

The strengthening of the city's defences in 1225--6

King Johan arrived in Rochester on 13 Oct 1215, to take personal command of the siege of Rochester castle. He remained there for more than seven weeks (the longest time, it seems, that he ever stayed in one place), driving the siege forward with great energy, till finally the garrison surrendered.* By that time, the keep had been breached, as well as the outer defences. When the king departed from Rochester, on 6 Dec 2015, he left a shattered ruin behind him. Some months later, when Ludovic, the French king's son, brought an army over into Kent at the invitation of the rebel barons, the castle at Rochester was in no condition to put up any resistance. (The castle at Dover, as Ludovic discovered, was quite another story.)

* The Rochester annals (see below) say this: "King Johan besieged Rochester castle from 5 October till 3 December" (*Rex Iohannes obsedit castellum Rofe a iii non' Octobris usque ad iii non' Decembris*, BL Cott Vesp A xxii, fo 32v, written by scribe V, with an unreliable addition in the margin by a different hand).

After 1216, with peace restored, Ludovic back where he belonged, and the new king (nine years old) set securely on his throne, the damage done to Rochester castle began to be made good. In 1225--6, while those repairs were still under way, some work was also carried out on the defences of the city. That is my topic here. I have nothing that I want to say about the castle; my only interest is in what was done at this time towards "strengthening the town of Rochester".

The written evidence bearing on these matters comes chiefly from two sources: from the annual account rolls produced in the king's exchequer, and from the rolls on which the king's chancery made copies of some of its outgoing letters. There is, besides, one snippet of evidence from a Rochester source. Though I start by discussing these categories of evidence separately, in the end it will be seen that they dovetail together in a very satisfying manner.

Exchequer rolls

The most reliable evidence comes from the exchequer rolls, among the entries in which the sheriff claimed deductions of any sums which he had been authorized to spend, out of the revenue which he would otherwise have been expected to pay into the treasury. The exchequer had ceased to function during the war, and some time elapsed before it was operating normally again. As far as Kent is concerned, the first account is the one which appears on the roll for 1220, and that covers a period of three years. From then on, the sheriff accounted regularly, year by year.*

* Here and throughout, the man I call the sheriff was actually the under-sheriff, Hubert de Burgo's deputy. For the period 1217--23, the under-

sheriff was Hugo de Windlesores; for the period 1223--6, it was Roger de Grimestone. The exchequer was always careful to make the distinction: the account for 1220, for example, begins by saying that "Hubert de Burgo, Hugo de Windlesores on his behalf, accounts for ... the farm of Kent" (GREx 1220:156). The chancery was less particular: for example, Roger de Grimestone is called "our sheriff" in 1225 (Hardy 1844:20).

The sums which were being spent on the castle are recorded in these accounts. This evidence was used by Brown (1963); I am not aware that anyone had used it before. It is much more easily accessible now than it was fifty years ago: the rolls for 1220 through 1224 have been printed by the Pipe Roll Society, and images of the unpublished rolls are available online, through <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT.html>. I quote the relevant entries in full below, for the years 1220-6, but take the story no further than that.

The entries of interest here are the ones which prove that a large amount of money was being spent on the defences of the city. In the roll for 1225, among the items of expenditure reported by the sheriff, there is an entry to this effect:

And to Willelm Potin and Johan l'Engleis and their fellows, keepers of the works of the ditch of Rochester, £164 14s 8d, (as ordered) by the king's writ, for which the said keepers are to answer, and they answer below.

The story behind this entry would go something like this. There is a ditch being dug at Rochester, at the king's expense. Four or more of the citizens have been appointed keepers of the works, and the sheriff is ordered to pay them some money, out of the revenues of the county, towards the cost of the operation. Probably he pays them a round sum, possibly a series of round sums from time to time. When the works are finished, the keepers draw up an account of their expenditure, the sheriff approves it, and at this point some further sum of money changes hands, so as to balance the account. (Perhaps the sheriff has to pay the keepers something extra; perhaps the keepers have to return some surplus. Either way, the total ceases to be a round sum.) This has all been settled between the sheriff and the keepers in advance; now they have to face the barons of the exchequer.

From the exchequer roll, we know what happens next. The sheriff claims a deduction of the amount which he has paid to the keepers; the keepers accept responsibility for it. (The clause "and they answer below" is part of the original text, not an afterthought.) Further down the same rotulet (immediately after the account for the farm of Rochester), the promised account appears; and this is what it says:

Willelm Potin and Johan l'Engleis and their fellows, keepers of the works of the ditch of Rochester and other works of the king's, account for £164 14s 8d which they received from the sheriff for the said works, as is contained (in the sheriff's

account) above. And for 100 marks which they received from the same sheriff, which the sheriff received from the king's treasury, (as ordered) by the king's writ. And for £100 which they received from the same sheriff, which the sheriff received from Henric de Sancto Albano, from the exchange of London. Total, £331 8s 0d. -- In the treasury nothing.* -- And in the works of the ditch of Rochester from St Valentine's day in the ninth year until the morrow of Saints Vedast and Amand in the tenth year, £300 18s 7½d. And in the expenses and wages of the carpenters who made the mangonels and petreries in the castle of Rochester, and for making lime-kilns for the works of the said castle and the town of Rochester, £30 9s 0d, (as ordered) by the king's writ. -- And they owe 4½d.

* This clause is only there because it was part of the standard formula: it was never expected that the keepers would pay any cash into the treasury.

From this we learn much more than we knew before. It turns out, for a start, that the sum of money involved was much larger than appeared at first -- almost twice as large. In addition to the money which he had paid to the keepers out of the revenues of his county, the sheriff had passed on two large round sums received by him from other sources: 100 marks from the treasury, £100 from the keeper of the London exchange.* In total, therefore, Willelm Potin and his colleagues have £331 8s 0d to answer for. The bulk of this money has been spent on the ditch; but some other costs have been incurred (in paying the wages of the carpenters employed in the castle, in making some lime-kilns), and that expenditure is credited to them as well.† The keepers' itemized account does not survive -- only the opening and closing statements got copied onto the exchequer roll -- but it looks as if one small item was disallowed by the exchequer. Instead of clearing their account as they (and the sheriff) had expected, the keepers were left with a debt of 4½d. They paid it off one year later, and that is the end of the story. After that, though work on the castle continued,‡ nothing is heard of any further work on the defences of the city.

* The exchange was the office attached to the mint where people had to go to swap their old coins for new ones. There ought to be a matching entry in the account of the keepers of the exchange -- "to the sheriff of Kent for the works of the town of Rochester, £100, (as ordered) by the king's writ", or something to that effect -- but I have not been able to find it. (An unfinished account, intended to cover the period from Nov 1222 till Jul 1226, appears on E 372/69, rot 10d.)

† It is not clear why this sum was credited to the keepers of the works. The writ authorizing the deduction (see below) assumes that it will be credited to the sheriff.

‡ The roll for 1226 is the first that mentions work being done on the keep, under the supervision, so it seems, of master Robert de Hotot. Is anything known about this man?

There is one other entry on this roll which refers incidentally to

the works at Rochester. The citizens of London, represented by their two sheriffs (Andreas Bukerell and Johan Travers), account as usual for the farm of London and Middlesex. One of the deductions that they claim this year is this:

And for the carriage of 96 picks sent to Rochester, 1s 7d, (as ordered) by the king's writ.

That these picks were needed for digging the ditch is proved by the writ (see below) which the sheriffs produced to justify this deduction.

Chancery rolls

By the 1220s, it was standard practice for the king's chancery to make and keep copies of much of its outgoing correspondence. One result of this policy is the series of records known as the close rolls -- in Latin *rotuli litterarum clausarum*, "rolls of folded-up letters". The exchequer rolls, when they speak of deductions justified *per breve regis*, "by the king's writ", are referring to letters of this kind -- letters addressed to some named person or persons, ordering him or them to get something done (at the king's expense, if any expense is involved). When he makes his appearance at the exchequer, the person claiming the deduction produces this letter as his voucher for spending some of the king's money; the exchequer then holds onto it.

The close rolls for the early years of Henric III, from 1216 till 1227, were edited by Hardy (1833, 1844) for the Record Commission. From 1221 onwards, there are numerous letters entered on these rolls relating to the works which were under way at Rochester.* Eight letters refer specifically to the work on the defences of the city: Hope (1900) reprinted these eight, and translated them into English. He checked the printed text against the originals; despite that, I am doubtful whether his version of the Latin is uniformly more reliable than Hardy's, but the discrepancies are few and unimportant. His translations go wrong in places -- it is clear that he was not familiar with the private language used by the chancery in communicating with the exchequer -- and I have adjusted them accordingly.†

* It does not appear that much use was made of this evidence before it was put into print. But there is a statement in Philipott (1659) which has to be taken to mean that he (or his father) had consulted the close rolls: "In the year 1225 [the city of Rochester] was by the Indulgent Bounty of King Henry the third, invested with a Wall, and that this Fortification might be of more Concernment, it was likewise secured or fenced with a Ditch" (Philipott 1659:285). Fisher's "History" (1772) has a comment alluding to this statement of Philipott's: "this king [Henry III] is said to have invested Rochester with a wall and ditch, in the year 1225". It then adds the proviso: "this only implies that he rebuilt or repaired the old wall, it being most certain (as was before shewn) that this city was walled at least 500 years prior to this period" (Fisher 1772:13--14).

† The only reason why I have this advantage over Hope is that I have read an article (Johnson 1916) which was not available to him.

These are the letters in question:

15 February 1225. To the sheriff of Kent. We command you that by the view and testimony of William Potin and two other upright and lawful men of the town of Rochester you cause the labourers of the ditch of the city of Rochester to be paid their wages every week. And the cost which you lay out for this by their view will be computed in your favour at the exchequer.

20 February 1225. To the sheriffs of London. We command you that you cause 96 pickaxes which the constable of the Tower will hand over* to you to be carried to Rochester without delay and delivered to the constable† of Rochester. And the cost which you lay out for this will be computed in your favour at the exchequer.

* Hardy has *liberabit*, "will hand over"; Hope has *liberavit*, "has handed over". Hardy's reading seems to me to suit the context better.

† By "constable" is meant the man who had day-to-day charge of the castle. Possibly he was appointed by the sheriff; possibly he was appointed by Hubert de Burgo but told to take his orders from the sheriff; either way he was too far down the chain of command for his name to get mentioned very often in official records. "Hugo Pincerna, constable of Rochester," occurs (in first place) among the witnesses to a local charter which dates from 1221--9 (Faussett 1866:208--9, from College of Arms, Combwell Charters 92).

26 February 1225. To Alexander of Dorset and Henry of St. Albans. We command you that from the outgoings of our exchange which is in your keeping by our order you pay by the hands of Roger of Grimston, our sheriff of Kent, to William Potin, Thurstan of Strood, and John the Englishmen, keepers of the works of the town of Rochester, £100 for the works of the same town. And (that sum) will be computed in your favour at the exchequer.

13 April 1225. To the sheriff of Kent. We command you to pay to William Potin and his fellows, keepers of the works of enclosing our town of Rochester, £40 towards carrying out the same works. And (that sum) will be computed in your favour at the exchequer.

11 May 1225. To the sheriff of Kent We command you that of our monies for which you ought to answer to our exchequer you cause to be handed over to William Potin and his fellows, keepers of the works of the town of Rochester, £40. And (that sum) will be computed in your favour at the exchequer.

9 August 1225. To the barons of the exchequer. Compute in favour of the sheriff of Kent four score and ten pounds (£90)

which he laid out by our command in the strengthening of the town of Rochester.

20 August 1225. To E[ustace] the treasurer and his chamberlains. Pay from our treasury to our sheriff of Kent or his known messenger bearing these our letters 100 marks for the works of the town of Rochester.

14* February 1226. To the barons of the exchequer. Compute in favour of our sheriff of Kent £30 9s 0d which he spent by our command in the ninth year of our reign [1224--5] on the carpenters who made the mangonells and engines in our castle of Rochester, and in making the lime-kilns for the works of the aforesaid castle and of our town of Rochester. Compute in favour of the same sheriff £4 7s 10½d which he spent by our command in the aforesaid year in making a brattice and drawbridge towards the south of the same castle.

* Hardy has *xiii*, Hope has *xiiii*. I take it that Hope's reading is the right one.

There is some disjunction between these letters (which tell us what the chancery expected to happen) and the entries on the exchequer rolls (which tell us what actually happened). The sums which the sheriff had been ordered to pay to the keepers of the works, out of the revenues of the county, add up to £170 (£40 in April, £40 in May, £90 in August); in the end he claimed a slightly smaller deduction (£164 14s 8d). More puzzlingly, one of the deductions which the chancery had authorized for the sheriff (£30 9s 0d) was eventually credited to the keepers. Whatever the reason for that may have been, a result was arrived at which satisfied all three parties directly concerned -- the exchequer, the sheriff, and the keepers of the works. After more than £300 of the king's money had passed through their hands, William Potin and his colleagues were only a few pence away from being quit.

Apart from these financial adjustments, the evidence all fits together very well. We can be sure, for example, that the sheriffs of London did as they were told and arranged for those ninety-six picks to be transported to Rochester. We even know how much it cost.

Rochester annals

The third item of contemporary evidence is a single sentence written on the spot, by one of the monks in the cathedral priory. A manuscript from Rochester, now in the British Library (Cott Vesp A xxii), includes a sequence of annals ending in the year 1225. Up until the last few lines, they were written by the man whom I call scribe V: he signed off with the report of a blizzard on 6 April. Not much later, a different scribe (whose hand I do not recognize) added four more items of news for the same year. The annals were discontinued after that.

These are the items added by this second scribe:

A great ditch around the city of Rochester was begun. -- The church of Hartlip was <13 Feb> given to the monks of Rochester by king Henric,* Stephan archbishop of Canterbury and the convent of the same place approving the king's donation and confirming it <Apr> with their charters. -- Ricard the venerable prior of Darenth was elected prior of Rochester after the octave <14 Jun> of Pentecost, on the day after the synod. -- A fifteenth of both movables and immovables, was granted and collected throughout England, from both ecclesiastical and secular persons, for the support of the realm.

* Over Henric is written *iiii*. Some people were still not sure whether the present king was to be counted as the third or fourth of that name (his uncle Henric having undergone a coronation in 1170). Similarly in a list of the church's benefactors, written by scribe V: *Henricus rex tercius dedit ... Iohannes rex frater eius dedit ... Henricus rex quartus dedit ...* (Vesp A xxii, fo 89v, Thorpe 1769:123)

The first two items at least would have been known about by scribe V; but it was not his policy to include very much in the way of local news.

As far as I know, this paragraph has not been quoted before. But a similar paragraph occurs in a fourteenth-century manuscript from Rochester, and that has been printed more than once. The manuscript in question, also in the British Library (Cott Nero D ii), is a copy of a mediocre chronicle entitled "A historical bouquet", *Flores historiarum*, which comes to an abrupt end in the year 1307. In making his copy of this chronicle, the Rochester scribe spliced into the text (not always in the right place) a large number of passages derived from whatever sources were available to him locally. Under the year 1225, he made this interpolation:

In the same year king Henric the third gave the church of Hartlip to the monks of the church of Rochester, Stephan archbishop of Canterbury and the convent of the same place approving his donation and confirming it with their charters. -- Ricard called prior of Darenth was elected prior of Rochester. -- Also a great ditch around the city of Rochester was begun.

That paragraph was printed by Wharton (1691:347) among the excerpts which he published from this manuscript (attributed by him to an imaginary author named "Edmund of Hadenham"). It was printed again by Luard (1890 2:183), in his edition of the chronicle (where the passages which only occur in the Rochester copy are marked "MS. N"). The last sentence was quoted once again by Hope (1900:12), who took it from Wharton but checked it against the original.

This latter paragraph is manifestly related to the former one, though I would not wish to say exactly how. But in any case there is no point in citing it when one can cite the contemporary statement found in the earlier annals -- a sentence apparently written while the digging of the ditch was still under way, "begun" but not yet finished.

Discussion

How much, then, do we know? We know that a ditch was dug. We know that the work was supervised by some of the citizens,* and that the flow of funds was controlled by the sheriff of Kent. We know exactly when the work began: on 14 Feb 1225. And we know exactly when it ended: on 7 Feb 1226. Probably this means that the citizens had been told to get the job done within a year -- and finished with a week to spare. We do not know the details of the keepers' account, but we do know what the total came to: it cost the king £300 18s 7½d to get the ditch dug (not counting the sum of 1s 7d due to the sheriffs of London). On average, therefore, the keepers had been spending about £6 a week.

* Probably Willelm Potin and Johan l'Engleis were the city's two bailiffs, but they were made personally, not officially, responsible. If they got into debt, the debt would fall on them, regardless of whether they were still the bailiffs or not.

We know that some lime-kilns were made, "for the works of the castle and town". We have no idea, however, what quantity of lime was produced by these kilns, or what share of that quantity went into the works of the town. It is likely enough that the existing walls and gates would have needed some patching up; but we could not think of arguing, from the word "lime-kilns" alone, that any new walls and gates were constructed in 1225.* The digging of the ditch was subcontracted to the citizens: that is why we have a separate account of it. But the construction work was managed by the sheriff, and the surviving records do not allow us to distinguish what money he spent on the defences of the city from what money he spent on the castle.

* It was Philipott's idea (see above) that the city was not just "secured or fenced with a Ditch" in 1225, but also "invested with a Wall". That Rochester was walled for the first time in the reign of Henric III (if that is what Philipott meant to say) was also Beale Poste's opinion. There are two versions of Poste's paper (1848, 1859), just about equally perverse, and two versions of the accompanying plan, just about equally inaccurate. I do not understand why Poste took it into his head to deny -- what everyone else was inclined to admit -- the existence of a Roman wall: it would have suited his purpose just as well to say that the wall was a (later) Roman wall which followed the line of an (earlier) Roman earthwork.

I do not rule out the idea (hinted at in Flight and Harrison (1987:7)) that interval towers (perhaps resembling the new tower at the south-east angle of the castle) were built around (the

northward side of) the city in 1225. There are references to "turrets" in some later documents -- "walls, turrets, gates and dykes" in 1386 (*Calendar of patent rolls, 1385--9*, p 215), "walls, gates and turrets" in 1397 (*Calendar of patent rolls, 1396--9*, p 137) -- and apparently some towers still existed in the 1530s, when John Leland visited Rochester. The suggestion is not unattractive, and (as I said) I do not rule it out. But I would need to see some solid proof before I would begin to think of ruling it in.

So much for the written evidence. In discussing the evidence which appears on the ground, I propose to deal separately with the northward and southward sides of the city. There are two good reasons for making this distinction. First, on the northern side (i.e. from Eastgate northwards to the north-east angle and then westwards from there to the river), the Roman wall remained the city-wall for as long as a city-wall existed, and the line of it has never been in question.* On the southern side, from the south-east angle westwards, the defences were advanced further south, and the Roman wall was so thoroughly effaced that its line was only rediscovered in the 1890s. Second, the northern side of the city is the part which belonged to the citizens. The southern side, not counting the castle, belonged (mostly) to the monks.† There are, conversely, no good reasons for not making the distinction. It cannot do any harm. At worst it will prove to be pointless -- but I do not think it does.

* In a more or less battered shape, much of the wall remained standing, because it continued to form a boundary between the freehold land to the south of it (which fronted on the High Street) and the leasehold land to the north of it (which fronted on the Common). One exception is of some incidental interest. At some uncertain date, the owner of 69--71 High Street -- "Abdication House", as we are being encouraged to call it -- got a lease of the land on the opposite side of the Roman wall (Wheatley 1926:73), razed the wall flat, and extended his garden all the way to the Common.

† For this reason an expression like *circa civitatem* does not immediately prove that the ditch was dug all the way around the city. At least for the Rochester monks, the word *civitas* tended to mean the other part of the city -- the part which was under the citizens' jurisdiction.

That the ditch was dug around the northward side of the city would seem to be close to self-evident. The citizens were in charge of the work, and this was the part of the city which belonged to them. There certainly was a ditch here. It was long since filled up and built over,* but the outer edge of it continued to be defined by the inner frontage of the streets which ran alongside it, at a distance of about 20 metres from the wall. (This was perfectly true until the 1850s; despite railway viaducts, new roads, car parks and other such improvements, it is still vaguely true even now.) I see no risk in drawing the obvious conclusion -- that the ditch was dug in 1225--6. The interesting questions are the ones which arise after that. Was the ditch filled with water? Was there a sluice towards the western end of it, where it

met the river? Perhaps someone, sooner or later, will have a chance to find out the answers.†

* Once the ditch had lost any value as a defensive feature, this whole strip of ground became the property of the city. In a charter obtained by the citizens from Henry VI, dated 1 June 1446, a paragraph appears to this effect: "the bailiff and citizens may build over the king's east gate within the city for the profit of the city and erect houses of stone or wood, and have the profit of the grass and pasture growing outside the walls of the city and those of the castle and in all the ditches belonging to the castle, to be received yearly by them or their deputies for the profit of the city without impediment" (*Calendar of charter rolls* 6:64). I find it hard to understand what the king was trying to say; but I think he meant that he was giving the city ditch and the castle ditch to the citizens, to do with as they pleased. (Similarly, by the phrase about "ditches belonging to the castle", I think he meant that he was giving them Boley Hill.) Fifteen years later (all grants by Henry IV, V and VI having been annulled) the citizens had to obtain a new charter from Edward IV; but that repeats much of the substance of this earlier one, including the paragraph about the ditches (*Calendar of charter rolls* 6:179, with "mayor" instead of "bailiff"). The originals both survive: RCA_C1_01_05 and RCA_C1_01_06.

† I have not seen any adequate report of the excavations carried out on the "Riverside" site in 2004--5. The opportunity was there; but it seems to have been let slip.

On the southern side of the city, westward from the south-east angle of the Roman wall as far as the castle ditch, matters are more complicated. To say nothing of the walls and buildings, two great ditches are known to have existed here: an inner ditch which followed the line of the Roman wall, an outer ditch which ran parallel with the first one, leaving a strip of solid ground in between. The spoil from the outer ditch was used to fill up the inner ditch, and the work was done so thoroughly that the existence of the latter was unsuspected until it was discovered in the 1960s.

At first the discoverers agreed that this inner ditch was to be identified with the ditch dug in 1225 (Harrison and Flight 1969). In time they came to disagree -- I thought it made better sense to suppose that the outer ditch was the ditch dug in 1225 -- but neither was able to convince the other that his interpretation was right (Flight and Harrison 1987).

At last I have come round to thinking that both of us were wrong. There never was a "1225 ditch" on the southward side of the city.* Like Livett, like Hope, Arthur and I were looking for something which does not exist -- and got confused when we failed to find it. The inner ditch is earlier than 1225: I was right about that. The outer ditch is later than 1225: Arthur was right about that.

* That is, I now favour "Scenario D", the "hypothesis of last resort" which Flight and Harrison (1987:4) did not feel driven to. I think we ought to have given it some serious consideration, not just dismissed it in a flippant footnote.

Some time soon, I plan to go back over the evidence; but I can say at once that this seems to me now the only way out of the impasse. Whether Arthur would have shared that view I cannot say. He was always ready to think things through again; I should have liked to be able to discuss the suggestion with him. Unfortunately it did not occur to me till fifteen years too late.

Hartlip church

When Hope was trying to prove that the ditch dug in 1225 was dug around the southward side of the city,* he had one good point to make. "It cannot be supposed", he said, "that they [the monks] acquiesced in the driving of a broad ditch through their property, ...† without receiving a *quid pro quo*. It is therefore not without significance that in the same entry in the MS. [Nero D ii] which records the beginning of the great ditch there should be special mention of the gift of the church of Hartlip by the king to the monastery. The date of the letters patent is 13th February 1224-5, so that the grant of the church and the beginning of the ditch were practically coincident" (Hope 1900:16). Flight and Harrison (1987:7) found the argument persuasive; now I am not so sure.

* He was suggesting that it was dug only around this side of the city. According to him, "the marshes on the north rendered unnecessary any such defence there" (Hope 1900:15). I do not know how he could say that. (When the members of the Archaeological Institute visited Rochester in 1863, they were taken on a tour of the city. Their local guide, Stephen Steele, led them along the Common, "pointing out rows of houses occupying the site of the city ditch, while in some of the [gardens] in the rear of these, small remains of the city wall exist" (*Gentleman's Magazine*, Sep 1863, p 302). Exactly so. When the members of the Kent Archaeological Society made a similar perambulation in 1886, they were taken to see those "portions of the ancient wall, which ... stand behind small houses on 'The Common,'" and Hope was the guide who took them there (*Reliquary*, NS, 1:56 (Jan 1887)). Did he not realize that the houses were in the ditch?)

† The passage which I omit reads "and the restriction of it by a new and strongly-built wall". In Hope's interpretation there was a new wall here, as well as a new ditch. For present purposes, however, the ditch is enough to think about.

The story about Hartlip church is not as straightforward as it appears at first. The chancery kept only a summary of the king's letter (*Patent rolls 1216--25*, p 507), but the full text survives as a copy in Rochester's cartulary (see below), from which it was printed by Thorpe (1769:411). It is addressed to the archbishop: it informs him that the king has given the church to the prior and monks of Rochester and asks him to "admit and institute" the prior.*

* The letter was issued in the king's name, but authorized "by the justiciar (Hubert de Burgo) in the presence of the lord king's council". It reads like a normal letter of presentation. In effect, however, it is a grant in

perpetuity; so it breaks the rule that such grants could not be made while the king was under age (that being the reason why there are no charter rolls for the period 1216--27).

When this letter arrived, the archbishop found himself in a quandary. Whatever the king might think, the church was not vacant. It already had a parson, Thomas by name,* and he had no intention of resigning in favour of the Rochester monks. Negotiations followed; they went on for several weeks; but by April a compromise had been worked out. Thomas was to retain possession of the church for as long as he might live, on exactly the same terms as before, except that from now on he would be regarded as the monks' vicar and would make them a token payment each year, in recognition of that fact. (The stipulated payment was an *aureus*, a gold coin -- the same, I suppose, which was also called a bezant, equivalent to 24 pence.) The archbishop issued a letter recording this agreement; the prior and convent of Christ Church issued a letter saying that they had seen the archbishop's letter; and all three letters -- the king's, the archbishop's, the prior and convent's -- were copied into the cartulary by one of the Rochester monks (BL Cott Dom x, fos 204v--5r). (In the cartulary as in the annals, the block of text referring to Hartlip church follows immediately after the last entry written by scribe V.) No doubt the archbishop had done his best for them; but the monks must have been hugely disappointed. They had expected to get the whole church;† they had got two shillings a year. It is not known how long they had to wait for Thomas to die (or perhaps resign), but sooner or later the church did pass into their possession.‡

* "Thomas son of Edward Blundus of London." The church had been given to him by Henric II (*Book of fees*, p 269). He was still alive and in possession in 1227 (*Book of fees*, app p 1345).

† In the *taxatio* of 1291 the church of Hartlip was valued at £18 6s 8d. A share of the income went to the vicar (his portion was valued at £5); the rest of it went to the monks.

‡ The appropriation had apparently gone through by 1241 (*Book of fees*, app p 1380). A new vicar appointed in 1279 was presented by the prior of Rochester (Reg Pecham ed Martin 1882--5 3:1016).

There is, it should be stressed, not the slightest hint in any of these letters as to what had inspired the king to this sudden act of generosity. Nevertheless, just from the coincidence of date, I still agree with Hope's suggestion that the grant of Hartlip church was intended to compensate the monks for some loss that they stood to incur, in consequence of the decision to dig the ditch. The coincidence is even closer than Hope realized: the king's letter is dated 13 Feb, and (as we know from the exchequer roll) work on the ditch began just one day later, 14 Feb 1225.

And yet it does not follow that the new ditch was dug around the southward side of the city. The monks owned property to the north

of the city as well. Some of it had probably belonged to the church from time immemorial;* some of it had only quite recently been acquired. Copies of two charters survive relating to a meadow "which lies within the boundary of the cellarers's meadow, outside Chealdegate wall" (Thorpe 1769:537-8, from Cott Dom x, fos 190v--1r), and of one relating to two acres of marsh "which lie between Delce marsh and the monks' marsh" (Thorpe 1769:536, from fos 192v-3r), "next to Holfliet mill" (heading added by scribe V, fo 192v). Another donation is recorded by an entry in the list of benefactions: "The land (that we own) outside the wall towards the north, including the meadow and the marsh, was given with Ricard of Wouldham and Eustachius, monks (of our community; this is the land) from which the heirs of Alvred the cook pay five shillings a year to the common fund."† If we check the corresponding section of the rental, we find four quarterly payments listed as due "from the land of Eustachius of Wouldham outside the gate (called) Cheldegate."‡ (Once again, we have scribe V to thank for putting these facts on record.)

* A landbook dated 868 (Campbell 1973, no 26) put bishop Cuthwulf in possession of a portion of land to the north of the city, "marsh and meadow", bounded on the north by the Medway, on the west and east by creeks called *Pirigfliat* (pear-tree creek) and *Scipfliat* (ship creek), and on the south by the city-wall. (Like Kitson (1987) and Brooks (2006), I would think it safe to assume that the two creeks are Common Creek and Blue Boar Creek respectively.) How long or how far the church held on to this land is more than I can say.

† *Terra extra murum uersus aquilonem cum prato et marisco data fuit cum Ricardo de Wldeham et Eustachio monachis, de qua heredes Aluredi coci reddunt per annum communi v s'* (Vesp A xxii, fo 84r, pr Thorpe 1769:118).

‡ *De terra Eustachii de Wldeham extra portam de Cheldegate, xv d'* at each of the usual quarter-days (Vesp A xxii, fos 103r--5r, pr Thorpe 1788:21-2, from DRc_R2, fos 42r--4r).

I do not pretend to know exactly where any of this land was located. Some of it may have been so far to the north that it was entirely unaffected by the digging of the ditch. But some of it may have been close to the wall; and in that case the monks might have been entitled to some compensation when the new ditch was dug, even if it was dug -- as I now suppose it was -- only on the northward side of the city.

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Documentation

Exchequer rolls

- 1220 -- Hugo de Windlesores for Hubert de Burgo -- ... Et in emendatione castris de Rouecestr' per iii/es annos post guerram xviii li' et ii s' et viii d' per breve regis et per uisum Constantini le Mascrim et Godwini Vinitoris. ... (GREx 1220:156)
- 1221 -- Hugo de Windlesores for Hubert de Burgo -- ... Et in reparatione et emendatione domorum et murorum castris Roff' xii li' et xviii s' et vi d' per breve regis <et> per uisum Thome Sparew et Ham' de Duna. ... (GREx 1221:201)
- 1222 -- Hugo de Windlesores for Hubert de Burgo -- ... Et in emendatione domorum in castro de Rouecestr' xxxvii s' et viii d'. ... (GREx 1222:57)
- 1223 -- Hugo de Windlesores for Hubert de Burgo -- ... Et in reparatione castris de Ruuecestr' iiii li' et xiii s' et vi d'. ... (GREx 1223:94)
- 1224 -- Roger de Grimestone for Hubert de Burgo -- ... Et in reparatione breccarum castris de Rofa c s' et xii d' per breve eiusdem et per uisum Walteri Houd et Rob' de Taterham. ... (GREx 1224:144)
- 1225 -- Andreas Bukerell and Johan Travers for the citizens of

London -- ... Et pro cariagio quater xx et xvi picoisiorum missis <sic> usque Rofam xix d' per breve eiusdem. ... (E 372/69, rot 10)

Roger de Grimestone for Hubert de Burgo -- ... Et Willelmo Potin et Johanni Anglico et sociis eorum custodibus operationis fossati <de> Roffa c et lxiiii li' et xiiii s' et viii d' per breve regis, de quibus dicti custodes debent respondere, et respondent infra. Et in custo posito in operatione i breteschie et i pontis torneicii uersus austrum castris Roffe iiii li' vii s' et x d' et ob' per breve eiusdem. ... Et in carriagio maremii regis ad mangonellos et ingenia facienda ducti usque Rofam lix s' per breve regis. ... Et item habet de superplus xliiii s' et iii ob' quos posuit in emendacione domorum castris Rofe. Summa totius superplusagii ... (rot 12d)

Willelm Potin and others -- Willelmus Potin et Johannes Anglicus et socii eorum custodes operationis fossati de Rofa et aliarum operationum regis reddunt computum de c et lxiiii li' et xiiii s' et viii d' quos receperunt de vicecomite ad predictas operationes sicut supra continetur. Et de c m' quas receperunt de eodem vicecomite quas idem vicecomes recepit de thesauro regis per breve eiusdem. Et de c li' quas receperunt de eodem vicecomite quas idem vicecomes recepit de Henrico de Sancto Albano de cambio Lond'. Summa ccc et xxxi li' et viii s'. In thesauro nichil. Et in operatione fossati de Rofa a die sancti Valentini anno ix usque in crastinum sanctorum Vedasti et Amandi anno x/o, ccc <li'> et xviii s' et vii d' et ob'. Et in expensis et stipendiis carpentariorum qui fecerunt mangonellos et petrarias in castro Roffe, et in rogis faciendis ad operationem castris predicti et ville Roffe, xxx li' et ix s' per breve eiusdem. Et debent iiii d' et ob'. (ib)

1226 -- Willelm Potin and others - Willelmus Potin et Johannes Anglicus reddunt computum de iiii d' et ob' de remanenti compoti sui de anno preterito. In thesauro liberaverunt. Et quieti sunt. (E 372/70, rot 9d)

Close rolls

To the sheriff of Kent -- 15 Feb 1225 -- Rex vicecomiti Kancie salutem. Precipimus tibi quod per visum et testimonium Willelmi Potin et duorum aliorum proborum et legalium hominum de villa Roff' pacari facias operatoribus fossati civitatis Roff' stipendia sua singulis septimanis. Et custum quod ad hoc posueris per visum eorundem computabitur <tibi ad scaccarium>. Teste rege apud Westm' xv. die Febr' anno nono. Per justiciarium. Contrabreve. (Hardy 1844:17, from C 54/33, m 12)

To the sheriffs of London -- 20 Feb 1225 -- Rex vicecomitibus London' salutem. Mandamus vobis quod iiii/xx et xvi. picos' quos constabularius Turris London' vobis liberabit* sine dilacione cariari faciatis usque Roffam et eos liberari constabulario Roff' et computabitur vobis ad scaccarium. Teste <rege apud Novum

Templum Lond', xx. die Febr'> anno nono. Contrabreve. (Hardy 1844:19, from C 54/33, m 10)

* "liberavit" Hope

To the keepers of the exchange -- 26 Feb 1225 -- Rex <Alexandro de Dors' et Henrico de Sancto Albano> salutem. Mandamus vobis quod de exitibus cambii nostri quod est in custodia vestra per preceptum nostrum habere faciatis per manus Rogeri de Grimeston' vicecomitis nostri Kancie Willelmo Potin, Thurstano de Strode et Johanni Anglico custodibus operacionis ville Roffensis c. libras ad operationes ejusdem ville, et computabitur vobis ad scaccarium. Teste <rege apud Novum Templum Lond', xxvi. die Febr'> anno nono. (Hardy 1844:20, from C 54/33, m 9)

To the sheriff of Kent -- 13 Apr 1225 -- Rex vicecomiti Kancie salutem. Precipimus tibi quod habere facias Willelmo Potyn et sociis suis custodibus operacionis ville nostre de Roff' claudende xl. libras ad eandem operacionem faciendam et computabitur tibi ad scaccarium. Teste rege apud Westm' xiii. die Aprilis anno nono. (Hardy 1844:27, from C 54/33, m 6)*

* The counter-brief is also enrolled (Hardy 1844:29, from C 54/34, m 17)

To the sheriff of Kent -- 11 May 1225 -- Rex vicecomiti Kancie salutem. Precipimus tibi quod de denariis nostris de quibus respondere debes ad scaccarium nostrum liberari facias Willelmo Potyn et sociis suis custodibus operacionis ville Roff' xl. li' et computabitur tibi ad scaccarium. <Teste rege apud Westm', xi. die Maii anno nono.> Contrabreve. (Hardy 1844:38, from C 54/34, m 13)

To the barons of the exchequer -- 9 Aug 1225 -- **Compute**. -- Rex baronibus suis de scaccario salutem. Compute vicecomiti Kancie quater xx. et decem libras quas posuit per preceptum nostrum in firmacione ville Roff'. Teste me ipso apud Westm' ix. die Aug' anno nono. Coram justic' et Bath' et Saris' episcopis. (Hardy 1844:56, from C 54/34, m 6)

To the treasurer and chamberlains of the exchequer -- 20 Aug 1225 -- **Liberate ad operacionem Roffe**. -- Rex <E. thesaurario et camerariis suis> salutem. Liberate de thesauro nostro vicecomiti nostro Kancie vel ejus certo nuncio has litteras nostras deferenti centum marcas ad operacionem ville de Roffa. Teste <me ipso apud Westm', xx. die Aug'> anno nono. (Hardy 1844:58, from C 54/34, m 5)

To the barons of the exchequer -- 14 Feb 1226 -- **Compute de operacione Roffe**. -- Rex baronibus suis de scaccario salutem. Compute vicecomiti nostro Kancie xxx. libras et novem solidos quos posuit per preceptum nostrum anno regni nostri nono in carpentariis qui fecerunt mangonellos et petrarias in castro nostro Roff' et in rogis faciendis ad operacionem castri predicti

et ville nostre Roff'. Computate eciam eidem vicecomiti iiii/or libras septem solidos et decem denarios et obolum quos posuit per preceptum nostrum anno predicto in i. brutesch' et i. ponte turneccio faciendis versus austrum ejusdem castris. Teste <rege apud Westm', xiii.* die Febr' anno decimo.> (Hardy 1844:98 from C 54/35 m 23)

* "xiiii." Hope

Rochester annals

Vesp -- 1225 -- Magnum fossatum circa ciuitatem Rouec' inceptum est. -- Data est monachis Rouec' ecclesia de Hertlepe ab Henrico (iiii.) rege, donationem regis Stephano Cant' archiepiscopo et eiusdem loci conuentu approbantibus et cartis suis confirmantibus. -- Ricardus prior uenerabilis de Derente electus est in priorem de Rouec' post octabas pentecostes in crastino synodi. -- Quintadecima tam mobilium quam immobilium tam ab ecclesiasticis personis quam secularibus in subsidium regni per totam Angliam concessa est et collecta. (BL Cott Vesp A xxii, fo 33v)

Nero -- 1225 -- **Ecclesia de Hertlepe data est Roffensi ecclesie.** -- Eodem anno Henricus tercius rex dedit monachis Roffensis ecclesie ecclesiam de Hertlepe, cuius donacionem Stephano Cant' archiepiscopo et eiusdem loci conuentu approbantibus et cartis suis confirmantibus. -- Ricardus dictus prior de Derente electus est in priorem Roffensem. -- Item magnum fossatum circa ciuitatem Roffensem inceptum est. (BL Cott Nero D ii, fo 133rb, pr Wharton 1691:347, Luard 1890 2:183, last sentence Hope 1900:12)

Hartlip church

<H.> dei gracia rex Anglie dominus Hibernie dux Normannie Aquitanie et comes Andegaue uenerabili patri in christo S. eadem gracia Cantuar' archiepiscopo tocius Anglie primati et sancte Romane ecclesie cardinali salutem. Sciatis quod intuitu dei concessimus et quantum ad nos pertinet dedimus priori sancti Andree Roffen' et monachis ibidem deo seruientibus ecclesiam de Hertlepe cum pertinenciis que ad nostram spectat donacionem, ipsosque uobis per has litteras patentes ad eandem presentamus, rogantes quatinus dictum priorem ad eam admittatis et in eadem instituatis. Teste meipso apud Westm' xiii. die Febr' anno regni nostri ix/o. Per iustic' coram consilio domini regis. (BL Cott Dom x, fo 204v, pr Thorpe 1769:411)

<O>mnibus christi fidelibus presentes litteras inspecturis S. permissione diuina Cantuar' ecclesie minister humilis tocius Anglie primas et sancte Romane ecclesie cardinalis salutem in domino. Nouerit uniuersitas uestra nos ad presentacionem domini nostri Henrici regis Anglie admisisse dilectos monachos Roffen' ad ecclesiam de Hertlep' in prioprios usus habendam, de consensu Thome qui nunc est persona ipsius ecclesie, ipsosque in eadem ecclesia personas canonicè duximus instituendas. Ita tamen quod

iidem monachi unum tantum aureum annum recipient nomine personatus a Thoma predicto, nihil amplius quamdiu ipse uixerit exigentes. Ipse autem Thomas totum residuum illius ecclesie habebit nomine uicarie. Cum autem mortuus fuerit idem Thomas, habebunt ipsi monachi totam ecclesiam in perpetuum in proprios usus salua uicaria uiro idoneo ad presentationem ipsorum conferenda, qui honera ipsius ecclesie sustinebit, reseruata eciam nobis taxatione ipsius uicarie. Saluo eciam in omnibus iure nostro et Cantuar' ecclesie dignitate. In cuius rei testimonium has litteras nostras patentes duximus faciendas. Dat' anno domini M.cc.xxv. mense Aprilis. Valete in domino. (fos 204v--5r, pr Thorpe 1769:411)

<O>mnibus christi fidelibus presentes litteras inspecturis I. prior humilisque conuentus ecclesie christi Cant' salutem eternam in domino. Honestas et religio nos monent propensius et inducunt ut secundum deum religiosorum commodis et profectibus intendamus, et, ne possint super hiis que rationabiliter possident aliquorum uexacione molestari, benignum quantum in nobis est patrociniū et fauorem impendamus. Eapropter cum uenerabilis pater noster S. Cant' archiepiscopus tocius Anglie primas et sancte Romane ecclesie cardinalis ad presentationem domini nostri Henrici regis Anglie admiserit dilectos nobis in christo priorem et monachos sancti Andree Roff' ad ecclesiam de Hertlepp' in proprios usus habendam et in eadem illos instituerit, sicut in autentico prenominati patris nostri S. Cant' archiepiscopi conscriptum inspeximus, predictam admissionem et institutionem in prefata ecclesia prenominatorum prioris et monachorum eisdem sicut prouide et rationabiliter sunt concessa quantum in nobis est confirmamus. Et in huius rei testimonium presens scriptum sigilli nostri appositione duximus roborandum. (fo 205r, pr Thorpe 1769:412)