

The later owners of Bletchingley Castle

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The story of the de Clare owners of Bletchingley, earls of Gloucester and Hereford, is here continued, together with that of subsequent owners of the castle site. Tradition asserts that Bletchingley Castle was ‘slighted’ [ie rendered untenable] at the time of the battle of Lewes (1264). This paper argues that a persistent animosity between the de Clare family and Roger de Leyburn, sometime steward of the Lord Edward and later sheriff of Kent, which was never resolved, may have had a fundamental bearing on the ultimate fate of Bletchingley Castle, and a new scenario and date for its destruction are proposed.

Introduction

In a previous paper, an account was given of the origin of Bletchingley¹ Castle and of its ownership by the de Clare family in the 11th and 12th centuries. The de Clares' involvement in baronial unrest went back at least as far as the reign of King John.² Gilbert III (c 1180–1230), the first de Clare earl of Gloucester, and his father, Richard de Clare III, were among those sealing the Magna Carta and Gilbert was one of the 25 barons appointed to enforce its observance. Fifty years on, Gilbert de Clare IV's switch of allegiance from Simon de Montfort IV to the Lord Edward was to contribute大大ly to the Crown's final victory over the baronial rebels at the Battle of Evesham.

The baronial rebellion and French invasion that followed within months of the agreement at Runnymede found the de Clares (earls of Gloucester) and the de Warennes (earls of Surrey) on opposite sides. Pope Innocent III (having been given England by King John as a papal fief) excommunicated several barons, including Richard de Clare III and his son Gilbert III, in December 1215. In the following March, King John declared earl Richard's estate forfeit.³

The rebels had offered the crown to Louis (the king of France's son) who had a claim to the English throne, having married a grand-daughter of Henry II.⁴ Louis landed at Stonar (Kent) in May 1216 and, after being welcomed in London, went on to the royalist John de Warenne's castle at Reigate (which he found empty), and to capture Guildford, Farnham and Winchester castles.⁵ Louis' initial success enabled him to rally much support – even John de Warenne went over to him.⁶ However, Louis' support collapsed within a year. Gilbert de Clare III was taken prisoner fighting at Louis' side at the battle of Lincoln in May 1217.⁷ John de Warenne, who had already made his peace with the regent for the infant Henry III, had become sheriff of Surrey and remained so until 1226. A peace treaty was concluded in September and both Earl Richard de Clare III and his son Gilbert III had their estates restored shortly afterward.⁸ Gilbert remained sympathetic to the baronial cause of reform after he became earl of Gloucester and Hertford on his father's death late in 1217.⁹

¹ Turner 1996. The original spelling ‘Blechingley’ has been altered here to accord with current usage.

² For the ‘remarkable series of fortuitous marriages and sudden deaths’ that brought the Gloucester title to the de Clares, see Altschul 1965, 25.

³ Ramsay 1903, 493–4; Altschul 1965, 53.

⁴ Warren 1997, 251.

⁵ Ramsay 1903, 495–7.

⁶ Warren 1997, 252.

⁷ Altschul 1965, 53; Carpenter 1990, 40.

⁸ Altschul 1965, 54 citing *Rot Claus*, 1, 327b.

⁹ Altschul 1965, 26–7.

Blechingley was a mesne borough by 1225, demonstrating the de Clares' continuing economic interest here.¹⁰ Gilbert died in Brittany in October, 1230.¹¹ His son, Richard de Clare IV, was only a child and Henry III appointed Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, to the wardship of the de Clare estates. Hubert was deprived of the justiciarship in July 1232, and the king then assigned custody of Richard de Clare IV to the bishop of Winchester, and control of the de Clare inheritance itself to the bishop's nephew.¹² Soon after Richard came of age, he was leading royal forces in Wales.¹³

The road to Civil War

Simon de Montfort IV (hereafter just Simon de Montfort) had come to England in the 1230s, and had been allowed both to realise a hereditary claim to the earldom of Leicester and to marry the king's sister.¹⁴ Historians disagree on the primary cause of the renewed baronial unrest that detonated in 1258. Like many major explosions, it was touched off by a series of small local incidents: one of these was the so-called 'Battle of Shere' on 1 April, 1258.¹⁵ Henry III showed poor judgement by promoting and protecting his half-brothers (the Lusignans), arrogant foreigners from Poitou.¹⁶ A group of barons, led by Simon de Montfort and Richard de Clare IV, confronted the king in person and forced him to expel the Lusignans from England.

In May 1258, Henry III swore an oath to re-order and correct the state of the realm. At the Oxford parliament a month later, he agreed to the Provisions of Oxford which were intended to effect changes for better government of the entire kingdom. Under the Provisions, the king could not rule without the consent of a council of fifteen magnates.¹⁷ Richard de Clare IV was one of the king's representatives in the negotiations, but the draft agreement has him on the baronial side.¹⁸

The *Ordinationes facte per magnates de consilio Regis* of March 1259¹⁹ aimed to bring the lords under the same regulations as those imposed upon the sheriffs and other royal bailiffs by the Provisions of Oxford. To many barons, including Richard de Clare IV, this was carrying reform too far – into their own powers. Richard became the leader of the conservative wing of the baronial movement for reform and the main opponent *within* the movement to Simon de Montfort, the leader of the radical wing. The enrolment of the *Ordinationes* was delayed by a quarrel between them.²⁰ Richard de Clare IV agreed to aid the Lord Edward (Henry III's eldest son, later Edward I), whose allies included his steward Roger de Leyburn and John de Warenne, in order to recover his castles and lands and the full enjoyment of his rights.²¹ This report of accord between Richard de Clare IV and the Lord Edward conflicts with other reports of discord between them, including a dispute over rights to Bristol Castle.²²

¹⁰ Assize Roll 863, m.5 cited by Lambert 1921, 1, 149; Malden 1912, 262; Turner 1996, 49.

¹¹ Ramsay 1908, 57, citing Tewkesbury 1, 76, 77; Dunstable 3, 125; Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* 3, 199; Altschul 1965, 59–60; Powicke 1962, 94–6.

¹² Ramsay 1908, 62, citing Wendover; Tewkesbury 1, 86; Altschul 1965, 60–1 citing *CalPR* 1225–32, 500–1.

¹³ Ramsay 1908, 112–13; Altschul 1965, 78–9.

¹⁴ Carpenter 1987, 9. Bémont 1930, chapter IV and 60–8, citing Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* 3, 566–7; 4 *passim*; *Rot Fin.*

¹⁵ Stewart 2000.

¹⁶ Carpenter 1985b; 2003, chapters 11–12.

¹⁷ Jacob 1925, 5ff.

¹⁸ Trehearne 1932, 69–76; Trehearne & Sanders 1973, 96–113 *CalPR* 1247–58, 637; Carpenter 1985, 58 note 99.

¹⁹ Transcribed in full by Jacob 1925, 366–9, and by Trehearne & Saunders 1973, 130–7.

²⁰ Jacob 1925, 84–5 and chapter 3; Trehearne 1932, chapters 2 and 3, 139–41, citing Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* 5, 744–5; Carpenter 1984; Powicke 1962, 146–7.

²¹ Jacob 1925, 84 note 1, citing *Hist MSS Comm 18th Report*, 16, and *Report on the MSS of Lord Middleton*, 67–9; Trehearne 1932, 140.

²² Trehearne 1932, 164, 193 citing *Ann Lond* 1, 54 and Stubbs 1906, 2, 85; Prestwich 1997, 30, 60; Carpenter 1985c, 228, 234. However, Trehearne (1954, 84) said that the quarrel was quickly resolved.

Beginning of the Clare/Leyburn quarrel

A quarrel between Roger de Leyburn and Richard de Clare IV appears to have begun before Spring 1259, as the covenant of that date between de Clare and the Lord Edward is mentioned in a ruling on the dispute published by King Henry in June 1260.²³ However, the covenant had not limited the dispute between Richard de Clare IV and the Lord Edward for, in the autumn of that same year, friction between their followers culminated in a raid by Richard's men. Some were captured by Roger de Leyburn, who summarily hanged them.²⁴

The Lord Edward's subsequent oath to aid and counsel Simon de Montfort was sealed by Henry de Almain, John de Warenne, and Roger de Leyburn.²⁵ When the king arrived in France with Richard de Clare IV, Simon de Montfort was already there, and delayed the peace negotiations by insisting first on a settlement for his wife's dower: he and Richard de Clare IV drew their swords but were restrained.²⁶ Simon returned to England and apparently entered into an alliance with the Lord Edward. As a result, the baronial party was even more polarised.²⁷

Richard de Clare IV and other barons returned to England before the king, who ordered them to destroy the castle at Leybourne that Roger de Leyburn was fortifying without royal consent, unless he stopped work.²⁸ Leybourne Castle was not far from that of Richard IV de Clare at Tonbridge; probably Richard 'blew the whistle' on Roger, remembering the previous execution of his men. Tonbridge Castle did not need a royal licence, having been built by 1088: Bletchingley Castle had been founded at about the same time.²⁹ Richard de Clare IV had gained a fistful of licences in 1259: 'to strengthen like a castle' the Isle of Portland (Dorset) replacing a similar 1257 licence to Aymer de Lusignan, also to fortify his houses at *Manhale* (Essex) and Southwold (Suffolk) as well as his *towns* of Southwold and Tonbridge.³⁰ In June 1260, Henry III published his ruling on the dispute between the Lord Edward and Richard de Clare IV: there was to be mutual remission of all contentions and strict adherence to the covenant made by the two parties in March 1259.³¹

In the first half of July 1261, Henry III made a clean sweep of the baronial administration, asserting that the Provisions of Oxford were annulled, having acquired a papal decree to that effect. This action temporarily united the two wings of the baronial party, a unity wrecked by a revival of the quarrel between Richard de Clare IV and Simon de Montfort. Richard and many other barons returned to the king's party.³²

In February 1262, Roger de St John was licensed to fortify 'Lageham in Walkested' at South Godstone, very close to Bletchingley.³³ He was one of the councillors appointed by the 'Electors' in 1264 and was killed at the battle of Evesham.³⁴

²³ *CalPR* 1258–66, 79. Roger de Leyburn was said to have been under the protection of the Lusignan William de Valence at this time: Carpenter 1984, 115 note 33. Roger had deliberately killed another knight in a tournament in 1252 (Faulkner 2004).

²⁴ Trehearne 1932, 193 citing *Ann Lond* 1, 54.

²⁵ Carpenter 1985c, 226.

²⁶ Trehearne 1932, 213–16 citing Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* 5, 745.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 213–35, 261–5; Powicke 1962, 154–5, 162–5.

²⁸ *CalPR* 1258–66, 11; *CalCIR* 1259–61, 283–4; Trehearne 1932, 229; Powicke 1962, 157–8; Coulson 1994, 129. The *Dictum* of Kenilworth in 1266, distinguished 'castles which were built by charter and by consent of the lord king' from others (Trehearne & Sanders 1973, 332–3).

²⁹ Garmonsway 224; Turner 1996, 46 and in prep (a)

³⁰ *CalPR* 1258–66, 11 cp *CalPR* 1247–58, 607; *CalPR* 1258–66, 61, 108. See also page 183.

³¹ *CalPR* 1258–66, 79; Trehearne 1932, 238.

³² Powicke 1962, 164–5; Trehearne 1932, 261–72; Powicke 1962, 162–6; Carpenter 1987, 9.

³³ *CalPR* 1258–66, 199. This was the first, and only, Surrey licence until 1341 (apart from one of 1269 for a house at Addington, astride the Kent border). There is a very large double-banked moated site at Lagham: Lambert 1929, 76; Ketteringham 1977; 1980.

³⁴ Page 182; Sanders 1973, 295 note 5; Cox 1988, 32 citing *Flores* 3, 265, Gloucester 1887, 2, 764, London 69, Osney 4, 171.

Death of Richard de Clare IV, 1262

On 15 July 1262 Richard de Clare IV died, aged only 39 or 40.³⁵ Richard's *inquisition post mortem* states that he had lands at Betchingley together with a *curia* (court-house) and garden, a watermill and a windmill, and two parks.³⁶ There is no mention of a castle, nor of a principal messuage, which suggests that Betchingley was by then not a regular residence for the de Clares.³⁷

Richard's death might have encouraged Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, prince of Gwynedd, to attack de Clare lordships in the southern March of Wales.³⁸ Since Richard's heir, Gilbert de Clare IV, was legally under age, the king appointed Humphrey de Bohun as keeper of all the de Clare's lands and castles in Wales and the Marches, the other lands being assigned to different keepers. Gilbert had crossed to Boulogne, expecting to gain seisin of his father's lands by paying the usual fine, but then learnt that Henry III had ordered a minute inquiry into all the lands, etc, of the late earl for the purpose of recovering all Crown rights.³⁹

At the same time, a quarrel broke out between the Lord Edward and his steward Roger de Leyburn. Roger turned to his friends among the younger Marcher lords, but was forced to return to Kent, gathering armed bands about him to plunder royal manors.⁴⁰ They associated themselves with Simon de Montfort but, by July 1263, the Lord Edward patched up his quarrel with Roger de Leyburn and his kinsmen in order to detach them from Simon's party.⁴¹ Roger was appointed Warden of the Cinque Ports, Keeper of Dover Castle and Chamberlain of Sandwich on 5 December 1263 and on the same date was granted the seven hundreds of the Weald.⁴² Three days later he became sheriff of Kent, and held the office until June 1264, after the battle of Lewes.⁴³ Roger de Leyburn is listed among King Henry's supporters to the Mise of Amiens arbitration.

In August 1263, the king finally allowed Gilbert de Clare IV to come into most of his estates in return for an (unfulfilled) promise to pay a fine of 1000 marks.⁴⁴ But the damage had been done and the hot-headed Gilbert 'the Red'⁴⁵ became an active source of unrest. Henry III's brother reported to him on 30 June 1263 that Simon de Montfort was moving from Reading to Guildford and thence to Reigate, presumably from castle to castle.⁴⁶ Simon enjoyed the support of the Church, and the sympathies of the gentry who had welcomed the reform of local administration. However, pressurising the king (as in 1258) was very different from being prepared to fight against him, as seemed increasingly necessary in 1263. Above all was the problem of Simon de Montfort himself. He had taken an oath to support the reforms of 1258 and he would not break it, even at the cost of self-exile. But this could be seen as a mixture of pride, arrogance and ambition.⁴⁷ Consequently Simon was unable to

³⁵ Altschul 1965, 95, citing Tewkesbury 1, 130.

³⁶ *CalIPM* 1, no 530 p153; Lambert 1921, 1, 160 citing IPM Henry III, file 27(5).

³⁷ Lambert (1921, 1, 162) suggested that silence simply meant that the castle was 'unsaleable': a liability rather than an asset. The curia and garden were valued as 10s pa. Subsequent valuations of the one or two capital messuages and garden put them at 6s 8d or 7s: *ibid* 168–9, 175, 180; Manning & Bray 1809, 2, 297.

³⁸ Powicke 1962, 171–2; Altschul 1965, 95.

³⁹ Trehearne 1932, 285–6, citing Gervase 2, 215–16; Altschul 1965, 95; Trehearne & Sanders 1973, 40–1; *CalCIR* 1261–4, 141, 212–13.

⁴⁰ Trehearne 1932, 296–7; Tout 1934, 2, 60, 69–75, 84; Powicke 1962, 172–3; Altschul 1965, 96–7. Carpenter (1992, 934, citing the Canterbury/Dover annals).

⁴¹ Trehearne 1932, 312; Altschul 1965, 99, both citing *Foedera*, 430 and Gervase 2, 224.

⁴² *CalCIR* 1261–4, 315, 358 cited by Trehearne & Sanders 1973, 266 note 12; the seven hundreds were presumably grouped under one bailiff. Jacob (1925, 254–5) cited *CalPR* 1258–66, 300 for the grant and date of the appointment.

⁴³ Page 179; Trehearne 1932, 335 citing *Foedera*, 433.

⁴⁴ Trehearne 1932, 313, citing *CalPR* 1258–66, 273 and Memoranda Rolls of the Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer.

⁴⁵ Tewkesbury 1, 130.

⁴⁶ Shirley 1862, 2, letter dcv; Denholm-Young 1947, 120. For a general discussion of Simon de Montfort's personal rôle, see Trehearne 1954 or 1971.

⁴⁷ Carpenter 1987, 10; Altschul 1965, 98–9.

reimpose the Provisions of Oxford on the king for more than a few months in 1263. Simon de Montfort entered London and summoned his followers to join him.⁴⁸

The king, who had been trying to recover Dover Castle, ordered that the rebels be expelled from London.⁴⁹ His order was ignored, but some citizens replied secretly with a plan to trap Simon de Montfort's forces, now camped outside London. The king was to launch an attack from the south, while his confederates in the City had the gates on London Bridge barred to cut off Simon's line of retreat. However, when the other Londoners realised what was happening, they broke down the gates, surged out and escorted the rebel army into the City. The king withdrew to Windsor.⁵⁰

All that could be agreed was to refer the quarrel to the arbitration of Louis IX, king of France. In January 1264 he delivered his verdict, wholly in Henry III's favour. The Provisions of Oxford were condemned outright, and the king was to be free to appoint whom he liked as his ministers. This verdict Simon de Montfort and his followers could not accept, and the result was civil war. In February 1263/4 there was already fighting in the Welsh Marches where Simon de Montfort's sons tried to seize Worcester and Gloucester, but were beaten off by the Lord Edward (Henry III's eldest son) and were forced to regroup at Kenilworth and Northampton. A royal writ of March 1264 instructed Roger de Leyburn to fortify Rochester Castle and gave him the commission to keep the peace in Kent, Surrey and Sussex, and 'to harry our enemies and rebels in those parts'.⁵¹ Further negotiations only served to define the differences between the two sides.

The opposing forces

Geographically, Simon de Montfort had two areas of strength. One was in the south-east, where he held London and the castle of Dover while his ally, Gilbert de Clare IV, held Tonbridge and Bletchingley and other supporters held Canterbury Castle and the Cinque Ports (except Hastings). Gilbert's activities during the autumn and winter of 1263–4 are obscure but, by the spring of 1264, he was at Tonbridge.⁵² Simon's other power base was in the Midlands: in the vicinity of his castle of Kenilworth, and his borough of Leicester, lay lands belonging to many of his closest supporters. As a shield to these, he had secured Northampton, further south-east.⁵³

Royal forces or supporters held Rochester, Reigate, Guildford, Farnham and the castles of the Sussex coast from Arundel to Pevensey, thus threatening Simon de Montfort's support in the south. Despite the writ issued in March commanding him to fortify Rochester Castle, Roger de Leyburn still seems to have been with Henry III early in April, when he and John de Warenne, earl of Surrey, were sent to secure the castles of Rochester and Reigate.⁵⁴ The king summoned his supporters to join him at Oxford, so driving a wedge between Simon de Montfort's two areas of strength and making it easy for the Lord Edward to join the king from the Welsh March.

War begins

On 3 or 4 April 1264 Henry III set out from Oxford. His army quickly stormed the walled town of Northampton, the castle surrendering on the next day.⁵⁵ They had marched on

⁴⁸ Treharne 1932, 332–3.

⁴⁹ Powicke 1947, 2, 452, 460–1; Harris 2005, 272; *CalCIR* 1261–4, 37.

⁵⁰ Treharne 1932, 332–3; Williams 1963, 223.

⁵¹ Jacob 1925, 255, citing *Exchequer Miscellanea* 1/41, no 7.

⁵² Powicke 1962, Ch V; Altschul 1965, 95–103; Treharne & Sanders 1973, 46–55, docs 39–43.

⁵³ Dunstable 3, 226; Carpenter 1987, 12.

⁵⁴ Page 186; Carpenter 1987, 13, citing St Albans 489, Rishanger 22 and Wykes 4, 146.

⁵⁵ Royal documents are recorded as sealed at Oxford on 4 April and at Northampton on 6 April (both *CalPR* 1258–66, 310). Powicke 1947, 2, 459; Carpenter 1987, 13, citing Treharne 1986, ch 9. Young Simon de Montfort V and many other knights were captured.

to Nottingham, when alarming news arrived: Simon de Montfort was laying siege to Rochester.⁵⁶

Simon had set out from London to raise the siege of Northampton, but returned when news arrived of the disaster.⁵⁷ He therefore moved not north but south-east, aiming to capture Rochester, the one major royalist stronghold threatening his grip on London. Gilbert de Clare IV attacked Rochester from the south, while Simon de Montfort established himself across the river to the west and sent a blazing boat down to burn the partly-broken bridge and, in the confusion, ‘crossing the river with a few followers, he took the castle though not the [great] tower’ as one chronicler put it. The royalists John de Warenne and Roger de Leyburn were forced back into the tower, which presented a substantial obstacle to Simon de Montfort, just as it had to King John in 1215.⁵⁸ Simon, unlike John, was prevented from taking the great tower.

By 27 April, Henry III was at Croydon, hardly more than 25 miles from Rochester.⁵⁹ Simon de Montfort had withdrawn from Rochester and re-entered London. The surrender of a de Clare castle at Kingston is mentioned by Walter of Guisborough.⁶⁰ The king’s main army would have needed to cross the Thames at Kingston (then the first bridge upstream from London) but the taking of any ‘castle’ there could only have been the merest formality, given the speed of the army’s progress. The (alleged) castle was probably hastily erected to defend the river crossing. Henry III was at Gilbert de Clare IV’s castle at Tonbridge on 30 April and captured it the next day, taking Gilbert’s wife prisoner; as the king’s niece, she was not kept captive for long.⁶¹

King Henry III marched south from Tonbridge, wishing to secure his hold on the Cinque Ports. On the way through the hilly, wooded Weald, his cook was killed by a hidden archer. That evening ‘315 archers were beheaded [...] in the presence of the king, all of whom had been called deceitfully to the king’s peace’.⁶² If the number is correct, this reprisal seems to be excessive, even today. After a night at Battle Abbey, Henry III moved to Winchelsea, where he took hostages and oaths of fealty, but the Barons of the Cinque Ports refused to prepare a fleet to blockade London.⁶³ He had kept the initiative, although he had sacrificed his position between the two centres of rebel power, and Simon de Montfort could now unite his forces in London.⁶⁴ Malden stated that Simon and Richard de Clare IV ‘marched by [Blechingley]’.⁶⁵ This is a possibility: Simon’s army had to avoid the Medway crossings at Rochester and Tonbridge, both controlled by the king’s forces. That Henry III had left garrisons at both places is demonstrated by the enrolled letter issued to them after the battle.⁶⁶

When Henry III heard of Simon de Montfort’s advance, he moved immediately to Lewes, on the way spending a night at Herstmonceux, where his army fed off the game in the

⁵⁶ Carpenter 1987, 13 citing Osney **4**, 145; *CalPR 1258–66*, 315; Wykes **4**, 146.

⁵⁷ Dunstable **3**, 230; Carpenter 1987, 13, also citing Canterbury/Dover, 235; Guisborough, 191; fitz Thedmar, 62.

⁵⁸ Carpenter 1987, 13–14 citing Dunstable **3**, 230–1; BL Nero A IX, f.71; St Albans, 489–90; and Canterbury/Dover, 235; Powicke 1947, **2**, 462. Roger de Leyburn was seriously injured in the fighting (Faulkner, 2004). For 1215, see Warren 1997, 246–7.

⁵⁹ *CalPR 1258–66*, 310–13; Carpenter 1987, 13 citing Dumstable **3**, 230, St Albans, 488–9, Wykes **4**, 146, London, 61–2.

⁶⁰ Guisborough 192.

⁶¹ Carpenter 1987, 14 citing Guisborough, 192; *CalCLR 1261–4*, 343; *CalPR 1258–66*, 315; Canterbury/Dover, 236.

⁶² *Battle*, 375–6; Powicke 1947, **2**, 462 note 2; Lemmon 1964, 105; Kingsford 1890; Carpenter 1987, 16 citing BL Nero A IX, F.71v; *Battle* 375; Wykes **4**, 147–8.

⁶³ Carpenter 1987, 16 citing *Battle* 375–6; St Albans 491–2; *CalCLR 1261–4*, 384; Wykes **4**, 147 (Powicke 1947, **2**, 462); Lemmon 1964, 105–6 gives more detail.

⁶⁴ Powicke 1947, **2**, 463; Lemmon 1964, 106; Carpenter 1987, 17. For Henry III’s movements before the battle, see Kingsford 1890; *Battle* 375–6, and Powicke 1947, **2**, 462 note 2.

⁶⁵ Malden 1900b, 25–6; Malden 1912, 255.

⁶⁶ Page 181; Carpenter 1987, 17 citing fitz Thedmar, 62; *CalPR 1258–66*, 318; Powicke 1947, **2**, 467.

park.⁶⁷ Lewes was the one place in the vicinity where the king could feel secure, the lord of the town and castle being the loyalist earl of Surrey, John de Warenne.⁶⁸ Simon de Montfort set up his camp at his manor at Fletching, eight miles north of Lewes, where the surrounding forest might protect his army from a surprise attack. Both commanders seem to have been remarkably well informed about the other's movements.⁶⁹

The Battle of Lewes, 14 May 1264

At first, the battle went Henry III's way. An inexperienced troop of Londoners supporting the barons was routed and driven off the field by the cavalry of the Lord Edward. But Edward's continued pursuit of the Londoners left his father's army depleted and exposed. Many fled, and Simon de Montfort was able to seize the moment and to win the battle. While some chroniclers have the king surrendering to Gilbert de Clare IV on the battlefield, others have the king escaping to the Cluniac priory and negotiating terms of surrender from there. Gilbert might have been responsible for besieging the priory, or for the king's protection afterwards. Other prisoner-hostages included the Lord Edward and Roger de Leyburn.⁷⁰

Following the surrender of Henry III, a convention was signed, known as 'the *Mise of Lewes*' during the following night.⁷¹ The king sent letters to his garrisons at various castles including Reigate and Tonbridge that they should evacuate their castles and remain quiet on peril of their lives and lands.⁷² Both Walter of Guisborough and Nicholas Trivet report that the Tonbridge garrison refused to disband and marched off defiantly to Bristol after ambushing the fleeing Londoners at Croydon.⁷³

The 'slighting' of Bletchingley Castle

The archaeological evidence of major burning and overturning of walls⁷⁴ have confirmed the oral tradition that Bletchingley Castle suffered a catastrophe soon after 1250. Uvedale Lambert, the Bletchingley historian, wrote: 'tradition says it [Bletchingley Castle] was at their [London levies fleeing early from the battle of Lewes] hands that it suffered, if not destruction, at least such damage as to be made untenable'.⁷⁵ A slightly different account had appeared more than two centuries earlier: 'some ruins [of the Castle] whereof were visible (1673) [sic]. This with most part of the town of Bletchingley is said to have been demolish'd in the Barons Wars, when the Forces of King Henry III routed the Londoners at Lewes in Sussex, and pursu'd them as far as Croydon'.⁷⁶ The second sentence was copied (with minor changes to the spelling and punctuation) from a manuscript description of Bletchingley by William Hampton inserted into Aubrey's draft text.⁷⁷ William Hampton's

⁶⁷ Carpenter 1987, 18 citing *Battle* 376; *CalPR* 1258–66, 316; *CalCIR* 1264–8, 384.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, citing Guisborough 192, Winchester 2, 451, Gilson 521 and London 62.

⁶⁹ Powicke 1947, 2, 473; Carpenter 1987, 18, citing St Albans 492, Winchester 2, 451, *CalIM* 1 nos 921, 2030.

⁷⁰ Carpenter 1985a, 4–5; *ibid*, 8 citing *CalPR* 1258–66, 374. They were allowed to retire to the Welsh March on promise of good behaviour (Faulkner 2004); Ramsay 1908, 220–8; Carpenter 1985a, 3 note 14, 9 note 42.

⁷¹ Trehearne 1964, 11. A continuation of Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, from 1259 to 1307, is attributed to William Rishanger is the basis of *Chronicon et duobus bellis de Lewes et de Evesham*. There is a gap in the text between the negotiations on the night of 15 May and mid-July, but it then gives a detailed account of the formal terms of peace that followed the hastily-concocted outline *Mise of Lewes*. Denholm-Young 1933, 132; Maddicott 1983; Carpenter 1985a.

⁷² Powicke 1947, 2, 467.

⁷³ Guisborough 196, writing c 1300, but possibly using an earlier source (Rothwell 1967, xxx [sic]); Trivet, 261, writing about twenty years later and thought to be derived from Guisborough. Harris 2005, 273, provides translations of both Guisborough and Trivet.

⁷⁴ Turner 1986, and in prep (a).

⁷⁵ Lambert 1921, 1, 90.

⁷⁶ Aubrey 1718–19, 3, 73.

⁷⁷ Bodleian MS Aubrey 4, f 63, cited by Rowena Adams in a letter to Dennis Turner of 21 September 1999. See also Harris 2005, 274, 302 note 313.

source remains a mystery. He was rector of Bletchingley 1625–77 [sic] and his and Aubrey's lifetimes overlapped.⁷⁸

Although slightly ambiguous, the implication seems to be that it was the royal forces, rather than the 'Londoners', who were responsible for the demolition. This agrees with one of the two accounts given by Manning & Bray.⁷⁹ Their other account said of the battle that it 'drew after it the demolition of [de Clare's] castle of Bletchingley: for the garrison of Tonbridge (*sic*) Castle, then in the King's hands, hearing of the King's misfortune, sallied out on the Londoners [...] who were then collecting their shattered remnant at Croydon, and demolished this castle in their way'.⁸⁰ Henry Malden said that the 'Londoners' rallied at Bletchingley 'at the castle of their ally de Clare' before falling back on Croydon. Elsewhere he said that 'according to tradition, the garrison of Tonbridge [...] on the same march westward caused much damage to Ble(t)chingley [*sic*] castle'.⁸¹ There would seem to be no evidence that Bletchingley Castle was occupied after this event, although Manning and Bray state that the castle was 'restored afterwards, but has long been completely destroyed' without giving any authority for this.⁸²

From Lewes to Evesham

After Henry III's surrender, Gilbert de Clare IV, Simon de Montfort IV and the bishop of Chichester came together as three 'Electors' to rule the kingdom. Gilbert was granted lands from the estates of William de Warenne, the earl of Surrey, who had fled the kingdom.⁸³

Gilbert came to dislike the young de Montforts, and to chafe under the leadership of their father. During the negotiations with King Louis in August and September 1264, a dispute is said to have arisen about a prisoner's ransom. Gilbert de Clare IV eventually deserted Simon de Montfort, taking part in organising the Lord Edward's escape from captivity in 1265.⁸⁴

The Battle of Evesham, 4 August 1265

The story of the battle of Evesham can be briefly told.⁸⁵ Gilbert de Clare IV and the Lord Edward's forces, based at Worcester, prevented Simon de Montfort IV from moving north-east from South Wales to link up with his son's army at Kenilworth. The royalists blocked all routes out of Evesham, where Simon had stopped to reconnoitre; he was killed in the battle that followed.

Gilbert de Clare's reconciliation with the Lord Edward was a sensible, pragmatic action that ought to have saved his estates from the consequences of supporting a cause lost by the summer of 1265. But personal relationships between the de Clare family, the Lord Edward and Roger de Leyburn, intervened.

Roger de Leyburn

Roger de Leyburn had been part of the conservative wing of the baronial movement in March 1259.⁸⁶ He had quarrelled with Richard de Clare IV and later with his master, the Lord Edward, in mid-1262, plundering royal manors in support of Simon de Montfort.⁸⁷

⁷⁸ Lambert 1921, 2, 390.

⁷⁹ Manning & Bray 1809, 2, 305.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 296.

⁸¹ Malden 1900a, 85; 1900b, 76.

⁸² As note 79. Gilbert de Clare may have had a manor house further north by then.

⁸³ Powicke 1962, Ch V; Altschul 1965, 103–6; Trehearne & Sanders 1973, 46–55 (Rishanger 35); but see Knowles 2004 regarding Reigate Castle.

⁸⁴ Powicke 1947, 2, 493; Carpenter 1987, 37.

⁸⁵ Full accounts in Carpenter 1987, 38ff; Cox 1988.

⁸⁶ Pages 177, 178.

⁸⁷ Faulkner 2004, 695; Trehearne 1932, 140.

However, he was reconciled with his master a year later, and thereafter remained a royal supporter, but still in conflict with the de Clares.

Immediately after the battle of Evesham (during which he is said to have saved the king's life) Roger was reappointed sheriff of Kent, a post he held until November 1267.⁸⁸ Under the terms of his old royal writ of March 1264 ordering him to keep the peace in Kent, Surrey and Sussex,⁸⁹ Roger de Leyburn seems to have continued to be repressor-in-chief of disorder in those counties. He held the castles of Nottingham, Rochester, and the Tower against attacks. His first mission was to the Londoners 'to treat of peace and to take the City and Tower of London into the King's hand'.⁹⁰ London made absolute submission, and Roger bore back to Windsor letters recording the fact. Henry III then sent for the mayor and 40 prominent men of the City to confirm what they had written. Roger de Leyburn, who brought them letters of safe conduct, took the delegates from Staines to Windsor Castle, outside which they were kept waiting and, when finally admitted, locked up in the [Round?] Tower. Roger was sent a second time to the City of London in September, to prevent the conspiracies and treasonable gatherings which the king understood to be taking place.⁹¹

In November 1265 the king heard that there were unlawful assemblies in the Weald. Roger de Leyburn's accounts speak of his journey there as made 'to repress the rebels of the Lord King and to bring them back to the King's peace', keeping two hundred archers in his pay for nearly seven weeks.⁹² At the beginning of January 1266 he was sent to Sandwich, then harbouring the galleys of the Cinque Ports, to seize the port and expel the hostile vessels.⁹³ The heavy costs of his defence of the coast required special contributions from the county. Roger passed on to Hastings with a royal order to fortify the castle and protect the adjacent ports. Thence he made an expedition to Winchelsea, to hunt down rebels and drive out more rebel mariners.⁹⁴ In April 1266, Henry III gave Roger de Leyburn 'from the King's beloved works at Westminster [Abbey] 4000 freestone blocks', perhaps for (re) building Leybourne Castle.⁹⁵ Six years earlier, Roger de Leyburn's newly-begun castle here was ordered to be destroyed, but 'the place was established as a castle and barony' by 1276.⁹⁶

Continuing baronial resistance was not confined to the south-east; in particular, there were both Ely and Simon de Montfort IV's own castle at Kenilworth, not besieged by the royal army until June 1266. Roger de Leyburn probably moved to Kenilworth to help in the long-drawn-out siege of that castle, since his name appears among the witnesses to the *Dictum* and we find many pardons granted at his instance. A committee was appointed to draw up terms for the rebels. Clause 35 of the *Dictum* of Kenilworth⁹⁷ covered the men who had returned to loyalty after opposing the king at Northampton and Lewes. Especially favoured were those who had aided Gilbert de Clare IV at the time of his break with Simon de Montfort.

Then came orders for Roger de Leyburn to undertake a punitive raid into Essex, the reason once more being unlawful gatherings, robbery and murder on a considerable scale. The operation lasted from 6 May to 1 June 1266 and Roger de Leyburn employed a fair-sized force, reckoning his expenses at £117 14s a day. He had 35 knights, seven sergeants-at-arms, seven *valetti* of the king, and seven crossbow-men, a number of 'Welshmen and scouts', and 500 archers from the Weald, 200 of whom he equipped with tunics.⁹⁸

⁸⁸ Jacob 1925, 167 and 255, citing Exchequer Miscellanea 1/41, Faulkner 2004.

⁸⁹ Page 179.

⁹⁰ Jacob 1925, 147–8 citing Pipe Roll 111, m.28d, Exchequer Miscellanea 1/4, no 10 and Exchequer Accounts (KR) 3/6.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 255, note 2 citing and transcribing Exchequer Miscellanea 1/41, no 9.

⁹² *Ibid.* 256, citing Exchequer Miscellanea 1/41, no 2 and 255, Exchequer Accounts 3/6.

⁹³ *CalPR* 1266–72, 144–5; Jacob 1925, 254 citing Close Roll 50 Henry III, m.7 (= *CalCIR* 1264–8, 684).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 256–7 citing *CalPR* 1258–66, 551; Exchequer Miscellanea 1/41, no 4 (10 February); transcribing Exchequer Accounts 3/4, 6.

⁹⁵ *CalCIR* 1264–8, 190.

⁹⁶ Page 177; Coulson 2007–8, 191.

⁹⁷ Treharne & Sanders 1973, 56–60, document 44.

⁹⁸ Jacob 1925, 257 citing Exchequer Accounts 3/6.

In consideration of his faithful service, Roger de Leyburn was granted remission of all ‘debts and arrears, accounts, reckonings, and receipts’ which he was bound to render when sheriff of Kent.⁹⁹ Early in 1267 he was sent at the Lord Edward’s request to drive parties from the Cinque Ports out of Winchelsea once more; then back again to the Weald in February on hearing that there were further and more serious disturbances there.¹⁰⁰

The *Dictum* provided for the Disinherited to redeem their lands on a scale varying with their degree of participation in the rebellion. Litigation was often necessary to establish this.¹⁰¹ A dispute between Gilbert de Clare IV and the king in January 1267 led to Gilbert withdrawing to the Welsh Marches.¹⁰² By 5 March the king was assembling a force at Lynn, presumably for an attack on Ely.¹⁰³ However, John d’Eyvill, the leader of the rebels there, was making for London to join Gilbert de Clare, who had assured the king that he would join him at Cambridge. Roger de Leyburn was told to chase d’Eyvill ‘day and night’.¹⁰⁴

Urban disturbances

Ottoboni, the papal legate, was independently negotiating with King Henry over the question of the Disinherited and had summoned Gilbert de Clare IV to London. Gilbert marched on London at the head of a strong force. In view of their previous treatment by Roger de Leyburn and the king, the Londoners may not have been reluctant to side with Gilbert. In 1267, the *minutus populus* of London rose again and the commune was proclaimed; wealthy and important citizens were placed under arrest; new bailiffs were elected and all who had been banished for offences committed during Simon de Montfort’s government came back to the City, while any imprisoned on that account were released. The Disinherited came flocking to Gilbert de Clare IV from all parts ‘as if to their protector’ as one annalist strikingly phrased it.¹⁰⁵

Gilbert’s fortification of the City, the preparations he was making against the Tower, and his collection of fortified ships in the Thames, led Henry III to abandon the siege of Ely. Roger de Leyburn was despatched to stock and fortify Dover and Rochester Castles and to commandeer provisions in Kent for the royal army.¹⁰⁶ The king reorganised his forces at Windsor and moved to Stratford, where he remained with his army for fully seven weeks, presumably preparing to assault the City. On 24 May the king sent Roger de Leyburn to France to raise mercenaries, a mission which was accomplished with amazing speed and apparent success (he returned on 1 June).¹⁰⁷

King Henry III had assembled a formidable army, but the mediation of his brother Richard of Almain (King of the Romans) and the papal legate resulted in Gilbert de Clare IV coming to terms with the king.¹⁰⁸ The resistance of the Disinherited in East Anglia and Gilbert’s action had been a considerable menace to the government. The countryside was terrorised,

⁹⁹ Jacob 1925, 257–8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, citing Exchequer Miscellanea 1/41, no. 6, no 5; Lewis, 1939, 206.

¹⁰¹ Jacob 1925, 160; Prestwich 1997, 55.

¹⁰² Lewis 1939, 206 citing Rishanger, 59–60 and Dunstable 3, 245; Altschul 1965, 113–18.

¹⁰³ Jacob 1925, 260.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 258 citing Exchequer Miscellanea 1/41, no 8, and [BL] Add MSS 5444, f.82 and also fitz Thedmar 90; Lewis 1939, 206–7 citing fitz Thedmar, 95 and Wykes 4, 198–9; Powicke 1947, 2, 542–3.

¹⁰⁵ For the friction between the Londoners and the Crown from Magna Carta onwards, see Barron 2004, 11. In 1259, during the mayoralty of Thomas fitz Thomas, the ‘lower elements’ of the City had been encouraged to such an extent that, ‘calling themselves the commune of the city, they had the first voice in the city’ (Jacob 1925, 134–5 citing fitz Thedmar 55). Wykes attributed the contemporary social disturbances in other towns throughout the country to the conduct of Londoners from 1262 to 1263 and there had been similar occurrences at other dates: Wykes 4, 281ff. Also Jacob 1925, 258 citing fitz Thedmar, 91; Winchester 2, 105.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 258–9 citing BL Add MSS 5444, f.83; Lewis 1939, 207 citing Exchequer Miscellanea 1/41 no 11; for requisitions from Essex, see Powicke 1947, 2, 544 citing Cam 1921, 175–6.

¹⁰⁷ Jacob 1925, 259, citing Exchequer Miscellanea 1/41 no 11; Lewis 1939, 207 citing E101/3, no 9.

¹⁰⁸ Jacob, *ibid*; Lewis 1939, 208 citing CalPR 1266–72, 72, 144, 246 and *Foedera* 1, 472.

attempts were made to seduce from their loyalty towns faithful to the king, and arms were landed at Norwich. Between April and July 1267 a force of four knights, 40 esquires and their attendants, based on Rochester, is said to have been fully occupied in preventing a rising in the Weald in sympathy with Gilbert de Clare IV and d'Eyvill.¹⁰⁹ Although Roger de Leyburn was probably elsewhere for much of the time, he had been the forces' commander who had hanged six of Richard de Clare IV's men in 1259.

The solution was inevitably weighted on the side of the royalists, for many rebels either lacked the resources to redeem their lands or were too suspect to be received into the king's peace. Gilbert de Clare IV once more became the leader. It is difficult to see what he might have gained by continuing his occupation of London (*a coup d'état* can surely be ruled out). Gilbert's motive can only have been to continue supporting the principles of the reform movement. The terms agreed at Stratford on 16 June 1267 brought pardon to all members of his retinue, safe conduct and freedom from molestation for the Ely garrison and others who made their submission to the king by a certain date, and an 'aid' from the clergy for their ransom.¹¹⁰ Legal hearings began, including inquests taken to determine the loyalty of various persons during the war and upon the damage done to loyal subjects.¹¹¹

The 'slighting' of Bletchingley Castle revisited

There are two dates, 1264 and 1267, when the history of the de Clares suggest that the 'slighting' of Bletchingley Castle may have happened. The traditional story has been set out above.¹¹² At the outset of the battle of Lewes in 1264, the routed London troops, retreating to Croydon, are very unlikely to have had the time (or equipment) for the systematic destruction evidenced by archaeology; in any case, they were on the baronial side. The Lord Edward's pursuing cavalry would also not have been equipped for a major demolition. The same argument applies to the royalists from Tonbridge Castle: a (temporary) garrison (unlikely to have been large) which either sallied out or was on its way to Bristol (in defiance of the 'enrolled letter') would be similarly unlikely to pause and carry out a lengthy demolition.

A far more likely date for the 'slighting' of Bletchingley Castle is early 1267, when Gilbert de Clare IV had seized London against Henry III and Roger de Leyburn's forces were occupied in preventing a rising in the Weald in sympathy with Gilbert and John d'Eyvill.¹¹³ Roger had the power, the opportunity and, effectively, the writ to settle several scores. He had been concerned with the elimination of anti-royalist resistance in the Weald before Gilbert de Clare IV had come out in defence of the Disinherited. Roger could have taken revenge on Bletchingley for the threat to (and possible actual destruction of) his own castle of Leybourne by Richard de Clare IV and others (even if ostensibly on the king's orders) in the winter of 1259–60.¹¹⁴

By 1267, Bletchingley Castle can have been of little account to the de Clares. That year saw Llywelyn ap Gruffyd, Prince now of all Wales, secure the Treaty of Montgomery and threaten the Marcher earls' holdings. Gilbert de Clare IV was soon to build his great castle at Caerphilly in Glamorgan – he may, indeed, have already started work on the site.¹¹⁵ Gilbert's attention and money were now being directed to Caerphilly (and perhaps Tonbridge),

¹⁰⁹ Jacob 1925, 190ff: Assize Roll 1207 (Surrey, Kent, Sussex), m.4, records robberies on John le Moyne's estates in Surrey.

¹¹⁰ Jacob 1925, 118, 160–3, 259–60.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 173, citing *CalPR* 1266–72, 70–3.

¹¹² Pages 181–2.

¹¹³ Lewis 1939, 210.

¹¹⁴ Pages 177, 183.

¹¹⁵ Building at Caerphilly is said to have begun on 11 April 1268, and to have been substantially complete by the end of 1272 (Johns 1978, 30–1), which is remarkably quick (five building seasons, interrupted by a Welsh burning) for such a complex enterprise. Whether the building of the remarkably similar great gatehouse of Tonbridge Castle preceded the Inner East Gatehouse at Caerphilly as Renn suggested (1981, 100) or succeeded it (Martin & Martin, 2013, 274), both must have been designed by the same man.

not Betchingley. The latter, an up-to-the-minute ‘country house’ building of the late 11th century, had been little modified and would have been obsolete by the late 13th century. Roger de Leyburn’s focus also changed. Accompanying the Lord Edward on crusade in 1268/9, he founded the eponymous (and very successful) *bastide* of Liborne in Gascony. Back in England by December 1270, he was dead within a year.¹¹⁶ While no chronicle evidence has been found to support the 17th century account of the ‘slighting’ of Betchingley Castle at the time of the battle of Lewes, it is difficult to accept that the ‘tradition’ recorded by William Hampton is ‘no more than a dubious piece of local folklore’.¹¹⁷

The hypothesis advanced here – that the ‘slighting’ was the final event in a long-running dispute between the de Clares and Roger de Leyburn – could have been the basis of a local tradition. The year 1267, the date now proposed for the destruction, is sufficiently close to the battle of Lewes (1264) that the two became conflated.¹¹⁸

After the Barons’ Wars

In 1269, Henry III appointed a commission to investigate Gilbert de Clare IV’s alleged usurpation of liberties in Kent, in reply to Gilbert’s claim for compensation for his losses in the Evesham campaign.¹¹⁹ When Gilbert proposed to accompany Henry III on crusade in 1270, Henry III’s brother Richard, earl of Cornwall, was to hold Tonbridge Castle. When the Lord Edward returned to England to be crowned in 1274, he was welcomed by Gilbert de Clare IV and by John de Warenne in turn at Tonbridge and Reigate Castles.¹²⁰ In 1285, Gilbert secured the grant of an annual three-day fair to be held at Betchingley.¹²¹ To attract Gilbert’s closer support, Edward I gave him his daughter, Joan of Acre, as his second wife. The terms of the marriage settlement of 1290 left Gilbert de Clare IV as a life tenant of his estates; only his children by Joan were to succeed him.¹²² A long-running feud between Gilbert and Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford, culminated in both being fined and briefly imprisoned by Edward I in 1292.¹²³

Royal letters were dated at Betchingley on 13 May 1294,¹²⁴ but this does not mean that the castle itself had been reoccupied. In 1295, following the death of Gilbert de Clare IV, his *Inquisition post mortem* does not mention a castle, only a capital messuage, garden and closes, worth 6s 8d *per annum*.¹²⁵ The capital messuage may have been on the site later occupied by Betchingley Place (Venars, now Place Farm) or that of Little Pickle (Hextalls) a little to the east.¹²⁶

Like his father, Gilbert de Clare IV’s heir (another Gilbert, born in 1291) was a minor at his father’s death. However, by the terms of the marriage settlement in 1290, Joan of Acre

¹¹⁶ Faulkner 2004. His heart is enshrined in Leybourne church (Larking 1863).

¹¹⁷ Harris 2005, 274.

¹¹⁸ (by Derek Renn) Dennis Turner was reluctant to dismiss the traditional story completely, despite his conclusion. Folk memory of the years of tension leading up to the (relatively) local battle of Lewes would have been far stronger than those of events at far-away Evesham and Kenilworth. From many alternative, if less likely, possibilities. I select just one: that the demolition took place *before the battle of Lewes*. The sudden death of Richard IV de Clare in 1262 would have left his estates vulnerable. Roger de Leyburn was then attacking royalist estates, but early in 1264 he was sent by Henry III with John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, to secure the castles of Rochester and Reigate *et partes circumiacentes* (Rishanger 22), against any rising by the ‘Londoners’ (page 179). The obvious division of responsibilities would be for John to deal with his own castle of Reigate, and for Roger to control Rochester. Betchingley was an ‘adjacent place’, and John de Warenne and Roger de Leyburn each had a different reason to ‘slight’ the de Clare castle there.

¹¹⁹ Altschul 1965, 126–7; Prestwich 1997, 61.

¹²⁰ Prestwich 1997, 71, citing *CCIR* 1272–9, 97; *CPR* 1272–81, 55–6; *Flores III*, 43.

¹²¹ Leveson-Gower 1871, 203, 253 citing *Charter Roll* 11 Edward I.

¹²² Altschul 1965, 146–9, 165–7.

¹²³ Prestwich 1997, 348–51. Gilbert had begun a major castle on the Brecon border about 1288.

¹²⁴ *CalCIR* 1288–96, 347. The next letter is stated to have been sealed at Betchworth.

¹²⁵ Manning & Bray 1809, 2, 397 citing Esc 24 Ed I no 107.

¹²⁶ Turner in prep (b); Saaler 1998.

had been jointly enfeoffed of the de Clare lands, which were restored to her in January 1296. When she remarried against her father's wishes, Edward I seized the de Clare estates, but later restored them, with the exception of the *honor* of Tonbridge and the Isle of Portland.¹²⁷

Gilbert de Clare V died in 1314, in the battle of Bannockburn.¹²⁸ His *Inquisition post mortem* mentions two capital messuages at Bletchingley.¹²⁹ This may indicate a manor house completely separate from the castle, which was certainly the case by 1541.¹³⁰ The family lands were eventually divided between Gilbert de Clare V's three sisters. The manor of Bletchingley went to the youngest, Margaret de Clare. The separation of castle and manor may also have been signalled by the eldest sister being granted the knights' fees separately from the manor.¹³¹ The fees might have remained legally attached to the castle site.

Margaret was married twice: first to Piers Gaveston, and secondly to Hugh d'Audley. During Hugh's rebellion, extensive repairs to the fences of both parks at Bletchingley were carried out for Edward II in 1325.¹³² Margaret's only daughter by her second marriage took Bletchingley to the family of Stafford.¹³³ Humphrey Stafford (later duke of Buckingham) came into possession of the estate in 1422. On the execution of Edward, duke of Buckingham, in 1521, Bletchingley manor escheated to the Crown, and was granted to Nicholas Carew of Beddington. He in turn was executed and Henry VIII settled Bletchingley on Anne of Cleves in 1541. The land on which the castle stood was held by the family of Cholmeley in the 16th century.¹³⁴ The site was later held by the Gaynesfords of Crowhurst Place and passed from them to the Drakes. In 1793 James Drake Brockman sold it to John Kendrick in whose family it stayed for 50 years. It then passed to James Norris, who built Castle Place about 1860.¹³⁵ In 1871, Granville Leveson-Gower recorded that 'recent excavations exposed a considerable length of one of the walls [of the castle] together with the foundations of one of the towers and one of the loophole openings'.¹³⁶ Shortly before 1900, Henry Malden saw much more of the structure 'exposed and an ill-advised and worse executed attempt to build up the loose stones into walls and an arch'.¹³⁷ Castle Place belonged to Mr and Mrs Bertlin at the time of the 1986 excavations.¹³⁸

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¹²⁷ *CalCIR* 1296–1302, 12; *CalFR* 1272–1307, 369, 383; Altschul 1965, 157–8, citing Rishanger 171, Parliamentary writs 1, 296; Guisborough 259. Compare page 177.

¹²⁸ Leveson-Gower 1871, 203; Altschul 1965, 165 citing *CalFR* 1307–19, 200–1, 204.

¹²⁹ Manning & Bray 1809, 2, 297 citing Esc.8 Ed II, no 68.

¹³⁰ Malden 1900b, 20.

¹³¹ Malden 1912, 255 note 44 citing *Year Book* 17–18 Edward III, 404.

¹³² Saaler 1998, 5 citing Ministers' Accounts SC.6/1148/13.

¹³³ The succession of the Staffords is set out by Leveson-Gower 1871, 204–5. There are extensive records of Bletchingley manor and town 1307–1521 at Stafford County Record Office (Saaler 1986).

¹³⁴ Manning & Bray 1809, 2, 303 only say that the family 'settled here from an early date'.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*; Malden 1912, 255.

¹³⁶ Leveson-Gower 1871, 214.

¹³⁷ Malden 1900b, 21, 23–5.

¹³⁸ Malden 1912, 255; Turner 1986.

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