

THE GEOLOGY OF BRAMDEAN VALLEY
AND THE ANTIQUARIAN ASSOCIATIONS
OF WOODCOTE MANOR.

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The valley in which Bramdean is situated is one of those dry upper valleys above the permanent sources of the river found lower down, which commonly occur in chalk and limestone districts. It is, in fact, the upper part of the Itchen valley. The permanent sources of the Itchen are near Cheriton, and in saying this I may state that the so called Itchen springhead, north of Kilmeston, is not a permanent source, as it was dry in the summer of 1887. The never-failing sources of the Itchen supply are in and near Cheriton, where this upper chalk valley of Bramdean may be said to end. Bramdean Valley is wholly a chalk valley, but it contains in parts of it and on the higher lands that bound it some remains of the Tertiary formations which formerly lay upon the chalk in this part of Hampshire. These Tertiary remains consist of red and other clays and loams, derived from the reconstructed Reading beds, commonly found on hilly parts of the district, blocks of greywether sandstones, and rounded Tertiary pebbles. A common feature in an upper chalk valley such as this is a large quantity of flints or flint gravel, such as are found in this valley. We may consider such flints to have different later geological histories, viz., (1) those which have travelled, generally the smaller masses of flint gravel washed from some distance, and (2) those flints, generally of larger size, which have been washed out of the chalk near where they are found. Such flint nodules are commonly of large size, and these flints of very considerable dimensions are found on the lower chalk slopes in various parts of this valley, as, for instance, in the fields lying to the south-west of Privett. Such large flints must have been much more abundant in all parts of our chalk areas in former times for they have been

collected for building. The best example of a flint building in Hampshire is the church of Privett, in the upper part of this valley. It is built of undressed flints, set with the natural surfaces outwards, and strengthened with stone facings. Flints have, however, been collected for buildings in Hampshire from a very remote time, and in this country we find vast accumulations of flint wherever Roman buildings have been found in or near our chalk districts. Wherever, therefore, very large flints arranged as for the foundation of buildings turn up, it is a sign of an early building. I am informed by Mr. Seymour Haden that many cartloads of such very large flints have been found on the site in front of this Manor House, a sign of its great antiquity as a dwelling site. Some of the remarkable greywether sandstones which exist in this valley may be seen in the neighbourhood of Froxfield, where more than one forms part of a roadway. Some of the largest were collected by the late Colonel George Greenwood and brought to the east of Bramdean to form the remarkable monument in the form of a stone circle, or cromlech, which he made there. He tells us himself, in his book on "Rain and Rivers," that he brought the largest of these sandstones from the chalk ridge which forms the southern limit of this valley, and which overlooks the valley of the Meon between East and West Meon.

Colonel Greenwood also tells us that the next largest of the flat sandstones he dug out of the surface of the drift gravel east of Bramdean, and therefore not far from where the stones now are. These stones were probably part of the Tertiary beds which lay on the chalk near where they were found. Others, he tells us, he got from Froxfield, and he gives us to understand, as all local geologists would have expected, that the large conglomerates came from the direction of Brightstone Lane.

I regret that we, the members of this Club, cannot, on this occasion, visit the churchyard of the neighbouring parish of Hinton, and pay our respect to Colonel Greenwood's memory by standing near his grave. His monumental stone is a greywether, on which his name is cut, a fitting monument to a man who was an ardent student of nature.

The system of water drainage in this valley is a system of soakage and swallow holes. In wet seasons, as during the present summer, but more particularly in rainy winters, you may see plenty of water flowing down the little channels from higher ground to the hollows, where the thirsty chalk absorbs it, but you will be very fortunate if you see much of this flowing out. It goes, however, as certainly as if it flowed above the ground, and supplies the springs about Cheriton. At certain times the water rises in a great bourn spring a little west of Bramdean village, and I believe in very exceptional seasons higher up the valley, some of the springs bursting out on or close to this Manor of Woodcote. If we could trace the geological experiences of some of the many drops of water which flow into the sea at Southampton, they would have some very remarkable experiences to tell us of their courses above ground and of their courses and adventures under ground. The bourn spring west of Bramdean is one of our most interesting Hampshire springs. Only sometimes is it a spring; much more often it is a swallow hole. It is quite easy to understand that the underground channel through which the water rises when the chalk is saturated and the water level is high is capable of forming a channel through which water can sink when the chalk is dry and the water level is low.

In prehistoric time, and perhaps even much later, when there was much wood in Bramdean Valley, the soil would be damper, and the bourn stream would probably flow more constantly. I think the valley in which Bramdean is situated was part of the ancient forest land of mid-Hampshire, and there is one circumstance connected with the valley which appears to me to support this view. Nature has more than half made in the bottom of the valley a natural road by the great beds of gravel it contains, but I am not aware that any ancient road ran entirely along this dean or valley. Its name "dean," on the contrary, seems to imply that it was part of the sacred folkland, or unoccupied forest land of the pagan Saxon settlers. Certain it is that the present road was made early in this century, for in his Official Survey of the County, published in 1810, Mr. Vancouver recommended that this new road from Winchester to Petersfield through Bramdean should be made, and that close observer states that the

material is at hand to make it. We may see this material in the beds of flint gravel west of "The Dean," and particularly near the West Meon hut. The new road recommended by Mr. Vancouver to the existing Board of Agriculture was made by utilising parts of old roads where suitable. The old road from Bramdean to Cheriton still remains, but is little used. The subject of the alterations which have been made in this county in the country roads is one well deserving attention.

The remains of prehistoric man, of the Neolithic, or polished stone age, have been found in the upper part of this valley. Last year I obtained two polished stone implements from the neighbourhood of Froxfield, and bronze articles of the Romano-British period have also been found at Froxfield, and I believe, at Bramdean. We also find near Privett, and near the cross roads at the hut north of West Meon, some large round tumuli, which are very characteristic of the period of the bronze people in Hampshire. Additional evidence is afforded by the Froxfield defensive earthworks, a series of remarkable defence lines against an enemy coming up this valley. Bramdean Valley, therefore, as is proved by ancient remains, has been occupied by man from the most remote time to which we can trace human settlements in this part of Hampshire. One of the most interesting Roman pavements found in this county was brought to light at Bramdean, and I regret it met with so unfortunate a fate. For some time it was, I believe, covered with a well-built shed, and after Colonel Greenwood's death an attempt was made to move it to Winchester, but, as what remained of it was removed loose in a sack, it did not arrive at Winchester in a condition creditable to those concerned. Some rough rearrangement of its tesserae may be seen in Winchester Museum. As Bramdean appears to have been in or close to part of the old forest land of mid-Hampshire, such names as Woodcott and Brookwood may be considered to be derived from its ancient wooded character in Anglo-Saxon time, and such a name as Wolfhanger tells us that it was in those days a place frequented by wolves. There is a record of a Gemôt, or Saxon Parliament, being held at Bromdun, probably Bromdean, at which the laws of King Ethelred, son of Edgar, were decreed, about the first year of that King's reign. This assembly is referred to by Mr. Thorpe

in his edition of the "Ancient Laws and Institutes of England" (vol. I, p. 295). At the time of the Norman survey, the manor of Bramdean, which I consider to be the manor of Woodcote in Bramdean, is specially mentioned. The entry in the Domesday Book relating to it as follows:—

"Milo, the porter, holds Brondene of the King. Two free men held it of King Edward for three manors. Then it was assessed at one hide and two virgates and a half; now at nothing. The land is one ploughland and a half in demesne, and four villeins and six borderers with one ploughland and five acres of pasture. In Winchester it has a house worth 3 shillings. In the time of King Edward it was worth 60 shillings, and afterwards 40 shillings; now 50 shillings."

This entry is very interesting in connexion with the later history of the manor of Woodcote. First we may note that the manor at the date of the survey was held by Milo the Porter, who could be no other than the king's porter, the keeper of the royal house or castle at Winchester. Next we may note that the manor of Milo was composed of what was formerly held by two freemen, and considered as three manors when so held by them in the time of King Edward; and next we may note that the manors were assessed or rated at one hide $2\frac{1}{2}$ virgates in the time of King Edward, but that the land escaped taxation or assessment in the time of the survey. From these facts we may, I think, draw the conclusion that the connexion of Woodcote or Bramdean with the office of Porter of Winchester began in the time of William the Conqueror. Next we may consider that the office of porter was one of very considerable responsibility and of some dignity. The porter of Trinity College is a very considerable personage at Cambridge at the present day, and, in the time of the Normans, Milo, the king's porter at Winchester, was no doubt an important man, who in addition to holding this manor was let off from paying his share of ordinary taxes, and was also provided with a town house at Winchester, where no doubt he resided when personally discharging his official duties in that city. Next we may note that this Domesday entry concerning Bramdean tells us of a fluctuation in the value of the manor in the time of Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror. It was worth 60

shillings, it fell to 40 shillings, and at the time of the survey it was worth 50 shillings. There had been a period of agricultural depression. If we pursue our reflections a little further on, life at Bramdean in 1086, we find that the Domesday record of 4 Villeins and 6 Borderers (or, as we should have said in later centuries, 4 working leasehold farmers and 6 labourers or cottagers) cultivated one ploughland and five acres of pasture for their own support, while they rendered customary manorial services to Milo the porter (or squire, as we ought perhaps to call him) in the cultivation of the ploughland and a half which he kept in demesne, and which no doubt surrounded his own manor house. These ancient demesne lands of Milo are at present held by Mr. Seymour Haden. The next reference I have found to Woodcote is one in the time of King John, when a further service to be performed for the King appears to have been attached to the tenure of this manor and other lands in the county. This service connects the manor of Woodcote with the Royal sport of falconry. During the season when the King's falcons or hawks were mewing or shedding their feathers, it was necessary that someone should look after the birds and feed them. This duty was attached to this manor. The word mews, now denoting a place for horses, is from an old French word "mue," which means a change, and mews were originally places where the birds shed their feathers. It appears by the "Liber Winton" (p. 537) that in Norman time Winchester contained a Domus havoc or Mews, where the King's hawks were kept, and in the reign of John this establishment appears to have been enlarged, for there were at that time four mews for hawks at Winchester (Rot. Lit. Claus. Vol. I., p. 553). One of the charter rolls of the time of King John grants certain lands to Matthew de Wallop, Warden of Winchester Castle, for the service of mewing at his own cost the King's hawks. "Quas tenemus infra castellum Winton ad mutandum." These lands were at Candover and Woodcote.

Matthew de Wallop held land worth 100s. in the villa of Bramdean, i.e., at Woodcote, by the service of keeping the gaol at Winchester, as is shown by the Charter Roll 5th John, dated April 27, 1204, by which the King grants the custody of the King's houses and the gate of the

castle and the gaol at Winchester, with the land at Wudecote and one hide of land in Candaura, and all other things belonging to the same custody, to hold to him and his heirs of the King by the service of mewing at his and their own costs the King's birds, which the King shall place in the castle of Winton to be mewed, and of finding one servant to mew and keep them during the whole season of mewing, and also of finding the cost of three hounds in the Castle for the same season.

The value of the land and manor held by Matthew de Wallop by this tenure in the time of King John is stated to have been 100s. annually.

At a still earlier date, apparently between 1086 and 1200, John de Bramdena is recorded as holding 20s. worth of land at Bramdean by the same service of the custody of the King's house or gaol at Winchester. The next record in point of date I have come across relating to Woodcote Manor is of the 53 Henry III, when it is stated in the "Inquisitiones post mortem" that Nigellus Beket held lands, &c., at Woodcote and Bramdean, and in the next reign, viz., in the 34th and 35th Edward I, two inquisitions appear to have been held relating to Woodcote Manor, and it is recorded as the result of the first that Valentine, the son of Nigellus Beck, held in Woodcote Manor, near Winton, one carucate and a hundred acres of land; and, secondly, that Valentine Beck held Woodcote by the service of the custody of Winchester gaol. It is interesting to note in these entries relating to a time when surnames were rapidly coming into use how loosely they were given at first, Beck and Beket being both used. Valentine Beck appears to have had a lengthy tenure here, but for some cause or other in the 28th Edward III. his lands and office appear to have been escheated to the king, and it is recorded in the list of escheats of this year that these were Woodcote Manor, tenements, &c., in the ville of Bromden, the custody of Winchester gaol, and lands and tenements at Sparsholt. Valentine appears to have died soon after, and the manor to have been afterwards held by his son, probably by the kindness of the new grantee, for an entry in the Inquisitiones post mortem of 39 Edw. III. states that the manor was held by John, son of Valentine Beck, but it adds "pro Johannes Mareschall," from

which it is clear that the manor had really passed to the family of Marshall. This is confirmed by an inquisition held in the 6th Henry VI., by which a return was made stating that Woodcote Manor and the custody of Winchester gaol was held by Edward Mareschall. After an inquisition held 1st Edw. IV. it is declared that this same manor was lately held by Johanna (now deceased), who was the wife of John Frampton, and who was the daughter and heir of Edward Mareschall. Three years later, another inquisition states that the manor was held by John Frampton, Esq., but whether the son or husband of the late heiress of the Marschall families not mentioned. While the manor was held by the Marschall family people were apparently at a loss to understand why the custody of Winchester gaol should always be held with the manor of Woodcote. Perhaps it was a lucrative office, and it was worth somebody's while to inquire; anyhow, an inquisition was got up in the reign of Henry VI. to inquire why the custody of the gaol at Winchester is part of the manor of Woodcote. "Quod solum gaolæ Winton est parcell maner de Wodecote." I have not seen what answer was returned, but as the connexion of Woodcote Manor with the custody of Winchester gaol or the care of the King's house there began before the date of the Doomsday Survey, and had lasted for nearly 400 years, I can believe that it was a difficult inquiry.

These few antiquarian associations shew that there is much to be learned concerning Woodcote, and it is well worth further research.
