

The Winchester Bishopric Pipe Rolls
East Meon History Group, 18 April 2011.

In the autumn of 1302, Nicholas de Ychen, the bailiff of the manor of East Meon, or possibly Richard Pokepole or Adam de Cumbe, one of the reeves or overseers there, picked up a quill and dipped it in an ink which he had perhaps mixed himself, using oak galls and ferrous sulphate bound together with gum Arabic. On a piece of parchment – the stretched skin of a sheep, possibly from this very manor he began to compile the accounts of the manor for the previous twelve months – possibly using data recorded since the previous Michaelmas on tally-sticks or a similar device.

First of all, they'd have looked back at the previous year's accounts, recording a sum of £94 4s 10d ha'penny which had been paid in to the Bishop's central treasury at Wolvesey Castle in Winchester. Then they moved on to the year that was just completed: the rents due at Christmas, Easter, St John the Baptist's day (24 June) and Michaelmas (29 September) amounted to a little over £97 – but there were various deductions – it looks as if some people were being excused rent because they were serving as reeve, or doing ploughing, shepherding or swineherding; and account also had to be taken of land which wasn't producing any rent that year because it had been taken back in hand, such as the pasture and wood which belonged to Thomas de Cumbe. Sometimes rent was paid in kind – William ate Bere and Andrew de Holeweye paid in cumin, and William Gilbert' in a pair of gloves – which were duly handed over to estate HQ at Wolvesey.

There's a long section called 'issues of the manor' which includes nearly £3 from pannage – payments for the right to turn pigs out for fodder, usually in the woods, with an explanatory note that there was no income from pannage in the park that year because of a lack of mast for the pigs to eat. There were various sums for pasturage – but none from the meadow below Godshull because it was mown that year. Income from wool was also listed – but that year there was no cash income from coarse wool and lambswool because it had been sent to Wolvesey – presumably it was wanted either in the bishop's household or somewhere else on the estate. £6 15s came from summer cheese, 4s 3³/₄d from winter cheese, 9s from butter and over £2 from cider.

The livestock was itemised with care: 3 old and feeble plough horses were sold, and 7 oxen, 100 ewes fetched £5, and 19 pigs were sold at Michaelmas for 3s 6d each. Wheat, barley and oats brought in a total of nearly £112. The mill was let out, and brought in £1 15s.

Tenants who paid standard sums on inheriting property or on marrying were listed at length: Nicholas, son of Nicholas de Langriss' paid £2 10s for the right to succeed to his late father's property in East Meon; Peter ate Bure paid £1 to marry Christina, widow of John Crispyn, and take on her land; Agnes Fermyn paid 1s for marrying her daughter 'outside' (to someone outside the manor, I presume).

There were lots of fines – Adam Kay was fined 3s 'for having his pigs at the barn door', and Adam Kay the younger 6s 8d 'for keeping the plough-horses badly', while Alice, daughter of Richard de Naddenham, Ralph at Stupe and their fellows were fined 4s 'for many transgressions'. Altogether the receipts came to £270 1s 11¹/₂d.

The other side of the account, the expenditure, is listed with equal care: expenses relating to ploughs amounted to over £15, ranging from ironwork at 14s 3d to 1s 'for hiring men for the ploughs when they plough after dinner'; 17s was spent on work on the carts, and 4d on doctoring horses was included in this. In the dairy, buying salt, repairing buckets and utensils, and so on was all itemised. The buildings this year accounted for only 12s 4d, including 3s 10d on roofing and pending the barn beside the pinfold (or movable pen) and other buildings, and repairing the barley barn which had collapsed. Harvest-time brought its own expenditure: although much of the work was carried out as a matter of obligation, the estate provided a farthing's worth of bread and 2 herrings or one cheese for each. The total expenditure in East Meon was £39 5s 7½d.

After the income and expenditure, there's an account of the crops produced – mainly wheat, barley and oats, showing amounts used on the manor for animal fodder (and, like the men, the plough-horses got something extra when they ploughed after dinner). And there's also a detailed account of the livestock – to give one example, pigs: 35 adult pigs remained from the previous year, 28 which had been counted as hoggets in the previous year – that's pigs in their first or second year – were now redefined as pigs, 19 were sold, 4 were sick – balance 50; there had been 50 hoggets from the previous year's piglets, 10 were sick, 2 had been redefined as sows and 38 as male pigs, so none of last year's hoggets were still hoggets. 45 piglets had been born from the sows that year, and 8 had come from the reeve of East Meon Church, the smaller manor in East Meon. 9 were sick, so that left 44. And I could go on in the same way about horses, cattle, sheep, hens, and swans. Oh, and if you want to know about peacocks and peahens – 6 from the previous year, one sick, no offspring this year, balance 5.

And having done all this accounting, Nicholas de Ychen had to pop round to East Meon Church manor and start all round again with the reeve there, Robert Hugh'. Perhaps he deserved the 3s he claimed at East Meon for fur for his summer livery!

Seven centuries later, the accounts which Nicholas and his colleagues were producing are used by local, family and academic historians studying the history of farming, buildings, and even the weather. What we have surviving, for the most part, is not the original account rolls written by Nicholas and the reeves, although for some years we do have those, but for many more years we have the series of fair-copy annual accounts of the Bishopric estates, which by the late 13th century had become known as pipe rolls. Each consists of about thirty membranes of parchment, with about eighty long lines of writing on each side, stitched together at the top and then rolled for storage.

The pipe rolls stretch in an incomplete sequence from 1209 to 1711, with 330 years represented. There is, not surprisingly, a gap for the period of the Civil War and Commonwealth, when the bishopric estate was dispersed, but the sequence resumes in 1663/4. The first 191 surviving rolls, down to 1455, are indeed in roll format. By 1457 they were being bound into book format. They cover the period from one Michaelmas (29 September) to the next Michaelmas.

Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester from 1205, probably first ordered the pipe rolls to be kept. He would have been familiar with the King's annual audit accounts which are also known as Pipe Rolls. Bishop des Roches was influential both within and beyond the diocese: he was effectively regent of England during King John's absence in 1214, and he is said to have been involved in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in the 1220s. Under des Roches the income of the estates doubled to £3000 a year; although his household accounts do not survive to show us the way in which much of the money was spent, some of it may have gone towards the foundation of monasteries at Titchfield, Selborne, Netley and elsewhere, and to fund hospitals at Southwark and Portsmouth.

Why was this complex system of accounting introduced on the Bishop's estates? On small estates with a resident lord, there was little need to keep formal accounts, as the lord could keep a close eye on the administration. In contrast, the Winchester Bishopric estate was one of the largest estates in England, spread across seven counties, so a complex administrative system was required.

The Winchester pipe rolls are just the last stage in the accounting process. The day-to-day running of each manor was entrusted to one of the local people, known as the reeve. Manors were grouped together into bailiwicks, each run by a bailiff. The chief administrative officer was the steward, who for most of the medieval period was based at Wolvesey, the Bishop's palace in Winchester. As well as overseeing the accounts, he would have been responsible for instructing officials on each manor in any particular crops that were to be grown for use elsewhere on the estate (for instance, barley which could be sent to the malt-house in Bishops Sutton and then to the brewhouse at Wolvesey to be made into ale).

The reeve for each manor submitted his annual accounts, perhaps with the help of the bailiff, and these would then be checked by auditors. Occasionally the preliminary accounts – known as compotus rolls – do survive, showing the changes made by the auditors.

The Bishops of Winchester enjoyed the richest episcopal estate in England. It was more lucrative than that of the Archbishops of Canterbury, and perhaps the second richest in Europe, producing an annual income of about £4000 in the late 13th century. It comprised about sixty manors, roughly half of them in Hampshire (especially in mid-southern Hampshire, in and around the Meon valley, and in the extreme north), with three in Surrey (which was also part of the Diocese of Winchester), and the others scattered across southern England from Buckinghamshire to Somerset. Many of them had been given to the bishops by successive Kings of Wessex between the 7th and 10th centuries, but there were some changes in the composition of the estate during the Middle Ages.

Although the rolls were administrative documents, some scribes occasionally allowed themselves flights of fancy, decorating them with dragons, ornate versions of the manor names, and other animals, such as a hare – or fox – shown playing a harp in the decorated initial capital of the 1337 roll.

Despite this apparent playfulness, the auditing process was a serious business. This extract from the original Droxford for 1410 shows the account for the sheepcote. In

the top line there was a claim for 8s for two barrels of tar (which provided protection against parasites), and 8s 6d for grease, but these figures have been deleted by the auditors, and changed to one barrel at 4s, and 6s 8d for grease. Similarly, in the last line, a claim for 6s 8d for the annual stipend of the shepherd of hoggs (sheep in their second year) has been reduced to 3s – although he was still better off than the dairymaid who got two shillings. The pipe roll entry for Droxford, copied from the compotus roll, only gives the approved figures.

For centuries the rolls were kept at Wolvesey, but in 1858, as part of a national process of reform of bishops' estates, the Winchester bishopric estates, together with the records, were transferred to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England (now the Church Commissioners). The records passed to the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane (now The National Archives, at Kew) in about 1890. Dr Hubert Hall, who was both a senior clerk at the PRO and a lecturer at the London School of Economics in search of medieval agricultural records, led several seminars which studied the rolls and published an edition of the 1209 roll in 1903. The seminar members also visited Winchester in 1903 and discovered the 1254 roll at the Cathedral; it was restored to its place in the series. In the 1920s, seminar members discovered flaws in the old departmental list which formed the only means of access, and they began checking the dates of the rolls and searching for others hidden under the description *Miscellanea*; thirteen previously unknown rolls were identified. The rolls remained at Chancery Lane until 1959 when they were transferred to Hampshire Record Office.

For many years the rolls were probably used mainly by fairly experienced by historians, perhaps investigating trends in agricultural history, or specific buildings. To most potential users, however, they remained very intimidating, because of their language, handwriting and accounting methods. At the Record Office we were very keen to open them up to a wider audience, and so Hampshire County Council, of which we are a section, funded the first six years of the Pipe Rolls Project, based at the Record Office, which resulted in the publication of English translations of two rolls, those for 1302 and 1410, edited by Dr Mark Page. A Latin edition of the first surviving roll had been edited by Dr Hall's class many years earlier, and recently an English translation of that has been published by the local historian Harold Barstow. Although that's only three years out of 330, they can be used as templates, helping you to get to grips with the layout and style of the pipe rolls – and the idea is that this will make it easier to pick out entries for East Meon in rolls for other years, and work through them. Copies of Mark Page's two translations are available for sale or consultation at the Record Office. The Pipe Rolls Project was then continued by Dr Page and Dr John Mullan, with a study of the operation of the land market, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Leverhulme Trust.

The rolls are stored wrapped in acid free material, in specially-made boxes, to ensure their long-term survival. To reduce wear and tear on the original rolls, we've made microfiche copies of all the early rolls.

So – what do the rolls tell us about life in East Meon, and the Bishop's other manors, in the Middle Ages? The earlier medieval rolls are the most interesting to agricultural historians, because until the 15th century most manors were kept 'in hand' – that is to say, managed directly for the bishop – so the accounts for each manor list in

minute detail the agricultural produce, and all expenditure incurred. By contrast, from the 15th century most manors were leased to tenants, known as 'farmers' (from the phrase to 'farm out', meaning to lease out), so there was little to record except the annual rent payment, because increases and decreases in livestock and crops were now the responsibility of the 'farmer'.

Successive historians have studied the rolls in great detail for the light they shed on agricultural and economic history, especially crop yields, suggesting a relationship between the weather, yields and some aspects of social stability.

The accounts for each manor are generally divided into four main sections, as indicated in the East Meon example at the beginning:

- cash receipts
- cash expenditure, including construction and maintenance of buildings, agricultural expenses, food for workers, and hospitality for guests
- the grain account, recording for each crop the balance from the previous year, the latest yields, and how it had been disposed of (provisions, seed, fodder, sold and in hand)
- the stock account, recording the balance for each type of animal, and the numbers born or bought, and slaughtered, sold or transferred

[The first membrane of the 1302 pipe roll begins with the account for Taunton (*Tauntona*) in Somerset. This was the bishopric's most westerly and richest manor. In 1301-2, £365 was paid into the bishop's treasury at Wolvesey, and a further £230 was owed at Michaelmas. The headings in the margin name the manor's numerous mills (*molend'*), and the accounts detail the amount of corn - wheat, oatmeal, maslin, first and second grade malt - sold from each. The mill at Corfe is said to stand idle because of a lack of water (*stat otiosum pro defectu aque*), a frequent occurrence because the village depended on a small stream from the Blackdown Hills which was prone to drought. The constable of Taunton, Philip de Paunton, also recorded that £103 of the manor's arrears was in the hands of the Wiltshire coroner because the money was found on the body of a dead man (*quia inventa fuit super quendam occisum*).

The stock account for the manor of Droxford in 1302 lists the animals and dairy produce, following a standard pattern. As the marginal headings show, these begin with the cart-horses (*equi carrectarii*) and continue with the plough-horses (*affri*) and the oxen (*boves*). Cheese (*caseus yemalis* and *caseus estivalis*) usually heads the list of the dairy and animal products sold on the manor during the year. At Droxford 160 cheeses, each probably weighing around sixteen pounds, had been made since 29 April. Several were given away to the chaplain, reeve and shepherd as customary dues, but most were sold. A record of household goods (*utensilia*) brings the Droxford stock account to a close: it lists a brass pan, a basin with a ewer and a brass pot.

Medieval tenants were required to perform labour-services on the bishop's land, as well as cultivating their own lands. The rolls don't actually set out what these services were, but they do often allude to them, either because the tenants had paid to be excused the services or because the manor had to buy-in additional labour. Even in the last pipe rolls there are still references to the sale of labour-services; one

imagines that by this time no tenants would actually have been carrying out the work in person.

The structure of the families who were working on the manors may also be revealed. Tenants of the manors were liable to pay 'fines' (fixed charges – not penalties in the modern sense of the word fine) when they took over land, or when their daughters married. Sometimes sufficient information about inheritance or marriage is given to be able the family historian to identify a marriage or death – perhaps several centuries before the introduction of parish registers in 1538. For instance, at Cheriton in 1302 Joan le Swon paid a fine to take over the land which had been held by her late husband Henry, and then John de Spin' paid 'to have the said Joan le Swon with her land', while Robert Jan paid to have land from the inheritance of his mother, the widow of one Cartere.]

For the local historian, perhaps the most exciting feature of the earlier Pipe Rolls is the rich detail of building projects and maintenance, relating both to higher-status buildings such as the bishop's castles (some of which can still be visited today), and to more humble farmhouses.

Among the higher-status buildings was Farnham Castle, originally built or fortified in the twelfth century, and a favourite residence of the bishops of Winchester, who especially valued its deer park. As the practice of travelling from one residence to another declined, it became their principal residence, and remained so until 1927 when the diocese was divided and Farnham became part of the Diocese of Guildford. Since 1962 it has been the home of the International Briefing and Conference Centre (then known as the Overseas Service College).

The 1410 pipe roll account for Farnham Castle includes £2 paid to 'Thomas Glasyer of Selborne remaking anew the windows of the lord's chamber, chapel and hall, broken by the great wind' (*cum magn' vent'*), and 2s 6d paid to William Bagge for mending the ironwork of the windows of the lord's chamber.

The pipe roll for 1301-2 tells us about the expenditure on the castle buildings, arms, and the park and fishponds (*custus parci et vivar'*) at Farnham. During that year, quite substantial work was carried out at the castle. The corner tower 'facing the vill' was pulled down by order of the bishop, its foundations examined and cleaned and a new tower constructed. A new bridge was also built, and the park palisade repaired where it had been blown down by stormy winds (*per tempestatem venti*).

Bishops Waltham Palace, an important residence on a Hampshire manor held by the bishops since 904, was transformed by two bishops, William of Wykeham and Henry Beaufort, between 1367 and 1447. Dr John Hare has searched the pipe rolls (and comptus rolls) to piece together the story of these changes. In 1378-81 Wykeham rebuilt the great hall, and constructed a new bakehouse and brewhouse; later in the 1380s about £300 was spent on the kitchen, larder, etc, and the 1390s saw alterations to the bishop's great chamber.

Cardinal Beaufort carried out three main phases of work – enlarging his own accommodation in 1406, building a new chapel in 1416-27, and adding a new range of lodgings, comprising 22 chambers, in 1438-42, a time when officials and guests

increasingly expected to have private accommodation instead of communal sleeping arrangements. Much of the building material came from the estate, but some was probably imported from overseas, such as 5,000 paving tiles brought from the port of Southampton. The lodgings made use of the newly-fashionable brick: Anthony Brekeman made over 300,000 bricks, probably nearby.

William Wynford appears to have come to know William of Wykeham when they were both working on a building project at Windsor Castle in the 1360s. Wynford seems to have acted as Wykeham's master mason continuously from 1377/8 to 1404, and worked for him at Winchester Cathedral, Winchester College and probably New College Oxford. Henry Yevele was his leading contemporary, and it is interesting to find both of them named in the accounts for Wykeham's alterations at Bishops Waltham.

The medieval bishops were often closely involved in the royal government; when in London, they would have used their palace at Southwark. The 1410 pipe roll lists extensive minor repairs here, thus telling us about a variety of features of the building. A carpenter was paid for mending the door of the women's prison (*hostium prison' mulierum*) and a plumber for mending defects in the hall, great chamber and chapel (*defect' super aulam, magnam cameram, capell'*). The extract also contains headings for work on the bridge across the Thames and the wharf next to it (*custus werve versus Themes*), and on the lord's barge (*custus bargie*).

If you go to Southwark today, incidentally, not far from the Cathedral and the Globe Theatre you can still see the west end wall of Winchester Palace, with the tracery of its rose window stands isolated against the sky: most of the palace was destroyed by fire in 1814 and it's now surrounded by offices and warehouses.

Edward Roberts (Honorary Research Fellow and Associate Lecturer at the University of Winchester) has used the pipe rolls in combination with dendrochronology, the dating of timber samples using known variations in the width of tree rings from year to year, to research a variety of buildings on the estates.

Overton Court is typical of the timber-framed farmhouses built in the period around 1500, larger than peasants' cottages but less grand than stone-built manor houses, and intended for the new generation of 'farmers', who had taken leases of land which had previously been managed directly. At Overton Court a new barn was built in 1496-8 and a farmhouse in 1505-7, both at the expense of the estate, possibly as an inducement to a farmer to take on long-term responsibility for the manor.

The 1498 roll gives most of the detail of the barn construction. Costs included payment of one man for 34 days at 5d to fell 120 oaks, and 7s 8d for 11 cart-loads of stone. Some materials came from other bishopric manors: £4 10s was spent on 18,000 tiles bought at Highclere, besides 6,000 from the lord's stock there, and 3,720 tiles bought at Earlstone.

The 1507 roll records the building of the farmhouse, and gives the names of more than thirty of those who worked on the building, including John Woodman, a carpenter paid 7d a day, other carpenters such as Nicholas Syllenes and John Mason,

paid 6d a day, tilers such as William Hylton and Richard Goodgrouce, also paid 6d a day, and William's servant Robert Durbare, who received 4d a day.

And now for a really local example – East Meon Court House, although smaller than the great residences, was used for short visits by successive bishops, perhaps as a country retreat, and also provided a usual base for the steward on his visits. By 1209 it already had a hall, chamber, kitchen and fishpond, and in 1285 a glazier was paid for work there, at a time when few houses had glazed windows. Edward Roberts and other researchers have found references to it in many of the rolls, notably in the 1390s when William of Wykeham rebuilt the hall and a chamber block (and again in the 1430s-40s when Henry Beaufort refurbished the house). In 1396 the large sum of £17 13s 4d was spent on timber from the Abbot of Durford in Sussex, presumably a special shape of timber which was not available on the bishop's manors – perhaps the great tie-beams for the hall.

This is a printout from the 1397 roll. As is usual with the medieval Pipe Rolls, the text looks quite dense but you do get headings to assist you – both telling you which manor is being talked about – you can see *Meone Eccl(es)ia adhuc* ('still' – presumably meaning 'continued from overleaf') at the top – and also for the sections of the account, many of them beginning 'Custus', i.e. cost. The first thing I've underlined in red is 'Custus domorum' – cost of houses – and later there is a heading, more or less on the middle of this sheet, 'De nov' aedific' aul' et cam' – for rebuilding the hall and chamber.

Towards the end of this extract there's a mention of the eight corbels which were carved by a mason in Winchester on the instruction of the master mason William Wynford – I've underlined the words *viiiij corbell'* and *magist' Willi' Wynford*.

Another house on the bishopric estate where bishops sometimes stayed, and which is still occupied, is Manor Farm, Hambledon – occasionally used by the bishops until the mid-14th century. Some of the roof-timbers have been ring-dated to 1473-8, which has enabled Edward Roberts to locate in the 1477 pipe roll the account for rebuilding the roof of the steward's outer chamber on the first floor of the east block. The first-floor chambers would have provided a suite of rooms for the steward of the whole bishopric estate, on his visits to hold courts, and at other times would have been available for use by the tenant.

The 1477 roll gives a total of £8 5s 8d spent on the new roof, including 15s for 6,000 slates bought at Fareham (which had probably come by sea from Devon), down to 12d spent on three bushels of tilepins (*tilepynnys*). The walls and chimneys were repaired using stone from nearby Langrish and from the Isle of Wight.

But the Pipe Rolls aren't just about farming and building construction: they can also give us insights into many aspects of the highs and lows of medieval life.

Town planning, for instance: in the 13th century the bishops established new six new towns within manors on their estates. Some such as New Alresford, established in 1200, remain thriving communities.

Newtown in Calbourne manor on the Isle of Wight, also known as Francheville or Swainston, was founded in the 1250s and was at one time a successful Solent port. The 1257 roll shows the first half-year's rents for plots in the Calbourne Newtown, with the bold heading 'Francheville'. Initially there were 73 plots; some tenants occupied two or more, at a rent of sixpence per plot for the half-year. Entries in the pipe rolls for planned towns, where all the property was let, are much shorter than for rural manors which were managed directly.

So we get entries like:

...per dimidium annum. Et de vi d de Willelmo de bosco pro i placea per idem tempus. Et xviii d de Eugenia de Aretleya pro iii placeis

...for half a year. And in 6d from William Wood for one plot for the same time. And in 18d from Eugenia de Aretley for three plots

IIM59/B1/27

Perhaps as a result of competition from Yarmouth and Southampton, and reductions in the population in the surrounding area, Newtown declined, and only eleven houses were mentioned in the 1674 Hearth Tax.

I visited Newtown last summer – you can go inside the exquisite little Town Hall, marooned in the countryside, now run by the National Trust, and continue on to the harbour – an eerily windswept place even on a fine summer's day.

The new borough of Overton was established in the 1210s. We hold a map made in 1795, which still shows the contrast between the grid pattern of the planned town, on the south, and the old village around the church, surrounded by the strip-fields of the remaining part of the manor, on the north. Along the town streets, a few of the burgage-plots, house-plots with long thin gardens, are shown. Many decades after the town's foundation, the reeve still included an entry in his accounts noting that certain old agricultural rents were no longer paid because the land in question had been taken for the new town – an example of the way in which the information in the Pipe Rolls tended to become somewhat fossilised.

Accounts of St Giles's Fair, held annually on St Giles's Hill on the eastern side of Winchester, and arguably the greatest fair south of the Thames, can be found under the heading *Compotus Ferie Sancti Egidii*. The 1410 pipe roll entry records a steep decline, with receipts of only £17 ½d compared to £56 7s. 2½d. in 1302. The account lists income under the headings ground rents (*terragium*), leases (*locagium*) and tolls on cattle (*boagium*) with customs and tolls. Expenditure included 11d on roofing the pavilion (*papill'*) and lord's shop (*shopam*).

Sometimes the pipe rolls give us a hint of the impact of national events on the lives of the bishops' tenants and servants. The Black Death reached England in 1348, and the pipe roll produced at Michaelmas 1349 must have been written by clerks who had seen the horrors of this unprecedented plague. One might think that, in the traumatic circumstances, they wouldn't have had time or inclination to make such a good job of the roll as usual – but in fact it is as neat as ever, and contains the usual information just as if life was continuing as normal. The only clue is its bulk – 43 membranes compared to 28 in 1343 – giving an indication of the many additional entries recording greater numbers of deaths and changes of ownership, and more

use of hired labour because they were fewer tenants undertaking labour-service obligations. In later years there are headings such as *Defectus redditus et operum per pestilentiam* – default in rent and works through the pestilence. Some manors recorded the names of tenants who had apparently died – probably many, although not necessarily all, through plague – leaving no-one to succeed them and take on the land, such as Alice Gillies and John Appelhurst at Hambledon, and Agnes Aleyn and Matilda Weyland at Merdon.

More localised disasters, such as bad weather and disease of animals, could have an impact on particular manors, which was then reflected in their accounts. In 1302 numerous plots of land at Gosport paid no rent because they had been inundated by the sea, and many manors recorded livestock affected by murrain.

The year 1301-2 appears to have been especially blusterous, necessitating an unusual amount of repair work, particularly to the roof-covering of the estate's agricultural buildings. In the account of the cost of repairing manorial buildings (headed *custus domorum*) at Overton, the reeve stated that the wheat and oats barn (probably thatched) had been unroofed by the wind (*per ventum discoopert*). Also suffering damage were the bakehouse, dovecote and kitchen. The bakehouse was reroofed using 35 acres of stubble (*stipula*), whilst 4,000 tiles (*tegulis*) were bought for the dovecote and kitchen.

The rolls can also help us to reconstruct the route taken by the bishop around his various castles and manors, and the dignitaries who stayed there. This is especially useful for the years before 1282, when the series of surviving bishops' registers begins – after that point, the register often record where they were when they issued official decisions. The 1302 account for Wolvesey reveals that 8d was spent in cleaning the buildings in preparation for the visit of the Earl of Lincoln and the Count of Savoy.

The rolls can be revealing about political history: they show that the future Henry III was entrusted to the keeping of Bishop des Roches in 1212, four years before other sources tell us that the bishop took him into his care on the death of King John. In the 1220 roll, when the bishop was still caring for the young king, we can follow his progress around Brightwell, Downton, Farnham and Taunton, thanks to the accounts of food and drink supplied. Henry's sister Eleanor was maintained at the bishop's castle in Taunton in the 1210s, and the rolls record expenditure on candles, robes, soap and so on. During the renewed struggle between crown and barons in the 1260s, the rolls record the payment of a watchman with hounds at Farnham, a low figure of 46s for pasturage at Southwark *quia destructum fuit per homines London' in Guerra* – because it was destroyed by the men of London during the war – and at Wolvesey two carthorses were lost *in depredatione in Guerra per exercitum domini Symnois de Monteforti* – in a depredation in the war by the army of the lord Simon de Montfort.

The pipe rolls and other estate records are not primarily concerned with the bishops' spiritual work – that is the subject of the equally fine series of diocesan records surviving from 1282 and also held at Hampshire Record Office. However, there are references to the distribution of grain or bread to the poor (for instance, during the economic crisis of 1258), and occasionally we are given glimpses of the

rich ritual of pre-Reformation practice in the diocese. The 1302 pipe roll entry for Bishop's Waltham contains an inventory of the books, ecclesiastical vestments and plate (*ornamenta*) kept at Bishops Waltham. They include one antiphoner (book of anthems), two legendaries (books of saints' lives), one missal (mass-book), and vestments including an alb (white robe) with a hood, a maniple, a stole and a chasuble, as well as a chalice with a paten.

The rolls were written in a variety of typical medieval hands until 1602 – by which time they'd long since ceased to be typical elsewhere, so one must assume that clerks taking up a post in the estate HQ at Wolvesey would have deliberately learned this rather archaic hand – just as clerks in central Government departments were taught different styles of handwriting if they worked in the Exchequer or Chancery, and writing-masters prided themselves on the number of different hands they could teach. There were, nonetheless, minor individual features, and sometimes it is possible to work out that a particular roll was produced by several different clerks who had slightly different styles. In 1603 the handwriting changed to the style known as 'secretary', which had become common for most purposes in the 16th century, and indeed by then had already been abandoned by some in favour of Italic, which is much closer to modern handwriting.

Roman numerals are used for the thousands of sums of money and numbers of livestock recorded in the rolls. The system, in which i represents 1, v represents 5, x is 10 and so on, has no symbol for 0 and so does not use columns as in the familiar Arabic system. Not surprisingly, there are frequently mistakes in the copying of the figures - and the fact that they may still end up with the right answer is a reminder that the pipe rolls are copied from other documents.

It may be a surprise to find that the Pipe Rolls are written in Latin, not only in medieval times, but even down to the final surviving roll produced in 1711. But in fact Latin remained the language of some official documents, including many records of the Westminster law courts such as Chancery, and manor court records, until 1733. Fortunately for the modern researcher, dealing with the formalised Latin found in records like this is generally easier than reading the works of those whose first language was Latin. Some of the estate clerks may not have known much more Latin than the standard phrases that were used year after year.

Sometimes the clerks found themselves faced with a word which had to be included, but for which they did not know the Latin. Some words may not even have had a Latin equivalent, especially if they related to improvements made in farming, building or milling technology since Roman times. In these cases the clerk had two options: to slip into English, usually introducing an English word with the Latin 'vocatur' – 'called' – or to invent a new Latin word, drawing on existing Latin or English roots.

In the rolls there are Latin words for hundreds of activities and for the implements used which reflect the daily domestic and agricultural tasks of ordinary people working on the estate. A large number of these words are not recorded as Classical Latin words and are derived from vernacular languages, primarily English and French. For example, we find here the Latin word ALGEUM meaning a water-trough for a mill: in 1209 four shillings and two pence was paid for the construction of one of these. From the earliest Pipe roll we have the word HOGGETTUM, a diminutive

from the Middle English HOGGE, meaning both a pig in its second year and apparently a young sheep. We also find POTTUM in its more specialised meaning of a pot-shaped vessel used as a fish-trap, a word deriving from the Anglo-Saxon word POT: an unspecified number of these was made in 1271 at a cost of sixpence. Other words connected with eating are PUDINGUM, meaning a sort of sausage, and REISINA (the earliest form of the modern English 'raisin' deriving from Classical Latin RACEMUS meaning a bunch of grapes).

We find such words as PILARE (to pluck sheep's wool), REFALCARE (to mow again), PINNARE (to fill with bits of masonry), and PINIONARE (to clip a bird's wings). These two words, deriving from Middle English, still exist in the modern English forms 'to pin' (in the sense of filling a wall with masonry) and 'to pinion'.

In these accounts we find the earliest example of PICHERA meaning an earthenware vessel or jug, deriving from the Middle English PICHER and surviving in modern English 'pitcher'. A less obvious instance of a word that has survived into the modern period but which is first used in a Latin form in the Pipe rolls is the word PENTICIUM meaning a simple structure added to a building to provide shelter: this word derives through the Middle English and Old French forms PENTIS and PENTICE but goes back to the Classical Latin word APPENDIX meaning 'an appendage'; in turn it is later transformed into the modern English word 'penthouse', although in Winchester the name Pentice is still used for the colonnade in the High Street.

We also find some unusual words that have so far only been found in the Winchester Pipe Rolls, possibly invented for use on one occasion! – words such as QUERNESTRAGUM, meaning a wooden tray for a hand-mill, derived from Middle English QUERN (mill) and TREI (tray; from Anglo-Saxon TREG), SPLOTGABALUM meaning a payment made for permission to pasture cattle, deriving from Anglo-Saxon SPLOT (a piece of land) and GAFOL (tax or rent) and POTFALDA meaning the practice of establishing temporary enclosure for domestic animals on another person's land, a word deriving from Middle English POTEN (to put) and Anglo-Saxon FALDA (an enclosure or fold). This word occurs in the Pipe rolls repeatedly from 1209, and its specific meaning is made particularly clear in the 1401 roll, which explicitly records that no payment has been made in that year for the temporary enclosure of the breeding ewes, because no such enclosure was needed.

However, it is not only words that are peculiar to Medieval Latin that can produce interesting entries. In one entry, dating from 1287, we read that 'twenty two pence halfpenny was paid for 1500 frogs, at a penny halfpenny per hundred, to feed the fishes' where the Classical Latin words for frog (RANA) and fish (PISCIS) are used.

Perhaps the greatest difference between English and Latin is that, whereas English usually shows a what a word is doing in the sentence by means of the word order or through additional words such as 'of', 'to' and 'from', Latin achieves this by changing the endings of words, just as in English 'he' changes to 'him'.

Now at this point you may be thinking that this is all very interesting (says he hopefully) but really how realistic is it that I will be able to find anything about my East Meon house in these rolls? Well, if you live in a reasonably identifiable house

like the Court House, which was managed 'in hand' by the estate officials rather than being leased out, there's quite a good chance of finding references although it is a very lengthy job, given that most of the rolls are not translated or indexed in detail, and the language and handwriting are quite challenging for most of us. But if you live in a property which was always tenanted, it is really going to be a matter of luck whether it is ever mentioned, and even then it may be difficult to identify it.

So, although I was invited to speak about the Pipe Rolls, I hope you won't mind if I spend the last few minutes talking about some other aspects of the estate archive which we hold for the Bishops' manors. It's a huge collection – the catalogue alone, which is far from detailed, runs to 11 binders, and the Pipe Rolls are just a few pages of that. It includes surveys, maps and account rolls, but a large proportion of the rest relates to tenanted properties – both those which were held leasehold, and also those which, like many in East Meon, were held by copyhold – a form of land tenure by which you became the tenant by going along to the manor court (in person or by proxy) and being admitted tenant by the steward or whoever was holding the court – who would hold out a rod to you and you would take hold of the other end of it – a bit like shaking hands. The transaction would then be recorded in the manor court roll or book, and you would be given a small slip of parchment giving a copy of the entry, which takes the place of conventional title deeds. It's the system of giving out these copies that explains the term 'copyhold'.

Although we talk about people holding property under this manorial system as 'tenants', in fact they had much more security than modern tenants – they could, effectively, pass on their property either by inheritance according to whatever the custom was in any given manor, or they could usually sell or mortgage it or leave it by will – but they had to go through the form of surrendering it 'into the hands of the lord' and he would then admit as tenant whoever was the purchaser or mortgagee, or readmit you as tenant for your life with a remainder to the beneficiary of your will.

Some of you may well have, among your title deeds, items which will help you start tracing the story of your houses back through the manorial records – perhaps either the small parchment 'copies' of court roll entries, or a deed called an enfranchisement – basically the document by which the tenant buys out the manorial rights and converts the tenure into a freehold. If you have any of those, you are already well on the way, because you will have a tenant's name to look for, and details of the property description which tends to be fossilised – this is helpful in making it easier to spot successive transactions relating to a single property – although it can be misleading as a description of what the property was like then, perhaps describing a cottage as 'newly-built' for several hundred years, simply because that was how they'd described it once.

If you don't already have any documents like this, the first step is probably to get a tenant's name, perhaps from the tithe map of c1840 – which comes with a list of owners and occupiers and is always worth a look anyway, to make sure that you have got exactly the right property, before you start working back. Alternatively, if you have some idea of the date when the property was enfranchised you can look in a series of enfranchisement registers which contain copies of these deeds, between 1855 and 1916.

The transactions in the manor courts are recorded in a series known as fine books – the word 'fine' indicating the payment made by an incoming tenant who had inherited or bought the property – sometimes known as an 'entry fine'. These fine books cover all the manors which used this system, and are arranged by date, but there are very useful indexes, and each manor usually has its own index – covering the period 1660 to 1935.

In the index for East Meon manor, you can look for the name of any person that you know held your property, and you will find the date of the court when he or she was admitted tenant. This will normally be in the form of the letter H or M for Hock or Martinmas, indicating the spring or autumn court, followed by the year, often in the form of the regnal year, the year within the current monarch's reign. So if you see M 12 Geo II it will mean the Martinmas court in the 12th year of George II – which by my reckoning was in autumn of 1738. You can then get out the fine book or books for that year and find the entry. Of course, some tenants held more than one property and you will need to make sure you are looking at the right one.

Once you have got the right one, spotting it in the indexes again is usually not too difficult, because different properties were normally subject to different entry fines, but, like the property descriptions, the fine on any given property normally stays the same – unless the property is divided, in which case it is split between the parts.

Very usefully, the fine book indexes, also give you columns indicating the dates of the previous and subsequent transactions for that property – it was a really well organised system. In the actual fine books the date of the previous transaction is given at the top of the entry so even when you have got back before the start of the indexes in 1660 you still have quite a good chance of getting back to the beginning of the fine books series in 1540. Generally the fine books are in Latin, before the mid 18th century, but they follow such a standard formula that, if you've read the later entries in English you won't need a huge amount of help to work out what's going on in the Latin entries.

So I hope I have inspired you to come in and use the Bishopric archive, either to trace your own house through the fine books, or to use the Pipe Rolls as a way of studying life on the medieval manor – perhaps getting a little closer to understanding what day-to-day life was like for your predecessors in the village as they ploughed and harrowed their lord's fields, worked their own strips of land, and coped with the perils of disease, storm, drought, and those Episcopal officials who kept on writing everything down.

DR/4/2011.