

MANOR COURT ROLLS OF FENNY STRATFORD
AND ETONE (BLETCHLEY).

By W. BRADBROOK.

The following is a digest of the contents of 29 membranes, of which 19 are Fenny Stratford and 10 Etone; 5 of the last are in the British Museum, the membranes are about 9 to 11 inches wide and from one to three feet in length, most of them are written on each side.

The 19 Fenny Stratford skins contain the records of 48 courts, the first being dated May, 1373, and the last October, 1395. The 5 Etone record 8 courts, first dated January, 1371, and the last August, 1382. The 5 skins in the Brit. Mus. (Add. Rolls 59,361-5) record 7 courts, first dated Trinity, 1372, and the last January, 1384. The record is not continuous; several missing membranes are required to make it perfect, nevertheless the contents provide a sufficiently full account of local life for 22 years.

No mention is made of any meeting place, probably the Etone courts were held at Water Hall; they were held indifferently on any day, Tuesday being most in favour and then Thursday; two were held on Sunday, once in 1376 and again in 1383. The courts met in every month except June; 13 were at end of October and November, 10 in May.

Only once is a court dated by the calendar, viz., 14th May, 1392, the rest are dated by Saints' days or Church festivals, e.g., Thursday after Hokeday, 1375; Friday after All Saints, 1376, etc.

Each record is in abbreviated Latin, and is headed: "Fenny Stratford, View with court held there (date) in the year of the reign of King (Edw. or Rich.) after the Conquest the 46th (or so)." One record begins, "Halmote held there, etc.," and deals only with estate business; another begins, "View of Frank-pledge held there."

The assemblage, presided over by the Lord's steward, held two courts—one the View of Frank-pledge, or Court Leet, dealt with public business, such

as is now done by County Councils, County Courts, Police Courts, etc.; the other or Little Court, or Court Baron, dealt with estate business, the relations between lord and tenants and the management of the Manor.

The court first took the *Essoniae* or excuses, the list of names "essoined of common essoin" for non-attendance, usually illness or infirmity. Then follow the names of the tithing men, 7 to 10 in number, with 2 constables and 2 ale-tasters at Fenny Stratford. At Etone there were 12 to 15 tithing men, 2 or 3 constables, and 3 ale-tasters. Then were reported the names of those, who, having made no excuse, "come not therefore they in mercy," each was fined 2d. usually. Some names appear frequently, e.g., John Plomer, chaplain, who is fined on a rising scale, 2d. to 6d.

At the autumn court (October or November) the tithing men gave (not paid) cert money, 10s. at Fenny and 13s. 4d. at Etone. The cert money was for the expenses of keeping the law day.

The tithing men and officers then report or present offenders and occurrences: at the end of the record of the court leet is the final statement, "Twelve jurors say on their oath that tithing men, constables, and ale-tasters well and faithfully present and make no concealment." The fines were fixed by two specially appointed *afferatores* (*affier*, to confirm), whose signatures end the record.

MEN IN THE TITHING.

The View of Frankpledge was an important part of the business of the Court Leet. King Alfred perhaps instituted tithings, ten freeholders made the tithing, and were sureties or free-pledges to the King for the good behaviour of each other; for any offence they were bound to produce the offender or be punished in his stead. No man was suffered to abide in England 40 days unless he were enrolled in a tithing. Annually one in each tithing was appointed tithingman or headborough. Men had certainly become freer than they had been, yet if a man were no longer "adscriptus glebae," he was still controlled in

movement by economic necessity as well as by the regulations of civil government.

¹ Dec. 1373, and that Nicholas Smyth was received not being in a tithing, the aforesaid by William his brother therefore he is in mercy, and that John brother of the same William was received out of the tithing by the same William therefore he in mercy; it is ordered that the said men to belong to a tithing against the next view under penalty 40d. and that John Wylemot 3d., Henry Taylor 3d., and William Schendon 3d., received a certain servant who was out of the tithing therefore he in mercy, and that John Gernoun 2d. withdrew himself out of the tithing therefore he is in mercy.

Nov. 1375, John Smyth is placed in the tithing and takes the oath, and that John Wilmot gives to the Lord for a fine 6d. and is able to be out of the tithing this year, etc.

November, 1380, John Koc gives as a fine, one capon, that he may be out of the tithing for one year. In November, 1381, Rich. Sadler gave one capon as a fine for the same, and others paid fines for not being in a tithing.

Oct. 1388 and that Thomas Cheval gives to the Lord for a fine 4d. that he may be able to be out of the tithing this year, and gives as a fine for the preceding year 4d., etc.

In 1392 Cheval again pays as above, and 17 others are fined, including one the Rector "pledged," for whom he was fined 2d.

Etone. Oct. 1381. And that John son of Nicholas Bagge gives to the Lord for a fine that he is able to be out of the tithing this year 4d., pledge John Bagge; and that Hugh Welchman 2d. is out of the tithing and is answered for by John Longe 2d. therefore he in mercy. John Mareys is placed in the tithing and takes the oath, etc.

Presentments varied in number: sometimes there was none, usually a few, and occasionally 12 to 20.

ROAD AND HIGHWAY REPAIRS.

Lying as the little town did, on either side of Watling Street, the repair or maintenance of this important *via regia* obtains frequent mention in these rolls, and the comparative heaviness of the fines shows the importance of the road and the remarkable non-chalance of offenders who made their dung heaps on the road, allowed their pigs to lie around as a nuisance,

¹ The sum after each name is the amount of the fine inflicted. The term "in mercy" indicates that the individual is in fault, and that the penalty is inflicted at the pleasure or decision of the lord.

and neglected to clean the ditches and keep the surface in order.

May 1373. And that John Wylemot, John Hertwell, John Red, Margaret Hunte, Thomas Schirlond (fine 2d. each) do not amend the high way fully as was enjoined to them at the last court therefore they in mercy, and it is ordered them to rectify it fully to the next court under penalty to each of them 12d.

June, 1374, John Wylemot and Richard Candler fined for not repairing the high road. Eight others fined 2d. each for having their dung heaps lying as a nuisance in the highway therefore they in mercy and it is ordered them to amend against the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula under penalty to each 12d. Ten others also fined for not cleaning gutters, etc.

Easter, 1376, Henry Taylor, William Woketon, Rich. Candler had their pigs lying in the highway to (the common) damage therefore in mercy.

In 1382 some heavy fines were inflicted on many offenders in cases of neglect, and again in 1383.

Feb. 1388, presented that there are many defects in the highway therefore it is ordered that each one holding amend the highway against his house under penalty 12d., and that all who have dung heaps lying in the highway to be a nuisance are warned against the next court under penalty 12d.

May, 1395, and that the bridge at Stratford is not repaired therefore the whole town in mercy, fine half-a-mark. And it is ordered that it be repaired against the feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist under penalty 40s.

The bridge over the Ousel or Lovatt was certainly timber and probably a foot bridge, heavy traffic always using the ford. The above sample extracts show that heavier fines were inflicted for offences on the *via regia*, for in the Etone rolls the fines are fewer and lighter as there was no great or important road in Bletchley.

Trinity 1372 John Smyth has dug up the King's highway at Danweshandlond to make fuel (turves) to the hurt of his neighbours he is commanded to repair the same under penalty 6d. John Bane has not repaired the lane called Winchestrelane as he was ordered, fine 3d., ordered to do it under penalty 40d. John Norman has dug up the highway upon Schenlarugwe therefore in mercy etc. John Bully has not repaired his ditches at Swetewell, in mercy etc.

Other offences, in 1377, Thomas Koc fined for an encroachment on the highway; in 1382, Alice Red fined for stopping up the water course at Thecros,

John Stevens dug earth in the common therefore in mercy, and again it is ordered the Person of the Church to fill up the encroachment he made on the common, etc.; in 1381 he was fined for digging earth in the highway to the damage of one penny.

SANITATION.

The care of the roads involved scavenging and outdoor sanitation, which in its turn meant regulation of buildings, etc., the following extracts illustrate this phase of the powers and duties of the manorial court.

Nov. 1377. Richard Candeler fine 3d. has dung heaps against dwellings to nuisance ordered to amend before the feast of St. Martin, under penalty $\frac{1}{2}$ mark.

Oct. 1388. Rich. Kandeler fine 2d. cleans not his ditch between him and John Pye therefore in mercy, ordered to do it.

Mar. 1377. Etone, John Bocher fine 2d. has not yet repaired his buildings therefore in mercy, ordered to amend before next court, penalty $\frac{1}{2}$ mark.

Etone, May, 1377. Agnes Hacon, Henry Taillor, and John Smith all fined for not cleaning their ditches, ordered etc.

POLICE DUTIES.

In 1285 was enacted the important Statute of Winchester for the enforcement of public order and the organisation of national police and defence. It regulated the duty of the hundred, of watch and ward. Every man was bound to be ready duly armed for the King's service to pursue felons when hue and cry was raised. Every district was responsible for the crimes committed within its bounds; the gates of a town were to be closed at night, and all strangers had to give an account of themselves. All bushes and cover was to be cleared on either side of the highway for a width of 200 feet so that robbers had no concealment.

Nov. 1377. John Felipes, John Deye and Robert Taillor, fined 6d. each, broke the statute of Wyncestre, watching in the night, therefore they in mercy.

In mediæval times the English were reputed to be the fiercest people in Europe; these rolls provide abundant evidence of violence and pugnacity on the part of women as well as men. At every court presentations were made for making affrays, drawing

blood, raising the hue and homsokne.² Homsokne² was the term used by those who complained of assault or robbery in their houses, but nocturnal crime cannot always be meant; often the meaning is obscure, and is occasionally translated "affray" in the extracts which follow. For the period of 22 years represented by these rolls there are more than 170 cases of violence recorded, were the series complete the total would be at least doubled.

View held thursday after Hokeday King Edw. III. year 49. that Scholastica Spenster justly raised the hue over John Wenkeworth therefore he in mercy, pledge the constable, and that the same John make an affray over the said Scholastica therefore he in mercy, pledge the constable. And that Rich. White drew blood from Will Test therefore in mercy, pledge the constable, and that the said William justly drew blood from the aforesaid Richard therefore the said Rich. in mercy. And that Galfridus atte halle justly raised the hue over Henry Taylor therefore in mercy, pledge Will Woketon, and that Rich. Geffessone justly raised the hue over the said Henry therefore in mercy, pledge the aforesaid. And that the same Henry made an affray with the said Galfridus therefore in mercy. And that William son of William Hosteler justly drew blood from Rich. Candler therefore the said Richard in mercy, pledge the constable, and that the wife of the said Richard justly raised the hue over the aforesaid William therefore he in mercy by pledge of his father.

Nov. 1377. And that Alice Fero unjustly raised the hue over Will. Woketon therefore she in mercy, pledge Henry Fero, and because the pledge has her not therefore in mercy. And that John Braban (fined 18d.) made an affray over Thomas Deye, John Mey, and Thomas Cok therefore he in mercy, by pledge of Golfrid atte halle, Rich. Candeler, Thomas Colyns, and Thomas Shirlond, and the same John drew one sword, worth 2s., which is forfeit.

On hearing the cry, "Out, Out," all were obliged to help in the capture of the offender, and as this process entailed some discomfort or even danger to the accused, punishment was inflicted on any one who raised the cry without good reason. General rows were common, e.g., November, 1384, Agnes, servant of John Wright, raised the hue over Walter, servant

² Hamsokn, hamsoca, or (1) privilege of private houses, (2) forcible entry into a house, (3) fine for it, (4) claim of breach of (1). The freedom of a man's own house. O.E. ham soon, occurs in charters of Cnut and Edward the Confessor, but query—whether genuine. Seems to be a Saxon law term not introduced into genuine charters until the arrival of the Bastard's lawyers. (F.G.G.).

of John Mey, and he was fined; Walter assaulted Agnes, and Agnes raised the hue over Thomas Colyn, thereupon John Colyn made an affray over Agnes. Weapons used were confiscated, and if the constables failed to take them they were fined. In May, 1392, Andrew, of Lowthone, drew one dagger worth 2d. against the peace, etc. In October, 1394, John Colyn drew one baselard, value 6d., and is continued to the next court in mercy because he has not the baselard. In October, 1395, Thomas atte halle drew one knife worth 1d., forfeited, and a certain stranger drew a baselard worth 3d., forfeited. A baselard was a short sword worn by civilians in front of the belt.

Etone. Dec. 1373, Stephen Mulewarde legally drew blood from Will. Stevens therefore he in mercy, pledge Nicholas Schepherde, and that the said William made homsokne over the said Stephen therefore in mercy, and because the tithingmen and constables concealed this therefore they in mercy.

May. 1377. John Clerk legally raised the hue over Will. Stevens of Drayton therefore he in mercy, and John Bene legally raised the hue over Walter Felipes and that the same Walter made abuse of the said John therefore in mercy. And that John Longe made homsokne over Stephen Milewarde therefore he in mercy, pledge the constables and because they have him not, they in mercy. •

Other duties were the custody of *bona waviata*³: e.g., in May, 1373 that waived chattels, viz., one . . . one cap, one hood, are valued at 8d., and it is ordered to raise the said sum from John Hertwell: presumably he had them. December, 1373, and that one embroidered tunic being waived chattels is valued at . . . Estrays, like lost chattels, became the property of the King, though sometimes the Lord of the Manor had them.

Etone. Dec. 1373 that one cow of a brown colour will be forthcoming of estrays against the feast of St. Martin.

Oct. 1381 that one wether is forthcoming of estrays and it remains because within the (legal) day and year.

April 1382 and that one wether which was presented at the last view as an estray is now judged of the Lord and remains in his store. And that one ox is forthcoming of estrays and it remains because within a year and a day.

³ *Bona waviata*, are goods stolen and waived or thrown away by the thief in his flight for fear of being apprehended. These are given to the King by the law, as a punishment upon the owner for not pursuing the felon and recovering his goods.

Trinity 1372 that one lamb forthcoming of estrays price 2s. William Shepherd has carried away a sheep, estray, worth 2s.

June 1377 John Snowes pays of fine for the keep of a cow forthcoming of estrays 18d. and proves in a lawful manner that it is his.

Oct. 1384 John Hamond has taken a pig forthcoming of estrays and sold it for 3s. 1d. in contempt of the lord, in mercy 40d. Jan. 1384 to this court comes John Mathew and proves a horse to be his well and truly bought and he gives to the lord for keep of the same 18d.

There is no more ancient institution than the village pound, which is probably older than the Kingdom (Maine), in which estrays were placed and were to be cried on two market days in the two nearest market towns, and if not claimed within a year and a day became the property of the Lord.

Oct. 1381. that John Longe (fine 3d.) broke the right of pound of the lord, therefore he in mercy.

CIVIL ACTIONS.

Civil actions, which would now be tried at the County Court, came to the manor court, pleas of debt, trespass, and disputes about property.

Aug. 1375 Rich. Candeler complains against John Balyngton in a plea of debt and the aforesaid Richard offers himself against John Balyngton and the aforesaid John is attached for one horse price 20s. by pledge of Will. Taylor and the aforesaid John Balyngton is excused by John (clerk).

John Heyne complains against John Gernon in a plea of debt and the aforesaid John Heyne offers himself and John Gernon is not yet attached for one pig worth 12d. by pledge of John Mey, etc.

The reason for finding pledges was that the plaintiff should prosecute his suit to a judgment, and not put the defendant to trouble and charge unnecessarily.

Nov. 1375 John Heyne does not prosecute his suit against John Gernon for plea of debt, therefore he and the pledge for prosecution in the mercy of the Lord. Robt. Test complains against John servant of John Bonde for a plea of trespass and the said John is attached by the pledge of Will. Osteler and comes not therefore the pledge in mercy and it is ordered the better to distrain him against the next court. Walter Felipes complains against Thos. Mulso in a plea of debt, pledge for prosecution the bailiff and because he owes to him and unjustly detains 8s. for a certain cow and the said Thomas acknowledges, hence let execution be done and in mercy for detaining. Henry Bolay complains against John Tilecot in a plea of debt, pledge for prosecution the bailiff, and the said John not prosecuted, therefore he and the bailiff in mercy, etc.

The court officer "distrainted," levied distress on the goods of a defaulter to satisfy the fine. Attachment, the cautionary seizing of an offender or goods pending a judgment. The system of cultivation with its plots of scattered strips of land in open fields was communal in its essence; the difficulty of preventing trespass was obvious, and quarrels must have been frequent, probably only some came for decision at the court, when occasionally amicable settlement occurred.

May, 1377. Again it is ordered to attach Joan Hore to answer John Goldyng in a plea of trespass against the next court. Rich. Candeler complains against Roger Bully in a plea of trespass, pledge for prosecution the bailiff, and by licence they are agreed so that the said Roger places himself in mercy.

April 1382 John Stevens complains against John Deye in a plea of debt, pledge for prosecution the bailiff, and because that he owes to him one bucket worth 8d. because he paid 8d. and unjustly detains to his hurt 6d., and the said John Deye says that he does not owe and has a day against the next court by pledge of Will. Woketon and Thomas Colyns.

Etone April 1382. John Deye complains against John Stevens in a plea of debt, pledge for prosecution the bailiff and he complains that he owes him 8d. for one little bucket purchased from him and John Stevens acknowledges therefore let execution be done and in mercy.

Aug. 1382. John Deye fails concerning his law suit made against John Stevens for debt therefore it is ordered by the court that John Stevens regains from John Deye 8d. for one bucket and 6d. for damage hence let execution be done and in mercy for detaining.

Oct. 1388. Will Barton complains against Galfridus atte Halle in a plea of debt whence he complains that he owes to him and unjustly detains 18d. for the teaching of his son and Galfridus acknowledges, therefore let execution be done etc.

Oct. 1395. John Heyne complains against Thomas Colyn fuller in a plea of debt and trespass, pledge the bailiff, and because he owes and unjustly detains 2s. for his labour for his carting at Wandonwode for two days and his pigs to the damage 40d., and the said Thomas said that concerning the debt he owes nothing and for the pig he made compensation and wishes to make his law and let him have a day himself sixhanded against the next court by pledge of Rich. Kandeler, and after by licence they are agreed so that the complainant places himself in mercy.

MARKET.

A market was a valuable privilege granted by the Crown, which was eagerly sought for by the Lords of Manors. In 1104 Roger de Cauz had the grant of a market at Etone, as all Bletchley and Fenny Stratford

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END OF ROLL (S. George's Day, 1385).

were included in Etone by the Domesday survey we may suppose that this market was held at Fenny Stratford on the great high road known as Watling Street, where there were houses of refreshment and a small town, and not at Water Eaton, where the Lord's mill was, with his residence, situated nearly a mile from the highway. In 1324 John de Grey died seized of a Monday market at Fenny Stratford valued at one mark.

Dec. 1373. It is granted by the Lord that John Russell may have and hold a place for one stall in the market place for putting and selling meat namely that place which Edward Ironmonger held formerly, having and holding the same John to hold for his life by service, four pennies annual rent, paying at the terms usual in the vill, and he gives to the Lord for a fine 5s. by pledge of William Hostiler and he does fealty to the Lord and seisin is delivered to him.

May, 1392. Nicholas Bocher and John Bonnylle (fined 2d. each) sold meat in private (or in secret) therefore they in mercy, and it ordered that they sell properly over a butcher's stall, under a penalty 40d.

Private dealing deprived the Lord of his market tolls and tended to decay the market, if general.

In December, 1373, Alice Smith was fined 4d. as a common regrator of corn. A regrator was one who purchased provisions and then resold in or near the same market at a higher price, one who "cornered" the supply and profiteered.

Etone, April, 1382. And it is ordered to all the tenants of Etone and Blechele that they use the Lord's market on Monday at Fenny Stratford under penalty to each one of them, to be laid on them by the Steward.

The last entry seems to indicate that some coercion or persuasion was necessary to maintain the use of the market. Subsequent history bears this out, for Fenny Stratford market has never been continuously prosperous; occasional bursts of activity, more or less artificial, have been followed by long periods of depression and even abeyance. Discontinued during the Civil War, it was revived in 1660, and abandoned in 1665 because of the plague. Revived in 1702, and described in the "Post Boy" of 1725 as an ancient market town, it may have lapsed, as in 1768 a writer described the place as too insignificant to deserve description. In 1806 Lysons says the market had been discontinued

for years. In 1817 an abortive attempt at revival was made. In 1837 "English Counties" states market not held. In 1849 the Gentleman's Magazine says there was some shadow of a market. About 1880 the market was revived and increased and flourished; after 1914 came D.O.R.A. and control and interference by the Ministry of Agriculture, and finally in 1924 abandonment of the site in Fenny Stratford and removal to a site a mile distant, but close to Bletchley Junction.

THE MILLS.

It was compulsory upon the tenants to have their grain ground at the Lord's mills. From these rolls it appears that the Lord did not keep the mills in his own hand, but farmed them out, let them to tenants who paid rent and made their profit; at times they took advantage of their monopoly, and were presented by the tithingmen at the Court Leet and fined for taking unjust toll.

In Fenny Stratford and Etone there were water and horse mills. There may have been a windmill also, perhaps not in use at this time as only one mention is made of it. In 1384 the Rector dug up land upon Wynmyllehill to the hurt of his neighbours, ordered to amend the same before the next court under penalty 40d. Windmill Hill, still so called, is nearly three miles from Water Etone (220 feet above sea level) on the much higher table land (380ft.), continuous with Whaddon Chase, and contiguous with Bletchley Leys. Here there is a hemispherical mound with flattened top and encircled with a shallow ditch, a windmill lump such as is found elsewhere; it was excavated and explored some years ago with negative result.

At the Court at Etone, May, 1372.

To this Court comes Stephen Smith, miller, and takes of the Lord his two water mills of Etone for term of his life under condition that the lord shall provide, timber, straw, and wattles for repair, and said Stephen for the whole time shall keep up all utensils pertaining to the said mills, paying to the Lord yearly thirty-four quarters of corn at the four usual terms of the year.

In 1371 John Hore, miller, fined 8d. for taking illegal toll. Stephen Milewardé (Mulewardé) and William Schendon are often recorded as millers taking

toll unjustly and paying fines of 3d. or 6d.; in 1384 Schendon was fined 12d.

In Dec. 1377 John Thomas tenant of the mill has not repaired the lane called Horse millane. He is ordered to repair the same before the next court under penalty 40d.

To this Court comes William Schendan and takes of the Lord his horsemill of Eton. To hold for term of life under condition of the lord finding timber, straw, and wattles for repairs and said William maintaining all necessary utensils. Paying therefrom yearly at the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, Annunciation B.V.M., Nativity of St. John Baptist and St. Michael the Archangel by equal portions four marks of silver.

The water mill was the more valuable property, 34 quarters of corn at 4s.=£6:16, as against £2:13:4 for the horse mill. In the compotus roll of 1386 mention is made of the horse-mill at Stratford being granted to the parson of Blechle for term of his life without rent by the lord's deed.

Horsemill-lane is often mentioned as requiring repair, probably it was much used by heavy traffic, pack horses with grain, it opened on to the highway. In 1374 Alice Red was fined for not repairing the highway next to the lane. In 1381 John Gernon was punished for turning the water course, and in 1388 was fined half a mark, "many knowing," for neglecting repairs, and in 1392 the Recter was fined for the same offence.

ASSIZE OF BEER.

Quality and price of food were a matter of legislation at an early date; in 1266 this is referred to in the Assize of Bread and Ale. These regulations originally the care of the Hundred Courts were afterwards made the duty of the Manor Courts (Court Leet), which appointed bread-inspectors and ale-tasters (ale conners, ale founders, gustatores cervisi) to see that beer was wholesome, of proper strength and purity, just measure, and not excessive price.

It was no sinecure office at Fenny Stratford, the ale-tasters presented at every Court a long list of those who had brewed and sold beer contrary to the assize. As many as 22, occasionally as few as 12, the average was 16; the same offenders appear regularly and always for multiple offences; the fine was 2d. (sometimes

more) per offence, and often the aggregate was 16d. or 20d. per individual. It seems as if the fine resolved itself into a sort of licence to be paid rather than a punishment or deterrent for law breaking.

In 1374 John Heyne refused to sell at the time of the assize, possibly conscious of unusual badness, and was fined 12d. In 1377 an old offender Thomas Mulso fined 20d. also broke the attachment of the tasters and forfeited another 6d. In 1384 Julia Schendon an old offender was heavily fined, half-a-mark, for being rebellious to the tasters: and brewers were ordered to sell during the whole day under a penalty 10s.

The troubles of the tasters are shown by the following extracts. In 1377 for not presenting five offenders at the previous court, the tasters were in mercy for concealment.

In 1381 Robert Test fined 4d.: ale taster has not done his office competently, and in 1382 he gives to the Lord 4d. as he is warned from his office.

In 1392 the ale tasters paid 4d. each to resign the office and the same year their successors were fined 6d. each for concealment.

In 1394 Will. Wylmott does not order after tasting as is the custom, and Alice Wylmott is rebellious, fine 2d.

Owing to the position on Watling Street and the market the place probably had a large proportion of inns; it certainly had during the later centuries. In 1725 the dependence on travellers and the number of inns was emphasized in an appeal to the public; in 1792 there were ten licensed houses and a population of perhaps 250, and in 1921 thirteen licensed houses in the parish with a population of about 4,000.

At Etone (Bletchley) the aletasters had a much less worrying time, presenting 2 or 3 and at most six offenders, who were probably distributed about the parish and not concentrated at one place; one only, Ralphe Webbe, is described as gannoker, an inn or tavern keeper.

ASSIZE OF BREAD.

Offenders were few, but appeared time after time with such regularity that their offence must have been of such a nature as to be easily condoned. In 1373 John Hostiler was presented as a common baker of white bread and fined 4d.; he was probably the father

of William Hostiler, who was fined at 25 courts spread over about 20 years (and the record is imperfect!), sums varying from 4d. to 2s., and he was also frequently fined for breaking the assize of beer, perhaps he was an innkeeper.

In 1380 the exceptional number of nine was fined 2d. each except one, Will. Smith, fined 16d., and Will. Woketon, 6d. Will. Wylmott was fined 12d. in 1394.

MEAT INSPECTION.

The purveying of bad meat, corrupt flesh, putrid meat, etc., was sufficiently often complained of to show the necessity of official surveillance. In December, 1372, Thos. Schirlond and John Boucher were fined 3d. each for this offence.

Déc. 1373. Thomas Schirlond 12d., and Richard White 12d. sold one putrid cow, John Hostiler 12d. butcher, and Simon Boucher 12d. sold one putrid bullock, John 6d. butcher of Newetone one quarter of one ox putrid. Symon Mile 6d. and John Hostiler 6d. sold a second putrid cow, John Boucher 4d. sold bad meat, Kyngs, John Russel 6d. butcher sold one leprous pig, therefore they in mercy. And that Symon Mile 6d. sold one leprous pig therefore he in mercy. And it is ordered to them and to each one of them that they do not sell from now bad meat under penalty at each offence whereof they have been legally convicted of paying to the Lord 40d.

The above is by far the largest presentment in these rolls, the sum following each name is the fine inflicted. The following year Simon Mile, flesher, 18d., Shirland, White, Hostiler, 12d. each, fleshers, sold putrid flesh and were in mercy.

Sometimes the constables were at fault; in November, 1375, they presented John Botiler, and in 1376 the constable of the tithing was fined 11d. for the unjust presentation of Botiler at the last court.

Nov. 1384. And that John (H)Ostiler sold meat against the assize and sold the same to the Lord at a greater price than to others therefore he is in mercy.

At the same court Ostiler was fined 2s. 10d. for breaking the assize of beer. His frequent offences in bread and beer have already been noted.

CLERGY.

In the 14th century and the middle ages generally the term cleric had a very wide significance, it included seven classes of men, four in minor and three in major orders, though only those of the last order, priests and deacons would to-day be recognised as clergy. In the 15th century England swarmed with men in minor orders, they served as vicars, domestic chaplains, "capellani," etc. Drawn from humble families, with scanty stipends, they were obliged to live by labour. We are apt to consider the mediæval priest as solely an ecclesiastic, in reality he figured in a variety of rôles. In these court rolls we find them sharing in the economic life as agriculturists, probably the occupation of their ancestors for generations.

William Heulett, Hulot, Howlott, etc., became rector of Bletchley in 1364, he became prebendary of Empingham in 1386 and had other preferments, and appears to have left Bletchley in 1396. He is often mentioned in these rolls.

Nov. 1375. Will. Howlot parson of the Church of Bletchley complains of Rich. Candeler in a plea of debt, pledge for prosecution the bailiff, and because that he owes and unjustly detains 40d. etc. and the said Richard acknowledges, therefore let execution be done.

In 1376 the rector had a similar action against Will. Shendon.

Nov. 1380. William Hulot parson of Blechele is entered into the half of one burgage of the fief of the Lord by the surrender of John Red and gives to the Lord for a fine of relief 10d. and the said John by custom 10d.

At Etone Oct. 1381. The Homage presents that William Houlot person of the church of Blechele is entered into one messuage and twenty acres of land and appurtenances, whereof two acres of meadow, to the end of his life of the fief of the Lord, by the release of Henry Cook and gives to the Lord for a fine of relief 8s. and it is ordered to distrain him for fealty. At the same court: the tithing men present that the Person of the church there digged earth in the King's highway to the damage of one penny, and that it be stopped up against the next court under penalty of half-a-mark.

The rector collided with the civil authority on other occasions; he was fined for absence from the "View," and for other lapses. Many other clerics are mentioned; in 1375 Agnes Osteler is fined 6d. for unjustly

raising the hue over John, parson of Bletchley, who must have been a curate.

Nov. 1377. Henry person of the church of Great Wolstan, William person of the church of Cokenho and Thomas Wotton, clerk, are entered in six burgages and a half by the release of John Longevyll and give to the Lord for a fine of relief 13s. and it is ordered to distrain them for homage and to do fealty against the next court, but afterwards a day is given to them to perform the services which pertain to the aforesaid holding against the next court. (in 1379 they released the holding).

May 1384. Will. Test, chaplain, is entered into one burgage by the release of Robert Test his father and gives to the Lord for a fine for entry 8d. and the said Robert for the same by custom 8d.

May. 1377. Will. Warde, chaplain, is entered into one cotagia of the fief of the Lord by the release of John Curteys and gives to the Lord for a relief one pound of pepper. (in 1384 he released it.)

The sporting clerk was well known in other manors, there was one at least here: in August 1382, John Cheval, chaplain, was fined 6d. for taking one hare in the Lord's warren.

Other clergymen find mention, always for sins, usually those of omission: e.g., John Plomer frequently fined for absence from the View, Richard Lacey, John Smith, and in 1371 John Trig, person of Bollebrichull, were attached to answer David Gow in a plea of trespass.

THE LITTLE COURT OR COURT BARON.

The business of the Court Leet finished, the same assemblage continued to sit as the Lord's Court and dealt with the interior domestic economy of the Manor. The tithing men probably were the homagers, or freeholders of the Manor, and sat with the Lord or his steward, virtually as judges. The record always begins "The Homage being sworn on the articles touching the court present, etc.," the presentations that follow include: excuses for absence, absentees without excuse, of those that owe suit and consequently in mercy and fined 2d. to 4d.; reports of deaths and heriots due, surrenders of holdings, grants of same, the business of a rent audit, etc. In these rolls we find evidence of the economic consequences of the Black Death visitation in 1349. The scarcity of

labour caused a rise in wages, and the cost of working an estate was doubled and even trebled by the evasion of the servile tenants of their obligations to the manorial lord.

In 1371 John Smyth is exhorted in full court about the refusal of one harvest work for a long time and he found pledges Walter Bacon and John Baili to exonerate himself or to make satisfaction against the next court, therefore he is respite, and in 1372 he satisfies the lord for autumnal work, long withdrawn, for the tenement he holds, fine 12d.

In 1377 Henry Heriot refused his work for the lord, viz., ploughing one day, half a day reaping and other work in the meadow and two boon days, and one cock and hen at Xmas, one day at carting and one day in the autumn, and they say that ploughing one day is worth 3d. and half a day reaping 3d., and two boon days 4d. etc which it is ordered to levy. And it is ordered to all the tenants to do the work for the lord under penalty to each 40d.

In 1382 six tenants were fined for refusing customary work, and Henry Koc was fined for refusing his work and inciting the other tenants to refuse also. This mention of the agitator shows that he was at work during the Wat Tyler insurrection.

For some years after the Black Death a murrain was rife among the cattle and live stock. The "cadavertores, or carcase inspectors, whose office it was to report on dead stock, presented at most of the Etone courts in 1371, one ox, 2 calves, 10 sucking pigs, 3 mother ewes, and one wether dead, not on account of any default, but from sudden murrain.

In 1372 the carcase collectors present 12 young sheep, 5 ewes, 6 lambs before shearing, one calf, one sow, since Easter 19 porkers dead, not by default of the reeve or of any keeper but as is said of the murrain.

In 1382 besides other matters "present that one boar killed another boar by whose neglect we are ignorant."

Poaching on the preserves of the lord finds frequent mention; in 1371, John, servant of John Bailis, took one hare in the warren of the lord, and his carter took another; each fined heavily, 6d.

In 1377 John Bocher has one coney in his house, whether it was taken in the warren or not they do not know and ask a day to enquire and a day is given to them even to the next court.

Etone. And that Agnes Haton 4d. (2), Thomas Mulsho 2d. (1), Thomas Colyns 2d. (1), Henry Smyth 3d. (1) have dogs not hameled therefore they in mercy, and it is ordered that they be hambled this instant day under penalty of half-a-mark.

To hamble a dog is to render it unfit for hunting by cutting out the balls of the feet.

Trespass on the lord's land appears at times to have been extensive; in 1371 amerciaments were seized for trespass in banlieu⁴ meadows and the pasture of the lord; several are fined 1d. each for trespass with cocks and hens, and William, son of John Smith, is in mercy for trespass on the lord's severalty.

In 1377 John Norman was attached for trespass with 40 beasts in the corn of the lord. At the court held in July, John Tommes, Beatrix Smyth, Thomas Collyn, and John Smyth all had their geese in the lord's barley. Ad Hurne had 40 cattle in the peas, and others, pigs and cows in the meadows etc of the lord: at the court held in November the list of offenders is long, John Bailey with a horse in the barley, Richard Candelar 2 pigs in the corn, John Dene 2 pigs in the oats, John Tommes 2 pigs in the peas, John Bully 4 beasts in the barley, Robert Test 2 beasts in the meadow, Isolda Chapman hens in the barley, Thomas Daye 6 beasts in le Holm, the fines varied from 2d. to 6d.

The most serious was the shepherd of Sewanston (Simpson), with 20 beasts in the lord's oats, fine 20d.

Committing waste, destruction, and failure to repair buildings were offences dealt with by the court baron.

May 1373 John Domberdale sold six ash trees of his burgage and has made waste etc, and Thos. Schirlond has not repaired his buildings as was enjoined him under penalty 20s. etc.

1375. Thos. Schirlond has ruinous houses and a day is given to him to repair them under penalty 20s. etc.

April 1382 Petronilla Herman has cut down and sold three ash trees on the tenement she holds of the lord without licence, therefore she in mercy, and apprised at 9d. and they were sold to Adam Pecot and he carried them off therefore he in mercy; fined 3d. and 4d. respectively.

Possibly the most interesting of the contents of these rolls, certainly to genealogists, are the records of admission to a tenement, the surrender of a holding on the death of the holder and the admission of his heir with mention of the names of widow, children, and indications of the social status and comparative

⁴ *Ban*, jurisdiction; *lieue*, a mile or league within the legal limits of a township.

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wealth, etc. The customs of the manor are indicated, and the details of heriots, etc. On the death of a villein tenant a tribute of the personal goods of the deceased was due to the lord. Heriot from the Saxon "heregeat" (*here* an army, *geatu* provision or equipment), originally the heriot was the military equipment supplied by the lord to his tenant and returnable at the latter's death for transference to the new tenant. In course of time on the assumption that the lord had provided the outfit for farming some token was returned at a tenant's death. A heriot was also due on the voluntary surrender of a tenement.

May 1373 John Bully who from the Lord held two burgages, half a burgage, and the third part of one burgage has closed his last day, through his death there falls to the Lord as a heriot, one horse with saddle and bridle and one pair of disabled plates and one sword, one pair of boots with one pair of spurs disabled and priced at 40s. And his wife comes and claims to hold the aforesaid tenements according to the custom of the manor without fine to the Lord while she wills to remain single without marriage and this she seeks that inquiry by the Homage be made. And the Homage being responsible on this, say that the custom is such, therefore she is admitted to hold the aforesaid tenements and does fealty to the Lord and seisin is delivered to her. The same say that the aforesaid John held one burgage and a half which formerly were Ad. Schelford, whereof he was seized, one ox for a heriot which remains in the Manor, etc.

Nov. 1377. Margaret Hunte who held one burgage by services and 12d. rent per ann, and one quarter of another burgage by what service they (the homage) do not know, has closed her last day and nothing falls to the Lord as a heriot for she has no goods in the home but let a day be given them to enquire and they have seisin of the tenement. At the next court it was reported she had nothing.

Pentecost 1377 Thomas Hunte is entered into the tenement after the death of his mother Margaret and gives for a relief 2s. It is ordered to distrain Agnes Sampson to answer for detaining one brass pot which fell to the lord as a heriot after the death of Margaret Hunte.

Jan. 1384. John Red who held two burgages by service and 2s. rent has closed his last day and has nothing whence it is possible to render a heriot, the aforesaid tenements fall to John son and heir to the aforesaid John Red.

The above are samples of the many instances; others are in 1381, John Norman's estate, one ox for heriot, which remains in the store of the Lord, whereof the reeve is responsible, and Michael Payn surrendered a messuage and half a virgate held according to the custom of the manor, and a messuage and half a

virgate held by service of rent yearly, 8s., and one messuage and five acres by service and rent, 5s., yearly, and gave to the Lord equally for a fine as for a heriot, 60s., and then Richard, son of Michael Payn aforesaid, took his father's surrendered holdings on the same terms and did fealty. In 1384, on the death of Benedict Cornwayll, "there falls to the Lord of heriot, 2 cows."

The following are instances of grants of tenements and successions:—

Aug. 1373. It is granted by the Lord to Robert Taylor and Agnes his wife that they are to hold that tenement which formerly was John Schelford's having and holding the same and by services according to the custom of the manor, rendering therefore yearly to the Lord six shillings eight silver pennies for new rent . . . and does fealty to the Lord and seisin is delivered to him, and he gives to the Lord as a fine of entry 6s.

It is granted by the Lord to Agnes Bully that she is able to hold all the lands and tenements which John son and heir of John Bully succeeds in heirship by the death of the said John his father even to the full age of the said John's heir, and he is estimated to age ten years . . . with custody of the said heir, reserving nevertheless to the Lord, maritagium. And the aforesaid Agnes makes to the Lord rent per. ann. 13s. 4d. at two usual terms and gives for a fine of entry 5s.

In December, 1373, Joan Cabbel paid as a fine 40d. to the Lord that she may be able to marry in the Lord's demesne.

In November, 1375, John Bully, jun., died, and his tenements are in the hands of the Lord and thus remain.

Adam Colyn who holds a half of one burgage by service and rent per. ann. 10d. has closed his last day after the death of whom the aforesaid half burgage falls to Thomas, his son and heir of full age and gives to the Lord for a relief 20s. and does fealty.

Pentecost, 1376, Michael Smith closed his last day, his widow Beatrice and heir legally procreated have the holding. July, 1376, John Bocher and Agnes his wife take one burgage to hold to the end of his life and that of Agnes his wife and his first-born son, by service and rent and a heriot after death.

March 1378 Thomas Schirland has closed his last day holding one burgage by services and 4d. per. ann. there falls to the Lord as a heriot one horse worth 10d., and they say that the said Thomas was sworn to build one house on the aforesaid holding under penalty of 20s., which is not yet built therefore

it is ordered to distrain his executors for the building of the house.

At the next court the executors paid a fine of 13s. 4d. to exonerate them from the building of the house.

Aug. 1382. John Herman is entered into one burgage of the fee of the Lord by the release of John Hert and gives to the Lord for a (gersumma)⁵ 2s. and the said John Hert by custom 2s. and that John Hert and Agnes his wife are entered in the said burgage by the release of John Herman and give to the Lord for a (gersumma) 2s. and the said John Herman by custom 2s..

May 1383 Agnes wife of John Bocher holding one burgage, died, John Smyth comes and takes the said burgage to hold to the end of his life and Agnes his wife and one child first born by service of rent per ann. 4s. and a heriot after death and does fealty and gives to the Lord for a fine of entry 3 capons.

Jan. 1384 John Red died, has nothing whence to render a heriot, his son John succeeds to his holding by right of heirship.

May 1384 Alice Gardyn holding one burgage, died, heriot, one brass pot which remains in the store of the Lord.

May 1387 Elena Wyot who held a third of a burgage has gone away and they (the homage) do not know who has a right to the said burgage and let them have a day to enquire.

Nov. 1386 Thomas Skerel takes one burgage formerly Dumberdales, to hold to the end of seven years by service of rent per ann. 3s. and the maintenance of the buildings at his own charges and competently and gives for a fine of entry 2 capons.

Dec. 1386. John Heyne acquired one burgage of Galfrid Hunte and made composition for his services to the Lord for 4s. which it is ordered to levy and in mercy for compounding.

October, 1388, Agnes Sampson died; Thomas Sampson is the next heir and of full age.

By the death of Alice Reed, Theobald Renaws claims part of her holding, by right of Felicia his wife, the homagers say that Felicia is the next heir and of full age.

Etone. Jan. 1371. The customary tenants being sworn on the diverse articles touching the court, present that William Stevens who from the Lord held two messuages and one virgate of land and a half has closed his last day, after the death of whom falls to the Lord as a heriot an ox worth 12s. and one cow worth 10s. and afterwards because in full court John and William sons of the aforesaid William renounced and remitted it to the Lord the said virgate of land is granted to John James to hold the same in bondage by doing therefore custom and works of service which pertain to the said land, and does fealty and seisin is delivered to him and he gives to the Lord for a fine of entry 5s.

⁵ *Gersumma*, a customary gift, or any customary payment. The term "fine of entry" represents it.—(F.G.G.).

Walter Hore died, no heriot because his wife was feoffed in common with him.

Thos. Bayly surrenders his holding and makes a fine for heriot 40d.

William Stevens took from the Lord two virgates etc, which lately were Walter le Rone's and Matilda Pernele, to be held according to the custom of the manor making therefore yearly for rent and works 40s. for all other services save suit of court and a heriot, and release for the whole of his life from the offices of reeve, woodward and rent collector etc. etc.

Mar. 1377. John Balyngon holder of one croft and eight acres in Bollebrichull according to the custom of the manor, died, heriot one ox worth 13s. 4d. and thus sold to his wife, the tenements remain in the hand of John son and heir.

May 1377 Hugh Deiste died, Matilda his widow claims to hold his tenement to the end of her life by copy of the court roll etc.

July 1377 John Mey takes all the lands etc. which were John Bully's in Fenny Stratford and Etone holding at the will of the Lord by service of rent yearly one rose flower at the feast of the nativity of St. John the Baptist for all services and does fealty, by letter of the Lord direct to the Steward.

At this court the Lord granted to William Stevens two tenements and two virgates of land with appurtenances in Etone which Walter Reveson and Walter Pernel lately held in the same, holding for himself and his by the will of the Lord by service of rent to the Lord yearly 26s. 8d. at the usual terms and suit of the court: and know that the aforesaid lands and tenements lately returned to the Lord yearly 40s., and now 13s. 4d. is accepted by the Lord as appears by a letter of the Lord directed to John de Broughton steward there.

Etone. Aug. 1382. John Longe comes and surrenders his messuage and six acres of land held by service of rent 8s. yearly into the hands of the Lord and gives for a heriot 2s. Henry Longe comes and takes the aforesaid holding and gives as a fine of entry 13s. 4d. and 3 capons.

(Brit. Mus.) Etone. 1372. It was granted by the Lord to William Whatanwer that he may marry Joan Hurne and hold the lands etc which Joan held in bondage for term of her life by customs and servile works which she was accustomed to do, and he does fealty to the lord and seisin is delivered to him and he gives for a fine of entry 13s. 4d.

Oct. 1384. John Hamund takes of the Lord a cottage and two acres of land to hold for term of his life by service of rent 4s. and he owes a heriot and gives to the Lord for a fine of entry 6 capons.

Jan. 1384. The homage presents that Agnes Bacoun who held of the Lord a messuage with croft and toft containing ten acres of land hath closed her last day. After whose death comes John son of Walter Bacun and aforesaid Agnes and claims the aforesaid tenement and they are granted to him etc. And after the death of Agnes there falls to the Lord of heriot, one cow.

SURNAMES.

* Occurs frequently. † Now in the district.

*Andrew	Chawmber	Goos
*Asser	Cheval	Gow
*Atte Hall	†Chyne	Hacon
Atte Hurne	†*Clerke	†Hamond
Atte lee	*Cok	Hangeman
Bacon	*Colles	Haton
Bagge	*Colyn	Hayward
*Baggele	*Collyns	Hebbecastle
†Balis	Commander	†Hele
Baker	†Cook	Heriot
Balyngon	†Coteler	*Herman
Balyngton	Coupe	Herne
Barber	Coupere	†*Hert(well)
*Barker	Cranle	*Heyne
Barton	Crukelaude	Hogges
Batvile	*Curteys	*Hore(man)
†Bayly	Davy	Houlot
*Bene	Dawes	Howlet
Beneth	Deiste	*Hostiler
Bogeys	Deakne	Hulier
Bokeys	Debue	*Hunte
Bolay	†*Deye	*Hurne
Bonde	*Domberdale	Irishman
*Bonnyll	†Douglas	†*Jakeman
Booker	Dully	†James
†*Boteler	Edmond	Jamyne
Bocher	Elys	Janne
*Boucher	Felpus	†Kempe
*Braban	*Felipes	†Knight
†Breton	Fero	*Koc
Bryton	Fletcher	†*Kyng(s)
†*Brown	†French(man)	*Lacy
*Bully	*Fuller	Lecke
*Cabbel	Gardyn	*Longe
†*Candler	*Gernonn	*Longwylle
*Candeler	Gibbeson	†*London
†Carte	Glawnuylle	Lythington
†Chandler	Gledwell	Malehert
Champneys	†*Goldyng	Mareys
Chapman	*Gondyne	*Mey

Mile	*Pycod	*Threscher
+*Milewarde	*Pynnok	Tilecot
{ *Mulewarde	+*Red(e)	Tillesworthe
Micches	Renaws	*Topping
Michael	*Reve(son)	*Towell
*Mulsho	Rolf	Travis
Newcastle	Romeney	Trig
*Newman	le Rone	la Vache
+*Norman	Ropere	Vine
Notyngham	+*Russell	*Walscheman
*Ostiler	Ruthyn	Walton
Owain	*Sadler	Watkin
*Padeworth	+*Sampson	+*Warde
Parkens	Schalford	Wawen
Palfreyman	*S(c)heperde	*Webbe
Passelew	*Schendon	+*Welles
*Payn	+*Sedeney	*Wenkworth
Peg	Serour	Welsh(man)
*Peion	Sewenton	de Welye
Perkyn	+*Sewster	Whatanwer
Perot	Skinner	Wherith
Pernele	+*Smyth	+*White
Perventon	Spenster	*Woketon
+Phelphys	+*Stevens	Wotton
*Pie	Stoke	+Wright
Piper	+*Taillor	*Wyatt
*Plomer	*Taylor	Wyeth
Plowright	Teser	*Wylemott
Porter	*Test	Wylkyn
+Prat	Thether	Wyrhale
Prest	Thomas	Yve
Profyt	*Thommes	

122 surnames in the 5 Etone rolls.

164 surnames in Fenny Stratford rolls.

7 Etone courts, rolls in B.M. only contained two or three names (once each), not in the above.

215 surnames in all.

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W. B.