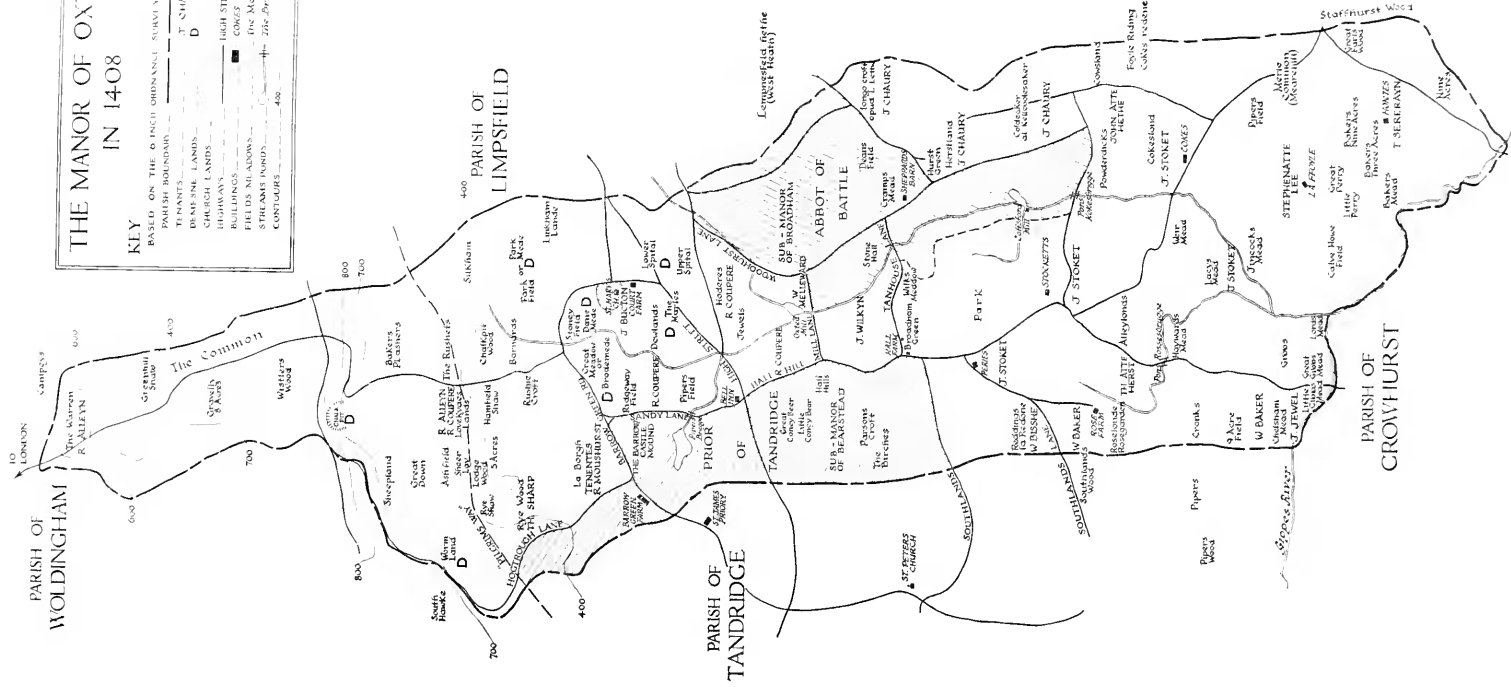
PARISH OF
WOLDINGHAM

THE MANOR OF OXTED IN 1408

KEY

- ROADS ON THE 6 INCH ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP
- PARISH BOUNDARY
- TENANTS
- DEER PARK LANDS
- CHURCH LANDS
- HIGHWAYS
- BUILDINGS
- FIELDS & ADOWNS
- STILLAGES POUNDS
- CONTOURS

400



PARISH OF
LIMPSFIELD

PARISH OF
TANDRIDGE

PARISH OF
CROPTHURST

presented for allowing this public highway to become water-logged.⁷⁵

On the top of the downs was the warren held by Richard Aleyn, probably the son or grandson of the bailiff of fifty years before. He also rented a field on Lovekynslonde.⁷⁶ The view and survey shows the northern boundary of the manor adjoining the Uvedale estate, and it clearly defines the 'Commons belonging to the lord: Oxted Great Hethe, Barowe Grene, Brodham Grene and Mearhill (Merle) Common.'⁷⁷

THE DEMESNE FARM

There are six documents which describe the demesne over a period of 140 years; their details are best shown in tabular form:—

	1270 ⁷⁸	1292 ⁷⁹	1299 ⁸⁰	1361 ⁸¹	1370 ⁸²	1408 ⁸³
<i>Messuage</i>	—	—	12d.	—	—	—
<i>Garden</i>	1	1	6d.	—	12d.	8ac.
<i>Dovecote</i>	—	1	6d.	—	—	—
<i>Arable</i>	397ac.	360ac.	—	308ac.	250ac.	206ac.
<i>Meadow</i>	17ac.	20ac.	—	29 $\frac{3}{4}$ ac.	15ac.	20 $\frac{1}{2}$ ac.
<i>Pasture</i>	19ac.	30ac.	—	—	8ac. for cattle.	—
<i>... on the downs</i>	30ac.	—	—	—	200 sheep.	500 sheep.
<i>Wood</i>	40ac.	30ac.	—	14ac.	—	—
<i>Water mills</i> ...	4	3	1	2	1	1

This, then, is a picture of the demesne farm: the grange, garden and orchard; then, all around, the arable fields diminishing markedly in extent through the years; finally, cattle grazing on the pasture, sheep on the downs and pigs in the woods which brought in 6s.8d. pannage. In 1361 the increase in meadow and the extra mill were due to the Stoket minority. The inquest of 1370 caused by the death of Lady Cobham explained that two parts of the arable were sown annually; the value per acre was 3d., of the remainder 1d. Eighteen acres were sown with wheat. The meadow was worth 8d.; after mowing it was common land. The apple trees had been destroyed and were of no value. Finally it pointed out that some fields which used to be in the lord's demesne were farmed out to various tenants.

Three bailiff's accounts for consecutive years have survived. That they are consecutive is fortunate in that they supplement each other and present a fairly complete picture; unfortunate in

⁷⁵ 87/1/5.

⁷⁶ 87/1/2a.

⁷⁷ 87/1/13.

⁷⁸ *I.P.M.*, I, 1270, No. 741.

⁷⁹ *B.M.*, Symmes MSS., 325.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Symmes MSS., 325-6.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Symmes MSS., 328.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Symmes MSS., 328 verso.

⁸³ 87/1/2a.

that there can be no indication of progress or regress over a period of time. Each shows the receipts and expenditure over the year and on the reverse side a stock and grain statement. From this information the farm can be described in some detail.⁸⁴

First, the people. The lady of the manor was represented by the steward, Nicholas de Nywenton, whose work was clearly distinguished from that of Richard Maubank, steward of her household. The former carried out supervisory duties: he arranged the management of the important Stoket estates during the minority of the heirs, he sanctioned the granger's allowance and with the written order of Lady Cobham gave permission for a personal gift. The steward's function in the manor court will be discussed later.⁸⁵

About the bailiff, on whom the management of the estate depended, not much is known. He was Richard Aleyn. In 1408 another Richard Aleyn was holding land on the downs⁸⁶ and the court rolls have the names of Joanna (1414), John (1417) and William (1419) Aleyn.⁸⁷ In 1537 Thomas Aleyn paid 12d. to Tandridge Priory as freehold rent for Alynslonde.⁸⁸ The bailiff had his own office, an allowance for official dress, his fee for collecting rents and his livery of wheat which was one bushel per week.⁸⁹ According to Lady Cobham's will she demised to him for the term of his life the manor of Oxted for £97, a very large sum; the bailiff of Chiddingstone was in the same position.⁹⁰ Is this an example of stock-and-land leasing? Every year he appeared with his account 'in the presence of the lady,' and each time she remitted to him 'of her grace' a substantial amount. In the first account he claimed his expenses in coming to hold the manor courts and in reckoning and regulating the stock.

There are references to his predecessor, John Skinner, including the receipt of 40s. and an explanation why there was no tar for the sheep. Aleyn called his first stock and grain account a transcript; this may be a duplicate copy, the original being a comprehensive receipt for stock handed over.

In the later period two documents refer to bailiffs. The first, an account for the first six months of 1417,⁹¹ was drawn up by Richard Yerde who was bailiff in 1417 and 1420.⁹² In this account he is *firmarius* which suggests that he farmed the estate for £22 per half year. No details of rents, revenue or stock and grain are given, only the amount of grain delivered to the lord's household and the sum owing. A second document of this period is an order from the steward, John Bere, to his bailiffs John Driver and Thomas

⁸⁴ 87/2/1 and d., 87/2/2 and d., 87/2/3 and d. Facts given here will do no more than supplement the work of many scholars in this field.

⁸⁵ 87/2/2. See p. 86.

⁸⁶ 87/1/2a.

⁸⁷ 87/1/3, 87/1/5.

⁸⁸ 87/1/2a, *Surrey A.C.*, IX (1885), 73 and 75.

⁸⁹ 87/2/1, 87/2/2, 87/2/3 and d.

⁹⁰ *Surrey A.C.*, II (1864), 182.

⁹¹ 87/1/4d.

⁹² 87/1/5

Lokeridge to restore to Thomas atte Herste animals of which John Stoket had deprived him.⁹³ The two latter are named many times in the court rolls between 1414 and 1420, the officials not at all.

Nowhere in these Oxted documents does the word *prepositus* (reeve) appear. John Skinner, on retiring as bailiff, became granger, his duties apparently being to supervise the reaping and delivery of crops. Next in importance on the home farm was the chief hayward (*messor*), also responsible for all stages of grain production. In harvest time the word is used in the plural. In the manor court the hayward had minor official duties; two haywards are named in the rolls of 1360. In some manors the hayward was also the beadle; their duties were by no means incompatible.⁹⁴

Concerning the regular paid workers on the home farm, the *famuli*,⁹⁵ it is not easy to answer the questions—who were they, how many, full time or part time, how remunerated? In each bailiff's account there is a section Cash Payments instead of Food (*Vadia Famulorum*) in which such payments are clearly specified; in the accounts their number is given—thirteen.⁹⁶ Elsewhere in the accounts they are mentioned either as individuals or in a group. In all, twenty different types of worker are indicated; some of these were probably paid for some special work, sometimes there is an unaccountable omission and there may be duplication among the ploughmen. If we define as *famuli* those who worked full time on the demesne for all or part of the year and received money wages and a food allowance, there were:

the hayward,
the shepherd; in one year there were two: for ewes and for sheep,
the cattle farmer,
the maid servant,
the boy servant,
the swineherd,
the ploughmen; never more than six.

The money wage ranged from 8s. a year for the hayward, ploughmen and shepherd to 4s. for the girl and boy servants. The close connection between the cash payment and the food allowance is clearly brought out in a marginal note in the first account: 'Cash payment of the workers when there was no food allowance.' The hayward was the only one who in each year received cash payments, but he did not have food. As for the other workers there was great variation from year to year; for example:

First year:

The shepherd, ploughman and maidservant had cash payments for 12 weeks and food for 12 weeks, the girl's allowance being half a man's. The cattle farmer had cash for 12 and food for 9 weeks. The swineherd is not mentioned.

⁹³ 87/1/4a.

⁹⁴ Bennett, H. S., *Life on the English Manor* (1938), 179.

⁹⁵ See Postan, M. M., 'The Famulus.' *Economic History Review*, Supplement 2 (1954), and Bennett, H. S., *op. cit.*, 182-6.

⁹⁶ 87/2/2, 87/2/3.

Second year:

One shepherd had 7d. a week for 49 weeks, the other had no cash payment but received a bushel of flour each week for the whole year; the two ploughmen had no money but each had eight-ninths of a bushel a week for the whole year. The girl and boy each had 3½d. a week, the swineherd 6d. and the cattle farmer 7d. a week for the year, and a note explains that these fixed payments were made because of a shortage of grain.

Third year:

Two ploughmen received 7d. a week each for six months and a third the same amount for the whole year; all three had eight-ninths of a bushel of flour a week for the year. The workers received cash payments.⁹⁷

The first year was a bad one for crops; not only had much wheat to be used for flour, but it was necessary to buy oats for the pottage. Salt, a copper cauldron and a tripod were also purchased. This, and the employment of a maidservant are the only indications of a common meal. This girl had other work: to winnow half the grain crop. Each year at Christmas and Easter these workers received a further payment of 2d., and once at least two of them received special payment, sanctioned by the steward, for 18 weeks heavy work on the mill repairs in addition to their usual duties.⁹⁸ For the harvest eight pairs of gloves were provided.

That the tenants on the manor had similar workers is suggested by a court roll entry of October 1360 when Walter atte Melle was presented for assaulting Sibilla, a *famula* of John atte Melle.⁹⁹

These workers, then—the *famuli*—carried out many of the essential tasks on the home farm. There were many other workers who appear to be deliberately separated from them in the bailiff's accounts, some of them craftsmen, some labourers. Apart from their work and pay we know nothing about them. The accounts do not make it clear to whom payments for miscellaneous work were made: whether to *famuli* who, as has been seen, might receive extra pay, or to men on the manor who made their living by such employment. Generally speaking, one or two men were hired at a time: to scour and repair the mill dam, to clear away thorn bushes and lop branches, to help craftsmen, to dig clay for making tiles, to repair paths, to shift manure. Sometimes the number of men is not given, only the cost of the work done: mending harness, collecting wood, making a bucket, dealing with fallen trees, digging a ditch, building. For one urgent task when the mill was being repaired 155 carters were paid the unusually high rate of 8d. a day, and 172 men were hired to fill the carts, each receiving 3d.¹⁰⁰

Nor do the accounts record how many persons were employed on the seasonal work in the fields. Hoeing cost 18s., and weeding 14s. a year. Mowing the hay cost 8d. an acre; the acreage varied from 31 to 47. Tedding and gathering was paid for at 2d. an acre.

As to reaping and binding, all three accounts record no payment

⁹⁷ 87/2/1, 87/2/2, 87/2/3.

⁹⁸ 87/2/1.

⁹⁹ 87/1/1.

¹⁰⁰ 87/2/1.

because, as the bailiff said, 'All the corn is cut and bound to the tenth sheaf according to the custom of the country,' a reference to the ever-unpopular tithes.¹⁰¹

The first account omits threshing altogether. The other two show that the rate per quarter was 4d. for wheat and rye, 3d. for barley and 1½d. for oats. Half the quantity threshed was winnowed at ½d. a quarter; the maid servant did the rest.

Of craftsmen, three types are clearly defined: smith, carpenter and roofer. There is no mention of builders or masons. The smith, like the miller, had a section of each bailiff's account for himself ('the outlay on ploughs' and, perhaps, 'the outlay on carts') which gave his annual remuneration (12s.8d. or 14s.6d.) and his costs in repairing ploughs and carts and shoeing horses and oxen. There were several carpenters and the rate of pay varied from 1½d. to 5d. a day. Work on a large scale was done by contract with the steward; the carpenter was Robert le Hert and his contracts were for more than £6 and £5. A great deal of roofing was being done at this time. Two words are used for this: *tegulare* which, perhaps, is literal, 'to cover with tiles,' and *co-operire* which may mean 'to thatch' or 'to cover with shingles.' If so, tiling was more common than thatching. The tiler was always accompanied by his assistant and their joint pay was 6d. a day. A house and a kiln were built and a tub bought for the tilers, and men were paid to dig the clay. Some of this work took several weeks, payments for 54, 37 and 94½ days are recorded. In the last instance the tiler's name was given: Gautronis. Possibly, like Robert le Hert, he was a contractor; perhaps both men came from outside the manor; their names do not appear elsewhere in the records.

The usual crops were grown. In area, oats, averaging 104 acres out of a total of about 225 under cultivation, was the most important. Wheat came second with 64 acres, and there was no great difference among the other crops—rye, barley, peas and the mixed grain crops, dredge and maslin. Barley may have been used for making ale for the workers but there is no mention of this; in contrast is the detailed allocation of the other grain crops: oats for fodder for the horses and oxen in the Oxted grange and for the Sterborough household, the others for the allowance of bread and broth for the workers; in 1363, 40 quarters of wheat was sent to Sterborough. It was necessary to buy seed for wheat and rye, but there was a surplus of oats to sell.

Various crops were grown on the demesne fields as indicated in the grain account. The pictures so presented by the bailiff are not always clear; sometimes the crops occupy only a small area of the field, sometimes the area differs from year to year. What is clearly shown is the 'rest' every third year; so is the fact that more than one crop might be sown in a field.

The table which follows gives some idea of the planning of the crops for the years 1361, 1362 and 1363. The fields are named on

¹⁰¹ See Bennett, H. S., *op. cit.*, 330-1.

the map with the exception of Eveneye which appears to have been next to Shirlese. Some of the land which the map, based on the 1408 rental, shows to be held by tenants, was in the 1360's part of the demesne. The list of fields and their crops could be extended. The total area of each field is given in the 1576 view and survey; two centuries could bring about changes.¹⁰² The area of each crop is stated in the grain account. All figures are the number of acres.

		1361	1362	1363
<i>The Marles</i> ...	64	Wheat 13 Maslin 7 Barley 12		Wheat 17 Dredge 7
<i>Sheer Lay</i> ...	61	Beans $4\frac{1}{2}$ Oats $13\frac{1}{2}$	Beans (with Eveneye)	
<i>Eveneye</i>	Wheat 43	Barley 15 Beans $7\frac{1}{2}$ Peas $11\frac{1}{2}$ Oats 38	
<i>Lovekyneslonde</i>	55	Oats 38		Wheat 18 Peas 3 Oats 12
<i>Stonyfield</i> ...	55		Rye 10 Oats 4	Peas 2 Oats 9 Barley $11\frac{1}{4}$
<i>Stoket territory during heirs' minority</i>			Rye $2\frac{1}{2}$ Beans $1\frac{1}{4}$ Peas 5 Oats 53 Dredge $7\frac{1}{2}$	Beans $2\frac{1}{4}$ Peas 6 Oats $36\frac{3}{4}$

Some crops were sometimes adversely affected. In 1361 there was a prolonged drought, a plague of thistles and a shortage of workers; straw was bought from the rector for animal fodder. In 1363 the dry summer was thrice mentioned but there were also unusually heavy rains; the barley seed was debilitated and because of the drought the vetches were ploughed in. In the manor court there were frequent complaints about animals straying among the crops.

The 1362 account includes vineries and wine casks; nails were bought for them.

As to productivity, the figures for Oxted have been worked out following the form of the analysis made by Lord Beveridge:—¹⁰³

¹⁰² Nevertheless the difference between the total acreage and the area under cultivation is often remarkable.

¹⁰³ Beveridge, Lord, 'The Yield and Price of Corn in the Middle Ages.' *Essays in Economic History*, ed. Wilson, E. M. Carus, I (1961), 15-25.

	Wheat	Barley	Oats
<i>Average of seed in quarters per acre</i>	0.31	0.63	0.49
<i>Yield in quarters per quarter of seed</i>	1.96	1.65	1.09
<i>Produce per acre in quarters.</i>	2 rolls are faded	1.24	0.94

It is not possible to draw a firm conclusion from the average of three sets of figures, but it seems that, compared with other farms in southern England, Oxted sowed more seed per acre, produced much less from the seed and got less grain from each acre. This poor result was not due to lack of manure. Carting and spreading dung was charged to the account in 1361, and the next year 52 cart-loads were bought 'to manure the lady's land.'

The farm animals included about 16 horses, 500 sheep, 90 cattle and a number of pigs. In the stock account each species were carefully graded according to age.¹⁰⁴ The number varied considerably by reason of purchase, heriot, sale, death by murrain and transfer to or from another manor.

The cattle were in the care of the cattle farmer whose dairy account included the five shillings paid for each cow and also the proceeds of the sale of cattle and produce. Excluding the capital costs of roofing the cow houses and making a feeding rack for ten beasts, there was a profit of more than £16 over the three years; this sum, however, included a gift from Lady Cobham to buy cows.

The cattle were almost certainly of the Sussex breed, reddish brown in colour, heavy and muscular, suitable for the heavy work of the plough on the clay, for beef rather than milk. It is possible that two black cattle mentioned in the court rolls¹⁰⁵ were of Welsh descent. Some 30 of 40 oxen were used extensively on the arable, sharing the work of ploughing and harrowing with four stots. All were shod on the forefeet only.

These stots are clearly distinguished from the cart horses, of which there were about four. In 1362 one was sold because it was blind and two were stolen by night from the pasture. Each account gives in detail the cost of harness. From Michaelmas to April four horses used for harrowing and carting were given a special fodder allowance. The Oxted manor had to provide fodder for the steward's horses when he came on official business; this is the sole reference to riding horses.

When Aleyn succeeded Skinner as bailiff it seems that there were no pigs on the farm. Some were obtained from Filston and later sows and boars were sent from Sterborough. A sty was built. At the end of the third year the total number of pigs was 116, of which 34 porkers were sold.

¹⁰⁴ Young, N. Denholm, gives an example of this classification in *Seignourial Administration of England* (1937), App. III.

¹⁰⁵ 87/1/1, 87/1/5.

The retiring bailiff handed over 126 goats and kids which were transferred to Sterborough the same year; a goatherd was employed for this year only. A token figure for poultry was given in the stock accounts: 4 geese and 5 hens. Nevertheless there was a useful farm rent: 6s.6d. one year and 5s.6d. the next for 3 geese and 5 hens.

According to the rental, on the downs there was common pasture for 500 sheep. Aleyn took over 458 from his predecessor and began a breeding programme. From Filston came 5 rams and 146 ewes which produced 138 lambs, 5 ewes being sterile. By transfer to and from other manors and owing to murrain (in 1362, 86 died) the number remained stable. The tithe claimed 12 lambs in 1362. The tenants also owned sheep; at the court held in May 1364 seven of them were in mercy for allowing their sheep, about 80 in all, to trespass in the wheat and in the meadow.¹⁰⁶

The demesne flock was in charge of a shepherd and each year there were normal expenses for hurdles, tar and grease, and for washing and shearing at a cost of 1d. for 10 animals. The wool was stored under seal and in 1363 the fleeces of 1361 and 1362 were sold. It is clear that the bailiff was not concerned in this sale; it was done 'by the lady.' In 1362 the steward was accompanied on his round by Thomas de Fullyng who remained till after the shearing; a special payment was authorised for this. The price received for the wool was not entered in the bailiff's account. This Oxted wool, produced on the chalk lands, was of a type 'not at all distinguished for its quality,'¹⁰⁷ bringing in 6 or 7 marks a sack. 958 fleeces were sold from Oxted in 1363 for about £17.

The skins of 26 cattle and one horse were sold for 52s.6d. in these years. Most of the animals died of murrain, an expression which appears to cover all forms of natural death among farm stock of all kinds. In these three years 24, 94 and 45 animals died; these losses were reported in the manor court so that no one should be held responsible. The court roll and the stock account for 1362 agree as to the number of deaths but their details differ. In 1419, 196 sheep 'whose carcasses can be seen' so died.¹⁰⁸

If some animals were lost by murrain, others were gained by heriot. The first stock account showed that 16 horses and cattle were so acquired; the other two accounts had nothing. From the court rolls of the later period it is clear that two heriot animals were not handed over for some years, if at all.¹⁰⁹

Other items listed in the stock accounts were lime and tiles. In 1362 lime was bought for building purposes at 2s. a quarter; the same year a kiln was made. In 1363, 16 quarters of burnt lime were produced, of which half was used for building repairs. Tiles were listed by the thousand. The rector of Oxted received by order of Lady Cobham 2 quarters of lime and 5,000 tiles, and 12,000 tiles,

¹⁰⁶ 87/1/1.

¹⁰⁷ Pelham, R. A., *An Historical Geography of England before 1800* (1951), 240-5. His basis of reckoning is 240 fleeces to one sack.

¹⁰⁸ 87/1/1, 87/1/5.

¹⁰⁹ 87/1/5.

some flat, some concave, were sent to Chiddingstone. The output was more than 30,000 tiles a year,¹¹⁰ and in 1362, 24,000 were retrieved from old buildings.

Every year new buildings and renovations were very important items in the expenditure, as will be seen.

Of miscellaneous payments in the accounts, some refer to the tithe which took fleeces, lambs, porkers and corn. In 1363 Peter's Pence claimed 5d. The State as well as the Church took its toll: for failure to send men to the sheriff's tourn and to provide proper watch, and for a licence to hold the view of frankpledge. Reference has been made to a student's commons and another extraordinary payment was to provide ale for the servants of Lord Cobham who, at the age of 65, was engaged in a wolf hunt.

At the beginning of each account, following the section for arrears, came the farms and fixed rents, the former in detail, the latter in total quarterly payments. The difference between them appears to be that the farms were annual payments subject to revision, while the fixed rents were the agreed rents of freeholders and copyholders which could not be altered.¹¹¹ In 1292 customary rents and services were still demanded and fixed rents of the free tenants amounted to £21 16s.¹¹² In 1361 there were a dozen or so farmers whose rents varied from 3d. to 10s.6d., the total being £3 8s.6d. During the Stoket minority their land was rented out for 11s.9d.; the total for 1363 was £4 5s.6d. The fixed rents did not change: £23 16s.2d. a year. In the winter of 1360-1 there were two big rent increases, 2s.3d. to 9s. and 2s. to 9s. In 1408 the total Oxted rents were £34 8s.

The accounts concluded, as was the custom, not so much with the balance as with a statement of the bailiff's indebtedness or otherwise to the lord of the manor. In 1361 the balance showed a deficit so the bailiff was in credit; the amount is illegible. The loss on this year's working was caused in part by the heavy expenditure on the mill. But, in order to ascertain whether or not the manor was run at a profit, it is necessary to exclude as far as possible the extraneous items: the proceeds of the manor court, special allowances, payments and receipts, and also the interim cash payments made to the lord of the manor (*liberacio denerariorum*). The interpretation of some of the entries in the accounts is open to question, nevertheless the following table gives a fair summary:—

	1360-1	1361-2	1362-3
<i>Net Receipts</i> ...	£42 14s. 6¼d.	£54 7s. 7¼d.	£55 18s. 2¼d.
<i>Net Expenditure</i> ...	£72 4s. 2¾d.	£40 17s. 6¼d.	£49 12s. 6d.

¹¹⁰ One word occurs thrice in this connection. It is clearly *scuria* (stable). Could it be a scribe's mistake for *quaria*? See below, p. 85.

¹¹¹ Levett, A. E., *Studies in Manorial History* (1938), Chap. III, The Financial Organisation.

¹¹² B.M., Symmes MSS., 325.

The profit accruing to Lady Cobham from the Oxted accounts, including all the extraneous items, could be calculated thus:—

Revenue	1360-1	1361-2	1362-3
<i>Profit on manor</i> ...	—	£13 10s. 1½d.	£26 15s. 7½d.
<i>Proceeds of the court</i> ...	£6 2s. 11d.	£5 18s. 9¼d.	£5 9s. 0d.
<i>Other receipts</i> ...	£15 6s. 8d.	3s. 0d.	£5 0s. 0d.
<i>Chiddingstone arrears</i> ...	£8 1s. 2d.	—	—
<i>Sale of wool</i> ...	—	—	£17 0s. 0d.
<i>Total</i> ...	£29 10s. 9d.	£19 11s. 10¾d.	£30 4s. 7½d.
Expenditure			
<i>Loss on manor</i> ...	£29 9s. 8½d.	—	—
<i>Other expenses</i> ...	—	£4 17s. 0d.	£1 11s. 0d.
Net Profit ...	1s. 0½d.	£14 14s. 10¾d.	£28 13s. 7½d.

BUILDINGS

The most important secular building on the manor was the mill. Domesday Book recorded two mills; in 1270 there were four; in 1299, one; in 1370 and 1408,¹¹³ one. On Bowen's map (c. 1775) there were three mills: Upper, at the foot of the hill on the main road; Middle, on the site of the present mill;¹¹⁴ Lower, for many years called Colesett or Coltsford. Probably the second mill in 1361 was on Stoket land, temporarily in the hands of the lady of the manor; each mill was farmed for 32s. 11d.

The manorial mill was the Middle mill on Bowen's map and in 1360-1 important and costly repairs were carried out on the mill dam; the wall was scoured and repaired; 172 men were employed in carting earth and clay; the sluice and flood gates were repaired at a cost of £6 13s. 4d. and the road to the mill, damaged by flooding, was restored.¹¹⁵

When the extant documents begin again fifty years later, the mill was again undergoing extensive repairs; rotten timber was replaced, ironwork renewed, the dam wall restored, all at the lord's expense. The mill house was rebuilt and enlarged to include a corn mill and a malt mill. The work was done by an outside contractor, Geoffrey Eliot, who was to be paid 19 marks and to have all the old timber; the mill was to be out of action for six weeks.¹¹⁶ Several of the leading tenants sent their carts for the work, each receiving 2d. per cart.¹¹⁷

The miller in 1408 was Walter Melleward or Mellere; besides the

¹¹³ See p. 1.

¹¹⁴ Today the building is no longer used as a mill.

¹¹⁵ 87/2/1, 87/2/2, 87/2/3.

¹¹⁶ 87/1/4.

¹¹⁷ 87/5/3.

mill, he held four crofts, his total rent being £4 19s.4d. Ten years later he was presented for permitting a fault in the water gate by which the water became very deep; later on he demanded damages from Richard Baker for interfering with the flow of the stream.¹¹⁸ In 1417 and again in 1419 it was reported that he took more than his lawful perquisite from his customers. This was a characteristic business practice.¹¹⁹

During the years 1360-3 much building work was done on the demesne farm. Extensions to the grange and the new house and kiln for the tilers have already been noted. Much of this work was done in Aleyn's first year as bailiff. Three carpenters worked for 74 days in making and restoring the byre, and the roofs of the oxhouse and cowhouse were repaired. Timber for a sheephouse was brought from Chiddingstone. Next year it was roofed and its foundations strengthened; in addition a new sheepfold was made. The pigsty cost nothing to build because a house was built for the carpenters 'in place of their salary'; roofing and plastering cost 5s. A house was built for the shepherd and the stable was roofed. In view of this activity it is surprising that at the inquest of 1370 following the death of Lady Cobham the grange and the oxhouse were stated to be of no value.¹²⁰

The cost of materials such as nails, laths, tiles and lime as well as repairs to unspecified houses are entered in the accounts together with expenses incurred on other Cobham manors. In the absence of records it may be assumed that such work continued as was necessary during the next fifty years. In 1413 repairs to the grange, the gatehouse and some of the buildings previously mentioned cost about £15.¹²¹

Apart from the demesne farm the documents scarcely mention buildings. On High Street, which was 'the public highway leading from Canterbury to Guildford'¹²² and described as 'a great road which leads from the east to the west over the hill' (*super montem*),¹²³ the Bell Inn at the cross roads and eleven houses bear traces of fifteenth- to sixteenth-century work. The church was undergoing alterations which transformed it; on the arch of the south porch there is some Cobham heraldry. Nearby, a new rectory was built.

Away from the village several buildings still standing date at least from the fifteenth to sixteenth century: Stocketts with its magnificent oak timbers, part of Foyle Farm, Mayflower Cottages on Broadham Green and, lastly, Sheppards Barn on Hurst Green, now greatly altered,¹²⁴ whose solid timbers may have been erected by John Shepherde, tithing man of Broadham in 1417.

¹¹⁸ 87/1/5.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, ll. 562-3, *Reve's Tale*, ll. 19-20.

¹²⁰ B.M., Symmes MSS., 328 verso.

¹²¹ 87/1/4.

¹²² 87/1/5.

¹²³ Huntington Library, MSS., B.A., XXIX, f. 210.

¹²⁴ *Antiquities of Surrey*, Surrey County Council (1951), 169-71. Fry, L. G., ed., *Oxted, Limpsfield and Neighbourhood* (1932), 87 ff.

THE MANOR COURT

For the period under review there are the rolls of 33 courts: 18 for 1352-64 and 15 for 1414-20. There is only one sequence which accords with the prescribed period of a court every three weeks.¹²⁵ Today the farm next to the church still bears the name Court Farm and here, on 18 October every year, the annual court leet must have been held; the more frequent courts baron were probably here also. The manuscripts do not describe the court procedure except in the formal language which was used; the rolls were written for a special economic purpose: 'to record the occasional profits of the manor, the fines, amercements and perquisites which are to be collected by the bailiff. . . .'¹²⁶

The Oxted rolls mention several officials but their duties are not clearly distinguished. The chief official was the steward; he is not mentioned in the court rolls, only in the bailiff's accounts, where are given his expenses for coming to hold the court.¹²⁷ In the rolls the words *consideratum est* (it was adjudged) and *constitutum est* (it was decided) indicate that he presided.¹²⁸

Next in importance was the bailiff. He assembled juries as ordered; he presented offenders for trespass; it was his duty to distrain and he might be fined for failure to do so; he acted as pledge for his friends or as required. Once at least he was, as a manorial tenant, charged with the common offence of allowing his ditches to be clogged.¹²⁹ Probably he was the sergeant (*serviens*) to whom reference was made only once.¹³⁰

The beadle (*bedellus*) is not much in evidence; he is not mentioned in the earlier rolls. In 1414 he was fined for not distraining a defaulter and later he and another man were punished for failing in duty as pledges for six defaulters. The beadle in 1417 reported that he had distrained a man in 40 sheep as ordered and at the same court he was given the task of forming a jury in a case which involved the lord of the manor. The case was continued in the next court but this time the official concerned was the bailiff. It seems that the beadle was no more than a court officer.¹³¹

Like the beadle, the constable is mentioned only in the later rolls. The man elected at the 1417 view of frankpledge was John Matthe, a tenant paying 13s.5d. rent, probably in the Broadham area. He still held office in 1420 when a tithing man, it was said, 'rebelled against the constable in the performance of his duty.' At the same court a man was charged with disobeying the constable's

¹²⁵ 87/1/2a d.

¹²⁶ Maitland, F. W., *Select Pleas in . . . Manorial Courts*, Selden Society, xiv (1931).

¹²⁷ 87/2/2, 87/2/3.

¹²⁸ 87/1/1, 87/1/5. See Gomme, G. L., ed. *Tooting Bec Court Rolls* (1909), 47, and Lambert, H. C. M., *History of Banstead*, II, 19.

¹²⁹ 87/1/5.

¹³⁰ 87/1/1. See Bennett, H. S., *op. cit.*, 155 and 162.

¹³¹ 87/1/5.

orders to hand over grain.¹³² That the beadle and the constable were one and the same is possible but quite uncertain.

There is no mention of a reeve. Several haywards are indicated in the documents of 1360-3, two by name. In the court rolls four men are so styled; one was Thomas Tounyng who, with another hayward, had routine duties in court.

Every year at the view of frankpledge the tithing man (in 1360 *borgh*, from 1361 on, *decenarius*) appeared with the men of his tithing. There were four tithings and although the boundaries are nowhere clearly defined it appears that: Reye was the northern part of the manor extending as far south as the main road; Brodeham was the middle tithing within the parish, including the mill, the lands held by the Prior of Tandridge and those held by the Abbot of Battle; Homewode was the southern tithing, including the Stoket holdings as well as Rose Farm and Jincocks. Stonhurst was in the ecclesiastical parish of Lingfield. In three consecutive years, 1360, 1361, 1362, Homewode retained the same man and so did Stonhurst. In 1414, 1417, 1419, 1420 Stonhurst again relied on one man. Brodeham elected a different man each year.

At the annual presentation the customary communal dues were paid, failure to perform the nightly watch admitted and defaulters reported; these cases give a lively picture of rural life at this time. One tithing man, when collecting a tax, was attacked by a married couple with sticks and knives.¹³³ The aletaster of each tithing usually had a long list of men and women who had to pay the usual fine for breach of the brewing assize.¹³⁴

The court was largely a source of revenue and the court roll was primarily a record of this. The steward presided but the actual amount payable was fixed by sworn officers representing the lord of the manor, not the court. These were the afferors; generally two attended each court.¹³⁵ In 19 court rolls their names are given at the end; they were prominent tenants, not professional clerks.

There are casual references to other legal or quasi-legal persons in court. In 1361 a fine was remitted by the lord at the instance of the eschaetor, and in 1418 the lord was represented in his case against the miller by an attorney; the next entry in this roll refers to a man acting on behalf of a tenant and the same word is used.¹³⁶ In one place it is stated that a decision was made *cum domino et concilio suo*, possibly a reference to a body of advisers; elsewhere it is stated that something was decided *cum consilio domini*, that is, after the lord had been consulted.¹³⁷

From these Oxted rolls it appears that the courts in this small manor functioned in a way entirely normal with no startling exceptions. There are, however, some points of interest.

¹³² 87/1/1, 87/1/5.

¹³³ 87/1/5. See page 92.

¹³⁴ 87/1/3.

¹³⁵ See Hearnshaw, F. J. C., *Leet Jurisdiction in England*, Southampton Record Society (1908), 135.

¹³⁶ 87/1/1, 87/1/5.

¹³⁷ 87/1/3, 87/1/5.

First, about the jurisdiction of the court. There are two cases of Limpsfield men, therefore subject to the abbot of Battle, one of them the bailiff, who pleaded guilty at the Oxted court for trespass on crops. Similarly the rector of Woldingham was fined along with a number of Oxted tenants for trespass on the demesne pasture.¹³⁸ The reason may be natural: reciprocity among neighbour landlords. Nevertheless it is clear that the lord of Oxted was jealous for his prerogative. In 1352 William Crynne was summoned to explain why he had brought an Oxted tenant to court 'at Croydon to the prejudice of the lord.' He said that the other man had not suffered any loss by going to Croydon.¹³⁹ Two other cases, concerning offences at Lingfield and East Grinstead, may have been brought to Oxted for convenience, the accused being sub-tenants of the lord of Oxted.¹⁴⁰

The second point of interest is: who constituted the court? Among the rolls there are two lists of suitors, one dated 1417, the other undated but of the same period.¹⁴¹ Each list has about 24 names, of which 14 appear on both lists, including the abbot and the prior at the head followed by members of three important local families, some substantial tenants and one who held by villein tenure. A woman is named in each list; they were, it would seem, widows who retained their husband's land. Several of these suitors paid fines to be excused attendance.

Apart from these lists, the expression 'free tenants' appears twice in one roll,¹⁴² 'tenants' seven times in four rolls.¹⁴³ 'The homage' is also used; it was an inclusive word for all tenants and is synonymous with 'all the people' (*tocius populi*).¹⁴⁴ The words 'in full court with the agreement of the lord and his council' are used once in connection with a proclamation;¹⁴⁵ the names of 14 witnesses are given followed by '*et cetera*.' They were not a jury; the proclamation announced that the Herst family had fulfilled their obligations as executors of William atte Herst.

Third, attendance at court. About this the Oxted rolls have nothing out of the ordinary. They abound with essoins by which attendance could be excused up to three times; after 1361 the number of each esoin is omitted. Neglect to send an esoin brought amercement. There is a good example of failure to answer a jury summons: the jury failed to attend on 18 June 1417 as ordered, did not appear on 18 October, refused to come on 17 March 1418 and again defaulted on 18 October, after which date no more is known.¹⁴⁶

Fourth, juries. The whole court made decisions, but it was the

¹³⁸ 87/1/3, 87/1/5.

¹³⁹ 87/1/1.

¹⁴⁰ 87/1/5.

¹⁴¹ 87/1/5.

¹⁴² 87/1/1.

¹⁴³ 87/1/3, 87/1/5.

¹⁴⁴ 87/1/1, 87/1/5.

¹⁴⁵ 87/1/3.

¹⁴⁶ 87/1/5.

practice to assign certain work to juries, generally of 12 men.¹⁴⁷ In June 1417 the beadle was instructed to summon three juries to act in cases in which the lord was involved with three different tenants. At the view of frankpledge in the same year the clerk recorded a presentment of assault; he added later '12 jurors say that it is not so.' At the court held on the same day two juries failed to answer the summons to appear; one seems to have been a jury of enquiry.¹⁴⁸

This brings us to the juries which were definitely styled 'Great Enquiry'; there are three of these and all covered leet business: keeping a stray horse, a false presentment by a tithing man and the responsibility of a tithing for an escape from arrest.¹⁴⁹

Fifth, the marginal catchword *Lex* (Law). This word appears opposite cases which appear to have been difficult, although generally the sums involved were not large. One concerned a plea of debt long overdue; the plea was denied. In 1417 two different pairs of senior tenants appeared in court, the charges in each case being written on an attached note (*per billam huic rotulo annexatam*).¹⁵⁰ Such cases may have been referred to a higher court or it may be that the court required time to consider the legal arguments.

Sixth, the number of courts. Despite the charter the courts did not meet regularly, unless the documents err or are not complete. The bailiff's accounts are more valuable in this respect than the court rolls, and even when the dates do coincide the discrepancies in the amounts are often noteworthy. For the three years when there are both accounts and court rolls, the former have the receipts from 9, 7 and 7 courts, the latter have the rolls of 4, 3 and 3 courts, and only for the five courts held from 18 October 1361 to 12 March 1362 is there correlation of dates and amounts.¹⁵¹

Analysis of the business of the court shows that there were more than 50 subjects for consideration. The purpose of the court was largely to produce revenue and from this point of view the subjects can be divided into groups.

There were non-remunerative matters such as essoins; it was default in this matter which incurred a fine. Murrain declarations which absolved the tenants from responsibility and *Lex* cases which were sent to another court also did not bring in revenue.

A rich harvest was gathered from fines and amercements. Non-appearance at court was fined; on the other hand it was possible to pay to be released from attendance. Failure to swear fealty or pay relief or pay rent was amerced and so was neglect of court duties by bailiff, beadle or hayward. A very frequent offence was trespass on the demesne land either in person or with animals. The largest group derived from the technical offence of brewing ale and breaking the assize of bread and ale; the fines were so numerous as to be regarded more as licence fees and the ale taster's duty was not so

¹⁴⁷ See Hearnshaw, F. J. C., *op. cit.*, 87.

¹⁴⁸ 87/1/5.

¹⁴⁹ 87/1/1, 87/1/5.

¹⁵⁰ 87/1/5.

¹⁵¹ 87/2/1, 87/2/2, 87/2/3.

much to test the quality of the brew as to check the number of times brewing took place. The usual fine was 2d., for each offence, and to sell indoors and not outside aggravated the wrong. Brewing was the most remunerative item of all; for example, at the view of frankpledge in 1361, 63 persons paid 23s.5d., the total for the whole view being 46s.3d.¹⁵² In the later court rolls, after 1414, the number of such offences decreased. Breach of trade or craft rules, especially overcharging, by tailor, butcher, cobbler, baker and others, was also presented at the view.

The tithings had particular obligations. They paid without fail the common fine, a customary levy; they atoned for not carrying out the watch according to the statute of Winchester; they were liable to be fined for not reporting offences; they were responsible for being at full strength in order to satisfy the sheriff's tourn. In 1361 Walter Blake was presented because 'he was summoned to enter the assize of the lord king and did not come.'¹⁵³ In 1417 Walter atte Bisshe was permitted to leave his tithing on account of old age.¹⁵⁴ The tithing was also responsible in the interests of the community for the upkeep of roads and bridges. The view of frankpledge rolls abound with presentments for not keeping ditches clear and for allowing roads to be obstructed by fallen branches; the lord of the manor was twice charged, the bailiff once. In 1417 a man was presented for placing a post on the highway at Broadham and making a wood fire on the main road through the village; at the same court he appeared on other charges.¹⁵⁵ More serious was the offence of encroachment with deliberate intent on the highway in contravention to the statute of Winchester; there are two examples of this purpresture.¹⁵⁶

Another source of revenue was the private litigant. To fail in your accusation, to seek to settle out of court, to be absent from court when your case was called, placed you in mercy. Trespass and debt were the most common causes of dispute among tenants. There was one case interesting not for itself but for the object concerned, a spinning wheel.¹⁵⁷

Occasionally income was derived from stray or heriot animals. If not claimed after a year strays were taken by the lord; there is one instance of wrongful detention of a stray. As to heriot animals, a good example comes in 1418 when, five leading tenants having died, the money value of the heriots, 56s.8d.,¹⁵⁸ was more important than the beasts. There could be delay in delivering a heriot. In each case the animal was clearly specified.

The court also dealt with offences more serious than trespass and brewing. There are two examples of breaking into the pound.

¹⁵² 87/1/1.

¹⁵³ 87/1/1.

¹⁵⁴ 87/1/5.

¹⁵⁵ See p. 92.

¹⁵⁶ 87/1/1, 87/1/5.

¹⁵⁷ 87/1/1. See Appendix, p. 94.

¹⁵⁸ 87/1/5.

More serious still were acts of violence: an assault on a girl (the clerk did not give her name); a fight between two women, one of whom suffered a broken head; a public affray involving fourteen offences, total fines 4s.2d. In 1420 a Flemish sawyer nearly killed a man with a knife and assaulted the bailiff who came to arrest him; two saws and some files were taken from him. Soon after this another Flemish sawyer, charged with stealing a horse at Lambeth, was taken into custody.¹⁵⁹

Theft and detention of goods and chattels was common: two sleeves of a coat; an axe taken three years before; two sheep; timber felled and carried away; timber from a house wrecked in a gale.¹⁶⁰ So, too, was defiance of authority: a violent assault on a tithing man; impeding the ale taster; resisting the constable.

Two recorded offences were of a very different kind. The owner of a greyhound bitch 'against the statute' was committed to a higher court and the animal was confiscated. In May 1419 Robert Stonherst was charged with wholesale trespass with horse and cart to take timber. At the same court he strenuously denied a further charge of poaching; the game included rabbits, hares, pheasants and partridges.¹⁶¹

The court rolls also recorded transactions in manorial land: the grant by the lord; the transfer from one tenant to another; the return into the lord's hands. Almost every such transaction involved a money payment. Revision might be recorded but there is not much evidence of this in the court rolls.¹⁶² The rolls and the rental show that changes were frequent, sometimes a large holding was involved, often a field or croft. Besides the rents there were the customary reliefs, heriots and fines. There is a full notice of acquittal of all dues following the death of an important tenant.¹⁶³ Non-payment of rent to the lord, if any, was not recorded in the court rolls; there is a case where one tenant sued another for rent. Sometimes land reverted to the lord because there was no successor; sometimes he acted as guardian during a minority. During the minority of the Stoket heirs their lands were integrated in the demesne as is shown in the bailiff's account, but there is no sign of this in the court rolls.¹⁶⁴ Only legitimate heirs could inherit; bastardy was a disqualification for tenancy.¹⁶⁵

It was also an important function of the court to supervise the tenancies by inspection of charters, by settlement of disputes and by scrutinising agreements. There is a concise summary of alienation in fee simple in four stages, the third stage being carried out by what seems to be a firm of land agents in Maidstone.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ 87/1/5.

¹⁶⁰ 87/1/1.

¹⁶¹ 87/1/5.

¹⁶² See p. 83.

¹⁶³ 87/1/3. See p. 88.

¹⁶⁴ 87/1/5, 87/2/2, 87/2/3.

¹⁶⁵ 87/1/1.

¹⁶⁶ 87/1/1, 87/1/5.

So far as can be judged, all these tenants were freeholders. In July 1420 the court warned 'all tenants who hold by copy land on the demesne to come to the next court to show their copies under pain of forfeiture.'¹⁶⁷ In the rolls of the two subsequent courts there is no record of this having been done. It may have been a routine check; on the other hand it may indicate some concern in view of the frequent change-over of holdings.

It is unavailing to lament the absence of any living details of the routine of a medieval court. The most that can be hoped for is that some flash of human interest will occasionally break through. From the documents on which this study is based almost nothing has been learned about the people beyond their names and occupations. There are two exceptions and their characters have come across the centuries only because they fell foul of the law.

Henry Smart¹⁶⁸ was tithingman of Reye in 1414. In 1417 he and his wife were presented for a violent physical attack on a tithingman who came to collect a military levy (*costagium militum*),¹⁶⁹ but the jury found that the charge was false. At the same court he was also charged with assaulting a girl and the tithing was penalised for not arresting him when she raised the hue and cry. At this court, too, he was presented for wilful obstruction in two places on the highway and as a general victualler and trader whose charges were too high. The same day he was elected ale taster for Reye. Apart from two jury notices this is all. His name does not appear in the rental. Perhaps he was not a farmer but kept a store on the main road.

A more doubtful character was Richard Wodesdone. He was presented for being a public innkeeper and fined 8d.; the tithing was amerced for concealing this. At the same court he was fined for brewing and not sending for the ale taster and before the court ended he was elected joint ale taster for Reye. There was nothing out of the ordinary about this or that he and his wife Isabella, engaged in a law suit, allowed three pigs to trespass on the demesne stubble and sold fish. However, in 1419 the tithing presented that he 'frequently entertained various felons by night and took capons, geese, rabbits, hens and chickens and other stolen goods; that he welcomed evil-doers against the king's peace; that he was a common eavesdropper by night outside men's houses.' He was warned, not fined, and swore to behave himself.

CONCLUSION

The documents on which this essay has been based were drawn up for the lord of the manor; they relate primarily to his financial interests: the rent paid by his tenants, the working of the demesne farm and the revenue from the manor courts. Concerning the people of the manor only a few details and impressions can be gained.

¹⁶⁷ 87/1/5.

¹⁶⁸ All references to Smart and Wodesdone are in 87/1/5.

¹⁶⁹ See p. 87.

Information as to their mode of life is lacking; there is no answer to the question: how much communal effort was there or did each man farm on his own? or to such questions as: to whom was the wool sold; was any surplus of farm produce sent to London; did any man serve in the wars in France?

It would be rash to attempt to estimate the population. In 1408 there were some 60 tenants whose households might number about 240 people, but this takes no account of the men who worked for them and of the craftsmen. If the third Lord Cobham employed about 20 *famuli* on the demesne farm at Oxted, John Stoket and other large-scale tenants cannot have employed many fewer to work their fields, and even the smaller tenants would require assistance. Also, at a time when there was much mobility in rural England, did many people leave the manor to work in London? Did some of the girls leave to find husbands? What was the birth rate and the death rate? Did the later outbreaks of the Black Death in the 1360's reach Oxted? Is the fact that the average number of convictions for brewing in 1360-4 was 55 while in 1417-20 it was 31 an indication of a fall in population or of a change in the habits of the villagers?

To these and many other social and economic questions the documents give no answer.

APPENDIX

THE SPINNING WHEEL. (See p. 90 and facsimile Plate I(b).
 Sy. R.O. 87/1/I. Court Roll of 6 March 1352.

Transcription:—Willelmus Bomour querens optulit se versus Nicholaum Comber (*above the line*: receipt xl d. et in misericordia iii d.) de placito transgressionis et unde dicit quod dictus Nicholaus vendidit uxori dicti Willelmi unum bonum Ruel pro certa summa cum fusillo *err'* et omni toto paratu ad filandum et dictus Nicholaus postulavit unum Ruel ad domum dicti Willelmi non tam bonum quod Nicholaus valuit sine fusillo *err'* et sine apparatione ad dampnum dicti Willelmi xl d. et de hoc, etc. Et dictus Nicholaus venit et dicit quod non convenit ei nec uxori eius nisi unum Ruel sine fusillo et de hoc ponit se ad legem contra proximam perplegium Johannis Heyward et Nicholai Turnour.

Translation:—William Bomour, plaintiff, stated his case against Nicholas Comber (*above the line*: received 40d., amerced 3d.) concerning a plea of trespass whereby he says that Nicholas Comber sold to his (William's) wife a good wheel with loose spindle and all ready for spinning for a fixed sum; and the said Nicholas offered at the said William's home not so good a wheel, but which Nicholas deemed to be good, without the spindle and apparatus to William's loss of 40d., concerning which, etc. And the said Nicholas came and asserts that he made no agreement with William and his wife for anything except one wheel without a spindle, and hereby he places himself at law at the next court. Sureties: John Heyward and Nicholas Turnour.

Note by Professor Carus-Wilson.

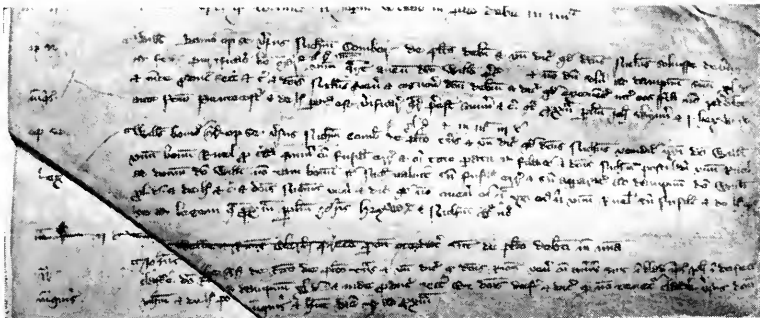
The buyer alleges that he ordered a spinning wheel (*ruel . . . cum fusillo err'*) and all the apparatus for spinning. The word *fuseau* or *fusill* was commonly used to denote the distaff and spindle, i.e. the old-fashioned instrument which continued often to be prescribed for spinning the warp thread when the woof thread was spun with the wheel (i.e. in the famous Speier Ordinance of 1298 where the two words are clearly thus contrasted). It may therefore be that the man was ordering both types of spinning implements, new and old, wheel and distaff and spindle.

On the other hand, *fusill* literally indicates only a spindle, and a spinning wheel of course had a spindle as well as a wheel. It is therefore possible that this is all that he means, though from the fact that I have found many references to just 'spinning wheels' without any special mention of spindles I incline to my first interpretation.

The word *err'* does not seem to help much, though one may suspect, without seeming certain about it, that it denotes an unattached spindle such as one would use with a distaff and thus indicates distaff spindles in contrast to the spindle belonging to the wheel, which would be fixed.



(a) FOOD VESSEL FROM ABINGER HAMMER.



[Copyright, Surrey County Council.

(b) MANOR OF OXTED. ENTRY RELATING TO SPINNING WHEEL.