

Itinerant justices in Kent : 1219 : Eyre of Benedict bishop of Rochester and others

There is no full record of the proceedings, but evidence survives relating to some aspects of the business transacted by these justices.

(1) The 'Book of fees' (E 164/5-6) has extracts from the record of this eyre relating to wardships, churches, escheats, serjeanties, etc – that is, the sort of rights which belonged to the king (either as king or as overlord), about which the hundred juries were expected to inform him. These extracts are printed in *Book of fees*, pp 269-71. I append my own transcription of the printed text.

(2) Long sequences of entries resulting from the eyre of 1219 appear in the exchequer rolls, under the heading *Amerciamenta facta per B. Roffensem episcopum et socios suos* (GREx 1219:151-2, 1220:162-9). These justices had imposed rents on various 'purprestures' (encroachments on the king's land) (*Book of fees*, p 271): those rents turned up for the first time on the exchequer roll for 1222 (GREx 1222:63-4) but did not start flowing smoothly till two years after that (GREx 1224:148).

(3) Fines were levied before these justices at Canterbury, 9-16 June (*Feet of fines*, pp 68-9), and at Rochester, 20-21 June (p 69).

One significant by-product of this eyre is an order sent to the justices in July 1219, which I copy here as it was translated by Furley (1874, p 56):

The King [by the grace, etc.], to the venerable father in Christ B. <Benedict>, by the same grace Bishop of Rochester, and his associates, justices in Eyre in cos. Kent and Sussex, greeting. We command that you all or certain of you do go to the Lowy ('banlega') of the liberty of Tunebruge, in like manner as the Justices in Eyre used to go there in the times of our predecessors and of the predecessors of G. <Gilbert> Earl of Clare, in order to see that the same Earl do have his liberties which he ought and is wont to have in the Eyre of Justices, and that the pleas of our Crown which fall to us be justly conducted in the same liberty. Witness, H. <Hubert> de Burgh, Justiciary, at Westminster, the 17th day of July [1219].

As far as I know, this is the earliest explicit evidence that the itinerant justices were expected to hold a separate session at Tonbridge for the lowy of Tonbridge. But the language which the king is made to use (he was 11 years old at the time) is emphatic that there is nothing new about this. By speaking of "our predecessors" in the plural, the king must at least mean that the arrangement existed in the time of his uncle, king Ricard, who died in 1199; by speaking of "the earl's predecessors", he must at least mean that the arrangement existed in the time of the earl's grandfather, Roger earl of Clare, who died in 1173. Thus, without

saying so, this letter of the king's invites us to suppose that the itinerant justices who visited Kent in 1168 would already have been required to hold a session at Tonbridge.

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Eskaete comitatus Kancie. (*Book of fees*, pp 269-71)

In hundredo de Estrie est quedam eskaeta domini regis que vocatur Mainesse, quam H. de Burgo dedit Nichol' de Dunwic', et monachi de Dovor' illam modo tenent, set nescitur per quod servicium, et valet per annum c s'.

In hundredo de Beauseberge -- Ecclesia de Ripera est de donacione domini regis, et Johannes de Ripera tenet illam de dono domini regis Henrici, patris Johannis regis.

Villa de Ripera est eskaeta domini regis, castrum Dovor' tenet inde unam partem, canonici de Sancta Radegunda tenent inde unam partem, et Salom' de Dovor' tenet unam partem de dono regis Johannis, et valet per totum xxx l'.

Ewell est eskaeta domini regis de honore Peverelli, fratres milicie Templi tenent illam per Willelmum Lungespeie in elemosina, et valet per annum xx l'.

Midelton' -- Dominus Henricus rex, pater Johannis regis, dedit ecclesiam de Bradegare magistro Firmino, et hospitale Sancti Jacobi de Cant' tenet modo illam, set nescitur per quem.

Idem dedit ecclesiam de Hartlep Thome filio Edwardi Blundi de Londoniis, quam <read "qui illam"> adhuc tenet, et est in hundredo de Midelton'.

Midelton' -- Dominus Ricardus rex, frater Johannis regis, dedit ecclesiam de Bakechild magistro Olivero, qui illam adhuc tenet.

Dominus Johannes rex dedit ecclesiam de Milsted' Wydoni clerico, qui illam adhuc tenet.

Idem Rex dedit Willelmo de Wrotham ecclesiam de Wardon', et Robertus capellanus modo tenet eam, set nescitur per quem.

Codested est eskaeta domini regis, et dominus Johannes rex dedit eam Willelmo le Taillur, qui eam tenet, et valet per annum xv s'.

In hundredo de Otteford <Codsheath> -- Camesing' est eskaeta domini regis, et Falco de Breaute tenet illam, set nescitur per quem, et valet per annum xxxvi l'.

In hundredo de Schamele -- Dominus H. de Burgo habet custodiam cuiusdam puelle que est heres Willelmi de Lanvalai cum maneriis de Chauk' et de Henneherst, et valent per annum xl l'. Et pertinet ad donacionem domini regis, set nescitur per quem habet illam in custodia.

In villa de Derteford' -- Terra Roberti Bacun est eskaeta domini regis, et Willelmus de Wrotham ex dono domini regis Johannis tenuit illam, et dedit eam fratribus hospitalis Ierosolimitanis, set nescitur per quod servicium, et valet per annum c s'.

In hundredo de Sutton <Axstone> -- Terra Gileberti de Foukarmont fuit eskaeta domini regis, et Willelmus de Wrotham tenuit inde

iiii libratas terre de dono Johannis regis, et hospitalarii de Ierosolima illas iiii libratas tenent modo, set nescitur per quem.

Abbas de Lesnes tenet xx solidatas redditus de eadem terra de dono ipsius Gilberti Fukarmont.

In eodem hundredo heredes Roberti Walensis tenent quendam campum qui vocatur Rede et valet per annum x s', et reddunt <read "reddent"> inde domino regi xiii d', et antecessores sui erant custodes de placitis corone domini regis de lesto de Sutton', et heredes predicti Roberti ita esse debent, ut intelligunt. <The rent of 13 pence is a new one imposed by the justices: the meaning is "they are to pay".>

In hundredo de Brugg' -- Medietas ville de Badrichesburn' que fuit Radulfi Teisuni est eskaeta domini regis, et Gaufridus de Say tenet eam per dominum regem Johannem, et valet per annum x l' sine stauro.

In hundredo de Maidestane -- Robertus de Bouton' tenet unam sergantiam in villa de Boxel', et valet per annum xl s', et debet domino regi unum equum cum sacco, quando vadit in exercitu apud Walliam. <This is Weaving.>

Willelmus de Longo Campo tenet Ovenell' in eodem hundredo que est sergancia domini regis, et valet per annum c s', et debet invenire domino regi unum equum et unum saccum cum brocha in exercitu Wallie.

In hundredo de Strete -- Villa de Selling' est escaeta domini regis, et Willelmus de Putot tenet eam per Hubertum de Burgo, et valet per annum x l'.

In eodem hundredo, villa de Herst est sergancia domini regis, et Robertus Falconarius tenet illam per sergantiam unius falconis, et valet per annum xv l'.

In hundredo de Faveresham -- Ecclesia de Ospreng' est de donacione domini regis, et data fuit Thome de Boues per dominum Johannem regem, qui adhuc eam tenet, et valet per annum xl m'.

Villata de Ospreng est eskaeta domini regis de honore Peverelli de Dovor', et Hubertus de Burgo tenet eam, set nescitur per quem, et valet per annum xl l' sine stauro.

In hundredo de Eyhorn' -- Ecclesia de Sutton' est de donacione domini regis, et Anselmus Grassus eam tenet, set nescitur per quem.

Herietesham est eskaeta domini regis, et Rogerus de Cressy tenet eam, set nescitur per quem, et valet per annum xx l'.

In hundredo de Wy -- Villa de Bouton' cum Helya herede Alulfi de Bouton qui esse debet in custodia domini regis est in manu Petri de Maulay, et est de honore Bolonie, set nescitur per quem, et valet per annum xx l'.

Ecclesia de Bouton que est de donacione predicti Elye heredis Alulfi dedit dominus legatus Willelmo de Cirencestr'.

Robertus de Wilinton' tenet unam sergantiam de honore Bolonie, scilicet Wilinton', et valet per annum ii m', et tenet illam per sergantiam quod sit cocus comitis Bononie.

Willelmus de Burton' tenet Seton' in eodem hundredo de eodem

honore per servicium quod debet esse veautrator eiusdem comitis,  
et valet per annum i m'.

In hundredo de Litlefeld' -- Emma de Bendeuill' tenet quandam  
sergantiam, scilicet Pecham, per servicium portandi i hostorium  
<read "ostorcum"> domini regis a festo sancti Michaelis usque ad  
purificationem beate Marie, et valet per annum xv l'.

In hundredo de Bircheholt -- Braburn' est eskaeta domini regis,  
et Falco de Breaute tenet eam, set nescitur per quem, et valet per  
annum xl l'.

In hundredo de Newecherche -- Medietas ville de Bilsinton' est  
eskaeta domini regis, et fuit terra Roberti de Curcy, et comes de  
Arundell' tenet eam per Johannem regem, et valet per annum xxx l'.

In dimidio hundredo de Langeport -- Aubrea de Jarpenuill' tenet  
quandam seriantiam que vocatur Effeton' per servicium quod sit  
mariscallus de falconibus domini regis, et valet per annum c s'.

In hundredo de Wrth -- Estbreg est eskaeta domini regis, et  
Stephanus Haringod tenet illam, set nescitur per quem nec per quod  
servicium, et valet per annum xii l', et est de honore de Pertico.

Graneston <read "Tr-"> est eskaeta domini regis, et Aubricus de  
Marinis tenet eam de dono Johannis regis per servicium i militis,  
et valet per annum v m'.

Sutton' est escaeta domini regis, et Fulco de Breaute tenet eam,  
et <read "set"> nescitur per quem, et valet per annum xl l'.  
<This is Sutton Valence; the entry ought to be included under  
Eythorne hundred.>

Filia Baldewini de Verevall' est de donatione domini regis, et  
Willelmus Taillur habet eam de dono domini Johannis regis, et  
seriantia illa infra Cantiam valet per annum xv m'. <I do not  
know what this entry is about.>

<The ten paragraphs following this relate to "purprestures" --  
encroachments on the king's land. In eight of these paragraphs we  
are told that the justices have imposed a small rent: together  
with the rent for "Rede" in Sutton hundred (see above), those  
rents first turn up on the exchequer roll for 1222 (GREx  
1222:63-4, backdated to cover three years, 1219-22). No rent was  
imposed on two encroachments in Strood, apparently because they  
were thought to work to the king's advantage: the first one, we  
are told, *est ad commodum caucee*, "is a good thing for the  
causeway".>

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