

**GASTLINGS, SOUTHILL
1066-1667**

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30 November 2024
(Revised 30 December 2024)
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Contents

<i>List of abbreviations</i>	ii
Southill 1066-1086	1
The Spec family legacy	2
Walter de Godarville	2
Joan Godarville	4
Geoffrey Gascelyn I	5
Edmund Gascelyn I	8
John Gascelyn	9
Edmund Gascelyn II	9
Geoffrey Gascelyn II	10
Alice, wife of John Gascelyn	11
The Abbot of Wardon	11
Gastlings and Day's house after the suppression of Wardon Abbey	13
<i>Appendix</i>	
1. The abbot of Wardon: Southill Manor	15
<i>Select bibliography</i>	18

Abbreviations

<i>Abbrev. Rot. Orig.</i>	<i>Rotulorum Originalium in Curia Scaccarii Abbreviatio</i>
BARS	Bedfordshire Archives
Beds	County of Bedfordshire
BHRS	Bedfordshire Historical Record Society publication
Bucks	County of Buckinghamshire
<i>Cal. Close R.</i>	Calendar of the Close Rolls
<i>Cal. Fine R.</i>	Calendar of the Fine Rolls
<i>Cal. Inq. p.m.</i>	Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem
<i>Cal. Pat. R.</i>	Calendar of the Patent Rolls
<i>Cat. Of Anct. D.</i>	Catalogue of Ancient Deeds
CChR	Calendar of Charter Rolls
Central Beds HER	Central Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record
<i>Chan. Inq. p.m.</i>	Chancery: Inquisitions Post Mortem
<i>Chan. Proc.</i>	Chancery Proceedings
<i>Excerpt. Rot. Fin.</i>	<i>Excerpta e Rotulis Finium in Turri Londinensi Asservatis, Henrico Tertio Rege, A.D. 1216-1272</i>
Hunts	Huntingdonshire (Historic county of England)
LP	<i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VII</i>
ME	Middle English
Northants	County of Northamptonshire
OE	Old English
<i>Pipe R.</i>	Pipe Roll
QW	<i>Placita de Quo Warranto, Edward I-Edward III</i>
TNA	The National Archives
VCH Beds	<i>Victoria County History: A History of the County of Bedford</i>
VE	<i>Valor Ecclesiasticus, temp. Henry VIII</i>
Wilts	County of Wiltshire

SOUTHILL 1066-1086

Domesday survey (1086)

In 1086 twenty-nine [heads of] household were recorded at *Sudgivele* (Southill) in the hundred of *Wichestanestou*, indicating a population of around 145 individuals. The Domesday entry almost certainly included the area known by the twelfth century as *Rueye* (Rowney) near the boundary with *Chichesane* (Chicksands), but not the settlements of Broom or Stanford.¹ The Southill assets, which had dropped in value from £9 4s 0d to £8 8s 0d since the Norman conquest, were shared between six tenants-in-chief who held them directly from the king.

Based on 120 acres per ploughland for arable,² 24 acres per plough for meadow,³ and 1.5 acres per pig,⁴ Southill contained 2,442 *fiscal* acres but any attempt to calculate the actual area would be flawed since this is likely to have been far more extensive than the documented figures suggest. The percentage held by each tenant-in-chief was as follows: Eudo the Steward (1.72%), Hugh de Beauchamp (23.83%), **William Spec (53.56%)**, Walter of Flanders (2.95%), Richard Poynant (2.46%), and the king's niece Judith, countess of Northumbria and Huntingdon (15.48%). Despite being the major landholder, Spec was listed third in order of precedence behind the king's steward and the sheriff of Bedford. Two nobles of lesser stature followed him, and, despite her kinship, Countess Judith came last on account of her being a woman. Worth noting are the annotations beside the entries for Hugh de Beauchamp, William Spec, Walter of Flanders, and Countess Judith which indicate that a degree of restructuring had taken place in the previous 20 years.

William Spec

In 1066 sixteen freemen had held certain land and resources in Southill as one manor. The assets were worth £3, however, the value had increased to '4 pounds when acquired by [William Spec] the 1086 owner'. A further uplift is noted in 1086, when two unnamed Frenchmen were the immediate lords over the villagers and smallholders. These men were liable for the taxes and obligations due to Spec as tenant-in-chief and the annual value to these lesser lords given as £4 10s 0d. The estimated population of 110 individuals under their jurisdiction comprised eight households of villagers, eight of smallholders, and six of slaves.

Domesday notes '4 lord's plough teams', suggesting that the 480 acres of arable were retained as demesne (for the lord's use), while '3 men's plough teams' tilled a further 360 acres between them in addition to their obligations to their overlords. In common with Warden, it appears that each villager maintained an unusually large landholding, perhaps an average of 35 to 40 acres apiece, while the bordars were well served with 5 to 10 acres per household. Other resources consisted of seven ploughs (168 acres) of meadow, exactly the amount required by the seven plough teams, and enough woodland to support 200 pigs (300 acres).

¹ The entry for Broom appears in the margin of the page listing lands held by Nigel d'Aubigny.

² The terminology of taxation overlaps with that for land measurement and has no correlation with the actual area for which a landholder was responsible. The standard Domesday plough team was 'the theoretical basis for the units of assessment in Domesday Book. The ploughland, for instance, was in theory an area which could be ploughed by an eight-oxen team during the agricultural year.' See <<http://www.domesdaybook.net/domesday-book/data-terminology/taxation/plough>>.

³ G.H. Fowler, 'Bedfordshire in 1086', *Quarto Memoirs of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, vol. 1 (1922), 64 §70.

⁴ For discussion on using swine as the basis for calculating an area of land, see G.H. Fowler, 'Bedfordshire in 1086', 62-63 §66 and A. Wright, *Domesday Book Beyond the Censors* (Troubador Publishing Ltd, 2017), p. 31.

THE SPEC FAMILY LEGACY

It is not known when William Spec's holdings in Northill, Old Warden, and Southill were inherited by Walter Espec and although their relationship has not been confirmed, it is likely that they were father and son. When Walter founded Warden Abbey in 1135 he gave assarts (land cleared for cultivation) and woodland in Warden and Southill to the Cistercian monks. His charter showing the boundaries was lost centuries ago, but it appears that the monastery used the founder's gifts in Southill as the basis for Rowney grange, Rowney warren, and Inlonde [now Ireland].⁵

Walter left no surviving children and on his death in 1155 the sons of Hawise, Albreda and Adeline, his three [half?] sisters, inherited not only in Bedfordshire, but also those lands that Walter had amassed in north-east England thanks to his successful military career. The heirs were required to pay the Crown in order to claim their agreed share and the sum due from each man was enrolled on the Pipe Roll of 1158.⁶ Southill was formally divided between William de Bussei (eldest son of Hawise) and Geoffrey de Trailli (eldest son of Albreda)⁷ with later documents confirming that the portion subsequently known as 'Gastlings' originated in the share passed to the de Trailli family.

WALTER DE GODARVILLE

Background and family

Walter de Godarville was first mentioned in connection with Southill almost 60 years later. Written in some sources as Cardevil or Cardevell, he is documented as 'de Goderville' in 1248/49.⁸ Confusion may be attributable both to the vagaries of medieval spelling and to two areas in continental Europe with similar sounding names. Godarville is actually in the present-day Hainaut Province of Belgium, whereas Goderville, 215 miles to the south-west, is a commune in the Seine-Maritime département of Normandy, less than 2 miles north-west of Bréauté. Walter's heritage therefore remains unconfirmed, however his family and military links point firmly towards Norman origins.

Walter de Godarville married three times. His first wife Joan was the widow of Philip de Ulecot [Oldcoates], one of King John's 'evil counsellors'.⁹ She was also one of the two heiresses of Robert de Meisnil (a commune in Normandy) and her sister Isabel became the wife of Ralph Musard,¹⁰ who served as sheriff of Gloucestershire in the period 1216-24. Sir Ralph was dead by 20 June 1230 and his assets in Gloucestershire, Berkshire, and Nottinghamshire taken back into the king's hands.¹¹ After the death of Joan in 1226, Walter de Godarville took one Isabel as his second wife. No further details are known, but it is not inconceivable that as a widower Walter had married his widowed sister-in-law. Isabel had died by 1232 and Walter had married Hillaria [Hilary] by 1234.¹² Hilary gave birth firstly to **Joan** (1234) and then to Margery [Margareta].¹³

⁵ **inlōnd (ME)**: from the OE 'inland' meaning land belonging to a manorial lord (ie not let to tenants) and usually cultivated by himself or his steward.

⁶ W. Farrer, 'The Honour of Old Warden', *BHRS*, 11 (1927), 6 cites *Pipe R.*, 4 *Hen. II*, 140, 146.

⁷ *BHRS*, 11, 1-46 (pp. 5-6).

⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls* 33 Henry III (28 October 1248-27 October 1249), Fine Roll C 60/46, m. 12, No. 20, <https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_046.html>.

⁹ G.H. Fowler (ed.), 'Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem No. 1', *BHRS*, 5 (1920), 201-255 (p. 204).

¹⁰ *BHRS*, 11 cites *Excerpt. Rot. Fin.*, i, 144.

¹¹ Henry III Fine Rolls Project, Fine Rolls of Henry III, [Fine_Rolls_Project].

¹² For the death of Isabel, *BHRS*, 11, 26 cites *Excerpt. Fin.* i, 222 and *Pipe R.*, 1242 (ed. H.L. Cannon), 295. Walter and Hilary are found in the *Cal. Close R.*, 1231-34, 509; 1234-37, 168.

¹³ For Joan, *BHRS*, 11, 26 cites *Excerpt. Rot. Fin.*, ii, 9. A charter of Edmund Gascelyn, knight, dated to 1282 x 1337, confirms a charter of Hilary de Godarville, his grandmother. See 'The Cartulary of

Military career

Based on the link between their names and the period in which they were establishing their military careers, we might speculate that Walter de Godarville was one of Falkes de Bréauté's men and, by implication, a loyal supporter of King John.¹⁴ He was enjoying a level of trust by around 1215 when, as the guardian of Robert de Pavely, he made the first recorded presentation of a candidate to be the priest of the church of Wendlebury in Oxfordshire.¹⁵ More noteworthy, however, was his position as governor of Hertford Castle during the bitter civil war when the barons rebelling against King John had been joined by the armies of the French Prince Louis. John fled and many towns and castles across England fell to Louis and the rebellious barons. These included Hertford which Godarville only surrendered after a siege lasting from 12 November to 6 December 1216 and for which he secured all the honours of war.¹⁶

A hiatus in the records largely corresponds with the period following the death of King John in 1216 and the early reign of Henry III, who came to the throne aged just 9 years. Walter fell from royal grace when Falkes de Bréauté rebelled in 1224 and in common with Falkes's other followers, Walter found himself deprived of his lands. Regaining favour was subject to payment of a fine of £100 and accepting the commission to accompany Richard, earl of Cornwall (the king's brother), on the re-settlement of Gascony in 1225.

Thereafter Walter de Godarville was honoured with several high-profile appointments becoming constable of the castle and Honour of Abergavenny in 1231. That same year the king granted him Chippenham and Sheldon (Wilts) and it is as a Wiltshire knight that he appears to have been best known.¹⁷ In 1231-32 Walter was resident at Devizes Castle, either at the behest of the owner, Lord Ralf Willington, or on the direct orders of the king.¹⁸ 'In 1233 he was one of the four knights charged with the delicate and unpopular duty of guarding Hubert de Burgh in Devizes Castle; whether by contrivance or connivance, his prisoner escaped, to the great wrath of the king.'¹⁹ He acted as the king's agent in Scotland (1238), held the Honour of Gloucester (1242/43), and was steward of the county of Meath and constable of Trim castle (1243).²⁰

Bradenstoke Priory', ed. V.C.M. London, *Wiltshire Record Society*, 35 (1979) 153 (514). For Margery, *BHRS*, 11, 27 cites *Cal. Close R.*, 1247-51, 257, 260, 270.

¹⁴ The first accurate records of de Bréauté's royal service date to 1206. For details, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falkes_de_Breaute> and for information on the siege of Bedford Castle, see <<https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/month/fm-07-2007.html>>.

¹⁵ 'Parishes: Wendlebury', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 6*, ed. M.D. Lobel (London, 1959), pp. 338-346. British History Online <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol6/pp338-346>> [accessed 14 April 2020] cites *Rot. Welles*, i, 151.

¹⁶ For an account of the political situation and the siege, see <<https://www.hertfordshirelife.co.uk/out-about/the-siege-of-hertford-castle-1-4657825>>; *BHRS*, 5, 203 (footnote).

¹⁷ King John died on 18 October 1216. He was succeeded by the 9-year old Henry III and the greater part of eastern England remained in the hands of rebel barons. Henry was declared of age in 1223 but did not begin his personal reign until 1227. The regency was undertaken first by William Marshal, earl of Pembroke (d. 1219) and then by Hubert de Burgh. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hertford_Castle#cite_note-bh-3> and <<https://magnacarta800th.com/history-of-the-magna-carta/battles/restoring-royal-authority/>>; *BHRS*, 11, 27; <<https://www.mychippenham.org.uk/the-chippenham-project/the-research/36-medieval-chippenham>>.

¹⁸ J. Waylen, *A History, Military and Municipal of the Ancient Borough of the Devizes* (Longman, 1859), pp. 66-69; L. Waite, *The Bassets of Compton* (8 November 2023), <<https://comptonbassetthistory.co.uk/the-bassets-of-compton-1163-1271/>>.

¹⁹ *BHRS*, 5, 204 (footnote).

²⁰ *BHRS*, 11, 27.

Landholding in Southill

It appears that, around the time of King John's death, Walter de Trailli held land in Southill from the Crown and Falkes de Bréauté held it from Walter on payment of a pair of gilt spurs or 6d per annum. One source suggests that it was held from Falkes by Gilbert de Clare, the new 1st Earl of Gloucester,²¹ and by Walter de Godarville from the earl in the period 1217-19. As noted above Walter was deprived of his lands in 1224, however the earl of Gloucester recovered at least the overlordship, and, as guardian of the Trailli heir, seems to have farmed the land unhindered until 1229 when Henry III restored Southill to Walter de Godarville. The king ordered the earl to remove his cattle and stock, but permitted him to keep the crops which he had sown. It is confirmed by a suit of 1235-36 that Walter had recovered Southill by an action against the earl of Gloucester in the king's court, and had thus secured a permanent tenure.²² *The Book of Fees* shows that Godarville held half a knight's fee in Southill from the de Trailli family in 1242/43 and in 1247 he granted the advowson of a third part of the church in Southill to the prior of Newnham. By this time, he was in debt to the Jews, from which we might infer that the last grant was more for financial reasons than the good of his soul.²³

Walter de Godarville died around the end of 1249 and during the inquisition (ordered by writ dated 8 January 1250) it was established that at the time of his death he had held the manor of Southill from the heirs of Walter de Trailli for a rent of 6d and a pair of gold spurs. In the absence of a son, Walter's two daughters became his heirs. By then Joan the elder (aged 16 years) was married to Sir Geoffrey Gascelyn, but the jury did not even know whether Margareta [Margery] her sister was dead or alive. The court recorded that Joan had to pay scutage²⁴ for the fee of half a knight and that her father's assets in Southill amounted to £9 19s 11d consisting of two carucates of land [240 fiscal acres] worth £3 3s 4d; assessed rent of two arrows (£4 19s 11d); villanage [*sic*]²⁵ (£1 2s 0d); meadow (6s 8d); and aid (*auxilium*) (8s 0d).²⁶

JOAN GODARVILLE

Marriage and family

Joan [Johanna] (born in or about 1234) was the elder daughter of Walter de Godarville and Hilary, his third wife and by 1247 the young heiress had been married to **Geoffrey Gascelyn** I without the king's licence. There is documentary evidence of one child, **Edmund**, who was born in 1252.²⁷

Medieval scripts offer a variety of spellings and the family name has been transcribed variously as Gascelin (1247, 1261), Gascelyn (1282) and Gacelyn (1369).²⁸ The origins of the family are unknown, but a possible connection with Gacé, a commune in the Orne département of Normandy, is suggested in combination with the Norman-French *lin*, meaning lineage or race.

²¹ *BHRS*, 11, 26; Gilbert de Clare was the 1st Earl Gloucester from 1217 until his death in 1230.

²² *BHRS*, 5, 203-204 (footnote).

²³ *BHRS*, 11, 27.

²⁴ **scutage**: annual payment to the overlord in lieu of providing knights for military service.

²⁵ **villanage**: tenure at the will of a feudal lord by villein services.

²⁶ *BHRS*, 5, 203-204.

²⁷ For the marriage without royal approval, *BHRS*, 11, 26 cites *Excerpt. Rot. Fin.*, ii, 9; For the birth of Edmund, *BHRS*, 11, 28 cites *Cal. Fine R.*, i, 234-5 and *Cal. Inquis. p.m.*, ii, 243, 382.

²⁸ *BHRS*, 11, 26 cites *Excerpt. Rot. Fin.*, ii, 9; *BHRS*, 11, 27 cites *Cal. Pat. R.*, 1258-66, 143; 'The Cartulary of the Cistercian abbey of Old Wardon, Bedfordshire: from the manuscript (Latin 223) (transcribed and edited, with introduction, abstracts and appendices in English)', ed. G.H. Fowler, *BHRS*, 13 (1930), 302 (**N/38**); *Cal. Pat. R., Edward III*, vol. 14, p. 327.

The inheritances of Joan Godarville

On Walter de Godarville's death at the end of 1249, the manors of Chippenham and Sheldon (Wilts) passed to his elder daughter and likewise the lands in Southill, which automatically became the responsibility of her husband, Geoffrey Gascelyn. On Geoffrey's death in 1282 the Crown ordered that a knight's fee held from Walter de Trailly in Southill and a half a virgate [15 fiscal acres] in Southill of the fee of Simon le Bel, and sixteen acres of land of the fee of the abbot of Wardon were to be delivered back to Joan as Geoffrey's widow.²⁹ It was recorded that at the time of his demise, Geoffrey held nothing directly from the Crown in Southill, rather he had held the knight's fee and the half virgate by knight service thanks to Joan's inheritance. Geoffrey had bought the 16 acres which he held from the abbot of Wardon, for which Joan had been jointly enfeoffed with him.³⁰ Joan continued to hold the knight's fee in Southill in 1284 and when she died in 1287, 'her land in Southill was delivered to Edmund Gascelin her son and heir, then aged 35 years'.³¹

GEOFFREY GASCELYN I

The sins of the father-in-law

Based on his suitability as a match for Walter de Godarville's elder daughter and heiress, Geoffrey Gascelyn I must have been a well-regarded figure. He took on his father-in-law's debt to the Jews during Walter's lifetime, an entry in the *Cal. Fine Rolls* dated 1248/49 noting:

The king has pardoned to Geoffrey Gascelin £10 of the £32 which he owes him for Walter de Goderville [*sic*] for Walter's debt, and he has granted him that he may render 40s. per annum of the remaining £22, namely 40s. at the forthcoming Exchequer of Michaelmas in the thirty-second year [1248], 40s. at the Exchequer of Michaelmas next following, and 40s. thus from year to year at the same term until the aforesaid £22 are paid to the king [11 instalments would see the debt cleared on 29 Sep 1258]. Order to the barons of the Exchequer to cause Geoffrey to be quit from the aforesaid £10 and to have the aforesaid terms for the remaining £22.³²

In 1249 Geoffrey was outlawed and banished with William de Valence (youngest half-brother of Henry III and in whose household Geoffrey served as a knight) for trespass against the king's order. His father-in-law was ordered to sell Geoffrey's lands and goods, but this directive was quickly revoked.³³

In 1252/53 further evidence of Walter de Godarville's debt surfaced in the *Cal. Fine Rolls*:

The king, concerning 8 m[arks]. 10s. which Geoffrey Gacelin and Joan his wife owe to the king of the debts in which Walter de Godarvill, father of the same Joan, whose heir the same is, was bound to Abraham de Berkhamstead, Jew, has granted to the same Geoffrey and Joan that notwithstanding that they have not observed their terms that the king gave to them concerning the aforesaid money they are to render 4 m. 5s. at the Exchequer of Easter in the thirty-seventh year and 4 m. 5s. at the Exchequer of Easter in the following year. Order to the barons

²⁹ *Cal. Close R., Edward I, 1279-88*, vol. 2, p. 167.

³⁰ **enfeoffment** (feudal): deed by which a person was given land in exchange for a pledge of service.

³¹ *Feudal Aids 1284-1431*, vol. 1 (London, 1899), p. 6; *BHRS*, 11, 28 cites *Cal. Fine R.*, 1, 234-5; *Cal. Inquis. p.m.*, ii, 243, 382.

³² *Cal. Fine Rolls* 33 Henry III (28 October 1248-27 October 1249), Fine Roll C 60/46, m. 12, No. 20 <https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_046.html>.

³³ *BHRS*, 11, 26-27.

of the Exchequer to cause them to have those terms and it to be done and enrolled thus.³⁴

A career in the service of Henry III

Henry III was a weak individual and his reign was characterised by civil war with the barons led by his brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester. In a divided country, the evidence points towards Geoffrey Gascelyn I having followed in the footsteps of his father-in-law by dedicating his career to the service of the Crown and the royal household. On 17 February 1261 he was one of twenty-four soldiers of the Crown mandated to bring horses and arms to London and on 27 February, he was appointed constable of Hereford castle.³⁵ On 12 March 1261 Henry III issued a mandate to Petro de Gisorciis, chamberlain of London and custodian of the king's wine, to send a cask of good wine to Geoffrey Gascelyn without delay.³⁶ A further gift was granted by the king on 25 April 1261 when a mandate was issued for the constable to give Geoffrey Gascelyn six healthy oak trees from the royal forest of Chippenham.³⁷ All of these offerings coincided with the build-up to and negotiations over the Provisions of Oxford (1258) and when, on 29 April 1261, the pope condemned the reforms that had been forced upon Henry III, all barons in England were absolved from any oaths they have taken to ensure that the reforms are upheld.³⁸ On 7 June 1261 the monarch issued a mandate to Ricardo de Ewell' and Hugoni de Turri, buyers for the king's wardrobe, that Geoffrey should have three robes made for him.³⁹ This was one of many gifts of robes made over a period of several days, possibly according to custom or perhaps to reward the loyalty of his royal servants.

On 14 May 1264 Henry III and his son Prince Edward were taken prisoner by Simon de Montfort at the Battle of Lewes after which the sovereign was reduced to a figurehead (he was not freed until 4 August 1265). On 16 June 1264 Geoffrey Gascelyn, together with Rogo Gascelin and numerous others living in Windsor castle were summoned to London 'with all speed to speak with the king, who has important matters to communicate to them'. Failure to attend would render them 'rebels and contemnors of his mandate from his peace'. Safe conduct would be provided.⁴⁰ Clearly they were concerned for their safety as the king issued a further mandate on 28 June 1264 granting Geoffrey Gascelyn and Rogo Gascelyn safe passage by Stephen Soudan, marshal of the household, until 'Monday the morrow of the Apostles Peter and Paul and throughout the whole of that day'.⁴¹

Two further entries in the court rolls are worth noting. Firstly, an entry on 7 February 1266 records an agreement that Robert Paynel would hand over his land in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire to Sir Geoffrey Gascelyn, knight, unless he made certain payments. He subsequently had insufficient funds and the lands were forfeit as per.⁴² On 10 September 1267 Henry III granted Geoffrey Gascelyn the right to hold a fair at the manor of Chippenham on the vigil, feast and morrow of the feast of St Barnabas (10, 11 and 12 June).⁴³

³⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls* 37 Henry III (28 October 1252-27 October 1253), Fine Roll C 60/50, m. 12, No. 637, <https://frh3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_050.html>.

³⁵ *Cal. Close R.*, 1259-61, p. 457; *BHRS*, 11, 27 cites *Cal. Pat. R.*, 1258-66, 143.

³⁶ A. Jobson (ed.), *Baronial Reform and Revolution in England, 1258-1267* (Boydell & Brewer, 2016), pp. 74, 97; *Cal. Pat. R.*, 1258-66, p. 143.

³⁷ *Cal. Close R.*, 1259-61, p. 373.

³⁸ Magna Carta Timeline. TNA, <<https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/education/magna-carta-timeline.pdf>>.

³⁹ *Cal. Close R.*, 1259-61, p. 391.

⁴⁰ *Cal. Pat. R.*, 1258-66, p. 324.

⁴¹ *Cal. Pat. R.*, 1258-66, 329.

⁴² *Cal. Pat. R.*, 1258-66, 657.

⁴³ *CChR*, 1257-1300, p. 80.

Shield of the Gascelyn family

Chippenham still wears as one of its two coats of arms, the shield of the Gascelyn family.⁴⁴ The shield displays a golden field surmounted by ten billets azure⁴⁵ and a label gules.⁴⁶



Arms of the town of Chippenham as displayed on the Yelde Hall © Rodhullandemu. Image reproduced under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

Landholding and rights in Southill (1250/51)

Following the death of his father-in-law, records from early 1250 show that Geoffrey Gascelyn I held those parts of the manor of Southill which belonged to his wife Joan, and to her younger sister, Margery. He also had the wardship of and right to choose a husband for Margery, who was then under age and 'beyond seas'.⁴⁷

In 1250/51 Henry III granted Geoffrey Gascelyn and Johanna [Joan] his wife the right to hold a Tuesday market and the right of free warren.⁴⁸ The *Cal. Fine Rolls* noted that '*Concerning a fine for having a charter. Geoffrey Gascelin owes the king 11 m[arks] for acquitting a charter of market and warren from the [fees of the] Chancery.*' A marginal note beside this entry in the originalia roll, E 371/16, m. 1, reads: 'He is to be distrained. Bedfordshire'.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ J.E. Jackson, 'On the History of Chippenham', *The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, vol. III (1857), 19-46 (28).

⁴⁵ **Billet** (fr. *billette*): a small oblong figure. In architecture blocks of a similar shape bear this name, and are frequent in Ionic and Corinthian, and are continued Norman, mouldings; but while they are in architecture either exact square or else cylindrical, in heraldry they are brick shaped. See <<https://www.heraldsnet.org/saitou/parker/index.htm>>.

⁴⁶ Labels have been supposed by some to represent the collar and cape of a garment, with several pendent labels of tongues, which were worn hanging from the back part of the neck, over the surcoat or tabard. **Gules** (fr. *gueules*): the heraldic name of the tincture red.

⁴⁷ *BHRS*, 11, 27 cites *Cal. Close R.*, 253, 257, 260, 270.

⁴⁸ S. Letters, *Online Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516*, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/list-index-soc/markets-fairs-gazetteer-to-1516/bedfordshire>>.

⁴⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls* 35 Henry III (28 October 1250-27 October 1251), Fine Roll C 60/48, m. 22, No. 68, <https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_048.html>.

Lands in Southill (1272-1287)

The Southill landholding was documented again in 1272, when John de Trailli reconfirmed that, with the exception of the advowson of the third part of the church (granted by Walter de Godarville to the prior of Newnham in 1247), the 3 carucates [360 fiscal acres] which his ancestors had formerly held, were the right of Joan, Geoffrey's wife. Joan and her husband and her heirs were to continue holding the land from de Trailli in return for one knight's service.

At John de Trailli's death in 1273, there is a report that Ralph Gasceline [sic] held one knight's fee from de Trailli in Southill.⁵⁰ However, Geoffrey Gascelin I was still alive and his right in the land having been acknowledged just one year earlier, this report cannot be explained satisfactorily. At the time of his death in 1282, Geoffrey Gascelyn I held lands in Wiltshire, Dorset, Cambridgeshire, and Bedfordshire.⁵¹ His widow Joan held certain Wiltshire lands in her own right as well as the fee from Walter de Trailli in Southill, which was still in her hands in 1284.⁵² So did Geoffrey or Joan ever visit Southill? There is no evidence one way or the other, but it seems likely that he was too preoccupied with royal duties either in Wiltshire or at the king's side to spend any time elsewhere.

EDMUND GASCELYN I

Family

Son and heir of Geoffrey Gascelyn I and his wife Joan, Edmund Gascelyn I was born in 1252. In common with his forebears he had a military career, serving in the earl of Pembroke's retinue.⁵³ Edmund and his wife Isabel had two sons. The elder son Edmund II (born before 1281, died 1337) and John (born about 1286, died in or before 1346). Records also mention 'William Gascelyn and John his brother' in connection with land in Dorset, but it is unclear whether William was a third child of the union between Edmund and Isabel, or from a different branch of the family.⁵⁴

Lands in Southill (1287-1309)

In 1287 at the age of 35 years, Edmund Gascelyn I inherited the land in Southill from his widowed mother, Joan.⁵⁵ In 1301 he conveyed the manor to Hugh de Osevilla [Doffevill], who returned it to Edmund and his **wife Isabel** in 1302, and to **John, their younger son** 'in tail'.⁵⁶ Edmund, who had made his career as a household knight of Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk (d. 1306), died on 24 September 1307. His elder son, Edmund II (aged 26 years) succeeded to the family estates in Wiltshire, Dorset and Cambridgeshire, while John benefitted from the entail by which he would receive the manor at Southill after the death of their mother. From there it would descend to John's heir, but as with the previous generation, it seems that a surviving spouse would be allowed to keep it during her lifetime.

⁵⁰ *BHRS*, 11, 27 cites *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, ii, 13.

⁵¹ *BHRS*, 11, 27 cites *Cal. Fine R.*, I, 166. *Cal. Close R. 1259-61*, 171-72 documents holdings in Hertfordshire in 1260.

⁵² *Feud. Aids*, vol. 1, p. 6.

⁵³ Edmund inherited from his widowed mother at the age of 35 years. *BHRS*, 11, 28 cites *Cal. Fine R.*, I, 234-5; *Cal. Inquis. p.m.*, ii, 243, 382.

⁵⁴ *Full Abstracts of The Feet of Fines Relating to the County of Dorset, remaining in the Public Record Office, London, from their commencement in the reign of Richard I*, ed. E.A. Fry and G.S. Fry (British Record Society, 1896), pp. 309-10, <<https://archive.org/details/dorsetrecords05frye/page/n3/mode/2up>>.

⁵⁵ *BHRS*, 11, 28 cites *Cal. Fine R.*, I, 234-5; *Cal. Inquis. p.m.*, ii, 243, 382.

⁵⁶ *Feud. Aids*, vol. 1, p. 27; **entail**: a settlement of land, destined to the grantee and the heirs of his body and in this period, such settlements rendered the land inalienable, ie not transferable to another owner.

In 1309 Isabel Gacelyn was called upon to pay tax of 12s 5d on her livestock and crops in Southill.⁵⁷ The sum was more than double that due from any other landholder in the parish and at one twenty-fifth of her moveable assets, suggests an overall value of 35s 5d. The sum would have purchased three cows at that time and had the equivalent spending power of £1,083 in 2017. No other members of the Gacelyn family were recorded in the subsidy list that year.

JOHN GASCELYN

Holdings, taxes and rights in Southill

The younger son of Edmund Gascelyn I and his wife Isabel, John was born in or shortly before 1286. He inherited the entailed lands in Bedfordshire after 1313⁵⁸ and is documented as one of four lords holding land in Southill in 1316.⁵⁹ In 1322 four messuages were granted to John Gascelin as lord of 'Suthgivele' and to **Alice his wife**.⁶⁰

At some time after 1327 John claimed the right of free warren in Gastlyns, producing the charter issued in 1250/51 by Henry III to his [grand]mother Joan in support of the bid. This may have taken place in 1330 when John still had the right to hold the market, but trading conditions were poor and it was often the case that nobody came to do business.⁶¹ The market is not recorded after the fourteenth century.⁶²

In 1332 the most affluent landholder in Southill was 'Johanne Hastyng' who was required to pay tax of 12s based on assets worth about £9. Perhaps a transcription error, this probably relates to John Gascelyn's entailed lands in Southill. Ten shillings were demanded from the abbot of Wardon, although the entry was subsequently deleted. That year, John Gaselyn was also required to pay taxes of 13d for holdings in the 'Villata de Holm cum Estwyk', 3s 9d for the 'Villata de Clifton', and 9s 3¼d for the 'Villata de Souhgyuel', probably associated with the four messuages acquired in 1322.⁶³ These were relinquished in 1337 when he was described as 'John son of Sir Edmund Gascelin, lord of Southill'.⁶⁴ Having been associated with Southill for more than 30 years, John died in or before 1346 (aged about 60 years).⁶⁵

EDMUND GASCELYN II

The elder son of Edmund Gascelyn I and his wife Isabel, Edmund Gascelyn II was probably born in 1281. He married Eleanor, widow of Sir John Kiriell, in 1303⁶⁶ and when he died on 1 September 1337 he held lands in Kent, Berkshire, and Wiltshire. The Southill assets, however, had already passed to his younger brother John. The inquisition post mortem held on the twenty-fifth of September at Ildesle [East Ilsley] (Berks) documented 'Geoffrey his firstborn son, aged 24 years, is his next heir.' However, the inquisition held in Wiltshire on the following day gives Geoffrey's age as 26 years.⁶⁷

⁵⁷ *Two Bedfordshire Subsidy Lists. 1309 and 1332*, ed. S.A.H. Hervey, Suffolk Green Books. No. XVIII (Paul & Mathew, 1925), p. 52.

⁵⁸ *Feud. Aids*, vol. 1, p. 19; *VCH Beds*, vol. 3 (1912) cites *Cal. Pat.* 1307–13, p. 529; Anct. D. (P.R.O.), A 8507; *QW*, p. 75; *Cal. Close*, 1333–7, p. 234.

⁵⁹ *Feud. Aids*, vol. 1, p. 19. The other lords were the abbot of Wardon, the prior of Newnham and the prior of Chicksands.

⁶⁰ *BHRS*, 11, 28 cites *Cat. Of Anct. D.*, vi, A. 8,507.

⁶¹ *QW*, p. 75.

⁶² *QW*, p. 64.

⁶³ *Two Bedfordshire Subsidy Lists*, pp. 112, 135, 157.

⁶⁴ *BHRS*, 11, 28 cites *Cat. Of Anct. D.*, vi, A. 11,026.

⁶⁵ *Feud. Aids*, vol. 1, p. 27.

⁶⁶ For further information on the military activities of Edmund Gascelyn II, see K. Warner, *Edward II*, <<http://edwardthesecond.blogspot.com/2007/08/rioters-and-ruffians-dunheved-gang-2.html>>.

⁶⁷ *Cal. Inquis. p.m.*, vol. 8, pp. 68-69 (120).

GEOFFREY GASCELYN II

Family

Son and heir of Edmund Gascelyn II and his wife Eleanor, Geoffrey Gascelyn II was born in either 1311 or 1313. These were tough times as the great famine hit countrywide between 1315 and 1317. There is no known record of Geoffrey's marriage to Elizabeth who first occurs in a document dated 30 December 1337. This was little more than 3 months after the death of his father when Edward III granted Geoffrey licence to enfeoff two named individuals and for them to regrant the manors of Sheldon and Chippenham to Geoffrey, Elizabeth his wife and their heirs; the final concord was issued three weeks from Easter 1338.⁶⁸

Christina, the first of the couple's two daughters, was born in 1339. Geoffrey's widowed mother survived until at least 1340 as evidenced by a deed dated 12 June 1340, which notes that 'As Lady Eleanor Gasselyn is bound to pay him [Geoffrey II] £100 on 29 Sep 1340, he agrees that if she appoints attorneys as he ordains and at his cost, she need not be troubled by a plea between William de Actone and herself etc.'⁶⁹

Declining fortunes

In common with other landholders, Geoffrey suffered from the economic consequences of the Great Plague (1348-50). With collapsing rents and spiralling labour costs, suggestions that he was ineffectual and incompetent are harsh.⁷⁰ On 8 October 1351 he granted all of his goods and chattels in the manors of Sheldon, Chippenham, Louden and Westlands in Heytesbury to Sir Thomas de Berkeley, lord of Berkeley.⁷¹ In return, he would receive 'an annual rent and maintenance as a squire in Berkeley's household. At the end of the seven-year agreement, Berkeley offered Geoffrey the choice of staying in his household for a further five years or taking an annuity of 10 marks (six pounds, sixty-six pence) with an acre of meadow and an acre of field - evidence of the sad decline of the family, which had once enjoyed an income of £200 a year'.⁷²

The heirs of Geoffrey Gascelyn

Christina Gascelyn became a nun in the Benedictine priory of Mynchenbarwe [Mynchin Barrow / Barrow Gurney in Somerset] and was professed in 1353 at the age of 14 years. Whether her parents sent her there due to straightened circumstances, the prospect of a good education, security, or for religious reasons is not known. A second daughter, also called Christina, was born to Geoffrey and Elizabeth in about 1356.

Geoffrey Gascelyn II died in 1375 and the inquisition post mortem held at Devizes on 6 April confirmed that he held the manor of Sheldon and Chippenham jointly with Elizabeth his wife. It is documented that 'Christina Gascelyn, his daughter, aged 19 years and more, is his heir.' Matters were less straightforward in Dorset where the 'next heirs are his two daughters, Christina and Christina, one aged 36 years and more, and the other 19 years and more'. On 7 May 1375 Christina the younger petitioned the bishop of Bath and Wells claiming that she was the sole heir. Nevertheless, enquiries were needed to determine whether Christina the elder had given birth before her profession as a nun and if so, whether that heir was still alive. It transpired that 'for 5 years [she] publicly wore the said habit, and had no heir of her body surviving when she entered the order, so far as the bishop can ascertain'.

⁶⁸ *Cal. Pat. R.*, vol. 3, p. 561; *Wilts Fines 1327-77*, no. 188.

⁶⁹ 'The Hungerford Cartulary. A Calendar of the Earl of Radnor's Cartulary of the Hungerford Family', ed. J.L. Kirby, *Wiltshire Record Society*, 49 (1994), 89 (352).

⁷⁰ M. Prestwich, *Plantagenet England, 1225-1360* (Clarendon Press, 2005), p. 401.

⁷¹ *Hungerford Cartulary* (No. 287); BCM/A/2/95/1

⁷² See <<http://edwardthesecond.blogspot.com/2007/08/rioters-and-ruffians-dunheved-gang-2.html>>.

Elizabeth died on 5 December 1394 and the inquisition post mortem held on 4 March 1395 confirmed that 'she held the manor of Sheldon and Chippenham in demesne as of fee tail jointly with Geoffrey, her late husband. She held in dower part of the manors of Great Cheverell, and of Biddestone. Christiana, wife of Edward Hales, confirmed as her daughter and heir, aged 36 years and more'.⁷³

ALICE, WIFE OF JOHN GASCELYN

It is during the crucial period between 1346 and 1369 that the descent of Gascelyn lands in Southill becomes unclear. Few documents have survived and the relationships between one family member and another have been interpreted differently depending on the writer. There is no doubt that Alice, wife of John Gascelyn, occurs in 1322.⁷⁴ It is assumed by the editor of *BHRS* 11 that this is the same woman who, in 1346, held jointly with John Baret [Barat] of Baldock (Herts) half a fee in Southill 'of the heir of Edmund Gascelin, a minor, who held of John de Trailli'. That Alice was responsible for the land with a man other than her husband shows that her spouse had indeed died.⁷⁵ The evidence further points towards an heir (born in or after 1326), son of Alice and John, and grandson of Edmund Gascelyn I.

In 1356 'Alice late wife of John Gys [Guise] Knt., sister and heir of Edmund Gascelin, made a feoffment of land' in Southill.⁷⁶ Having explored the family line descending from Edmund I to his great-granddaughters, the author remains perplexed over this clause. Suffice to say that assuming this to be the same person, Alice, widow of John Gascelyn, had remarried and then been widowed for a second time.

VCH Beds presents evidence that 'by 1363 the manor had been alienated to John Creuker for his life, with reversion to Geoffrey Gastlyn, Alice's son, which reversion the latter granted in that year to Richard Gregory and others in trusteeship'.⁷⁷ The arrangements intimate that Alice had died by this time and that Geoffrey (by now in his thirties) was without an heir.

THE ABBOT OF WARDON

Acquisition of Gascelynesbury manor

Geoffrey Gascelyn, son of John and Alice, died in or before 1369 and the patent roll of 16 November 1369 at Westminster documents the abbot of Wardon paying £100 [spending power of about £49,000 in today's money] to Edward III for a licence to acquire 'Gascelynesbury' manor in Southill from Geoffrey's trustees - Richard Gregory the younger, John Risle and John Hayward. In return, the abbot was to provide two chaplains to celebrate divine service daily at the altar of the Blessed Mary in the abbey church for the souls of Geoffrey Gacelyn, Alice Gacelyn, their ancestors and all faithful departed.⁷⁸

The high price of the licence reflects charges imposed by the Crown to fund war with France. Moreover, the manor was to be held in mortmain, that is in perpetuity, free of feudal services to the Crown and therefore at great cost to the grantee. At the time that the manor was assigned to the abbey, the right of free warren was worth 6s 8d (½ mark) annually.⁷⁹ The ability to pay suggests that either the abbey's parlous financial situation was improving or, despite spiralling debts, the monks considered this to be a worthwhile, long-term investment.

⁷³ *Hungerford Cartulary* cites *Cal. Inquis. p.m.*, vol. 17, (468).

⁷⁴ *BHRS*, 11, 28 cites *Cat. Of Anct. D.*, vi, A. 8,507.

⁷⁵ *BHRS*, 11, 28; *Feud. Aids*, vol. 1, p. 27.

⁷⁶ *BHRS*, 11, 28 cites *Cat. Of Anct. D.*, v, A. 11,443; 12,024.

⁷⁷ *VCH Beds* cites *Feet of F. Beds*. Trin. 37 Edw. III.

⁷⁸ *VCH Beds* cites *Abbrev. Rot. Orig.* (Rec. Com.), ii, 307 confirming that the manor was to be held in mortmain; *Cal. Pat. R., Edward III*, vol. 14, p. 327; *Chan. Inq. p.m.* 43 Edw. III, pt. ii (2nd nos.), no. 16.

⁷⁹ *VCH Beds* cites *Chan. Inq. p.m.* 43 Edw. III, pt. ii (2nd nos.), no. 16.

Sadly none of the abbey's accounts have survived and the next 163 years are a blank. Just one reference to Gastlings has been found in government records, which dates to 1428 when the abbot of Wardon held half a fee in Southill. The asset pertained to the manor of Northill which had once been held by John Trailli and the document merely acknowledges that the half fee had previously been held by 'John Barat of Baldock and Alicia de Gacelyns'.⁸⁰

The last years before the Dissolution

Augustine London, abbot of Wardon from about 1500 to 1535, proved to be a canny businessman who issued new leases wherever possible to maximise income generation opportunities. On 28 August 1532 he let the messuage called Gastlings and the 'messuage called Deys howse in Southill' to **John Gardener** for a fixed term of 31 years (effective 29 September 1534) at £10 per annum. The present-day Gastlings may be on or near the site of the medieval manor house, but the location of 'Deys howse' [Day's house] has not been identified.

It seems that John Gardener's predecessor at Gastlings was one **William Barbur [Barbor]**, who made his will on 4 January [?] 1533. Barbur died in the second half of 1534, but there is no record of probate being granted.⁸¹ He requested burial in the parish church at Southill with customary bequests for 'tithes forgotten' (12d), and to the mother church of Lincoln (2d). The friars of Bedford were to have 10s for a trental for the testator's soul, the same to the friars of Hitchin, and to the friars of Dunstable. Twelve pence were given to the 'painting of Our Lady of Grace in Southill church', 2s 4d to the Brotherhood of Biggleswade, and the like to the Brotherhood of Luton, and the Brotherhood of Shillington. Every male child of William Barbur's son, Ralph, would receive a bullock (or cash equivalent) and a sheep, while Ralph himself was to have 'all wearing gere and the great brass pot'. To his wife Agnes, William left the residue of the couple's household goods 'and iiii bees' [four beehives?]. Significantly the monks of Wardon received nothing, which seems unusual given that the abbot was Barbur's overlord, however, this may be explained if the tenancy were to be removed from Barbur family hands. A fit of pique, perhaps? Ralph Barbor occurs as a copyholder in the Court of Augmentations accounts for 1538, when he was paying 12s 8d (8d being the price of two capons) for a messuage formerly occupied by Richard Percell and 3 acres of arable and a piece of pasture 'above Netherbankes Wyke in Southill'.⁸²

By the mid-1530s Henry VIII was at odds with the pope and having set his sights on appropriating the Church's wealth, the king ordered a full survey to establish how much property it owned in England and Wales. The results were recorded in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, when the rent for *Eastlynbury [sic]* was given as £10.⁸³ Wardon Abbey surrendered to the Crown on 4 December 1537 but this had no impact on the fixed terms of the lease and the rent remained unchanged.⁸⁴

The Court of Augmentations accounts (1537/38) also show that **Clement Est.** had held five copyhold properties in the abbot of Wardon's Southill manor worth a total of 7s. Moreover, as a tenant at will, he held 15 acres of land and 3 acres of meadow in Southill 'reserved from ind. of farm of Gasclyns' for 24s pa.⁸⁵ The start date is not provided, but calculations show that these assets were accounted for as part of Southill manor in 1535.

⁸⁰ *Feud. Aids*, vol. 1, p. 41.

⁸¹ *Bedfordshire Wills 1531-1539*, trans. P. Bell (Beds Family History Society, 2005), p. 85 (154).

⁸² 'Court of Augmentations Accounts for Bedfordshire – II', ed. Y. Nicholls, *BHRS*, 63 (1984), 88 (117).

⁸³ W. Dugdale, 'Wardon Abbey, in Bedfordshire', in *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Caley, Sir Henry Ellis and the Reverend Bulkeley Bandinel, 8 vols. (London, 1846), vol. 5, part 052, p. 373.

⁸⁴ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1825), p. 373; *BHRS*, 63, 89 (119).

⁸⁵ *BHRS*, 63, 89 (118).

GASTLINGS AND DAY'S HOUSE AFTER THE SUPPRESSION OF WARDON ABBEY

The Daye family

By the close of September 1538 **Richard Daye**, formerly one of the abbot's free tenants, held a tenement and adjoining 2-acre croft for 2s 6½d. The property is shown in the accounts as having been part of the monks' manor of Southill and lay between two other properties in the lost hamlet of West End [TL 1342 4221], less than half a mile south of Gastlings.⁸⁶

Nearly 8 years later, the will of Richard Day of Southill, husbandman (dated 18 March 1546 and proved on 11 June), requested burial in the church of Southill. The document shows that Richard and his wife Ellen had six sons. Ellen was to live in the family home until her death, after which it would be inherited by their [eldest] **son, Richard**. It is conceivable that this was the abovementioned 'Dey's house' in Southill, but there is insufficient evidence to be sure.

Ellen and the children would have joint responsibility for Richard senior's farm at Broom for remaining the term of the lease and 'any profit to be divided between them, both cattle and grain, the seed grain only deducted and excepted'. **William** was to inherit his father's house in West End, which may be the tenement and 2-acre croft mentioned above. **Thomas** Day would receive 'the house that Mathew Davye dwells in', while **John, Robert, and Henry** Day were each to receive seven quarters of barley on reaching the ages of 20, 19 and 18 respectively.⁸⁷

Edmund Gostwick

The lease of Gastlings manor was acquired after 1538 by **Edmund Gostwick**, who is best known for illegally laying claim to the neighbouring Warden warren on 23 July 1541. He threatened to beat and lock up the warrener if he took any of the rabbits which Edmund now claimed as his by right. On 15 August 1541 Edmund, together with James Webster, William Steward and about six or eight more forcibly entered the warren armed with bows and arrows, billhooks and other weapons which they deployed to kill and injure the animals. He subsequently attacked the warren numerous times, destroying an estimated 100 or more rabbits, worth about £350 in today's money.

Edward Peke, who held Warden warren from the king, complained to Sir John Gostwick of Willington JP (Edmund's eldest cousin) asking him to stop the incursions. Sir John called a meeting on the warren between Peke, Edmund and four elderly local men who knew the extent, limits and bounds of the warren well. The villagers testified that the land had always been part of Warden warren and Sir John ruled that Edmund had acted unlawfully. He ordered Edmund and all of his servants to keep the peace and to cease hunting or taking rabbits until the matter had been examined further by the king's officials. Edmund ignored him. On his orders, at around 10pm on both Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th November 1541, Anne Gostwick (Edmund's wife) together with about ten or twelve others entered the warren, assaulting and seriously injuring the warrener and his servants who feared for their lives. The gang then seized about forty couples of rabbits using 'heyes' (long nets erected between the rabbits and their burrows) and other nets.

Peke claimed that unless speedy reparation was made, such losses meant that he was neither able to pay his cash rent nor provide the king with the customary rabbits while the royal household was at the king's manor of Ampthill. Peke urged Sir Richard Rich, Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, to call Edmund before him and ensure that he made good the damage.⁸⁸ No records survive to say what happened next.

⁸⁶ *BHRS*, 63, 85 (113).

⁸⁷ Will of Richard Day of Sowthyevell made 18 March 1546 [BARS, ABP/R11/214].

⁸⁸ A full transcription of the PRO Augmentation Office, Proceedings 17/20 is held in Beds Archives.

The Piggott family of Stratton

On 19 November 1544 Rowney Grange and Rowney warren (excluding rabbits in 'le Indelond'), the farm of Gastlings, Doys House [*sic*], and Beales Grove in Southill, were sold by the Crown to **Francis Piggott of Stratton**, Biggleswade for £698 6s 0d.⁸⁹ After his death, Piggott's widow Margery surrendered her life interest in them to Thomas Piggott, her late husband's son.⁹⁰ On 4 May 1566 a licence costing £11 13s 4d was issued by the Crown permitting John Gyfford and Thomas Pygott to sell the manors of Rowney and Gastlings to **Hugh Cartright of West Malling, Kent**.⁹¹ The transaction was completed at Trinity (eight weeks after Easter Sunday) on receipt of £700 for five messuages, five gardens, 600 acres of land, 100 of meadow, 120 of pasture, 100 of woodland and 500 of heath, tithes, and two shillings-worth of rents in Southill, Old Warden, Rowney, and Shefford.⁹²

The Thurgood family

On 9 February 1569 a lease for the manor of Rowney was agreed between Hugh Cartright of Kent and local yeoman, **Nicholas Thurgood [Thurgood]** for a term of 41 years at £66 per annum. Included were 'the site of the manor or grange of Rowney', Rowney Warren, tithes, Broomclose wood, Kettlesey mead, and Beales grove in Southill, an area of 1,138 acres (557 acres of land, 81 of woodland, and 500 acres of heath).⁹³ On 14 October 1587 William Cartwright of Offington (Nottinghamshire) sold the property to Richard Thurgood of Rowney for £1,500.⁹⁴ By May 1599 the holdings appear to have been split, with Nicholas Thurgood the elder of Rowney (gentleman) having 'solde or conveyed away' Gastlings, Doys House, 13 acres of land and 15 acres of meadow to '**sondry persons**'.⁹⁵

The Thurgood family was still to be found at Gastlings in the 17th century. Extracts from the burial registers of Southill document the burial on 28 October 1612 of Alice, wife of Thurgood of 'Grations'; on 11 July 1619, Nicholas Thurgood of Gaslins; and on 13 April 1624 Nicholas Thurgood of 'Grations'.⁹⁶ On 26 January 1621 yeoman George Thurgood 'of Gaslins', leased various lands in Southill from yeoman Clement East and Nicholas East of Southill; payment of £430 was made by George's father, Thomas.⁹⁷ On 10 May 1643 a marriage settlement was made by Thomas Thurgood senior and Thomas Thurgood junior of Gaslins, gentlemen on the marriage of John Thurgood (son and heir apparent of the younger Thomas) to Mary East, daughter of yeoman Nicholas East of Stanford.⁹⁸ When the will of Thomas Thurgood of 'Gaslins, in Southill, gent.' was proved on 20 January 1648, he bequeathed his house and lands there to his elder son John, with the proviso that in the event of John failing to produce a male heir, it would go to his younger son, Nicholas.⁹⁹ Gastlings left Thurgood family hands for good when John Thurgood sold the manor to **Sir John Keeling** in 1667.¹⁰⁰

⁸⁹ *LP*, vol. 19 pt. 2, p. 413 (30).

⁹⁰ *VCH Beds* cites *Chan. Inq. p.m.* (Ser. 2), xcv, 1; *Chan. Proc.* (Ser. 2), bdle. 139, no. 151.

⁹¹ *Cal. Pat. R., Elizabeth I*, vol 3, p. 496 (2776).

⁹² Final Concord dated Trinity 1566 [BARS, W1999].

⁹³ Lease for 41 years dated 9 February 1569 [BARS, X95/133].

⁹⁴ Bargain & Sale enrolled dated 14 October 1587 [BARS, W2001].

⁹⁵ Bargain & Sale enrolled dated 10 May 1599 [BARS, W2003].

⁹⁶ J.J. Howard (ed.), *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, vol. 4 second series, (London, 1892), p. 281.

⁹⁷ Assignment of lease (500 yrs) dated 26 January 1621 [BARS, W1620].

⁹⁸ Marriage settlement dated 10 May 1643 [BARS, W1370].

⁹⁹ Blaydes, *Beds. N. and Q.* iii, 299.

¹⁰⁰ *VCH Beds* cites *Feet of F. Beds. East. 19 Chas. II.*

THE ABBOT OF WARDON: SOUTHILL MANOR

In 1135 Walter Espec, lord of the manor and founder of Wardon Abbey, granted assarts and woodland in Wardon and Southill to the Cistercian Order. Other donors giving land in the parish of Southill during the twelfth century included Payne de Beauchamp and his wife Countess Rohesia,¹⁰¹ Philippa de Trailly, daughter of Walter Espec's middle sister, Albreda,¹⁰² and Walter's heirs Geoffrey de Trailli and Robert de Ros.¹⁰³ There were also grants from Radulf Malclerc,¹⁰⁴ Randulf de Caron and his son John, Berardus of Broom,¹⁰⁵ and Roger, son of Ansketil.¹⁰⁶ The scale of the abbey's twelfth-century holdings in Southill is impossible to gauge and there is no indication as to whether they abutted one another such that they could be enclosed or were, more probably, scattered throughout the common arable fields, shared pasture, and meadows. In 1330, thirty-nine years before the monks acquired Gastlings, the abbot of Wardon claimed right of free warren and view of frankpledge in Southill manor.¹⁰⁷

Nine of the abbot's properties in the parish of Southill warranted individual entries in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1535), the remainder being valued together as *Southill cu' membr'* (Southill manor).¹⁰⁸ The Court of Augmentations accounts (1537/38) fail to mention a manor at Southill *per se*, although clauses 113 to 118 itemise income totalling £36 9s 10¼d [or £36 8s 10¼d] from free tenants, copyholders and tenants at will who rented properties from the king in 'Southill with Westend, Standford & Broom'. Clause 119 shows 12s derived from a tenement held at 'farm' (a fixed term contract) in Westend and 26s 8d [2 marks] from a pasture called Secotes. Neither was listed as a separate entity in 1535, such minimal sums presumably having been accounted for under Southill manor.

By 1538 the late abbey's lands in Southill were worth £38 8s 6¼d [or £38 7s 6¼d] to the Crown, an increase of £5 9s 7½d [or £5 8s 7½d] since 1535.¹⁰⁹ Table 1 summarises the following information:

Column (a) – Properties owned by the abbot of Wardon in the parish of Southill (1535).

Column (b) – Taxable value of the property in 1535.

Column (c) – Name of the asset as shown in the Court of Augmentations accounts (1537/38).

Column (d) – Rent due to the Crown in 1538.

Column (e) - Remarks.

¹⁰¹ *Cal. Pat. R., Henry VII*, vol. 2, p. 615 (9).

¹⁰² *BHRS*, 1, 25; *BHRS*, 13, 244-45 (327).

¹⁰³ *Cal. Pat. R., Henry VII*, vol. 2, p. 614 (9).

¹⁰⁴ *Cal. Pat. R., Henry VII*, vol. 2, p. 617 (11).

¹⁰⁵ *Cal. Pat. R., Henry VII*, vol. 2, p. 615 (9).

¹⁰⁶ Ansketil refers to an ecclesiastical elder, including an elder in a monastic order (Anglo-Norman). Ansketil the priest occurred as lord of [Great] Barford, Bedfordshire in 1086, while Ansketil of Southill and his son John witnessed several charters relating to the abbey between 1171/76 and 1180/1200. '[Great] Barford'. *Open Domesday*, <<https://opendomesday.org/place/>> and *BHRS*, 13, 5.

¹⁰⁷ *QW*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁸ *Mon.*, vol. 5, part 052, p. 373.

¹⁰⁹ *BHRS*, 63, 85-89 (113-118).

PROPERTY (1535)	VALUE (1535)	PROPERTY (1538)	VALUE (1538)	REMARKS
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Stanfordbury	£10	Manor or grange of Stanfordbury	£10	
Fishers Grange with Bury Close ¹¹⁰	£8 10s 4d	Messuage & farm called 'Graces grounde in Southill'	£8 15s 4d	The post-suppression uplift of 5s equates to a moveable rent of 25 rabbits, which would have been paid annually to the abbot.
Holme Mills Grange	£7 7s 4d	Holme Mills Grange	£7 8s 8d	Post-suppression accounts suggest that a moveable rent of four capons was commuted to 16d cash.
Eastlynbury [sic]	£10	Messuage called Gastlyns & messuage called 'Deys howse' [Day's house] in Southill	£10	
Rowney	£18 13s 4d	Rowney Grange	£20	By 1535 Rowney was worth £18 13s 4d [28 marks]. Its status is unclear, however the 1538 accounts show Rowney Grange was 'late occ. Abbot to use of sd late monastery'. A post-suppression increase of £1 6s 8d [2 marks] brought the rental value to £20 [30 marks]. The uplift may have included a cash element in lieu of tithes, a theory supported in a document dated 10, 11 March 1691 [BARS, BS858-859].
Rowney Warren	£7	Rabbit warren of Rowney	£8	A moveable rent of 100 rabbits formerly paid to the abbot was commuted to 20s cash.
Indelonds [Ireland] pasture	£1	Leased as part of a package including Warden Warren and accounted for under the lordship of Wardon	NA	

¹¹⁰ On 1 December 1507 Sir John Fysher of Bedfordshire obtained a licence from Henry VII to grant the abbot of Wardon four messuages, 202 acres of land, 16 acres of meadow and 36 acres of pasture in Southill, Stanford and Broom. The land was 'extended at' £6 5s 4d according to the county valuation officer, Thomas Grove. This was 'in full satisfaction of 10 marks [£6 13s 4d] yearly of land and rent', for which a licence had been granted on 8 February 1507. *Cal. Pat. R., Henry VII, 1485-1509, 2, 556 (563)*. Bury Close is thought to have been a warren containing pillow mounds or 'buries'.

PROPERTY (1535)	VALUE (1535)	PROPERTY (1538)	VALUE (1538)	REMARKS
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Southill manor	£32 18s 10 ³ / ₄ d	Free tenants in Southill with Westend, Stanford & Broom	£10 19s 6 ¹ / ₄ d	Plus one rose and a pair of golden spurs in 1538. ¹¹¹
		Copyhold rents	£18 2s 6d	There appears to be an error either in the transcription or the mathematics, which would reduce the total in 1538 to £18 1s 6d.
		Tenants at will	£7 7s 10d	
		Tenement in Westend	12s	
		Pasture called Secotes	26s 8d	
Stanford Mills	£2	Stanford Mill	60s	The reason for increasing the value by 20s between 1535 and 1538 remains unclear.
Holme Mills	£8 6s 8d	Holme Mills	£8 6s 8d	

Table 1

¹¹¹ *BHRS*, 63 87 (116) shows the heirs of Nicholas Wodell paying 6d for various parcels of meadow in Brodemede in Stanford and a pair of gold spurs 'coming from the same land formerly charged above at 6d'. The spurs were given to the Crown auditor as part of the profits from his office.

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