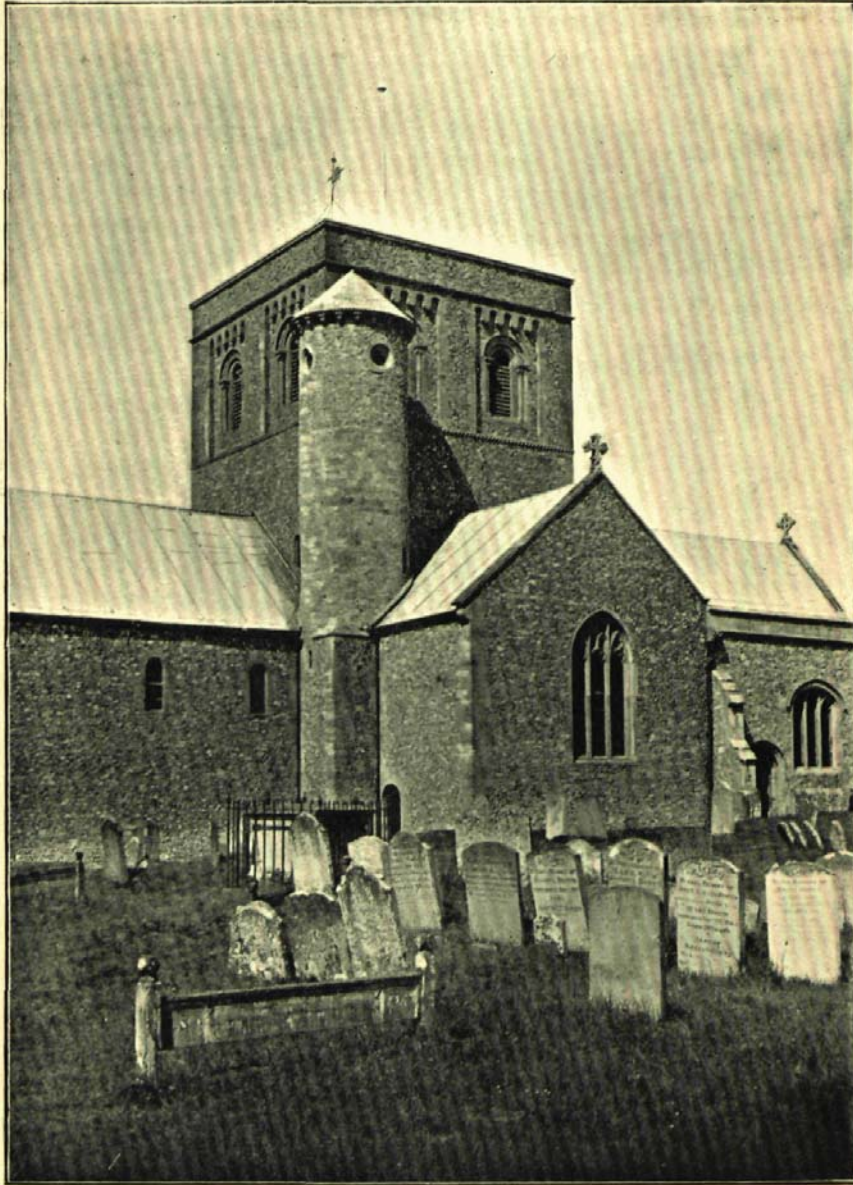


HANTS FIELD CLUB, 1895.



KINGSCLERE CHURCH—SOUTH SIDE.

KINGSCLERE AND ITS ANCIENT TYTHINGS.

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[*A paper read at Kingsclere, June 6th, 1895.*]

There are very few places in Hampshire which have associations of as much interest as those of Kingsclere. Many kings, Saxon, Norman, and Plantagenet, have left their marks upon its history, and at least six monastic and religious houses were endowed at one time or other with its lands and tithes, one of which was the metropolitan church of Normandy, the Cathedral of Rouen. If the visit of the Hampshire Field Club should awaken an interest in this parish so as to induce some one fully to write its history it will have fulfilled one of its objects.

The geology of this district, which is also of special interest, has a literature of its own:—it certainly had a great influence on its history. A large area of the chalk downs on the south of Kingsclere must have been open downland in the Celtic period, when forest land and heath land extended along the northern part of the county from the outcrop of the chalk, over the areas covered with clay, loam, sand, and gravel, into Berkshire. Nature marked out the site of Kingsclere as a desirable one for an early settlement, a site having a good water supply, good land for arable cultivation, good pasturage, and plenty of woodland for a supply of fuel, and timber for house building. The gault clay which lies near the surface in the vale assists in causing the outflow of water from the chalk, which feeds the stream that has for a thousand years worked the mills which have existed here, probably on the same sites, so that all the conveniences for an early settlement were found here.

There are two early Saxon charters relating to the gift of land in the Clere district to the Bishop of Winchester by King Cuthred, A.D., 749, and its confirmation by King Edward, A.D. 909.¹

The history of Kingsclere itself begins in the time of King Alfred, almost exactly a thousand years ago.

The Saxon documents relating to Kingsclere are—1. King Alfred's will² in which he bequeathed the town of Clere to his middle daughter, Ethelgiva, Abbess of Shaftesbury; this was for her life, and it afterwards reverted to the Crown. 2. The charter of King Æthelstan, A.D. 931,³ granting land at Clere to the Abbot Ælfric. 3. The charter of King Edmond,⁴ A.D., 943, granting land at Clere to the religious woman Ælfswith. This was granted by the same tenure as thane service, and apparently at a Saxon gemôt, for the charter is signed by the king, the king's mother, Edred the king's brother, the archbishop, six bishops, and 25 other notable personages. In this charter the king anathematizes anyone who should infringe his gift by the anathema of "Anna and Zafirra." The Roman road is mentioned among the boundaries of land in this charter under the name of "herepath" or army path, showing that it was in use at that time.

Kingsclere continued to be a manor of the king's demesne through the whole of the Saxon period, and grants of land in it were made from time to time. The name of one of its ancient tythings, Edmunsthorpe, probably denotes a Norse or Danish settlement, which were known as thorpes. In Hampshire these thorpes are all situated on the outlying parts of the Saxon royal manors, and we know that the Saxon kings did, from time to time, grant settlements to the Danish invaders.⁴ Edmondsthorpe was probably one of these.

The old system of local government by the Hundred Court is well illustrated by the Hundred of Kingsclere, which consisted of the in hundred, comprising the parish of Kingsclere,

¹Cartularium Saxonicum, Vol. I., 256.

²Liber Monast. de Hyda, p. 68.

³Cart. Sax.^m II., 357.

⁴ibid II., 530.

⁵Laws of Edgar.

made up of 11 tythings, and the out hundred, comprising the parishes of Wolverton, Ewhurst, and Hannington on the east, and Sidminton and Itchingswell on the west. The two last parishes stretch, like Kingsclere itself does, from the Roman road on the south to the Berkshire border on the north. The eleven old tythings of Kingsclere are named the Lordship Town part, the Lordship Woodland part, Guildable, the Parsonage, Edmonsthorpe Beenham, Edmonsthorpe Lances, Clerewoodcot, Frobury, Hannington Lances, Sandford, and North Oakley.

Domesday Book records eight separate manors or large holdings of land in Kingsclere. North Oakley, one of these, is not mentioned under Clere, but apparently under the name of Chenol. Oakley occurs in medieval records spelt Okle, and it is a curious circumstance that Chenol appears to be the old French equivalent for Okle, which looks as if the Norman French surveyor wrote Chene, the old French for the English word oak, using a word in his own language inadvertently. These Domesday manors can for the most part be identified with the tythings whose names have survived to the present time.

Firstly, Domesday Book tells us that Clere was a royal Manor, and had been part of the demesne of King Edward. It was linked with Basingstoke and Hurstbourn Tarrant in providing one day's entertainment for the King, which probably denoted a certain tax, or amount of corn or other food rent, to be supplied for the royal household, or its equivalent paid by the agricultural community or guild in money. The land of the manor consisted of 16 ploughlands, of which three were cultivated for the King as their lord by 21 villeins and 12 borderers, who also had 15 ploughlands which they cultivated for themselves. There were two mills on the royal manor and seven slaves. There were also two freemen who paid a rent of 13 shillings for the land they held. In addition the King received 100d. from the mills, 20s. from the woods, and 15s. from a toll which existed here. Only two other toll places are mentioned in Domesday Book as existing in Hampshire, and both on royal manors, one at Titchfield, and the other at Bowcomb, in the Isle of Wight. Kingsclere is situated where the roads from Basingstoke to

Newbury, and from Andover and Whitchurch to Reading cross each other, and the thelonium or toll was probably levied on the goods passing through this place. The King's manor refers to the tythings now known as the Lordship Town tything, the Lordship Woodland tything, and the Guildable tything, the names of which still remain.

Secondly, the church of Kingsclere as far back as Saxon times was endowed with a Manor of its own, the name of which has also come down to the present day as the Parsonage tything. This Church Manor or Parsonage tything has had a very remarkable history. Domesday Book tells us that it was held by Queen Eadgyth, wife of Edward the Confessor, and daughter of Earl Godwin. She held it in her widowhood, during part of the reign of the Conqueror, until her death, when it reverted to the King. This Manor consisted of four and a quarter hides of land, its own mill, and its own Manor Court. Its inferior tenants were three villeins and 14 borderers, and it had two slaves. In the time of King Edward it was worth £7, and at the time of the survey, when it was held by the Abbey of St. Peter's, Winchester, known afterwards as Hyde Abbey, it was worth £6 annually. It came into possession of the Abbey in a singular manner. The Conqueror desired to build a palace for himself in Winchester, and so he made an exchange with St. Peter's Abbey in that city, and gave the Abbey this Manor, with the church of Kingsclere, for the land in High Street, Winchester, close to and east of the City Cross, where the shops are now situated which form the Piazza, and thereon he built his palace. This palace was destroyed by fire in A.D. 1102,¹ and part of its material was used for building the Bishop's Castle at Wolvesey.² This Manor belonging to the church, the Parsonage tything of Kingsclere, was a very valuable possession, for it carried with it the advowson of the church as well as the tithes of the whole of this large parish, including its smaller manors. Hyde Abbey held this Manor and the advowson of the church for about 200 years. The Abbey lost it in Henry III.'s reign. Certainly, in 1290, the Abbot presented a petition to the King for its restoration.

¹ Milner. Hist. Winchester, I., 201.

² Wharton Anglia Sacra, II., 421 quoting Giraldus Cambrensis.

Domesday Book states that there was a church here in Saxon times, but the fine church of Kingsclere we now see, which took the place of the Saxon church, is mainly of Norman date, and its architecture shows that its erection must be ascribed to the time when the Abbey of Hyde held the advowson. At about the end of the 13th century this benefice was the wealthiest in the Diocese of Winchester, and we must admit that a substantial church was built here. The tithes of sheaves, wool, and lambs were at that time worth £30; other tithes, with oblations and mortuaries, £53 2s.; and the parsonage, with its land, services, pasture, and wood, £16 18s.; making a total of £100.¹

Leaving the consideration of the church and its tything for a few minutes, let us turn to the early condition of some of the other tythings, for each of them has had a separate history, and their lands were held by different tenures. Edmondsthorpe Manor, which subsequently became divided into two manors—Edmondsthorpe Beenham and Edmondsthorpe Lances—must, I think, have been originally granted by King Edmond as a Danish or Norse settlement. Its land was re-granted from time to time. It was held in the 13th century of the King by the service of the custody of the Forest of Wytingley, or the King's Park of Freemantle, a kind of hunting tenure.

In the time of Edward III., Edmondsthorpe¹ was held partly by the Beenham or Benham family,² and partly by the Launcelene or Lancevee family, whose name has become shortened in the course of time to "Lances" hence the names of the tythings of Edmondsthorpe Beenham and Edmondsthorpe Lances. The Launcelene family also held that part of Hannington which is in Kingsclere parish, the other part of Hannington being held by the Bishop of Winchester; hence the name of another tything, Hannington Lances.³ In the time of Henry VI. Edmondsthorpe was held of the Castle of Winchester,⁴ *i.e.*, under the obligation of assisting in its defence.

¹ Taxation, Pope Nicholas;

² Inquisition post mortem, 35, Edw. III.

³ Burrows, Hist. family of Brocas, 336.

⁴ Inquis. post mortem V., Hen. VI.

Another of the old tythings Frollibury, now known as Frobury Farm, was held by the serjeantry of keeping the door of the King's wardrobe.¹ Clerewoodcote was held by knight-service,² a feudal tenure under the barony of Basing, the manor being held at two knights' fees. North Oakley was also held by a similar feudal tenure, and as often as the Lords of Basing received writs commanding them to assemble their military force, the knights or men-at-arms from these parts of Kingsclere would have to join the King's army. Many records of such writs exist.

The main history of Kingsclere, however, is that which is connected with the early kings' own manor, the Lordship tythings and the Guildable tything, which the important agricultural community or guild occupied, who lived on the royal estate and cultivated the common fields as well as the land of the king. William the Conqueror was lord of this manor, as the Saxon kings, his predecessors had been before him. Rufus appears also to have kept it in his own hands, but Henry I. gave it to the Canons of Rouen,³ and Kingsclere has not been part of the demesne land of the Crown since his time. I am not aware of the circumstance which led to this gift, but there had been troubles in Normandy, and the war between Henry I. and Robert Duke of Normandy, his elder brother, in that duchy, are matters of history. In recognition, perhaps, of services rendered to him in Normandy against his brother Robert, or from religious motives, as a mark of favour to the metropolitan church of the land of his fathers, Henry gave the manor of Kingsclere to the Dean and Chapter or Canons of Rouen, who held the lordship for more than 200 years. It was during this time that a great part of the Cathedral of Rouen was built, and Hampshire visitors to that magnificent cathedral may be interested in remembering its connection with Kingsclere, and that the revenue derived from this parish must have contributed to the cost of its erection. The Canons of Rouen were lords of the manor of Kingsclere until the time of

¹ Testa de Neville.

² Testa de Neville and Inquis. post mortem.

³ Dugdale Monasticon Anglicanum vi. p. 1118, quoting Rot. Claus. 7 John, M. 1 in dorso.

Edward III., and they have left their marks on its history. Their name still survives in that of Cannon Park, and Cannon Park Farm and Heath in this parish. A Close Roll record of the 7th John states that the manor of Clere, with its appurtenances, was given to the Canons of Rouen "by Henry of good memory the illustrious King of England, and grandfather of the present king." For more than half the time during which the Canons were lords of Kingsclere they had ceased to be subjects of the English crown. In the 13th century their possessions here were even enlarged.¹ King John lost Normandy, and his young son Henry was brought up under the tutelage of Peter de Roche, Bishop of Winchester, the Justiciar of the Kingdom, and the virtual ruler of the country. Bishop de Roche was a Poicteven with French sympathies, and it was no doubt under his direction that a supplementary charter of privileges at Kingsclere was granted to the Canons of Rouen in the 10 Hen. III., *i.e.*, in 1225, during the minority of the King. By this charter the Canons, a body of foreign ecclesiastics, were made Lords of Kingsclere Hundred as well as the Manor, and the right of holding the Hundred Court and the right of holding a fair in Kingsclere, with other privileges, were also granted to them. Later on Henry III. granted to them Witingley Wood of the manor of Clere, adjoining Freemantle Park, that part of the manor, I think, now called Cannon Park. The date of this charter is the 31st Hen. III., 1252.² The same king also granted to them Clere Woodlands, which refers probably to the tything known as the Lordship Woodlands part. In addition to the manorial revenues it is not improbable that the Cathedral body at Rouen acquired some at least of the tithes of Kingsclere. The petition which the Abbot of Hyde made in 1290, complaining of the wrongful withholding of the advowson of the church of Kingsclere, shows that Hyde Abbey had lost the tithes.³ Here we note that this church is dedicated to St. Mary, and that Rouen Cathedral is mentioned in the records as the "Ecclesia Beate

¹ Cal. Rot. Chart. Hen. III. 32, and Cal. Rot. Chart. Hen. III. 41.

² Cal. Rot. Chart. 31st Hen. III., 63.

³ Liber. Mon. de Hyda, p. liv.

Marie de Rotomag."¹ In the taxation of Pope Nicholas in 1290 the value of the benefice of Kingsclere was £100 a year.

It is interesting to note the relative values of the 13th century and the middle of the 19th century. Under the Commutation of Tithes Act the rectorial tithes of Kingsclere were commuted for a rent charge of £1850, and the value of the vicarage at £440, a total revenue of more than 22½ times that of 1290. The value of the manor of Kingsclere to the Canons of Rouen in 1290 was £60 per annum. This local administration of the hundred and manor of Kingsclere by a body of French ecclesiastics was an anomalous state of affairs, and must have led at times to disputes and complications. There was certainly nothing English in the arrangement. Thus, in the 51 Henry III., about 1267, a trial took place concerning seven acres of land held in Kingsclere unlawfully by Walter, the parson of the church, who did not appear. Sworn evidence was taken that the land was formerly held by William Bernard, and that Nicholas Bernard was his heir, but, because he was under age when William died, he was in custody of the said Walter, and afterwards, when Nicholas came of age, Walter detained the said land for five years. Judgment was given by the court that Nicholas should be indemnified, and Walter fined fifty shillings.² The wars between England and France must have made the Canons realise that their valuable property at Kingsclere was held by a very insecure tenure. As late, however, as the 9th Edward II.³ they were certified in a Parliamentary writ as still being the lords of this manor, but not of the hundred. The end, however, of their connection with this parish was near at hand. In the first year of Edward III. Kingsclere was again in the King's hands, for in that year he committed the custody of the manor to Richard de Wyville, parson of the church of Kingsclere, to account for the same.⁴ Four years later an inquisition concerning the woodlands shows that the Dean and Chapter of Rouen had not finally lost the manor.

¹ Cal. Rot. Chart. Hen. III. vs Clere Woodlands, and M. Rotulo Originalium de anno 9 Edw. III.

² Abbreviatio Placitorum, 51 Hen. III.

³ Nomina Villarum.

⁴ Abbreviatio Rotulorum Originalium. 9 Edw. I., p. 7.

Later on, on account of the war with France, the king granted the custody of the manor of Kingsclere, with its belongings, to Peter de Galicien.¹ The end came in 1335, when Peter, Archbishop of Rouen, gave and conceded to William de Melton, Archbishop of York the manor of Kingsclere.² He conveyed to the English prelate what the circumstances of the time would allow him to retain no longer. If the records of Rouen Cathedral from the 12th to the 14th century escaped the fury of the French Revolution, and are still in existence, it is certain that they would supply information for the history of Kingsclere. Archbishop William de Melton was one of the leading men in State affairs. He had been in the service of the Crown from early life, and had gradually risen from one office to another until he became Archbishop of York in 1316. He it was who officiated at the marriage of Edward III. and Queen Philippa. The year 1335 was thus a turning point in the history of Kingsclere, for in that year its foreign connection ceased.

Archbishop de Melton was a man who had risen from humble parentage to one of the highest positions in the kingdom, and he desired to found a family, leave a name behind him, and provide for his heirs. He had sufficient influence with the king to obtain for himself personally a grant of the manor of Kingsclere, with other manors³ and these were passed on to his nephew, Sir William de Melton. The Archbishop was, however, the first English lord of this manor after its separation from the Cathedral of Rouen, and the name, Bishop's Hill, in this parish, may be a surviving trace of him. He died in 1340, and his nephew, Sir William de Melton, was enfeoffed or put into possession of the manor in the 22nd Edward III., by Bishop William de Edyngton.⁴ The tenure was changed, the manor being granted to the de Melton family by the grand serjeantry of the defence of Winchester Castle. In the 11th Richard II. the manor was held by Thomas Wyntershull, apparently under the de

¹ Abbrev. Rot. Orig. II., III.

² M. Rotulorum Originalium de anno. 9 Edw. III., Membrane I.

³ Cal. Inquis. post mortem Edward III., vol. II., 62.

⁴ *ibid.* 22nd Edward III., vol. II., 147.

Melton family.¹ In the 22nd Richard II. it was held by another Sir William Melton, and in the time of Edward IV. by Sir John Melton,² whose widow, Cecilia, held it in the 2nd Richard III.,³ *i.e.*, 1485, the date of the battle of Bosworth, when the Tudor dynasty arose.

When the Archbishop of Rouen surrendered the manor of Kingsclere to the Archbishop of York the transaction was carried out in a legal way by the sanction of the king. The tithes were already in possession of the Crown, or passed into the king's hand, who, in the same year in which he conveyed the manor to Archbishop de Melton, *viz.*, 10th Edward III., granted the advowson of the church to William de Montague, Earl of Salisbury, and his heirs.⁴ This was done for a special purpose. The Earl was desirous of founding a priory, and it was largely endowed with tythes. Accordingly we find that William de Montague, Earl of Salisbury, founded the Priory of Bisham, or Bustlesham, in 1338, and endowed it, among other possessions, with the rectory of Kingsclere. Bisham is in Berkshire, close to the Thames, and opposite to Great Marlow, in Buckinghamshire. There the earl established his priory, which held the rectory of Kingsclere for 200 years. Before the establishment of the priory there had been a preceptory of the Knights Templar at Bisham. The priory was of the Augustine order, and was comparatively a wealthy one. It was surrendered on June 19th, 1538, and the deed of surrender was signed by sixteen of its Canons.⁵

The King's park and forest of Freemantle, in the parish of Kingsclere, have a history of their own, apart from the royal manor.

We learn from Domesday Book that, as far back as the time of Edward the Confessor, Edwin the huntsman held two hides of the king's demesne in Clere, which King Edward gave him. This shows that there was some connection with the royal sport of hunting here at that early

¹ *ibid.* vol. III., 97.

² *ibid.* vol. IV., 367, 14th Edward IV.

³ *ibid.* vol. IV., 420,, 2nd Richard III.

⁴ *Cal. Rotulorum Chartarum*, p. 170.

⁵ *Dugdale Monasticon Ang.*

period. Freemantle Forest was also known as the Forest of Wytingley, by the custody of which land was held in Edmondsthorpe. Freemantle Park came into prominence in Henry the Second's time, in connection with the story of his amours with Rosamond de Clifford, the "Fair Rosamond" of history and romance. According to the Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, as paraphrased by Hearne, one of Fair Rosamond's bowers was at Freemantle Park. Hearne's account of this from Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle is as follows :—

" Boures had the Rosamond about in Engeland,
Which this king for her sake made ich understand.
Waltham Bishops,—in castle of Wynch,
Atte park of Fremantel, atte Martelstow,
Atte Wodestocke, and other places."

From this it appears that Henry II. had a country-house at Freemantle. Probably he built the house there, which we know was a substantial royal residence in the time of King John.

Kingsclere was connected with Henry II. and the Fair Rosamond in another way. When she died, about 1174, and was buried in the Nunnery of Godstowe, near Oxford, the king certainly became conscience-stricken, and he made many liberal benefactions to Godstowe Nunnery, where Rosamond's body was laid, under a stone inscribed "Rosamunda." His donations were confirmed in a charter by his son and successor, Richard I.

These circumstances bring us to the history of another of the tythings of Kingsclere, namely, Sandford, which certainly belonged to Godstowe Nunnery, and part of which was given to it by Henry II. when sorrow pressed heavily upon him in his later years. The charter of Richard I. relating to Godstowe, confirms to the Nunnery "the land in Clere called Prevet, which our father bought of Manasse de Sannerville for twenty and five marks." This was the gift in Kingsclere Henry II. made to Godstowe, and appears to have been part of Sandford tything.

I cannot but think that this gift to the Abbess of the convent where the paramour of his young days was buried, and where supplications for her soul were made, must have been the outward and visible sign to the people of Kingsclere 700 years

ago, of Henry's repentance of his life with Rosamond de Clifford at Freemantle Park, and we must remember that he was the same king who submitted to be scourged for other offences at Canterbury. His grandson, Henry III., gave Godstowe Nunnery the privilege of estover, or wood for fuel and building, in the forest of Clere and the forest of Freemantle;² and in the 35th year of that king's reign an inquisition was held concerning the liberties of the Abbess of Godstowe, in the county of Southampton, in respect to her possessions here.³

Sandford Manor was held by the Abbess of Godstowe until its dissolution, when its annual value was £21 6s. The deed of its surrender is dated 17 Nov., 31st Henry VIII., and the particulars of its sale to John Kingsmill, Esq., are among the records of the late Augmentation Office.⁴

Richard I. visited Freemantle on his way from the Midland Counties to Winchester, after his return from captivity, and just before his second coronation. It was a favourite hunting place of King John, who came to it on 37 occasions during his reign.⁵ There is one circumstance which connects Freemantle with the unhappy Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry II. It was at Freemantle, on 15th April, 1205, that King John was mourning the loss of Queen Eleanor, his mother, and from his house there he issued on that occasion a general pardon of criminals (including those who had broken the Forest Law) on account of her death, or as the record says—"for the safety of the soul of the King's mother recently dead,"⁶ a suitable pardon to offenders against Forest Law for the King to issue from his favourite hunting seat. I have no doubt that masses also were celebrated for the Queen on that occasion within this church. While the King was at Freemantle his cellar there had often to be replenished. There are orders still existing directing wine to be conveyed from the royal cellars at Southampton in the time of King

¹ Dugdale Monasticon Ang. "Godstowe Nunnery Charters."

² Cal. Inquis. post mortem, 35, Henry III.

³ Eighth Report (appendix II., p. 22) of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records.

⁴ Itinerary of King John (Index).

⁵ Itinerary *ibid.*: 62-63.

John, to his house at Freemantle. One of these is dated July 11th, 1205, in which Hugh de Neville is commanded to send to Southampton a good and strong carriage to convey thence such wines as Daniel, the butler, who had charge of the King's cellars, should give him, viz., three casks of white wine and three other casks of wine. Another order of a similar kind was issued from Freemantle on Oct. 23rd, 1205, and another dated Dec. 26th, 1207, ordered the bailiffs of Southampton to send four casks of household wine to Freemantle. Some of the old cellars of this date are still in existence at Southampton, and will shortly be viewed by this Club. It was at Freemantle that the last wolf of which any record exists as having been killed in Hampshire, was taken on May 31st, 1212.

In the 38th Henry III. an inquisition was held at Kingsclere to ascertain the extent of Freemantle Park, and how much of it was enclosed.¹ The manor of Freemantle, with the house, park, and all pertaining to it, was granted by Edward I. to Reginald Fitzherbert for his life, as appears from the "Placita quo warranto" rolls. As late as the time of Elizabeth, Freemantle Park was still part of the Crown demesne, as is shown by an entry in the civil list of that reign, in which a payment to the keeper of the park occurs.

The records of the Committee for Compounding, in regard to the forfeited estates of the Royalists, between 1643 and 1660, state that the Freemantle Park was under the management of the Irish Trustees before 1651. During the civil war period, it had been held by Lord Cottington, whose name still survives in that of Cottington Hill or King John's Hill. Lord Cottington's estate was sequestered and administered by the Trustees of Irish affairs in 1649-50, the revenue apparently being used for public purposes in Ireland.² Later on it was ordered, "that Freemantle Park co. Hants, late Lord Cottington's, be discharged from sequestration, and delivered to President Bradshaw, to whom it is granted by Parliament."³ This ancient royal estate and hunting seat of the early Plantagenet Kings thus passed into the possession

¹ Ing. p.m. 38 Henry III.

² Calendar of the Committee for Compounding, page 174.

³ Date of order Oct. 8th, 1651. Cal. Committee for Compounding p. 487.

of the President of the Commission which tried and condemned Charles I.

In addition to the ancient religious houses I have mentioned, two others had lands in this parish. A few miles north of Kingsclere, just over the Berkshire border, a small priory, known as that of Sandiford, was founded for Austin Canons in 1205 by Jeffrey, Earl of Perch, and this priory held land in Frollebury (now Frobury tything) in the 13th century.¹ The priory also held a house and 20 acres of land in Clere-Woodlands in the 14th century. The "Placita quo warranto" rolls state that the Prior of Sandiford or Sandleford was summoned to do suit of Court at the Hundred Court of Kingsclere in 1283, and he came in accordance with this summons.² About 1480 the priory had got into difficulties. Its inmates actually forsook it, and Edward IV. annexed it to the Collegiate Church of Windsor.³

The College of St. Elizabeth at Winchester also held land at Kingsclere. This was a college of priests founded in 1301 by John de Pontissera, Bishop of Winchester, and it acquired its estate at Kingsclere by a gift from John de St. John, Lord of Basing, and others.⁴ At its dissolution in the 35th Henry VIII. the College was given to Thomas Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton.

The church of Kingsclere was connected with the Cathedral of Winchester by a small pension of 13s. 4d., which it paid to the Custos Operum, or Master of the Works of St. Swithun's Priory.⁵

The Hundred Court of Kingsclere was its ancient District Council, an early local tribunal for the local administration of the law. Like similar Courts it probably met in the open air in early Saxon time, and if the singular place-name of "Nothing Hill," which still survives, is a modification of "Mo thing or Mote thing Hill," which is not unlikely, that hill was probably its meeting-place. The Exchequer records

¹ Testa de Neville,

² Placita quo Warranto, p. 772.

³ Dugdale, Monasticon Ang.

⁴ Dugdale Monasticon. chart. Edward II., referring to chart. Edward I.

⁵ Computus Rolls of St. Swithun's Priory. Ed. by Dean Kitchin, pp. 114, 210, 216.

show that the Hundred of Clere was fined 10s. 9d. on account of a murder committed within it in the reign of Stephen. The Hundred Roll shows that the escape of robbers and criminals was facilitated by the existence of forests in the hundreds, such as that in the Hundred of Clere.¹ The administration of the Hundred by the Canons of Rouen, to whom it was granted by Henry III., apparently became unworkable. This appears to have been remedied in the time of Edward II. by abolishing the Hundred of Clere, and annexing it on to the adjoining one of Pastrow, under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff.² In the next reign, however, the Hundred of Clere was again revived, as shown by the records of the tax of the tenth and fifteenth in 1334.

The common lands of Kingsclere were of great extent, and were an inheritance of the people of this parish which had descended to them for at least 1000 years, until in 1842 an Act was passed for their enclosure. There were at that time 1700 acres of common land³ part of which had been formerly let to numerous small tenants at 6s. per acre, an arrangement which appears to be the last trace of the ancient agricultural community or guild.

There are many things in Kingsclere which remind us of past ages. The church is its great antiquity, and this is a fine monument of Norman architecture and of the connection of this place with the Abbey of Hyde and Dean and Chapter of Rouen, since in all probability it owes its origin to one or both of these ecclesiastical bodies. The Curfew Bell is an appropriate survival of a Norman custom in a Norman church. Seven mills are mentioned in Domesday Book, and four remain at the present day, probably on the ancient sites. The numerous old chalk pits in this parish, some of them of great size and overgrown after long disuse, are among its earliest antiquities. The settlement of cottagers in the Dell, the descendants or modern representatives of the cottars of Norman time, is unique in Hampshire. Some of these cottages are themselves centuries old—a circumstance which points to the great age of the pit itself. Some of the

¹ Maddox, *Hist. of the Exchequer* p. 377.

² *Nomina Villarum* 9th Edward II.

³ Lewis, *Topographical Dict.*

old inn signs—the Crown, the Falcon, and the Swan—must be of great antiquity. The Crown is one of the oldest English inn signs, the Swan was a favourite badge of some of the Plantagenet Kings, and the Falcon Inn has a history extending back to the 14th century. Its sign reminds us of the ancient royal sport of falconry, for which the open downs here offered such an excellent field.

Like all other old places Kingsclere has been much changed in the course of centuries, but these remains I have mentioned, and its ancient tythings, its old place names, its great chalk pits, the remnants of its common lands, and its inn signs, are relics of the conditions of life which prevailed here in olden times, and which, since the break-up of the feudal and manorial system, have drifted down to our day as wreckage on the sea of Time.

Since writing the above the following note relating to Kingsclere and its connection with the Cathedral of Rouen has been communicated by the Rev. R. G. Davis.

At the meeting of the Hampshire Field Club at Kingsclere, on the 6th of June, 1895, Mr. Shore in his most interesting paper, stated that Henry I. had given the Manor of Kingsclere to the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral of Rouen, and that it would be a matter of great interest to ascertain if any records relating to this gift existed. Acting on this suggestion I opened communication with the authorities at Rouen, and received from the Abbé Tougard a letter dated June 17th, 1895. He writes "The Archbishop was absent from Rouen when your letter arrived. It has been sent on to me that I may reply. I need only open two volumes, and extract the lines added to this letter, which cannot fail to interest you. It appears probable that the charter of Henry I. exists at Rouen (the *Vidimus*,¹ if not the original), amongst the MSS. of the Chapter, now preserved in the Departmental Archives. If I find anything there more definite, I will inform you. The author of the paper you mention, has I imagine written in accordance with your local archives, and unless there has been a double donation, which is very unlikely, his statement exposes an error, committed by several authors, who have believed that the Clères in question is the small town of Clères situated 5 or 6 leagues to the north of Rouen."

The extracts are as follows. *Histoire de l'Eglise Cathédrale de Rouen* Par. D. Pommeraye, moine bénédictin. Rouen, 1686, 4to. Page 571. "The ancient Obituary of the Cathedral commemorates Henry I., King of England and Duke of Normandy, who gave the Manor of Clere to the community of Canons, in the year 1107; and the book with the binding of ivory, says that he left his crown of gold, which was valued at 300 marks of silver, to establish a fund

¹ *Vidimus* Letters Patent of a charter of Feoffment, so called from the words of the conclusion *Vidimus*. Also called *Innotescimus*.

for the benefit of the Canons." The same author in his *Histoire des Archevêques de Rouen*, Rouen, 1667, fol. p. 302, indicates as one of the probable reasons of this generosity, that it was Henry I. who in 1111, caused Geoffrey, formerly Dean of the Chapter of Mans, to be nominated Archbishop of Rouen. The Canons every year offered special prayers for their benefactor Henry I. The Obituary of the Cathedral for 1761, gives November 14th as the date for that year.

In a second letter from the Abbé Tougard, dated 25th June, 1895, he writes "I went yesterday for your sake to the Departmental Archives. Our eminent Conservateur assured me that the original deed of gift was not in his care. Thanks however to his extensive memory, this old man of seventy, was able to find me in an instant abstracts of two deeds, concerning the Manor of Clere, published in Vol. III. of the Inventory of the Series G. of the Departmental Archives, 1881 gr. in 4to, which volumes are regularly sent by the French Government to the Royal Archives of England.

Of these abstracts, G. 4046, contains letters of the official of Rouen, bearing date Saturday after St. Luke, 1273, acknowledging a *Vidimus* of a deed of the noble man William of Winterehelle¹ (*sic*), Knight, by the which this Knight rents for nine years, to commence at the feast of St. Michael, 1271, from the Canons of Rouen, their Manor of Clere in England, for the yearly rent of 60 marks, payable at Rouen; he can neither sell nor dispose of anything, without permission, in the woods of Holt or of Hellee. He will treat the inhabitants of the manor according to the uses and legitimate customs (of the Manor), nor will, without the consent of the said Dean and Chapter, levy any taxes on them. He undertakes to administer justice to them according to what the said Dean and Chapter or their mandate shall enjoin. If he enters into a religious order, or undertakes a long journey (such as to Jerusalem or Constantinople), or enters on the way of universal flesh, the aforesaid manor shall freely revert, with all improvements, to the said Dean and Chapter. Every three years the lessor undertakes to visit the Church of Rouen personally, to render an account of the state of the manor. Given at Westminster, February 1270. The seal is lost. G. III. 250. B.

G. 4053. *Vidimus*, of a charter of Richard Cœur de Lion, by which he gives to the Church of St. Mary of Rouen (the Cathedral), for the use of the Canons, all the Manor of Clere. Dated, Chinon, 2nd March, in the first year of his reign. G. III. 251. A.

The Abbé Tougard adds "the error of those who have supposed this donation to refer to the small town of Clères, five leagues from here, is very apparent, and the Archivist confirms my view.

An account of my letters to the Abbé Tougard, and of his replies to me, was inserted in *La Semaine Religieuse du Diocèse de Rouen*, Saturday, 24th August, 1895, and in addition to the above information, it states that in the 14th century, according to an English indenture, the tithe of the domain of Clere, was returned at 3 or 4000 francs.

¹ William de Wintershall, Sheriff of Hampshire, 1272.