

R. Brown
on line

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

Essex Archaeological Society.

VOL. XVII.

NEW SERIES.



COLCHESTER :

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY AT THE MUSEUM IN THE CASTLE.

1926.

Transcribed by:

Tom Doig
Wynnels

Little Cokenach
Nuthampstead

Royston

Hertfordshire SG8 8LD

for Hatfield Broad Oak WEA 2003

TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
ESSEX ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

PIGS AND PANNAGE.

A short chapter on mediæval stock-rearing
illustrated by some Essex Manorial Records.

BY REV. CANON F. W. GALPIN.

It is not my purpose on the present occasion to deal with the history of the wild boar in England or even to trace the relationship which may exist between that warlike animal and the *chef d'œuvre* of modern breeding, the Essex pig. Possibly under the outward gloss of *kultur* the blood of the wild still runs in its veins; but many centuries have elapsed since boar-hunting provided a thrilling pastime for Saxon thane and Norman king. For, notwithstanding the attempt made by Charles I. to restore the breed to the royal hunting grounds of the New Forest, and efforts, made by private enterprise in the last century, to popularize wild swine in Dorset, our moorlands and countryside are now fortunately freed from the depredations of so ferocious a creature, which could inspire even prehistoric man with terror.

I intend to deal with quite a homely subject—the domestic pig: for in most civilized and even in partially civilized countries, this animal, dependent upon man for its care and food as he was on it for his fat and bacon, existed side by side with the untamed denizen of the forest. The ancient Egyptians, for instance, maintained large herds of swine, especially in the region of the Delta, and, when the waters of the Nile subsided, they turned them on to the moist land in order to press the seed into the ground and so protect it from the birds. From the Homeric poems also we learn that the much-travelled Ulysses possessed a fine herd—600 sows and

360 hogs—well tended and housed by his faithful swineherd, Eumaeus. The keeping of pigs then is an office both ancient and honourable, and whether it were Roman, Saxon or Norman who held our country, the pigsty figured in the menage of the master's house. In fact so important was the feeding of swine under the manorial system that in the Domesday record the extent of the woodlands is generally reckoned according to the number of swine that could be maintained on the beech-mast and acorns which littered the ground in the winter months, this maintenance being commonly known as Pannage.

According to the *Rectitudines singularum personarum* (Rights and duties of particular persons) written about the year 1000, the care of the pigs was committed to two classes of swineherds, whose duty it also was to prepare the animals for human consumption. There was (1) the rent-paying swineherd. "He must give of his slaughter according to the custom of the estate. On many estates the custom is that he give every year 15 swine for sticking, 10 old and 5 young, and have himself what he needs beyond that. He must take care that he prepare and singe well the slaughtered swine. . . . He must have a horse for his lord's use." Then there was (2) the serf-swineherd who "keeps the in-herd" (*i.e.* the lord of the manor's herd). He was allowed a sucking pig from the sty and *interiora* when he had prepared bacon.

We have an instance of this pig-service amongst the tenures of the royal manor of Hatfield Regis (or Hatfield Broad Oak) in this county, and I take this, as I do other particulars, from the small but valuable collection of deeds now preserved under the care of the vicar and churchwardens in the church library of that parish: for this my thanks are due to them. Two farms on the manor provided swine-keepers, being held on the service of keeping the lord's pigs for the year, one in the forest, the other in the park at Bromesho where there was a small herd but no pannage. Each tenant was given a young pig at Michaelmas to go with the lord's pig till the following Easter: and when the pigs of which he had the care were killed for the larder, he had all their tails with three joints of the chine nearest the tail. During all the time of pannage he had half-bushel of corn every week from the lord.

In *Seneschaucie*—a description in Norman French of the various officers of a manor written in the thirteenth century—we have the following details of the office of Swineherd with some sage advice on profitable pig-keeping:

The Swineherd ought to be on those manors where swine can be sustained and kept in the forest or on moors or waste or in marshes without sustenance

from the Grange; and if the swine can be kept with little sustenance from the Grange during hard frost then must a pigsty¹ (*porcherie*) be made in a marsh or wood where the swine may be night and day. . . . And if there is no wood or marsh or waste where the swine may be sustained without being altogether kept on the Grange, no swineherd or swine shall be on the manor, except only such as can be kept in August on the stubble and leavings of the Grange; and when the corn is threshed for sale and as soon as they are in good condition and well, let them be sold. For whoever will keep swine for a year from the cost of the Grange alone and count the cost and the allowance for the swine and swineherd, together with the damage they do yearly to the corn, he shall lose twice as much as he shall gain, and this will soon be seen by whoever keeps account.

I quote from a translation made by Elizabeth Lamond for the Royal Historical Society's edition.

So much then for the swineherd's duties. But the general tenants of the manor had also the privilege of turning out their swine at the fall of the year into the forest and woodland, and it was this privilege which was originally known as Pannage,² although the term was afterwards applied to the practice as well. This privilege is frequently mentioned in old manorial records and highly valued, at least by landlords. In an extent of the manor of Havering, Essex (1306-7), we are informed that "all tenants in the said manor ought to pay pannage for all the swine which they have between the Feast of St. Michael (29 September) and the Feast of St. Martin (11 November), except those whom the king's charter protects, wheresoever they be within the manor: to wit, they owe a tenth part of the value of each pig which is worth more than 5*d.* whether there be acorns (*pesona*) or not, so nevertheless that for a pig worth more than 20*d.* the tenant shall give only 2*d.*" In the Glastonbury Costumal (*c.* 1250) it is stated that if the tenant of the manor of Burton (in Marnhull, Dorset), held under the abbot, have porkers, "he can sell them at will before the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (8 September), but, after that day, not at all unless he give

¹ The Homeric poems give us an interesting account of an early pigsty (*cf.* *Odyssey*, Book xiv., lines 5-20). It was a large enclosure surrounded by heavy stones upon which was placed a fence of thorny bush cuttings: outside, oak posts set in the ground close together afforded protection against wild beasts. Within there were twelve pens with fifty sows in each; the hogs slept outside the pens, guarded by the swineherd, who had a hut on an elevated position, from which with his five dogs, he could survey the herd. The mediæval pigsty was made in much the same way, posts with hurdles of reed, brushwood or wattle protecting the enclosure. At Faulkbourne, in this county, there is a long grassy field with a broad sheltered hollow in its length: at the lower end it is artificially terraced on either side, and at the bottom is marshy ground partially drained. An estate map of 1765 gives it the name by which it is still known, "The Butchery." As it lies between the Hall and the home farm, could it have been the site of the old manorial pigsty and "Butchery" a corruption of the Norman French *porcherie*?

² Various derivations have been given for the word: Spelman (*Glossarium Archaeologicum*, 1664) treats it as a Latinized form of "Pawns, a name given to the fruit of woodland trees and acorns": others connect it with the Latin *panis* (bread-food), but Webster's *Dictionary* (1911 Edition) is probably nearer the mark in stating that it represents the old French *pasnage*, low Latin *pasnadium* for *pastinaticum*, from *pastio*, a pasturing.

pannage to the lord." On the other hand there are frequent instances of tenants proceeding in Chancery for protection against breaches of manorial customs and the loss of pannage.

The fixing of the payment for this privilege and the settlement of place and time of pannage was termed "agisting,"¹ and for the royal demesnes in Essex Henry II. appointed four knights "to agist the forests and receive the king's pannage." The king's woods were to be "agisted" first, fifteen days before to fifteen days after Michaelmas. Fisher (*The Forest of Essex*) informs us that under the Forest Charter granted by King John and confirmed by Henry III. "every freeholder might agist his woods at his pleasure and have his pannage: he might freely drive his swine through the king's woods for the purpose of agisting them in his own woods or elsewhere,

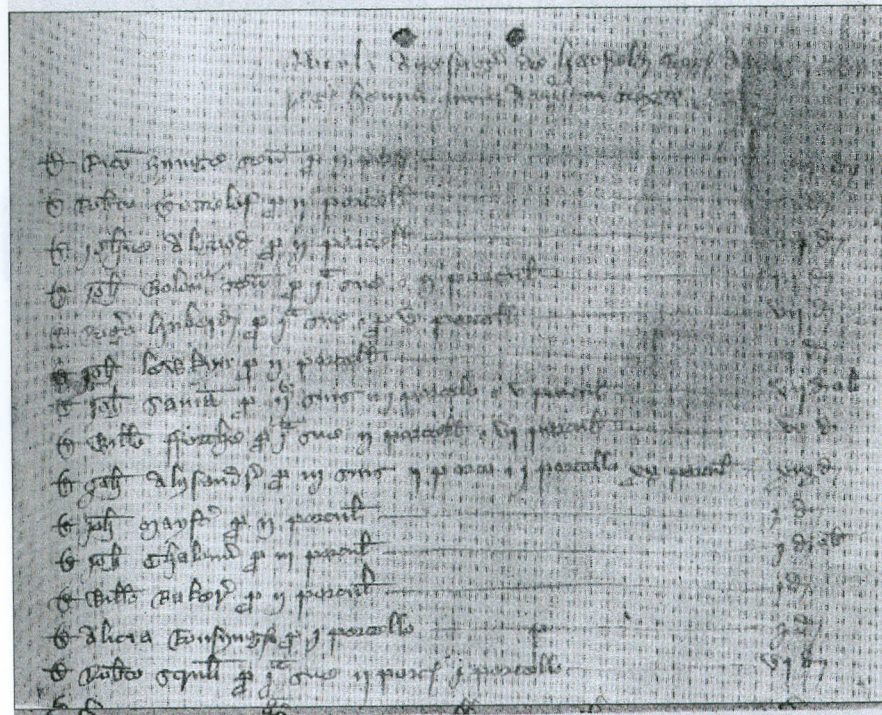


SEPTEMBER — AGISTING THE WOODS.
O.E. Calendar, eleventh century.

with liberty to tarry on the way in the Forest for a night." I think it is this scene which is depicted in an English calendar of the eleventh century (Brit. Mus., Cotton MS., Julius A vi., copied with slight alterations in Tiberius B v.), and not "the hunting of the wild boar," as commonly stated. The swine, as shown in the illustration, seem much more interested in the acorns than in the two men and the dogs close at their heels. Here, as I take it, we have the "agisting," and the two swineherds are driving the pigs to the pannage grounds. Such a herd was called "a dryft": if of wild swine "a sownder": if of boars "a singular."

¹ The primary meaning of the word seems to be 'to lie, to linger, or to stop at,' from the Norman French *agiser*, derived through the low Latin *jacitare*, from *jacere*.

The payment for pannage was termed "avesage,"¹ a word which seems to have escaped the notice of most lexicographers. Avesage rolls are rare, but manorial records of pannage courts are not so uncommon: and although I have carefully inspected the Fulham Avesage Rolls in the Public Record Office, I have not found one in so perfect a condition as that dated the sixth year of the reign of King Henry V. (1413), and now preserved at Hatfield Broad Oak. On both sides of a thick skin (2 feet 9½ inches long by 7½ inches wide) are written the names of the tenants of the royal manor who



AN AVESAGE ROLL — 1413 A.D.
(Hatfield Broad Oak Church Library).

were entitled to turn their pigs into Hatfield forest to feed on the acorns, there to be found in plenty. The vellum is unusually well

¹ It is, I believe, derived through a low Latin word *avesagium*, from *avesare*, itself a corrupt variant of the Latin *adverare*, meaning to value or tax, just as *avesatio* stands for *adveratio*, the actual taxing made. Carpentier (*Glossarium Novum*, 1766) gives the meaning as "aestimare," and instances such phrases as "*avesationes honorum*," "*pro adverando seu taxando eadem*." It must not be confused with the commoner word 'average' (*averagium*), which means service or a composition for service due to the lord of the manor from his tenant.

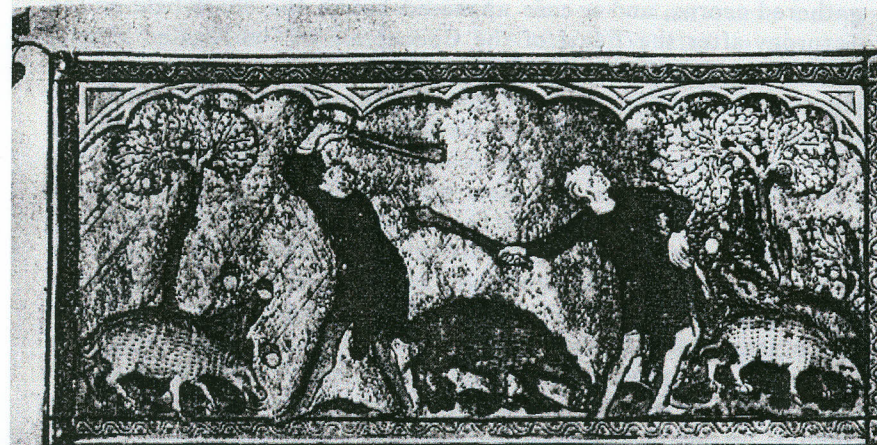
preserved, of a dull fawn colour when closed, but its surface white within, a few stains, and the black ink practically unfaded. On the back of the roll is inscribed in faded writing "VI. H. 5," and below in a seventeenth century hand, "Rolls of the first seaven yeares of Henry the fiftie," as if, at one time, it belonged to a series. The accompanying reproduction of the heading and opening entries will give an idea of its arrangement and contents (see illustration). It begins as follows, and I have inserted a translation of the original Latin where necessary:—

Rotula Avesagii de Hatfield Regis anno regni Regis Henrici quinti a Conquestu sexto [a roll of the Avesage of Hatfield Regis in the sixth year of the reign of King Henry, the fifth from the Conquest].

De Richardo Zyngre seniore pro ii porcis (<i>for two swine</i>)	-	-	iiid
De Roberto Turtelof pro ii porcellis (<i>for two pigs</i>)	-	-	iiid
De Johanne Algood pro ii porcellis	-	-	iiid
De Johanne Bolonia seniore pro i sue (<i>sow</i>) et ii porculis (<i>porklings</i>)	-	iiid	iiid
De Rogero Lynberd pro i sue et pro v porcellis	-	-	viiid
De Johanne Lewkyn pro ii porcellis	-	-	iiid
De Johanne Saman pro ii suibus i porcello et v porculis	-	viiid.	ob.
De William Forthe pro i sue ii porcellis et vi porculis	-	-	viiid
De Johanne Alysandre pro iii suibus, i porco et i porcello, xx porculis	xixd		
(et alii)			

There are in all 138 names; some of them are those of women, as Margaret Grubbe, Alicia West, Johanna Attewoode, Isabella Pekele and Agnes Mott; whilst, of the others, some names such as Cook, Sparwe (Sparrow), Speller, are still known in the district, and Crabbe and Ongar are commemorated in farm holdings. The payments, for reasons given below, vary from an obol ($\frac{1}{2}d.$) to 2s. 1d., the total amounts to 3*l.* 11*s.* 1*d.*, which is equal to over 50*l.* in present currency.

The scale of payment was fixed according to the age and description of the animal. In a metrical Latin-English vocabulary of the fifteenth century (Harl. MS., 1002) we find the pig-race divided and catalogued as follows: *aper*, a bore; *porcellus*, a pig; *porcus*, a swyne; *sus*, a sow; *scropha*, a gelte; *suilla*, a sow pyg. The term gelt or gilt is still employed for a pig not used for breeding. Another vocabulary of the same century (Reg. MS., 17) gives us: *porca*, a sowe; *porcus*, a swyne; *porcellus*, a gryse; *aper*, a bore. Gryse or grice for a young pig is a word of Scandinavian origin now rarely found in our country. In the Cliffe Court Rolls of the thirteenth and fourteenth century (24 Ed. I., and 1 Ed. II.), in the Public Record Office, the Pannage Rolls mention only swine (*porcus*), though some are rated at 1*d.*, others 1*½d.* each. In a late fourteenth century Avesage Roll of the manor of Fulham (8-10 Richard II.), which manor included Hammersmith, Finchley,



NOVEMBER — THE PANNAGE.



DECEMBER — THE PIG.

From Queen Mary's Psalter (Royal MS., 2 B, VIII)

The pannage rights, too, were invaded by trespassers who gathered acorns, and a case appeared before the court held on the Saturday after the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, 1452, when John Bedwell, of Great Hallingbury, was charged with entering the forest and in the time of pannage collecting and carrying off a great quantity of acorns (*quam plures glandes*)—he did not spare himself—to the serious loss of those who had agreed for pannage. Stray pigs were also offenders, and the attraction of such a forest as that at Hatfield must have been very strong, especially to the young. A minute of the court held on the Saturday next after the Feast of St. Hilary (1466) deals with a little boar (*aperculus*) who, coming from outside (*de extraheniis*), had for a whole year feasted himself in the lord's demesne, and although he had been proclaimed both in the market place as well as in the church (*tam in foro quam in ecclesia*) according to the custom of the country, no one had claimed the waif, and so he was handed over to the lord of the manor, the value being 16s.

Sometimes the pannage fees were commuted and paid in kind. Nicolas of Stortford, the holder of a house and some land, if he had two pigs, had to give them for avesage: "if he has one, he shall buy another of the same size and give them for avesage: but unless he has pigs, he shall not be called upon to give by this custom," which was certainly considerate but not unexpected. Practically everyone in the manor—except Sir Nicolas de Barenton (the king's forester) and his tenants, and the tenants of the prior of Hatfield, whose lands were held by gift to the church—who should at any time between Michaelmas and Martinmas keep pigs was liable to pannage charges: namely, if they had ten pigs of one size they were to give the tenth, being the best but two: but if not of one size they were to pay pannage for each according to custom: if one pig, nothing: if two, nothing: if three, according to their age. From the accounts of the steward of the priory for the year 1326 we learn that the prior tithed the pannage of the manor and received from the Earl of Hereford, the then lord, 8s. at Martinmas.

Before leaving the description of this interesting Avesage Roll, I must draw attention to a sidelight which is thrown upon another curious custom of the manor by an entry made upon it. After the list of the first fifty names are inserted the words "*Stanstrete v vomeres*." Adjoining the north side of the forest runs the old Roman road called the Stane Street, and along this highway there were already settlers: although they did not live in the manor of Hatfield, they were nevertheless allowed to turn their pigs into the forest for pannage on condition that they paid avesage and gave to

the lord of the manor five ploughshares (*vomeres*) annually: hence the memorandum of the woodward. In an extent taken before Sir Humphrey de Walden and Sir Nicholas de Weston in the year 1328 (now in the library at Hatfield), twelve men, living at Stane-street, near the forest of Hatfield, but in the parish of Takeley, claimed a right of common for their cattle in the forest of Hatfield, paying a certain rent at Martinmas, *viz.* two parts of five ploughshares, each ploughshare valued at 1s.

Though the swine were driven into the woodlands in September, the principal month for fattening them seems to have been November: for many of the old English picture calendars illustrate the chief duties of this month by a woodland scene with miniature oak trees, which serfs are belabouring with large cudgels while hungry pigs are catching remarkably fine acorns in their open mouths. The November illustration herewith reproduced by the kind permission of the Director of the British Museum, is from the so-called Queen Mary's Psalter, being English work of the early fourteenth century (Royal MS., 2 B, VIII.), while that for December completes the scene and carries us on to the end of the tale. In a Shepherd's Calendar, entitled *Le Compost et Calendrier des bergers*, published at Paris, 1499 (Brit. Mus., I B, 39718), the month of November provides us with a view of the whole process from acorn to bacon—the swineherd being helped by his wife, whilst an assistant is coming out of the house with a flaming straw wisp to well-sing the bristles! *Sic transit gloria!*