

Local History Notes

The Ely Coucher Book
1251

Extent of the Manor
1356 & 1357

Orders of the Court Leet
1790

Meadows Book Abstracts

The Ely Coucher Book — Willingham

The inquest was carried out by Ralph le King; Robert Raysun; Robert son of Eustace; Nicholas Biscop; John le Bere; Roger le King; William le Newman; Ranulf Hog; Gilbert Hoker; Henry Maple; Henry Hoker and Richard Syward.

This manor is in the county of Cambridge and in the Hundred of Papworth. the advowson and gift of the church belong to the bishop of Ely, and it is in the diocese of Ely.

The Demesne

The manor is divided in this way namely:-

In the field called Westfield eighty two acres.

In the field called Middlefield¹ ninety one acres.

In the field called Belassis² one hundred and six acres.

By acquisitions recently made by the present bishop in the three fields aforesaid: thirty acres.

¹ Subsequently known as Cadwin Field

² Belassis is Norman French meaning a fine seat, however this would seem to be a somewhat sarcastic name in view of it's cold exposed position, if it was indeed used by William's army as a base for the attack on the Isle of Ely in Hereward's time. Wm. Spencer Turner our local chemist in his paper to the newly formed Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Archæological Society (Transactions Vol. 1. 1903) cites the Hundred rolls for Rampton (temp Edward I) where it is spelt Belassise and he gives it as meaning de bello situ or the place where the army rested. It is almost always referred to as Belsies Field in the late Tudor and early modern priod. The Ordnance Survey made one of their many blunders with the Willingham Field names when they copied Camden's mistake in naming it after a Roman general called Belisarius calling it Belsars Field. Whatever the reader thinks of the two former derivations of the name there can be no doubt that either Belarsarius or Belsar had nothing to do with Willingham or it's fields. I prefer to call it by the name used for the longest period Belsies Field. D.J.

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Total of all arable land, three hundred and nine acres, reckoned by the short hundred and by the perch of seventeen and a half feet¹. these can be cultivated by two ploughs each of two stots² and six oxen with the customary tenants of the vill.

Meadow for Mowing

In Belasis and elsewhere in parcels 30½ acres. In Westmede³ on Overfurlong 4 acres which can sometimes be cultivated, namely at a time when it is very dry. 3 acres can be added there.

By acquisition of this present bishop in the aforesaid meadows 6 acres and one rod.⁴

Total meadow for mowing 43 acres and 3 rods.

Coarse Pasture.

In Henholm and Snotefen 20 acres.

In Quenholm 40 acres.

Total 60 acres

¹ See introduction with regard to measurements.

² Stot.— A small horse or pony commonly described as a nag in Willingham. These were yoked in front of the oxen as they were easier to lead than the latter there is a misericord in Lincoln Cathedral shewing this type of plough team.

³ West Meadow

⁴ As the Ms. has used the term perch for it's measure of length I think it might be fair to assume that by a rod he means a rood or a quarter of an acre. One has to be very careful in this assumption as in The Meadow Books (CRO R59/14/5/8g and the other owned by Mr. M. Hopkins) the fen reeves call each individual strip or holding in the meadows a rood whether it contains a quarter acre or not. Similarly they call each group of about 10 such roods a Hide. The most southerly of the commoners' allotted strips in Hemsall for mowing are also known as "The Roodes".

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In Shelekholes¹ there are 40 acres of coarse pasture fit for mowing. These are now put to farm for 60/- (£3-00) per annum, payable at St. Laurence's Day.²

Note that no one should common in Middle Fen except only the Lord Bishop and the vill with their own beasts. In Heveneshal³ the vill should likewise common their own beasts with the Lord Bishop.

In that same place at the lord's will, strangers can have their beasts for payment, but from the proceeds the free men of Willingham shall have the seventh penny, tithe excepted.

If strangers mow there they shall give two pence (.48p) for every cart-load, from which the free men of Willingham shall likewise have the seventh penny, tithe excepted as above.

At the present time the lord Robert de L'Isle and the whole vill of Rampton common and make hay there without payment, by permission of the Lord Bishop, so the jurors say.

In West Fen as far as Dernlode and so beyond Sualewenheth⁴ to the end of the Lord Bishop's meadow called Sheleksholes, the whole vill of Willingham and the whole vill of Over should common with the Lord Bishop, that is from Over Lode to Willingham Lode horn under horn.

If strangers pay to put their beasts there with the consent of the Bishop's bailiff, then the Bishop shall have the money paid on account of the beasts put there from the Willingham side so long however as the free men shall have the seventh penny, tithe

¹ Shelfords almost certainly the part now known as Crane's Fen. (John Crane owned this parcel of fen in the middle of the 17th century.)

² The 10th of August.

³ Hemsall.

⁴ Darre Lode and Swalney Fen in the survey of Over 1575 (PRO. E134/17-18 Eliz I)

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excepted as above. but the Lord of Over shall have the money paid for the stranger's beasts put there from the Over side.

From Aldreth Causeway to Stockslode¹ and from Suthermere² to Stackes the is a marsh called Blackhassocks where oxen and other beasts of the Lord Bishop are pastured, and in that place he commons with the vill of Willingham and no one else commons there.

The Stock.

The following stock can be kept there:

16 cows and two free bulls, or 20 cows when it is dry.

20 pigs and one free boar.

Two hundred sheep by the long hundred, (240) together with the sheep of his customary tenants which must lie in the lord's fold from Hokeday³ until Christmas Eve.

The Mill.

There is one windmill to which all rent-paying tenants, and all customary tenants owe suit.

The Fisheries.

A fishery of three boats on Willingham Mere belongs to this manor, each boat is now put to farm for 30 shillings (£1-50), payable in equal parts at the will of the lord.

A certain fishery belongs to it called Wilford, and is now at farm at the lord's will for 30 shillings (£1-50), payable in equal parts.

Sometimes through flooding there is a fishery in the ditches of Belassise, which is the requisite of the bailiff so the jurors say.

¹ Scotch Lode in the Meadows Books Op. Cit.

² Also called Alkesmere, Auxmere and Ox Mere.

³ The 2nd. Tuesday after Easter.

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The Free Tenants.

Thomas Aliquid holds one hide of land for the service of a quarter of a knight. And one boat on Willingham Mere belongs to that same land, there is a fishery called Lyppinglake and it belongs to the same boat.

To the same land belongs its part of the seventh penny from the payments taken for beasts from outside put on the marshes.

He shall find for the lord's great ale-boon in Autumn all his tenants for one day with lord providing meals. He himself shall ride with them to see that they do a good job. He owes suit of court.

John of Craudene holds one virgate of land for four shillings (20p) payable in equal parts. His tenants shall come to the great Autumn-Boon as above. He owes suit of court.

Henry Torel holds a half-virgate of land for eighteen pence (7.5p) payable in equal parts. He shall come in Autumn to the lord's great boon with all the men who work for him, the lord providing food.

He shall pay tallage at his lord's will, and a fine for his daughter marrying.

He owes suit of court and suit of mill.

He shall go with the others outside the vill to make distrains.

William Nuncius holds a half-virgate for eighteen pence (7.5p) payable in equal parts, and will do everything else like the aforesaid Henry Torel.

Thomas son of Olive holds one virgate of land for sixpence (2.5p) payable in equal parts (sic) at the feast of St. Andrew.¹

¹ The 30th of November (The problem is how could it be paid in equal parts on one day only?)

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He shall plough three rods of land a year that is, one in summer, one in winter and one in lent, without allowance of food.

He shall harrow with his horse for a whole day before Christmas without allowance of food, and for a whole day in lent without allowance of food. On the day he harrows in lent he shall have two handfuls of oats, by favour of long standing so the jurors say.

He shall mow with one man for a whole day without allowance of food.

He shall help to lift and carry the hay without allowance of food.

He shall hoe for one whole day without allowance of food.

He shall reap for one whole day without allowance of food, and what he has reaped he shall carry without allowance of food.

He shall carry the writs of the Lord Bishop or his steward as far as Doddington or a similar place.

He shall pay tallage, heriot and the fines for his daughter's incontinence or marriage.

He owes suit to the shire court, the hundred court, the manor court and the mill.

His sheep shall be in the lord's fold as above.

Agnes widow of Henry Carpenter and Lecia daughter of Robert Hoter hold one virgate of land for sixpence per annum (2.5p) payable at the feast of St. Andrew. They will do everything else as the aforesaid Thomas Olive does.

Nicholas Augtrich holds one messuage formerly held by John of Clowere. He gives 2 shillings (10p) per annum in equal parts.

The Tenants holding by labour service.

Thomas Wecheharm holds a half-virgate of land comprising fifteen acres. At Michaelmas¹ he gives 1½d. for Wytepund.

He gives a hen at Christmas and 12 eggs at Easter.

In every week of the year he owes two works.

Every third week he shall plough half an acre of land, and it shall be counted to him as one work. he must as well plough and harrow one rod before Christmas without allowance of food or a work. likewise he shall harrow for a whole day before Christmas without allowance of food or a work. Likewise he shall harrow for a whole day in Lent without allowance of food or a work, and he shall have two handfuls of oats as above.

He shall hoe for one whole day without allowance of food or a work. If there is need to hoe for more than the whole day, he shall do so and count it as one work.

He shall mow for one whole day without allowance of food or a work. Every thing he mows on that day he shall get ready and carry without allowance of food or a work, and he shall have in common with his fellow workers 12d. for beer. If there is need to mow for more than the whole day he shall do so and shall count it as one work.

If it is necessary to prepare and lift hay for a whole day, he shall lift and get it ready and shall count it as one work. That man and one of his mates shall carry the hay for as many days as are necessary with horses and carts, and every day on which they are carting shall be counted to them as two works.

In autumn he shall find one man to reap for a whole day without allowance of food or a work and whatever he reaps on that day he shall bind and carry one cart-load without allowance of food or a work.

¹ 29th September.

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He shall come to the great ale-boon in autumn with as many men as he has working for him, his wife excepted, the lord providing food. Every one of them shall have a loaf at none, and two shall share a dish of meat, and they shall have a reasonable quantity of ale. In the same way in the evening everyone shall have a small loaf and a herring or a measure of cheese and a reasonable quantity of beer.

He shall bind half an acre of what he reaps at that boon, and he shall carry two cart-loads without allowance of food or a work.

In turn with his neighbours he shall do carrying service by land and water both short and long.

The short to Cambridge by land, Earith by land and water, Aldreth likewise, Somersham by land and water. To Hardwick and Shelford, and to St. Ives and like places without allowance of food or a work, unless it falls on his work-day [i.e. a day on which he does labour service], that is on Monday or Friday. If on such days he and his fellow are summoned to perform labour services and they are working, and he is taken from his work to do that carrying service, and he returns on the same day while his fellows are working then he shall work with them according to what he may be ordered to finish, for as long as his fellows are working, that is until evening. Then he shall be quit of one work.

Know however that if he does that carrying on the days aforesaid to Earith or Aldreth by Water, it shall not be counted to him as a work.

The long to Doddington, Ditton and Cambridge by water and to Ely likewise by water and like places without allowance of food or a work, unless it be on the aforesaid work-days, because he shall then be quit of that carrying service for one work.

As often as necessary in autumn he must reap half an acre of any kind of corn, and must bind and carry it for one work. In the same way he must mow, gather and carry half an acre of stubble for one work.

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If need be he shall carry manure with horse, man and cart. When he carries for a whole day it shall be counted to him for two works. He shall if necessary spread an acre of manure, that is two courses of manure to count as one work.

He must thresh 24 sheaves of corn (wheat?) or rye for one work, and 30 sheaves of barley or oats for one work, and at each work of threshing he ought to have as fodder four sheaves of whatever corn he has threshed.

He must dig out ditches, build walls, tend the vineyard, mow in the fen, dig at the manor and in the fen, clear the ground of hassocks of coarse grass if need be, and do other small services both inside and outside the manor house and its buildings, for a whole day to count as one work.

As often as need be he shall go for foodstuff for his lord to Cambridge, Ely, Huntingdon or St. Ives without allowance of a work, but if he goes on one of his work-days then it shall be allowed him as a work as above.

As often as need be he shall carry his lord's equipment in the same way.

He must thresh 15 sheaves of oats for his lord's provender at the first arrival of his lord in the term of Michaelmas.

He and all his fellows in common, once a year, for one visit of their lord find hay and fodder for their lord's horses for one night.

He shall thresh and winnow a quarter of barley,¹ from which he shall make malt; and he shall be quit of one work.

¹ Corn was always sold by the quarter, it is a measure by volume not by weight. The old imperial scale in this instance was : 2 pints = 1 quart; 4 quarts = 1 gallon; 2 gallons = 1 peck; 4 pecks = 1 bushel; 4 bushels = 1 comb; 2 combs = 1 quarter. It is easier to visualise a quarter as being 64 gallons, or in metric terms approx. 291 litres.

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His sheep shall be in the lord's fold from Hokeday until Christmas, but the lord shall provide a shepherd.

He shall pay tallage, and leyrwyte for his daughter's unchastity and a fine for her marriage. He owes suit of court. He owes a herriot, that is, the best beast of the house, nor may he sell a male foal or ox which he has raised himself without his lord's leave.

He shall make and maintain half a perch of the causeway at Belassise without allowance of food or a work.

Once a year he must gather twenty sheaves of rushes for one work, any band with which they are tied must be five spans in length, and he shall carry them to the manor house.

On any day on which he mows he shall have as much grass as he can lift on the snaith of his scythe, and if in lifting the grass the snaith breaks, then he shall not have the grass.

He shall weave two fold-hurdles with his own straw and withies before the feast of St. Andrew, without allowance of a work.

If it is necessary to build houses he shall go with a boat or cart to fetch timber from Doddington, Ely, Somersham, Cambridge, Hardwick and like places. It shall not be allowed him as a work unless it be on the work-days already referred to. If it be on those work-days it shall be allowed him as a work above.

If he is ill for fifteen days or longer, he shall be quit of his works and no more, but if he is ill for a shorter time he shall be quit of nothing. *Note that no illness will excuse him from his autumn boon work or from his ploughing service.*

When he dies his wife shall have the beast which will be given as heriot to maintain her wainage for 30 days, so long as the

A comb sack of barley would weigh in at 16 stone or 101.6 Kg, a comb of wheat was 18 stone or 114.3 Kg, oats were lighter at 14 stone or 88.9 Kg. Remember that it was usual practice to carry and load these heavy sacks of corn until quite recent times.

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beast is kept in good condition. After 30 days it shall be handed over as heriot to lord's bailiff. If she has no beast she shall give 32d. as heriot.

The following a hold half-virgate of land in the same way:-

Philip, son of Alexander.

Walter Cusin.

Roger King.

William le Neuman and Margaret his wife.

Henry le Bere.

John le Bere.

Robert, son of Eustace.

Denis Mapel.

Alice Seaman.

Richard Hoker and Margaret his wife.

Gilbert Hoker.

Dawe le Paumer and Constance his wife.

Matilda, Geoffrey's widow.

Ranulf Hog.

Alice Vylein.

Thomas Mariot.

Nicholas Biscop.

Richard Maistermain.

John le Hayward and Mabel his wife.

Warin Runcin.

Henry Mapel.

Augustine Ralph's son.

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Richard Pain and Richard Heven.

Augustus Bric and Margaret his wife.

Richard Syward.

Ralph King.

Robert Reysun and Alice his wife.

The Cottars.

Adam Unwyne holds one cotland which comprises two acres.

He gives a hen at Christmas, and six eggs at Easter.

He owes two works each week throughout the year.

He shall provide a man to hoe for one day without allowance of food or a work.

He shall provide a man to mow in the meadow for one day without allowance of food or a work. If there is need for more hoeing or mowing, then he shall mow and hoe for a whole day for one work.

He shall find one man to reap in autumn for one day without allowance of food or a work.

At the lord's great autumn boon he shall come with all the men he has working for him, with the lord providing food.

If there is need for further reaping to be done, he shall reap half an acre of any kind of corn, and shall bind and shock it for one work; but he shall not carry it.

If there is need he shall mow half an acre of stubble. He shall gather it and help in common for one work.

He shall thresh and winnow a quarter of barley, and shall make malt from it to count as one work against Christmas.

On the day on which he mows he shall have grass as above.

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If he threshes for a work he shall thresh as above, likewise if he works on walls or ditches, gathers rushes, hoes or mows, or performs other small tasks as works, then he shall do them as above in all respects, but he shall not plough nor harrow nor perform carting service.

He shall do carrying service on foot in rotation with his neighbours without allowance of food or a work, unless it is on one of his work-days, that is on Monday or Friday. If he does carrying service on those days, then it shall be counted to him as above.

He shall thresh fifteen sheaves of oats for forage for one visit of the lord per year in the term of Michaelmas.

His sheep shall lie in the lord's fold.

If there is need he shall wash and sheer the lord's sheep for a whole day for the allowance of one work.

He shall pay tallage, leyrwyte and gersuma for his daughter.

He owes suit of mill.

If the lord requires it he shall watch over the fold, and while he does so he shall be quit of all works.

Nevertheless he shall give a hen and eggs, but for this he shall have (.....)¹.

He shall weave one fold-hurdle with his own straw and withies without allowance of food or a work.

The following are tenants of cottage holdings on the same terms:-

Alice Purry; John Brich; Agnes Pund; Alice Pund; Ralph Shepherd and Margaret his wife and Richard Blast.

¹ Translation lost at this point.

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The Tofts in Willingham.

Warin son of Laurence holds a toft which comprises one acre.

He gives a hen at Christmas and six eggs at Easter.

Every week throughout the year he owes one work, that is on Monday.

He shall hoe for one day without allowance of food or a work.

He shall mow for one day without allowance of food or a work, on the day on which he mows he shall have grass as above.

He shall reap for one day in autumn without allowance of food or a work.

If there is need he shall reap half an acre of any kind of corn, and shall bind and shock it, but he shall not carry it.

If there is need he shall mow half an acre of stubble, and shall gather it and help the others for allowance of one work, but he shall not carry it.

If he builds walls or digs out ditches, threshes or gathers reeds, hoes or mows, or does other small tasks as works, then in all things he shall do them as above, but he shall not plough.

He shall do carrying service on foot in turn with his neighbours without allowance of food or a work, unless it be on a work-day, that is, on Monday. If he does carrying service on that day, it shall be counted to him as above.

For one visit of the lord per year, at the term of Michaelmas, he shall thresh seven sheaves and a half sheaves for provender.

His sheep shall lie in the lord's fold.

If necessary he shall wash and sheer the lord's sheep for a whole day to count as one work.

He shall pay tallage. leyrwyte and gersuma.

He owes suit of mill.

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The following hold a toft on the same terms:-

Robert Bond; Reginald Paris and Cassa his wife; William Bigga; Sibilla Toni; Alice and Sara daughters of Schyre.

Now at the lord's will they give twelve pence for remittance of their works, but nevertheless give a hen and six eggs and will do their boons like the others

Della daughter of Roger le Paum holds on toft in the same way, but now at the lord's will gives twelve pence payable in equal parts.¹ Nevertheless she gives a hen and eggs.

She will help with the mowing, hoeing and reaping as above.

Walter Flint holds a croft for which he hoes for a whole day without allowance of food, and on that day he shall have grass, and ale with the others as above.

John le Hayward holds a toft and pays 12d per annum in equal parts, at Christmas he gives a hen, and at Easter six eggs.

He shall find a man to hoe for one day without allowance of food.

He shall find a man to mow for one day without allowance of food, and he shall have grass as above, likewise he shall find a man to reap for a whole day in autumn without allowance of food.

William Teytulf and Amicia his wife hold a toft for two shillings payable in equal parts. He shall come to the great autumn boon with as many men as he has working for him, his wife excepted, the lord providing food.

Cecilia Clobbers holds a toft for 12d. payable in equal parts. At the great autumn boon she shall find as many men as she has working for her, the lord providing food.

She holds a roadway for two pence payable in equal parts.

¹ In lieu of work services?

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Walter Belhund and Cecilia his wife hold a toft and pay 12d. in equal parts. they shall come to the great autumn boon as above.

Reginald Pye holds a messuage for 12d. payable in equal parts, and shall come to the great autumn boon as above.

William Pettard holds an acre of land for 12d. payable in equal parts, and he shall come to the great autumn boon as above.

Walter Clubbers holds an acre for 12d. payable in equal parts, and he shall come to the great autumn boon as above.

Walter Pistor hold half an acre for 4d. payable in equal parts, and he shall come to the great autumn boon as above.

Henry Hoker holds an acre for 12d. payable in equal parts. He gives a hen at Christmas and six eggs at Easter. He shall find a man to hoe for one day without allowance of food, and a man to mow for one day without allowance of food. He shall have grass and ale like the others, as above.

He shall find a man to reap for a day in autumn without allowance of food, he shall come to the lord's great boon as above.

Further he shall acquit the Lord Bishop in respect of Sir Alan de la Scutch and his heirs concerning an annual rent of two shillings for removing the obstruction of a certain fishery in the parishes of Wisbech and Elm.

Thomas Fayrem gives 6d. a year in equal parts for having right of common in the fen during his life time.

Symeon Page gives 4d. a year payable in equal parts for the same right.

Robert Froyt gives 12d. a year at Easter for having right of common in the fen during his life time.

Henry Basse; Robert Palmer and William Unwyn each give 12d. a year for the same right.

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Capons at the term of Easter for having right of common.

Two capons each from *John Prest; Walter le Batur; Colin de Haysho; John Hudein; Prudforth?; William Carpenter; Hugh de Sanford; P.....tup and Hugh Dolle.*

One capon each from *John de Soham and Durestrang.*

Total yearly rent of capons 20 at the term of Easter.

Total of all rents per annum: 25s. 10d. that is at

Michaelmas 6s. 2½d. at St. Andrew's Day 7s. 2½d. at Lady Day 6s. 2½d. and at St. John's Day 6s. 2½d.¹

Total payments from the fisheries with the tithe equals £6 per annum, payable in equal parts at the terms aforesaid.

Total yearly rent in hens with the reeve 44 at Christmas.

Total of eggs payable at Easter with the reeve equals three hundred and seventy two, reckoned by the long hundred.²

Total number of works (labour services) per annum with the reeve, three thousand nine hundred, reckoned by the short hundred.

Note that if it is the will of the lord to compound the labour services for money payment, then in lieu of any work outside autumn he shall have ½d.

In lieu of any work in autumn he shall have 1d.

By gift of the present bishop, *Walter Russell* holds a messuage for 4d. per annum payable in equal parts.

He shall find a man for the great autumn boon the lord providing food.

¹ Michaelmas 29th of September, St Andrew's Day 30th of November, Lady Day 25th of March and the feast of the nativity of St John the Baptist the 24th of June.

² 432.

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Extent for the Manor of Willingham¹

Inquisition taken at Willingham in the County of Cambridge before John de Harewedon, Sheriff of Cambridge, on the Monday next after the Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist. In the regnal year of King Edward III, after the conquest the thirtieth. By virtue of the letters of the Lord King addressed to the same sheriff to diligently to inquire, what goods and chattels, lands and tenements, Thomas, Bishop of Ely² had in the County of Cambridge, in the Octave of St. Michael next before and after. To value those goods and chattels, and also make an extent of the lands and tenements aforesaid.³

On the oath of Thomas le Ward; John Andrew; William Bolle; William Maysterman, senior; John Prikke, senior; Henry Bere; John son of Alexander; John son of Gilbert; William Torell; William Sandresson; Thomas Richer and William Gibbe, jurors, who say on their oath, that Thomas Bishop of Ely had at Willingham in the manor there in the Octave of St. Michael next before and after, divers goods and chattels written below namely:-

Three quarters and a half of wheat in the sheaf and straw by estimation, which are worth 15/9d., price per quarter 4/6d.

¹ P.R.O. E/143/9/2. Transcript B.M. Add Ms. 6165

² Thomas de Lisle Bishop of Ely 1345- 1361.

³ The Feast of St. Luke is on the 18th of October.

30 Edw. III is 1356

The Octave of St. Michael usually began on the 6th of October and ran until the Quindene of St. Martin the 25th of November.

Compounding the above we arrive at Monday the 24th. of October 1356

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Twelve quarters of rye in the sheaf, which are worth 40/-., price per quarter 3/4d.

Twenty quarters of barley, which are worth 60/-., price per quarter 3/-., similarly in the sheaf by estimation.

Ten quarters of dredge¹ in the sheaf by estimation, which is worth 25/- price per quarter 2/6d.

Twelve quarters of peas and vetches by estimation, which are worth 30/- price per quarter 2/6d.

There is there, rough hay called "Flegheye", which is worth 13/4d.

One stot and three mares with two foals at foot (unweaned) for the plough, which are worth 18/-., price per head 4/6d.

Twelve plough oxen which are worth £6-0-0d., price per head 10/-.

One cart with unbound wheels for muck which id worth 3/-.

Two old ploughs with their gear which are worth 4/-., price of each 2/-.

And so made up the total value of all the goods and chattels aforesaid :- £16-9-1d.

The aforesaid jurors say that, the aforesaid Thomas, Bishop of Ely had in the Octave of St. Michael next before and after, and by right of the See of Ely, The Manor of Willingham with appurtenances.

They say the site of the manor is worth nothing per year beyond repairs, in that there is no garden there or any dove-house, but several houses are ruinous, which cost more per year than they bring in.

¹ Mixed corn.

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There are there of the demesne lands 166 acres of arable land in the hands of the lord, by the short hundred, which are worth £4-3-0d., price per acre 6d., when sown, and when not sown then worth nothing, because they lie upon the fen, and cannot be let for pasture, in that they have sufficient pasture there in the commons or lots.

There are there certain pieces of arable land of the demesne land which are let at farm to several men for £7-19-10d. per year at the Feast of St. Andrew, The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin. The Nativity of St. John the Baptist and St. Michael, to be paid in equal portions.

There are there 15 acres of mowing meadow, which are worth 15/-, price per acre 12d., and no more because half the said meadow lies under water, and for the greater part is mixed with flags.

There are there 30 acres of fen meadow, which are worth nothing per year in that they always lie under water, and no profit can be had from it.

There are there in assized rents per year £6-4-0d., at the feast of St. Andrew, the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist and St Michael, to be received in equal portions, and likewise there are there in assized rents 3 capons per year to be received at Easter.

There is 1 windmill, which is worth beyond expenses 40/-.

There is a certain fishery called "The Frithmere" which is let at farm for £8-0-0d. per annum, at the aforesaid four quarters of the year, to be received in equal portions.

There is a certain other fishery in part of Willingham Mere called "Threbotganges", which likewise is let at farm for 30/- per year at the same four times in the year, to be received in equal portions.

there are 28 villiens, each of them hold of the lord half a virgate of land, and each of them pays the lord per year for services and

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customs in rent 14/3¹/₂., at the aforesaid terms of St. Andrew; The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary; The Nativity of St. John the Baptist and St. Michael by equal portions.

The same villiens likewise give to the lord per year 4/-., at the Feast of St. Michael for a certain custom called "The Whytfee", and each of them gives to the lord at the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord 1 chicken worth 1¹/₂d., and at the Feast of Easter 12 eggs at the price of 24 for 1d.

There are 6 customary tenants called "Coseteles". Each of them do 2 works for the lord each week in the year. Works between the Feast of St. Michael and the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist are worth ¹/₂d., and works between the Feast of St. John the Baptist and the feast of St. Michael are worth 1d.

Each of them gives the lord at the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord one hen, and at Easter 6 eggs price as above.

They say that the pleas and perquisites of the court there are worth by estimation per year 20/-.

They say that the aforesaid Thomas, Bishop of Ely had no other goods, chattels, lands nor tenements there in the Octave of St. Michael last past nor ever thereafter.

In witness of the truth of these things the Jury of this Inquisition have fixed their seal. Given at Willingham the day and year above written.

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Part 2

The Condition of the Manor House

Inquisition taken before Roger de Clonne, Clerk., assigned by the commission of the Lord King to oversee the deficiencies in the buildings in the manors in the See of Ely, and certain other things contained in the same commission; made on Sunday next after the feast of St. Matthew the Apostle in the regnal year of King Edward III, after the Conquest the 31st. at Willingham.¹

On the oath of Andrew Rightsoo; John Prik; Walter Sheter; Henry Ber; William Torel; John Tredgold; John Adam; John Gibson; John Andrew; William Cake; Walter, son of Alain and William, son of Alexander: who say upon oath that:-

There is an adequate² hall, except that one window is in part broken on one side, which can be repaired for 6/8d., and one door of the same hall which can be repaired for 3/4d., and the chimney of the same hall can be repaired for 6/8d., and the roof of the hall for 3/4d.

There is a chamber on the lower part of the same hall with a solar, which is adequate, and one chamber is on the higher side of the hall, which is adequate.

¹ The 24th. of September 1357. At this time our church was dedicated to St. Matthew, so this inquisition would have taken place on "Feast Sunday".

² In the Latin "Sufficiens" although this is translated as adequate they most probably mean by this term that it was in a quite reasonable state of repair, similarly when they describe parts of the buildings as ruinous it does not necessarily mean it was down to a heap of rubble, in modern terms the estate agents would probably say in need of renovation. Remember the roofs were thatched at this time and their renewal was an ongoing process anyway.

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There is a passage-way between the principle chamber and the chapel, which is ruinous, and it needs to be completely repaired and the cost of the repairs in full are 40/-.

One chapel which is almost unroofed, and needs new roofing, walls to be repaired and repairs to the glass. The cost for the roofing and glazing come to 53/4d. in full.

There is an adequate kitchen

One stable needs repair in it's roofing, and the cost of the repairs is 6d.

Two chambers called The Knight's Chamber, and The Clerk's Chamber, of which the Knight's Chamber needs roofing and the cost of the roofing 3/4d.

There is a barn which is adequate, and an adequate ox stall.

The boundary fence around the manor all needs repair and the cost of the repairs 3/- and the gates there, which need all remaking and the cost of the repair 10/-.

There is a mill, which lacks a mill-stone costing 40/-.

One old stable for draught-beasts, which is adequate.

There are no other buildings nor enclosures which need repair.

They say, that William Pricke sold of the manor after the Octave of St. Michael last past 5 quarters of wheat, and these are not in the sheriff's extent made previously, and that each quarter is worth 5/-, which money the same William paid to the Lord Richard de Middleton, the receiver of the bishop.

They say, that all other goods taken away from there were so taken after the Octave of St. Michael, and other things owed to the said bishop, became due to him after the said Octave there.

In witness whereof the aforesaid inquisitors have affixed their seals to these presents, on the day place and year above written.

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Orders & Rules of the Willingham Manor Court Leet 1790¹

The Manor of Willingham otherwise Wivelingham in the County of Cambridge. At a Court Leet and Court Baron holden for the Lady of the said Manor on Tuesday the thirteenth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety. It was ordered concluded and agreed upon by The Jury as follows.

1. Drains and Water Courses.

Item: We order that every person or persons who ought to scour out and cleanse any drain or water course, that tends to the draining any of the Common Fens and Arable Fields or Meadows in the said Manor and bounds of Wivelingham aforesaid, do cause the same to be sufficiently scoured out on or before the seventh day of May next ensuing the date hereof, or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor one shilling for every pole not done.

2. Fences to be Kept and Maintained.

Item: We order that all Common Fences that tend to the preserving of the said Common Fens, Fields and Meadows be sufficiently repaired, kept and maintained by the several occupiers of the same. For this year and every year until the next Court Leet or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every pole not done one shilling and six pence.

3. Rates for Feeding.

Item: We order that whereas there is mentioned in the rate made for feeding, ordering and breaking all the Common Fens in the said manor, that is to say for every Messuage House with

¹ C.R.O. R59/14/5/9.

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a half yard-land to feed Nine Great Cattle not being Steers or Stone Horses in Middle Fen: whereof Three to be Mares or Geldings and Six Cows. And in West Fen Two Mares or Geldings and One Cow or Three Cows at their own choice: for every Commonable House.

4. *Not to Exceed the Rates.*

Item: We order that if any of the said Commoners shall exceed any of the said rates above mentioned: He, she or they so offending shall for every such offence forfeit to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings for every beast.

5. *No Joist to be Taken.*

Item: We order that if any person or persons shall take to joist any horse, mare, cow or sheep or any other beast (small or great), and bring them or that upon any of the commons of the said manor at any time or times hereafter, they shall forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every horse, mare or cow ten shillings, and for every sheep two shillings and six pence.

6. *Inner Ways.*

Item: We order that no commoner or other person shall feed but one horse, mare or cow in any of the Inner Ways¹ in any of the arable fields of the said manor, and such beast shall be staked: or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor five shillings for every great beast, and if any beast be found feeding in any of the said ways before the third of May the owner shall be subject to pay the same penalty.

7. *Loose Horse Etc.*

Item: We order that no waste or loose horse, mare colt or filly or yearling be suffered to follow the team of any person or

1. The roadways and tracks between the furlongs in the open fields.

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persons in hay-time and harvest: on penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor for every offence two shillings and six pence.

8. Horses Staked.

Item: We order that no person or persons shall lead, drive or feed any sort of cattle in the Meadow or Snout Fen, but such as shall be staked on their own ground. First staked out and visibly divided with boughs. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings for every offence.

9. Year-Old Bulls.

Item: We order that no person or persons shall keep any year-old bull in Iram, without such person or persons provide common for the same. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings for every offence.

10. Commons Cleared.

Item: We order that Middle Fen and West Fen be cleared on the twenty fifth day of September, and be kept clear until the twenty fifth day of October. On penalty of forfeiting to the Lady of the Manor for every beast ten shillings.

11. Commons Cleared of Sheep & Other Cattle.

Item: We order that Middle Fen be cleared of sheep and other great cattle on the twenty first day of January, also that the Meadow and Hempsall be fed until the twenty fifth day of March with all manner of cattle, and then cleared. Or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every offence ten shillings. Also that Iram be cleared of sheep and all other cattle on the first day of March, or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every offence ten shillings.

12. Swine to be Rung.

Item: We order that if any pig, hog or swine be found in any of the fens, fields or meadows of the said manor unrun. The

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owner thereof shall forfeit to the Lady of the Manor six pence for every swine.

13. *Bulls to be Kept.*

Item: We order that every six occupiers of Commonable Houses, and every six such throughout the Town shall provide and keep upon the commons for public use, one sufficient bull of good size such as the Fen Reeves shall approve of, and shall not take any of them off the said commons before the twelfth day of November. We further order that if any person or persons shall let all their commons in West Fen and Middle Fen to one person. He or she that hires the same shall provide part of a bull for the same, and if any person or persons shall neglect or refuse to provide and find such parts of a bull as aforesaid, he, she or they so offending shall forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every offence ten shillings.

14. *Reed Carried Away.*

Item: We order that no person or persons set or leave any reed standing in any part of Middle Fen called The Meerbrow after the twelfth day of May. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings.

15. *Cattle Branded.*¹

Item: We order that cattle kept and depastured in West Fen, Middle Fen and Iram shall be branded by their respective owners with such figures or figure as is the number of their house or houses, and on that part of the cattle as usually they have heretofore done, before they be put upon any of the said commons and the same to continue visible on all manner of great cattle until the twenty first day of October yearly, and every year until the next Court Leet. Or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every beast two shillings and six pence.

¹ See main notes.

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16. *Bills of Stock.*

Item: We order that an account be sent in writing two days next after the breaking or stocking the said commons, how and for what they keep such cattle in all or any of the said fens. On penalty of forfeiting to the Lady of the Manor ten shilling for every such neglect.

17. *Changing of Stock.*

Item: We order that no person or persons shall shift, remove or change any cattle from out of any of the said fens into the other without first being branded according to the rule of the fen into which they are put., and notice be given in writing to The Fen Reeves so that the same may be entered in The Fen Reeves Book. Or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every offence ten shillings.

18. *Hiring and Letting.*

Item: We order that no person or persons hire or let or otherwise dispose of their common without giving an account in writing to The Fen Reeves. Or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings.

19. *By-Flocks & Herds.*

Item: We order that no person or persons shall keep any by-flocks or herds in any of the fields, fens or meadows of the said manor. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor for every offence ten shillings.

20. *The Right to Feed Sheep.*

Item: We order that every house that hath a right of common and every half-yard of land that hath a right of common shall feed the same number of sheep, that is to say for every house ten, and for every half-yard of land ten and no more. The lambs to be deemed lambs and accounted such until the twenty second day of November and no longer, If any person or persons shall

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exceed such number. such person or persons so offending shall forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every offence ten shillings.

21. Knobing.

Item: We order that all beasts such as cows and heifers horns be capped, buttoned or covered with wood on the tips of their horns before they be put upon any of the said commons or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor one shilling for every uncapped beast. The bulls horns to be capped, buttoned or sawn at the election of their owners, and the owners of such bulls as are not capped or buttoned or sawn shall have two days notice given them by the Fen Reeves before they shall impound the same. If any beast lose their cap or caps the same beast shall be capped again in two days after losing their cap or caps, and if in breaking their cap or button the nail remains in the horn the owner of such beast shall immediately take out the same. If any person or persons suffer their beast or beasts to go down to any of the said commons with the nail in their horn uncapped, he, she or they shall forfeit to the Lady of the Manor six pence for every such neglect.

22. Hemsall Fed.

Item: We order that no person or persons shall put into Hemsall or any of the meadows usually fed any manner of cattle that was not rateable cattle before the first day of November. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings.

23. Fallow Field Kept Clear.

Item: We order that the Fallow Field be kept clear of all manner of cattle from the twenty second day of November until the third day of December following or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings for every offence.

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24. *Hurdles to be Left.*

Item: We order that every fold-master or fold-mistress leave his or her hurdles in the fens and fields until the seventh day of March, and that the flocks be kept separate in their folds. Or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings. And every fold-master or fold-mistress leaving his or her hurdles, and the shepherds neglecting to remove the same, shall each of them be subject to pay the like penalty.

25. *Horses Carrying Milk.*

Item: We order that no person or persons put or leave any mare or ass that carries milk on any of the commons or meadows aforesaid. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor two shillings and six pence for every offence.

26. *Broke Field Cleared.*

Item: We order that the fold-masters shall clear the Broke Field of sheep and of the fold on or before the twenty first day of April. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings each fold-master.

27. *Haulm Field Kept Clear.*¹

Item: We order that the Haulm Field be kept clear of sheep fourteen days after harvest be done. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings for every offence.

28. *Fallow Field.*

Item: We order that no person or persons shall put any great cattle into the Fallow Field from the twenty second day of

¹ The Haulm Field. At this date the wheat crop was cut with a sickle the wheat straw was usually long up to 5 feet tall and only the top foot or so was taken by the reapers when cutting same. The straw that was left was known as the Haulm sometimes it was mown and used as bedding or fodder, or left standing for the sheep to graze and any residue ploughed in later.

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November until the eleventh day of May following. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings.

29. Lode Fences.

Item: We order that every owner of Commonable Houses and every owner of Arable, that is feeding land in Middle Fen, shall sufficiently keep uphold and maintain this year and every year until the next Court Leet holden for the said manor, their several parts of their boarded or barred fences from St. Ellen's Hill to the Lode's end. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor for every foot six pence, if not done.

30. Herd Lodging.

Item: We order that the cattle pasture and lodge nights and days in Middle Fen.

31. Sheep Kept out of the Meadow.

Item: We order that the sheep be kept out of the Meadow, Hemsall and Iram until the twenty second day of November. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings for every offence.

32. House Dales

Item: We order that after two days public notice being given by the Field Reeves, that every occupier of a Commonable house shall ditch and sufficiently scour out his or her part or parts of the dale or dales in the Arable Fields of the manor aforesaid or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor six pence for every pole not done and for every pole mended three pence.

33. Land Dales.

Item: We order that every occupier of arable land after two days public notice given by the Field Reeves shall gripe, sluice and sufficiently scour out his or her gripe or gripes, sluice or sluices, or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every acre not griped

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eight pence, for every half acre four pence and for every rood two pence, also for every sluice four pence and for mending work half price.

34. *Ant Hills.*

Item: We order that every owner of a Commonable house shall upon public notice given by the Fen Reeves send one sufficient man able to labour two days in West Fen, and two days in Middle Fen yearly for the laying and destroying of ant hills, or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor two shillings and six pence for every man a day wanting. And every occupier of a half -yard land that is feeding land in Middle Fen shall send one man in Middle Fen to lay and destroy ant hills on the like penalty, and shall also send one man a day, or more if it found needful by the Fen Reeves, to spud or mow thistles, and scouring of ponds in any or all the said commons. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings.

35. *Sheep Bills.*

Item: We order that any person or persons that do or shall keep sheep upon any of the Sheep Commons of the said manor shall send or give an account in writing to the Field Reeves, what number of sheep he or she or they do or shall keep, and by what right he, she or they do keep the same. The first account to be sent in writing on or before the fourth day of May, and a second account on or before the twenty second day of November following. Or forfeit to the Lady of the Manor five shillings for every offence.

36. *Dye Gathering.*

Item: We order that no commoner shall gather dung or dyes off any of the said commons. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor two shillings and six pence for every offence.

37. *Dyes for the Poor.*

Item: We order that poor person or persons inhabitants, and not a commoner shall and may gather dyes or dung in a sack, but not in a cart on any of the said commons On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor two shillings and sixpence.

38. *Meadow, Hemsall & Shelfords Stocked.*

Item: We order that the Meadow, Hemsall and Shelfords be stocked on the twenty fifth day of September with rateable cattle only. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings for every beast.

39. *Howard's Fees.*

item: We order that the Howard or Pindar shall have four pence for all poundages in the fields as well as in the fens, but no wages for the arable land.

40. *Sheep Branded.*

Item: We order that if any person or persons keep any sheep upon any of the said commons without branding the same and continuing the same visible, shall forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every sheep six pence.

41. *Mowing the Meadow.*

Item: We order that the Meadow and Hemsall shall be mown on or before the twelfth day of August yearly and every year until the next Court Leet.

Item: We order that if any person or persons shall mow or cause to be mown any half acre or rood in the Meadow or any Rood, Middle or Layer in Hemsall after the twelfth day of August aforesaid he, she or they shall forfeit to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings for every half acre, Rood, Middle or Layer or any part thereof, except that part of The Layers from the Nots at the Dowelholes on the lower end of the Layers to Cottenham Ditch.

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42. Calves Stocked in Iram.

Item: We order that no person or persons shall put any calf or calves in Iram, that was or were calved on or before the tenth day of October, except that he, she or they shall provide a half part of a common for each of them. (Commonly called a half-mouth). On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings for each calf.

43. Town Grass.

Item: We order that if any person or persons shall or do buy any Town Grass and shall neglect or refuse to pay for it when demanded by the Fen Reeves. The Fen Reeves shall have power to sue such person or persons so refusing at the expense of the Parish.

44. Banking Money.

Item: We order that every owner or occupier of a Commonable house or houses shall yearly and every year as long as need may require pay into the hands of the Fen Reeves the sum of five shillings for each house for and towards the making and maintaining all the banks for the preservation of all the commons in the said Parish of Willingham from being overflowed by water. On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor for every offence ten shillings. And further that if any person or persons shall drive any cart, wagon or any carriage on any of the said banks. He, she or they so offending shall forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for every offence five shillings.

45. Fen Reeves Accounts.

Item: We order and agree that the Fen Reeves shall yearly and every year give a just account of all money received and expended by them for the use of the Parish unto the parishioners of the said Parish on Thursday in Easter Week, until the next Court Leet to be holden for the manor aforesaid. On penalty of

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forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor twenty shillings each of them.

46. Articles to be Kept.

Item: We order that all forfeitures aforesaid relating to the Fen Reeves or Field Reeves Offices shall be recovered by impounding the beast or beasts of the person or persons so offending or breaking any of the articles above mentioned, and if the fen Reeves or field Reeves shall neglect or refuse to impound such beast or beasts as aforesaid, they shall forfeit to the Lady of the Manor for such neglect ten shillings each of them, and any two of this jury shall have power to impound any beast or beasts of theirs for every such neglect. And further it is hereby ordered and agreed that if any person or persons shall neglect or refuse to pay the penalty for which his, her or their beast or beasts were impounded. The Fen Reeves or Field Reeves shall and may after such beast or beasts has been impounded twenty four hours make sale thereof and reserve and keep the penalty inflicted thereon with the expenses arising from the sale thereof, and return the overplus to the owner of such beast or beasts before impounding.

47. Not to Drive over the Meadow.

Item: We order that no person or persons shall drive their cow or cows over the Meadow or Hempsall or any part thereof to and from their ground or grounds as heretofore (except in a very dry time when there can be no water gotten in such ground or grounds for their cattle). On penalty of forfeiture to the Lady of the Manor ten shillings for every offence.

The following orders were added 29th of March 1833.

Clay, Land or Gravel.

Item: we order that if any person is seen fetching up clay, land or gravel from out of the Sheep Pasture or out of any of the fens or meadows that is not a commoner, he shall forfeit ten shillings

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to the Lady of the Manor. No commoner shall carry any sand or gravel out of Middle Fen or forfeit ten shillings for every offence to the Lady of the Manor.

Cutting Grass.

Item: We order that if any person or persons is or are seen in or about the Fields of Willingham cutting grass such person or persons shall forfeit ten shillings for every offence to the Lady of the Manor.

Trespassing across the Meadow & Hemsall.

Item: We order that if any person or persons is or are found trespassing across the Meadow or Hemsall down Aldreth Causeway into the Isle or out of the Isle of Ely with any wagon, cart or gig, such person or persons shall forfeit ten shillings for every offence to the Lady of the Manor.

Main Notes.

Rule 15. Branding of Cattle.

Note on the branding of cattle from an earlier Court Leet from the Court Rolls. of 1724.¹

Item: We order that all cattle kept and depastured in West Fen be by their respective owners branded with their usual brand upon the near-side with pitch, every cow upon the rump and every horse or mare upon the thigh fairly to be seen. The same rule to be observed in Middle Fen, that is to say that every cow be branded with the same brand on the offord, right or milking side and every mare or horse on the offord side. The same order and rule be kept and observed in Iram, that is to say that every mare, gelding, filly or foal and every cow, bull, heifer or calf depastured, they shall be by their respective owners branded

¹ C.R.O. Manor Court Rolls. Ref L1/177-195

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with pitch upon their near shoulder with the same brand as in the other fens. The aforesaid brands to be continued visible on all such cattle unto the tenth day of October yearly, and further the said owners of all such cattle shall cause the same to be branded before any of the said cattle be put upon any of the said commons, and also that a true copy or figure of every such brand be brought to the Fen Reeves at least two days before breaking day on penalty of forfeiture to the Lord of the Manor ten shillings.

This 1724 set of orders is followed by the appointments of the officers to serve the Town in the following year i.e. 1725. They were:-

William Bonfield and John Few. — Constables.

Abraham Love and James Graves. — Fen Reeves.

John Rooke and William Ingle. — Field Reeves.

John Ancel and John Grasves. — Aletasters.

Thomas Braiser. — Howard.

Abraham Love and James Graves, Senior. — Assessors.

Five people were fined in that year (1724) for "Suffering mares carrying milk to feed on the commons." They paid a 2/6d. fine. Four were guilty of the offence of 'leading cows in the meadow contrary to order.' Fined 10/- each. The highest number offending 14 persons were guilty of "leading cows in the Inner Ways contrary to order." each fined 5/-. Three commoners had not cleaned their share of the ditches in the meadows and commons; John Garner for 15 pole not done 15/-; William Rowell for 5 pole 5/- and Richard Garner for half a pole 6d.

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*Memorandum — The Hempsall.*¹

Being a meadow or marsh ground and lying in three furlongs to wit: The Layers, Middles and Roods by estimation 437 acres besides the outcasts of the Layers, Middles and Roods, Rood-bush, Longslipe Drove-way and Common Hill, which said outcasts are usually sold by the Fen Reeves for the use of the town.

The said Layers abut north upon Cottenham Division Ditch and south upon the Middles. The Middles abut north upon the Layers and south upon the Roods. The Roods abut north upon the Middles and south upon the Howard's Swath, of which said meadow or marsh ground every Commonable house hath a lot or share of 4 acres, more or less; to wit a Layer, a Middle and a Rood, which are every year mown by the several occupiers for their own use or uses.

The said fen is several from the 24th of February until the 29th of September following in every year, and from the 29th of September to the 24th of February following the said fen is common for all customary great cattle (Stone horses and steers only excepted).

The said fen is common for sheep from the 11th of November to the 21st of December, and then is freed from sheep to the 10th of January, but not from customary cattle. The said fen is also common again for sheep from the 10th of January to the 24th of February, and no longer for any manner of cattle whatsoever.

The aforesaid Layers, Middles and Roods are every year changed by the persons that live each end of the town, and goes on house by house through the fen. That is to say; when the year of our Lord is even then the West End begins next the outcast of the

¹ C.R.O. R59/14/5/8g.

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Middles and Roods by Aldreth Causey and goes on House by House through the fen to the drove-way next to Iram, and in the same year the West End begins in the Layers next to the longslipe by the Adventurers' Lockspit side and goes on house by house to the outcast of the Layers by Aldreth Causey side.

When the year of our Lord is odd the Green End alias Mill End begins and goes on house by house the same as the West End does when the year of our Lord is even, and so are changed for which common or lots aforesaid.

The Measure of Hemsall.

The measure of the Middles and Roods next to Howard's Swath is 21ft. 8 inches. between the Middles and Roods it is 28ft 8 inches and next to the Layers it is 32ft.

*The northern end of the Layers varied in width.*¹ Note that the first 9 grounds that abut against the Adventurers' Lockspit are 1ft 2½ inches one wider than another from the last usually laid out by the Fen Reeves, which said last ground is as aforesaid is 32ft, then to the said 32ft add 1ft. 2½ inches, which makes 33ft 2½ inches for the first ground then add 1ft. 2½ inches more and so keep adding to every of the said 9 grounds.

The last 10 grounds are 1ft. 3 inches one wider than another as on the other side.

¹ Hemsall is shaped like a fan consequently the northern end had to be wider than the ends next to the Middles. They began next to the Adventurers' Lockspit at a width of 33feet two and a half inches and finished up next to Aldreth Causeway at 55 feet four and a half inches.

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The Tithing of Hemsall.

Memorandum that in lieu of all the tithe hay in Hemsall in the Parish of Wivelingham, the Rectory has a treble part or portion to other Commonable houses in Hemsall, Iram, Middle Fen and West Fen. That is to say more than other Commonable Houses 8 acres in Hemsall.

In Iram 2 Commons for two beasts.

In Middle Fen 10 Commons for ten beasts.

In West Fen 6 Commons for six beasts.

In addition The Rector is allowed to keep in several at all times in the year The Rectory Holt in Shelfords, which advances the rent by its being kept in several five pounds per year more than other roods of the like quantity and quality.

Hemsall is 436 acres out of which deduct 12 acres for the Rector's three Commons, and there remains 424 acres which is at 10 shillings¹ per acre is £212 per year, which £212 @ 2 shillings per pound is £21-4-0^d per year for the tithe of Hemsall, which said £21-4-0^d paid in the manner following:-

By 8 extra acres in Hemsall	£4-00-0d
By 10 extra mouths in Middle Fen	£5-00-0d
By 6 extra mouths in West Fen	£4-10-0d
By the Holt in Shelfords several	£5-00-0d
By 16 extra sheep mouths more	16-0d
By 2 extra Commons in Hemsall	£1-00-0d
	£21-16-0d ²

¹ 50 pence.

² His maths are somewhat awry.

Local History Notes

Hempsall formerly was but of little value being subject to being drowned by every little flood.

Hempsall formerly was an inter-common the Parish of Rampton at Michealmas time, and was of so little value that a Common which is 4 acres was often sold for five shillings and I have also been credibly informed by ancient men, that a Common that is four acres has been exchanged for a pair of gloves, and also of late years has been sold for thirty five shillings. The said Commons Mouths and other allowance for the tithe of Hempsall aforesaid has been taken and deemed a full consideration for all the tithe hay in Hempsall in the Parish aforesaid according to the best information from ancient men, and writings for hundreds of years last past. The truth of which I have good reason to believe is true.

Will Clark

Register

The Measure of the Ditches in the Meadows.

The ditch between West Fen and Over Pastures is in length 235 pole, which is 35feet 7 inches to a house.

The West End begins at Kingshill Corner.

The ditch between the Sheep Pasture and Hither West Fen is 24feet 10 inches to a house.

The West End begins at West Fen Gate.

The ditch under West Bushes between further West Fen and the Sheep Pasture is 16 feet 6 inches to a house.

The West End begins at West Fen Pond.

The ditch next the Causey in Hempsall is 36 feet 6 inches to a house.

The Green End begins at Cottenham Division Ditch.

Local History Notes

The ditch between Iram and Hemsall is 6 feet 1½¹ inches to a house.

The Green End begins at Rampton Hemsall Corner.

The ditch between Hemsall and Rampton Hemsall is 17 feet 3½² inches to a house.

The Green End begins at the Adventurers' Lockspit.

¹ The length is 6 feet 6 inches in Mr. Hopkins' Book.

² Given as 16 feet 10½ inches in Mr. Hopkins' Book.