

Sheriffs of Kent from c. 1050 till 1227

Up till 1154, this list should be read as a commentary on the list put together by Green (1990). From 1155 onwards, it is based on the exchequer rolls, which record the names of the sheriffs in office each year. Because the rents which the sheriff had to collect were (mostly) paid in quarterly instalments, in December, March, June, and September (which is when the financial year was taken to end), it is possible to work out, within a few months, when the sheriffdom changed hands. (A sheriff who accounts for the first quarter of the year had collected the payments due in December, but not those due in March; a sheriff who accounts for the first half of the year had collected the payments due in December and March, but not those due in June.) So the sheriffs' names are known, and their terms of office are also known, but only in a fuzzy way. In the thirteenth century this fuzziness disappears, because from then onwards the date of each new sheriff's appointment can usually be found recorded on the patent roll.

Osweward – occ (implicitly as sheriff) 1053×61 (Sawyer no 1090 = Harmer no 35, addressed to Stigand archbishop, Harold earl, Wulfric abbot, Osweward, and all thegns) – occ (implicitly as sheriff) 1053×66 (Sawyer no 1092 = Harmer no 39 = Kelly no 39, addressed to Stigand archbishop, Harold earl, Osweward, and all thegns) – mentioned frequently as TRE sheriff in DB – once called "Osward of Norton" (DB-Ke-1va6) – one passage seeming to imply that he was removed from office before Jan 1066 (DB-Ke-2va22)

[By 1086, Osweward's lands were mostly in the possession of Hugo de Port. But that does not even begin to suggest that Hugo succeeded Osweward as sheriff of Kent. The lands did not go with the sheriffdom.]

Haimo – first occ 1077 – last occ 1086

Haimo (son of Haimo) – first occ 1088 – last occ 1114

[Haimo was the first Haimo's younger son. Most of the inheritance went to his elder brother, Rodbert son of Haimo (d 1107), but Haimo got the lands in Kent (those held from the archbishop as well as those held from the king) and also succeeded his father as sheriff. It appears that the elder Haimo died in late 1087 or early 1088 (Flight 2005:377); presumably the younger Haimo took over straight away.]

Willelm de Einesford – first occ 1114×16 – last occ 1127

[The document in which Willelm seems to reappear as sheriff in 1130×3 (Johnson and Cronne no 1867) is a thirteenth-century forgery from Rochester, not to be relied on.]

Rualon de Abrincis – first occ Sep 1129 – last occ Sep 1130 (GREx 1130:63)

[From the debts brought forward, it is clear that Rualon had been sheriff in the previous year, during at least some part of it.]

Ansfrid – first occ 1131×3 (Johnson and Cronne no 1728) – occ 1135×6 (Cronne and Davis no 142) – occ 1137 (Johnson and Cronne no 1190, misattributed)

[Ansfrid, when we hear of him first, was the steward of bishop Gundulf (as is proved, most explicitly, by DRc/R1, fo 188r); his career is fairly well documented (Conway 1911:4-11). The latest document in which he occurs as sheriff is a writ of queen Mathildis, Stephan's wife, issued in Mar × Nov 1137 while the king was overseas. A charter of archbishop Teodbald (Saltman no 44) relating to the manor of Stisted (Essex) seems to be saying that Ansfrid died before archbishop Willelm (who died on 21 Nov 1136). Since it cannot mean that, it seems rather to mean that Ansfrid had been dispossessed by archbishop Willelm. At least it seems clear that he was dead before the next archbishop arrived: it was Ansfrid's son, not Ansfrid himself, who had been causing trouble in the interim. Ansfrid and his wife were commemorated at Rochester on 27 October (Thorpe 1788:37); so apparently he died, on or about that day, in 1137 or 1138.]

[The difficulties complained of by Green are not real. (1) The document which calls Ansfrid "the archbishop's steward" is the same thirteenth-century forgery noted above (Johnson and Cronne no 1867). (2) The suggestion that he (or some other Ansfrid) may have been the steward of Haimo the sheriff is a misunderstanding derived from nothing more than the omission of a comma: the document in question (another Rochester forgery, reproduced by Flight 1997a, pl III) says "of Ansfrid the steward, of Hamo the sheriff", not "of Ansfrid the steward of Hamo the sheriff". It is speaking of two persons, not one.]

Radulf Picot – first occ 1143×8 (Saltman no 55) – occ 1151×4 (Saltman 1956:541-2) – occ 1153 (Cronne 1970:272-3) – occ Dec 1154 – last occ Dec 1160

[The document cited by Cronne – which I have not seen – is the report of a lawsuit (relating to land at Elverton in Stone) heard in the county court at "Castamers" (to be read, I suppose, as "Castaniers"). There is a misprint in Cronne's reference: it ought to say "Reg. D", not "Reg. B"; Green's reference to "Register A" is also wrong. An earlier and better copy of this document is reported to exist in BL Cott Faustina B vi: see H. G. Richardson, *EHR*, 43 (1928), 328.] <See the Postscript below.>

Hugo de Dovre – first occ Mar 1161 – last occ Mar 1168

Gervais de Cornhelle – first occ Jun 1168 – last occ Sep 1174

Robert fiz Bernard – first occ Dec 1174 – last occ Sep 1183

Johan de Cardif – occ as deputy sheriff Dec 1176

Willelm fiz Nigel and Willelm fiz Philip – first occ Dec 1183 – last occ Sep 1184

Alan de Valeines – first occ Dec 1184 – last occ Sep 1189

Henric de Cornhelle – first occ Dec 1189 – last occ Sep 1191

Radulf de Cornhelle – first occ Dec 1191 – last occ Sep 1192

Reginald de Cornhelle – first occ Dec 1192 – d before Oct 1210

Reginald (son of Reginald) de Cornhelle – occ as father's deputy from Dec 1207 onwards

[From the exchequer rolls, it is not immediately clear when the younger Reginald took over from his father. The elder Reginald was dead by October 1210, when his son promised to pay 10000 marks to be quit of all his father's and his own debts, up until that date (GREx 1210:120). In 1210 we find him being credited with a sum brought forward from the previous roll (1210:120 from 1209:11); in 1209 the same thing happened (1209:10 from 1208:97); but in 1208 it did not. Nothing was brought forward from the roll for 1207. Between 1199 and 1210, 1207 was the only year when the sheriff's account was declared to be quit, with no debt or surplus remaining to be carried forward. It seems that the account was purposely cleared in September 1207, so that the younger Reginald could start with a clean slate. At first he was deemed to be acting as his father's deputy; in October 1210, his father having died, he became sheriff in his own right.]

Reginald (son of Reginald) de Cornhelle – first occ Oct 1210 – superseded Jun 1215

Henric de Cobbeham – mentioned 1214 as having been (deputy) sheriff some time before (CRR 7:216)

Willelm des Mares – occ as (deputy) sheriff 1214 (CRR 7:137)

Hubert de Burgo – appointed Jun 1215 – superseded Sep 1227

Hugo de Windlesores – first occ as deputy sheriff Sep 1219 – last occ Sep 1223

Roger de Grimestone – occ as administrator Sep 1224

References

A. E. Conway, 'The owners of Allington Castle, Maidstone (1086-1279)', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 29 (1911), 1-39.

H. A. Cronne, *The reign of Stephen 1135-54* (London, 1970).

J. A. Green, *English sheriffs to 1154* (PRO Handbooks 24, 1990).

S. E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of St Augustine's Abbey Canterbury and Minster-in-Thanel* (Oxford, 1995).

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Postscript

This is the document cited above as proof that Radulf Picot was sheriff of Kent in 1153. The monks of Christ Church had been in dispute with sheriff Radulf concerning the tax-exempt status claimed by them for some land of theirs at Elverton (TQ 9862). The case was brought before a meeting of the county court at Chasteners (TQ 8766) in that year, and this is the monks' report of the proceedings. As was noted by Richardson (see above), a contemporary copy occurs on a single stray leaf (BL Cott Faustina B vi, fo 101v (formerly 100v)) derived (evidently) from a Christ Church manuscript. A later copy turns up in one of the Christ Church registers, CCA-DCC-Register/D; there ought also to be a copy in CCA-DCC-Register/E, in the stretch of text where Reg D runs parallel with it, but I cannot state that for a fact.

The text was first printed, from Faustina, by Hickes (1703:36). It was printed again by Sheppard (1881:329), from Reg D. This is how I transcribe it.

Elwardintune est terra monachorum ecclesie Christi Cant' et de mensa eorum. Ista terra dat iiii lib' et x sol' ad uictum eorum et iii sol' ad altare Christi pro omnibus seruitiis et consuetudinibus que ad terram pertinent. De ista eadem terra quidam uicecomes Radulfus Picot nomine scottum et denegeldum et de murthru <sic> et cetera que de terris reddi solent exigebat iniuste. Tandem autem post multos sermones et placita inde habita uentum est in comitatum quod <sic> idem Radulfus apud Castainers <read "Castaniers"> tenuit. Et ibi per iudicium totius comitatus ostensum et diratiocinatum est a iusticiis uel ministris regis uel ab alio aliquo nichil omnino de predictis exigi uel accipi debere nec aliquam potestatem super eandem terram habere preter monachos ecclesie Christi Cant' quia dominica terra eorum est. Isti nominati presentes fuerunt in comitatu ubi hoc diratiocinatum fuit. Actum est autem hoc tempore <sic> regis STEPHANI et archiepiscopi THEODBALDI sub predicto uicecomite apud Castan', anno ab incarnatione <sic> domini nostri Iesu Christi M/o c/o l iii/o. Radulfus Picot, Asketin' de Retling', Ricardus Castel, Thomas de Sancta Margar', Malgier', Willelmus de Tichesei, Reginaldus dapifer, Willelmus filius Ansfridi et Radulfus frater suus, Hunfridus de Wotringeb', Philippus de Tang', Rogerus Folet, Turstanus dapifer episcopi, Gerardus de Hardes, Rodbertus de Cloeuile, Guido le Napier, Willelmus de Hesetesford, Stephanus de Kennardintune, Thomas de Essendene, Rodbertus le Vethel, Petrus de Ottenham, Hugo Brutin, Thomas de Ledesinge, Heielnoth prepositus de Holling', Florent de Bosentune,

Alanus de Retling', Reinberd, Hugo filius Thomas <sic> de Bockyng',
Rodbertus le Arblestir, Rodbertus Pel de lu, Æielwinus de Cliua. (BL
Cott Faustina B vi, fo 101v)

Some of the other names mentioned are also of interest -- the name
Gerard de Hardes, for instance, from which it seems safe to infer that
the Lucas son of Gerard who occurs as one of the knights of Daniel de
Crevequer in 1166 was the owner of (Lower) Hardres.

Additional references

G. Hickes, *De antiquae litteraturae septentrionalis utilitate ...
dissertatio epistolaris, ad Bartholomaeum Showere* (Oxford, 1703),
published as part of G. Hickes, *Linguarum vett. septentrionalium
thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archaeologicus*, 2 vols. (Oxford,
1703--5).

J. B. Sheppard, 'Second report on historical MSS belonging to the Dean
and Chapter of Canterbury', *Historical Manuscripts Commission:
Appendix to Eighth Report* (London, 1881), 315--55.

Postscript added Jul 2010, revised October 2011