

ALAN BASSET'S OLD WOKING

So far, apart from the names of pre-conquest monks and Norman noblemen, we have not been able to put any names to the inhabitants of Woking. But with the granting of the Manor of Woking by Richard I to Alan Basset¹ in the late 12th century an important set of documents emerge in a number of land transactions and charters. Together with other documents it is possible to identify some of those connected with Woking – although it should be emphasised, with little or no indication of exactly where they resided, or in some cases whether they were actually resident here at all.

It seems that sometime before Alan Basset was granted the Manor of Woking, a Ralph de Ho was given 'a former royal fishery in the river – worth 3s., this item appearing among the granted estates in the Pipe Rolls from 28 Henry II'² (1181-82).

'Hoh' in Old English means a 'spur of land'³, and is assumed to have originally referred in the Woking area to the spur of high ground above Hoe Bridge⁴ (although it could just as easily refer to the spur of land between the River Wey and Hoe Stream).

The fact that the name of the stream has now spread upstream as far as Mayford has obviously confused many – not least the officials from Woking Council who decided when they created the 'Hoe Valley Linear Park' that the symbol to designate its course should be that of a garden hoe!

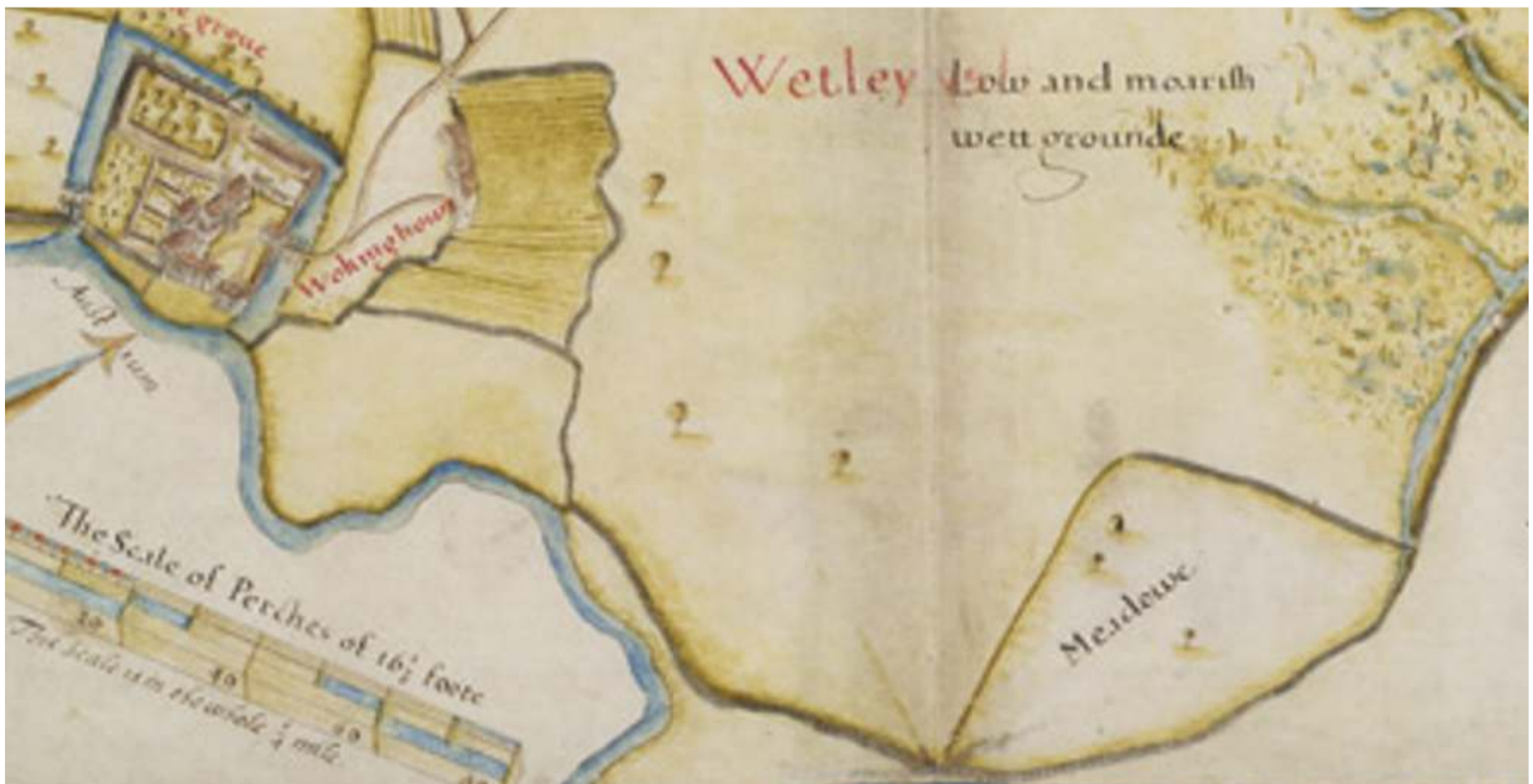
William Reedy, who has studied the extant Basset charters from this period, notes a 'confirmation by Geoffrey of Hoe to his lord Alan Basset of the agreement made between Alan and Geoffrey's father Ralph, by which Ralph remised to his lord Alan two parcels of land'⁵. He dates this after 1202 but before 1232. Meekings previously noted that in exchange Alan gave him 'five marks and a mark for his wife to buy a cloak with'⁶.

The National Archives gives a little more detail, with a translation that notes the land was 'between Waie and 'la Burne,' and all the land of 'la Rune' etc. – released to Ralph 'la Gerstune' near the bridge of Ho'⁷, and Arthur Locke adds⁸ that there was a 'ditch near the Hoe Bourne Mill, and Ralph de Ho agreed to give up this and the mill in exchange for the Garston, grassplace or meadow by Hoe Bridge, and on receipt of five marks for himself and one mark to buy his wife a cloak with'.

That possibly comes from another deed between the Hoe family and Basset, 'whereby Geoffrey quitclaimed to Alan land within a mill ditch, his claims to damages caused by Alan's mill, common pasture and his rights in Alan's park, and he conceded another ditch'⁹, in return for meadow granted by Alan. Meekings dates this to 'between 1225 and 1229'¹⁰ and Reedy to between c1200 and 1232.

A slightly different interpretation of the Latin text is given in Rob Poulton's report on the excavations of Woking Palace. 'In addition the foresaid Geoffrey has granted on behalf of himself and his heirs to the foresaid Alan and his heirs the right to have a ditch along the length of meadow of Illvale next to the hedge of this Alan, where that hedge is planted along the river Waye, so that that ditch shall be nowhere more than five feet in breadth. The land of this ditch shall be laid out on his own side and outside the hedge'¹¹.

Illvale (or Eel Wall) is interpreted as 'as being at the far south-east of the park, and includes an area labelled 'meadewe' on Norden's map' (below)¹².



This is important, as it probably explains why the entrance to the manorial site at Woking Palace is on the east of the complex, away from the village of Old Woking. Poulton notes that the location of 'illvale' 'was undoubtedly a strong influence in the siting of the new house, whose entrance faced out towards

¹ p115 (Manning and Bray 1804-14) Granted by Richard I, and confirmed by King John. There is no extant charter, but William Stewart-Parker assigns the date to soon after 1198, p5 (Stewart-Parker 2013)

² p206 (Meekings 1979), p156 (Pipe Roll Society 1910)

³ p157 (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1934)

⁴ Where the Hoebridge Golf Course is today. It is also the origin of the first part of the name 'Hook Heath'

⁵ p144 (Reedy 1995) Charter 213, TNA E40/6802

⁶ p206 (Meekings 1979) TNA E40/6802

⁷ TNA E40/6802, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4945555>

⁸ 'Woking under the Bassets: 1189 to 1281' (Locke n.d.)

⁹ p145 (Reedy 1995) Charter 214, TNA E40/4062, TNA E40/4058 indented counterpart

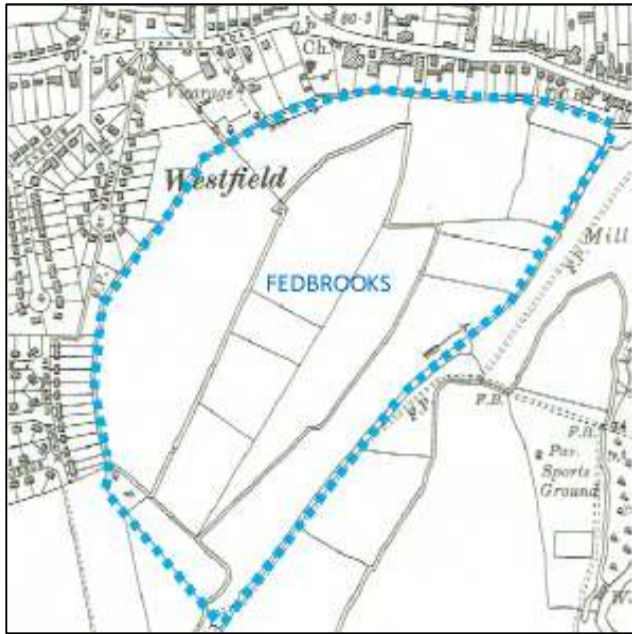
¹⁰ p206 (Meekings 1979) TNA E40/4062, draft, TNA E40/4058, fair copy

¹¹ p25, 'The Location, Disparking and Survival of Woking Park', by David Young and Richard Savage (Poulton 2017), translation by Hugh Doherty from the forthcoming 'The development of Old Woking 750 to 1650' by R.W. Savage and P.E.M. Savage.

¹² British Library, Harley MS 3749

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the new park, which initially lay only to its east¹³, but he goes on to note that 'of equal bearing, though, must have been the identification of a location that could be surrounded by water, putting Woking at the forefront of the new fashion for moated residences'.



The post-medieval area of 'Fedbrooks' as defined on the Tithe Map and Remnant's Map of 1719 (outlined in blue on the 1934 Ordnance Survey 25" Map)

According to the catalogue of the National Archives, the land of Geoffrey included 'all that is contained by the mill-dyke at Crumb, and also his common of Fretrebroch, and also grants to the said Alan the dyke along his meadow of Illenale, by his plantation on the bank of the Waye: the said Alan in return, granting to the said Geoffrey, the meadow between Hobourne and Kingeswarthe lately held by Gery de la Rune'¹⁴.

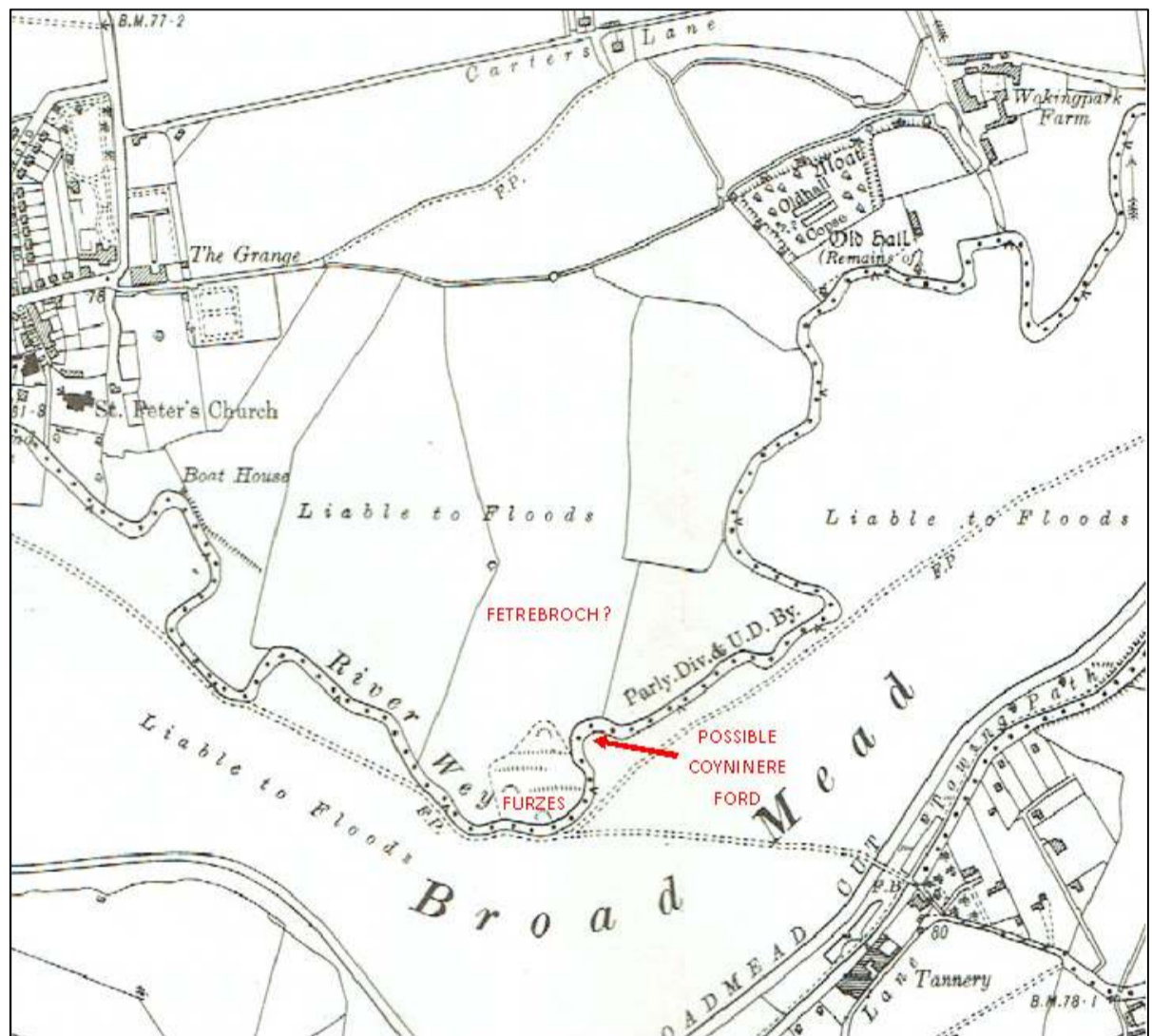
Where 'Crumb' was I do not know, but Locke noted¹⁵ that 'when Ralph de Ho died, his son Geoffrey parted with other land and a common of Fetrebroch, or 'rough grass ditch land', in exchange for a meadow between the Hoe Bourne and Kingfield', also noting that 'Peter of Pirbright and his men of Woking, also had rights on Fetrebroch'. Their rights, he said, 'and the name, were transferred to Gongers, with the right to cross lands to Gongers Ford (Shackleford) except when the corn was up'.

In Victorian times, Gongers Lane was the name given to what we now call Westfield Road, whilst the Tithe Map of Woking shows a number of fields called 'Fedbrooks' (or 'Fed Brooks' on Remnant's map of 1719) to the west of Mill Moor, bordering with Shackleford Tithing to the north (to the south and east of Gongers Lane). Could this be the exchange land referred to in the early 13th century documents above?

Whether the 'de Ho' family actually lived near Hoe Bridge, or simply owned land there, is uncertain, but Peter of Pirbright, whilst obviously having an interest here, clearly had connection from beyond our bounds.

In the limited Eyre¹⁶ of 1225, Peter de Pirbright 'brought an action against Alan Basset for common of pasture, but withdrew it, composing the dispute in a deed whereby he allowed Alan the enclosure which he had made in return for a confirmation of his pasture rights in the rest of the land'¹⁷. Reedy noted it as 'common pasture' which Basset conceded to 'Peter and his men of Woking' in the 'unenclosed part and the use of a road'¹⁸, but which road it was referring to is not clear.

The catalogue to the National Archive notes that it was a 'portion of pasture in Wockinge called 'Fetebroc' which Alan has inclosed', also adding that the 'use of the cross road to Coyninere ford' was 'except when the land on Coyninere is sown'¹⁹. This seems to suggest that the road was that to 'Coyninere ford' (from which Gongers Ford is corrupted), or somewhere else perhaps?



The possible site of the 'Coyninere Ford' and 'Fetrebroch' in relation to the Furzes (red text added by myself to the 1931 Ordnance Survey, 25" map)

Is it possible that the 'ford' at 'Coyninere' corresponds to the ford across the River Wey beside the Furzes? Poulton, in a discussion on the possible location of the 14th century 'coneywarne' at Woking Park, notes that 'the location of this rabbit warren is not certain, but as this pasture is also recorded as always flooded in winter it is probably that it lay close to the River Wey. A possible location is the small but sharply defined hillock of sand lying north of the River Wey between the moated site and Old Woking, which is at the present day riddled with active rabbit burrows and associated by Old Woking folklore with the palace warren.'²⁰ Just downstream of the Furzes a ford was identified in the early 1970's in the excavations of the Romano-British site here²¹.

If this is the case, then the original 'Fetebroc' or 'Fetrebroch' could be the area to the west of Woking Palace – part of that shown on Norden's map as being the 'Little Park' of Woking Palace.

¹³ p211 (Poulton 2017)

¹⁴ p25 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900) A4058, TNA E40/4058, witnessed by 'Raunt' de Caume, Gilbert de Basevill', William de Papeworthe, Jordan de Pirbright, Peter de Pirbright, William de Wyke and others.

¹⁵ 'Woking under the Bassets: 1189 to 1281' (Locke n.d.)

¹⁶ An Eyre being a session of the King's Justices held periodically at the County Court (Richardson 1989), L33.

¹⁷ p227 (Meekings 1979) TNA JUST 1/863 and E40/4060

¹⁸ p147 (Reedy 1995) Charter 216, TNA E40/4060

¹⁹ p25-26 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900) A4060, TNA E40/4060, Gilbert de Basevile and William de Papewurthe, William de Wyke, Ruald de Sande and others were witnesses.

²⁰ p23 (Poulton 2017)

²¹ p167 (Hawkins 1984)

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Meeking notes other transactions in connection with Alan Basset, which although not directly connected with the area under review, would probably have had an impact on some, if not all, of the inhabitants of Woking at that time.

William de la Rude, a prominent Woking freeholder who held the estate known later as Rude Hall, in a deed dated 2nd February 1229, recognised that 'in return for Alan's confirmation of his right to hold two-thirds of a quarter virgate and three acres of moor' (all lately held by Thomas de Goldhord), 'released all his interests in the rest of Thomas' lands'²².

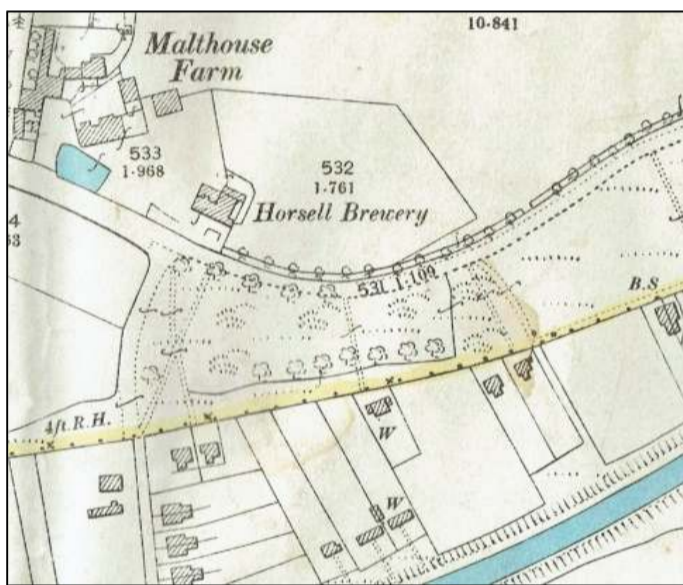
Reedy noted that 'William quitclaimed all his right in the land which Thomas held, and all purprestures which Alan has made or shall make in the manor', whilst Alan 'conceded a purpresture and 13 perches'²³.

The catalogue of the National Archives²⁴ noted that the 'land and moor which Thomas de la Goldhord held in Woking manor' was exchanged for 'a purpresture adjoining the road from Herisull to Sithwod, and extending from beyond Parlingeford'.

Rude Hall was, as you might have guessed by the name of its former owner, in the Goldsworth area (its original name of 'Goldhord' probably deriving from the discovery of a hoard of gold coins²⁵ – possibly by Thomas himself). Later, Rude Hall was known by the name of Hale End, corrupted in modern times as 'Harelands' on the border between Woking and Horsell.



John Seller's Map of c1693 shows 'Hale End' to the west of Heathside between Kingfield (Kenryl) and Horsell (Horstell). Sythwood (Sidwood end) is to the north-west towards Bisley, in the area most now associate with 'Lower Knaphill'.



The 1896 Ordnance Survey, 25" Map, shows the boundary (in yellow), with the boundary stone (B.S.) outside the cottages on the Woking side. Horsell's Brewery (on Brewery Road) was established earlier in Victorian times and has no connection with the 13th century 'William de la Bruere'.

Unfortunately the road name 'Sythwood' initially given by Woking Council to the road around the Bullbeggars (Lakeview) Estate at Horsell, could confuse matters, as the original 'Sithwod'²⁶ was in fact closer to Lower Knaphill, making the 'road from Herisull to Sithwod', what we would now call Littlewick Road and the 'Parlingeford'²⁷ where the road crosses the small 'Parley Brook' just west of Squires Garden Centre.

Sometime before 1232 William de la Rude, 'admitted by deed that he owed Alan Basset 6d rent for two acres of moor in Woking formerly held by Thomas de Goldhord'²⁸.

How another deed in the National Archives relating to William de la Rude, and dated to between 1216 and 1272, fits in with the above (if at all) is not certain. It is a 'grant by William de la Rude, of the parish of Woking, to William de la Bruere, of the moor formerly held by Osbert le Bws, with an addition up to the present bounds, but not including the dyke outside them'²⁹.

Was the 'moor', the Woking side of present day Horsell Moor (the road of that name being on the line of the ancient boundary between Horsell and Woking – with the houses actually on the Woking side)?

If it is, it should be noted that the Brewery there is so named after a Victorian establishment, which has no connection whatsoever with the 'de la Bruere' of the 13th century!

The Feet of Fines³⁰ from the period add other names to our list of possible Woking residents (or at least landholders), when in 1232/3 Geoffrey de Ho and William de la Rude, enter into an agreement with Thomas Melewys and his wife Johanna³¹.

Sadly, the above are not the only records in the National Archives that note the 'de la Rude' family at this time. The Surrey Eyre of 1263 records that 'unknown criminals came to the house of Emma de la Rude in the vil of Woking and strangled and took away her belongings'³². Two brothers, Robert and Reginald le Francis were accused by the coroner of the crime, but the jurors found them not guilty and as far as I can tell the murder and robbery remained unsolved.

In 1233 Alan Basset died³³ and the manor of Woking passed to his eldest son, Gilbert, whose local 'career' we shall look at in the next article.

²² p236 (Meekings 1979) Geoffrey de Hoe being one of ten witnesses, TNA E40/4055

²³ p148 (Reedy 1995) Charter 217, TNA E40/4055, a purpresture being an illegal encroachment on Crown lands (Richardson 1989)

²⁴ p25 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900) A4055, TNA E40/4055

²⁵ p157 (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1934)

²⁶ p130 (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1934)

²⁷ p129 (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1934)

²⁸ p236 (Meekings 1979) and p146 (Reedy 1995), Charter 215 TNA E40/9738

²⁹ p22 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900) A4022, TNA E40/4022, witnessed by Ralph de Papeworthe, William de Horisulle, clerk, and others.

³⁰ 'Feet of Fines' (from the Latin 'finis' meaning 'end' rather than an actual 'fine'), was a simple method of recording the exchange of land. The transaction was written in triplicate, the bottom part (the portion at the 'foot' of the fine) being kept by the Court of Common Pleas, with the upper portion being divided between the two sides of the case, so that each party had a record of the transaction (Richardson 1989) D38.

³¹ p18 (Lewis 1894)

³² p331-332 (Stewart 2006)

³³ p115 (Manning and Bray 1804-14) 'Gilbert, the eldest son of Alan, inherited it on the death of his father in 17 Hen III'.

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