

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Testa de Nevill, Returns for the County of Gloucester, No. 2.

by H. Barkly
1888-89, Vol. 13, 23-34

© The Society and the Author(s)

TESTA DE NEVILL
RETURNS FOR COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER.

No. 2.

By SIR HENRY BARKLY, K.C.B., G.C.M.G.

IF the Exchequer Register were arranged chronologically, the next Return would be that at the foot of column B, page 78. Although it has no title, the summation at its close shows it to contain an account of the collection of a "Carucage" of two shillings a plough. The tax, so called, was a revival under a new name of the ancient Danegheld, the normal rate of which had been the same sum for each hide of land subject to its imposition.

From the "Dialogue concerning the Exchequer," written in 1177, it would seem that Henry II. felt somewhat ashamed (possibly after A'Beckett's opposition¹) of continuing that levy on the pretext of apprehended invasion, and though by no means disposed to spare his subjects, and particularly his military tenants, from exactions, suffered it to fall into desuetude during the latter portion of his reign.² With his well ordered finances this was easy, but under his son the case was widely different. Richard exhausted his resources in order to take part in the Crusade, and when it became necessary in 1193 to provide a hundred thousand crowns for his redemption from captivity, no better alternative presented itself, than to supplement the proceeds of the "Aid," to which he was, under such circumstances, entitled according to

¹ At a Council held on 1st July, 1163—See *Stubb's Constitutional History*, Vol. I.

² Dr. Stubb's (now Bishop of Chester), the great authority on such points, states that Danegheld ceased to be imposed in 1168, but Madox, in his *History of the Exchequer* cites from the Pipe Roll of 1175, a charge for issuing the summonses for its payment in that year.

the feudal system, by reverting to direct taxation on all cultivators of land, the number of ploughs employed being taken as the basis of assessment. The experiment proved so successful, that it would appear to have been repeated in the following year, after Richard's liberation, since Roger de Hoveden informs us that at a Council held at Nottingham on 1st April, 1194, it was decided to grant the King (inter alia) "two shillings from every carucate throughout England, towards the cost of his expedition to Normandy."¹

Henceforth a carucage was deemed an established source of revenue, and little time elapsed before the numerous exemptions which had largely detracted from the yield of Danegheld were abolished, and the incidence of the new tax placed on an uniform footing throughout the realm. In 1198, as we learn from the same contemporary chronicler, on the imposition of a charge of no less than five shillings for each "carucate or hide," payable in two instalments, commissioners were sent to every county in the King's name, whose duty it was, in concert with the sheriff, to assemble juries, partly by election, in every Hundred, for the purpose of declaring on oath how many "Wainages of Ploughs"² there were in each vill, whether held in demesne or in villenage, or, if by the church, who was responsible for the military service of the lands. Minute and stringent instructions were added as to the mode of collecting and accounting for the tax, and recording all the particulars ascertained. Serjeanties were not directly taxed, but the extent and value of the lands held thereby, and the names of the holders, were to be entered, the latter being at the same time summoned to London at Whitsuntide "to receive the King's orders."³

Hoveden concludes his account by stating "that those chosen to superintend this business decreed according to the estimate of the Jurors for the Wainage of each Plough one hundred acres

¹ Roger de Hoveden's Chronicle, edited by Dr. Stubbs for the Rolls Series, 4 vols., 8vo, Vol. III., p. 242.

² "Carucarum Wainagia," rendered by Dr. Stubbs, in the Glossary to his "Select Charters," Ploughlands, but, literally, "Plough-gear."

³ Ipsi vero qui electi fuerunt et constituti ad hoc negotium Regis faciendum, statuerunt, per æstimationem legalium hominum ad unius cujus que carucæ wainagium centum acras terre.—*Hoveden, Vol. IV., p. 47.*

of land." It seems to be inferred from these words by most writers, that an important statutory alteration was thus effected by the Royal Commission in the previously recognised area of the carucate, which before that period had contained 120 acres. Surely, however, if such had been the case, the chronicler would not have been content with this mere incidental mention of what would have been equivalent to an augmentation of 20 per cent. in the basis of assessment? Is it not far more probable that in what he says as to acreage, he is speaking of the "long hundred" of six score, then in use throughout England,¹ and that the decision he records meant really no more than that henceforth in levying carucage every such hundred acres of arable was to be reckoned as requiring one fully equipped plough?

Some standard of assessment must indeed have become almost indispensable, considering the varying strengths of the teams employed; the increasing substitution of horses for oxen; and above all, the different systems of farming prevalent, not merely in different parts of the kingdom, but even in the same county.

With regard to the first point, details given in Extents of church lands early in the 13th century indicate that the typical 8 ox plough of Domesday was no longer the rule even on the lord's demesne,² whilst as to the second, the extended use of horses, (which are only once mentioned in the whole course of the Domesday Survey of the County of Gloucester) is shown by the directions issued to the Justices Itinerant in 1194, to enquire in the case of Royal manors on ferm, "how many oxen and how many horses, constituted a plough-team,³ the two, doubtless, being often harnessed together, since Sir Walter Henley, the earliest writer on English Agriculture whose treatise is extant, strongly recommends mixed teams consisting of two of each description of animal.

¹ For explanation as to the "Anglicus Numerus"—See *Domesday Studies*, Vol. I. Papers by the Rev. Isaac Taylor (p. 159) Mr. J. H. Round, and Mr. O. C. Pell.

² *Vide* Cartulary of St. Peter's, Gloucester, where, in the case of one manor as many as 10 oxen (with 1 in reserve) were kept for each plough; whilst in another, 6 only were deemed requisite.

³ "Forma procedendi," as given in Stubbs' Select Charters, p. 262.

In respect, thirdly, to modes of cultivation, we know that, with the exception of the lord's demesne, the lands lay in open common-fields, either three in number, one-third being for winter tillage, one-third for lent tillage, and one-third for fallow ; or upon the two-field system, half under crop, half fallow ; the number of ploughs differing proportionately.

Under these circumstances it would much simplify matters to make the cultivators of every hundred acres pay tax for one plough, and although the average thus struck was extremely favourable to the owners of stiff clay land, and correspondingly adverse to the interests of those who held light and easily cultivated soils, this was probably felt to be by no means inequitable.

Unfortunately we have no opportunity of testing the results of the Commissioners' labours by comparison with other Returns, since the Inquisitions of 1198 have, there is every reason to suppose, all but entirely perished. Dr. Stubbs, indeed, expresses uncertainty as to whether the elaborate scheme was carried out in its integrity, but there are in the "Testa de Nevill" entries which leave little room for doubt that the enquiry was completed from one end of the kingdom to the other.¹

Two years later, after King John's accession, a carucage was imposed at the rate of three shillings, in order to help in providing 30,000 marks which he had engaged by treaty to pay Philip of France for releasing all claim to the Vexin, but we are not told

¹ At p. 72 is a Return addressed to Archbishop Hubert by the Sheriff of Herefordshire "et Socii sui assignati ad taillagium faciendum de carucis de hoc Comitatu," which can belong to no other date. At p. 93 is another (likewise from the true Testa) in which the constant recurrence of the phrase "Wanag' Car" shows that the enquiry extended to the Counties of Warwick and Leicester ; whilst at p. 377, under Yorkshire, we find a commission of eight notables, among whom is the Sheriff for the year 1198, Roger de Badvent, reporting to H., Archbishop of Canterbury, that they have been "itinerantes in North Riding 'ad ponenda taillagia super Wainagia carucarum,' juxta mandatum vestrum," but being detained by various affairs in Richmondshire could not arrive at the Wapentake of Pykering before the Friday next before Holy Trinity, and so the Serjeants of the King could not appear before them in London at the appointed time, &c., &c. Unhappily in all three cases the compilers of the Testa de Nevill, deemed it worth while merely to transcribe the portion of the Returns relating to Serjeanties, and the rest is lost !

in what mode it was levied. This is the only imposition of the kind recorded in his reign, but that may arise solely from the fact that the chronicle of Roger de Hoveden comes down no further than 1201.

At all events the next carucage mentioned is that granted to his youthful heir, Henry III., in July, 1220, by the Great Council at Westminster, shortly after his second coronation in the abbey there, at the normal rate of two shillings for each plough, with a view to relieve the most pressing necessities of the government. A copy of the writ addressed on 9th August to the Sheriffs throughout England, ordering them to take steps for its collection, is on the Close Roll,¹ the mode of proceeding prescribed being far simpler than on the former occasion. Each Sheriff, aided by two Knights elected by the freeholders of the county, is to collect the tax in respect to every plough in working order at the preceding Midsummer, excepting those on the demesnes of the Archbishops and Bishops or those of their villeins, and except those of the Cistercian and Premonstratensian Orders. The exceptions were, no doubt, made in deference to the strong opposition which had, from the first, been manifested by the clergy to being subjected to the impost, especially by lay authority. In 1198 King Richard had only obtained payment from ecclesiastics by threatening to deprive those in default of the right of recourse to the Civil Tribunals in case of disputes with laymen; and John, two years later, had to go to the length of declaring that Geoffrey, Archbishop of York, his bastard brother, had forfeited his see, for, among other offences, preventing the servants of the crown from collecting money for the ploughs on his lands.² If, as was till lately held by most authorities, the lands of churchmen had been exempt from Danegheld, the attempt to subject them to the tax substituted for that impost, would unquestionably have constituted a valid grievance, but it has recently been pointed out by Mr. J. H. Round,³ that neither Domesday nor the Cartularies confirm

¹ Printed at full length in Stubb's Select Charters, p. 352.

² Roger Hoveden, Vol. IV., p. 107.

³ "Danegheld and the Finance of Domesday."—*Domesday Studies*, Vol. I., p. 96.

the idea of such exemption. It is true that it appears from the Gheld Rolls of the Exon Domesday, that they were excused from the heavy tax of six shillings per hide levied by the Conqueror in 1084, as far as their demesne lands were concerned, but so likewise were the lay barons, so that it may have been an exceptional concession in the case of both. In the reign of Rufus we have, in fact, a positive statement that the church was not exempted,¹ whilst in that of Henry I. we find on the Pipe Roll of 1130 evidence to the same effect. This is confirmed by the next earliest Pipe Roll extant, that of 2nd Henry II. (1155), which shows Bishops and Prelates paying gheld through the Sheriffs, just like laymen, the numerous remissions granted in both cases being classed in the same category. It would seem likely, therefore, that clerical opposition owed its revival to A'Beckett, and that even then a continuance of the tax, disguised under the title of a "Donum" or voluntary contribution, was submitted to. Such a compromise was at any rate entered into with respect to the carucage of 1220, since the chronicles of the Priory of Dunstable inform us² that in that year "every Bishop of his own free-will collected the aid for the King's necessities throughout his Diocese from the Abbots and Priors." This is corroborated by the actual returns of the collection in one county—Berkshire—to be found in the Testa de Nevill. At page 131, under the heading "Receipt of the Carucage assessed in the 5th year of King Henry III. from the lands of the Earls, Barons, Knights, free tenants, and other laymen cultivating lands,—not being ecclesiastical fiefs,—by the hands of Henry of the Exchequer, Sheriff of Berks, William de Stanford, and William de Wancy, elected to receive such collections," we find, first of all, seven entries respecting lands which may be conjectured, from the names of the holders, to be held "in Barony" and then come lists of the vills in every Hundred, with the number of ploughs and amount of taxation calculated at the rate of two shillings.

¹ Gulielmus Rufus ad Normanniam festinandum (*sic*), habuit ex unâquaque hidâ quatuor solidos, *Ecclesiâ non exceptâ*.—Quoted from "*Laws of the Confessor*," by Spellman in his *Glossary*.

² Rolls Series.

At p. 132B follows a second Return, headed simply, "Return of the Carucage of the lands and fiefs of Religious and Ecclesiastical persons," which sets forth under their respective Hundreds the names of the vills, as well as in most cases those of the Abbey or Priory to which they belonged, together with the number of ploughs taxed in each, and the amount of tax calculated as before. In one instance only is a Bishop referred to, viz., the Bishop of London as holding Bockhampton, where there were ten ploughs, for which he paid 20s., which throws discredit on the inherently improbable story that the episcopate taxed itself at the rate of 6s. 8d. per plough.

Indeed, as already remarked, throughout both Returns the carucage is set down at 2s. per plough, the rate authorised by the Great Council, the word *Caruca* being in almost every instance written at full length, without any sign of abbreviation, so as to preclude the possibility of *carucata* being meant.

Seeing that the writs authorising the levy bore date in Oxford, on 9th August, whilst the Sheriffs had to render account for their collections at the Exchequer by 30th September, not much time was allowed for enquiring as to the actual number and strength of the ploughs in use, so that it seems allowable to infer that the Rolls of payment for previous carucages were available for consultation, and that the number of standard¹ plough-teams to be paid for in the case of each vill, had been pretty well understood beforehand.

So far as to Berkshire; the Returns for which are, apparently, complete in all respects, which is the case in respect to no other county.

The single Return for Gloucestershire, is in the same form, and relates obviously, from internal evidence, to the same carucage of 1220-1. It is, however, of much less value, since it is confined to lay fiefs alone.

Not merely are the entire Hundreds of Henbury and Cleeve, pertaining to the Bishopric of Worcester: of Pucklechurch, owned by the Bishop of Bath and Wells; and of Deerhurst, divided

¹ That there was a "Standard" is clear from the number of cases in which the tax is paid *for half a plough* just as in Domesday.

between the Abbot of Westminster and the Church of St. Denis, at Paris ; omitted, but none of the church lands scattered throughout other Hundreds are included. No doubt they appeared in a separate ecclesiastical roll, not now extant.

This alone renders this Gloucestershire Return unfit for purposes of comparison, but it has another, though less serious defect, arising from the arrangement of the numerous manors belonging to the Honour of Gloucester in a schedule at the end, without reference to locality ; those of other Earls being treated in the same manner.

It would be useless, under such circumstances, to reprint in full the account of the collections in those Hundreds that are given, but I append a summary of the number of vills and ploughs mentioned under each, with a few comments where they appear called for.

SUMMARY OF CARUCAGE.

HUNDREDS OR OTHER DIVISIONS.		No. of VILLS.	No. of PLOUGHS.	REFERENCE TO NOTES.	
<i>As in the Return.</i>	<i>Modern Name.</i>				
1	Wesebir'	Westbury	14	80½	
2	Blycheslawe	Bledislow	8	31½	
3	Bottelau	Botloe	13	53½	
4	Wittestan	Whitstone	9	45½	
5	Duddestana	Dudstan	17	73	
6	Chilteh'm	Cheltenham	3	56	
7	Joh ^s de Mon- emue debet res- pondere	Liberty of Forest of Dean	8	45	
8	Byseleg	Bisley	13	64	
9	Wallingford	Honour of Walingford	3	16	
10	Cirencestr'	Seven hundreds of C.	15	63½	
11	Langetr'	Longtree	7	69	
12	Brethevaldes- burgh	Brightwolds- barrow.	5	58½	
13	Resp'egat	Rapsgate	5	45	
14	Bradel'	Bradley	7	70	
15	Agemede	Agmead, united to 16.	2	6	
16	Grimbaldess	Grimboldsash	9	114	
17	Berket	Berkeley	23	207	
18	Sloctr'	Slaughter	10	107	
19	Olefordd Winch'	Holford and Winchcombe	10	127½	
20	Kyftesgate	Kiftsgate	18	119	
21	The Bailiffs of the Earl of Glou- cester are responsible for the Carucage due by the ploughs undermentioned - - -		40	332½	See note A
22	The Bailiffs of the Earl of Chester are responsible for 15 fees in Säpeden, (<i>i.e.</i> Campden) - -		1	25	See note B
23	The Bailiff of the Earl of Salis- bury is answerable for 20 ploughs in Heythrop and for 9 in Omnel (Amney) - - - -		2	29	See note C
24	Hundred de Aleweston - - -		3	20½	See note D
			245	1857½	
Sum total of the ploughs for which the Knights have received carucage				1405	} See note E
Sum total in money - - -				£140 3	

NOTE A.—The Earl of Gloucester here referred to must be Gilbert de Clare (1), whose claim to that title on the death of Geoffrey de Mandeville in 1216 was indisputable. Doyle,

As already pointed out, the data furnished by the foregoing accounts are too scanty and imperfect to serve as a basis for comparing the state of agriculture in the different districts of the county, as deducible from the number of ploughs employed. Still less do they suffice for estimating the extent of cultivation in the early years of the 13th century, as contrasted with that which had existed at the time of the Domesday Survey; assuming always that the plough then spoken of still constituted the unit of taxation.

The task would in any event be an intricate one owing to the alterations which had taken place in the boundaries—and even in the number, of the Hundreds, although it might, perhaps, be possible in some few instances when these had remained comparatively undisturbed, to make an approximate estimate.

The Hundred of Berkeley, for example, had undergone little if any change of area, though some of its manors had passed to the church.

Berkeley itself, the head of the lordship, had, in 1086, 23 ploughs, and the 21 Berewicks which belonged to it, 223 more, to which must be added for the lands held extra-manorially by Roger de Berkeley, the tenant of the ferm, exclusive of Nesse, where no ploughs are accounted for, 48, making a total of 294½.

indeed, in the Official Baronage, says he did not succeed to the Earldom till 1st Jan., 1225, but this is clearly wrong, as in a case in Bracton's Note Book, in Hilary Term, 4th Henry III. (Jan. 1220) "the Earl of Gloucester" is recorded as present and giving evidence, whilst in the Pleas of the Crown for the County of Gloucester in 5th Hen. III. (1221) "Maitland, p. 78," it is noted that "the Earl of Gloucester asserts his right to hold courts in Tewkesbury, and also that he was present (p. 56).

NOTE B.—Ranulph, Earl of Chester, lived till 1232.

NOTE C.—William Longsword.

NOTE D.—This supplementary entry is so inexplicable that I cannot but attribute it to a mistake at the Exchequer. *Alvestan* is no where else accounted a Hundred, and of the three vills—Rockhampton, Winterbourne, and Frampton (Cotele) here included in it, the first and last were in Langley Hundred, and the second in Swynsheved (Rot. Hundredorum, 4th Edward I.) Neither of the last named Hundreds occur in the Return of the Caruage, but both were in existence at the time it was levied, for they were represented by juries at the Eyre of 1221. (*Vide* Pleas of the Crown for the County of Gloucester, 5th Henry III. Edit. F. W. Maitland).

NOTE E.—I cannot make this total tally with the figures as given in detail. If, besides deducting the number of ploughs for which the three Earls were liable, we deduct likewise the 45 for which John of Monmouth, as Keeper of the Forest of Dean, had to answer, there would remain not 1405, but 1406½, but to this ought, apparently, to be added the 20½ debited to the Hundred of Alveston. Perhaps, however, the tax for these had not been received by the Knights elected under the King's Writ (see ante) at the time they made their Return to the Exchequer. The sum total paid by them in money, £140 3s., was 7s. short of the tax on 1405 ploughs at 2s. each.

From this aggregate—before any attempt at comparison is instituted—should be deducted the ploughs on those manors which afterwards became ecclesiastical property, Almondsbury, Ashciworth, Cromhal (Abbots) and parts of Horfield, given to St Augustine's, Bristol, by Robert Fitz Harding, besides numerous smaller alienations made by the earlier tenants of Berkeley, such as Lorenge farm, Ozelworth, Calcote, &c., in favour of St. Peter's Gloucester, Kingswood Abbey, and other religious houses.

The deduction cannot be made with exactitude, for the ploughs of the 21 Berewicks are lumped together in the Survey, and we can only guess at the number in each of them from the hidage assigned to it as compared with the total hidage of all. Roughly estimated on this basis an allowance of 30 ploughs would seem to suffice, but even if we saw reason to double this number, the result of the comparison would still be startling, as instead of the 234 ploughs of Domesday which would remain, only 207 ploughs paid carucage in the year 1220-1.

The evidence thus presented of a considerable reduction in the number of ploughs in this single Hundred, is borne out, so far as we can judge, with regard to the entire county. According to the figures given by the Rev. C. S. Taylor in his interesting *Analysis of the Gloucestershire Domesday Survey*, there were 3909 ploughs belonging to the Lords, temporal and spiritual, and their tenants, at that date; and as the hidage of the lands of the former class is stated to have been in the ratio of about 10 to 9 to that of the latter the lay lords and their tenants, presumably, then owned 2060 teams. Instead of this we find them at the end of 135 years accounting for under 1860. It may be argued that the possessions of the church generally had been much augmented in that interval by gifts from the laity, and, further, that tillage had probably become more productive, but neither fact seems to me to explain so large a positive decline in the number of ploughs in face of the great increase which must necessarily have taken place in the population. This part of England it is true had suffered, especially in the civil wars of Stephen's reign, but it had for the latter half of the term been as little disturbed as any portion of the kingdom,

and the apparent contraction of agriculture therefore presents an anomaly worthy of closer investigation.

Apart from its value as throwing light on such questions, the Return, I may, in conclusion, point out, supplies the county historian with an early and authentic list of the names by which the various vills and manors had come to be known at the commencement of the thirteenth century, as well as of their relative importance in an agricultural point of view. As it seldom affords a clue to their tenants, it is, however, of little use for genealogical purposes.