

EARLY 14TH CENTURY OLD WOKING

Without the execution of the Despensers (both the Elder and Younger in 1326¹), and the confiscation of their lands, we would probably know far less about Woking in the 13th century than we do. After the two were hanged, drawn and quartered (and more) the deeds to their properties were also seized and kept in the treasury, finally making their way to The National Archives².



The name 'Runtley' (the wood between Old Woking and Sutton Green), was probably connected to Walter de Rontele in the early 14th century.

For much of the 14th century we may have less deeds to study, but there are still a wealth of other documents from the period, including the Feet of Fines that record in 1315/6 a transfer of land between 'Walter de Rontele in Wockyng' and his son, John³. This probably relates to the Runtley Wood area between Woking & Sutton, associated with the later 'sub-manor' of Emley.

The survey carried out a few months after Despensers' execution (see appendix one)⁴, gives great detail not just of the main manorial buildings (which although extensive were recorded as being worthless), but also the other land and buildings – some quite puzzling.

In 1327 the 'water-mill' (presumably the corn mill) was described as worthless, but the fulling-mill was worth 8s.4d., per annum. Compare that to the £1 per annum recorded for just one 'water-mill' in 1281, and the £4.13s.4d., recorded for the two mills (a fulling-mill and a corn-mill) in 1271 – over eleven times the amount of just fifty-six years later! Clearly something was wrong either with the mills (the buildings or machinery), with the millers, or with what they had to work with.

The answer, at least as far as the corn mill was concerned, might be in the amount of arable land – down from 300 acres in 1271, to just 214 acres in 1327. And whilst the value of that land was 3d., an acre in the first survey, by 1327, 127½ acres were worth just 1d., an acre, they 'being very sandy and barren'. Clearly not only was the amount of land for growing crops decreasing, but its suitability for crops was changing too – was the land being exhausted by over farming, or was the exchanges in land recorded in the last century meaning that less suitable soils were being forced into cultivation?

It is perhaps significant that whilst the amount of good farmland for growing crops had decreased, the amount of meadow and its value had increased. 24 acres in 1271 (value £1.16s.), had increased to 40 acres (£4) by 1281 and 83½ acres (£5.4s.) by 1327, although most of the extra land was worth a lot less per acre, 'being subject to flood'.

Pasture for the animals too had increased from land worth 7s.4d., in 1271, to 15s.10d., in 1281 and 19s., in 1327 – although exactly how many acres of pasture there were is not clear. 22 acres were recorded in 1271; 'diverse parcels' and 'common pasture at Brocwod' in 1281, and 37 acres of 'very rushy' pasture, and pasture in the deer park 'if no deer are kept', were recorded in 1327.

Some of that pasture evidently originally belonged to Peter atte Church of Purbright, who in 1327 requested 'grace and remedy regarding 15 acres of pasture in Woking which Hugh le Despenser seized from him and retained for 16 years without making any payment'⁵.

The amount of woodland had also increased from 40 acres worth £1 in 1271, to 400 acres of 'wood, waste and heath' at Brokwode by 1327 – although its only value was the amount paid in pannage (8s.), 'there being no underwood'. As noted in my previous essay, the extension of forest law over this area in Despensers' time had quite an effect on the area, and although the value of the wood and waste had gone down as far as the manor was concerned, it had obviously increased the value to the King (and his cronies like Despenser) when it came to the hunt.

Thus the change in values and acreage of the farmland is probably explained by the reference to the manorial deer park, which had obviously increased in size and value in the intervening years. Various land deals (mentioned before), had obviously consolidated the parkland around the manorial site at the expense of the arable (the soil to the east of the Old Woking Road being some of the best in the area), whilst the increase in 'very rushy' pasture and meadow, presumably on the flood-prone Broadmeads and Mill Moor, was inadequate compensation.

Less cereal was being grown for the miller, and the method of farming for the tenants and cottars was probably changing towards more of an animal-based system – but all the while they were having to pay more in rents and manorial fines.

Sadly the surveys do not give us the names of any of these people, but we do know something of their numbers and the burden they had to pay for the privilege of living in Woking.

There were 43 'free tenants' each paying an average of about 4s.6¼d., per annum. This was paid quarterly with £2.5s.3¼d., being collectively paid on St Thomas' Day (21st December), £2.5s.4d., on Lady Day in March, £2.5s.3¼d., at Midsummer (21st June) and the most being paid in the autumn at Michaelmas, when altogether £2.18s.10d, was due.

The customary tenants numbered 46, 27 of whom held half a virgate of land, and 19 just one-quarter of a virgate of land. Altogether they paid £5.19s.8½d., per annum in rent, although they had other costs and obligations too. The 'customary rent of 10½ quarters of oats' (church-scot) paid at Martinmas (November) cost them 10s.6d., whilst on St Thomas' Day the customary rent of 35 cocks and hens (valued at 1½d each) was due.

Sixteen tenants who held half a virgate of land were 'bound to plough half an acre each of the Lord's land at seed time in Lent, and half an acre at seed time in winter, and to harrow the same; the value of the said ploughing at 6½d., an acre being 8s.8d.'

¹ p91-92 (Cokayne, Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain & United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant, Vol 3 1890)

² The 'E40' series of Exchequer records ('Treasury Receipts: Ancient Deeds, Series A'), quoted in previous articles, in the National Archives.

³ p81 (Lewis 1894)

⁴ p117-8 (Manning and Bray 1804-14) carried out 7th July 1327 (Esch 20, Edw II, n52).

⁵ TNA SC8/168/8388

EARLY 14TH CENTURY OLD WOKING

Whether it was the same sixteen or others that were 'bound to carry out the Lord's manure' is not known, but together with some of those who held a quarter of a virgate (who were charged with filling the carts) we find that their service was at that time worthless 'because they neither do the work, nor compound for the same'. Likewise the 24 who were to 'weed the Lord's corn', and all the customary tenants who were supposed to mow 20½ acres of the Lord's meadow, 'in different places, and to make and carry the Hay into his Grange', also appear to have neglected the duty!

Finally we know that in 1327 there were 40 cottars (formerly recorded as villiens), who paid 'by equal portions and at the four usual terms' a total of £1.16s.4¾d., per annum'.

The cottars and tenants listed, of course, would not be the entire population of the area, just the heads of the households of the manor. Assuming an average of five per house, the population of the manor would then be about 600, one of whom was presumably Walter Broun, who is recorded in the Pipe Roll on the 3rd May that year as being the 'parson of the church of Woking'⁶

With the death of Despenser⁷, Woking was forfeited to the crown, with Edward II then granting the manor, 'in aid of the maintenance during the king's pleasure'⁸ to Edmund of Woodstock, 1st Earl of Kent (the second son of Edward I, by his second wife)⁹. Within a few years, however, the new 'king's pleasure' was that Edmund too should be executed – although his coat of arms were still being displayed in a window on the north of the Nave of St Peter's church until at least the late 17th century¹⁰.

The Friends of Woking Palace note that 'when Edmund was beheaded in 1330 for supporting his brother King Edward II, the Manor was forfeited to the Crown but in the following December his elder son Edmund was restored in blood by Parliament and the estates restored to him'¹¹ – failing to mention that Edmund's 'support' for Edward II (known to many historians as 'The Kent Conspiracy') was actually three years after Edward II had died!

Before his son, Edmund (2nd Earl of Kent), was restored to the estate, the crown conducted yet another survey of the manor, on the 10th January 1330 (see appendix two)¹². Sadly this Edmund, although he inherited Woking in 1330¹³, never lived long enough to enjoy it, dying on the 5th October 1331 (whilst his mother still held the manor in dower¹⁴). He was succeeded by his brother, John, third Earl of Kent¹⁵.

Remarkably the figures from 1330 show a distinct improvement in the value (if not the acreage) of the arable at Woking. Where once there was 127½ acres worth just 1d. p.a., now there were only 12 acres at 'la Hoke' worth that amount! 78 acres¹⁶ were now worth 2d., an acre, with 79¹⁷ worth 3d., but there were now 20 acres worth 4d., an acre, meaning that although the total amount of arable had once again decreased, its value to the lord of the manor had gone up to £2.0s.10d. Perhaps the farmers of Woking had been hard at work improving what arable land they had left (either that or they were just being charged more)!

As before whilst the arable had decreased, the amount of meadow had increased both in size and value, although at first sight that might not seem the case. In 1326 there were 41 acres valued at 18d. p.a., but by 1330 that was down to just 22½ acres, with the 42½ acres of 1330 valued at 1s, now down to just 16 acres. But added to this were 32½ acres now valued at 16d., ¾ of an acre that were worth 14d., and 12 that were now considered worth 2s., an acre. Granted there were odd areas of meadow worth less than in 1327¹⁸, but overall the total value had increased to £6.8s.,5½d., with the amount of meadow now 97¾ acres.

The pasture too had increased in value (as it had steadily done since the 1271 survey), so that the various parcels¹⁹ were now worth altogether £1.17s.,0d.

Another interesting comparison between 1327 and 1330 is in the wood and underwood which in 1327 were noted as being worthless, but which three years later the 'underwood in Alder beds and elsewhere' was annually worth £2. It is probable that part of that money came from a group of individuals²⁰ who in 1330 sent a petition to the king requesting that 'they can have their goods or that they are paid, as they bought some woods from the earl of Kent at Woking, paying for the same beforehand' but never received it, others receiving their goods from the Earl when he was alive 'but they have now been disturbed in this by the escheators' of his estate²¹.

Unfortunately the number of free tenants, customary tenants and cottars are not recorded in 1330, so we do not know whether any of the above individuals were local, but the amount they paid each quarter is noted and from that we can either assume that the number of free tenants had massively increased in three years, or the amount they had to pay per annum was extortionate (probably a bit of both). From £9.14s.8½d., in 1327, they were now paying in total £20.9s.6½d., (the amounts for St Thomas' Day, Lady Day and Midsummer being set at £4.7s.6½. whilst at Michaelmas the poor farmers had to find a total of £7.6s.11d.).

⁶ p102 (Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward III, Vol 1, 1327-1330 1891)

⁷ p91-92 (Cokayne, Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain & United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant, Vol 3 1890)

⁸ On the 2nd December 1326 at Ledbury, the King ordered the above survey so that he could be 'certified of their true value' the lands that he wished to grant to Edmund, earl of Kent, his brother, to have in aid of his maintenance during the king's pleasure' (Calendar of the Close Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office - Edward II, AD 1323-1327 1898) (p622)

⁹ p14 (The Friends of Woking Palace 2015) He was born at Woodstock the son of Edward I and his second wife Marguerite of France. He had four children, Edmund Plantagenet, 2nd Earl of Kent, Margaret Plantagenet, Joan of Kent, and John Plantagenet.

¹⁰ p217 (Aubrey 1718-9)

¹¹ p14 (The Friends of Woking Palace 2015)

¹² p119 (Manning and Bray 1804-14)

¹³ His mother, Margaret, appears to have continued to hold Woking in dower according to a grant dated 15th December 1330 which noted 'the manor of Wockyng with the hamlet of Hok and the manors of Sutton and Pirifrith, co Surrey, as of the value of £84 yearly (Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office - Edward III, AD 1330-1333 1898) (p85-6) – the value reduced to £58.3s.2½d., by the 14th February 1331 (p190).

¹⁴ pP85-6, p190 and p205 (Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office - Edward III, AD 1330-1333 1898) give details of the lands of Edmund confiscated, and their granting to his widow, Margaret.

¹⁵ P351 (Cokayne, Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain & United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant, Vol 4 1892)

¹⁶ Fifty acres of which were at 'La Hoke'

¹⁷ Twenty-six at 'La Hoke'

¹⁸ Two acres at 9d., six acres at 8d., and three acres at 6d.

¹⁹ The Survey lists the value of five separate areas of pasture at the Old Garden (1s.6d.), King's-worth End (1s.6d.), Coresbrook (5s.), Brook-wood (9s.), Cogwere (10s.) and The Park (10s).

²⁰ Named as Henry de Blakefenn, William Goundewyne, William atte Hulle, Thomas Golye, John le Taillour, Adam de Wodeham, Gilbert Esger, William atte Felde, Walter atte Felde, and John de Pekham

²¹ TNA SC8/91/4519, the King and Council noting that 'they should have a writ to the keepers that the people are able to carry away the wood that was cut during the time of the earl, but concerning the growing wood they should await the coming of age of the heir of the earl'.

EARLY 14TH CENTURY OLD WOKING

To add to the pain of an extra-large payment just before Christmas, the tenants also had to now find 4s.6d., for 'salt silver', and 8s.9d. for the 70 cocks and hens - and at some time during the year they also had to render 1s., for 1lb of pepper.

The more than doubling in revenue from the free tenants, might be partially explained by the more than halving of the money received from the customary tenants (and the now total lack of any mention of cottars). From £6.18s.10¼d., being paid in 1327 by the customary tenants (and £1.16.4¼d., being paid by the cottars), the lord was now receiving just £3.2.7½d. Does some kind of social mobility at this time account for the change? Could the majority of customary tenants have become free tenants by 1330, and the cottars somehow managed to become customary tenants in their place? Even if partially the case then it could explain how the Tax Returns of 1332²² list ninety-seven taxpayers (the now 'free-tenants' of the manor?) only eight more than the free and customary tenants added together five years previously²³.

In my next article I will look in detail at those listed on the 1332 Tax Return, and continue the story of the Earls of Kent.

APPENDIX ONE

Survey carried out on the Festival of St Thomas the Martyr, being Monday the 7th July, 20 Edw. II (1327), after the execution of Hugh Despenser the Elder (based on Manning & Bray²⁴ p117-8. They note that 'this survey is copied from a MS called Sim's Book, in the possession of the Right Hon. Lord Onslow, where it is noted that the Inquisition is mangled and torn. It is indeed now entirely lost').

1. A Capital Messuage, surrounded with Moats, containing an Hall, Chapel, two Chambers, with a Pantry and Buttery adjoining to the Hall, a Kitchen, Larder, Bakehouse, Brewhouse, Poultry-house, Laundry, a Chapel for the household, an Apartment of three lodging-rooms for the Knights, Treasurers, and other great Officers; two other Apartments for Knights and Esquires under another roof; a Gate and Draw-bridge.
£0.0s.0d.
2. On the outside of this first Moat and Bridge, was an Apartment with two others adjoining on each side; a Reservoir with a Water-wheel for filling the Moats; a Curtilage and Garden with fruit-trees; all Enclosed with another Moat having a Gate and Drawbridge over it on the South side of the Garden.
£0.0s.0d.
3. Adjoining to the premises, on the outside of the second Moat, were the several appendages to the Mansion, viz. one large Stable for the Lords's own horses; a Barton or Farm, with two Granges or Rick-yards, for Corn and Hay, a Stable for Cart-horses, an Ox-stall, Cow-stall, Cart-house and Sheep-cote. Here was also an outer Gate, with a Chamber over it for the²⁵... a Stable for his horses, and a dwelling house for his family. And what is worth notice perhaps, all the buildings were covered with tiles²⁶.
£0.0s.0d.
4. A Water-Mill, of the annual value of
£0.0s.0d.
5. A Fulling Mill, of the annual value of
£0.8s.4d.
6. A Fishery, of the annual value of
£0.3s.4d.
7. lxxxvi acres and half of Arable and several land, at 3d an acre
£1.1.7½d.
8. cxxvii acres and an half of the same, at 1d. an acre, being very sandy and barren
£0.10s.7½d.
9. xli acres of Meadow, at 18d per acres
£3.1s.6d.
10. xlii acres and an half of the same, at 1s being subject to floods
£2.2s.6d.
11. xxxvii acres of several Pasture, very rushy, at 4d an acre
£0.12s.4d.
12. A Park for ix head of Deer; the Pasture, if no Deer are kept
£0.6s.8d.
13. Underwood of the same, of the annual value of
£0.0.0d.
14. A wood called Brokwode, containing 400 acres of wood, waste, and heath, of no value [for pasture] because it is common
£0.0s.0d.
15. The Pannage of the same (there being no Underwood)
£0.8s.0d.
16. Assessed Rents of xliii free Tenants, who pay £2.5s.3¼d. at St Thomas, £2.5s.4d. at Lady-day, £2.5s.3¼d. at Midsummer, and £2.18s.10d at Michaelmas
£19.14s.8½d.
17. xxvii Customary Tenants, each holding, in villanage, half a virgate of land: and xix Customary Quarandelli, each holding in villanage also a quarter of a virgate of land; paying in all
£5.19s.8½d.
18. xl Cotars, paying, by equal portions, at the four usual terms
£1.16s.4¾d.
19. A customary rent of ten quarters and an half of Oats, called Ciric-scot, paid at Martinmas, by Customary Tenants
£0.10s.6d.
20. A further customary rent of 35 Cocks, valued at 1d. Each, and 35 Hens, valued at 1½d each, payable by the said customary Tenants also by the name of Ciric-sceat, at St Thomas
£0.7s.3½d.
21. xvi of the Customary Tenants, renting half a virgate each, are bound to carry out the Lord's manure; and certain of the aforesaid Quarandelli to fill the Carts: but these services are not valued, because they neither do the work, nor compound for the same.
£0.0s.0d.
22. xvi of the Customary Tenants, so renting half a virgate apiece, are bound to plough half an acre each of the Lord's land at seed time in Lent, and half an acre at seed time in Winter; and to harrow the same; the value of the said ploughing, at 6½d., an acre, being
£0.8s.8d.
23. xxiv of the aforesaid Customary Tenants are to weed the Lord's corn; but this is not valued, because they neither do the work, nor compound for it.
£0.0s.0d.
24. All the afore Customary Tenants, of either denomination, are to mow twenty acres and an half of the Lord's meadow, in different places; and to make and carry the Hay into his Grange
£0.0s.0d.

APPENDIX TWO

²² p45 (Surrey Taxation Returns - 15th's & 10th's (Part A) 1332 Assessment 1923)

²³ The Woking History Society (Members of the Woking History Society 2014) p13, noted that 'given the numbers of manorial tenants shown above as about the same in number as those in the taxation return it seems likely that these numbers represented the total number of properties in the parish, and indicate a population of around 400, assuming five in each household'.

²⁴ (Manning and Bray 1804-14)

²⁵ Brayley (Brayley 1850) p5, here adds the note 'Steward?'

²⁶ It is worth noting that this last sentence does not appear in the original survey, and appears to have been added.

EARLY 14TH CENTURY OLD WOKING

Based on survey carried out on the 10th January, in the 4th year of the reign of Edward III (1331)²⁷, after the execution of Edmund, Earl of Kent (based on Manning & Bray)²⁸.

1. A Capital Messuage, of the yearly value of	<u>£0.0s.0d.</u>
2. A Garden, whose herbage is annually worth	<u>£0.6s.8d.</u>
3. liii acres of Arable land, at 3d., per acre; worth per annum	<u>£0.13s.3d.</u>
4. xx acres of Arable land, at 4d., per acre; worth per annum	<u>£0.6s.8d.</u>
5. xxviii acres of Arable land, at 2d., per acre; worth per annum	<u>£0.4s.8d.</u>
6. xii acres of Meadow, at 2s., per acre; worth per annum	<u>£1.4s.0d.</u>
7. xxii acres and half of Meadow, at 18d., per acre; worth per annum	<u>£1.13s.9d.</u>
8. xxxii acres and half of Meadow, at 16d., per acre; worth per annum	<u>£2.3s.4d.</u>
9. xvi acres of Meadow, at 1s., per acre; worth per annum	<u>£0.16s.0d.</u>
10. iii acres and three quarters of Meadow, at 14d., per acre; worth per annum	<u>£0.4s.4½d.</u>
11. ii acres of Meadow, at 9d., per acre; worth per annum	<u>£0.1s.6d.</u>
12. vi acres of Meadow, at 8d., per acres, worth per annum	<u>£0.4s.0d.</u>
13. iii acres of Meadow, at 6d., per acre; worth per annum	<u>£0.1s.6d.</u>
14. Several Pastures in Cogwere, of the annual value of	<u>£0.10s.0d.</u>
15. Pasture at King's-worth end, of the annual value of	<u>£0.1s.6d.</u>
16. Pasture in the old Garden, of the annual value of	<u>£0.1s.6d.</u>
17. Pasture in the Park, of the annual value of	<u>£0.10s.0d.</u>
18. Pasture in Brook-wood, of the annual value of	<u>£0.9s.0d.</u>
19. Pasture in Coresbrook, of the annual value of	<u>£0.5s.0d.</u>
20. Underwood and Alder beds, and elsewhere, annually worth	<u>£2.0s.0d.</u>
21. Pannage, of the annual value of	<u>£0.5s.0d.</u>
22. A Fishery, of the annual value of	<u>£0.10s.0d.</u>
23. A Water-mill, of the annual value of	<u>£0.13s.4d.</u>
24. Assised Rents, payable at the four quarters, viz., at St Thomas, Lady-day and Midsummer, £4.7s.6½d., each, and at Michaelmas £7.6s.11d.	<u>£20.9s.6½d.</u>
25. Salt-Silver, being a composition, payable at Michaelmas, for carrying of Salt	<u>£0.4s.6d.</u>
26. lxx Cocks and Hens at Chrstmas, at 1½d each	<u>£0.8s.9d.</u>
27. Render of one Pound of Pepper, valued at	<u>£0.1s.0d.</u>
28. The Services of Customar Tenants, of the annual value of	<u>£3.2s.7½d.</u>
29. The Perquisites of the Court, valued, per annum, at	<u>£1.6s.8d.</u>

The whole being holden of the KING in chief, by the service of an half Knight's fee, and the payment of 20s., a year to the Treasury, by the hands of the Sheriff for the serjeanty of Mayford
£1.0s.0d.

This was exclusive of la Hoke, where were

1. xxix acres of Arable land, at 2d., per acre, of the yearly value of	<u>£0.4s.10d.</u>
2. xxi acres if Arable land, at 2d., per acre, of the yearly value of	<u>£0.3s.6d.</u>
3. xii acres of Arable land, at 1d., per acre, of the yearly value of	<u>£0.1s.0d.</u>
4. xxvi acres of Arable land, at 3d per acre, of the yearly value of	<u>£0.6s.6d.</u>

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²⁷ p226, No300 (Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem Preserved in the Public Record Office, Vol 7, 1-9 Edward III, 1327-1336 1909)

²⁸ p119 (Manning and Bray 1804-14)