

THE WOKING OF ALAN BASSET'S OFFSPRING

As we discovered in the last article, in 1233 Alan Basset, the early 13th century lord of the manor of Woking, died and was succeeded by his eldest son, Gilbert¹.

Gilbert already held the Manor of Sutton (the 'south-manor' of Woking), granted to him by King John in 1215-16², but according to Locke when he inherited Woking he 'neglected to pay his 'relief'³ and Manning & Bray note that 'a Writ was directed to the Sheriff commanding him to set to sale the Corn of the said Gilbert growing in this Maner'⁴.

Whether the seizure of the corn was due to his failure to pay what amounted to 'inheritance tax', or was the result of more serious conflict between Gilbert and the king⁵, is unclear.

Stewart-Parker notes that on the 13th August 1233 'orders had been issued that Gilbert's chattels and crops in his manors of Wootton, Woking and elsewhere were to be seized and taken to provision the king's castles'⁶, and that 'by the end of the month a further order had been issued to seize Gilbert's corn, sheep and the beasts of his park of Woking and use them to stock the king's castle at Guildford'⁷

What the tenants of Woking, who presumably had been hard at work tending the corn and looking after the sheep, thought of such actions is not recorded.



Norden's plan of Woking Park shows the area of the 'Little Park' (BL Harley MS 3749)

Locke also noted⁸ that Gilbert Basset 'enclosed a little park, between Woking Park Farm and The Grange, without license from Henry III, who promptly sent the Constable of Windsor to pull down the palings', but from the reference in the last article to the land at 'Coyninere ford', it is probable that it was Alan who enclosed this area, rather than Gilbert – Henry III granting Alan 'two bucks out of Windsor Forest'⁹, possibly to help stock that new park.

On the 2nd June 1234, a few days after Gilbert made his peace with the king, orders were issued to enable Gilbert to re-enclose his park 'destroyed on the orders of the king'¹⁰, and in 1236 (according to Locke), Henry III sent Basset 'fifteen does to help stock the little park' at Woking¹¹.

The establishment of the deer park clearly had an influence of the development of the area, with Robertson noting that 'the presence of Woking Park from the 13th century to the east of the settlement would have restricted the growth of Old Woking in that direction'¹².

In 1235 it is recorded that 'the Sheriff accounted for £9.17s.' as the value of Gilbert's land at Woking¹³ whilst in the Surrey Eyre a common fine was placed on the County of Surrey of £40, of which Gilbert was liable for a share. By Michaelmas 1236, however, only £15 had been paid, with £25 still outstanding by November 1239! Apparently one of those accused of not paying was Gilbert, as on the 14th November that year William of York personally testified to the exchequer barons that the money had now been received from Gilbert¹⁴.

In 1241, according to Arthur Locke¹⁵, Gilbert Basset (who was fond of tilting), 'got up a tournament between English and foreigners at Guildford, which might have started a war. Henry sent the Prior of Newark and the Abbot of Waverley to stop it.' He also notes that 'tradition says there was a bridge across the Wey leading into a tilting ground on the Broadmead', although so far there has been no archaeological evidence to support that.

A deed in the National Archives, dated to between 1232 and 1242, might link Gilbert with the expansion of Woking's manorial lands into the Broadmeads. It regards a 'sale and release by John, son of Guy, to Gilbert Basset, of all of his meadow in Coteshers, in the manor of Sandres'¹⁶.

Gilbert Basset died in 1241 'in consequence of a fall from his horse while hunting; and his infant son dying immediately after him, the estate devolved upon his brother, Fulk'¹⁷ (Dean of York 1239-1243, and then Bishop of London 1244-1259), who Arthur Locke noted 'must have extended the park by buying out commoners' holding Lammas lands; for he bought lands in Broadmead in Send Parish, and to this day the Lammas lands of Woking tenants are in the Parish of Send.¹⁸

¹ p115 (Manning and Bray 1804-14), 17 Henry III

² p23 (Stewart-Parker 2013)

³ 'Woking under the Bassets: 1189 to 1281' (Locke n.d.)

⁴ p115 (Manning and Bray 1804-14)

⁵ (Stewart-Parker 2013) Gilbert Basset's Fall from Favour (p33-35) and Estrangement to Rebellion: January-June 1233 (p35-41)

⁶ p40 (Stewart-Parker 2013)

⁷ P41 (Stewart-Parker 2013)

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

⁹ p217 (Foss 1848)

¹⁰ p53 (Stewart-Parker 2013)

¹¹ 'Woking under the Bassets: 1189 to 1281' (Locke n.d.)

¹² p5 (Robertson 2002 (revised June 2003)

¹³ p115 (Manning and Bray 1804-14)

¹⁴ p139 (Meekings 1979) Exchequer Memoranda Rolls E159/18

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

¹⁶ p23 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900) A4032, TNA E40/4032, witnessed by Gilbert de Basevil, Ralph Papewurz, Geoffrey de Hoe, Henry Piron and others

¹⁷ p3 (Brayley 1850)

¹⁸ 'Woking under the Bassets: 1189 to 1281' (Locke n.d.)

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Legend has it that the Woking Broadmeads were once Gilbert Basset's 'tilting ground' – with a bridge across the River Wey linked to the manorial complex at Woking

As noted above, this could have been a continuation of a process already begun by his brother Gilbert, but a number of grants in the National Archives show that Fulk was indeed expanding the manorial holding of Woking into what is to this day is called the 'Woking Broadmeads', outside the parish of Woking on the south side of the River Wey¹⁹.

These include the sale of 'an acre of meadow in Woking meadow, and part of a meadow in Brademed' to Fulk Basset, by Geoffrey le Dine, son of Richard de Dine of Sende²⁰; a grant of 'meadow land in Sandres, part in a meadow called seven virgates' from John de Bovile to Sir Fulk Bassett²¹; and an 'acknowledgement by Ralph de Pappeworth of his obligation to secure the title of Sir Fulk Basset, Bishop of London, to meadowland in Saund'²².

To the north and east, Fulk was in dispute with the Abbot of Westminster, who held the Manor of Pyrford. 'The abbot claimed 40 acres of woodland with appurtenances in Pyrford' which his predecessor Walter of Winchester had held from the time of Henry II. Fulk contested the case and further claimed the woodland only covered thirty acres – delaying the case whilst the court ordered the sheriff 'to assemble four knights from the hundred (Henry Lovell, Richard de la Porte, Walter de la Strode and Jordan de Pyrifith) to inspect the acreages'²³.

He was also evidently expanding the manorial lands westward too, judging by a 'release by Juliana, daughter of Hamo de Sitwde, to Sir Fulk Basset, of all her right in a moor called Hamo's moor in Coresbrok'²⁴ – for which Fulk apparently paid '20s sterling'²⁵.

Hamo de Sitwde is almost certainly connected with the Sythwood area of Horsell/Lower Knaphill, but where exactly Hamo's Moor was is not known. Coresbrok is the name of the stream that flows between Knaphill and Brookwood²⁶ (under the tunnel at Blackhorse Road, to join the Bourne near Kemishford Bridge in Mayford²⁷), so the moor must have been close to its course (possibly in the area between Knaphill and Sheets Heath).

Other transactions are recorded in the Feet of Fines for 1257-9 between Fulk and Peter de Pyrefryth in Wockyng²⁸ – probably the Peter, son of Jordan of Perefright, recorded as a witness to the Hamo Moor transaction above.

In 1242, according to Arthur Locke²⁹, Fulk 'entertained Henry III at Woking Park' during the hunting season in August, and 'Henry III stayed with Fulk at Woking Park in September 1251'³⁰. Eight years later Fulk died³¹ and was succeeded by another brother, Phillip.

Soon after inheriting Woking, Philip too set about expanding his land holding, by leasing the serjeanty of Mayford³² from John de Gatesden³³, with John's wife Hawise releasing her dower interest to Philip after John died in 1269³⁴.

¹⁹ see (Stewart-Parker 2013) p246/248 for a translation of the three deeds listed below (E40/4034, E40/4080 and E40/4075).

²⁰ p23 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900), A4034, TNA E40/4034, witnessed by Ralph de Papeworth, Roger de Doudeswall, Matthew de Bovile and others.

²¹ p28 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900) A4080, TNA E40/4080, witnessed by Richard de Wyk, Philip de Thonewrthe, Matthew de Bovile and others

²² p27 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900) A4075, TNA E40/4075. Pappeworth was almost certainly connected with the Manor of Papercourt in Send.

²³ p140 (Stewart-Parker 2013)

²⁴ p26 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900) A4061, TNA E40/4061, witnessed by Robert de Papewrth, Philio de Tunewrth, Peter son of Jordan de Perefright and others. Stewart-Parker (Stewart-Parker 2013) p245/246 notes also Gilbert of Graystoke, Ralph of Hoe, John de Oldham, John son of Richard of Stockton, Philip of Cunworth, Hugh de la Hull, and John de la Hull as witnesses.

²⁵ p245 (Stewart-Parker 2013)

²⁶ p158 Knaphill, p156 Brookwood (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1934), The first reference to both are in the Close Rolls of 1225, with Knaphill being recorded as 'la Cnappe' and Brookwood as 'Brocwde' 'Cnæpp in Old English means 'top of the hill', but with Brookwood it is impossible to determine whether it was originally 'brocc' (as in badger-wood) or 'brook' (as in a stream). The fact that in 1289 the Close Rolls record the 'wood of Brokewode lying near Coresbrok' seems to back up the latter. Close Rolls were grants of the Crown, originally folded – closed – and impressed with the Great Seal (Richardson 1989) D35.

²⁷ p158 (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1934) The first reference to Mayford is in the Red Book of the Exchequer in 1210-12, so it is not possible to determine whether it was originally the 'main ford' the 'ford where Mayweed grew' or 'Mæga's ford' – as suggested by Gover.

²⁸ p212 & p37 (Lewis 1894)

²⁹ 'Woking under the Bassets: 1189 to 1281' (Locke n.d.)

³⁰ 'Woking under the Bassets: 1189 to 1281' (Locke n.d.)

³¹ p258 (Fryde, et al. 1996)

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Phillip Basset was a loyal servant of the King and in 1261 replaced Hugh le Despenser as the Justiciar (the medieval equivalent of 'Prime Minister'), when Despenser went off to support Simon de Montfort (Earl of Leicester) in the First Barons War³⁵. Philip was captured with the King and his son, Prince Edward, at the First Battle of Lewes in May 1264 - by all accounts battling valiantly and sustaining several injuries. It is suggested that he may have been imprisoned by de Montfort at Dover, or possibly put under house arrest at Woking, as there is evidence 'he was allowed venison from the royal park of Guildford by the new regime'³⁶.

It is possible that Woking was caught up in the fighting, or at least paid heavily for the high profile role its lord played in the war, as when Philip died in 1271 the manor house at Sutton (the south manor of Woking) was worth just one shilling and the buildings at Woking were apparently worthless.

The Manor then passed to his daughter, Aliva - who had been married to Hugh le Despenser, whom her father had replaced as Justiciar and fought against just a few years previously³⁷! Perhaps confusingly their son, also called Hugh, is often referred to as 'Hugh Despenser the Elder' (to differentiate him from his son, Hugh Despenser the Younger – the favourite of Edward II).

According to Manning & Bray³⁸, the survey taken at the time of Philip's death recorded three-hundred acres of arable land at 3d an acre (worth £3.15s. a year); twenty-four acres of meadow at 1s.6d., per acre (£1.16s per annum); twenty-two acres of pasture at 4d an acre (7s.4d. p.a.); forty acres of wood at 6d an acre (£1 p.a.) and eighty acres of woodland outside (the manor).

There was also 'a fulling mill and corn mill worth £4.13s.4d a year; assised rents of the different tenants of the yearly value of £17.4s.1d.; and profits of the Lord's Courts of the yearly value of 13s.4d'; the whole being valued at £29.9s.1d a year; and holden of the King in Chief, by the service of half a Knight's fee³⁹, and the render of a pair of gloves furred with Minever or Ermin'.

Unfortunately the survey does not list who the 'different tenants' were, although a Feet of Fines from that time mentions a 'John de Livermore in Wockyng and Sutton'⁴⁰ in a case involving Ella, the widow of Philip Basset (evidently still connected with this area and adding to the Basset estate).

As well as de Livermore we can also assume that there was at least a miller in the area, possibly two, one of whom may have been at the 'Hoe Mill', rather than 'Woking Mill' on the River Wey, although when Aliva died in 1281 there was just one mill still recorded at Woking (worth just £1). Locke⁴¹ claims that 'when Alice Basset died in 1281, the Hoe Bourne Mill was out of use' - the reduction in value in just ten years of over £3, suggesting quite a substantial loss – although what evidence he had to substantiate it was the Hoe Bourne Mill is not known.

Where the 'Hoe Bourne Mill' was, is a matter of debate. One suggestion is that it was near Hoe Bridge, where there is a small weir – but there is, as far as I know, no documentary (or indeed archaeological) evidence to support this supposition. Another theory is that it was closer to Roundbridge Farm, where once again there is a small head of water (and nearby ponds), that could have powered an undershot wheel. Again there is no evidence to support this, and it seems the location of the long-lost Hoe Mill, will remain unknown.

The survey carried out at the time of Aliva's death (again set out in Manning & Bray⁴²), shows that there was also a loss in the amount and value of the arable land. From three-hundred acres in 1271 worth 3d an acre, there was now just fifty-three acres listed at that value, and two-hundred-and-seven acres listed at 2d an acre (one-hundred-and-thirteen of which were at 'la Hoke'⁴³). Altogether they were worth a total of just £2.7s.9d., although there were now nine acres of moor also at la Hoke which was worth 9s., in total. The relatively poor area of 'La Hoke' is what we now know as Hook Heath!



One possible site of the long lost 'Hoe Bourne Mill' – downstream from Roundbridge Farm, where there is still a weir, and a small 'fall' of water that could have powered an undershot waterwheel. (based on the 1934, Ordnance Survey 6" map)

There were some gains, with the wood, now identified as being at 'Brocwod', worth three times the amount ten years previous, and the meadows now worth 6d an acre more. With an extra sixteen acres of meadow, the total value had increased by £2.4s. Pasture too had possibly increased in acreage as the 'diverse parcels of several pasture' were now worth £8.6s., more than in 1271.

As for the money due to the manor by rents and profits from the manor court etc., the overall value had decreased by 3s.11d., over the previous ten years, although we now have a better breakdown of how the £17.13s.6d was made up. The rent due from the free tenants was £1.13s.4d., with the customary

³² p126 (Manning and Bray 1804-14) – note that 'Mayford was anciently holden of the King in chief by grand serjeanty, viz., by the service of attending, or providing a person to attend, the King, in any of his wars within the realm of England, for forty days, armed with a Coat of Mail and a Lance', but Malden (Malden 1900) p95, suggests that the original holder of the serjeanty, 'Galfrid de Pourtone holds Mayforde by the tenure of acting as huntsman'.

³³ p199 (Meekings 1979), p346 (Stewart-Parker 2013) and p20 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900) A4008, TNA E40/4008.

³⁴ p199 (Meekings 1979), p346 (Stewart-Parker 2013), and p20 (A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of the Public Record Office 1900) A4010, TNA E40/4010, witnessed by Sir William de Wyltone, Gilbert de Prestetone, William de Insula, Hubert de Ruyly, David de Jarpunvill, Robert le Chamberleyng and Walter de la Hyde, knights, and others.

³⁵ p90 (Cokayne 1890)

³⁶ p100 (Stewart-Parker 2013)

³⁷ By then married to Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk (Manning and Bray 1804-14), p116

³⁸ p116 (Manning and Bray 1804-14)

³⁹ A 'Knight's Fee' was an 'area held by a knight for which he was obliged to perform military service to his immediate overlord' (Richardson 1989) B93, the service normally requiring the service of 'a fully-armed knight and his servants for forty days a year', often commuted to a monetary payment (Richardson 1989) A443.

⁴⁰ p215 (Lewis 1894)

⁴¹ 'Woking under the Bassets: 1189 to 1281' (Locke n.d.)

⁴² p117 (Manning and Bray 1804-14)

⁴³ p158 (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1934)

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tenants yielding £2.0s.4d., to the accounts (once the cost of their board had been deducted)⁴⁴. The rents from the villeins⁴⁵, however, brought in by far the largest amount at £10.10s.8d., whilst the fines from the courts, heriots and reliefs⁴⁶, netted 15s., and the 'annual rent of 50 cocks and hens at 1d a piece', brought in another 4s.2d. Added to the above were the money from the hide of land at Pirbright (16s.) and the annexed land of Mayford (£1.14s.).

With a fishery now recorded as worth 6s.8d., and the 'small park' of forty acres worth 13s.4d, the result of all the above profit and losses, meant that in ten years Woking was worth to the lord of the manor an extra £1.3s., a year!

Again who the 'free tenants', 'customary tenants' and 'villiens' of the manor were we cannot know for certain, although another Feet of Fines from this time records Robert le Mareschal and Laurence de Yatelegh and his wife Isabella in relation to Wokyngh⁴⁷.

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⁴⁴ Being a 'free tenant' did not mean that you were free to do what you liked with the land you tenanted (nor that there were no fees involved), but you did have certain freedoms when it came to how the tenancy could be transferred or passed on. A 'customary tenant' held the land by the customs of the Manor Court (which varied from place to place), with occasional restrictions and obligations.

⁴⁵ The 'villeins' (otherwise known as serfs, crofters or peasants), had more rights than slaves, but were basically 'bound' to the manor with no land of their own – the right to reside in their home being linked to certain services to the lord of the manor (Richardson 1989) B48.

⁴⁶ A 'heriot' by this time was the 'gift' of the best beast by an heir to the lord of the manor upon their inheritance, with a 'relief' being a monetary payment to the lord by the incoming tenant (Richardson 1989), A394 and A378.

⁴⁷ p54 (Lewis 1894)