THE CHAPEL OF S. MARGARET, MELLS.

The Ruin and Its History.

By W. R. Gowers, M.D., F.R.S.

Two miles from Halesworth, the valley of the Blyth is narrowed by a projection of its southern bank, and on the top of this projection is the ruin of "Mells Chapel." Small as it is, its position renders it a conspicuous object, although the cap of ivy that covers its highest part renders its real character not distinct on a passing glance. Its commanding situation is better perceived from the place itself. A long stretch of the valley is seen on either side, with white cottages, winding stream, bending willows, and aspen avenues in the meadows, while beyond the opposite slope, range and range of woodland can be discerned. The ruin is that of a small Norman Chapel, which apparently passed to ruin untouched by the "restorer's" hand. All but the lower portions of the nave walls, the chancel wall and arch, and the wall above the arch, have been destroyed. Still, although its remains are scanty, they are of interest. Indeed, as the ruin of an unchanged Norman Chapel, it seems to be unique in East Anglia, and there are few like it in the kingdom. Yet no description of the ruin has appeared in print, and the only manuscript account of it that has come to hand was written 150 years ago.

It caught the eye of that acute observer of church antiquities, T. Martin: he paid a brief visit to it, of which he made the most, adding a rough plan and outline sketch from memory, which have some value. His description, as given in his "Church Notes," is hereafter quoted. Davy, the indefatigable collector, seems to have been unaware of the existence of the ruin, until he met with Martin's description. This he copied into his MS., now in the British Museum, and he appended to it a water-

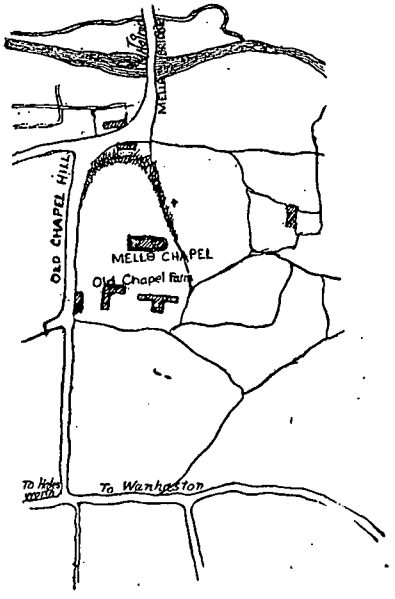
colour sketch of the ruin made by his well-known namesake, probably to compensate for the personal examination which he could not make. This, unfortunately, the drawing does not do, for it is worthless. It is evidently an arbitrary elaboration of a hasty and inaccurate sketch. A careful study of it shows that it has no value as evidence of any single point. I have given a copy of it to the Suffolk Institute, and it can be seen at Ipswich. Kirby, in his "Traveller," merely mentions the ruin and its dedication to S. Margaret. This is, indeed, the only definite mention of the ruin in print. The fact is strange, the more so because some notice of the ruin seems to have been taken

RUIN OF MELLS CHAPEL FROM THE S.

from time to time. Two other water-colour drawings of it are preserved in the Ipswich Museum; these differ from Davy's, except as to inutility. A copy of an outline sketch purporting to have been made in the 17th Century has been sent to me. But the drawing shows with precision so many features that certainly cannot have existed, that it is not needful to do more than mention the fact of the existence of the representation, by way of caution.

The position of the chapel deserves further description. Where the valley is narrowed, as just mentioned, the river passes close to the projecting southern bank. Here it is crossed by "Mells Bridge." The road over the bridge, towards the south, turns to the right for fifty yards or so before resuming its former direction and ascending the

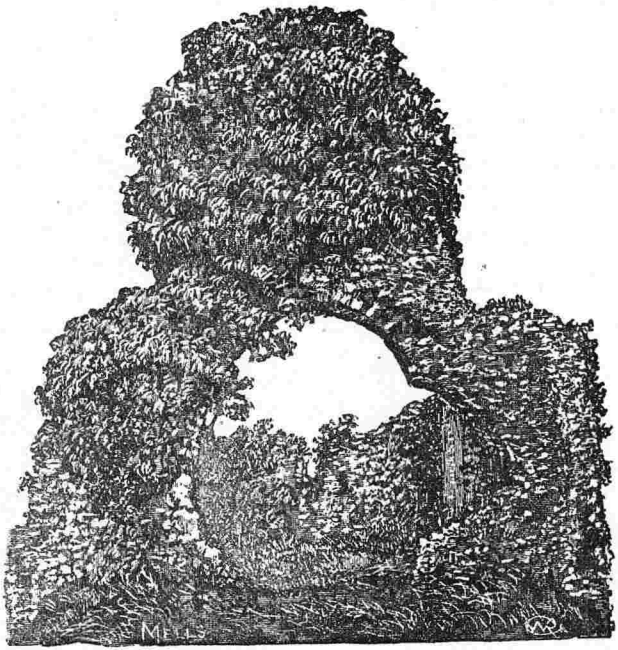
side of the valley. Its turn to the right corresponds with the extremity of the Chapel Field, in which the ruin is situated; this ends in a very steep slope, between which and the road are a few cottages, constituting (with a few others at a distance) the present hamlet of Mells. But the direction of the road over the bridge is continued by a foot-path along the edge of the field, which adjoins that in which the chapel stands. The slope of this field is gradual, but it is separated from the Chapel Field by an almost vertical bank covered with brushwood, in part 10 or 12 feet high. This is manifestly artificial, an opinion in which Canon Raven agrees; he examined the spot and noted its similarity with a surface contour elsewhere known to him of certainly Roman origin. It suggests that the Roman road from Dunwich may have crossed the Blyth here, and not at Blythford, an opinion which, it may be added, is supported by the direct course of the road from Dunwich to this spot and on to Holton.



The Chapel Field, thus bounded on the east, extends westwards to the road which ascends the hill. To the south it is bounded by the house and buildings of the Chapel Farm, from which the ruin is distant about 60 yards.

It will be convenient to describe first the present condition and suggestiveness of the ruin, and afterwards that which can be traced of its history and the associated history of the manor in which it stands. These embody many interesting facts.

By the kind permission of the owner, Mr. Rouse, of Ipswich, the interior of the building was cleared of the dense and impenetrable growth of bramble that occupied most of the Nave and some of the Chancel, and the inner surface of the remaining Nave wall was exposed throughout and made visible, as probably they had not been for four hundred years. The work was at the time only possible by the personal and energetic help of Mr. Ernest A. Kett, of Blythford Mill—harvest work absorbing at the time all the laborers: without his assistance some important facts could not have been ascertained.



THE CHANCEL ARCH AND SCREEN WALL, LOOKING E., AT THE INTERIOR OF THE APSE.

The chapel ruin stands in the field near its eastern side, so that the end of the chancel is only a few yards from the steep slope just mentioned. The field is cultivated up to the ruin, without the slightest attempt at the protection of the latter, although the wind and frost

and rain have done something to preserve it by forming a bank of earth outside the wall. The ruin presents the special interest that the base of its walls is intact, so as to furnish a model plan of a typical small early Norman Chapel. The remaining wall-base varies in height, measured inside, from 2 to 4 feet in the Nave to 8 feet or 9 feet in the Chancel apse. In addition to the outer wall there remains the Chancel arch. Its side walls are damaged to an even perilous extent, but the arch is perfectly semi-circular in its curve. Above it is a "screen wall," at least 8 feet in height. It is this which, covered with its preserving ivy, is such a conspicuous object from the valley.

All that remains consists only of rubble work. Ashlar, hewn stone, seems to have been used sparingly, and there is not now to be found a trace of hewn stone in the ruin. A study of what is left of the outer surface of the walls suggests that stone was used only at the window openings, the doorway, and the Chancel arch. Evidence of its use in the latter is afforded by many features of the arch; its present surface shows that it has lost a facing of worked stone (see fig.) Where, as in the Chancel, the walls are high enough to show the gaps of the lower parts of the window openings, the destruction of the sides of these makes it probable that they were once formed of stone. But the corners of the outer wall at the west end are finished with rounded flints, another instance of the use of flints to form corners in early Norman work.* One, and only one, hewn stone has been found in a field near the ruin. It is unmolded, and was, a year ago, lying beside the farm buildings. It may seem strange that no hewn stone can be discerned in the outer walls of the adjacent farm buildings or in those of the cottages in the neighbourhood, but a reason is not difficult to conceive. A bridge over the Blyth has existed for many centuries,

* By a writer in the *Journ. Arch. Ass.*, the neighbouring church of Thorington (tower arcade) is adduced as another example in connection with the origin of the round towers of East Anglia. This arcade, however, is, in the opinion of the esteemed rector, Mr. Hill, of not much value on this point. The chapel of Mells certainly is.

almost within a stone's throw of the ruin. We know by records that Blythburgh bridge was repaired with the stones of the ruined Priory. The stones, not very numerous, of the chapel, were ready for appropriation about the time at which Blythburgh Priory was built. Although no such stones are seen in the present bridge, yet one bridge succeeds another in the course of centuries. Nothing can be inferred from the absence of stones in the present bridge, which was built about 150 years ago. Could the bed of the river be excavated it might tell a different tale.

The soil within the chapel is two or three feet higher than that in the adjacent field. Corresponding to this difference, the base of the outer surface of the wall is concealed by a steep bank about three feet high. This has evidently been formed by the gradual accumulation of earth against the base of the wall, and by the fixation of the earth by the growth of grass, etc. It would be unsafe to expose the base of the wall, because the mortar has softened and disappeared in many places so as to imperil the stability of that which remains, especially in the apse. The most dangerous of these crevices, however, the owner kindly gave me permission to have filled with cement. The fact that the soil within is pure, fine, vegetable mould, makes it certain that the difference is due to the annual decay during many centuries of the leaves of the shrubs with which it was found choked. The height of the remaining exposed portion of the wall of the Nave is from two to four feet, concealed in parts by the vegetation growing on and beside it. The wall of the apsidal Chancel is from four feet in height at the sides to nine or ten feet at the semi-circular end. The wall between the nave and the chancel, on each side of the chancel arch, is about four feet wide, but is much broken away (see the last fig.) The ivy-covered screen-wall above the Chancel arch probably remains at nearly its original height, about eight feet above the top of the arch.

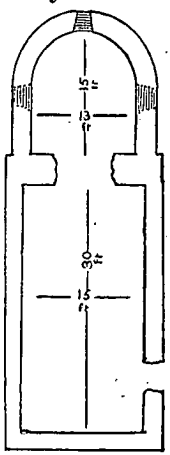
As an illustration of the accumulation of earth, it

may be mentioned that the doorway, presently to be described, in the south wall of the Nave, was filled with earth to the level of the top of the remaining wall on each side. Concealed on the outer side by the bank already mentioned, and within by a dense growth of bramble, its position had to be ascertained by probing before it could be cleared.

The tenant who left the farm three years ago, after occupying it for some twelve years, furnished the information that he had dug down several feet into the soil of both Nave and Chancel without finding any trace of stones or pavement. Whatever stones may originally have paved the chapel have doubtless gone the way of the others.

The chapel evidently consisted (and now consists in plan) of a Nave and apsidal Chancel, each small. The Nave is in length (interior measurement) 30 feet, in width one half the length, 15 feet.

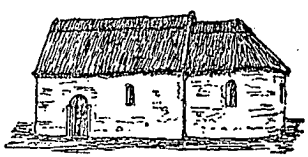
The apsidal Chancel is 15 feet in length, exactly the width of the Nave. The width of the chancel is 13 feet, two feet less than the width of the Nave. The difference has two causes; the wall of the Chancel is thicker than that of the Nave, and there is a rebate of six inches on the outer surface at the junction of the two.



PLAN OF MELLS CHAPEL.

The apse is semi-circular, the curve has a radius of 6 ft. 6 in., and begins 7 ft. 6 in. from the wall of the Chancel arch. The thickness of the arch wall is 4 ft. This brings the total interior length, from east to west end, to 48 ft., viz.: Chancel 14 ft., arch wall 4 ft., Nave 30 ft.

The only door opening is that just referred to in the south wall of the Nave, four feet from the west end of the wall. It is only three feet wide, although the irregularity of the rubble sides sug-


PROBABLE ASPECT OF MELLS CHAPEL.

gests that stones have gone from them. These, indeed, would almost certainly have originally bounded the doorway, and must have reduced its width to about 2 ft. 6 in. No trace of step stones or of threshold could be found.

The wall of the Nave is 22 inches thick, that of the chancel 30 inches.

The screen wall and Chancel arch are a most interesting feature. On each side of the arch the extent of wall is 4 ft. on the side towards the nave, 3 ft. towards the chancel, the explanation of the difference being that already mentioned. The width of the space below the arch was evidently at first 6 ft. 6 in., but the wall on each side has been broken away, so as to leave a gap two and a half feet deep (*i.e.*, an excavation of wall), commencing 18 inches from the ground and about four and a half feet in vertical measurement. These imperil the stability of the arch; and must, if increased, speedily bring it to the ground. The arch retains its semi-circular form, with little alteration, in spite of the loss of its stones, which have been removed without damaging the rubble. Its present radius is 3 ft. 3 in., corresponding to the diameter of 6 ft. 6 in. When faced with ashlar, its width was probably 6 ft., and the radius of the curve 3 ft.

Above the arch rises the remarkable screen wall, of which there still remains, preserved by the close casing of ivy,* about 8 ft. above the arch.

The sides of this wall, above the arch, are irregular, and have been broken away; originally its sides probably sloped, in pyramidal form, to an apex at the ridge of the roof. This is indeed indicated by Martin, as if then still obvious (see p. 343). The rebate on the outer wall at the junction of the chancel and nave, makes it probable that the chancel roof was not quite so high as that of the nave. If so the sloping sides of the screen wall would be covered with stone, and the removal of this explains the damage to the sides of the upper part of the wall. A steep

* This is unquestionable and an interesting example of the conservative influence of that which is supposed to be the great enemy of ruins.

pyramidal roof may be safely inferred from similar edifices, and from the height of the screen wall in proportion to the width of the chapel and also from its form, when less concealed and damaged, in Martin's sketch. It may be noted that the side walls, 10 ft. high in the apse, falling to 4 ft. at its commencement, rise suddenly to 10 ft. against the chancel arch wall, and no doubt retain nearly their original height, up to the commencement of the roof.

The general dimensions have these proportions: the width of the Nave was one half its length, and that of the chancel arch nearly one half that of the chancel, and equal to the radius of the curve of the apse.

The west end of the Nave presents an unbroken base wall with the square flint-wrought corners above mentioned, and no evidence of door or window. But the height of the remnant is not enough to give significance to the absence of any trace of west window.

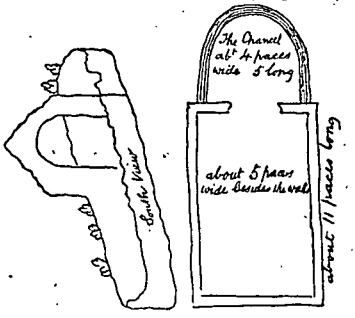
At the middle of the apse wall is a narrow space open above, with irregular sides, evidently the remains of the narrow east window space. It is the only certain window opening to be traced, and there can have been no other in the apse. But the position of two other chancel window openings can be inferred as probable from the wide openings in the walls opposite each other, on the north and south sides, so situated that the east side of the present window-gap, which is almost vertical, nearly corresponds with the commencement of the apsidal curve. Indeed, on the south wall, the surface of the wide splay is still distinct on the east side. The west edge is irregular, as the figures show. The bottom of each gap is about four feet from the top of the earth bank outside. No doubt the removal of the hewn stones of the window openings led to these wide gaps in the wall. The remains of the nave walls are too low to furnish any indications of the position of window openings in the sides of the nave, if any existed.

The material of which the walls are composed is the rubble of early buildings, without constituents of signifi-

cance in the substance of the wall. The outer surface of the chancel wall and its junction with that of the nave, opposite the screen wall, is intact on the south side over a considerable area, and manifestly presents its original state. The rounded flints are in horizontal courses, and the stones are nearly uniform in size and regular in course, above four or five feet from the ground (*i.e.* from the top of the outside bank); but in the lower four feet of the exposed wall they are irregular in size, and therefore, also in arrangement, some being large, oval, or elongated, even a foot in length; all are unbroken. The arrangement of the stones that form the inner surface of the wall is less regular, and the mortar between them is more abundant. In places there are traces of a covering layer of plaster or mortar. In the substance of the wall the stones are very irregular in size, but all have rounded angles. The mortar here has become very soft.

Martin's account of the chapel as he saw it in 1760 will now be intelligible. It is apparently the only existing *description* of the ruin, and is given by Davy in his Suffolk volumes (Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 19,081), from the MS. Church Notes of Martin now in the possession of Mr. Cullum.

"As I was riding from Halesworth to Wenhaston Church on Sunday the 14th of Sept, 1760 the ruins of a demolished chapel offered themselves to my view on the left hand about half a furlong (I guess) from the road. It stands high, in a close of about an acre of ground (arable, now a barley stubble), adjoining to the road leading over a wooden bridge towards Blyford Inn. The place it standes on is called Mills Hamlet, probably from a Water mill which stood by the afore-mentioned bridge, and not a bow shot from the Chapel. The close belongs to one Mr. Sparrow of Shanfield who has the great Tythes of Wenhaston. They plough quite close to the ruins, which is quite overrun with ivy, bushes, shrubs, &c. Quaere if any pavement or gravestones under the rubbish? If ever any steeple



REDUCED SKETCH AND PLAN GIVEN BY MARTIN.

here? The Quoin stones are all picked out. There seems to have been three windows in Cancella, but how many in the church?"

He appends a rough sketch; of this the adjoined figure is copied from Davy's reproduction.

It will be seen how nearly the statement of this precise observer agrees with what can now be observed.

We cannot err in ascribing this small chapel to the early Norman period. The form of the chancel arch, the terminal apse, the short chancel, the very narrow opening of the east window, and the high screen wall, are conclusive evidence that the date of its erection must have been before 1120, and possibly soon after 1100. It is not mentioned in Domesday. Few small subsidiary chapels were mentioned in the survey, but the very full account of the Manor of Mells gives a slight significance to its omission. All the churches in the adjacent parishes are noted, and at Wisset a similar subsidiary chapel is also mentioned. Most of the neighbouring churches present some Norman features, and one of them is especially interesting and instructive, from the comparison which can be traced, in certain features to the chapel of Mells. This is the church of Westhall. It is instructive to compare the surface of the wall at Westhall with the later round-flint surface of the north wall of the nave of this church. In this Norman wall at Westhall there is a Norman doorway, occupying precisely the same relative position as the door opening in the north wall at Mells. It is plainer than almost any other Norman door in adjacent churches, the only arch ornaments are an outer row of billets and an inner row of shallow scalloping. The capitals are quite plain, and their shape suggests that they were not intended for subsequent carving. It is precisely such a doorway as we may expect to have existed at Mells.

The proportions of the aisle are nearly those of the nave at Mells, but the dimensions are double. In the smaller chapel there was certainly no west door such as remains at Westhall, now serving only for an entrance

into the tower. But there is one other feature which suggests still further correspondence. In the flint wall of the east end of the aisle, a few feet from the south corner (midway between the corner and the inserted Perpendicular window), is a vertical row of hewn stones, the flush edges being towards the middle of the wall. They extend for about 8 ft. from the ground, and are in the exact place that would be occupied by the side of a chancel arch similar to that of Mells. Moreover, nearer the south end of the wall, and near the ground, there projects a mass of stone-like rubble, evidently the indication of a former wall projecting eastwards, and the place of this, six or eight inches from the corner, corresponds (according to the difference in size) very closely with the position of the wall of the chancel at Mells. Having regard to these facts, it seems probable that the Norman church at Westhall had a chancel similar to that at Mells, and that the two edifices were built at nearly the same time and in a style that differed only in the difference in elaborateness that was entailed by difference in size. Hence we may reasonably infer that the one narrow Norman window-opening remaining at Westhall, between the aisle and the tower, in the middle compartment of the arcade above the Norman doorway, reproduces for us the character of the window openings at Mells. It corresponds to the usual type: small, narrow, round-headed, and widely splayed on the inner side. We know that in such churches the window openings, for such they were, were small and placed high up, at least in the nave. At Mells there was certainly one at the east end, and also one on each side of the chancel. The positions of the gaps correspond with those of windows in the few unaltered Norman apsidal chancels, and the splay of one remains. There may have been in the nave only one at the west end; of others no trace could now remain. Nothing can be inferred from the two Perpendicular windows inserted in the south wall at Westhall. The amount of light needed by an early Norman congregation

must have been small, and superfluous light from unglazed window openings would involve additional air, no unimportant consideration, even to hardy peasantry, in a building, as at Mells, exposed to three of the four winds that blow.

Thus the chapel of S. Margaret, Mells, can be approximately dated. Nothing suggests a pre-Norman origin. Its special, and most unusual, feature is that its remains are changed only by destruction. Apparently it was never altered, never restored. As an untouched Norman relic, still left on the face of the earth, it is certainly most rare.

Before passing to the facts to be ascertained regarding its history, an earnest hope may be expressed that this relic of the past may be rescued from destruction. The chancel arch at least is not far from peril from the excavation of its sides, chiefly by climbing boys. This almost unique ruin in the middle of a cultivated field is absolutely unprotected. It urgently needs the guard of a railing, light and unobtrusive, but such as would be a barrier and protection, not only physical but moral. This however, ought to be placed not less than a yard from the bank which, as described, covers the base of the wall. The danger from decay of mortar should be obviated by cement, as it has been, for the time, in the chancel wall.

Suffolk archæologists should know, however, that for the present existence of the ruin they are indebted to the owner of the farm, Mr. J. Rouse, of Ipswich, who refused to listen to a suggestion that this obstacle to the plough should be removed.

[While these sheets are passing through the press (Aug., 1894) I have again visited the ruin, and have seen with regret that its interior and the doorway, which were cleared, are again choked with bramble, while the instructive south wall of the chancel is quite concealed by a fresh growth of shrubs. Many features above described are, therefore, not now visible. I trust that its present state, which is discreditable to Suffolk Archæologists, may not long continue.—W. R. G.]

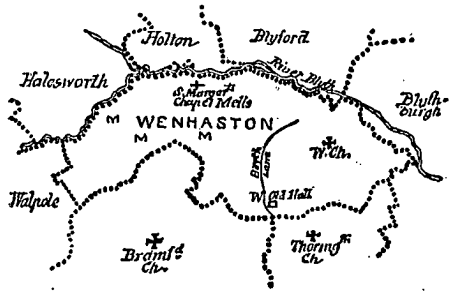
II.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHAPEL.

The facts that can be ascertained relating to the history of the chapel of Mells, relate, for the most part, to the ecclesiastical relations of the manor and the chapel. They constitute an interesting chapter in the early history of Tithes and Parochial relations, and of the proceedings to which these relations gave rise. These are described in the appended records, which will repay careful perusal. A brief historical epitome of the facts, and of others that may help to understand them, is alone necessary. It will be desirable, however, to add the few facts that can be ascertained regarding another chapel which existed in the parish, on account of its curious connections, and the evidence of the customs of such small parochial chapels which its records present.

The Manor.

The Manor of Mells occupies about half the parish of Wenhaston, extending farther towards the western boundary than towards the eastern, where the parish church is situated. On the north it is limited by the river Blyth, on the south it is contiguous with the parishes of Bramfield and Thorington. It certainly extended from the north to the south of the parish, but its limits, East and West, cannot now be determined.* Probably its area was not far short of one half of the parish. In the appended outline map, the letter M indicates places to which the name is still



THE PARISH OF WENHASTON AND ITS RELATIONS.

* The limits given from the Mettingham Chartulary (copied by Tanner and now in the British Museum) are useless, since the places named cannot now be identified.

applied. Its large size, and the proportion it bears to the whole parish, are no doubt one cause of the peculiar features of its ecclesiastical history. Their influence was increased by the numerous relations of the manor to some adjacent parishes.

Although it was always within the parish of Wenhaston, it was sometimes described as being in that of Bramfield. This may be explained by the geographical relations, but it was a late, and not an early statement, and probably was due to causes which we cannot now discern.

The origin of the name "Mells" has given rise to much discussion. It is borne also by another manor in Suffolk—Mells, or Mellis, in Hartismere, and in each case has been generally supposed to be due to the presence of a mill. (See East Anglian N. and Q., 1 Ser., Vol. I., R. P. 309, 318.) There is no evidence of a mill in the Hartismere Mells, but a water mill on the Blyth existed for many centuries at the extremity of this manor, until it was moved a mile lower down when the navigation of the river was established in 1758. Although absent at the Domesday epoch, a mill existed at the time of Edward the Confessor. This derivation presents difficulties; so simple an etymology of a place-name is seldom correct, and the name is attached to farms, woods, &c., throughout the manor, while the mill is on its actual boundary. Moreover, the doubt is increased by the various forms of the name, which suggest that it was at first disyllabic. Melles has been explained as possibly mil-laes, "mill-meadow."* The variant Melnes in some degree supports the derivation which associates it with "Mill" (molendinum, Milner, etc.) Mellis seems to have been first employed as the genitive of Melles. The name is met with in other parts of England, but these localities give no help as to its origin.

The fact just mentioned, that there was another Suffolk Mells, is, however, of practical importance, because

* Meals, marshes, has been suggested by Dr. Jessopp.

the numerous variations in the name were similar in each case, and in each a family took a surname from the manor "de Mells." Among the forms of the name met with in each place are Mels, Mells, Melles, Mellis, Mellys, Melnes, Melen. The risk of error is increased by the similarity in name (especially in its older forms) of a parish contiguous to each manor. Adjacent to the Blything Mells is Thorington (Torintuna), and to that in Hartismere, is Thornton (Tornetuna, Tornintuna). These forms were frequently of old written alike.

The history of the manor, besides its ecclesiastical relations, is embodied in the list of its lords, given in the Addenda (II.) The Domesday record describes it as one of the many manors of Robert de Todenei, but it seems to have passed from him, at the end of the eleventh century, or soon after, to a certain Edward Fitz Hugh, who dropped this surname for one indicating his local connection. He is called in later records Ebraudus, Ebrandus, and Ebrancus de Mells. The transition of Edward to Ebrancus—great as it appears—can be readily traced, by mistakes in writing the name, through Eduardus, Edvardus (Evardus, Everardus, Eborardus), Ebrardus, Ebraudus, Ebrancus. His descendants believed that he came to England with the Conqueror—at least so Peter de Mells said in his claim for free warren in 1285 (Add. XIII.), and his name* is consistent with the idea, but he is not to be traced among those who fought at Hastings, or who had received lands at the Domesday time. He was followed by a series of descendants who held the manor until the close of the next century, Baldwin, Eudo, and several Ralphs and another Baldwin (see Add. VI., VIII., where the meagre facts that can be discerned at present are mentioned). We can fix the date of only two of these, a Radulphus or Raufe, who had the manor in 1217, and Baldwin, 1267 (Add. VI.) In 1275 we find it in the hands of Peter de Mells, and this

* Edward FitzHugh. This name is given in Blomfield's History of Norfolk (see Add. IV.) The authority is not stated, but the identity with Ebraudus does not admit of doubt. The change of such a patronymic to a local surname was common; ? E.g., Baldwin, the youngest son of Gilbert FitzRichard, was called "Baldwin de Clare" from his grandfather's lordship in Suffolk.

lord was the last of his race who owned it. He had free warren in 1279, but had to defend his claim in 1285. About the end of the century the manor passed to Sir John de Norwich,* who acquired, about this time, most of the neighbouring manors. He obtained free warren in 1302. In this family Mells remained for three quarters of a century, the successors of Sir John being Sir Walter (Baron of the Exchequer), Sir John No. 2 (the Admiral), and his grandson Sir John No. 3, whose father (Walter) died during the lifetime of the previous lord.† The widow of Sir John, Margery, whom he had made co-owner, held it till her death, when it passed to his niece, Katherine de Brews, or to trustees for her. Two years later she took the veil, and the manor became the property of Mettingham College, the foundation of Sir John de Norwich. The college retained it until the dissolution, when, with its gift to Sir Anthony Denny, our present interest in the manor is at an end. The earlier ownership is, however, important in connection with the ecclesiastical relations of the manor and chapel. The essential facts are given in the table appended. (Add. III.)

The Chapel.

The history of the chapel embraces, and indeed chiefly consists of some interesting indications of the what may be termed "tithe history." There seems no reason to believe that Mells manor and chapel were ever parochial. Apparently the church of Wenhaston, by preceding existence, had established a parochial position which included the manor of Mells. Otherwise the act of the manorial lord in building S. Margaret's, and bestowing the manorial tithes, would have made the manor a parish. It is not however surprising that more than one significant attempt should have been subsequently made to assert and obtain parochial independence.

The custom of giving a tithe of revenue, common

* A statement has been made that it was first sold to a Sir Walter de Norwich about 1281. This is an error due to the date of "Sir Walter" having been given in one record, Ed. I. 9, instead of Ed. II. 9.

† See note to Add. III.

for many centuries, was only at this period fixed by legal process. The donor was free to appropriate his gift as seemed to him fit, provided he retained one third for his own church. Some conventual establishment was usually the recipient of two thirds of the tithes, according to the custom which originated on the Continent many centuries before. Considering the size of Mells Chapel, a third of the tithes would be an ample endowment. The first event that can be ascertained is the gift of two thirds of the whole demesne tithes to the Thetford Priory. Doubtless, in most cases, a recent foundation determined such a gift. Thetford was founded in 1104 by Roger Bigod, who owned manors near Mells (as Yoxford), and gave from them tithes to his foundation. We may assume that it was not long after this date (1104), that Mells Chapel was built or consecrated, and its tithes apportioned. Had the chapel been built earlier, the tithes must have been apportioned at the consecration, and some reference to this would be found in the gift to Thetford. It is curious, however, that no allotment of the tithes had been made by Robert de Todenei, who did not neglect the Church, but began his monastery at Belvoir as early as 1076. There is indeed one curious record (Add. v.), which suggests that some promise may have been made by him regarding tithes from Suffolk, enough to warrant a formal investigation. At any rate a dispute arose in the 12th century, between the Priories of Belvoir and Thetford, regarding the tithes of certain Suffolk manors, of which Mells was one, and the neighbouring Yoxford another. It was sufficient to be referred to the Pope, who remitted it to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. The nature of the decision we may infer from the fact that the subsequent relations of these places were with Thetford and not with Belvoir. The dispute is noteworthy on account of the curious error which has arisen concerning the identity and locality of the places concerned. Nicolls (Hist. of Leicestershire) and Dugdale after him assume the dispute to have been

with Redford (Wirksop) Priory, and the mistake has not been corrected. It is nevertheless certain that the remaining third of the tithes was reserved,—no doubt, for the support of the chapel. A stipend was often paid to the priest by the Lord of the Manor in such instances. These manorial private chapels often became parish churches, the manor becoming a parish on their erection.

That a church existed at Wenhaston before Mells chapel was built is shown by its mention in the Domesday record.

The small size of Mells chapel, moreover, indicates that there could have been only a small number of residents to need or use it. It is very small, even compared with the traceable dimensions of most of the first Norman churches which were afterwards enlarged. The significance of these facts is confirmed by the absence of any evidence that a burial ground was attached to it. Although burial was once vaguely asserted (Add. XI.), other records seem to exclude it, and we can scarcely conceive that the plough would have been allowed to skirt the wall of the chapel on every side, had there been a "coemeterium." No trace of it can be now perceived or can be discerned in the past. It is well known that the right of burial was a distinctive mark of the highest order of parish churches, of those next below the cathedral or conventual churches. A lower grade was marked by the possession of the right to baptise; while below baptismal churches were those in which only mass was celebrated. The chapel of Mells may possibly have been "baptismal"; but there is no evidence of the fact, and it is, on the whole, improbable. For this and for burial, the inhabitants of the manor must have gone to the "mother-church" of Wenhaston. It must, morever, be noted that the position of the chapel would make it less accessible to the majority of the inhabitants of the manor, than either the chapel of S. Bartholomew, the parish church of Wenhaston, the church of Thorington, or even that of Bramfield.

Not many years after the chapel was built and the tithes apportioned another centre of ecclesiastical interest and influence arose in the neighbourhood. The Priory of Blythburgh, only three miles away, was founded as an independent off-shoot of S. Osyth, in Essex, under the influence of Henry I. and (probably) Richard Beauvais, Bishop of London. The priory of Blythburgh seems to have been in existence in 1114, since it is said to have contributed in that year to the expenses of the marriage of the Princess, afterwards Empress Maud. It therefore must have been founded about the year 1112. Richard became Bishop of London in 1108.

Several gifts of land in Mells were made to Blythburgh by members of the De Mells family, probably during the twelfth century. These are mentioned in Add. VIII., and are significant, as showing the interest taken in the Priory. The absence of dates, however, lessens their historical utility. In one, that made by Baldwin de Mells, the names of the witnesses suggests that it may have been early in the 12th century, and that Baldwin may have succeeded Ebraudus, although we can trace another Baldwin a hundred years later. A Robert Malet is one witness; the Robert Malet of Domesday had a son and heir of the same name. (See note to Add. IV.) Facts may yet be ascertained which will throw light on the dates of the other gifts. Ralph seems to have been a common name in the family as in so many others at this period. It is the name of the first lord of whose date we have clear evidence, from the attempt he made to secure a parochial position for the manor, and the position of a parish church for the chapel. We have seen how many parochial elements the manor possessed. To its early lords they must have seemed indistinguishable from those which had been effective in the case of neighbouring parishes. Early in the 13th century this Radulphus de Mells* made an attempt to establish independence of

* There are many scattered unimportant references to this Ralph de Mells. (Rot. Litt. Claus. in Tur. Lond., p. 331, &c.)

Wenhaston. The dispute was referred to the Pope (Honorius III.) who appointed, in 1217, a commission to decide the question, the Prior of Southwark with the Dean and Archdeacon of London. They decided adversely to the claim. The decision is recorded in the Blythburgh Chartulary, and is also given in the Wenhaston MS. (Add. v.*) The latter is in quaint English and is a manifestly accurate translation of an original record, to judge by the briefer account in the chartulary. The "Conteraversi," which was then "at lengthe pacified," is said to have been referred to the Commission to effect a "Cumpossyssyon, agreuement and ffiniall end." We have to discern its nature from the decision. Evidently the lord of the manor, "Raufe" of the MS., Radulphus of the Chartulary, asserted independence of the Vicar, Herveus, "Syr Ernesin."† The decision, which was announced by the loser, established in effect the absolute subordination of the chapel; it enjoined an oath of fidelity to be taken by each new Rector of Mells, and a definite recognition of the fact that Wenhaston was the mother-church of Mells, made still more emphatic by an annual payment.

The commission thus arranged for the future as well as for the present, and also took the opportunity of defining the relation of the other parish chapel that of S. Bartholomew. The particulars support the opinion that there was no burial ground at Mells, since the allusion to burials merely allows the lord of the manor, should the chapel ceased to be used, to be buried elsewhere than at the mother church of Wenhaston?

The next passages from the same MS. are from the Norwich diocesan record called the "Norwich Domesday," which seems to be a copy of earlier records, made in the 16th century. The statements apparently formulate the decision arrived at by the Commission.

* Particulars of these will be found appended. An account of the contents of the MS. has been lately published by the Rev. J. B. Clare, in a paper read before the East Anglian Literary Guild, March, 1894.

† An interesting instance of name variation: the H being omitted and the v of Herveus written as u, and both u's changed to n, we get Ernens, very near the MS. form. It is certain that Ernesyn is here a transformation of Herveus, and thus probably Ernesius arose, perhaps also Ernest?

The Priory of Blythburgh acquired the tithes of Mells that had been given to Thetford, probably about 1260, by exchanging for them lands in Darsham and paying 9s. a year. This payment was still made at the time of the Dissolution and is recorded with precision in the Blythburgh Chartulary. The trifling amount of the money payment shows that the chief part of the transaction must have been the transfer of the land in Darsham; this is referred to in the judgment of the Archbishop of Canterbury regarding the remaining tithes (1282, Add. x.) and seems to have been well known. (See Add. xi.)

By this exchange Mells ceased to have any relation to Thetford, and its connection with Blythburgh was increased. The Priory already owned land in the manor as well as the advowson of the church of the parish within which Mells is situated, and it now acquired two thirds of the whole demesne tithes. The vicar of the parish church to which Mells chapel was subordinate, was the local representative of the Prior of Blythburgh. Thus the acquisition of the Thetford tithes left, of the ecclesiastical property of the manor, the chapel tithes only, and the advowson of the chapel outside the interest of Blythburgh. The fact seems to have been fully realised on both sides, and to have determined the character of the subsequent proceedings.

The descendants of Ebrandus, as we have seen, held the manor for two centuries, but we have no evidence of their dates or exact sequence. We have also seen that before 1300 it passed from this family to that of De Norwich. Peter de Mells, the last of manorial name, probably succeeded in 1275, and soon afterwards presented to the chapel Robert de Mells, doubtless a kinsman, perhaps a brother.

The Priors and Monks of the middle ages, with abundant time to devote to their various affairs, seem to have lost no opportunity that occurred, or could be made, to maintain and increase their revenue and influence. In 1282 a claim was put forward on behalf of Blythburgh, for

the remaining third of the manorial tithes, and all the other tithes relating to the chapel. It is not easy to understand the grounds that could be alleged for the claim, but it was made and was referred to the Archbishop of Canterbury. His judgment was, of necessity, adverse to the Prior's demand. Two records of it exist in the Norwich collection (Add. x.), and both have points of interest that make it desirable to append them in full. The second is, perhaps, introductory to an account of which the first is an abridgement. Although their details are intrinsically instructive, they do not bear on the history of the chapel.

Robert de Melles, the Rector, whose tithes were thus claimed, soon attempted to retaliate. His proceeding can, however, excite only surprise and must have rather amused than alarmed the Prior. In 1285 he submitted to the Diocesan Authorities a series of statements, still preserved at Norwich, of what he proposed to prove, in order to establish the independence of Mells Chapel, and its freedom from subordination to the Church of Wenhaston. His great object was to show that Mells had always been of independent parochial character, and that its chapel had always been a true "mother church." He was manifestly ignorant of the decision less than 70 years before on the same point—difficult as it is to understand that this decision should have been unknown to him. Even so, his assertions seem to be scarcely serious. He even proposed to establish the fact that the chapel was a burial church "by rumour" alone. His "intentions to prove" are interesting in themselves, and they are instructive as illustrating the local absence of written records of the past history of such chapels. The facts suggest, moreover, that little attention could have been paid to the injunctions of the Pope's Commission of 1217, for if Robert had sworn fidelity to the Vicar of Wenhaston on institution, as was his duty, he could scarcely have put forward his plea.

The decision on his attempt is not recorded, but its character cannot admit of doubt. Robert did not long

survive his failure. On his death, in 1287, the energetic Prior put forth another claim, viz., to the right of presentation to Mells chapel, against the lord of the manor, Peter de Mells, who seems to have retained the advowson. It is not easy to understand the ground on which the Prior based his claim, but he carried it on to trial. When the case came on at the Ipswich Assizes, however, he withdrew it, finding no doubt that this course would be least troublesome and would make no difference to the result. So Peter made the next presentation. The Rector was Peter de Byskele, of whom we have a personal trace, trifling, but not uninstructive, in a receipt which he gave to the lord in 1291 for his share of the tithes. The amount was 32s. "pro fructibus"; it probably represents the yearly sum paid by the lord from the remaining third of the tithes. Walcott gives 40s. as the common stipend for the priest of a small parish chapel in the middle of this century. The receipt suggests that the third of the demesne tithes of Mells were not paid to the Rector directly, but to the lord, and that he paid the priest, who no doubt had also the small tithes for his own use.*

The last presentation by Peter must have been in 1302, of John Burhard or Banyard, who lived until 1316. Then Peter de Mells was doubtless dead: the last trace of him that I have met with is his witness to a gift to Blythburgh Priory in 1311.† In 1316 Sir Walter de Norwich had succeeded his father. The death of Peter, and probably the direct ownership of the chapel tithes by the Rector, seem to have given the Prior of Blythburgh another opportunity. He could not again claim the right of presentation, but he apparently made a searching investigation into the details of the tithes and found reason to suspect irregularities in the past. He did not himself move in the matter ostensibly, but it was doubtless at his instigation that a number of the inhabitants of Wenhaston made a claim on the behalf of their Vicar. (Add. xv.)

* It is curious that in Pope Nicholas's Taxation, made this year (1291), only Blythburgh and S. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, are mentioned among the proprietors of the tithes of Wenhaston and Mells.

† Among the interments in the church of the Grey Frairs at Dunwich is "Sir Peter de Mellis, and Dame Anne his wife."—Gardner's Hist. of Dunwich, p. 60.

The alleged interest of the Vicar would of course really be that of the Prior. An inquiry was held at Mells of which the Norwich record gives the details, but is silent, as usual, regarding the result. The particulars are curious, especially in the complication of the minute local relations, but would not repay discussion, since neither the gifts nor the localities can be identified. In the record Ralf is probably mentioned with Ebrandus, because he was the owner of the manor at the time of the Pope's commission.

For a long time after this, during the De Norwich ownership, and after the manor had passed to Mettingham, matters seem to have gone on smoothly. Presentations to the chapel are recorded in the Norwich Diocesan Registry until 1358 and then cease, those to the vicarage of Wenhaston being described as "cum hamletto de Mells." It might be inferred that the chapel then ceased to have a separate priest, but this would probably be incorrect.

After the last recorded presentation, chaplains would be supplied by Mettingham College. Subsequent facts show that chaplains or rectors were still appointed, no doubt by the College, and in this is probably to be found an explanation of the fact that there are no other entries at Norwich, just as there are none of presentations to S. Bartholomew's Chapel, which would no doubt be made from Smithfield.

The fact that rectors continued is revealed by another tithe dispute in 1413. (Add. XVI.) It was between John Waryn, rector, and John Reve, the vicar of Wenhaston (whose name is sometimes written Kene, by a scribe's error). The fact that John Waryn was regarded as one of a series of rectors is very clear from the words employed. The Vicar of Wenhaston seems to have made some claim to receive the chapel tithes, because the arbitrators, the Master of Mettingham and the Rector of Carleton Rode, awarded to the Rector* of the Chapel all the small and mixed tithes, including those of wood, except of one meadow, the whole tithe of which belonged to the Vicar.

* "Rector" is the term employed.

The manorial tithes of course could not have been in dispute, two thirds being paid to Blythburgh, and the remaining third either to Mettingham or to the Rector for the use of Mettingham.

The regular services at the Chapel seem to have continued until 1465. So it was subsequently asserted (Add. XVIII.), and the statement is indirectly confirmed. (Add. XVII.) After that date the services are said to have been confined to the eve and day of S. Margaret. Such an arrangement could not last. The chapel could not be kept in repair for an annual service only, and it is probable that, perhaps before 1467, its door closed behind a priest for the last time, to be opened again only for dismantlement. In that year occurred the last of the long series of tithe disputes; its occasion was probably the cessation of weekly service. This is suggested by the terms of the decision, which indicate that there was no longer a reason for tithe payments to it. Wenhaston was the "mother church" of Mells, and to the owner of Wenhaston (the Prior of Blythburgh), it may have seemed that the payment made for "spiritual service" became due to Wenhaston, when this service ceased to be afforded at Mells. So Blythburgh and Mettingham were once more at variance, and the matter was referred to an official of the Consistory Court of Norwich, Magister Johannes Salot, who assigned to Blythburgh two thirds of the mixed tithes as well as of the predial tithes (which already belonged to Blythburgh) and gave to Mettingham the remaining third of the predial tithes (also already the property of the College), with the tithe of all wood and underwood, and the tithe of the mill which stood on their ground. The vicar of Wenhaston was to receive the two thirds of the mixed tithes, and, besides some minor arrangements, not very clear, he was also to receive from the inhabitants, for his services to them, that which was due. In return for other receipts the College was to pay the Priory 4s. a year, and old arrangements were to be annulled. To this all parties agreed on May 6th, 1467. The arrangement was

probably not quite congenial to the Master of Mettingham, since we find him soon after, according to Pryme, endeavouring to secure the attendance of his Mells tenants at Bramfield Church on the formal occasions, which would involve a payment, though taking care that this had no semblance to tithe payment. The manors of Bramfield and Wenhaston belonged to the College, although the church of each was in the hands of Blythburgh. The strange consequences and complications are described by Pryme; they are sufficiently curious and not quite creditable to vicarial morality. But the story of the chapel has been told.

S. Bartholomew's Chapel and the Priory of Smithfield.

The history of Mells is incomplete without a reference to its relations to the Priory of S. Bartholomew's, Smithfield. To this belonged some land, probably part in Mells and partly in Wenhaston outside the manor, near the South end of the lane, whose name still bears witness to the fact, Bartholomew's Lane. How or when the Priory acquired the land we do not know; it was probably soon after its establishment early in the twelfth century. Most of the charters of the Priory have long been lost. It had also possessions in Yarmouth, while its founders also established S. Osyth, to which Blythburgh Priory is due. The value of its possessions here in 1291 was about half that of the church of Wenhaston.

Almost certainly on its ground was the second small parish chapel, that of S. Bartholomew, and the name suggests that it was built by the Priory. But of it we know nothing save the facts recorded in the Wenhaston MS. It has long disappeared from the earth, so that even its site is uncertain. Probably more may yet be discovered about it. But it had no local tithes, and so was free from the entanglements which have preserved to us so much of the history of S. Margaret's.

It is interesting to note that the payment to the

mother-church was to be made once a year, on the Saint's day of the chapel, to note also the arrangement for the weekly celebration of mass, and that the chaplain was to provide the candle for such celebration,* but the Prior of S. Bartholomew's, the hanging lamps "for to kepe the light," as well as the vestments. The eucharistic candle was the business of the chaplain, the lighting of the chapel that of its owners.

III.

ADDENDA.

I. Domesday Record.
II. Extenta Manerii (Mettingham).
III. List of the Lords of the Manor, Rectors of the Chapel, and Presentors.
IV. 1106: circa. Gift of two-thirds of the demesne tithes to Thetford Priory.
V. 1162: Dispute between Belvoir and Thetford regarding certain tithes, including those of Mells, referred to Pope Adrian.
VI. 1217: Decision by a Commission, appointed by Pope Honorius, regarding the subordination of Mells to Wenhaston.
VII. Notes regarding the relation of Mells to Wenhaston, from an old Wenhaston Manuscript.
VIII. Gifts of land in Mells to Blythburgh Priory.
IX. 1260: circa. Transfer to Blythburgh, by exchange, of the manorial tithes given to Thetford.
X. 1282: Decision, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, of a tithe dispute between Robert, Rector of Mells, and the Prior of Blythburgh. (Two records.)
XI. 1285: Attempt, by Robert, Rector of Mells, to prove independence of Wenhaston.
XII. 1287: Decision; (Prior of Blythburgh *v.* Peter de Mells) as to the right of presentation to the Chapel.
XIII. 1287: Defence of right to free-warren, etc., in Mells by Peter de Mells, and by the Master of the Knights Templars.
XIV. 1291: Acknowledgment by the Rector of Mells, Will. de Byskele, of payment from the tithes, by Peter de Mells.
XV. 1322: Inquisition at Mells regarding alleged tithe-irregularities, to the prejudice of Blythburgh and Wenhaston.

*The "one" candle is clear and can hardly be an error. It is generally assumed that two candles were always burned during mass, and the use of a single candle, even in the smallest chapels, does not seem to be recognised. Its possibility is suggested by the canons of Ælfric, A.D. 957, which direct the acolyte to "hold the candle when the gospel is read, or the housel hallowed on the altar." It was not usual for the priest himself to have to provide the mass candle.

XVI. 1413: Decision by the Master of Mettingham and the Rector of Carleton Rode, in a tithe dispute between Mells and Wenhaston.

XVII. 1467: Decision, by Mr. J. Salot, of the Consistory Court of Norwich, in a dispute between Mettingham and Blythburgh, regarding the tithes of Mells.

XVIII 1550: Abstract of the case of John Pryme of Bramfield and Mells, describing the closure of Mells Chapel in 1462, and the relations of some inhabitants of Mells to the Church of Bramfield.

XIX. The Chapel of S. Bartholomew, Mells, and the connection of Mells with S. Bartholomew's Priory, Smithfield.

The following records contain the facts described in the preceding pages. Their chief sources are the following:—(1) The Norwich Diocesan Collection, including the MS. copied by Tanner and preserved there.* (2) A Chartulary of Blythburgh Priory, now in the possession of Mr. F. A. Crisp, of Denmark Hill, to whose courtesy a tribute of thanks is due. A knowledge of its contents is, however, chiefly derived from an abstract made by the Rev. Dr. Jessopp, who has most kindly allowed it to be used. (3) A curious MS. of about 32 folio pages written in the 16th century, containing copies from Norwich and from parochial records now lost, relating to Wenhaston. For extracts from this the author is indebted to Rev. T. S. Hill, Vicar of Thorington, to whom it formerly belonged, and to the Rev. J. B. Clare, Vicar of Wenhaston, in whose custody it now is.

I. *Domesday Record.*

1084 (Vol. II., fol. 429 b). Terre Roberti de Todenio Blidigga H. Mealla teñ mannig lib hō p' mañ. et modo hť Rodbt' in dñio. iii. car' t're. semp. viii. vilł. semp. xii. bord.' semp iii seru.' semp. ii car' in dñio. iii car' hom' silua. ad. c. porc. v ac p̄ti tc. i. mol. modo null. semp ii runc' vii an' xxx porc' xvi ōus Tc. uał, L. sol. modo. LX. Et hť x qr' in longū et vii in lať. et reddi reddit' ii d̄ de geldo.

II. *Extenta Manerii de Mellys (In Cartulario de Metyngham.)*

Made in 1 Ric. III. 1483.

Via ducens de Capella de Sci Bartholomei usq. Knottforth Bridge.

Via ducens de Capella de Wenhaston usq. Knotshale Bridge.

Vetus Scitus manerij vocat. Wenhaston Halle cum pastura ex parte occident. de Capel. Sci Barthol. in Mellys ex parte australi capellæ S. Margaretæ ibidm.

In clausum vocat. Meredale Londe cont. x acr. in Mellys unde i

* Most of these were made for me by the late Mr. Tallack, but they have been carefully compared, corrected, and added to by Mr. F. Johnson, of Great Yarmouth.

acra dicti in clausi decimatur Eccliæ de Bromfeld et parcellam ejusdem clausi reddit decimas capellæ de Melles et parcella inde decimatur Eccliæ de Wenhaston.

(Mettingham Chartulary, British Museum, Stowe Coll. Copy also at Norwich, by Tanner.)

III. *List of ascertainable Lords of the Manor and Rectors of the Chapel.*

Lords of the Manor.	Rectors of the Chapel.	Presented by
1084 Rob. de Todenei		
1115 Edward FitzHugh, otherwise Ebrandus, Ebraudus, or Ebrancus de Mells		
Baldwin de Mells.		
Radulphus de Mells?		
Eudo de Mells.		
1217 Radulfus de Mells.		
1267 Baldwin de Mells.		
1273 Peter de Mells, died between 1311 and 1316.	1273 Rob. de Mells,* ob. 1287.	Peter de Mells
	1287 Will. de Byskele ob. 1291	„ (probably)
1302 Sir John de Norwich.	1302 Joh. Burhard or Banyard.	„ „ †
1316 Sir Walter de Norwich.	1316 Joh. de Tounberningham.	Dns. Walter de Norwich
1326 Sir John de Norwich. or 1329	1334 Ric. de Berningham.	Remigius de Hedersete
(Walter de Norwich, son of the last, died before his father, who had made his wife joint-owner.)	1337 Will. Flemme	Wm. Schotesham
	1341 Joh. de Edyngale	Remigius de Hedersete
	1346 Bart. Seman de Halesworth.	„ „
1362 Margery, widow of Sir John.	1349 Herveus de Welham or De Threston.	Sir John de Norwich.
	1354 John Skilman.	„ „

* Tanner's MS. at Norwich states, "In Prima Edwardi primi Magr Robti de Melles at Capell ad præs Petri de Mellis." No authority is given. This is the earliest mention of Peter de Mells as lord of the manor.

† Tanner's MS. states "Herveus de Welham persona de Mells 27 Ed. III. sæpe occurrit in cartis, &c. Jõis de Norwico Mil. postea persona de Dallingho."

1358 JOHN BRON or BROWN. SIR JOHN DE NORWICH. Henceforth no separate presentations, only "to Wenhaston cum hamletta de Melles or Mells." (Norwich.) But, in the year

1366 SIR JOHN DE NORWICH, grandson of the last lord.

1373 Trustees for KATHERINE BREWS and for Mettingham College.

1374 Mettingham College by its Master, and henceforth until the Dissolution.

1413 JOHN WARYN is said to have charge of the Chapel.

The lists of Rectors and Presentors are from the Norwich Diocesan Register, except the first (see Add. x.) and the last (Add. XVI.) The presentations are said to be "in liberam capellam de Mells," one adds "sive cant. (cantaria, chantry) scæ margaretæ situatin in manerio de Mells." The list of the Lords of the Manor is from various sources, given in other Addenda. The mediæval custom of alternating Christian names is well exemplified by the De Norwich family, and often causes mistakes. To those which have arisen in this instance, I have elsewhere called attention (*East Anglian N. & Q.*, N.S., Vol. IV. 259).

IV. *The gift of two-thirds of the Manorial Tithes of Mells to Thetford Priory.*

Sciant presentes et futuri quod ego Ebrandus de Melnes dedi et concessi Deo et Ecclie Sce Marie de Thetford et Mon. Cluniacensib' ibidē deo s'vientiż duas partes decime mee de toto d'nio meo quod habeo in Melnes et de toto Dominio meo quod habeo in Bresthorp de omn. rebus in liberam et pur. et ppetuam Eleemosinam.

Test. Ricd. de Cademo, Gycardo (Rycardo)* de Vallibus, Falcon' de Saveney, Lamb'to de Stanham, Rob'to de Bosco, Yuone de Verdun, Rob'to de Pontarchefrey, Ernaldo Diacano,‡ Turstano p'sb'ro', Ricardo Capłło, Rob'to dapifero, Rogero pincerna, Edwyno et Lamb'to et Richero famul' Prioris et multis aliis.†

* This is one of three copies of this record in the original Mettingham Chartulary, now in the Brit. Mus. In one the witnesses are omitted; in the other it is clear that the name is Rycardo, and that the first scribe has inadvertently written G instead of R. In the opinion of the authorities of the MS. Department this does not admit of doubt, unusual as such an error is. That the third letter is *c*, is certain. Tanner has copied it as Girardo.

† These names confirm indirectly the date of the gift. They are not to be met with in the printed records (which I have carefully searched) and which do not begin until after the middle of the 12th century. The recurrence (especially by alternation) of the same christian name in a family prevents any importance being attached to such instances as a Rob. de Bosco in 27th Ed. I., or a Rob. de Ponte Arch in 33 Hy. III. But the period indicated by the names is shown by the benefactor of Thetford, quoted by Blomefield (II. 109, 110). William Bygod, steward of the Household to King Hy. I., gave to Ethard de Vallibus or Vaux (? Richard) two parts of his tithes in Kesewic; Robert de Bosco, the same in Strestouj; Robert de Vallibus, or Vaux, the same of many places. . . . . Ivo Verdunenses, or Verdun, gave

Tanner's MS., Vol. II., p. 1712. (Norwich). Mettingham Chart., Brit. Mus., Stowe Coll. 934.

Ebrardus de Melnes . . . domui et ecclie Sce Marie de Thetford et Mon. Claun. eisdem domui servientibus (erasure) decime mee de toto dominio meo quod habes in Melnes et . . . in Brestorph &c. (in the same words as III.) (Blythburgh Chart. No. 353).

The erasure should doubtless be "duas partes."

This gift of the tithes of the two manors is also mentioned in Martin's History of Thetford, 1779, p. 132:

"Edward FitzHugh gave lands in Melles in Suffolk and Bisthorp in Norfolk."

No authority is given. The early charters of Thetford Priory are said by him to have perished in the fire which destroyed part of the Cottonian Library in 1731.

The same statement appears in Blomefield's History of Norfolk, and in another place with the name "Ebrandus de Melles."

V. *Dispute between the Priories of Belvoir and Thetford regarding the tithes of Bradley, Yoxford, Mells, and Sileham, committed by Pope Adrian to the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London (circa 1160).*

The following is a copy of Harleian Charter (43 A 18) which is also given in almost the same words by Nicolls in his History of Leicestershire (Belvoir) as a Bull of Pope Adrian. This is quoted from him in the last edition of Dugdale's "Monasticon." The dispute is, however, said to be between Belvoir and Redford or Radford, commonly called "Wirkesop," although a note is added that the tithes of these places are never mentioned in connection with this Priory. The "Tetford" of the Harleian MS. is certainly right. The tithes of Bradley and Sileham were given to Thetford by its founder Roger Bigod. Yoxford and Mells were held by Rob. de Todenei, who founded Belvoir, but his successor at Mells gave two-thirds of the tithes to Thetford. All these places are in Suffolk. The words that are different, in Nicolls' version are given between brackets, as given by him.

Com' Adrian' Pap' ad terminandam causam de Abbati' de Tetford et de Belvero (Belvoir W. Linc.) dependentem super decimas de Bradleia Jokesfort Melne et Seleham arbitrio T(heobald) Archiepisc' Cant et [word erased] Lond Episc Dat Benevent Kal Maii 1156.

the same in Moulton; Ralph Fitzhugh gave land at Creid or Creik; Edward FitzHugh, two parts of his tithes in Melles in Suffolk and Besthorp in Norfolk; Richard de Cademo, or Caan, gave &c. "All which gifts the said William (Bygod) confirmed to this monastery in the presence of William Maleth, William Bigot, Humfrey Bigot, Robert de Vallibus, Ralf Fitz, Walter Ethard de Wallibus, Richard de Caam, Robert de Bois, Ivo de Verdun, and many other of his men, and soon after Henry I. confirmed it. This William perished in the lamentable shipwreck, with the King's children, as they came from Normandy to England in the year 1819."

It should be noted that in the account of the Mells in Hartismere, in Davy's MS. (Brit. Mus.) its lords and those of the Blithing Mells are mixed at random; the same confusion occurs in most printed accounts.

‡ Dent in Tanner, and Denc in the second copy in the Mett. Chart.

Adrianus ep's seruus servor' Dei dilectis filiis Monachis de Tetfford' (Retford) salt' (salutem) et ap'licam ben' (ed') Causam que inter nos et dilectos filios n'ros monachos de Bellueer (Belver) sup' decimis de Bradleia de Sokefort (Solcefort) de Melne (Melve) et de Seleham, diutius (decimas) agitata est ven'abilib3 fr'ib3 n'ris T Cantuarien Archiep's et——(R) Londonien' eps contulimus (comisimus) audiendam et om'i appellatione cessante fine congruo terminandam. Quocirca p (per) ap'lica nobis scripta mandamus quatinus cum ab eis propter hoc fueritis euocati eorum presentiam adeatis et quod ipse exinde inter vos iudicauerint suscipiatis fiſmiter et seruetis.

Dat Beneuenti (Venecienti) Kl (K) Maij

The date is supposed by Nicolls to be 1162, when he says, Adrian was Pope, Theobald Archbishop of Canterbury, and the second Richard de Beames (not Beaumes), Bishop of London. Theobald (1139—1162) and Richard (1152—1162) both died in the same year, but Adrain (our one English Pope) died in 1154. Hence 1153 is the probable year, although 1152 is possible, since Richard de Beames was consecrated on Sept. 28th.

VI. *Decision by a Commission appointed by Pope Honorius III. of a Dispute between Mells and Wenhaston, 1217.*

Omnibus Christi fidelibus ad quos present scriptum perveneret Radulphus de Mellis salutem in Domino.

Ad omnium noticiam volo pervenire quod cum inter me ex una parte et Dnū heruēū Rectorem de Weniston ex altera parte supra Capellam de Mellis in parochia de Weniston, coram viris venerabilib3 Priore de Southwerk decano et Archid' Loud' Auctoritate d'ni Pape Honorii tercii questio verteretur. tandem super ipsam lis mota inter nos amicabiliter convenit in hunc modum. viz quod capellanus ministraturus in predictæ capellæ presentabilitur Rectori matrices ecclesiæ de Weniston qui pro tempore fuerit et coram ipso jurabit se fidelitatem juxta tenorem present' servaturum et quod solvet eidem ecclesie de Weniston annuatim nomine subjectionis duos solidos ad festa' Pasche et Mich'. Et quod parochiam matricis ecclesie servientes Dnō de Mellis a matrice ecclesie percipient spiritualia et solvent jura ecclesiastica parochialia et extranci similiter qui ad suas ecclesias accessum habere non potèrunt.

(Blythburgh Chartulary).

The Wenhaston MS. contains the following quaint translation of apparently the same record of this decision, with an introductory summary :—

Herafter ffollowyth the Coppie of a Cumpossission the whyche was made abought the yere of our lorde god a : m^le : cc : and xvij^te and abought the xvij yere of the Reigne of Kynge John the ffyrste or the ffyst yeare of the Reigne of Kynge henrie the thyrde by the auctorite of our holly father pope honorius the thyrde of that name the whyche pope honorius by his auctorite dyde apoynt and assygne the lorde pryour of Southwerk the deane and the archedeacon of london for to here the veriannce and Conteraversi that was declared shewed and

brought before the afore sayde holie father pope honorius the whyche at that tyme was betwyn Raufe lord of melles and Syr Ernesin persone of the Church of Wenhaston for the Chapell of mells in the pysshe of wenhaston—and the afore sayden lorde pryour of Southwerke the deane and the archedeacon of London by the auctorite afore sayd dyde here determyn and made a Compossyssyon agreuement and ffiniall ende betwyn the aforesayde Raufe lorde of melles and Syr Ernesin persone of the Churche of wenhaston for the afore sayd Chappell and hamlet of Melles vppon thys Condyssion and In thys maner and ffourme ffollowyng &c.

Vnto all that shall see and Rede thys present wrytyng Rauffe lorde of melles Gretyng in the lorde - I wyll that it cume vnto the knowledge of all men that where as betwene me of the one parte and Syr Ernes parsone of the Churche of wenhaston of the other parte for the Chapell of Melles in the parryshe of wenhaston before men of worshype the lord prior of Southwarke the deane and the archedeacon of london - by the auctorite of our holly father pope honorius the thyrde a Cause was pleted and at the length the Contraversie that Rose of the same betwene usse fiendly was pacified on thys manner - - that is to saye - that the prest servyng in the foresayd Chapell - presently vnto the parson of the mother Churche of wenhaston - the wyche for the tyme shuld be and afore hym shall swere - that he shall be faythfull vnto the mother Churche accordyng to the tenore of thys presence - and that he shall paye vnto the same Churche yearly for the tythe of homage vij^{s} that is to saye at the ffeaste of Easter and Saynt Mychaell so that yf the prest shall make any faulte in paying of the sayd pencion of vij^{s} at the tymes apoynted that thene vnto the Solucion of the same the Chapell shall haue no diuine Seruice and that the parryssheners of the mother Churche tenentes of the lordes of Melles shall Receue all Sacramenttes and Sacramentaulles at the mother Churche and shall paye all Ecclesiasticall Ryghtes and duties vnto the same In like manner - - also straungers that can not have passage vnto theyr owne Churche and the lorde and the ladye of Melles departyng in Melles shall chuse A Regulare buryeing vnto them selves the Ryght of the mother Churche therby being nothyng hurte and the segnele in the solemne ffeaste of the mother Churche that is to saye in the feaste of peter and paule that the t whyche shoulde be offered in the Chapel vnto the aforesayd parsson shoulde be payed for the testimoni of the whyche Composicion vnto thys present wrytyng I have haue Sett to my Sealle all the Inhabitance of wenhaston being wytnes &c.

VII. *Extracts, in the Wenhaston MS. from the Norwich "Dumesday" regarding the Chapel, &c.*

Herafter ffollowyth the true Coppie of the booke that is caulled the dum̃es daye the whyche Coppie is wretten in order as yt dothe stande and yt is wrytten In the same booke that is caulled the dumes daye the whyche booke was made and wrytten In the yere of our lorde gode a: m^{l}: c: and l^{ti} And in the xv yere of the Reigne of Kyng Stphane

by the whyche booke yt dothe playnly apere that all the holle hamlet of Melles in the Counti of Suff Is Joyned and anexed vnto the mother churche of wenhaston and to no other town but only vnto the towne of wenhaston aforesayd for Bromefeld thuryngtone and Whenhawestone stande In order to gether one after a nother in the sayd booke Caulled the dumes daye for ye fyrste of the thre townes is Bromefeld and yt standeth alone by yt Selfe—and next bromefeld stand thuryngton In lyke Cas alone by yt selfe and next thuryngton stande whenhaweston and melles añexed and Joyned bothe to gether so that yf the sayd hamlet of mells hade belonged vnto any other towne or place thene vnto the towne of wenhaston yt should so haue bene sete in & soo Recorded wythin the sayd book caulled the dum̃es daye aforesayd - - but Euen so as the afresayd thre townes dothe stande wrytten in the sayd booke caulled ye dum̃es daye - Even so they stande wrytten here - in order as here after - followyth the verie same verbatum in effect -

Here endethe the Coppie that was taken owt of the book caulled the dumesdaye for as muche as is wrytten in the same book of bromefeld thurington and wenhaston and herafter ffollowyth the Coppie wrytten owt of sertayn other ould Evedence that belongethe vnto the viccarage of wenhaston &c.

(The Latin original is given at a preceding page of the MS., and to it is added the last sentence, being followed by the English translation; first of some records relating to Wenhaston, and then one regarding Mells.)

Capella de Melles solvit ijs annu Redditus m'rici Ecclie de Wenhayston p manus Capell'i ministrantis ibm et aliquando p manus d'ni de Melles. Etiam decima feni de prato le despenser xijd et p'ter' alia bona etc.

The Chapell of Melles payethe of yerlie Reuenewe vnto the Mother Churche of wenhaston ijd by the handes of Chapellen servyng there and sometimes by the handes of the lorde of melles and also for the tenthe of the heye of spensers meddowe xijd and other Comodites besyds.

VIII. *Gifts of Land in Mells to Blythburgh Priory.*

Baldwinus de Melnes pro salute aie mee et omnium antecess' et successor' meor' et specialiter pro anima Radulphi filii mei in pur' et perpet' elem' . . . 5 acr' in villa de Melles etc. Test. Robt Malet Mich Bavent Alano de Monei etc.

(Blythburgh Chartulary, No. 350.

Radulphus f. Eudonis de Melnes in pur' et perp' elem' . . . . . duas acras terre que jacent juxta ex parte occidentale in campo qui vocatur Noefacresaddendo predictis acris ipsos duos scilones quos eis prius subtraxem Habend' etc. ab omni terreno servicio et seculari exactione. H. Test Rad de Wenistoun et Reginald de Halysworth Mil. Rog de Holton Thoma de Wenistoun etc. (Ibid. No. 351.)

In the next entry (No. 352) the above is repeated to "subt(raxeram"), and continues "et duas acras terre de cultura mea que appellatur

Prestesbreche . . . pro salute anime meæ et patris mei et filii mei Galfridi. Test. Herveo de Blyb. etc (oefacres in this Neofacres).

No. 349 records the gift of two tenements in Mells by Roger Champeneys de Wenistoun, and No. 358 a concession of two pieces of land at rent to "Radulfi Radulfo Eaful de Mells" witnessed by Baldwin de Mells, Robert de Mells, John Blench, and William de Dufford.*

IX. *Exchange of the Mells Tithes by Thetford with Blythburgh.*

Omnibus X̄ti fidelibus presentes literas inspecturis vel auditūr Frater Willūs Prior Beate Marie de Tetford et ejusd loci conventus ord. cluniac' Salt'm in Dño Sempiterna . . . . Noverĭ Universitas vr̃a nos unāi assensu et voluntate nos tradisse concessisse et adfirmam' p'petuam dimisisse viris religiosis Priori et Conv. Ste. Marie de Blyburgh ordinis Sti. Augustini et eorundem successoribus omnes decimas nos et domum nostram de Thetford in Mellys aliquo juri contingentes cum omnibus p'tin suis h'end' et tenend' dc̃is Priori et Conventui de Blyburgh et eor' successor' imppetua bene et in pace sicut nos melius et quietius dc̃as decimas unquam habuimus et tenuimus pro novem solid' et duobus denar' argenti pronobis et successorib' seu ūro cert' attornat' ab eisdem Priori et Conv. de Blyburgh et eorundēm successor' in prox' sinod' post festum Sti. Michis apud Gipwicum singulis annis imperpetuum fideliter reddend et solvend, &c.

(Norwich and Mett. Chart.)

The same transaction is recorded in the Blythburgh Chartulary.

X. *Decision of the Archb. of Canterbury, 1282, in the dispute between Magister Robert de Mellys, Rector of the Chapel, and the Prior and Conv. of Blyburgh regarding the tithes.*

Frater Johannes (J.) p'missione divina Cant' Ecclie ministr' humil' totius Anglie p'mas dilecto filio Decano de Dunwico sal'tm gratiam et benedictionem. nuper nri comissarii procedentes in causa inter Mag'rum Rob'tum de Mellys, Rect. Cap. de Mellys ex parte una et Religiosos viros Priorem et Conv'. de Blyburgh ex altera sup' tertiam partem decemarū de d'nicis D'ni de Mell' ac etiam sup' minut' decim' ejusdem dñi in quarum possessionem quidem religiosi alias missi fuerant cā rei servr'andæ ex primo decrete missione ipām rescindentes possessionem easdem decimar' predic̃ō Magrō reformaverunt in forma . . . Quo circa

* It thus seems that besides possible earlier Ralphs, there was the Ralph of 1216, and also one who was contemporary with John de Wymples, who died in 1276 (Inq. p. mort.) In Blyb. Chart. 442 this Ralph witnessed with Galfridus de Weniston, and Walter de Thoriton frater Johis Wymples (Wymples is a manor in Thorington). I have found other of his attestations, without significance as to date. Probably this latest Ralph was the son of the last Baldwin, since in 1267 "Baldwin de Melnes or Mells had those lands which Ebraudus his ancestor had, two parts of the tithes of which he confirmed to the monks of Thetford, but it was no manor." (Blomfield, I., 498, Brettenham Manor, Besthorp.)

discretione tuæ comittimus quatenus eundem Mag'rum in possessionem ipsarum decimarum vice et aūt'ate nr̃ā reinducas contradictores et rebelles per censuram ecclesiasticā compescendo. Dat apud Wauerle* Idibus Novembris consecrationis n'ra. Ao III (1282).

(Norwich.)

The following longer record of the same decision, also at Norwich, is instructive, both in the facts it mentions and its form. The copy differs from the original in the Brit. Mus. (Mett. Chart.) in the expansion of a large number of abbreviated words. The copy is here given with a few slight corrections from the original and some more important forms, and omitted words are given between brackets:—

1282. De Capella de Mells.

Coram vobis Reverend. Patre Dño J dei gratia Cant. Archiep̄o totius Anglie primat' seu v̄ris commissar' quibuscunq' proponit Thos Mulnekeberd procur' M^ri Roberti de Melles Rector' Capellæ dēi loci adiciendo contestāc̄oi suæ nōie dñi sui ad libellum Prioris et Conventus de Bliburgh fc̄e et peremptorie excipiend' contra p'dc̄os Priorem et Conventum asserent dc̄am capellam (?ad) eos et ecclesias suas de Brunfeld et Wenhaston de jure ptiñ petentes q, eandem unacum tertia parte decimarum de Dnīcīs Dñi de Melles et minutæ decimæ ejusdem Priori et Conventui adjudicar' et dict' Rectorem a dicta capella amoveri etc quod idem Prior et Conventus super eadem capella et decimis p'dictis ac ceteris in suo libello contentis de jure audir' non debent nec suæ † intencois consequi effect' pro eo quod dc̄ā capella a progenitoribus seu predecessoribus dicti Petri de Melles patroni ejusdem jamdudum fundata exstitit et de dicta tertia parte decimarum domīcis et minutis decimis eorundem ac oblationibus ipsorum et familiæ suæ ibidem faciend' dotata fuit et ex tempore fundac̄ois huius cujus non extat memoria fuit prefata capella libera et continua libertate fruebatur ita quod ipsam seu Rectores ipsius in nullo fuerunt subjecti ecclesiis memoratis. Et eadem ecclesiæ ab eadem capella et decimis seu oblationibus p'dtīs nichil unquam pciperunt set quumcunque (qūacūq orig.) Rectores fuerant capellæ ipsius ipsam unacum dictis decimis usque modo pacifice et libere possederunt dicet et procur' p'dcus quod dictus (in orig.) Mag'r Robertus non fingit se Rector dictæ capellæ sicut dicti Religiosi dicunt in suo libello set pro Rectore se habet et Rector in veritate existit eo quod dñs Norwic' Episcopus ipsum ad presentationem dicti Dñi Petri patroni ipsius Capellæ ad eandem admisit et ipsum Rectorem instituit in eandem Item dic' excipiendo ‡ contra eosdem Priorem et Conventum quod licet ip̄i duas partes decimarum provenientium de dñicis dictarum de Melles percipiant dictam tamen tertiam partem tanquam ad eos de jure com̃uni spectantem sub colore dc̄arum duarum partium potere non possunt cum ipsi dictas dictas partes non tanquam Rector pcipiant set ex causa permutationis quam fecerant cum quibusdam terris in Dersham quas Priori et Conventui Thetfordiæ quorum extiterant duæ partes decimarum predictarum ex collatiōe dc̄orum Patronorum antiquitus fc̄a permutaverunt

* Waverley Abbey. † So in MS. ‡ So in MS.

cum decimis duarum partium p'dictarum hæc se offert dc̄us procur' probatur' divisim quibus probatis vel eorum aliquibus quæ sibi sufficiant petit idem procur' nomine Domini sui ipm dom̄ suum et se ab impetitione dc̄orum Prior et Conventus de Bliburgh absolvi et sibi justitia exhiber' quatenus de premissis docere poterit pro testando se alias desensiones velle ponere pro loco et tempore cum sibi viderit expedire.

XI. *1285, Attempt of Robert de Melles, Rector, to prove the independence of the Chapel.*

Hii sunt ar'li Magri Robti de Mellys quos intendit probare divisim.

Magr Robtus de Melles intendit probare qd Capella de Melles libere fundata fuit.

It intendit probare qd dotata fuit antiquitus dotata fuit de tertia parte major' decimar' provenientium de dn̄ciis Dn̄i de Melles et omnibus minoribus decimis provenientibus de eisdem Dn̄icis.

Intend. probare q̄d dc̄a Capella extitit fundata a tempore cujus memor non existet.

Intend. probare q̄d ipsa fuit fundata antequam monast. de Bliburgh.

Item̄ Intend. probare qd dc̄a Capella nunquam fuit subjecta Eccl'iis de Wenhaston et de Bromfield.

It. intend. probare q̄d Capella de Melles est extra fines paroch. dc̄arum ecclesiarum.

Intend probare q̄d terræ Dn̄i de Melles de quibus Rector dc̄e Capellæ pcipere cert. parte decimar fuit extra parochias pdc̄as.

It. Intend. probare q̄d parochiæ de Bromfeld et Wenhaston sunt divisae a villa de Melles per certos fines seu certos metas.

It. Intend. probare qd quidem itinera puplica seu privata devidunt dictas villas.

It Intend. probare q̄d terræ dicti domini de quibus dictus Magister Robertus. P'cipit decimam p'dcam sunt ex parte villæ de Melles et infra fines p'dcos ex parte illa.

It. Intend probare quod talis est fama de omnibus p'dictis

It Intendit probare quod terræ sive dominica p'dca de quibus decimæ minores pcipiunt a dicto Magistro Roberto sunt extra parochias de Wenhaston et Bromfeld

It. Intend. prob. qd consistunt infra fines de Mellis

It Intend prob. qd Magr' Rob'tus p'dictus est Rector dictæ Capella

Et quod dictus Episcopus contulit ei dictam capellam ad presentationem dicti Domini Petri qui est verus patronus ejusdem.

It. Intend probare quod antiquitus fuit quidam Ecclesia parochialis in Melles ad quam p'tinebāt poch. s3 dn̄i de Melles et tenetur eorund. in eadem villa.

It. intend probare q̄d dca Ecclīa p se fuit poch et Matrix ab alia non dependens.

It int'd' probare qd dc̄a Ecclīa habuit Sepultura Baptism. et alia Insignia matricis Ecclesiæ.

It qd Rectores qui suis temporibus pochianis ejusdem Eccliæ ministrabant ecclesiastica Sacrament' et decimas spectantes ad eandem recepunt
It. qd tal. est fama
It. Intend. probare quod dc̃a Ecclesia corruit *(sic)*
It. Intend probare quod dominus* de Melles qui tunc temporis fuit loco ipsius Ecclie fundavit dicta Capella et dotavit eam de decimis p'dc̃is q̃d magr̃ Robtus de Melles pcipit.
It. Intend probare qd idem dominus duas partes major' decimar' suar' terrar' contulit priori et conventui Thetfd.
It. Intend. prob. qd iidem Prior et Conventus Thetfordiæ et successores eorum p multa tempora dictas duas partes decimarum habuerunt et tenuerunt
It. Intend. probare qd iidem Prior et Conventus Thetfordiie seu eor' successores postmodo pmutaverunt dc̃as duas ptes decimar' Priori et Conventui de Blibrugh pro quibusdam terris quas recipunt ab eis.
It. Intend probar. q̃d dc̃æ terræ consistunt in Dersham
It. Intend probar. quod dc̃i Prior et Conv. Thetford adhuc tenet certas terras ex cā pmutac̃ois prædc̃æ
It. Intend probar' quod tal' est fama
It. Intend probare quod dicti Prior et Conventus de Bliburgh pcipiunt dc̃as duas partes decimar' ex cā pmutacōis prædc̃æ et non tanquam Rectoris dc̃arum ecclesiar'.

(Norwich and Mett. Chart. fol. 88 †).

XII. *1287, Peter de Mells* v. *Prior of Blythburgh regarding the right of presentation to the Chapel of Mells.*

Placita &c. coram Salomone de Roff' Walter de Hoptone Rico de Boyland (and others) Justiciar' . . . . Itinerant' apud Gypewycum etc.

Assiai venit recogn' quis advocat' tempe pacis p'sentavit ultima p'sonam que mortua est ad Capel' de Melles que vacat. Cui advoc' Petrus de Melles clam' v'sus Priore' de Blybregg. Et unde dicit qd ipem̃et tempe paces dni Reg' nūc . . . . . p'sentavit ad pred'cam Capella quedam mag'rum Rob'm de Melles cl'icum Sui qui ad p'sentacōm suā ad eandem . . . . fuit admissus et institu' capiendo inde explec' ut in oblac'oibz et aliis ad valenc' &c et inde obiit seitus &c. Et Prior ven' E dicit qd ip̃e nich' clamat hac vice in pred'ca presentac'one ideo cons' est qd pred'c'us Petrus recup'et p'sentacōm ad eandem Cap. et h'eat br'e ad Ep'm Norwic' qd non obstante reclam' p'd'ci Prior ad p'd'cam capellā ydoneam p'sonā admittat.

Assize Roll, Suffolk, 14 Ed. I. (Record Office, m 5, 32–2).

* So in MS.

† This and the other Tanner documents have been very carefully compared with the originals in the Mettingham Chartulary already referred to. The originals, from which Tanner copied, had passed from the Stowe Collection to the British Museum after this paper had been written.

XIII. *1287, Defence of certain rights in Mells by Peter, Lord of the Manor, and also by the Master of the Knights Templars.*

Peter de Melles sum' fuit ad respond' dño Regi . . . . . de pl'to quo waranto clam' h're warenn' visum franci plegii et emendas assie panis c'vis' fracte in Mellis &c. Et Petrus venit et . . . . dicit qd ipse et omn' antecessor' sui a tempe conquestus Angl' rône (ratione) . . . . . cujusdam Ebranci antec' sui qui venit cum Conquestore in Angl' habuerunt predictas libert' et eis usi sunt a temp' quo nō exstāt memoria. Eta tamen qd ball's d'ni Regis predict' et eo war' clam' ipse habere liber tates predictas . . . . interesse de bet et inde pcipe quatuor denar' ad op' d'ni Regis pann visui franci pleg' etc.

(Plac. de quo War. apud Gyp. Ao. 14 Ed. I. R. 42.)

The next roll but one contains a similar allegation respecting Mells and the Master of the Knights Templars in England. I have met with no other evidence that the Knights held land in Mells, but the fact is not unlikely, since they had an establishment at Dunwich.

Mag'r Milicie Templi in Anglia sumon' fuit ad R respond' D'no Regis de P'l'ito quo waranto clam' h'ere visu f' nci pleg' emend' ass'ie panis et ceruis' fracte in Westleton, etc. Et . . . . in Melles etc . . . . . Et . . . . in Gyllingham etc.

The Master's reply, by his attorney, has some special features which deserve narration.

. . . . . dicit qd . . . . . Dñus H Rex pr̃ D'ni Reg' nūc concessit p' cartam suam qd idem Magist' et f'res milicie templi p'd'ci et eor'q' succ̃ lib'i sint et quieti de auxil' Regu et vic' de Shir et Hundr' P'litis et querel Et . . . . qd D'nus Rex nuc confirmavit eis omes consuetud' suas cu omn' lib' suis . . . et . . . quas regia potestasa alicui Domuii Religionis conferre potest et profert cartam confirmaconis pred'ci . . . . p tempus Diurentatem quocuq' casu contingente v'si non f'unt nichomin' etc.

XIV. *1291, Acknowledgment by the Rector of the Chapel to Peter de Mells for share of tithes.*

Pateat Universis ad quos p'sentes l're pervenerint q̃d Ego Will'us de Byskele Rector. Capelle de Mellys recepi a Dño Petro de Mellys Milite. duas marc' et dimid. argenti pro fructibus Capellæ predictæ eidem Dnō Petro p'me vendit et dimissis Anno Dni MCC^mo^ nonogesimo primo et anno regni Regis. Edwardi. nonodecimo. In cujus rei testimoniū p'sentibus sigillum mei apposui et sigillum decanatus de Donewic in signum probationis p'sentib̃ apponi procuravi. Dat apud Mellys die Dñica prox' post festum Sti Michis A° supradict'

(Norwich and Mett. Chart.)

XV: *1322, Inquisition at Mells regarding alleged tithe irregularities, to the prejudice of Blythburgh and Wenhaston.*

Inquisicō fcā apud Mellys die Dominica prox' post fest' Exalt' S'te Crucis ao R R Edwardi filij Reg Ed xjo.

Per Galfridum de Wenhaston Galfr' Binghard Joh'em le Fuller Thomam Queyntrel Joh'em Platon Henr' Cache Galfr' Jurdon Joh'em Queyntrel Hugonem Esoul Eudonem Ode Robertum Snayl Hugonem Goodrich Galfr' Leneys Qui dicunt q̃d Ebrādus de Mellys Añcessor Rad'i de Mellis dedit tertiam garbam decimarū de dn̄icis terris suis ad Cap' de Mellis et duas garbas decim' de dc̄is terris d'nicis Priori et Conventui. Monachor' de Thetford Item dicunt q̃d Prior et Conv. B. Marie de Blyburgh p'quisierunt in escambiis d'c'as duas garbas decimarū de d'c'o Priore et Conventū. Monachorū. Thetf. Item dicunt qd p'dcus Prior de Blyburgh debet p'cipe omnes decimas de terris in villa de Wenhaston usq. quandam virdam viam que se extend' de Mouncyrshegge ultra terra quondam Robti de Mellys excepta tertia garba decimarū de una pecia terre vocat Yeldelonde et excepta tota decima quatuor acras terre quas Rob. Snayl tenet excepta tertia garba decimarū de tribus acris terre quas Rob'us tenet que pertinent ad Capellam de Mellys.

Item dicunt qd D'nus Petrus de Mellys injuste appropiavit ad eandem Capell' tertiam garb' decim' decem acr' tre que voc' Merewynchel et de una acra' t're voc' Gottislond et tertiam garbam decimarū omni terrar' Ric'i le Reve in Mellys temp' quo Joh'es Binghard fuit Rector ubi p'cipere non debuit nisi tertiam garb' de una acr' t're voc' Welleakyr. Item dic' qd D'nus Petrus p'dcus appropriavit ad d'cam Capell' temp' quo Will' de Biskele fuit Rector tota decimā omnia terrarum voc' Bassishill ubi p'cipere non debuit nisi tertiam garb'. Item dicunt qd vicarius Prioris de Bliburgh apud Wenhaston debet p'cipere de Capell' de Mell' annuatim IIs ad festum Pasche et ad festum S'ti Mich'is equal' porc'on'

(Norwich and Mett. Chart. f. 81.)

XVI. *1413, Decision by the Master of Mettingham and the Rector of Carleton Rode, of a dispute between the Rector of Mells and the Vicar of Wenhaston—allotting to the former the small and mixed tithes, with some exceptions.*

Hæc Concordia fact' et indentat' infra Colleg' Beat' Marie de Metyngham ultimo die mensis Julij Anno Dni MCCCCXIII in p'sentia Mag'ror' Joh'is Wilbeye Mag'ri de Metyngham p̃dcā ac Willi Bernham Rectoris de Carleton Rode amicabiliū compositor' in hac parte Elector' inter D'nos Joh'em Waryn Rectorem Cap' de Mells ex parte una et Joh'em Kene (Reve*) vicar' de Wenhaston ex altera de et super jur' p'cipiende omnimodas decimas minutas et mixtas viz lactis lanæ pastur' feni

* John Reve, vicar, 1420-24.

bosci et fetus animaliu' infra manerium D'ni de Mellys p'd'ca et quibuscunq' terris D'nicis ejusdem manerii qualitercunq' provenientes seu provenire debent' testat' qd de cet'o imp'petuum d'cus D'nus Joh'es Waryn ac successores sui omnes et singuli p'fate Capelle de Mellys Rector temp'ibus suis successivis integ' percipient et habent omnimodas decimas predc̃as in manerio et terris p'dicis qualitercunq' provenientes seu provenire debentes pacifice et quiete sine condic'one et impedimento cujuscunq' vicarii pro temp' existentis de Wenhaston predict' excepto uno prato continent' quinque acr' t're vel circiter jacen' inter com'unẽ ripam ducent' de Walpole versus molendinū aquaticu de Mell' p'dict' ex parte boreali et pastur' d'ci D'ni ex parte australi de quo quidem prato d'cus D'nus Johes Kene vicarius p'dicus ac successores sui omnes et singuli vicar' de Wenhaston pro temp' exist' omninodas decim' provenient' integraliter p'cipient et habebunt et quilibet eorum p'cipiet et habebit sine condic̃oe et p'turb' quacunq' p'dici D'ni Johis Waryn et successor' suorum quorumcunq' d'ce Capell' de Mellys Rector' pro tempore existent' In cujus rei testimonium p'te p'dce p'sentibus sigilla sua alternatim apposuerunt. dat die loco et anno D'ni supradic'.

(Norwich and Mett. Chart.)

XVII. *1467, Decision by Mag'r Joh'es Salot, of the Consistory Court at Norwich, of a dispute regarding the tithes of Mells, between the Master, etc., of Meitingham, owners of the "Proprietary Chapel," and the Prior, etc., of Blythburgh, owners of the Parish Church. (Probably on the closure of the Chapel.)*

Universis Christi fidelibus ad quos p'sentes litere pervenerint Salutatem. Transact'quidem temporibus et. si non minima litium discordia s3 quasi mortalia pro quadem causa decimarum predialium personalium et mixtarum Manerii de Mells et Inhabitantium in eodem inter Magistrum et Confratres Collegii beatæ Mariæ de Metyngham proprietorij Capellæ de Mellys predict' infra fines et limites ut dicit' parochiæ parochialis ecclesiæ de Wenhaston Norwicensis Diocesis erect' et situat' ac Priorem et Conventum de Blithburgh propriatores Ecclesie parochialis predicte. necnon Vicariam ejusdem Ecclesia. Ipsi tamen nunc adjuvicẽ antiqua litium bella ad mutua pacis oscula traducere satagent' honorabili viro Magistro Johanni Salot Decretorum Doctor Officiali Consistorij domini Norwici Episcopi p'optat' pacis mediator' et suas gratiose in hac parte interponente partes forma subscripta amicabili compositione concordarunt. videl't q̃d Prior p'dictus perpetuis temporibus futuris percipiet et habebit duas partes decimarum quorumcunque predialium et mixtarum de terris pertinentibus Manerio de Mellys predict' et Magister et Confratres de Mettyngham predict' p'cipient et habebunt tertiam partem terrarum earundem ac totam deciman bosci et subbosci dicti Manerij cum tota decima molendini quod Magister et Confratres situm habent infra parochiam antedictam dictique Magister et Confratres p'cipient et h'ebunt

de Inhabitantibus in dicto manerio tertiam partem omnium decimarum mixtarum una cum tota oblac̃oe a fidelibus in dc̃a capella pie facta et devote oblata et elargita. Vicariusque parochialis predictæ percipiet et habebit de Inhabitantibus in eodem manerio quibus ministrat sacramenta et sacamentalia decimas quæ suis (?sunt) personales et duas partes decimarum mixtarum proviso semper quod antedicti Magister et Confratres pro indemnitate dictæ ecclesiæ parochialis de cetero solvent annuatim predicto Priori aut ejus vicario Ecclesiæ predictæ qui pro tempore fuerit quinque solidos Et extunc cessabit ille census antiquus quatuor solidorum olim p'stit' dicto Priori et Conventui seu ejus nomine vicario Ecclesiæ predictæ per dc̃um Magistrum et Confratres nõie decimarum aut subjectionis capellæ predictæ. In quorum omnium premissorum fidem et Testimonium dictus Magister et Confratres ac dictus Prior et Conventus sigilla sua comun' ac vicarius dictæ Ecclesiæ de Wenhaston sigillum suum presentibus apposuerunt. Datum apud Norwicum sexto die Maij Anno Dñi MCCCClxvij. (Norwich and Mett. Chart. fol. 83.)

XVIII. *1550, An Abstract of the Case of John Pryme published (verbatim et literatim) by the Rev. T. S. Hill of Thorington, from the Wenhaston MS.**

The case was to be presented to the Consistory Court of Norwich 1550.

How a farm in Mells, Wenhaston, belonging to Master Toppesfield of Fressingfield, occupied by John Pryme, had been occupied, and by whom, for a hundred years, and how its tithes had been paid.

In 1465 John Cowper was living in Mells at his farm, the tenement having just been built, and, indeed, was unfinished when he took it on lease from Mettingham College. Until 1465 Mells Chapel was used as a parish church, and was such for all the inhabitants of Mells. They, and Cowper as one among them paid their tithes, etc., to the chapel, for the use of Mettingham, until that date. Then the chapel ceased from use as a parish church, and the customary Divine Service was discontinued except on the eve and day of St. Margaret, the holy day of the chapel. So J. C. had to go where he could, but mostly he and his went to Halesworth Church, but he still paid his tithes to Mettingham. A few years before his death the Master of Mettingham ordered him, until other arrangements were made, to attend Bramfield Church on his four "offering days" and receive there the "Sacraments and Sacramentals." With those exceptions, he might go to Halesworth or where he liked. But for the Bramfield privileges, he must pay its vicar 5s. a year, which would be allowed out of his tithes. This was the origin of payments to Bramfield from Mells. On the death of John C., his son Robert occupied the farm and continued the payment to Bramfield until May, 1493, when Robert

* In this abstract the old circumlocutions and repetitions are reduced to the simplest exact rendering. Every definite statement is given. The original is about four times the length of this abstract.

C. bought a dilapidated house called "Howards," in Bramfield, with some land, from William Vesey. To this he removed, still keeping in Mells the greater part of the old farm, viz., the lands called "Over Seymars" and "Nether Seymars," and other parts of his old farm that lay close to Bramfield. The house and rest of the farm in Mells were rented from him by successive tenants. For 11 years this made it difficult to separate Cowper's two holdings, and, his chief duty being to Bramfield, he increased considerably the amount of his original annual gift of 5s. This was the cause of all the subsequent difficulty about the tithes of Mells.

Robert Cowper died in 1506* and his wife died soon afterwards. Then his executors sold the unexpired five years term of the Mells farm to "Symund Toppesfield" of Halesworth, who with his servants attended Halesworth Church. He paid nothing to Bramfield, but arranged the matter with the Master of Mettingham (whom he is said to have served) and ensured the tithes to the college, to which, at that day, all the other inhabitants of Mells paid them. Some of Simon's old servants who were still living in 1550, and other old inhabitants, testified to this. Simon renewed the lease before it expired, and then sub-leased it to John Wetynge, who died rather more than five years later, December 6, 1516. This farm was held to the end of the sixth year by Wetynge's executors, Walter Norton and William Saunderson of Halesworth, with Sir Robert Harrison, Vicar of Bramfield, as Supervisor. The last was thus able to secure tithes "and make his boke for his most vantage." At the end of the sixth year, John Pecke took the farm and occupied it for eight years. At the end of his first year, the Vicar of Bramfield asked for the tithes previously paid. (Apparently the Vicar was not sure of his ground, for a process of bargaining took place.) They "fell to lovinge and byddinge, till" J. P. offered 10s. a year, but the Vicar refused this, and at once sued J. P. in the "Chappettell Courte." Soon afterwards the Master of Mettingham was holding a Court at Bramfield and J. P. declared the facts. (They were also urged by others and were evidently conclusive, for) the Master sent for the Vicar and told him it was to be 10s. or nothing. The 10s. was not to be as tithe but for ministration to J. P. and his household, because J. P. lived in Mells, not in Bramfield, and the Mettingham tenants in Mells were merely told to attend Bramfield Church (their proper church being Wenhaston, which, from its closer connection with Blythburgh, seems to have been obnoxious to Mettingham). Unless the Vicar was content with the 10s. the Master would send J. P. to some other church. As long as Mells Chapel was a parish church (the old idea persisting, or the words being loosely used), the tithes had to be paid to it, but it was so no longer, and they belonged to Mettingham. It was to the College that J. P. was accountable. The Vicar, Sir R. Harrison, was annoyed, but accepted the 10s. and hoped the Master would regard him with favour.

After the eight years John Peck left, and John Pryme came, 30

* The year is said also, however, to be the 11th Henry VII., which was 1495.

years before this case was urged. A year after his arrival the Vicar of Bramfield came on him for payment. Another "loving and byddyn" ended in an agreement for 17s. a year for both their lives. But the Vicar soon came back (perhaps remembering the past) and begged Pryme, if asked from Mettingham, to say that he only paid 10s., and this merely for ministration, because he (the Vicar) was accountable to Mettingham. The 17s. a year were paid apparently until 1555. (The MS. reads "MCCCCC (and lv^{ti})" as if the interpolation was later, or an after-thought. 1555 would be five years after the suit, and is obviously erroneous. Whether the lie had to be told is not stated.) Then the Vicar of Bramfield, Sir Anthony Wylkinson, demanded the tithes in full, requested attendance at Bramfield Church, and hinted, among other things, that J. P. could not be a good Catholic. So Pryme sought, by all means, to get free from "such a popyshe cuerat." Some old records were found on which he might rely, wills, old cases, &c. Many old inhabitants, moreover, were prepared to testify to the previous customs, and Pryme forthwith absented himself from Bramfield Church, and refused the 17s. Hence this suit was brought in the year 1550. The decision has not been found, but the Vicar and Pryme had not become reconciled when the latter died in 1556, as the Bramfield Register shows.

XIX. *S. Bartholomew's Chapel, Mells.*

Land in Wenhaston and Mells was possessed by the Priory of S. Bartholomew, Smithfield, probably adjacent to the southern end of the eastern boundary of the manor. The possession was marked by no tithe disputes, such as have preserved for us so much of the history of Mells. It is recorded in the account of Pope Nicholas' Taxation, and the "Valor Ecclesiasticus," also in an entry in the Wenhaston MS. already described. The latter is said to be taken from the "Norwich Domesday Book" is as follows:—

Taxatio spirlitatee. Wenhastone. . . . . porcio Sti Bartholomei de Smetheffelde in eadem et in Melles lvi^{s} viii^{d} unde decima v^{s} viii^{d}

The MS. goes on to say, that "From certayn other evidence that belongethe unto the vicarage of Wenhaston.

"Capelli Sancti barthi solvit in die Solempnitatis p'd'i Sancti Capello Ecclie m'ricis annuatim iii^{s} iiii^{d} et predic'us Cap'lus celebraret Singulis ebdomadis Semetibry Et accipet in die ffesto p'd'co candela sufficiente ad ex ad celebrared' p anno sed prior Sc̄ti barthi mueniet vestimenta pillas lampade' pendente ad Custodien' lumen et Capellam sustinebit in omnibz."

"The Chapell of Saint bartholomew payeth in y^{e} daye of the Solemnite of the afore sayd Saynte vnto the Chapellen of the mother Churche yerlly iiij^{s} iiij^{d} and the aforesayd Chappelane shall celebrate Everie weke ons there and shall take in the fore sayd Solemne daye a sufficient candele to celebrate by By the yeare—but the prior of Sainte bartholomves shall ffynde vestimentes Copes & an hanging lampe for to kepe the lyght and shall ophoulde the Chapell il in all thynges, &c."

BLYTHBURGH PRIORY AND MELLS TITHES.

The Mettingham Chartulary contains one other record relating to Mells and Blythburgh, which either escaped the notice, or more probably, baffled the efforts of Tanner, and was not copied by him.*

(The k' of the original (= que or qui) is rendered q' in accordance with a frequent and convenient custom.)

Cees sunt les terres dunt le prioure de Blyburgh deit auer deus (deux) garbes et la pson' de mellys la terç Ceo† est a sauer.‡

De iiij^{xx}§ acr' de tre a sire pers' de mellys q' gisent iouste la deinse‖ de Bromfeld.

De ij acr' de tr' q' sunt appelt le baukenelond & boutef de vers Walpol.

De tute la t'r' q' est appelt le pertreslond de q' a sayliner'

De les tr' q' sunt appelt le Stubbyngheg'

De ij peces de tr' q' se estendet' de la meson Thom' Queyntrel.

De les trs q' se estendent de prue Kakescroft de q' a de q' Saylmere.

De t'r' q' se estendent del les t'r' q' fuerent a beneyt de Doufford de q' a bollisbrok.

De vne pece de tr' q' gesant entre bollisbrok q' git de Wennaston de q' Walpole

De tute la tr' q' est appelt chapelcroft sauve ii acr' dunc le p'our' prent le dim ent' ¶

De tr' q' se estendent de q' a le Watrsingh de vers le pykedlond.

De tr' q' estendent de Helderbusk de q' la tr' dame Anastate.

De tr' q' se estendent del pomer de q' a mouncirsheg'.

De iij acr' de tr' q' sunt appelt houphallelond

De terre q' sunt appelt Wyneldouneslond u's (vers) le Est

De tre q' sunt appelt le hupstedel.

De les tr' q' le pr'our' le couent de Blyburgh tenet en Mellys

De vn pre a Rob le Neuema'

Del pre Walt le Newemā

Del pre q' est appel de Westmedew.

* The second explanation is probable on account of the difficulty of the hand-writing, which is the same in this, as in the other records, and which caused numerous errors in his version. Moreover, this alone is not in Latin, but in old and much contracted French, of which some words bear a sufficient resemblance to Latin, to prevent an early perception of the language, except by those who are accustomed to French records.

† Ceo is the early form of ce.

‡ In the original the next line runs on from this. The others all begin separate lines.

§ A lens leaves no doubt regarding the xx although 80 acres is a large area. It may, however, reasonably be exact, since this entry is placed first.

‖ Probably equivalent to demesne.

¶ Dime ent'decime entière. Dime is still French; compare the American "dime," the tenth part of a dollar.