

BLEDLow: I. LAND TENURES AND THE THREE-FIELD SYSTEM

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THE face of the countryside is fast changing, new methods in agriculture tend to obliterate field divisions, and the steady encroachment of housing development is threatening the individuality of many Chiltern villages. The original pattern of Bledlow, however, still persists, the church, the manor and the village houses, a community where people live, now, less frequently, where they work.

Territorially, Bledlow includes Bledlow Ridge, but available records mainly concern the village as we know it, and the Ridge is now a separate parish.

For much of the early history thanks are due to the Provost and Fellows of Eton College for access to records and to the many medieval historians whose names appear in the references, in particular to Marjorie Morgan (now Marjorie Chibnall), whose study of the English Lands of the Abbey of Bec has been invaluable. I am also indebted to K. M. Richardson for her help in documentation and for the reconstitution of the field map (Fig. 1).

The village lies just below the 400-ft. contour of the Chilterns and the choice of the early settlement was undoubtedly due in part to the constant springs flowing from the coomb known as the Lyde.¹ Though the origins of the village can be traced from documentary sources to the tenth century, evidence of earlier occupation is not lacking. The ancient track of the Icknield Way, running from the Thames to the Wash, passes close to the village, at this point divided into an upper and lower branch. The upper track skirts the Chilterns above the springheads, a little over half a mile to the south of Bledlow, before it drops to cross the Risborough Gap. At Bledlow, West Lane, leading from the Lower Icknield to the village, continues as a track to the Upper Icknield. The pattern common to "Chiltern Eaves" parishes is followed, a long relatively narrow strip, running S.E. to N.W., including wooded hillside, with arable and meadow on the lower slope and the plain.²

On a natural knoll above the Upper Icknield and visible from Bledlow is a mound locally known as The Cop, or Bled's Tump. When this was excavated in 1938 the main finds showed that the original barrow belongs to the Early Bronze Age.³ It was subsequently used for burials in the Late Bronze Age and again in the Pagan Saxon period. Both inhumation and cremation burials were identified.

Two Iron Age habitation sites, apparently of even date, have been excavated nearby, one at the foot of Lodge Hill, and a second on Chinnor Common, on the border of Bledlow parish and Oxfordshire.⁴

In the fields near the springs from which the Cuttle Brook flows to form the county boundary, scattered sherds of Romano-British pottery and tiles have been found, indicating the site of a Roman building. In the village, the skeleton of a woman buried with a Roman vessel was uncovered in 1928. Chance finds include a Roman pot dug up in the garden of a house at Church End, and Roman pottery and a spindle-whorl from an inhumation burial in a garden opposite the Manor Farm.⁵ A Saxon strap-end with animal head terminal, dated to the close of the ninth century, was recovered near the Warren,⁶ and to the north of this find-spot is a chalk pit which has yielded Saxon inhumations.

The etymologist Ekwall interprets the name Bledlow as the “Hlaw” or burial place of Bled,⁷ spelt variously in the earliest documents as *Bleddanhlaew* (965–75), *Bledelai* (1086), *Bledeslawe* (1247) and *Bledelowe* (1315)⁸. The name could have originated in pre-Christian times, and in this context the barrow already mentioned as the Cop, reused in the Pagan-Saxon period, is significant.

Buckinghamshire falls within the area known to have been occupied by the Middle Angles. The Conversion of the “Ciltensætan” may have taken place after A.D. 653, when Paeda, son of the pagan Penda, King of the Mercians then ruling under his father over the Middle Angles, was baptised with his companions, thegns and servants.

The earliest documentary reference to Bledlow occurs in the will of the Lady Ælfgifu, widow of Edwig, King of the West Saxons.⁹ The will is undated but was apparently made after her husband’s death, between 967 and the death of her brother-in-law, King Edgar, in 975. It contains the following clause (Pl. IX): “First, she grants to the Old Minster¹⁰ where she intends her body to be buried, the estate at Risborough (Hrisanbeorgan) just as it stands, except that, with your consent [the King’s] she wishes that at each village every penally enslaved man who was subject to her shall be freed;¹¹ and [she grants] two hundred mancuses of gold¹² to that minster and her shrine with her relics. And she grants to the New Minster¹³ the estate at Bledlow (*Bleddanhlaewe*) and a hundred mancuses of gold.” We do not know the extent of the Lady Ælfgifu’s estates in Bledlow, but these must have been of some value. Doubtless the rents and dues would be collected by an official on behalf of the New Minster.¹⁴

The first mention of Bledlow in post-Conquest records is in Domesday Book, where the following entry occurs:

“The land of the Count of Mortain in Riseberg Hundret. The Count himself holds Bledelai. It is assessed at 30 hides. There is land for 18 ploughs. In the demesne are 16 hides, and on it are 4 ploughs; and 32 villeins with 3 bordars have 14 ploughs. There are 8 serfs, and 1 mill yielding 24 loads of malt, woodland [to feed] 1000 swine and producing in rents a sufficient supply of shares for the ploughs. Meadow is there [sufficient] for 18 plough [teams]. In all it is worth 22 pounds; when received 12 pounds; T.R.E. [in the time of the Confessor] 20 pounds. This manor Edmer Atule a thegn of King Edward, held and could sell.”¹⁵

In Domesday Book, Buckinghamshire is divided into 18 hundreds, each in a group of three probably by 1086,¹⁶ and so shown in a document of the late

thirteenth century.¹⁷ Aylesbury three hundred consisted of Aylesbury, Risborough and Stone; Risborough hundred included Princes and Monks Risborough, Horsenden and Bledlow. The smaller unit of land, the hide, also of pre-Conquest origin, was a holding of sufficient size to support a family and appears to have been variable from district to district; it is not therefore possible to assess the acreage of the Bledlow lands.¹⁸ The term manor, already used in Saxon times, might include one or more hamlets. A manor of moderate size could well be divided between more than one lord. The term applied to the lands, rather than to a building as it now does, though the estate could include a hall or manor house and farm buildings.

Domesday Book gives some idea of the relationship by then existing between villagers and the lord of the manor.

The inhabitants of Bledlow are described as "villani", "bordarii" and "servii". The villein or villager was a general term embracing free men who had some share in the village lands and in return worked on the lord of the manor's demesne. Next came the bordar or cottager, whose land holdings, if any, were smaller, and whose status was inferior to that of the villein. Lastly, the serfs, who were sometimes prisoners of war, sometimes bereft of their freedom through some misdemeanour, many of whom, it is suggested, were freed by their Norman overlords and became cottagers.

The thegn, Edmer Atule, held the manor of Bledlow in the Confessor's reign but he also owned the much larger manor of Berkhamstead, and, like many another Saxon landlord, his possessions were forfeited at the Conquest.

The decline in value of this property from 20 pounds in the Confessor's time to 12 pounds in 1067 is of interest. By plotting the manors which show similar post-Conquest depreciation in value, F. H. Baring has defined the belt of devastation which he equates with William's "harrying" of a broad tract of country round London.¹⁹ He traces a line from Thame through Bledlow, Princes Risborough, Ellesborough, Stoke Mandeville and a number of villages to Buckingham, and on from there through Hertfordshire to Berkhamstead, where the Æthling's supporters submitted to William. By 1086, however, the Bledlow estates had recovered and, indeed, had increased in value.

The honour of Berkhamstead, together with the land in thirty parishes, including Bledlow, was given by the Conqueror to his half-brother, Robert Count of Mortain.²⁰ He made Berkhamstead his headquarters, and leased all his other manors, with the exception of Bledlow, Biddlesden and Wing. Of these three manors, Bledlow was the largest. The knights' fees in his Buckinghamshire estates were privileged in that they only paid two-thirds of the amount exacted from other fees.

In the post-Conquest period Bledlow came directly under the influence of two religious houses in Normandy which received lands granted to them by Norman knights from the English estates bestowed by Duke William: such gifts were known by the fourteenth century as Alien Priories. These were the Abbey of Grestain, with Wilmington Priory in Sussex as the administrative centre in England, and the Abbey of Bec-Hellouin, whose Buckinghamshire lands were administered from the Bailiwick of Ogbourne in Wiltshire. Both these houses followed the Benedictine rule, and the foundations were

inspired by one man, Herluin, Conte de Contaville, step-father of William the Conqueror and father of Robert Count of Mortain.

Robert of Mortain gave the rectorial manor and advowson of the Church of the Holy Spirit at Bledlow to the Abbey of Grestain between 1086 and 1091, the date of his death.²¹ The church lands were administered by the Priory of Wilmington till the reign of Edward III when they were granted to St. Stephen's College, Westminster. After the dissolution of the College in 1548, during Edward VI's reign, the rectory manor came into lay hands and was acquired by Thomas East and Henry Hoblethorne.²² Having passed through various short tenancies, the property was sequestered during the Civil Wars, the owner at that time being William Fitzherbert, a recusant, who was captured at the siege of Lichfield. He compounded for delinquency, having served in arms against Parliament, and sold the rectorial manor in 1647 to James Blancks. William Starbuck, styled "minister of Bledlow", informed against Fitzherbert before the Committee for Compounding, stating that the latter had undervalued the worth of the property. Starbuck also claimed from James Blancks the purchaser, arrears due to himself, awarded by the *Plundered Ministers Commission*. Further, he and the parishioners of Bledlow offered to pay £300 for the rectory. He subsequently begged allowance of his expenses and benefit of discovery of undervaluation, also arrears as a member of His Excellency's Life Guard. In 1650 James Blancks begged to be quieted in his possessions, his lease having been adjudged good by Chief Justice St. John before the Assizes.²³ Having established his claim before the Committee for Compounding, he built the present Manor House; he died in 1664.

James Blancks' son, John, was in possession of the property after the Restoration. A memorial slab on the chancel wall of the church records that his daughter Elizabeth "inherited the manor of that Rectory, the advowson and parsonage, with other estates in the county". She married Johnshall Crosse, who, "having first served in the office of High Sheriff", died in 1723. Their son Henry Crosse, who appears as patron in the tithe book kept by the vicar, John Taylor, married Elizabeth Jodrell, and "for several years enjoyed a place in the High Court of Chancery". He died in 1744 and his daughter and heiress, Elizabeth, who erected the memorial slab, married William Hayton. Robert, Lord Carrington, who already held property in the county, acquired Bledlow manor from their grandson and the estate continues in that family.

Robert of Mortain had a son, William, who, after his father's death, joined with Robert de Bellême in rebellion against Henry I in 1102. William was banished, his lands forfeited and his manor in Bledlow was bestowed on Hugh de Gurnay.²⁴

The first Hugh de Gurnay is mentioned in the *Roman de Rou* as "le viel Hüe de Gornai". He died in 1074. He and his son, Hugh the Second, "Le Sire de Brai, le Comte",²⁵ fought at Hastings and were rewarded with lands in Essex. With the consent of his son Girard, Hugh the Second founded the Abbey of Goislafontaine, which lay to the north of his estates in Bray, Normandy. He also gave tithes of various properties to the Abbey of Bec-Hellouin and subsequently entered that monastery. Girard's son, Hugh the Third, grew up at the court of Henry I, his great uncle, and lived through the troubled reigns of

Stephen and Henry II. He it was who received the manor of Bledlow, some time before 1160, when he granted land from this estate to his military tenant, Robert de Turri.²⁶ He died before 1181.²⁷ By now Bledlow was no longer included in the Honour of Berkhamstead but was held directly from the King. His son, Hugh the Fourth, fought at the siege of Acre in the Third Crusade. He chose to live on his Normandy estates,²⁸ and, in 1198, gave, in exchange for certain tithes and dues in Normandy, the greater part of his Bledlow property to the Abbey of Bec-Hellouin, with the exception of certain property retained in the family and the lands already bestowed on the military tenants whose names appear in the charter²⁹ which will be found in the Appendix on p. 278, namely Odo de Braimuster³⁰ and the son of John de Turri; Simon de Hochede, who had been given a mill for his services, is also mentioned.³¹

This document has a fine equestrian seal (see Pl. Xa), 67 mm. in diameter, of green wax, on a doubled tag of thick parchment, in almost perfect condition, bearing the legend "Sigillvm Hvgonis de Gvrneio". It shows a knight on horseback, galloping from left to right. His accoutrement recalls the Bayeux Tapestry of over a hundred years earlier. The helmet has a conical crown with a nasal or nose-guard, the chain-mail shirt is the Norman-French *haubergeon* or hauberk (A.S. *byrnie*) and the slender lance, held over the right shoulder, carries a *gonfanon* or small rectangular banner with tails, which Sir James Mann interprets as a mark of authority.³²

Herluin, founder of the Benedictine Abbey of Bec, had appointed Lanfranc to open a school there, "for all comers", and from this seminary of bishops and abbots many of his pupils rose to high places in the church.

The English holdings of Bec ultimately included six priories, twenty-six manors and lands in forty-eight parishes, from which tithes and dues were collected. The place-names Tooting Bec and Weedon Bec still recall the tenure of the Norman Abbey. During the thirteenth century the tithes of Aston Rowant, Wythorpe, Henton in Chinnor, Quainton and Wycombe were collected at Bledlow.³³ The Prior or Proctor of Ogbourne answered for the English lands of the Abbey which were held in "frank almoign in chief from the King",³⁴ and administered the scattered manors; he was at that time described as the Lord of the Manor of Bledlow.

Though many of the original documents were destroyed during the French Revolution, scattered references to Bledlow appear in surviving records of the Mother house and relative material is to be found in the accounts and court rolls, custumals, charters and other documents held in the libraries of Eton College, King's College, Cambridge, and the British Museum.

From the Bec custumals some idea of the inhabitants of the manor and their way of living can be traced; also of the services required of the abbey tenants.³⁵ Of all the English manors held by Bec only at Bledlow and at Cottisford are free tenants classed apart,³⁶ and these were expected to give boon service. Dues and rents in kind were required and appear to be less of a burden than on some of the monastic estates. These included poultry at Martinmas and eggs at Easter. Boon services were seasonal and required from all tenants, sometimes in lieu of rents. Such services covered Lenten ploughing and work at harvest time as well as shearing, washing, riding and carrying (carting.) Custom-

ary servants numbered shepherds, ploughmen, foresters, as well as the hayward and the reeve, and the Manorial Accounts Roll of 1288/9³⁷ shows that under the administration of Bec every manor enrolled their own staff of “famuli”. The following extract from the Bledlow Custumal illustrates the boon services required of a villager.³⁸

“William Ketelburn holds half a hidate of land for 9s. a year, payable half at Martinmas, half at St. John the Baptist. And he has to plough 2 acres at the winter sowing and harrow them and pay 1d. at the threshing. Item he owes at the same sowing, if he has a whole plough team, 1 acre, and if he has half, he shall plough half an acre, and if he does not have that he shall plough according to what he has, and if he has nothing he shall plough nothing. Similarly at the Lent sowing he shall plough 1 acre in the same way as said above concerning the winter acre. And in the same way he shall plough another acre at fallow in summer. The terms within which these 3 acres are to be ploughed are Martinmas for the first acre, Lady Day the second acre, and St. John the Baptist the third. Item he has to hoe with one man for one day without food. Item he has to mow for 6 days with 2 scythes and each day he shall have as much grass as he can lift with the handle of a scythe, and he must clear the hay from the field he cuts, and for this he shall have the common aid of the cottars each of whom has to clear 3 mowings in 18 acres and the mowers the residue. Item he must carry the lord’s hay together with the others until it shall all be carried with the help of the lord’s carts. Item he has to reap at the three boonworks of the lord, in autumn at his own cost with his whole household, except his own person and his wife and his shepherd, and if he has no serving man, he must reap himself or find a man in his own place. Item at the fourth boonwork he must in the same way reap but this must be at the cost of the lord, to wit for one hour, and if the lord wishes to have several boonworks this shall be of grace, at the cost of the lord. Item if the lord’s wood shall bear [mast of acorn for pigs] he must pay pannage for his pigs like any other alien. Item when the lord’s hay and corn have been carried he is to have common with his sheep until Lady Day and from that term the lord shall have pasture called the Northern and that called Done, free, so that nobody can enter there without license till the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula, except the parson of the church of [Bledlow] and Henry de Turri, who shall have his oxen with the lord’s on Northern and his other cattle on Done. Similarly except three carters and the Hayward, each of whom shall have 1 cow and 1 bullock there. Item he may not give his daughter without license of the lord and on his decease the lord shall have his best beast,³⁹ and if he die intestate all his goods shall remain at the disposition of the lord. Item he has to pay scot and lot at all gifts and aids”.⁴⁰

The Bec Manor at Bledlow was worked on the three-field system, as was established from a study of the Enclosures Awards Map of 1812 when the original North, South and West Fields were identified as well as common meadows and pastures (see Fig. 1). Under this system one field was planted in autumn with wheat or rye as the main crop, another in the following spring with oats, barley or a leguminous crop, while the third field was grazed. In the next year the fallow field was autumn sown, the first used for spring-sown crops, while the second field rested until the crops had been taken. It was the

hayward's duty to keep the temporary fencings of wattle or thorn in order and ensure that crops were not destroyed by straying animals which were impounded and the owners fined, as in the following Court case: "John Sperling complains that Richard of Newmere on the Sunday next before St. Bartholomew's Day last past, with his cattle, horses and pigs wrongfully destroyed the corn on his, John's land, to his damage to the extent of one thrave of wheat, and to his dishonour to the extent of 2 shillings and of this he produces his suit. And Richard comes and defends all of it. Therefore let him come to the law six-handed."⁴¹

The Bledlow Custumal gives us the details of the hayward's and the ploughman's duties. "The Hayward shall be quit of yearly rent. He shall have his horse and cow and 1 bullock in the lord's pasture and shall have a headland called Haydoneshaeht, and on the day of the boonwork he shall have 1 sheaf and on the last day he shall have a thrave [or shock, generally 12 sheaves]. and he has to keep watch on the crops, meadows and pastures of the lord, and if they are damaged in any way he shall have to answer for the damage. Item he has to make all summonses. Item the ploughman must be quit of yearly rent and shall have the lord's plough always for the second Saturday, and on the day of the carrying of the carts if he goes with 1 cart he shall have 1 sheaf, and he shall have against Christmas firewood by delivery of the bailiff and he shall have in his lord's pasture 1 cow and 1 bullock, and he must come in the early morning to the plough with the handle of the plough and hold it till noon, again after dinner he shall return to the hall and do whatsoever the bailiff shall order him to do."⁴²

Each villager had his strips of arable, meadow and pasture chosen by lot or rotation. Rights of common belonged to the villager who could use uncultivated ground for grazing, as well as arable, and meadow after harvest. The peasant holding was not his sole supply, for corn allowances were made to the manorial workers, so that with his own husbandry, his garden, orchard, pigs, sheep, cattle, hens and bees, a fair living was possible. Such arrangements as the right to pannage or herd pigs in the woods to feed on beech mast and acorns were sometimes paid for in kind by the gift of a piglet, and there is mention of a lamb being given in lieu of money for the privilege of a private sheepfold. Nails were tendered by the blacksmith as rent, while at Bledlow, as is recorded in Domesday Book, 24 loads of barley were returned as rent for the mill.

The 1294 Royal Extent⁴³ or valuation of Bec manors lists fourteen, including Bledlow. The total of arable for the village is given as 317 acres, 1 rood, with 225 acres, 2 roods, of sown land, 37½ acres of meadow and 19 acres of pasture. The crops raised are listed in the Manorial Accounts Roll of 1288/9⁴⁴ as wheat, barley, oats, mancorn [rye mixed with wheat or barley] and beans. The sale of corn was apparently Bec's chief source of income, as would appear from the figures for that year, when the yield at Bledlow was 252 quarters, 1 bushel and the sale was 191 quarters, 7 bushels. Another source of income for the Abbey was the sale of wool. The Bec Manor of Obgourne St. George produced a total of 1,450 lambs and sheep, as recorded in the same Royal Extent, but Bledlow is listed as producing only 4 sheep. This is the more surpris-

ing when, as Eileen Power notes “the uses of sheep were manifold, and valued almost as much for their manure as for their wool; folded onto the fallows, the little golden hoof turned sand into rich soil”.⁴⁵ Sheep farming was already important before the Conquest and remained a flourishing means of livelihood until the fourteenth century through trade at home and abroad. By the fifteenth century exports had declined, in part due to political sanctions but also by reason of the increase in home consumption and the expansion of the cloth trade. Some record of sheep farming is to be expected from any manor, but the only mention of Bledlow wool sales in the Manorial Accounts Roll is for 2s. 2d. At Cottisford the wool clip was sold apart, the receipts not recorded with other produce, and the wool from both Cottisford and Weedon was sent to Bledlow.⁴⁶ In the early fourteenth century the tax on looms was remitted at Wycombe in the hope of encouraging the cloth industry,⁴⁷ and it may well be that the nearby manors had some particular accountancy which did not figure wool in the manorial accounts.

As well as corn and wool, the Manorial Receipts include the sale of butter, cheese, milk, vinegar, pigs, piglets and pigs’ entrails, oxen, calves, goats, the skin of an ox which had died of murrain, wood and hay. The following items are also set down, arrears for services due, perquisites, tallage and payments for the use of the mill, threshing, heriot⁴⁸ and mortuary⁴⁹ as well as Peter’s Pence. Disbursements covered the management of the manor, stores bought, and the expenses of the lord, the seneschal, Master Peter de Grumville and Dominus Richard de Boylan, itinerant justice between 1279–89.

The English Priory was expected to provide certain dues for the Mother House in Normandy. A list of these requirements is found in the Ogbourne St. George Custumal of 1248.⁵⁰ Cheese, wool and corn are mentioned and “at Michaelmas, two leather garments and a blanket to the Abbot and a garment to the Prior of Bec; at the feast of St. John the Baptist two marks, and knives to the convent, twenty lengths of woollen cloth, thirty leather garments, and thirty-two weys of cheese.” A licence for the year 1224 permits the Prior to cross the seas with such goods for the Abbot of Bec.⁵¹

Each Manor was visited by the Prior of Ogbourne, who was legally the Proctor of the Abbot of Bec and held letters of proxy from him when attending courts of law. Tenants might be required to ride with him and to provide food for him. Particular business was reserved for such visits. The Chief Steward, sometimes described as the Itinerant Steward, was the highest lay official employed by the Prior. On 18th October, 1288/9, William of Harden,⁵² Chief Steward from c. 1289–1324, held court at Bledlow to impose fines and settle disputes.⁵³ Two days later Adam, joint bailiff for Swyncomb, Wantage and Bledlow, rendered the accounts.

Certain local men were chosen to serve as estate officials. These included one James Freysel of Bledlow, Knight of the Shire, who in 1319 accompanied the Prior on a visit to the Abbey in Normandy⁵⁴ and in 1324 was one of the “mainpernors” or sureties for the Prior.⁵⁵

Records show that William of Wantage, an early administrator, was Prior Proctor in 1218; he was followed by Brother Michael de Turnbue in 1232. An outstanding organiser was William de Guineville, Proctor General in 1239–58.

He was greatly concerned with agriculture, acquired pasture lands and developed assarts or clearances in forest and woodland. The most detailed version of the Customs of all the Bec manors was made during his term of office. After fifteen years of his sound administration certain rents of Abbey lands were allotted to him for life, and a new Proctor General was appointed. In 1254 Bledlow appears in a list of eight manors whose dues formed William de Guineville's pension till his death in 1258.⁵⁶

By 1288, in the reign of Edward I, an alternative to demesne farming can be traced; manors could be leased, sometimes for life, the property reverting to the Abbey on the death of the tenant. Bledlow occurs in a list of such undertakings. James Freysel, already mentioned as an estate official, appears in documents as lessee of lands in Bledlow under the years 1323, 1326 and 1336 for terms of four, seven and six years.⁵⁷ But the Abbey continued to acquire lands as late as the mid-thirteenth century, for there is record in the Custumal of Geoffrey Dubbel selling by charter all he had in Bledlow to the Abbot of Bec, his tenants remaining the tenants of the Abbey.⁵⁸

During the thirteenth century the relationship between the Crown and the Alien Priorities deteriorated. In 1279, Edward I, by the Statute of Gloucester, summoned all franchise owners⁵⁹ to appear before his judges and show by what warrant, "quo warranto", they held them.⁶⁰ These enquiries, which continued over a period of years, involved laymen and clerics alike, and in many cases the King's lawyers found that men were exercising rights to which they had no claim. The Abbot of Bec claimed that his privileges of "sac and soc, tol and theam, ingfangthief"⁶¹ and exemption from shire and hundred courts⁶² had been granted him under charter in Henry II's reign, while his "rights to the chattels of felons and amercements of tenants⁶³ before the royal justices" had been added by charter in Henry III's reign,⁶⁴ moreover all these liberties and customs were his on the grant of Hugh de Gurnay, his feoffor. He apparently proved his case.⁶⁵

Until 1303 revenues from the English estates were still rendered to the Abbey of Bec. In November, 1310, the Prior of Ogbourne sold wood from Bledlow to the value of £450 towards the repair of the Abbey church after the central tower had collapsed.⁶⁶ But he was evidently unsuccessful in transferring to Bec the moneys thus collected, for in 1312 the Pope granted the Abbot two priories in France to subsidise the community for their loss of foreign revenues due to war between the two kingdoms.⁶⁷ The Hundred Years War materially increased the difficulties of communication between the Mother House and its dependants from the reign of Edward III onwards.

During 1348 the Black Death ravaged Europe, and by the autumn the first cases had appeared in England and the infection spread rapidly throughout the country. Apart from loss of life, estimated as one in three, the onset of the plague affected the agricultural tradition of the country. Whole villages were wiped out and men were no longer available for the seasonal boonwork which formed an integral part of the medieval system. The village plots and the common fields, as well as the demesne lands, were left uncultivated. The Court Roll of 30th July, 1349, records that the majority of the Bledlow tenants had

died of plague in the preceding year and that their tenements had reverted to the lord of the manor.⁶⁸

The ravages of the Great Pestilence and the continuing wars with France affected the administration of the Abbey lands of Bec. By the late fourteenth century Bec was leasing the English manors for longer terms, and was even selling them. In 1404, the Bailiwick of Ogbourne was granted "at farm" to William de St. Vaast, the last Prior, and to John, Duke of Bedford.⁶⁹ In the same year William de St. Vaast died and no successor was appointed. After the formal Act of Suppression of the Alien Priories in 1414, Bedford still farmed the property.⁷⁰ On his death in 1435 the religious of Bec petitioned for the restoration of their English lands, but without success, and the Benedictine administration of Bledlow lands came to an end. In 1438 there is record of Henry VI earmarking rents from Bledlow manor to make up the revenues of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester.⁷¹ Two years later the King bestowed the estate, among other gifts, on the newly founded college of St. Mary, Eton.⁷² Thus the revenues from the manor of Bledlow were assigned once more to a centre of learning. In the early days of the Commonwealth an Ordinance was issued, in 1649, for the sale of estates of various religious corporations, which directly threatened Eton College, and indirectly the manor of Bledlow. Fortunately an exemption was obtained and the College property escaped confiscation.

The record of properties which were not held by the Abbey of Bec will be found in Appendix II below; these include the lands of de Turri, Braimuster, de Rual, Freysel and the Hampden estates later called Corham's Manor.

From the Lydes, where the springs flow at the base of the chalk, water courses have been carefully planned to serve the village mills; two of these survive, though now derelict. The Lyde stream originally fed the "Monks' Mill", and crossing Perry Lane, to pass Brewhouse Farm, flowed under the Lower Icknield and ultimately reached the "Normill".

There is mention of only one mill in Domesday Book, but Hugh de Gurnay's charter of 1198 granted to the Abbey of Bec "waters and mills" with the exception of "a certain mill which he had given to Simon de Hochede for his services". In 1204, Alice, Simon's widow, sued William Neirnit for certain tenements, including a mill.⁷³ In 1263 Nicholas de Hochede appeared in a suit concerning lands in Bledlow, but the mill is not specified, and had presumably reverted to the de Gurnays.⁷⁴ By 1285 Juliana, the de Gurnay heiress, wife of William Bardolph, claimed Bledlow manor, with the exception of a mill, which she already owned.⁷⁵ Not later than 1286, "Robertus Molendinarius" granted an acre to Geoffrey de Samford, with quit rent of a rose.⁷⁶ On the death of Hugh Bardolph in 1303/4, a water-mill was held by Christiana, daughter of Reginald de Hampden, for a yearly rent of 16s.⁷⁷ William Bardolph died in 1389 seized of a mill.⁷⁸

An agreement of 1582 to levy a fine mentions "a water-mill called Normill, alias Bledlow Mill to the use of Hampden Powlett".⁷⁹ Apparently the de Gurnay descendants still owned the Normill though the Hampden Powlett, who held estates in the district (Corham's Manor) rented it. While the present house, locally known as Monks' Mill, post-dates the dissolution of the Alien

Priory, the site must surely be that of one of the water mills granted to Bec in the de Gurnay charter. The mill stones may be seen set in paving at the doorway.

The building (Pl. (X(b))) is one of a group of five Tudor houses, timber framed with herring-bone brick-work, probably replacing witchert houses of an earlier date.

Opposite the church on the south side of the main street is a house with half-hipped gable ends, listed as The Mill House (*R.C.H.M.*). This mill must have been horse driven or a windmill; the mill stones may be seen in the courtyard (Pl. XI(a)).

Also on the south side of the road, farther west, is another house with recent additions, but the original built-out bread oven can be seen on the north wall (Pl. XI(b)).

On the north side of the main street, a house known as Piggotts has been refaced, but the North wall shows small sixteenth-century brick-work. There are chamfered beams within and an interesting spiral stairway with wooden newell post. This building was at one time used as a forge.

Between this last and the church is a house, once an inn, which has herring-bone brick-work in the gable end (Pl. XII).

There are records of certain land enclosures dating from the reign of Elizabeth I, but the practice was not generally accepted until the eighteenth century, with the first Enclosure Act of 1760, during the reign of George III. Amongst other innovations in agriculture, Townsend and Coke⁸⁰ inaugurated winter feeding and silage, methods which were gradually adopted throughout the country. The slaughter of stock in the autumn became unnecessary, with the notable result that deficiency diseases were less prevalent as fresh meat became available at all seasons.⁸¹ New methods of marling, drilling and drainage brought about agricultural improvements, ultimately of importance. There was doubtless temporary hardship among the communities who grazed the common lands, now in part enclosed, but the resulting improvement in farming practice offset the disadvantages.⁸²

The map (Fig. 1) illustrates the original three-field system of Bledlow. This was established from the 1812 Enclosure Awards Map by plotting the smaller holdings into which the big fields had been subdivided, still listed as part of North, South and West Fields.⁸³ Pastures and meadows such as Hen Field, Perry Field, North and West Meadow were also identified, as well as Vineyard, locally held to have been a hop-garden, and the small strip immediately to the south of the Icknield, near Monks' Mill, known severally as Hangindeforlonge (1298),⁸⁴ Hangfurlong Close (1742-4)⁸⁵ and Hanging Close (1812). Coneygra, shown as a chalk pit on the 6-inch map, must surely be a Norman survival, when every manor maintained a rabbit warren,⁸⁶ while Haydons may well equate with the headland called Haydoneshaeht, the perquisite of the Bledlow hayward in the Custumal of 1248.

The group of smaller fields, to the north of the Lower Icknield, unnamed on the plan, were the "closes" or enclosures related to the cottages, which are mentioned in Parson Taylor's tithe book of 1742-4⁸⁷ where names appear such as Killepins, Black Worges, Costard's Piece, Neighbour's Close and

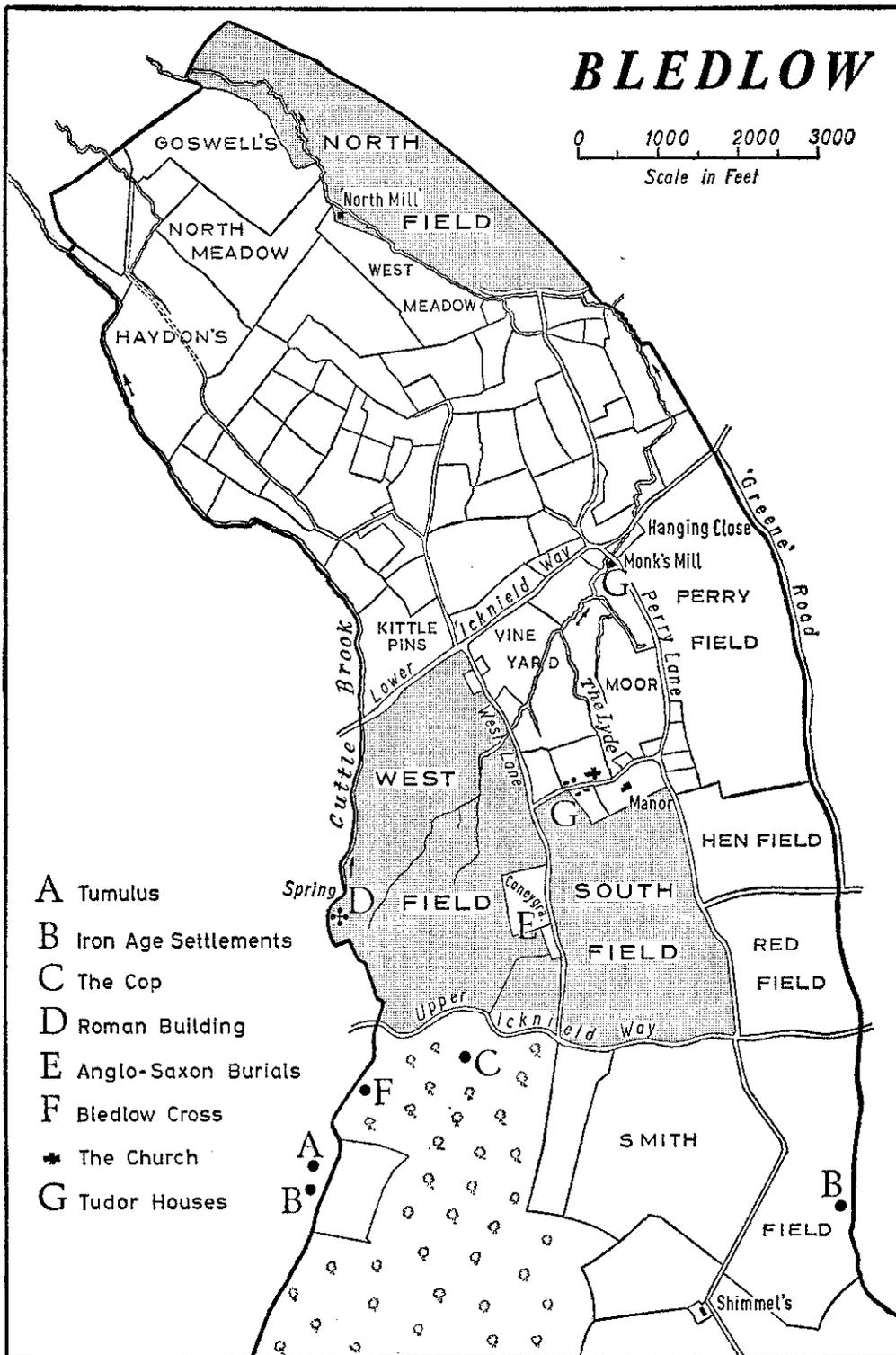


FIG. 1

The Lotts, possibly a survival of strip cultivation when lots were drawn for shares in the common fields. Some of these are quoted in the 1812 Enclosure Awards list.

The Icknield Way appears frequently in documents relating to land tenure; an interesting rendering of the name is found in the following grant of tithes to John Heybourne dated 1685 "in the Common Fields, Upper Northfield, Middle Northfield and Lower Northfield, and tithes in closes lying below the highway called the Lower Acknell Way alias Hackney Way".⁸⁸

The name Heybourne occurs frequently in church documents and in Parson Taylor's tithe book, which also mentions Gomme, Sale and Tappin, families still known in the Bledlow of today.

APPENDIX I

DE GURNAY CHARTER, 1198

"Exchange between Hugh de Gornay and the monks of Bec of all the tithes they had in the ferry and mills and furnaces (ovens) of Gornay and in all rents which came to his hand from the Honour of Gornay at the time of the making of this charter and all tithes they had in the ferry and furnace of Gaellefontaine and in all rents which came to his hand from the Honour of Gaellefontaine and all tithes they had in the ferry of La Ferté and the mill of Les Andelys and in all rents which came to his hand from the Honour of La Ferté and all tithes they had in his forests and woods, in money, in oats, in hens, and in all other tithes whatsoever in Bray for which rents at that time came to his hand. For the foregoing the said Hugh has given in exchange his manor of Bledlow in England free and quit of all custom and service with all rights and lordship and power he had therein and with all appurtenances in men, rents, waters, mills, meadows, pastures, woods, plain, grovelands and all other things or rents whatsoever, except the fee of Odo de Braimostier and the fee of the son of John de Turri and a certain mill which he had given to Simon de Hochede for his services."

APPENDIX II

LANDS HELD BY SECULAR TENANTS

DE GURNAY LANDS

An undated record states that Juliana, daughter and heiress of Hugh the Fifth, was summoned to give warranty for certain lands in the parish while still a minor.⁸⁹ She married William, Lord Bardolph of Wirmegay, in Norfolk and in 1285 she and her husband tried to regain the manor from the Abbey of Bec, claiming the whole property with the exception of 5 messuages, 1 mill and 2 carrucates of land, which, presumably, were already hers.⁹⁰ The case was settled, the Abbot paying a quit claim of 200 marks sterling. Later, in 1389, a Bardolph, also William, died seized of rents in Bledlow, and of 2 messuages, 1 carrucate of land and 1 mill.⁹¹ His wife died in 1402 leaving rents in the village and the right to two sor sparrow-hawks yearly.⁹² In the early fifteenth century Juliana's descendant, Sir Thomas Bardolph, still held tenements in Bledlow.⁹³

DE TURRI AND SENHOLT LANDS

Before Hugh de Gurnay granted the Manor to the Abbey of Bec, a part of the estate was leased in 1160 to one Robert de Turri, a military tenant, as recorded in the following document.⁹⁴

"Hugh de Gurnai and Milesent his wife greet the bishop of Lincoln and the good men of Buckinghamshire, both clerk and lay, French and English. Know that we grant to Robert de Turri, my man, for his service, twenty solidatae of land at Bledlow,

on which to dwell, namely the land which was Hemmings' and that which was of Ailmer and Ailwin of Northgrave. And with this land we grant to the aforesaid Robert four pounds of pennies from my rent of Bledlow at four terms in the year, namely twenty shillings at Michaelmas, at the Purification of St. Mary, at Whitsuntide, and at the feast of St. Peter in Chains, until we shall give him four libratae of land. And we grant this to him and his heirs, to hold of me and my heirs, hereditarily with sake and soke, and toll and team and ingangenetheof. We also grant to the said Robert and his heirs such customs and liberties as I have in that village, namely in woods, in plains, in pastures, in pannages, freely and quietly as regards me and my heirs, he giving me yearly a sor sparrowhawk or two shillings.

Witnesses: Ralf capellanus, John de Hosdeng', William de Merlo, Oliver de Age, Ansfrei dapifer, Odo de Bramustier, Hugh de Castello, Ralf de Riueria, Hugh de Burgennum, William de Moreigni, Hugh Brun, Warner camerarius, Richard Archer."

In 1180 John de Turri paid 10 marks for confirmation of his tenancy⁹⁵ while the fee of the son of John de Turri is mentioned in the Gurnay charter of 1198. An agreement made in 1238 between the Abbot and Convent of Bec and "dominus de Turri" is concerned with the wood of Schenholt and Comb and certain pannage, pasture and assarts.⁹⁶ The property appears to lie in the south of the parish towards Bledlow Ridge. The Custumal of 1248 mentions Johannes de Senholt, holder of 1 virgate, and Hugo de Senholt, once owner of another virgate, now the property of Symon Druel (see p. 280). William de Shenholte is witness to a grant of land in 1329,⁹⁷ while an indenture bill of 1530 mentions a wood called Schynolds.⁹⁸ This could be the derivation of the name of a property called Shinnals on the 1812 Enclosures Awards Map, now known as Shimmals (see Fig. 1).

Henry de Turri appears in the Custumal of 1248 where his duties as a free tenant are described⁹⁹:

"Henry Turri holds land called Dodegrave for half a pound of pepper and owes suit at all courts, all his tenants who are in assise have to do suit at the courts of Martinmas and Hockeday¹⁰⁰ at every view of frankpledge,¹⁰¹ and all boys of 12 years and more have to be placed on the assise in the lord's court and make oath and pay the thyngpeny and commute the fine with the tenants, and their lord is to receive a fourth part and the said Henry a fifth part. Also he and his successors must swear fealty to the new proctors of Bec and do homage to the abbots. Item he must find at his own expense one man before the Justices Itinerant and three at the expense of the lord; and for the defence of the liberty and of other rights, of which Henry is participant, he must find proportional expenses. Item half a hidate, which was of Constantine, answers for 17s. a year and the tenants there owe relief and pannage. And on the creation of a new abbot he must give aid, and at the renewal of the charter of liberty the same, and make suit, and at the view of frankpledge pay scot along with the others. And the said tenants may not and must not admit or receive any newcomers within the fee without the licence of the lords. These are the names of the said tenants: Alice de Coleshulle, Ralph de la Pole, John Bridel and Richard God. And their under tenants must reap at the Great Boonwork."

There is no further trace of the de Turrus in Bledlow, unless the following entry found in Lipscomb concerns a descendant of the family.¹⁰² In 1674 Thomas Harborne Sen. of Aylesbury conveyed by indenture to Ralph Toure of Bledlow, yeoman, in consideration of £600, certain tithes of grain in Upper North Field, Lower North Field and Middle North Field.

BRAIMUSTER LANDS

A second military tenant, witness to the de Turri grant of lands and mentioned in the de Gurnay Charter, is Odo de Braimostier, son of Hugh de Braimostier, who

had married one of the daughters and co-heiresses of Fulk de Fontibus. Already in 1192 he writes to his father that he has to spend more time in Normandy than in England and has arranged with the Abbot of Thame to act as his proxy.¹⁰⁸ Nothing more is heard of the Braimusters after the loss of Normandy and Odo probably left England to live on the Normandy estates.

THE DE KEYNES AND DE RUAL LANDS

In the early thirteenth century Simon de Rual held lands in Bledlow¹⁰⁴ later described, when John Druel owned them, as the hamlet of Mosleys and held of John de Keynes.¹⁰⁵ From a fourteenth-century record it is clear that this was a fief of Robert of Mortain¹⁰⁶ and de Keynes a military tenant.¹⁰⁷ Rudolph de Chaynes, or Keynes, appears as a witness to Mortain's charter granting the rectorial manor to the Abbey of Grestain. Simon de Rual is listed among the free tenants in the 1248 Custumal:

"Simon Druel holds a certain grove for 7d. at the Nativity of St. John the Baptist and owes suit of court and must do fealty and homage like the said Henry de Turri. Item a virgate which was of Hugh de Senholt and the land which is called Hermite, he paying yearly 6s. 6d. and at death a horse with harness and pannage like the relict of Reginald Palmere."¹⁰⁸

By the mid fourteenth century the Druels were no longer in possession of the manor of Mesle or Druel, as it was then known,¹⁰⁹ and the property passed through various hands until 1640 when John Franklyn died seized of the lands.¹¹⁰ The last trace of this manor was a copse near the road to Bledlow Ridge known as Drewell's Wood which is shown on the Bledlow Enclosures Awards Map of 1812, and again on a parish document of 1851.

THE FREYSELLE LANDS

In the fourteenth century the family of Freysel held lands in Bledlow later known as Frayselles. James, Knight of the Shire,¹¹¹ already mentioned as an estate official, son of Robert Freysel,¹¹² had acquired lands from Hugh Brian in 1316¹¹³ and first leased lands from Bec in 1323.¹¹⁴ By 1326, he apparently held the lease of the Manor of Bledlow for seven years, with the exception of the woods, and from 1336 for a further period of six years.¹¹⁵ He died in 1341, leaving in his will estates to his second son, Thomas, and various bequests to Bledlow church and to the Abbey of Bec.¹¹⁶

Thomas' daughter, Elizabeth, was apparently his heir, as she claimed tenements owned by her father in 1364/5.¹¹⁷ She appears, however, to be the last of that name to hold these lands, for in 1417 Richard ap Adam (or Yevan) died seized of tenements called Freyselles.¹¹⁸ He was presumably a descendant of the de Gurnay heiress Elizabeth, daughter of John de Gurnay (who died in 1290) and wife of John ap Adam.¹¹⁹ Through this connection Richard ap Adam may have been successful in acquiring Abbey lands when the Alien Priory's estates were sequestered. In 1522/24, William Curzon died seized of the Manor of Freyselles.¹²⁰ Later owners include George, Earl of Huntingdon, who sold the land to Sir Michael Dormer in 1537. Edward East held it in 1584/5.

HAMPDEN LANDS (CORHAM'S MANOR)

In the fifteenth century the Hampdens of Great Hampden held an estate on the north side of the Lower Icknield under the Provost and Fellows of Eton.¹²¹ Thomas died seized of the property in 1485. His grandson, John Hampden, settled it on his younger daughter and co-heiress, Barbara, wife of Sir George Paulet. In 1585 Hampden Paulet sold the land to the Corham family who held it till 1624. In the eighteenth century it was acquired by Richard Badcock and continued in that family till 1826.

mynstere . and oþer hæfð æþelweap.

Dis Ælfgýfa Ʒegumig to hira cine hlafordæ . hæc ic hæc heo
hyne bito for godæc lufum and for cyne seƷpæ hæc heo mote beon
hyne cƷydet Ʒyrdæ . Honne cyð heoþæ leof bæ hime Ʒe hæfunga hƷæc heo for
þæ and for hynæ tƷaplo to godæc cƷucean don Ʒylæ . hæc is æneæc hæc heo ann in
to caldan mynstæp . hea heo hira heaman næstan hea hæt landæc æt hƷutan beon
Ʒan call sƷa hit stænt buton hæc heo Ʒylæ bæ hime Ʒe hæfunga hæc man fƷeoge
on ælcum tuncæ ælne Ʒicæ heopnæ mann hæc undæp hira Ʒe heopud Ʒæc . and tƷa
hund mancuffa goldæc to ham mynstæp . and hira seƷun mid hira halig domec .
And heo an untonƷean mynstæp hæc landæc æt bleddan hlaewe . and hund man
cuffa goldæc . And anne offring dæc in to nuna mynstæp . and hæc landæc æt
hƷæcæ duncæ in to sumnæsiƷe æƷiste æ sanctan manan . and æt æstæle haminæ
hæc abbandunæ . And æt Ʒicam in to bahum . And ic ann minen cine hlafordæ hæc
landæc æt Ʒeopungum and æt hluc Ʒeladæ . and æt hæfænef ham . and æt hœdƷealdæ .
and æt mæsttan Ʒyrdæ and æt Ʒyllic and tƷeƷea beagas ærheap Ʒc on hund tƷælcƷig .
mancuffum and anra sƷoƷ cuppan and sƷix hofra and sƷa Ʒala seƷlda and sƷæna . and
ham æþelinge hæc landæc æt nƷan ham . and anæc beagas on hƷutærgum mancuffum .

By courtesy of the Trustees, The British Museum

PLATE IX. The will of Ælfgýfu, line 9: "and she grants to the New Minster the estate at Bledlow (bleddan hlaewe)".



By courtesy of the Provost and Fellows of Eton College

PLATE X (a). The Seal of Hugh de Gurnay, 1189.



Photograph by M. B. Cookson

PLATE X (b). House at Monks' Mill, Perry Lane, Bledlow.



Photograph by M. B. Cookson

PLATE XI (a). Mill House, Church End, Bledlow.



Photograph by M. B. Cookson

PLATE XI (b). House with bread oven, Church End, Bledlow.



Photograph by M. B. Cookson

PLATE XII. House, formerly an inn, Church End, Bledlow.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Baronage of England</i>	Dugdale, <i>The Baronage of England</i> , I (1675), 429.
<i>B.F.</i>	The Book of Fees (Testa de Nevil).
<i>C.Ch.R.</i>	Calendar of Charter Rolls.
<i>C.Cl.R.</i>	Calendar of Close Rolls.
<i>C.F.R.</i>	Calendar of Fine Rolls.
<i>C.I.P.M.</i> (R.C. and P.R.O.)	Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem.
<i>C.P.L.</i>	Calendar of Papal Letters.
<i>C.P.R.</i>	Calendar of Patent Rolls.
<i>E.C.R.</i>	Eton College Records, vols. 7 (1943) and 46 (1960), transcribed by Noel Blakiston.
<i>English Lands of Bec</i>	Marjorie Morgan, <i>The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec</i> , O.U.P. (1946).
<i>Exch. K.R. or Q.R.</i>	Exchequer King's or Queen's Remembrancer. P.R.O.
<i>F.A.</i>	Inquisitions and Assessments relating to Feudal Aids.
<i>History of Bucks.</i>	George Lipscomb, <i>History and Antiquities of the County of Buckinghamshire</i> , vol. II (1847).
<i>House of Gournay</i>	Daniel Gurney, <i>The Record of the House of Gournay</i> , Pt. I (1845).
<i>P.R.O.</i>	Public Record Office.
<i>R.C.</i>	Records Commission.
<i>R.L.C.</i>	Rotuli Literarum Clausarum in Turri Londiniensi asservati.
<i>Select Documents</i>	Marjorie Chibnall, Ed., <i>Select Documents of the Abbey of Bec</i> , Camden, ser., vol. 73 (1951).
<i>Select Pleas</i>	F. W. Maitland, Ed., <i>Select Pleas in Manorial and other Seigneurial Courts</i> , Selden Soc., vol. 2 (1888).
<i>V.C.H.</i>	Victoria County Histories, <i>Buckinghamshire</i> , I (1905); II (1908).

¹ From O.E. *hli*, slope, surviving in the form *lithe*, denoting steep pastures; *la lithe* (1250), *atte Lithe* (1277), *ate Lythe*, (1346), *English Place Name Society*, Bucks., 12 (1925), 168.

² A. Morley Davies, *Records of Bucks.*, 15 (1947-52), 247, map 5.

³ J. F. Head, *ibid.*, 13 (1938), 313. Part of a neolithic polished green-stone axe was recovered from the site; the rock source of this axe was probably St. Ives, Cornwall. *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, 7 (1941), 56, no. 179, and a fragmentary polished stone axe was dug up in one of the village gardens.

⁴ J. F. Head, *Records of Bucks.*, 14 (1944), 189; K. M. Richardson and Alison Young, *Antiq. Journ.*, 31 (1951), 132.

⁵ J. F. Head, *Early Man in South Buckinghamshire* (1955), 146.

⁶ J. F. Head, *Antiq. Journ.*, 22 (1942), 221.

⁷ Ekwall, *Dictionary of English Place Names* (1960).

⁸ *English Place Name Society*, Bucks., vol. II (1960), 167, Bledda's *hlaw*; Bledda is a regular pet name from the O.E. form *Blaed*.

⁹ Dorothy Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, no. VIII, O.U.P. (1930). See also A. Vere Woodman, *Records of Bucks.*, 17, 2 (1962), 130.

¹⁰ Founded at Winchester in 643 by Kenwalh of Wessex.

¹¹ It was customary for landowners to leave instructions in their wills manumitting slaves on their estates, an act encouraged by the church. Penal serfs were persons enslaved for certain crimes or because they could not pay the fine for some offence. See D. Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society*, Pelican History of England, no. 2 (1954), 112.

¹² A weight of gold of about 70 grains, equating with 30 silver pennies. This derived from a gold coin introduced by Offa, King of Mercia (757-96), imitating a dinar struck by the Caliph Al Mansur in 774.

¹³ Planned by Alfred, but built by Edward the Elder, c. 900.

¹⁴ The Lady Ælfgifu's apparent piety is, however, balanced by this item in her will: "And to my sister Ælfwaru I grant all that I have lent her; and to my brother's wife, Æthelflaed, the head-band which I have lent her."

¹⁵ *V. C. H. Bucks.*, I, 243.

¹⁶ A. Morley Davies, *Records of Bucks.*, 15 (1947–52), 232.

¹⁷ F.A., I (1899), 89. "De formis hundredorum", a return of Knights' fees for 1284/6.

¹⁸ See F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (1950), 276.

¹⁹ F. H. Baring, *Domesday Tables* (1907), 207.

²⁰ The Bayeux Tapestry has a scene of Duke William holding a council of war seated between his two half-brothers, Odo Bishop of Bayeux and Robert Count of Mortain, sword in hand. See *The Bayeux Tapestry*, pl. 50. Phaidon Press (1957).

²¹ *De Banco Rolls*, 55, m. 50. See *V.C.H.*, II, 252.

²² For documentary references to the successive holders of the property up to John Blancs, see *V.C.H.*, II, 249.

²³ This somewhat equivocal story, typical of an unhappy period of English history, is set out in P.R.O. *Calendar of the Proc. of the Cttee. for Compounding*, II (1890), 1489.

²⁴ For the History of the de Gurneys, see *House of Gournay*, and *Baronage of England*, p. 429.

²⁵ "Catalogue des grands seigneurs qui passèrent la mer et combattirent pour le Duc Guillaume", G. du Moulin, *Histoire Générale de Normandie* (1631), 185.

²⁶ See Appendix, p. 278. It seems likely that Bledlow manor was parcel of the gift of lands de Gurney received in Wendover and Houghton Regis (Beds.) during Stephen's reign (1134–54). It was apparently in the King's hands by 1173/4; see Pipe Roll of Henry II, where it is described as "firma de Bledelawa tra Hug. de Gurnai". *Pipe Roll Soc.*, 21 (1896), 86.

²⁷ In a charter confirming gifts to the church of St. Hildevert his son, Hugh the Fourth, mentions 1181 as "anno quo in terram successi" (*House of Gournay*, Appendix XXIV), and in 1185 he paid a fine of £100 for his lands in England (*Baronage of England*, p. 430).

²⁸ See clause in covenant of 1195 between Philippe Auguste of France and Richard I of England, *House of Gournay*, Appendix XXVII.

²⁹ *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 2. Confirmation of the charter was made in 1332, *C.Ch.R.*, IV (1912), 261 6 Ed. III.

³⁰ See Appendix, pp. 279,280, for Braimuster tenure, and p. 278 for de Gurnay property.

³¹ Below, pp. 275, 276, Bledlow Mills.

³² *The Bayeux Tapestry*, p. 56. Phaidon Press (1957).

³³ *Select Documents*, p. 123.

³⁴ The grantor of lands given in frank almoign or free alms to the church could not claim the usual services for them from the feoffee.

³⁵ *Select Documents*, Introduction: "The customs of the manors of Bec are preserved both on rolls and in a book. It is possible that the rolls were intended for the use of the steward or itinerant bailiff when on circuit, while the book was to provide a more permanent record. [The book] *Brit. Mus. MS. add. 24316* is a volume written in at least five different hands . . . the definitive version of the customs of all the manors was made not later than 1248 during the proctorship of William de Guineville. . . ." Chibnall version E includes Bledlow, pp. 119–23. The Eton College version, *E.C.R.*, vol. 46, no. 5, is in a hand of the latter half of the fourteenth century.

³⁶ *Select Documents*, pp. 98 and 122.

³⁷ See below, note 44.

³⁸ *E.C.R.*, vol. 46, no. 5, and *Select Documents*, p. 119.

³⁹ The right of heriot or *hergeat*, originally the war-gear wherewith the lord equipped his men and which must be returned to him at death, later applied to a payment in kind of a beast or chatel made at death, in return for the stock supplied to his villeins by the lord of the manor.

⁴⁰ A tax levied for the use of the sheriff or bailiff.

⁴¹ I.e., he must bring five men who will swear to his innocence, Court Rolls of the Abbey of Bec, *Select Pleas*, p. 7.

⁴² *E.C.R.*, vol. 46, no. 5; *Select Documents*, p. 123.

⁴³ *Exch. K.R.*, E 106 (Alien Priories Bundles), 2/1–2/6; see *English Lands of Bec.*, p. 47.

⁴⁴ Pipe Roll of 1288–9, *Select Documents*, p. 125: "Compota Maneriorum Becci anno rengni Edwardi filii regis Henrici septimodecimo." *Ibid.*, p. xiii, Marjorie Chibnall notes in the preface that "The accounts begin in 1289 with a document unique among the existing records of Bec. This is a pipe-roll (Eton C14), the only central financial record to survive. Consisting of four membranes with stitches for another, it contains accounts for 16 manors enrolled in an abbreviated form after the audit of Oct./Dec. 1289. It is a fair copy written in a single hand with only one or two corrections, and probably based on rougher records of some kind."

⁴⁵ Eileen Power, *The Wool Trade in English Medieval History*. O.U.P. (1941), 20.

⁴⁶ *E.C.R.*, C14 (Cottisford), 1316–7. *English Lands of Bec*, p. 33, note 2, “In expensis ij hominum cariancium lanam apud Bled’ *ijd.*, 1318–9. In expensis ij hominum cariancium Wedon et Cotesford apud Bled’, *ijd.*”

⁴⁷ *V.C.H.*, II, 128; Wycombe Borough Records.

⁴⁸ See above, note 39.

⁴⁹ Mortuary, a gift in kind paid to the church from the estate of a dead person to cover the probable non-payment of tithes.

⁵⁰ *Select Documents*, p. 36.

⁵¹ *R.L.C.*, I (1833), 624b, 649b; 8 Hen. III.

⁵² His name occurs in documents over a period of 45 years in the service of the Abbey, as supervisor of the estates and legal representative of the Abbot. He first appears as attorney to Bec in the *Quo Warranto* dispute; see *English Lands of Bec*, pp. 56–7.

⁵³ For example in the Court Roll of 1336, *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 122. “Defaulters: John Drewel, William Lambard, Isabel Lambard, tenants, six undertithing men and one subject. The offender, Robert Kele, who has led a mare with a foal through the corn making a path in the field where none ought to be (fine 6d.); Isabel Lambard diverted a water course (fine 3d.); the pledge of Juliana Knight, who raised the hue on Isabel Lambard, for her non-appearance (fine 6d.); Hugh le Whyte for not mending a road (fine 6d.).”

⁵⁴ *C.P.R.*, III (1903), 326, Ed. II, 1317–21. “Safe conduct for one year for Stephen le Botyler, James Frisel, Richard de Molendinis . . . men and servants of the Prior of Okeburn going beyond the seas.”

⁵⁵ *C.C.I.R.*, Ed. II, 1323–7 (1898), 209, where an order was made to the Sheriff of Buckinghamshire “to release the Prior of Okeburn . . . who is an alien, and his monks, if he have arrested them”.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Hen. III, 1256–9 (1932), 345.

⁵⁷ *Exch. K.R.*, E.106, 6/2, and *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 53. See Appendix, p. 280.

⁵⁸ *Select Documents*, p. 123.

⁵⁹ Privileges granted by charter.

⁶⁰ *V.C.H.*, I, 250, note 112. *Plac. de Quo. War.* (Rec. Comm.), 88.

⁶¹ Terms used in early charters to denote certain rights of levying dues, jurisdiction over and punishment of tenants included in the grant of manor lands.

⁶² *English Lands of Bec*, p. 63.

⁶³ Amercement, the right to levy fines.

⁶⁴ *C.Ch.R.*, I (1903), 430; 37 Hen. III.

⁶⁵ *F.A.*, I (1899), 85, “Abas de Bek tenet Bledelawe unum feodum de rege in capite”, and *ibid.*, p. 97, 1302/3, “Abbas de Becco Herlewyne tenet Bledlawe in puram elemosinam de dono Hugonis de Gorney et confirmacione regis Ricardi”. Charters of Hen. I and II, Ric. I and Hen. III were confirmed by Ed. III in 1332. *C.Ch.R.*, IV (1912), 261. 6 Ed. III.

⁶⁶ “On Monday in the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, in the 4th year of the reign of King Edward, son of King Edward, it was agreed between Brother William de Ponte, Bishop, Prior of Okeburn, on the one part and John Romayn and Osbert Romayn on the other, to wit that the said Brother William sell to the said John and Osbert three thousand faggots in his wood of Bledlawe under the seal of the signatories, to wit for every 100 of the said faggots, 25 pounds sterling, wholly for restoring the fabric of the church of Bec. *English Lands of Bec*, p. 123, note 1.

⁶⁷ *C.P.L.*, II (1895), 103, and see also *C.C.I.R.*, Ed. II, 1323–7 (1898), 209, 18 Ed. II, where the Prior of Okeburn is warned “not to send out of the realm or eloin in anyway the goods of the abbot’s manors in his custody”.

⁶⁸ *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 122, m. 10.

⁶⁹ Windsor, *The White Book*, ff. 91–91v, see *English Lands of Bec.*, p. 128.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 131. *C.C.I.R.* Hen. VI vol. III (1937) 493.

⁷¹ The manor being “in the King’s hands by reason of the death of John Duke of Bedford, as parcel of the Priory of Okebourne”, *C.P.R.*, III (1907), 189; 16 Hen. VI; *C.I.P.M.* (R.C.), IV (1828), 168, no. 36, 14 Hen. VI.

⁷² A charter of 1441 records a grant for life to the King’s knight, John Styward, of 36 pounds yearly of the issues of the castle of Rochester in lieu of grants for keeping of the castle and manors of East Wrotham and Bledlow. *C.P.R.*, *ibid.*, p. 546, 19 Hen. VI. The gift was settled on Eton by patent in 1462 by the Commission appointed to deal with the possessions of Alien Priors. *C.P.R.* Ed. IV, 1461–7 (1897), 73, 1 Ed. IV.

⁷³ *Assize Roll*, 55, m. 12, see *V.C.H.*, II, 248.

⁷⁴ *Feet of Fines Bucks.*, Hil., 47 Hen. III.

⁷⁵ *Assize Roll*, 63 m. 19d., see *V.C.H.* as above.

⁷⁶ *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 34.

⁷⁷ *C.I.P.M.* (P.R.O.), IV (1913), 167, no. 236, 32 Ed. I.

- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.* (R.C.), III (1821), 112, no. 6, 13 Rich. II.
- ⁷⁹ *Bucks. Record Soc.*, 5 (1941), 397/22, no. 43.
- ⁸⁰ Turnip Townsend and Coke of Norfolk in the reigns of George II and III.
- ⁸¹ See G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (1934), 378.
- ⁸² For a description of the stages of enclosure, see M. W. Beresford, *Records of Bucks.*, 16.1 (1953–4), 5 ff.
- ⁸³ The Awards Maps were drawn up “to achieve and register the changes in land ownership, tenure and usage”.
- ⁸⁴ See note 112, grant of land made to Hugh Bryan.
- ⁸⁵ Parson Taylor's tithe Book, see below, note 87.
- ⁸⁶ From O. F. *coninière* which becomes in English *conyngere*, etc.
- ⁸⁷ John Taylor, parson of Bledlow, 1732–1775.
- ⁸⁸ *Bucks. Records Soc.*, 5 (1941), 398/22, no. 38.
- ⁸⁹ *Assize Rolls*, 55 m. 12; see *V.C.H.*, II, 248.
- ⁹⁰ *C.F.R.*, I (1911), 184, 11 Ed. I; *Assize Rolls*, 63 m. 19d.; *V.C.H.*, *ibid.*
- ⁹¹ *C.I.P.M.* (R.C.), III (1821), 112, no. 6, 13 Rich. II.
- ⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 286. Sor sparrowhawk, a hawk of the first year that has not moulted and still has its red plumage.
- ⁹³ *C.I.P.M.* (R.C.), III (1821), 286, no. 39, Hen. IV, and *V.C.H.*, II, 248.
- ⁹⁴ F. H. Stenton, *The First Century of English Feudalism* (1932), Appendix 28. I have to thank Mr. G. R. Elvey for bringing this document to my notice.
- ⁹⁵ *Pipe Roll Soc.*, XXIX (1908), 129, 26 Hen. II.
- ⁹⁶ *E.C.R.*, vol. 46, no. 3.
- ⁹⁷ Bodleian Library, *MS. Ch. Bucks.*, no. 1072, 24 Dec., 3 Ed. III.
- ⁹⁸ *E.C.R.*, vol. 46.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 5.
- ¹⁰⁰ Hock Day, the second Tuesday after Easter Sunday, an important term day on which rents were paid. This and Michaelmas divided the rural year into its summer and winter halves.
- ¹⁰¹ Frankpledge, the system whereby all free men of a tithing (ten householders) were responsible for the good behaviour of its members; view of frankpledge, a court held periodically for the presentation of members of a tithing.
- ¹⁰² *History of Bucks.*, p. 114.
- ¹⁰³ I am indebted to Mr. G. R. Elvey for this reference, *Oxfordshire Record Soc.*, *The Thame Cartulary*, I (1947), 58, no. 70. “Karissimo domino suo Hugoni dei gracia Lincolnensi episcopo et eius senescallo, Odo de Braimust’ salutem et seruicium, quia in Normannia oportet me plus manere quam in Anglia, iccirco abbatem de Thama in loco meo constituo, qui nobis seruitium quod ad feudum meum pertinet pro me faciet et de hominibus qui illud seruitium michi debent, accipiet. Valet.”
- ¹⁰⁴ He payed 8s. 3d. scutage for 3 hides in Bledlow in 1235/6 and 1242/3; *B.F.*, I (1920), 462, 875 (scutage, payment commuting knight service).
- ¹⁰⁵ *F.A.*, I (1899), 85, 1284/6: “Johannes Druel tenet hamelettum de Mosleye pro dimidium feodum de Johanne de Keynes et idem Johannes de rege.”
- ¹⁰⁶ *F.A.*, *ibid.*, p. 97, 1302/3, where described as a small fief of Morteyn, held of the heirs of Richard de Keynes.
- ¹⁰⁷ Hugh de Kaynes’ name is included in a list of tenants-in-chief in the Barony of Bucks. for 1208/9, *B.F.*, I (1920), 20.
- ¹⁰⁸ *E.C.R.*, vol. 46, no. 5, the Custumal.
- ¹⁰⁹ *F.A.*, I (1899), 123, for 1346.
- ¹¹⁰ *V.C.H.*, II, 249.
- ¹¹¹ *C.C.I.R.*, Ed. III, 1327–30 (1896), 528.
- ¹¹² Robert witnessed a grant made in 1298 by Hugh Knyt of Bledlow to Hugh Bryan of lands including arable in Bledlow of which $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre is in Hangindeforlonge (Bodleian Library, MS. no. 951, *Ch. Bucks.*, 26 Ed. I. He is also mentioned as appearing on a jury in the Hundred of Risborough, and as a pledge for Hugh Pinel in the Court of the Abbot. *F.A.*, I (1899), 97, for 1302/3.
- ¹¹³ *Feet of Fines*, Bucks, Hil. 10 Ed. II.
- ¹¹⁴ *Exch. K.R.*, E. 106, 6/2; *English Lands of Bec*, p. 114.
- ¹¹⁵ *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 53 “Indenture of lease by Brother Richard de Besevall, Prior of Ogbourne . . . to James Frisel of Bledlaux, of the manor of Bledelowe with all its appurtenances, excepting woods and the moiety of the profits of the court, but including housebote and heybote . . . To hold for 7 years from the feast of St. Mark the Evangelist 1326, yearly rent 60 pounds. The said Brother Richard has delivered to the said James 4 horses worth 2 marks, 4 farm horses (affors) worth 20s. and 14 oxen each worth 1 mark, to be restored at the end of the lease. Russlop, 25th April,

1326." *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 55. "To hold for 6 years from this date, yearly rent 60 pounds payable at Ruysselep, 25th June, 1336."

¹¹⁶ *Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, Report 9 (1883), Appendix 1, p. 47.

¹¹⁷ *Assize Rolls*, 1452, m. 45, see *V.C.H.*, II, 249.

¹¹⁸ *C.I.P.M. (R.C.)*, IV (1829), 27, no. 57, 5 Hen. V. "Ricus ap Yevan. Bledlow mess' terrae etc. vocat Freselles."

¹¹⁹ *History of Bucks.*, p. 112.

¹²⁰ For the later history of the property, see *V.C.H.*, II, 249.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 247-8.