

## **ANSTEY, HORMEDE, MEESDEN, PELHAM & WYDDIAL IN THE DOMESDAY BOOK 1086 by Christine E. Jackson 1986**

### **Acknowledgements**

I am pleased to acknowledge the help of the staff of the County Archive Department and the Local Studies Department of the County Library, and Mr Peter Barratt's assistance in the preparation and production of this pamphlet.

### **THE DOMESDAY BOOK 1086**

Nine hundred years ago, King William of England and Duke of Normandy issued an order to his officials to survey the whole of his English kingdom to find out the full extent of his possessions. This was after a meeting held over Christmas 1085 at Gloucester when William had 'held very deep speech with his council about this land – how it was peopled, and with what sort of men.' The result was a written description of the lands of every shire and the property of every 'magnate in fields, manors and men – whether slaves or free men, cottagers or farmers, in plough teams horses and other stock, in services or rents.' William was attempting to find out how much land each man owned, how productive it was (and therefore how taxable) and how it was administered. He did not demand that a census be taken, so we can only estimate the number of people present.

William had conquered England 20 years before and by 1086 had supplanted most of the Anglo-Saxon landowners by his own French followers. He had tried to integrate the Englishmen, but some had rebelled and been removed, some had fled, and many had died. By 1086 there were few of them left. However, both French and English were made to co-operate in the compilation of the Domesday Book which was a remarkable organisational feat for its time. It was also to become a matchless basic record for historians, coming so early in our civilised history.

King William was very thorough and fair over the compilation of the Domesday book. Commissioners were appointed and took evidence, on oath, from the Sheriff of each shire, from all the earls and their Frenchmen, also from the 'whole Hundred, the priests, reeves and six villagers from each vill.' As a check, four Frenchmen and four Englishmen from each Hundred were sworn to verify the detail. Among the four Englishmen verifying the details for Edwinstree Hundred (in which the villages of Anstey, Meesden, the Pelhams, the Hormeads and Wyddial are situated) were Godwin and Siward of Hormead. Each shire was divided into groups of villages in regions called Hundreds, and within the hundred into demesnes i.e. estates held by landlords, and parcels of land held by other freemen. The tenants-in-chief were the demesne owners and the freemen who paid taxes direct to the king. Their sub-tenants paid their dues to the owners of the land.

When all the information had been collected, it was taken to Winchester to be collated. A second group of commissioners was sent 'to shires they did not know, where they themselves were unknown, to check their predecessor's survey and report culprits to the King.' The records were then copied into two volumes, now preserved at the Public Record Office. The whole operation was carried out in less than twelve months.

The Hertfordshire entries are contained in Book 1, the twelfth shire, folios 132-142. First came the Borough of Hertford, then a list of the landholders in order of precedence (King William, The Archbishop of Canterbury, other bishops, abbots, canons, Counts, then commoners) followed by the land they held grouped according to Hundred under their names. Anyone with a knowledge of Latin could soon learn to decipher the entries. Interpreting them however, is quite another matter.

### **The Questions asked by the Inquisitors**

We know exactly what questions the inquisitors were instructed to ask for they were set out in *Inquisitio Eliensis*, in the first paragraph. They were:

- The name of the place.
- Who held it before 1066, and now?
- How many hides?
- How many ploughs, both those in lordship and the men's?
- How many villagers, cottagers and slaves, how many free man and Freeman?
- How much woodland, meadow and pasture? How many mills and fishponds?
- How much has been added or taken away?
- What the total value was and is?
- How much each free man or Freeman had or has?
- All threefold, before 1066, when King William gave it, and now; and if more be had than at present?

One of the entries from the Domesday Book (in translation) for Hormede shows the layout of the entries giving the answers to these questions:

In Hormede 2 Englishmen hold 3 hides and 1 virgate from the Count Land for 3½ ploughs. In lordship 2. A priest with 2 cottars has 1½ ploughs. Meadow for 1 plough; woodland, 12 pigs. Total value £3; when acquired £4; at the time of King Edward 100s Wulfard, Asgar the Constable's man, held this manor; he could sell.

The Name of the Manor and who held it (a) at the time of King Edward and (b) who holds it now in 1086.

The demesne was a house and its land against which geld was charged. Geld was a land tax – so much per hide. The lord of the demesne paid the geld and his tenants contributed their share. The manor in the Domesday Book equated roughly to the old Anglo-Saxon heafod botl, the principal dwelling or the chief's residence, and the lands surrounding it from which he derived provisions, services and money.

The Normans had taken over many of the estates of the leading English families who had acquired land in several shires. The names of the dispossessed English are recorded in the Domesday Book as well as contentious claims by others. In the Hormead example above, Count Eustace of Boulogne had been given this manor at the expense of Asgar the constable who had owned it prior to 1066.

In every shire (and the counties or shires remained almost the same from the time of the Domesday Book until the reorganisation of 1974) the King owned a number of manors. A fact not indicated in the Domesday Book was that the King was also

currently enjoying the revenues from Archbishop Stigand's lands after the Archbishop had been desposed in 1070 (see Hormead, Langeport and Meesden). Besides the King, the Domesday Book names about 200 tenants in chief and a large number of sub-tenants. Among these were a few Englishmen, often royal officials, who had been allowed to retain some of their former properties (see Hormead).

In 1086 neither the Hormeads nor the Pelhams were divided into the smaller, separately named units or villages we know today, though there were several distinct demesnes in each. Langeport is a place later to be re-named Hare Street and Ichetone was later identified as a manor in Layston with adjacent lands and estates. Alswick, Beauchamps and Stonebury were separate demesnes and not parts of Layston, Wyddial and Little Hormead respectively. Indeed, they were small villis at the time of the Domesday Book and only shrunk at a later date to become single small estates as we know them.

### **The size of the Lord's Demesnes**

The size of the demesne was measured in hides and virgates. The hide in Cambridgeshire and other eastern counties, including Hertfordshire, equals 120 acres where each of the 120 units known as "acres" represented a forenoon's ploughing. The four quarters of the hide, called virgates were later to become the area of land regarded as adequate to support the medieval villein. Most of the units that we now call villages consisted of 5 hides (a modest village of 600 acres) or 10 hides (a large village of 1200 acres). The 10¼ hides of Hormede made up a large village that was divided into three units of 3¼ hides, later to be known as Little Hormead; ¼ hide and 6¾ hides, later to become known as Great Hormead. It is evident from the discrepancy in the acreage, however, that these are only approximations of the area of what was later to become Little and Great Hormead, also that a great deal more wasteland and woodland was incorporated and enclosed over the following centuries. With the passage of time, due to buying and selling of land, the manor boundaries altered, making it a futile task to define them now or to attempt to equate those of modern times with those obtaining in 1086.

Some comparisons may be made from the following table between the size of the places in our district in 1086.

Place	Hides	Acres
Alswick	6	720
Anstey	5½	660
Beauchamps	2	240
Hormead	10¼	1230
Langeport	¾	90
Layston	Nearly 3	362
Meesden	1	120
Pelham	11	1320
Stonebury	1½	180
Wyddial	5½	660

The Inquisitors also asked about the value of the land in King Edward's time, when the new owner acquired it post-1066 and now in 1086. After the Battle of Hastings,

William had swept across the country devastating any area whose inhabitants opposed his army. Hertfordshire suffered from this passage in the west of the county and from the effects of uprisings both then and later over most of the county. In consequence, the value of the land in 1086 was below that of 1066. There was further upheaval when William gave the land to new owners, often Normans unacquainted with the terrain and methods of working the land here. In our district, with the exception of one or two very small parcels of land that remained constant in value, the value dropped quite significantly between that of 1066 and when it was assessed in 1086. In this area, agriculturally, the Conquest had been a decided setback.

How many ploughs are in the demesne, and how many held by the tenants?

There were plough-teams of 8 oxen at the manor and tenants also owned either a plough-team, or an oxen or two that they could contribute towards a full plough-team. It is obvious some sharing and borrowing occurred - ½ ploughteams were noted in the Domesday Book and sometimes a ploughteam was said to “be possible”, i.e. it could be made up. However, there were some estates where the ploughteam was “not there”, and there was a general lack of them in many areas.

Shortage of oxen was due either to conflict in the area, or disease among the cattle. Cattle plague between 1066 and 1086 is known to have affected the number of ploughs through the death of the oxen that drew them in both Essex and Hertfordshire. Armies killed oxen for food or took animals in raids and reprisals for rebellion on the part of the villagers. There are clear signs that the Hormeads men resisted the take-over by the Normans. There had been trouble with Count Eustace’s men “as the Hundred testifies” according to two of the Hormede Domesday Book entries. There was still conflict and argument over the Pelham estates where the Bishop of London’s sub-tenants are significantly called “men-at-arms” for they were holding the Bishop’s 36 hides in Herts against another claimant, the Abbot of Ely. (This is also a reminder that the high-ranking clergy were great landowners who did not hesitate to commit their armed tenants to defend their lands).

The emphasis on ploughteams is interesting because they gave us so many of our measurements of land. Forty statute rods long = 220 yards or a furlong (i.e. furrow-length) which was supposed to represent the distance an 8-oxen team could be expected to pull a plough without pausing for a rest. The measurement of four rods, i.e. 22 yards, became the English chain. An area 220 yards long x 22 yards wide is 4840 square yards, or one acre – regarded as a good day’s ploughing for the ox-team.

How much wood, meadow and pasture was present; how many mills, fisheries, animals were present?

These questions were designed to record the type of land, and the manor appurtenances. Sadly, when the returns were collated at Winchester, some editing was done. The number of animals was deleted by the scribes in the first volume (including Hertfordshire): though volume 2, confined to Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk recorded the number of animals present. It would have been useful to know how many cattle, horses (The Domesday Book called them ‘cobs’), sheep and goats were present.

Woodland was of prime importance for it provided the timber for house construction, the building of barns, and making of fences. It also gave the villagers fuel for their heating and cooking, as well as pasturage for their swine. An indication of the amount of woodland available to provide acorns and beech-nuts to fatten the pigs is given in terms of how many pigs could be turned into the woods in autumn. At this period, pigs were usually in the woods from 29 August until the new year. The woods at Meesden could support as many as 400 pigs, while Wyddial only had woodland sufficient for fences.

The amount of “pasture for livestock” is never elaborated in our Domesday Book entries and one can only assume there was sufficient for the needs of the small number of cattle present. Only the minimum number would be over-wintered for all those in excess of their estimated winter fodder available were killed off and salted down in the autumn.

“Meadow for one plough” is an indication of the area according to the number of teams of eight oxen the meadowland was capable of feeding with hay. Most of the demesnes in this district appear to be short of hay for their number of ploughteams.

All the cereal grown had to be milled at the lord of the manor’s watermill. There were to be no windmills for another century or more after the Domesday Book, which makes it all the more curious that the only mill in our district was at Beauchamps. No fisheries are mentioned.

The People: How many villeins, cottars, slaves and freemen live in the demesne?

These were the different social groups of Norman society, imposed on the Anglo-Saxon society of a very similar structure. The old, pre-1066 society was comprised of the King (Edward the Confessor who died in January 1066); thanes or earls, the baronial class who were freemen and landowners; a lower group of freemen called churls; and slaves. These became King William, Duke of Normandy; the nobles, counts and earls and clerical magnates; freemen and sokemen, also villeins, cottars and bordars; and slaves, of the Normans.

### **Anglo-Saxon Society**

King Edward was head of a united England in 1066. His death triggered off the series of events during that year leading up to the conquest of England in the autumn by William, Duke of Normandy. Edward (King from 1042-66) was the son of Ethelred II and his Norman wife Emma. He had lived at the Norman court during the Danish rule of England from 1016 until 1042. In 1045 he married Edith, daughter of the over-powerful Earl Godwin who dominated English affairs during Edward’s reign. Edward’s Norman upbringing resulted in many Normans holding key positions in England during the 20 years of his reign prior to the Conquest. Edward was not a strong king politically, his chief interest and greatest achievement being the building of his abbey church at Westminster where he was buried on 5 January 1066 a few days after the consecration of the abbey.

The throne of England would have passed to his great-nephew Edgar the Aethling but for the unstable state in which Edward had left the country. The day after his funeral,

without waiting for the lords from the north, the lords and prelates of the Wessex witan, or council, met in the Godwin stronghold of London and, ignoring all other claimants to the throne, elected Harold, the son of Earl Godwin and the Earl of Wessex as their new King.

The Saxon kings had personally owned large tracts of land in many shires and Edward had owned land in Hertfordshire, some of it being in Layston (q.v. under Domesday entries).

Among the Earls of Edward's reign, three are of importance as landowners in our district. Two were the sons of Earl Godwin, and thus brothers of Edward's own Queen Edith. Harold, Earl of Wessex, to be crowned King in 1066 and killed at the Battle of Hastings, was Godwin's eldest son. The fourth son, Gyrth was created Earl of East Anglia in 1057 at which date the shires of Essex, Hertfordshire, Middlesex and Buckinghamshire were separated from this earldom for Leofwine, Gyrth's youngest brother. After this move, Harold and his brothers Gyrth and Leofwine, along with another brother called Tostig, controlled the whole of England except northern Mercia. All (except Tostig who was killed in September 1066) fought at the Battle of Hastings in October where Gyrth and Leofwine fell before Harold, leaving the English host leaderless. When they died, their land in Layston and Anstey (Harold's) and at Alswick (Gyrth's) was given by the Conqueror to Frenchmen.

The third Earl of interest to us was Algar or Aelfgar the son of Earl Leofric of Mercia (who died in the autumn of 1057). He was the Earl of East Anglia from 1051-2, 1053-7 but was outlawed by the witan on a charge of treason – never described and apparently unfounded for he was acquitted. Algar then went to Ireland and raised a force of 18 ships' companies among the vikings of the east coast and invaded Wales and England, burning Hereford town en route.

Earl Harold called out the militia of all England and with the compelled Algar to withdraw. There was no decisive battle so a truce was called and Algar had all his lands and his earldom restored to him. In 1057 his father died and he inherited the Earldom of Mercia and vacated the Earldom of East Anglia. This last Earldom was given instead of Gyrth (see above) though the four counties surrounding Herts were cut off from this Earldom and added to Kent and Surrey instead. In 1058 Algar was involved in a great invasion from Norway, but was again pardoned when it failed, and kept his lands. Having led a charmed life, he died in 1062 when his eldest son Edwin inherited the Earldom of Mercia. Earl Algar had owned a lot of land in Essex and Hertfordshire, including Anstey and Wyddial, but all his lands were confiscated and re-distributed in 1066.

The other important Saxon in our area was a Prince. Edgar the Aethling held land both before and after the Conquest, but forfeited his lands to William following a later rebellion, only to be allowed to retain 8 hides in Barkway and Hormead, created out of several estates of small-holders after 1066. Following the defeat of Harold in October 1066, the English earls not present at Hastings decided that London could still be held against William. They elected Edgar (the last male heir of Edmund the Ironside who had reigned briefly in 1016) as their new King. Edgar the Aethling's men offered William no resistance between Hastings and the southern approach to London, but they held London Bridge against him. William recognised that he could

not storm the bridge, so he circled London, laying waste a broad belt of land across Surrey, north Hampshire and Berkshire as he progressed to Wallingford. His speed surprised the English, and Archbishop Stigand, the leading member of Edgar's forces, defected and swore fealty to William at Wallingford. William proceeded along the line of Icknield Way to Berkhamstead where the English opposition collapsed. A meeting there with Edgar the Aethling and many of his followers resulted in their swearing an oath of fealty to William. On Christmas Day 1066 William was crowned King of England in Westminster Abbey. He then attached Edgar to his train of followers, to keep a close watch on him.

William was so far in advance of controlling England within six months after his victory at Hastings, that he could return to Normandy. He divided responsibility for the government of England between his seneschal William fitz Osbern (whom he created Earl of Hereford) and his half brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (whom he made Earl of Kent). William then departed for Normandy. Edgar the Aethling was prominent in the series of rebellions that followed William's departure. By the summer of 1067 the rebellions had been suppressed by the Normans with the help of many Englishmen, who thereby lost for the native aristocracy all that remained of its position and influence. Edgar continued to make trouble for William, in Scotland and then in France where he threatened to launch attacks on Normandy. William had to come to terms with him. Though he had been given great lands by William, he forfeited many and only retained this small portion in Hertfordshire after 1067. He held the largest demesne in Hornead. It would be while he was in disgrace that Ilbert the Sheriff placed the seven freemen, plus Wulfwin and Alnod in this manor.

The Anglo-Saxon reeve (or Sheriff of post-conquest documents) was appointed by the king and responsible to him alone for the administration of local finance, the execution of justice and the maintenance of the customs by which the shire was governed. In some shires he farmed the king's demesnes (see Stonebury) for a round sum to be rendered each year. He was expected to maintain the assessment of his shire to public taxes such as the Danegeld.

### **Thanes and Churls**

The upper group of noblemen, variously called earls and thanes, and the lower group of common freemen or churls, had rights and obligations in common. They were liable to taxation and church dues; they could be called upon for military service and had the duty of attendance at legal assemblies. In return, they had privileges of owning land, freedom to move from one part of the country to another, and a fixed measure of protection from the law. The difference between thanes and churls was mainly one of wealth.

A wealthy thane was a man who owned a church and a kitchen, a bell-house, a fortified dwelling-place and an estate of five hides of land. Another type of thane was one who held land of a prelate or earl, e.g. Alnod or Alnoth who held land in Graveley and Box and farmed 180 acres in Hornead for Archbishop Stigand of Canterbury. Thane landholders could not sell the land they occupied for their units were often created out of the earl's demesne land. They owed services of differing character to the earl. Military service was one consequence of the rank of thane. In Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire this took the form of carriage for the King and

Sheriff and providing a guard for the King. The thane would receive a personal summons from the King, and if he disobeyed would forfeit his lands. When the earls rebelled and called out their thanes and the King sent a summons to those same thanes, their position cannot have been enviable.

In East Anglian Saxon society there was a further category of freemen called sokemen who were liable to attend court and serve its lords. Economically speaking, freemen and sokemen were on a par, but socially the sokemen appear to have been inferior. After 1066 the sokemen were the worst affected group of Saxons, suffering a reduction both in status and number. In Hertfordshire, in 1066 there had been 250 sokemen but by 1086 there were only 43. In Horstead, Stonebury and Wyddial they were the worst affected group by the post-1066 changes.

Beneath these freemen were the slaves, for Anglo-Saxon England was a slave-state. In civil law the slave was a piece of property and a working machine to be bought and sold on the same sort of terms as a horse. His freedom could be bought and he could own property and money, but in general it is assumed he was penniless. He had some privileges at the hands of his lord, e.g. a herdsman slave was to be given a young pig to keep in a sty, and such dues as corn and carcasses of sheep and a cow for food, and the right of cutting wood according to the custom of the estate. There were three ways in which a slave could obtain his freedom: he could run away, but this was dangerous as punishable by death if caught; he could be manumitted as an act of grace, e.g. in a will; he either could buy his freedom, or a relative purchase it for him.

### **Norman Society**

William Duke of Normandy became king by conquest in 1066 and proceeded to impose the Norman hierarchy on English society. At first, he hoped to integrate the English aristocracy with Norman appointments but by 1086 this policy had failed and most of the great landowners and key position holders were Normans.

William replaced the English aristocracy with Norman and French lay and church nobles. They were the immediate tenants of the king as recorded in the Domesday Book. The landowners, given about half the land of England, number only eleven men, among them names appearing in Hertfordshire's Domesday Book entries such as Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent; Eustace, count or earl of Bolougne; Count Alan the Red of Brittany; Geoffrey de Mandeville in the Bessin. Their 'honours' or holdings of land were widely scattered in the different counties. Large and scattered estates had been the pattern of Anglo-Saxon times and were wisely retained by William so that no earl could form such a stronghold in one place as to challenge his authority.

By 1087 Normans of the baronial class were also in office in all parts of the country as keepers of royal castles and as sheriffs. Among the sheriffs of Hertfordshire were Ilbert de Laci, followed by Geoffrey de Bec, then by 1086 Peter de Valognes; while Geoffrey de Mandeville was sheriff of London & Middlesex. The sheriff was the king's chief executive agent in every branch of local government. He ranked as the king's reeve and was charged with the collection of the payments due by custom to the king from his shire. He had the custody of many of the ancient demesnes of the crown within his district. The military dues of the typical Anglo-Norman sheriff were

confined to summoning and command of the local militia. Most of his specific functions had belonged to his pre-1066 predecessor (see page ??????). The financial perquisites of a sheriffdom were enough to attract the richest barons and some sheriffs were unscrupulous in the use of their power. The Domesday Book gives evidence of this in Ilbert's activities in Hornead (c) and Peter de Valognes' in Stonebury. The Sheriffs were intensely disliked and the Abbot of Ely (a Norman intruder himself) described the Cambridge sheriff as a "hungry lion, a roaring wolf, a crafty fox, a filthy pig, a shameless dog" (all on the same day too!) for his rapacious stealing of abbey lands.

Beneath the nobles and household officers were the freemen called sokemen and villeins; the partially freemen the bordars and cottars, then the slaves. The freemen were few in number in this district compared with their numbers pre-1066. They held their land as an independent unit, paying a geld for it to the lord (in Hornead (c) the lord was the king). They held a judicial soke-right of the lord over the men of the unit.

The villeins were freemen who held as much as a hide of land, more often only a virgate, for which they paid rent in cash or service. They comprised 40% of the groups named in the Domesday Book in Hertfordshire. Mostly, they were Normans. They sometimes also farmed some of the lord of the demesne's land and owed certain dues to that lord, e.g. guard and escort duties and a specified time to be spent reaping and mowing his land in harvest time. They also furnished a pig as pasture-rent.

A villein owned one yolk of oxen and could turn out onto open pasture and waste land a number of beasts proportionate to his land holding. For this privilege, and that of using a strip of meadow to grow his hay, he paid the lord a due known as pannage. If he had swine and they fed in the lord's woodland, he paid pannage for them too. The lord claimed a third of the pigs that had put on back fat to the thickness of three fingers; a quarter of those with back fat of two fingers' thickness; and one-fifth of those with back fat of a thumb-thickness. Today, after fattening, we still measure pigs' back fat, though it is done electronically now.

The villein was roughly the equivalent of the Danish sokeman of Anglo-Saxon days, though in East Anglia the sokeman had a slightly higher status than the villein.

Bordars formed about 25% and Cottars 19% of the groups in the Domesday Book Herts. It is hard to distinguish between these two categories. They were both free men except for Mondays when they had to work on the lord's land and also on three days a week during August or whenever harvest fell. During harvest days they were expected to reap 1½ acres a day and in return received a sheaf of oats or corn.

Bordars were a step lower than villeins in the social scale, and rarely held more than five acres (a 'smallholding') of land themselves but most had fewer acres and the average seems to have been about one acre – just enough to support himself and his family. Cottars inhabited a cote, often without any land. Few bordars or cottars owned oxen, and those who did shared them with others to make up ploughteams. They both had the right to pasture a limited number of livestock on the common and too turn a few pigs into the wood to forage.

The priest was not given a name in the Domesday Book but his presence was noted. There was a priest at Anstey, Hormede, Meesden and Wyddial. They evidently all owned oxen that they contributed with other villagers' oxen to form an ox ploughteam. Evidently, they were expected to work their passage on the land as well as performing their clerical duties. The priest was linked to the villeins in status. Not all the manors or vills had churches but the presence of a priest implies that there was a church present. At this date, the church would be within the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. Our local Norman churches were built at a later date, so any Domesday Book churches would be Saxon buildings.

The slave was the chattel of his master and valued at approximately 20 shillings per man. His wife and daughters were ancillae – females not recorded in the Domesday Book. Occasionally a slave owned a plough acre of his own and could farm it himself in his free time and eventually accrue sufficient income from it to buy more land. He cultivated corn and had a couple of sheep and a cow which the law stated he should receive as his annual provision. He also received a food allowance at major religious festivals. The number of slaves declined after 1086, though not for altruistic reasons, but because they were expensive to keep and paid no taxes. When made free men they became liable to taxes to the state and dues to both the lord and the church.

## **DOMESDAY BOOK ENTRIES**

I have expanded the entries in John Morris' Domesday Book: Hertfordshire published in 1976 by Phillimore and acknowledge this source. For all the Normans and Saxons named in the entries see the Who's Who.

### **ALSWICK**

(Alsiewiche of DB gave its name to Alswick Hall, Layston). Ralph Baynard holds Alswick and William from him. It answers for 6 hides. There is land for 7 ploughs; in the demesne there are 2; a third is possible 4 villeins have 3 ploughs with a fourth possible. 11 cottars 7 slaves There is meadow for 1 plough; pasture for the livestock; woodland for 10 pigs. Total value now £7; when acquired 100 shillings; before 1066, £8. Aelmer, Early Gryth's men held this manor; he could sell it.

### **ANSTEY**

(Anestei of DB). Count Eastace holds Anstey himself. It answers for 5 hides. There is land for 10 ploughs, in the demesne there are 3 hides and 2 ploughs are there with a third possible. 8 villeins with a priest and 6 bordars have 5 ploughs with a further 2 possible. 5 cottars 6 slaves. There is meadow for ½ plough; pasture for the livestock; woodland for 50 pigs. The total value is and was £14; before 1066, £15. Alfward, a than of Earl Harold's, held this manor; he could sell.

In Anstey Payne holds ½ hide from Hardwin de Scales. There is land for 1½ ploughs; they are there with 4 bordars, 2 cottars and 1 slave. There is meadow for ½ plough; pasture for the livestock; woodland for 12 pigs. The total value of this land 20/-; when acquired 10/-; before 1066, 20/- Alfward, Earl Agar's man, held it; he could sell.

(Note: Anstey was split between two owners in 1066 and farmed by the Saxon Alfward. After 1066 it remained in two demesnes – a large manor and a smaller estate of 60 acres).

### **BEAUCHAMPS**

(Affledwick of DB meaning a (dairy) farm of a woman named Affled. By 1303 this manor came into the ownership of the Beauchamp family). In Beauchamps Rumold holds two hides from Count Eustace. There is land for 2 ploughs which are there. 7 bordars 2 slaves. 1 mill with an annual value of 2/-; meadow for 2 oxen; pasture for the livestock; woodland for 20 pigs Value 30/-; when acquired 40/-; before 1066 as much.

Godith, Asgar's man held this land; she could sell.

### **HORMEDE**

(authorities believe the first demesne to represent Little Hormead, the other two Much or Great Hormead).

(a) In Hormede 2 Englishmen hold 3 hides and 1 virgate from Count Eustace.

There is land for three ploughs and a half. There are two ploughs in the demesne; a priest with 2 cottars have one plough and a half. There is meadow for one plough; woodland for 12 pigs. The value is £3; when acquired £4; before 1066, 100/-. Wulfward, Asgar the Constable's man, held this manor; he could sell.

(b) In Hormede William holds 1 virgate from Ralph Baynard. There is land for ½ plough, but it is not there. There is wood sufficient for fences. The value is and always was 5/-. Wulfward, Asgar the Constable's man, held this land.

Count Eustace's men claim this land; they had been in possession of it for two years after the Count came to this Honour himself, as the men of the Hundred testify.

(Note: An 'Honour' was the sum total of land and property wherever it lay. The name of the honour was taken from the main house, or castle, forming the centre for the holder of that honour – in this case Boulogne. See under EUSTACE).

(c) Godwin holds Hormede of Prince Edgar. It answers for 6 hides and 3 virgates. There is land for ten ploughs. There are four in the demesne and a fifth may be made. 6 villeins with 15 bordars have 5 ploughs there. 2 cottars and 6 slaves. There is meadow for 1 plough; pasture for livestock; woodland for 24 pigs. It is worth £8; when acquired £6; in King Edward's time £12. Of this manor Alnod a thane of Archbishop Stigand's held one hide and a half for one manor and Wulfwin a vassal of Asgar's (master of the horse) one hide; and Alfward a vassal of Aelmer of Bennington's, one hide; and seven sokemen of King Edward's held 3 hides and 1 virgate; they paid 13 pence a year to the sheriff. All these might sell their land. Ilbert the Sheriff laid these seven sokemen and Wulfwinn and Alfward to this manor, in the time of King William, who were not there in the time of King Edward, as the Hundred witness.

(Note: the 13 pence paid to the sheriff would be cartage money – see Wyddial for explanation. The 1086 Hormede was divided into 2 manors and 1 small estate but 20 years before there had been 2 manors and 10 small estates of less than 120 acres. In Little Hormead (a) one Englishman had farmed 390 acres, but in 1086 two were

farming there, though still only for one owner. It is not often one finds Englishmen still in the position of sub-tenant or bailiff in 1068. In Hormede (c) there had been a great joining together of estates to form a single medium-sized manor from a smaller manor plus nine small estates. As usual, the sokemen or freemen were the losers in this Norman practice of manor-making. This time there is an unusual feature in that a Saxon is the owner of the enlarged manor of 1086, in the person of Prince Edgar. Godwin (an English name) was sub-tenant, but little is known of him.)

### **LANGEPORT**

(meaning a long town; identified as Hare Street)

- (a) Count Alan was the tenant-in-chief, with Roger his sub-tenant, Roger holding  $\frac{1}{2}$  hide. There was land for  $\frac{1}{2}$  plough that was there with 1 cottar and 2 slaves. The value is 10/-; when acquired 5/-; before 1066, 13/-. Alric, Archbishop Stigand's man, held this land; he could sell.
- (b) In Langeport Saeward holds 1 virgate from Geoffrey de Mandeville. There is land for  $\frac{1}{2}$  plough; it is there, with 1 cottar and 2 slaves. The value is and always was 5/-. Alfred, Asgar's man, held it; he could sell.

### **LAYSTON**

(Ichetone of DB was a manor in Layston)

- (a) Land of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. In Ichetone Osbern holds 1 hide from the bishop. There is land for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ploughs, one is there in the demsene and 2 villeins with 2 bordars have 1 plough, another  $\frac{1}{2}$  possible. 1 cottar 4 slaves. There is meadow for 1 plough; pasture for the livestock; woodland for 10 pigs. Value is 40/-; when acquired 30/-; before 1066, 60/-. Four freeman held this land – one of them was Archbishop Stigand's man; 2 were King Edward's men; they paid 2d in customary dues; the fourth was Earl Harold's man; all of them could sell their land.
- (b) Land of Count Eustace of Boulogne. In Ichetone Rumold holds  $\frac{1}{2}$  hide from the Count. There is land for 1 plough. 1 bordar. Value 20/-; when acquired 40/-; before 1066 as much. Godith, Asgar the Constable's man held this land; she could sell.
- (c) In the same vill 2 men at arms hold 20 acres from the Count. There is land for 2 oxen; they are there. The value is and always was 3/-. Godith, Asgar the Constable's man, held this land; she could sell.
- (d) Land of Eudo, son of Hubert. In Ichetone Walter holds 6 acres from Eudo. There is land for 1 ox. The value is and always was 12d. Aldred, a thane of King Edward's, held this land; he could sell.

### **LAYSTON**

- (e) Land of peter de Valognes. In Ichetone Humphrey holds  $\frac{1}{2}$  hide from Peter. There is land for 1 plough and it is there with 2 bordars. Meadow for 2 oxen. Value of this land, 15/-; when acquired 10/-. Before 1066, 20/-. Aelmer of Bennington held this land; he could sell.
- (f) Land of Hardwin of Scales. In Ichetone Theobald holds 3 virgates and 6 acres from Hardwin. There is land for 1 plough, it is there with 1 villein, 6 bordars and 1 cottar. There is meadow for 5 oxen; pasture for the livestock. Value 15/-; when acquired 10/-; before 1066, 20/-. 2 Freemen of King Edward's held this land; they could sell. They paid 3d a year to the Sheriff.

(Note: Even at this early date, Layston was not a neat, tidy place centered on a manor, for there was no manor here and the whole of Ichetone is in small parcels of land. Later, in the 20th century, it was dismembered and the parts absorbed into the surrounding parishes).

### **MEESDEN**

(Mesdone of DB)

In Meesdon, Payne holds 1 hide from the Bishop of London. There is land for 5 ploughs. In the demesne 2 ploughs are possible. 3 villeins with a priest have 3 ploughs. 1 cottar? 1 slave. Meadow for 3 ploughs; pasture for the livestock; woodland for 400 pigs. The value is and was 20/-; before 1066, £6. Alward, Archbishop Stigand's man, held this manor, he could sell.

(Note: the most notable feature of Meesden in 1086 is the amount of forest – a much greater area than the Scales Park we know today).

### **PELHAM**

(Peleham in DB)

- (a) In Pelham Ralph holds 1 hide and 1 virgate from the Bishop of London. There is land for 5 ploughs, 2 of them are in the demesne with a third possible. 2 villeins and 3 bordars have 2 ploughs. 1 cottar and 5 slaves. There is pasture for livestock; woodland for 20 pigs. The value is and was £4; before 1066, £5. Two brothers, Asgar the Constable's men, held it; they could sell.
- (b) In Pelham Payne holds 1 hide from the Bishop of London. There is land for 3 ploughs, 2 of them are present in the demesne. 1 villein has ½ plough, another ½ possible. 3 bordars 3 cottars. There is woodland for 6 pigs. The value is and was 40/-; before 1066, 50/-. Alfred, Asgar the Constable's man, held this manor; he could sell.
- (c) In Pelham Ranulf holds 2½ hides from the Bishop of London. There is land for 8 ploughs and there are 2 in the demesne. 7 villeins with 5 bordars have 6 ploughs. 6 cottars 6 slaves. There is meadow for 1 plough; pasture for the livestock; woodland for 30 pigs. The value is and was £10; before 1066, £15. 2 thanes held this manor. One of them was Askell of Ware's man, the other Godwin of Benfield's man. They could sell.
- (d) In Pelham Gilbert and Ranulf hold 1 hide and 1 virgate from the Bishop of London. There is land for 3 ploughs, one being present in the demesne. 1 villein with 3 bordars has 1 plough; another possible. 7 cottars. There is meadow for ½ plough; pasture for the livestock; woodland for 100 pigs. The value is and was 40/- before 1066, 60/-. 2 brothers held it, they could sell. One was Asgar the Constable's man, the other the Abbot of Ely's.
- (e) In Pelham Riculf holds 2 hides from the Bishop of London. There is land for 4 ploughs, there are 2 in the demesne. 4 villeins with 3 bordars have 2 ploughs. 10 cottars, 3 slaves. There is meadow for 1 plough; pasture for the livestock; woodland for 40 pigs. The value is and was 100/-; before 1066, £5-10-0. Wulfry, Godwin of Benfield's man held this manor; he could sell.
- (f) Seems to be a repeat of (e)
- (g) In Hixham William and Ranulf hold 1½ hides from the Bishop of London. There is land for 3 ploughs; in the demesne there are 2. 2 villeins with 3 bordars have 1 plough. 1 cottar, 1 slave. There is woodland for 60 pigs;

pasture for the livestock. The value is and was 40/-; before 1066, 60/-.  
Wulfwy, Asgar the Constable's man (held) this land; he could sell.

(Note: the division into three Pelhams was established by the 12th century, but not yet in 1086. Pelham in the 14th century was in the same tenure as Hixham Hall in 1086, but which DB entries refer to the other Pelhams is uncertain. There were four manors and three estates in DB.)

### **STONEBURY**

(Stanes in DB)

Land of Peter de Valognes: Peter holds Stonebury himself. It answers for 1½ hides. There is land for 1½ ploughs; 1 is there, ½ possible. 1 villein with 4 bordars. Value 15/-; when acquired 10/-; before 1066, 40/-. 4 Freemen held this land. One of them, a reeve of the King's had ½ hides; he appropriated the lands of the other 3 Free men in King William's despite, as the whole Shire testifies. He paid 4½ pence a year in customary dues. Now Peter the Sheriff holds it.

(Note: The reeve looked after the King's interests in the demesne and was appointed by the King or his bailiff for this purpose. He had the task of deciding on which days the King's ploughing or harvest work was to be done. To compensate him for this supervisory work, the reeve was exempted from the physical labour of the task. Peter the Sheriff, the successor to the Saxon reeve, kept this land stolen from the freemen).

### **WYDDIAL**

(Weidihale in DB)

Hardwin de Scales holds Wyddial himself. It answers for 5½ hides. There is land for 8 ploughs. In the demesne there are 2 hides less 20 acres; 3 ploughs there. A villein with a priest, with 5 bordars have 5 ploughs. 4 cottars 6 slaves. There is meadow for ½ plough; pasture for the livestock; wood for fences. Total value £9; when acquired £6; before 1066, £10. Nine Freemen held this manor. One of them, Sired, Earl Harold's man, had 1 hide and 3 virgates as one manor, and Alward, Earl Algar's man, and 1½ hides as one manor. The other seven, King Edward's Freemen, had 2 hides and 1 virgate; they found 9d a year for the Sheriff, or 2 cartages and a fourth part of one cartage.

(Note: It is "Earl Harold" not King Harold – the Normans refused to acknowledge Harold as King. Hardwin of Scales was given the whole vill of Wyddial, combining 2 manors and seven smallholdings into one manor. Cartage and escort duties were obligations virtually confined to Cambridgeshire & Hertfordshire and in Herts chiefly to Hitchin. The King's freemen had to provide a cart and a mule, or other animal, or a horse and rider to transport the royal baggage "when the King comes into the Shire". These obligations were frequently commuted to cash, 4d in Herts and 8d in Cambs. In Herts, one cart and mule was normally paid on one hide (or 1d per virgate). When paid to the Sheriff, he took on the onus of providing the actual transport when necessary.)

### **A SAXON AND NORMAN WHO'S WHO**

Abbots of Ely,	See Ely
AELMER DE BENNINGTON	A Saxon thane of King Edward's, who held one

	hide in Hormead pre-1066 farmed for him by his vassal Alward. He was also Earl Gyrth's steward of the manor of Alswick. He owned both the manor of Bennington and other land in Layston that was given to Peter de Velognes post-1066. Before he was ousted, he owned at least 5250 acres in Hertfordshire.
ALAN	Alan the Red, Count of Brittany and of Richmond. He held a great fee in the eastern counties and many scattered manors elsewhere in England, including his large and highly organised castlery of Richmond, east Yorkshire. He was married to Constance, the Conqueror's daughter and they do not seem to have rebelled like so many other of William's followers. One of the chief landowners in 1086, he owned 3 houses in Hertford and land in Reed, Wakeley, Langport, etc. As well as holding Cheshunt and Hoddesdon himself.
ALFRED	A Saxon thane of King Edward's farming for him about 10½ hides in Widford, Chaldean, Newsells, Aspenden, Layston and Pelham.
ALFRED	A man of Asgar the Constable who farmed for him in Langeport (b), in Pelham and at Hyde Hall.
ALFWARD	A highly trusted Saxon thane who had the oversight of 900 acres in this district in 1066. He was Earl Harold's thane at Anstey and Earl Algar's man there too, farming all 660 acres in the vill. He was also the bailiff of Aelmer of Bennington for 120 acres in Hormead (c). In addition, he was Archbishop Stigand's sub-tenant for 120 acres constituting the manor of Meesden. Ilbert the Sheriff retained his services in Hormead post-1066 and though he lost the oversight of much other land he was still holding his position as sub-tenant in Watton, Libury, Mardley and Reed in 1086.
ALGAR OR AELFGAR	He was Earl of East Anglia in 1051-57 when it included Hertfordshire. He relinquished this earldom when he inherited that of Mercia on the death of his father in 1057. He died in 1062. He owned a lot of land in Essex and Herts especially in our district: part of Barley, Newsells, Barkway, Anstey and Wyddial. Eudo the Steward was given 2 houses in the Borough of Hertford, once the property of Aelfgar of Cockenach. His Herts lands were all confiscated and re-distributed after 1066.
ALNOD/ALNOTH	A Saxon thane of Archbishop Stigand's who held 180 acres in Hormead as a separate estate post 1066 but ousted by 1086. He had also held land for the Archbishop elsewhere in Herts (Radwell, Thundridge, Graveley, Box).

ALRIC	Archbishop Stigand's farmer of 60 acres in Langeport (a) prior to 1066 and in Throcking. Over the border he farmed at Hexton, Cambs.
ALWIN	Godwin of Benfield's Saxon sub-tenant in Pelham.
ASGAR/ANSGAR	A Saxon described as "Constable" and "Master of the Horse" in DB. He was one of King Edward's chief household officers whose lands extended into at least seven counties, including a lot in Cambs. He was a grandson of King Cnut's follower Tori the Proud. He owned a lot of land in both Braughing and Edwinstree Hundreds including Hadham, Barkway, Stanstead, Thorley and see Hixham at Pelham, Pelham, Layston, Hormead, Beauchamps and Langeport.
ASKELL	Of Ware. A Saxon thane of King Edward's who had held a manor in Knebworth. He was the predecessor of the Normans Hugh de Bauchamp and Ralph at Ware and in many other demesnes both in Bedfordshire and Herts. He had employed freemen to work in 1320 acres scattered through Westmill, Stanstead, Ware, Sacombe and Pelham up to 1066.
CANTERBURY	Archbishops of Stigand was Archbishop from 1052 until 1070 after being Bishop of Elmham 1043-47 then Bishop of Winchester from 1047. When appointed Archbishop, he retained the see of Winchester as well. He figured in the Bayeux tapestry, next to Harold at Harold's election as successor to the throne when Edward died. When William arrived in England, he fought under a consecrated banner sent to him by the pope. His invasion was thus also a crusade and he was committed to reforming the English church. Stigand had been excommunicated by the pope for holding the archbishopric while his predecessor, a Norman removed in 1052, was still alive. Stigand was so powerful, however, that it was left to the pope to depose him and this was achieved by Papal Legate in 1070. William then brought over an Italian, Lanfranc, to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Lanfranc was thus archbishop in 1086 (and remained so until 1089) but he did not succeed to all Stigand's land, some of which must have been held personally by Stigand. See Hormead, Layston, Langeport and Meesden.
EDGAR THE AETHLING	Prince Edward the Confessor's great nephew and legal heir. He was a minor when Edward died and Harold was crowned instead. When Harold was killed, London acclaimed Edgar as King during the few weeks of resistance following the Battle of

	Hastings. Edgar submitted to William in 1066, rebelled in 1069 and though pardoned by William forfeited most of his lands, with the exception of 8 hides in Barkway and Hormead. He was kept in Normandy at William's court until the end of 1086 when he went to Apulia with 200 knights. Edgar died in 1125.
EDWARD THE CONFESSOR	King 1042-66. Since the Saxon kings were holders of estates in most counties, Herts was no exception. His estates were crown land that passed to Harold, then to William the Conqueror.
ELY	Abbots. The Saxon abbot Wulfric 1044?-66 was deposed in favour of a Norman Abbot Simeon from Saint Ouen. Despite being set over Ely in this manner, Simeon won admiration from his monks for the efficient way in which he administered the abbey. His men farmed some land in Pelham before the Bishop of London's men took it over. He suffered much at the hands of Hardwin of Scales who seized a lot of abbey land in Cambridgeshire. At the time of the Domesday Book he was also contesting with the Bishop of London over 4 hides in Hadham. In 1080 an inquiry was held into the losses of lands and jurisdiction suffered by the Abbey since 1066 but the disputes rumbled on well past the time the Domesday Book was compiled.
EUDO	The Steward or Eudo Fitzherbert, the fourth son of Hubert of Ryes. Many of Eudo's sub-tenants in England came from the neighbourhood of Ryes. A dapifer or steward at the court of King William in England from about 1072, he was probably promoted because his father Hubert had given William sanctuary in 1047 when the young Duke of Normandy was in difficulty. Eudo became Sheriff of Essex and his sister married another Sheriff, Peter de Valognes. Eudo founded the Abbey of St. John's Colchester and had large estates in Cambs, Beds, Essex and Norfolk. In Herts he had land at Knebworth, Reed, Barley, Newsells, Layston and Aspenden.
EUSTACE	Count, or Earl of Boulogne. One of the barons of the Norman Conquest who was prominent at the Battle of Hastings. When William returned to Normandy leaving his barons in charge of England, many rebellions broke out and Eustace also quarrelled with William. Kentishmen, convinced that they could never overthrow William's rule, decided that Count Eustace offered their best way to come to terms with foreign rule and persuaded

	<p>Eustace that he could seize the port of Dover and rule that part of England. Despite finding an inadequate force at Dover, Eustace refused to await reinforcements before attacking Bishop Odo in Dover Castle and he was defeated by the castle garrison. He forfeited all his extensive lands, given him by William for his support at Hastings, but later had some of them restored. By 1086 he was the largest landholder in Herts with estates in Reed, Corney, Throcking, Berkesden, Wakeley, Bozen, Hoddesdon, Beauchamps, Layston and Hormead. He himself held Anstey (where he had built the castle) Cockhamstead and Braughing. The 2 Englishmen who held his land in Hormead (Little) had tried to annexe another virgate of the neighbouring demesne, but failed in their attempt. The lands held by Eustace in 1086 may have been administered by his son, another Eustace. King Stephen of England (1135-54) married Matilda, the heiress of Eustace of Boulogne and his daughter, bringing with her the substantial county of Bologne in France as well as the honour of Boulogne in England.</p>
GEOFFREY DE MANDEVILLE	<p>A Norman count who held only slightly less land than Eustace in Hertfordshire. He was the successor to the Saxon tenant-in-chief Asgar the Staller and had estates amounting to 65 hides. He had some premises in Hertford, once Asgar the Constable's and seven houses that paid no due except the King's tax. In Langeport Saeward held 1 virgate from Geoffrey. He was one of the Conqueror's sheriffs of London and Middlesex and was head of a family that two generations later obtained the Earldom of Essex. His heirs held Ayot St. Lawrence.</p>
GILBERT	<p>Of Pelham, an otherwise unknown sub-tenant of the Bishop of London.</p>
GODITH	<p>A Saxon woman who owned land in Essex and in Herts at Wickham and Thorley (altogether 68 acres) where she had tenant farmers; and who herself was bailiff or sub-tenant of 1040 acres (so much for our vaunted 20th century female emancipation!). She was described in the Domesday Book as "Asgar's man" in Layston and Beauchamps (so much for 11th century female emancipation!). She was a "liber homo" or freeman, indicating status rather than gender, in Essex.</p>
GODWIN	<p>Earl, d.1053, a Saxon who was extremely powerful due to his earldom stretching from Kent along the</p>

	<p>south coast to Cornwall. He had four eminent sons: Harold, Earl of Wessex and King in 1066; Tostig, Earl of Northumbria, killed September 1066 at Stamfordbirdge; Leofwine, Earl of Essex, Herts, Middlesex and Buckinghamshire until his death at Hastings, October 1066; Fyrth, the fourth son, q.v. Earl Godwin's daughter, Edith, was the wife of King Edward.</p>
GODWIN	<p>Of Benfield (i.e. Bentfield) in Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex, 2½ miles east of Stocking Pelham parish. A thane of King Edward's. Three of his men were bailiffs at Pelham in 1066 farming 5½ hides on his behalf. There were others at Graveley, Sapeham and Bozen.</p>
GODWIN	<p>Sub-tenant of Prince Edgar in Hormead in 1086. at the Ely Inquiry into the Abbey's holdings in Hertfordshire in 1093 Godwin of Hormead was sworn as one of the witnesses or recorders. He was also Edgar's sub-tenant in Barkway with 1½ hides.</p>
GYRTH	<p>Created Earl of East Anglia (including Oxfordshire) in 1057. The fourth son of Earl Godwin above. He died at the Battle of Hastings having owned the manor of Alswick.</p>
HARDWIN D'ESCALERS	<p>Or Hardwin of Scales. He held a lot of land in Cambridgeshire that he had seized from the church of Ely, and many estates in Hertfordshire, totalling c22 hides. Some of his land was in Anstey, Layston and Wyddial.</p>
HAROLD	<p>Earl of Wessex 1053-66, King of England 1066. He was the son of Earl Godwin, q.v. By 1057 he was pre-eminent in England under King Edward having annexed Hereford to Wessex. A highly respected and powerful earl and warrior, owing much to his large estates in many counties. The only demesnes he owned in Edwinstree Hundred were at Reed, Anstey, Barley, Berkeesden, Wakely, Cockhamstead and Wyddial. Most of the land of King William, listed in the Domesday Book for Hertfordshire that formerly belonged to Earl Harold, lay in the west of the county. His East Herts lands were given to other Normans post-1066. He is "Earl Harold" of the Domesday Book since the Normans refused to acknowledge him as King. (Note follows illustration of Bayeux Tapestry) – In this section of the Bayeux Tapestry, onlookers at the left point to a comet with a fiery tail, in the sky, while an astrologer warns King Harold that this is an omen of misfortune. The comet was Halley's – visible in England in February 1066, then at c75 year intervals until</p>

	again seen in England 1985/6. In the bottom border, ships crossing the sea indicated the direction of Harold's coming misfortune.
HUMPHREY	Probably originally of Anneville. He was a sub-tenant in Camba of Peter de Valognes and Eudo. In Herts he held land for Eudo at Knebworth and Hertford, and in our district for Peter in Layston.
ILBERT DE LACI	A Norman, created Sheriff of this county, who ousted Saxon holders of land in Hormead and introduced some other landlords who were later changed again. He was a great re-organiser (for his own benefit) taking part of one vill and placing it in another so his activity in Hormead was but part of his disrupting influence in the county. An 'honour' (Hormead (c) was the feudal complex of lands, demesnes etc belonging to one man and took its name from the place that was, in effect, its capital and it is for this reason that the lands of Ilbert de Laci normally appeared in later documents as the honour of Pontefract where he had his castle. He was succeeded as sheriff by Geoffrey de Bec who had estates totalling over 40 hides in Herts. The Herts Sheriff in 1086 (see Peter de Valognes) had land extending over six counties of which his Herts holdings were just over 40 hides with Bennington accounting for over half of this.
LONDON	Bishops. The immediate pre-conquest bishop was a Norman appointed by King Edward, called William. Appointed in 1051, he died in 1075 still in possession of his see as a reward for his support of the new king. He bought many of his lands and the Domesday Book is careful to distinguish between what he bought (e.g. Stortford: "It is part of the holding which Bp William Bought") and what fell within the Bishopric of London holdings (e.g. Wickham and Hadham: "This manor was and is in the Bishopric of London"). The bishop, at the time of the Domesday Book was Maurice who had the previous year taken possession also of his castle of Bishop's Stortford where the bishop held 6 hides after ungallantly ousting a lady, Edeva the Fair. Maurice had been archdeacon of Le Mans, then chancellor (i.e. head of the King's secretariat and keeper of his seal) to William, before being translated to the see of London. His Pelham hides were held by his men-at-arms (or tenants who rendered military service as most tenants were obliged to do) in 1086. Maurice was also contending with the Abbot of Ely over land in

	<p>Hadham. The Bishop of London owned all of Meesden manor where he had a priest in residence. For clerical purposes, all our village belonged in the diocese of London at this date.</p>
ODO	<p>C1030-1097 when he died on the First Crusade, Earl of Kent 1067-82. He was appointed Bishop of Bayeux c1050 by his half-brother Duke William of Normandy. After the Conquest of England he was given land in England that made him the second largest landowner after the King. The Bishops of Normandy were wealthy barons, combining church and state in their persons and this extension of the Norman practice in England is not uncommon. He was a very ambitious and ruthless man mercilessly crushing any opposition to his position and his private life was a scandal. His rule of his French diocese and England lands was, on the contrary, just and beneficial. He was a great patron of craftsmen, especially those at work in his cathedral and it is thought that the Bayeux tapestry was probably made at his instigation. Odo, at the Battle of Hastings, is to be seen in the Bayeux tapestry attempting to rally fleeing horsemen in the middle of the battle when things were going badly for the Normans. After the battle Odo was entrusted with the castle at Dover and with holding Kent in submission. He defeated Count Eustace q.v. at Dover. In 1082 he quarrelled with William, but the reason is obscure. He may have aspired to the papacy and planned to go to Italy. William crossed from Normandy, arrested him and took him back to captivity in Normandy where Odo remained until he was released shortly before the death of William in 1087. His possessions were not confiscated but the earldom of Kent was allowed to lapse. He had land in 22 counties some in his name, some not at the time of the Domesday Book. In Edwinstree Hundred he owned land at Barley, Buckland, Throcking, Hazelhanger, Hodenhoe, and in Layston.</p>
OSBERN	<p>A Normal local sub-tenant of Bishop Odo in Layston, Buckland, Hodenhoe and Throcking.</p>
PAYNE	<p>A Norman who farmed land in Pelham and also was tenant of Meesden manor, both for the Bishop of London. He was also Hardwin of Scales' tenant on estates in Cambridgeshire e.g. Duxford, and in Herts at Anstey.</p>
PETER DE VALOGNES	<p>Sheriff of Hertfordshire and Essex in 1086. A landowner of some importance whose name was prominent in the Domesday Book among those</p>

	<p>representing the families central to the previous history of Normandy whose resources had enabled Duke William to conquer England. He received a lot of land as a reward, but, not content with what he had been given, he took a lot more. He had ousted Aelmer de Bennington in Datchworth, Digswell, Garveley, Woolwicks, Box, Libury, Bennington itself (10 hides), Sacombe and at Layston. He misused his sheriff's office at the expense of four Saxon sokemen to acquire Stonebury. He owned two churches and one house in Hertford. He did not baulk at challenging men over the King's land in Tewin where William had granted the Saxon holder Haldane and his mother 5½ hides "for the soul of his son Richard as he says himself and shows through his writ". Even that did not stop Peter saying "that he has this manor by the King's gift." A rapacious sheriff.</p>
<p>RALPH</p>	<p>(Baynard) of Brittany and Earl of East Anglia. Ralph married Emma, Roger the Earl of Hereford's sister in 1075. Together, Ralph and Roger plotted a rebellion against William at the wedding at Exning nr Newmarket. They were confronted near Cambridge by a large force under the Bishops Odo and Geoffrey of Coutances with many Englishmen fighting under them. Ralph fell back on Norwich castle and then escaped to Brittany. His wife held the castle while it was under siege and held out long enough to obtain terms under which she and the garrison were allowed to go freely to Brittany to join her husband. They never returned to England, with the result that the king suppressed the earldom of East Anglia (inherited from his father Ralph the Staller, King Edward's Breton minister who cooperated in the settlement of England after the invasion and was then rewarded by the earldom). All Ralph's possessions were confiscated in England and the earldom that he had held since 1069/70 was not re-established during the rest of William's reign – hence the Domesday Book under Hormead: "William holds of Ralph" and under Alswick: "Ralph Baynard holds Alswick and William from him", for the king was holding Ralph's lands in 1086. Ralph was sheriff of Essex before his exile and was succeeded by Peter de Valognes. He had formerly held 5 hides in Hertingfordbury himself and 2 houses in Hertford. As a tenant in chief he had held land in only 2 counties, Norfolk and Herts. Count Eustace was laying claim to his land in Alswick and Hormead.</p>

	Castle Baynard in London was named after him.
RALPH	He became the sub-tenant of the Bishop of London at Pelham and Albury (2½ hides) when Siward the Archbishop of Canterbury's man was replaced.
RANULF	He may have been the Ranulf who was Duke William's chaplain in 1060, but there are others of this name. One was local to Pelham.
RICULF	A sub-tenant of the Bishop of London at Pelham. At the Ely Inquiry into the Abbey's holdings in Herts, Riculf was named as one of the four Frenchmen doing the investigation in Edwinstree Hundred.
ROGER	A sub-tenant to Count Alan in Langeport, otherwise known.
RUMOLD	Rumold of Colon was Count Eustace's man in Wetherley Hundred, Cambridgeshire and had land in Throcking for the count besides holding Beauchamps and Layston for him.
SA(E)DWARD	A Saxon under-tenant to Geoffrey de Mandeville in Langeport. At the Ely Inquiry into the Abbey's holdings in Herts 1093 Siward of Hormead was sworn as one of the witnesses or recorders. He was one of the four Englishmen for the Hundred of Edwinstree. The two, Saeward and Siward, may be the same.
SIRED	He was a freeman under Earl Harold, holding 4 hides and 1½ virgates in Reed and 1¾ hides in Wyddial. These estates were given to Hardwin of Scales and Sired was dismissed. In Essex he was a freeman holding Chishill pre-1066 as a manor of 6¼ hides.
STIGAND	Archbishop of Canterbury 1052-70 see under Canterbury, Archbishops.
THEOBALD	May have been a chaplain to Duke William of Normandy in 1060. A Norman who was sub-tenant of Hardwin of Scales in 5 vills in Odssey Hundred and in Edwinstree Hundred at Barley, Throcking, Hodenhoe, Wakely, Berkesden and Layston.
WALTER	A sub-tenant of Eudo in Layston, otherwise unknown.
WILLIAM	In Hormead (b) and Alswick, refers to William I of England, q.v. and see also under Ralph Baynard.
WILLIAM	In Hixham, Pelham, an unknown sub-tenant of the Bishop of London.
WILLIAM 1	Of England 1066-87, Duke of Normandy 1035-87. His eldest son, Robert Curthose succeeded him as Duke of Normandy until his death in 1134 and his second son William Rufus became William II of England, reigning from 1087 until mysteriously

	killed by an arrow while hunting in the New Foreset in 1100. William I's third son Henry then reigned from 1100-1135 when he was succeeded by the last of the Norman kings, his nephew Stephen (reigned 1135-41 and 1148-54) who married Matilda of Boulogne (see under EUSTACE).
WULFWARD	A Saxon vassal of Asgar q.v. in both Hormead (a) and (b) and also in Wormley where the manor was sold after 1066 for 3 marks of gold.
WULFWIN	A Saxon vassal of Asgar q.v. in Hormead (c) where he farmed one hide.
WULFWY	Godwin of Bentfield's Saxon sub-tenant in Pelham (e); and in Hixham, Pelham (g), he farmed this adjacent land for Asgar the Constable pre-1066.

## POPULATION

The Inquisitors did not make an exhaustive list of the people present on each estate. Herdsmen and millers, women and servants, were among those not recorded. It is not possible, therefore, to know precisely how many people were living in Domesday Hertfordshire. Those authorities who have attempted to estimate the population have added together the people noted in the Domesday Book and then multiplied this number by five – assuming there were five people per household on average. One bailiff or overseer will be resident in each demesne, usually the named sub-tenant. To these are added the villeins, bordars, cottars, freemen and slaves. The exception to the assumption of five in a household is the priest who was celibate. On this basis the following estimated population tables have been compiled.

### The Hormeads

Place	Overseer	Priest	Cottar	Bordar	Villein	Freeman	Slave	Population
Hormead (a)	2 Saxons	1	2					21
(b)	William							5
(c)	Godwin		2	15	6		6	150
Langeport (a)	Roger		1				2	20
(b)	Saeward		1				2	20
Stonebury	Saeward					5		30
								246

There probably should also be one of the Layston entries included here, but which one we cannot tell. Stonebury is interesting for it was a thriving hamlet at this date. In this district, by the Middle Ages many such hamlets had shrunk to become single farms and there were also some completely deserted villages. About 1300 the climate deteriorated and from 1272 storms, floods and calamitous harvests resulting in famine had their effects on the population. In a particularly disastrous year, 1317-19, many died and murrain affected the beasts on the farms from about 1274 for the next 28

years. By 1341 (that is seven years before the Black Death) the following places were already half-decimated: Beauchamps, Barkway, Barley, Braughing, both Hormeads, Meesden, Royston and Wyddial, among others close by. Much of the arable was left unploughed in this year due to lack of men and animals.

Some villages were not deserted but survived under a new name, e.g. Langeport became Hare Street. Afladewick had shrunk to become the new farm of Beauchamps and was no longer the centre of a thriving small vill.

Alswick, Beauchamps, Wyddial, Anstey, Meesden

Place	Overseer	Priest	Cottar	Bordar	Villein	Slave	Households	Population
Alswick	William		11		4	7	23	115
Beauchamps	Rumold			7		2	10	50
Wyddial	Eardwin	1	4	5	1	6	18	86
Anstey	1 + Payne	1	9	10	8	7	37	181
Meesden	Payne	1	1		3	1	7	131

There were no freemen/sokemen present in these vill. The establishment of Buntingford as a market town c1290 probably led to the decline of the nearby vills of Beauchamps, Alswick and Corney Bury, and certainly that of Layston (originally Leofstan's church). Buntingford survived better due to its trading position on the highway where it was more resistant to decay than the surrounding hamlets in the fields. The close positioning of the demesnes in this district is a feature of this part of Hertfordshire not seen elsewhere and is thought to have led to the land becoming exhausted with consequent depletion in food stocks, followed by depletion in population.

Layston

Place	Overseer	Cottar	Bordar	Villein	Slave	Households	Population
Layston (a)	Osbern	1	2	2	4	10	50
(b)	Rumold		1			2	10
(c)	2 knights					2	10
(d)	Walter					1	5
(e)	Humphrey		2			3	15
(f)	Theobald	1	6	1		9	45
							135

There were no freemen/sokemen and no priest in Ichetone/Layston. Layston defies definition. Later it was to include Alswick, part of Hare Street, part of Throcking, etc. Later still it was absorbed partly into Buntingford. The ecclesiastical parish survived until 1938 but its boundaries had changed over the centuries just as the civil boundaries had altered. The part of Hare Street in Layston parish was transferred to Hornead parish in 1938 when Layston church was abandoned. Alswick became part of Buntingford.

The Pelhams

Place	Overseer	Cottar	Bordar	Villein	Slave	Households	Population
Pelham (a)	Ralph	1	3	2	5	12	60
(b)	Payne	3	3	1		8	40
(c)	Ranulf	6	5	7	6	25	125
(d)	Gilbert & Ranulf	7	3	1		12	60
(e)	Aldred		8		2	11	55
(f)	Riculf	10	3	4	3	21	105
Hixham (g)	William & Ranulf	1	3	2	1	8	40
							485

There were no freemen/sokemen and no priest present in the Pelhams. The division into three Pelhams was established by 12th century but which Domesday Book entries refer to which of the Pelhams, Stocking, Brent or Furneux, is uncertain. The Pelhams appear to be without the ministrations of a priest – a strange state of affairs since they were all owned by the Bishop of London! Since the Bishop also owned Meesden and there was a priest there, he probably also served the men of Pelham. One devoutly hopes so.

[A copy of the original entry for Meesden in the Domesday Book, 1086.](#)

The manorial system began to decline in the 14th century. Our local manor records show that courts continued to be held and fines, or dues, exacted when copyhold houses changed hands, into the 20th century. The last vestiges of the manorial system were officially dismantled and finally abolished in 1926.