

De Nogent Possessions in England

As a result of several marriages, and also the association with three successive Kings of England, the House of Rotrou inevitably acquired land and dominions in England. Unfortunately, as the House of Rotrou in France provided no male heir in 1226, their lands and manors were forfeit to the French Crown (Law of Reversion). However, even during the lifetime of the Counts of Perche, English assets were confiscated and restored at the whim of the King of England, as successive Counts fell into and out of favour. As of 1204, due to financial difficulties and a rather rapacious attitude, King John (Lackland), the current King, paid no heed to the fact that many of the possessions of the Counts of Perche actually belonged to his niece. He confiscated them even so.

This document will make no effort to establish a complete history of the lands and manors belonging to the House of Rotrou over a period of more than 100 years. This feat has already been admirably expressed in the book by Kathleen Thompson ¹, which we have quoted many times on this site. Miss Thompson has done deep research into the English affairs of the Rotrou family, and I will certainly not copy wholesale, passages from her book, nor attempt to better her research. For all Nugents wishing to expand their knowledge of the origins and development of the House of Rotrou, I strongly encourage readers to lash out the required cost of Miss Thompsons book. They will be rewarded with a fascinating story about the beginnings of our family. However, from available resources on the Internet, I have gleaned enough information about the possessions to show the importance of the Rotrou family in England, by the wealth of their lands and manors.

Orderic Vitalis ² has clearly stated that Geoffrey III de Mortagne (1045-1100) received rich rewards from William the Conqueror for his participation in the conquest of England. Either these rich rewards were in the form of liquidities, or else, if they were lands and manors in England, Geoffrey must have disposed of them before the availability of the Domesday book (1086), which was a compilation of all land and livestock attribution in England. No trace of English possessions can be seen allocated either to Geoffrey, or any of his family who settled in England. In truth, the Domesday Book, although representing a formidable picture of the distribution of riches in England ³ at this time, sheds no light upon any members of the Rotrou family.

¹ Power and Border Lordship in Medieval France : The County of the Perche, 1000-1226 - Chapter 7 - The Rotrou Counts and England, 1100-1226.

² An English Chronicler (1075-1141) His works are superbly presented in English by Marjory Chibnall - "The World of Orderic Vitalis" (1984)

³ This compilation has never been repeated, and although not quite complete (lacking information for London, Winchester, Northumberland and Durham), has nevertheless provided historians and genealogists with an unprecedented amount of information concerning the distribution of wealth at that time.

Rotrou Family Assets in England

Aldbourn Manor	Wiltshire
Wanborough Manor	Wiltshire
Newbury Manor	Berkshire
Shrivenham Manor	Wiltshire
Toddington	Bedfordshire
Great Horkesley	Essex
Kempsford	Gloucestershire
Sandleford	Berkshire

We have no indication that the subsequent Counts of Perche obtained lands or manors in England on their own account. As far as we know, all of the possessions which came into the hands of the family were as a result of three important marriages :

- 1 Rotrou II - The Great (1085-1144) marries (1103) Mathilda, illegitimate daughter of King Henry I (Beauclerc).

Mathilda brought the manors of Aldbourne and Wanborough into the Rotrou estates.

- 2 Rotrou II - The Great (1085-1144) marries (1126) Hawise de Salisbury, daughter of Walter FitzEdward, Earl of Salisbury.

Hawise brought the manors of Newbury and Toddington (from her grandparents) into the Rotrou estates. Kempsford manor also possibly comes from Hawises' grandparents. Certain estates had once been the property of Ernulf de Hesding. Hawises' brother was Earl Patrick, whose mother is considered to have been Sibil de Hesding, sister of Matilda, the presumed wife of Patrick de Cadurcis, and the marriage of Rotrou with Hawise may probably account for the interest which the Earls of Perche acquired in Ernulf de Hesding's possessions.

- 3 Geoffrey III (1158-1202) marries (1189) Mathilda of Saxony, daughter of Heinrich V of Saxony.

Mathilda brought holdings in Suffolk, Essex and Kent into the Rotrou estates.

There were certainly other possessions in England that came into the hands of the House of Rotrou. The above list only represents the possessions that I know of.

The following pages have been compiled from the **Victoria County History** site.

Founded in 1899 and originally dedicated to Queen Victoria, the VCH is an encyclopaedic record of England's places and people from earliest times to the present day. It is without doubt the greatest publishing project in English local history, having built an international reputation for scholarly standards.

Based at the Institute of Historical Research in the University of London since 1933, the VCH is written by historians working in counties across England.

Victoria County History

A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 12

D. A. Crowley (editor), A. P. Baggs, Jane Freeman, Janet H. Stevenson

Year published

1983

ALDBOURNE

Aldbourn, a downland parish north-east of Marlborough and south-east of Swindon, includes Aldbourn village, the hamlets of Upper Upham and Woodsend and part of that of Preston, and the deserted hamlet of Snap. It measures 3,441 ha. (8, 502 a.)⁴ and forms a rough square with an extension at its north-west corner. The parish's northern boundary, later also the hundred boundary, had for its western two thirds apparently been established by the mid 11th century along Rogues or Sugar Way, which is said to have run approximately east and west c. 4 km. north-west of Aldbourn village. The parish was largely coterminous with a single estate, Aldbourn manor, on which there was a church in the late 11th century. By a will of about 970, Alfheah left ALDBOURNE to his brother Alfhere. Gytha or her son Earl Harold held the estate in 1066. It passed to William I, and after 1086 was granted to a Count of Perche. Aldbourn was held in 1135 by Rotrou III, Count of Perche (died 1144), and passed with the title to his son Rotrou IV (died 1191) and to the younger Rotrou's son Geoffrey. Rents from Aldbourn or Wanborough granted by Rotrou III, Count of Perche to the priory of Lewes (Suss.) about 1135, were probably from Wanborough. Rotrou IV, Count of Perche, gave Aldbourn church to the priory of Nogent-le-Rotrou (Eure-et-Loir) before his death in 1191.

After the death of Geoffrey in 1202, the manors were controlled by the King, the beginnings of a complete forfeiture which was to take place some time later. John Lackland, died in 1216, and the future king, Henry III, was too young to be declared king. The task of regent was given to one of the most influential men in England at that time, Hubert de Burgh, 1st Earl of Kent. De Burgh was instrumental in the victory of the Battle of Sandwich, and gained more and more favour with the English court, even advising the king to sign the Magna Carta. De Burgh and the Earl of Salisbury worked in harmony for several years, preparing the future fortunes of their families. Four manors belonging to the Count of Perche, were confiscated in 1217 after the death of Geoffrey's son Thomas, Count of Perche, at the battle of Lincoln. The manors of Aldebourne, Wanborough, Newbury and Toddington were granted to the Earl of Salisbury. Salisbury made a bargain with the de Burgh, and the lands were partitioned between them.

⁴ The **Hectare** (ha) is a unit of measurement of an area. It corresponds to 10,000 square metres (an example is a square of 100 metres in length and breadth). The **Are** (a) represents 100th of a hectare (or 100 square metres). Many of the old measurements of the Middle Ages represent the area that a farmer could plough with two oxen, in a single day, or a sub-division of such areas. Middle Age definitions of these area measurements are no longer true, but have been rounded to values of the Metric System.

Salisbury acquired Aldebourne and Wanborough, while de Burgh acquired Newbury and Toddington. The rectory of Aldebourne was finally appropriated by 1228, just after the death of the last Count of Perche (Guillaume, bishop of Chalons) in France. De Burgh and Salisbury were also making moves to confiscate the lands held by the Count of Perche at Shrivenham in Berkshire. Their objectives were clear, as they hoped that the confiscated manors and lands would be conceded to them and their descendants as a hereditary right, when the king came of age. In 1229, this is exactly what happened.

Victoria County History

A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 9

Elizabeth Crittall (editor) R. W. Dunning, K. H. Rogers, P. A. Spalding, Colin Shrimpton, Janet H. Stevenson, Margaret Tomlinson

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1970

WANBOROUGH

According to a charter purporting to be of the time of Stigand, Bishop of Winchester (c. 1043–53), the area of the present parishes of Wanborough and Little Hinton formed part of that bishop's estates. The manor of WANBOROUGH was still held by the Bishop of Winchester in 1086, and was then assessed at 19 hides ⁵. In 1166–7 the Count of Perche was holding the manor. This was Rotrou IV, son of Rotrou III by Hawise, sister of Patrick, 1st Earl of Salisbury. He may have inherited the property through his mother, or possibly through his grandfather, Geoffrey III, Lord of Mortagne ⁶. Rotrou IV died in 1191 and was succeeded by his son Geoffrey IV; the sheriff rendered £4, three years later for the new Count's lands in Aldbourne and Wanborough. Geoffrey IV died in 1202 and his son Thomas was killed at the battle of Lincoln in 1217, fighting for Prince Louis. His lands were taken into royal hands, but almost immediately Wanborough and other properties were granted to William Longespée, Earl of Salisbury, the King's uncle.

Rotrou III, Count of Perche, gave a hide of land to Lewes Priory in 1135. The grant was confirmed several times during the next 25 years. In 1210 the monks drew rents from the land worth £1, but there is no trace of the property in the 1535 valuation of their lands. The land was demised by the tenant, Robert son of Roger, in 1169 as security for a loan.

⁵ Hide - An ancient measure of land - 4 virgates (about 120 acres), used as a measure of taxation in the Domesday Book (1086). It was not a fixed area of land, but represented a value, such as the amount of land sufficient to support a family.

⁶ Wanborough (and Aldebourne) actually formed part of the endowment of Mathilda (Maud), daughter of Henry I, when she married Rotrou II (The Great) in 1103.

A small estate granted by Geoffrey IV, Count of Perche, was confirmed to the canons of Bradenstoke in 1207, and consisted of 7s. rent.

The church of Wanborough with its tithes and some land attached to it was among those granted by St. Osmund to Salisbury Chapter in 1091. It was still held by the chapter in 1146, but apparently not in 1158. The advowson⁷ was presumably included in the grant of the church to the chapter, but its descent over the next 200 years is obscure. It may have passed to the overlords of the main manor of Wanborough, the Counts of Perche, and from them to the Cluniacs of Nogent-le-Rotrou (Eure-et-Loir), for whom the Counts had a special devotion. It was not among the possessions of that house confirmed in a bull⁸ of 1182, but in 1290 the Prioress of Amesbury asserted that Nogent-le-Rotrou had held the advowson of Wanborough for 100 years and had then granted it to her.

⁷ The right in English law of presenting a nominee to a vacant ecclesiastical position (from Medieval Latin "advocatia" - a summoning)

⁸ A bull is a patent letter or charter issued by a high authority of the Catholic Church, such as the Pope himself. It is named after the lead seal which is appended to the end, in order to authenticate it. A bull can define a confirmation of property, or a charter of protection accorded to a monastery or any religious institution.

Victoria County History

A History of the County of Berkshire : Volume 4

William Page and P.H. Ditchfield (eds)

Year Published :

1924

NEWBURY

Newbury stands on the River Kennet; the road leading from London westwards runs through the northern part of the town. At the present date the area of the borough is 1,826 acres.

If Newbury was to a great extent identical with Ulvritone it soon changed hands. From Ernulf de Hesding it passed (conjecturally by the marriage of one of his daughters) to the family of Chaworth *alias* Mundublel. Payne de Mundublel held Newbury in 1166, but by 1189⁹ it had fallen to the king. Then it passed to Rotrou IV, Count of Perche¹⁰, and was resumed with other Norman lands by King John in 1205, and at some subsequent period granted to the famous Fawkes de Breauté. But the Count of Perche apparently resumed his claim to it before his death at the battle of Lincoln in 1217, as his brother¹¹ and heir the Bishop of Chalons afterwards ceded all rights in the town to William the Marshal and the Earl of Salisbury. The manor was confirmed to Salisbury in 1217. The borough passed to William the Marshal, and soon the manor also passed to the same family. In 1231 the manor formed part of the dower of the Countess of Pembroke, the King's sister, who had married the second Earl Marshal. In 1229 Salisbury received a grant of land in Newbury of 100s.

⁹ This date looks a little strange - 1169 would seem a more likely year.

¹⁰ The close association between Henry II and Geoffrey of Perche (son of Rotrou II, the Great), resulted in the grant of Newbury (and Teddington) to Geoffrey, around 1175. When Geoffrey died in 1180, some of these lands (which ones ??) were passed on to his brother, Rotrou IV. These lands had belonged to the descendants of Ernulf of Hesdin, and the marriage of Geoffreys father (Rotrou III) to Harwise of Salisbury, had given him a tenuous right to part of the inheritance left by Ernulf. However, by 1205, King Jean had already confiscated more than half of the families recent acquisitions, and even the continued payments of Mathilda to her uncle, in order to recover the family properties were doomed to failure. By 1212, all of the families English properties had been confiscated

¹¹ This is an error. The next Count of Perche, Guillaume de Chalons was Thomas' uncle.

Victoria County History

A History of the County of Bedford : Volume 4

William Page & P.H. Ditchfield(editor)

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1924

SHRIVENHAM

The area now included in the hundred ¹² of Shrivenham was in 1086 divided between the three hundreds of Shrivenham, Wyfold and Hildeslaw. Within these three hundreds the king in 1086 held Shrivenham, Faringdon and Sparsholt in demesne ¹³. Faringdon early developed into a borough, and was apparently already separate from the hundred of Wyfold when granted by King John to Beaulieu Abbey. The hundred of Faringdon, as held by the abbot, included the parishes of Great and Little Faringdon and Coxwell. Shrivenham remained royal demesne until 1200, when the manor was granted to Geoffrey IV, Count of Perche ¹⁴, the rights over the hundred evidently being included in the grant of the manor. Early in the reign of Henry III the manor and hundred were acquired by William Marshal Earl of Pembroke and William Longespée, Earl of Salisbury.

¹² In medieval times, areas of land were defined such : a hide was an area of land that would support a family, typically about 30 acres of land, depending on its quality. A hundred was simply a hundred hides. Other medieval measurements existed, but are not defined here.

¹³ In the feudal system the "demesne" was the land, not necessarily all contiguous to the manor house, which was retained by a lord of the manor for his own use and support. In English, the "domain" is probably the equivalent term, taken from the French.

¹⁴ John Lackland ceded Shrivenham to Geoffrey in 1200, when he became King of England, upon the death of his brother, Richard the Lionheart.

Victoria County History

A History of the County of Bedford : Volume 3

William Page (editor)

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1912

TODDINGTON

Comprising 15½ hides, Toddington was held by Wulfweard "Levet" before the Conquest, and was afterwards granted to William Spec, who before 1086 exchanged this manor for two others held by Ernulf de Hesding. Two of Ernulf de Hesding's daughters are afterwards found connected with this parish. Of these Matilda, with her husband Patrick de Chaworth, made a grant of the church of Toddington, which was attached to the manor, to the Abbey of La Couture, 1100–22. This grant was made especially for the soul of "Ernulf de Hisden who held before us the land which we now hold" and was confirmed by Matilda's grandson Payn de Chaworth in 1167. Between this date and 1180, Toddington passed to Geoffrey IV, Count of Perche, who represented Sibel another daughter of Ernulf de Hesding, being her great-grandson. He died in 1202, and Toddington was still held by his widow, Mathilda, the Countess of Perche, in 1205. At this date, on the severance of English and Norman fealties, the English lands of the Count of Perche escheated ¹⁵ to the Crown, and Toddington was granted to Peter des Roches. This grant was temporary, and before 1229 the manor was again in the possession of the Crown, and was at that date conferred on William Marshal Earl of Pembroke on the occasion of his marriage with Eleanor sister of Henry III, who was to retain a life interest in Toddington ¹⁶.

The church of Toddington was granted to the abbey of La Couture, Le Mans, between 1100 and 1122, and confirmed to the Benedictine monks there by Henry I between the same dates, by Payn de Chaworth in 1167, by Henry II 1180 to 1186, and by Geoffrey IV, Count of Perche 1192 to 1202.

The priory of Dunstable acquired a considerable estate in the parish of Toddington during the 13th century, and possibly earlier, for among the grants enumerated in the cartulary of that monastery are those of Geoffrey IV, Count of Perche, whose connection with this parish extended from 1180 to 1202. He confirmed to the monks of Dunstable 5

¹⁵ Escheate - the reversion of lands in English feudal law to the lord of the fee when there are no heirs capable of inheriting under the original grant. This is similar to the French Law of Reversion (Middle English, developed from Latin - "escheir" - to fall, to devolve).

¹⁶ Such precise information can only come from the "Pipe Rolls", official documents created to show the movement of riches into and out of the coffers of the state.

virgates ¹⁷ of land in Chalton and 34 acres of land in Herne, and confirmation of this grant was afterwards made by William Marshal Earl of Pembroke.

Victoria County History

A History of the County of Essex: Volume 10

Janet Cooper (Editor)

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2001

GREAT HORKESELEY Manor

The manor of GREAT HORKESELEY was apparently held in demesne with Nayland manor until 1517. Sweyn was succeeded by his son Robert (d. 1132 x 1140) whose son Henry of Essex forfeited his lands in 1163. By 1198 Nayland had been granted to Geoffrey IV, Count of Perche (d. 1202) ¹⁸. He was succeeded by his son another Geoffrey, after whose death in 1205 ¹⁹ the lands reverted to the Crown. By 1215 Nayland had been granted to Hubert de Burgh (died 1243) who was succeeded by his son John (died 1274). John apparently gave Nayland to his son, another John (died 1280), who exchanged it with the Crown in 1272.

OTHER DOMAINS ASSOCIATED WITH THE HOUSE OF ROTROU

The Baronry of Kempford

Kempford lies in Gloucestershire upon the Thames halfway between Gricklade and Lechlade where the river parts Gloucestershire from Wiltshire. From the time of the Conquest official records are no longer silent. The pages of Domesday show that the manor of Kempford was granted by William the Conqueror to Arnulph or Ernulph de Hesding. He came from a family of rank and influence in France, with its headquarters at Hesding in Artois or Picardy in the lands of the Counts of Flanders.

This grant then, originally made by Ernulph de Hesding, is confirmed by his daughter Matilda and his son-in-law Patrick de Cadurcis: "We have placed it, for our souls' sake,

¹⁷ A virgate is an old Anglo-Saxon measurement of land which represents the area which can be cultivated by two oxen in a normal season. It represents a quarter of a hide, or about seven modern acres.

¹⁸ Great Horkesley was granted to Geoffrey in 1198, by Richard the Lionheart just before his death in an accident in 1199.

¹⁹ We must contest this reference. Geoffrey IV was succeeded in 1202 by Thomas, not by a Geoffrey. The Geoffrey in question, who was in fact the eldest of Geoffrey IV's sons, but seems to have died very young.

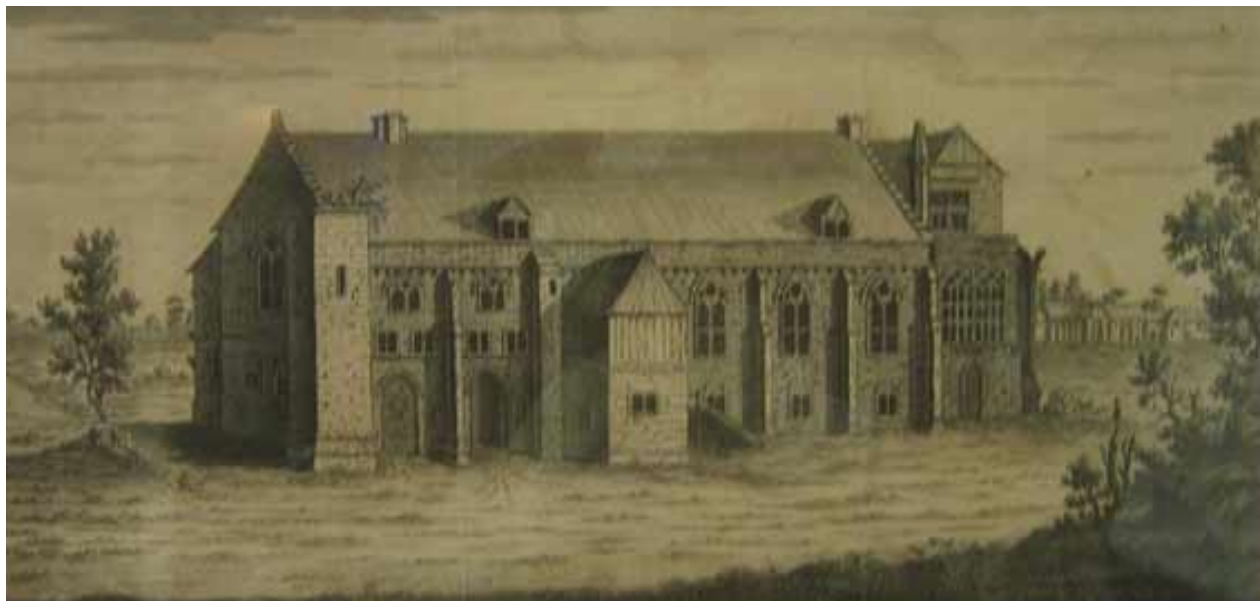
upon the altar in the dedication of the church". The same grant is next confirmed twice by the king - first by William II and later by Stephen. It is then confirmed by the bishop of Worcester - in whose diocese the parish was at that date. Pagan de Cadurcis, grandson of the original donor, again confirms the gift "for the soul of my brother Hugo and for the souls of all my ancestors and for my own soul", and this renewal of the grant is confirmed by Henry II – apparently twice, It is further confirmed by Rotrou III, Count of Perche, between 1144 and 1147 ²⁰. The grant is confirmed by Pope Celestine the third.

LESSER KNOWN DOMAINS

KT ²¹ suggests other, lesser-known domains which were ceded to the Rotrou family :

Domains of varying importance, but probably quite small, in Suffolk, Essex and Kent.

Warden Priory	Bedfordshire ??
Chelsfield	Kent,
Bradenstoke Priory	Wiltshire.



Bradenstoke Priory

²⁰ This grant shows the presence of the Count of Perche in this area, which is close to his assets of Wiltshire, at the indicated dates.

²¹ Kathleen Thompson, in a seminar "Le Pouvoir dans le Perche au temps des Rotrou", 22 October, 2006 in Nogent-le-Rotrou. Her other major work concerning the Rotrou family is referenced more completely in the "Site Information" menu, pointing to the sub-menu "Research Documentation" of this site.

The Priory of Sandleford

Some time between the years 1193 and 1202, although the material is not sufficient to fix the exact date, Geoffrey IV, Count of Perche (1158-1202), and Matilda of Saxony, his wife (1172-1214), founded, on some land about a mile south of Newbury, a Priory at a place already called Sandleford. We know but little of the early history of the monastery, except that it was dedicated to SS. Mary and John Baptist, and put in charge of Austin Canons.

It is possible that prior to the foundation of Sandleford by Geoffrey of Perche and Matilda his wife, for Monks or Regular Canons of the Order of St. Augustin, a small community of Secular Canons, or Recluses, dwelt here, as the "Recluses of Sandleford" are referred to in the Pipe Roll ²², 26 Henry II., 1180.

²² The Pipe Rolls (also called the Great Rolls) are a collection of financial records maintained by the English Exchequer, or Treasury. They record payments and debts made to the government, and as such, record much about the royal income. In the case of Rotrou lands in England, the Pipe Rolls showed attribution, confiscation and sometimes subsequent restauration of lands and chattels belonging to the family. The earliest Pipe Roll dates from the XIIth Century.