

ANCIENT HAMPSHIRE FORESTS AND THE GEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS OF THEIR GROWTH.

BY T. W. SHORE, F.G.S., F.C.S.

If we examine the map of Hampshire with the view of considering what its condition, probably was at that time which represents the dawn of history, viz., just before the Roman invasion, and consider what is known of the early West Saxon settlements in the county, and of the earthworks of their Celtic predecessors, we can scarcely fail to come to the conclusion that in pre-historic Celtic time it must have been almost one continuous forest broken only by large open areas of chalk down land, or by the sandy heaths of the Bagshot or Lower Greensand formations. On those parts of the chalk down country which have only a thin soil resting on the white chalk, no considerable wood could grow, and such natural heath and furze land as the upper Bagshot areas of the New Forest, of Aldershot, and Hartford Bridge Flats, or the sandy areas of the Lower Bagshot age, such as exists between Wellow and Bramshaw, or the equally barren heaths of the Lower Greensand age, in the neighbourhood of Bramshot and Headley, must always have been incapable of producing forest growths.

The earliest traces of human settlements in this county are found in and near the river valleys, and it is as certain as any matter which rests on circumstantial evidence can be that the earliest clearances in the primæval woods of Hampshire were on the gently sloping hill sides which help to form these valleys, and in those dry upper vales which are now above the permanent sources of the rivers. The sites of nearly all Hampshire villages come under one or other of these physical conditions. They are ancient dwelling sites,

and will be found in almost all cases to have been selected in reference to a permanent water supply, either from a running stream, or from a reliable source not far below the surface.

Hampshire is a richly wooded county at the present time, and perhaps no spots in the middle of it enable us to realize to some extent what its ancient forest character must have been, so well as such eminences as Woolbury Mount, Popham Beacon, Farley Chamberlayne, Woodgarston, Beacon Hill, Highclere, and Beacon Hill, near Warnford, which afford very extensive woodland views at the present day.

In Roman time Hampshire must have presented an appearance quite typical of Cæsar's description of Britain, viz., that of "a country covered with forests, and its cities fortified woods."

At least one such Celtic stronghold in this county subsequently became a noted Roman city under the name of Silchester, a fortified city in a wood, a character which we may well believe it possessed, from the elevation above its wooded surroundings at the present day. The earthen "rampiers" outside the Roman walls of Silchester probably mark the old Celtic defensive lines. Similarly the Celtic fortifications at Beacon Hill and Ladle hill, Burghclere, at Winklebury, Sherfield-on-Loddon, Quarley, Bury Hill, Woodgarston, and perhaps others now destroyed; which were the strongholds or oppidi of refuge of the northern Hampshire tribes, must have towered above the vast expanse of woodland that formed the great northern forest of this county, broken only by the alluvial lands along the rivers, the heaths of the Bagshot sands, the so-called "white land" of the downs where the chalk is almost bare, and the dry flint strewn upper chalk valleys. The whole northern part of Hampshire retained its general forest character through Anglo-Saxon times far down into the middle ages. This extensive area formed the largest of all the ancient forests of this county, and comprised those parts which were afterwards known as Eversley forest, Pamber forest, the forest of Freemantle, the forest of Wytinglea or Wytel, and the forest of Chute. At the north eastern corner of Hampshire we have the old place name of the village of Yateley or Gateley, which tells us of the limits which nature has placed upon its extent. This village was probably at one time the gate of the forest,

beyond which to the east the wide tracts of the upper Bagshot sands form the extensive heaths of Chobham. South and south-west of Yateley are the upper Bagshot heath lands of Hartford Bridge flats and Eversley Common, and west of it are the sandy areas of the Lower Bagshot age round Bramshill, upon part of which perhaps what are the finest pines in England are growing at the present time. The timber land of this part of the northern forest area is much broken by the intervening spaces of heath. Near Yateley the clay land on which the timber grows is chiefly of the Bracklesham age, and near Bramshill the London clay comes to the surface, and forms a wide expanse of strong clay land that extends round Stratfieldsaye, southwards to Newnham, and westwards to Bramley and Pamber. Round Silchester and westward to Tadley irregular alternations occur of the Bagshots, Bracklesham beds, and London Clay. Southwards the line of outcrop of the chalk which extends from Crondall past Odiham, Old Basing, Sherborn St. John, Monk Sherborn, Wolverton, Kingsclere, Highclere, and thence by a turn to the north west to East Woodhay, in the north west of the county, gives a distinctive character to the woodland scenery of North Hampshire at the present day, and in olden time we may be quite sure this character was still more strongly marked. The woods on the chalk slopes south of this line to the water parting of the Loddon, between Basingstoke and Whitchurch, and the sources of the Test from Church Oakley to Andover, have a character of their own, the indigenous beech tree which grows well on loams derived from the debris of the Reading beds, resting on chalk slopes, forming the prevailing feature of these woods, while the indigenous oak is characteristic of stronger clay land. The sandy Bagshot formations are marked by the native heaths and gorse, and by the coniferæ which grow so well upon them, of which those of Bramshill and the acclimatised pines at Little Switzerland, on the Stratfieldsaye estate, form the best examples.

The forest area of North Hampshire is characterised by outliers of the Bracklesham beds, which form a distinct feature in the geology of the district, and add to the beauty of its woodland scenery. The most marked geological characteristic of this area, however, is the great inlier of Upper

Greensand in the Kingsclere vale, where the complete removal of the chalk by which it is surrounded has laid it bare. In some parts of this denuded area the Gault probably lies near the surface, wherever the Upper Greensand has been most worn. This impervious Gault clay, by bearing up the water beneath the permeable Upper Greensand, must have had some influence on the forest growth of the Kingsclere district.

These geological forestry conditions and capabilities of the area of North Hampshire are, however, much modified in some parts by the thick deposit of drift gravel by which the beds are covered, and there are many alternations in the prevailing features, depending on the outcrop or disappearance of the Tertiary formations, along the forest area from Odiham to the north-west.

The old north and south road from Newbury or Speen through Whitchurch to Winchester passed through this ancient northern forest. This road follows the track which is the natural pass of the district — viz., the valley between the Burghclere Hills: Beacon Hill on the west and Ladle Hill on the east. The old track appears to have been near to the foot of Ladle Hill.

It is worth noting that at the time of the Domesday Survey only two toll places are recorded as existing in Hampshire, of which one, producing fifteen shillings annually, was at Clere. The other toll place was at Titchfield, and the tax was a "thelonium", or duty on imports. The toll at Clere could scarcely have been of this nature, but it may not improbably have been a "cheminagium", or a tax on waggons and other carriages going through a forest. The old forest road which led northward through Clere was probably not the modern road, but that north and south road east of it, which extends for a long way almost parallel to it and along which, north-east of Burghclere old church, urns and other Roman remains have been found.

The Roman roads which passed through the northern forests were those which led to Silchester from Sarum, Winchester, and London. The last of these, under the name of the Devil's Highway, forms the northern boundary of the county at the present time for some miles east of Silchester. There was also the road previously mentioned, from Winchester to Speen, which, if not of Roman construction, was

certainly used during their occupation ; and there was also the road from Winchester to Cirencester, which may still be traced through Harewood, and may also be seen in a very perfect condition near Tangley, passing through what was formerly part of the Forest of Chute.

In the 35th of Henry III. the balliwick of Pamber Forest, or Penbere, was held by Walter de Eversley, and in the Inquisitiones post mortem of Edward I. we have a record of seventy acres of newly assarted land, or land cleared of wood, held in this forest. Mention is also made of Pamber Forest in the Inquisitiones post mortem of Richard II. and in the 7th Henry V., when Thomas Poynings de St. John held the balliwick.

This forest appears to have extended a long way to the south of the sources of the Test and the Loddon as late as the 13th century, for in 28th Edward I. we find a record of the Abbot of Hyde obtaining authority to cut down Micheldever Wood "infra forest de Pambere."

That part of the northern forest land which was situated between Pamber and Chute is mentioned in early records as Freemantle Forest and as the Forest of Witingelea, Whytleyngle, or Wytel. One of the oldest royal hunting residences in Hampshire appears to have been situated in Anglo-Saxon days at or near Kingsclere, whence the name of the clearance in the forest.

The grand Norman church at Kingsclere, perhaps the finest in the county which was not of monastic origin, tells us of the continued interest of the Norman kings in this royal hunting manor. The Norman royal residence was at Freemantle on the higher ground, a little way south of the town of Kingsclere, and there are good reasons for believing that the Anglo-Saxon kings also had their hunting seat at this part of their manor.

In the 44th Henry III. Robert de Edmondthorp had the custody of Freemantle Forest. Some inclosure for royal hunting purposes appears to have taken place here before this date, for in the 38th Henry III. an Inquisition was ordered to be held to ascertain how much land the King's park at Freemantle contained, and how much of it was then inclosed.

The records of the 13th century enable us to trace some of the early inclosures of parts of Pamber Forest. For example,

a charter was granted 42 Henry III. to Robert St. John, to enable him to inclose Sherburn Park within the Forest of Pamber, and also to inclose Bramley Wood within the boundaries of the same forest.

One of the royal grants of part of the northern forest of this county has more than an ordinary interest — viz., that made in 31 Henry III. by which Wytinglegh Wood, belonging to the manor of Clere, was granted to the Church of "Beate Marie de Rotomag" (Notre Dame de Rouen).

We see the gradual process by which the northern part of Hampshire became disforested in such records as that of 8 Edward II. in the "Inquisitiones ad quod damnum," in which a record is made of the inquiry concerning 46 acres of newly assarted land of the Forest of Pamber, then held by John Wootton.

The country north of Andover, which formed the principal part of the ancient Forest of Chute, is one of the most interesting parts of Hampshire. The forest itself in Anglo-Saxon time and far into the Middle Ages extended much further to the south; as the records relating to it prove, but its forest character was maintained north of Andover long after most of those parts to the south of it had ceased to be part of a royal forest. Andover appears to have been the principal hunting domain of some of the Saxon kings, such as Edgar, who often resided here, and who in the southern part of this forest, now called Harewood, slew Earl Ethelwolf in A.D. 963 in that fit of jealousy and anger which preceded his marriage with his second wife, Elfrida. The traditional site of this forest murder is in what we now call Harewood Forest, at a spot known as Deadman's Plack, where a stone monument of the 18th century commemorates this event.

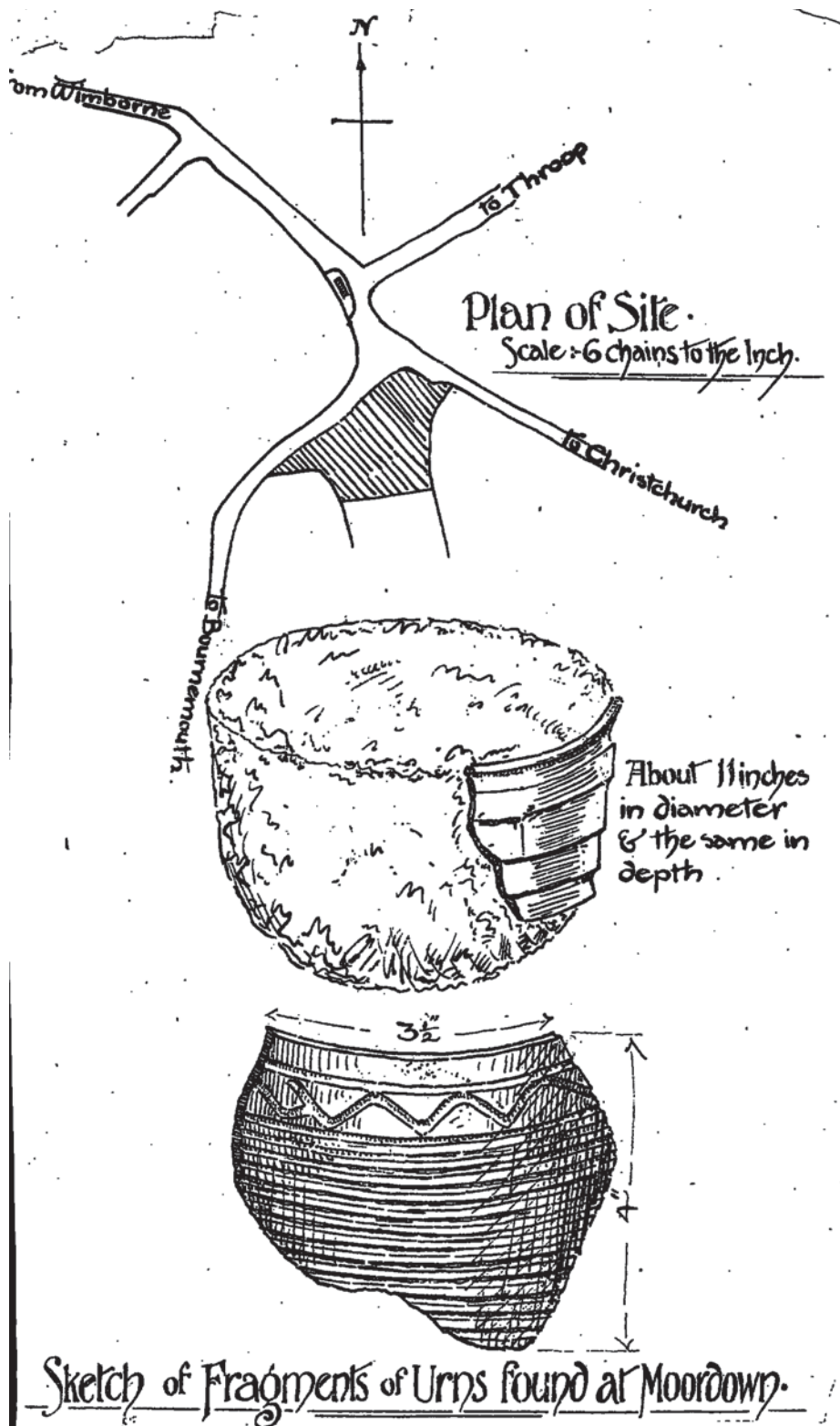
The natural roadway into Chute Forest was along the Bourn, tributary of the Test, northwards from Hurstbourn Priors through St. Mary Bourne, Swampton, Stoke and Hurstbourn Tarrant, which in olden time was, as now, the chief forest village within its area. This country is almost entirely a chalk area, in which the chalk, over a considerable part of it, is covered with reconstructed beds of clay and loam, derived from the Reading beds, that were once continuous over these hilly districts, and which formed the connecting link between the Tertiary beds of the Hampshire geo-

logical basin on the south and those of the London geological basin on the north, in the vale of the Kennet.

The finely diversified country round Hurstbourn Tarrant tells us far better than any description possibly can how beautiful the Forest of Chute must have been in primitive time. On the south of this village rises Hurstbourn Hill, with its wooded slope or hanger. To the north of it extends the long dry chalk valley of Netherton, which ends in a deeper cul-de-sac at Combe, a village with steep chalk hills on three sides. To the north-west of Hurstbourn Tarrant the main valley extends through Ibthorpe and Upton to Vernham's Dean, one of the most picturesque parts in Hampshire, close to which the chalk of Conholt Hill, 700 feet above the sea, rises abruptly, its slopes scarped in places with the remains of the old terraces of cultivation that mark the sites of the earliest agriculture of this district. A mile or more south of this hill is the Hampshire Gate, where the Roman road from Cirencester to Winchester enters what is now Hampshire, and about two miles west of this, in Wiltshire, is the village of Chute, beyond which the forest formerly extended. North of Hurstbourn Tarrant a rising country covered with much wood on the western slope of the Netherton Valley extends to Linkenholt, 700 feet above the sea, and beyond this, through the western part of Combe Wood, the level gradually rises till the most elevated spot in Hampshire is reached, close to the county border, at Inkpen Beacon, or Walbury Camp.

Here the chalk attains its greatest elevation in England—nearly 1000 feet above the sea. Looking southwards and eastwards from the ridge of high downs near Inkpen Beacon we may see the greater part of the northern forest land of Hampshire spread out before us, richly wooded at the present day. Close here is the site of the gibbet on which malefactors were hung on the highest gallows in the county, and far below, 400 feet down the steep slopes of the hill, in the most remarkable chalk hollow in the county, is the village of Combe, the manor and church of which formerly belonged to the Monastery of Bec, in Normandy, a religious house founded by the Conqueror and endowed with English lands. The manor and church of Combe was given to the Abbey of Bec by Rad. de Hastings, one of the Conqueror's followers.

Some four miles south of Combe is Faccombe Wood, of



which we have some record as early as the 23rd Edward I., when Oliver de Punchardon held "Faccombe bosc in foresta de Chute." The woods around Hurstbourn Tarrant were also, in the 13th century, reckoned as an integral part of Chute Forest, and probably under forest law. In the 13th Edward I. we find an entry in the *Inquisitiones post mortem* concerning the Abbess of Tarente and her manor at "Hursburne de bosco infra forest de Chute." In the 20th Edward I. we also find a record of an Inquisition by which the Abbess was permitted "to cut down and sell 40 acres of underwood at Hursburn, within the boundaries of the Forest of Chute."

Chute Forest formed a bailliwick which, like bailliwicks of other royal forests, was governed by a warden or baillif. In Chute this officer had an official residence called "Wode" house", of which we have a record in 9th Henry IV., when John Lisle, Esquire, had the custody of this forest, together with Wodehouse and certain assarted lands. We have similar records of Wodehouse or John Lisle, warden of the forest, in the 3rd Edward III., 5th Edward III., 7th Henry VI. and 11th Edward IV. We catch a glimpse of the gradual forest clearing going on in Chute in the 15th century in such entries as that in the *Inquisitiones post mortem*, 10th Henry IV., where it is recorded that four parcels of assarted land in Chute Forest were then held by Edmund Avenell.

The eastern walk of Chute Forest appears to have been that part known as Finkley Forest, which is mentioned in the *Inquisitiones post mortem* as early as the 43rd Henry III.

There is an interesting mention of Chute Forest in the 17th century in a despatch of the Venetian Ambassador to the Doge of Venice in the time of Charles I. The Ambassador alludes to the supposed grant of Chute Forest by Charles I. to his Minister, Weston, Earl of Portland, and to the scandal then the subject of gossip that this supposed grant was in reality a sale, made by the Lord Treasurer under a false name to himself. (Venetian state papers, A.D. 1202 to 1509; preface, p. 93, 94.)

The southern part of Chute Forest below Andover, which is still known as Harewood Forest, appears to have been held by the Abbess of Wherwell. There is a record of the Abbess, after an inquiry, being permitted to cut down this wood, in the *Inquisitiones post mortem* 23rd Edward I.,

Harewood is described as "Harewood de bosco in foresta de Chute."

The freemen of Andover appear to have had a considerable interest in the forest of Chute. Andover forest, or the Brills of Andover, are mentioned in a record as early as 1156.

In a Register of the Abbey of Titchfield, called the "Rememoratorium de Tichefelde," compiled in the reign of Richard II. for the Taxation of the Tenth and Fifteenth in Hampshire in 1334, the Hundred of Andover is entered as "Hundredu de Andeu'e for." Similarly that of Alton is entered as "Hundredu' de Aulton forinc," and Porchester as "Porcestre forinc." The final contraction "for," or "forinc," in these entries stands for "forinseca," which probably denotes a common forest pasture, a "pastura forinseca, quæ est communis." In the "Inquisitiones post mortem 4, Edward I.," we find the men of Odiham allowed a recognised pasture in the King's forest. "Odiham homines pro pastur in bosco de Whytmonsley." In these records we therefore catch a glimpse of the early common forest pasturage, such as survives in the New Forest at the present day, and which, with a common system of manorial ploughing and husbandry, formed part of the prevailing method of Hampshire agriculture at that date.

Many of the names of places which we find in the northern part of Hampshire at the present day may be clearly traced to its ancient forest character, the hursts, such as Hurstbourn Tarrant, Hurstbourn Priors, Baughurst, and Ewehurst; the holts, such as Linkenholt and Conholt; the open clearings in the woods, such as Kingsclere, Burghclere, and Highclere; and the wood names, such as Woodhay, Clerwoodcote, and Wootton. Some of these place names are derived from forest animals, such as Eversley, from efer, A. s, a boar; Pamber, anciently called Panbere, from pan, a hog, the wood for hogs; and Hartley Wintney and Hartley Westpall from the hart.

Some of the place names, such as Newtown and Newnham, mark the comparatively late origin of these village sites. In all the forest parts of Hampshire the place names which have the suffixes or affixes, hay, dean or den, gate and end, have probably derived these syllabic parts of their names from ancient forest boundaries. The Anglo-Saxon kings of Wessex had a royal ville at Odiham, which at that

time appears to have been situated in what then formed the south-eastern part of the great North Hampshire forest. As late as the 13th century Odiham was of much importance as a forest centre. Eleanor de Montfort, wife of Simon de Montfort, obtained the Manor of Odiham by a royal grant from Henry III., and maintained here a large hunting establishment of men and dogs, the "canes leporarii" harriers, or greyhounds. In 1224 we find the extensive woodland country round the place described as the "bailwick of the forest of Odiham."

The junction between the Chalk and the Tertiary beds, which lie to the north of it, occurs at Odiham; and therefore we find a varied character in the woodlands near this town.

To the north lies Odiham Common, and to the north-west the extensive former open spaces of Bartley Heath and Hook Common, which in ancient time must have been open heath lands, surrounded by natural woodlands.

Part of Odiham forest appears to have been inclosed for a hunting park in the 13th Century, for we find the palings and stockade of the park then mentioned. We find another record in the 13th century relating to an inclosure of a part of this forest in the *Calendarium Rotulorum Chartarum* 42, Henry III., when Patric de Cadurcis was allowed to inclose and make a fence round those parts of the forest at Weston, called Heydon and Haselmangrave. The entry is "Weston boscus, vocat Heydon and Haselmangrave, includ. et hayam facere." This appears to have been the origin of the Manor of Weston Patrick.

In the Hundred rolls of the time of Edward I., we find an entry relating to Odiham forest, which shows how "purpestures" or making of unauthorised buildings and inclosures within a forest, were detected. It appears that a purpestore of 1½ acres was made at Iwode, in the Hundred of Basingstoke, by Rad. Isembere temp Henry III., but it was reported, and is entered in the Hundred Rolls of Edward I.

In the eastern part of Hampshire the Lower Greensand crops out from beneath the Gault, and forms the extensive sandy areas and heath lands about Bramshot, over the greater part of Woolmer Forest, Broxhead Common, and Kingsley Common. Pines and larch appear to be the natural

trees of this district, but we have, in the history of Selborne, a record of the bog oak, formerly obtained from the bog and peat in Woolmer Forest, and used for cottage building at Selborne, showing that over some parts of this area clay or loam is sufficiently near the surface to have supported the growth of indigenous oak. Woolmer is described as being treeless in Gilbert White's time, a circumstance which is not surprising, considering the extraordinary way in which this forest was devastated in the previous century, to satisfy the greed of those who were its custodians.

The chalk which lies to the westward of the line of outcrop of the Upper Greensand in eastern Hampshire rises into very considerable hills, such as Selborne Hill, Noar Hill, and Ashford Hill, near Petersfield. All this elevated chalk country is more or less covered with loam, the debris of the Reading beds, and beech is the most characteristic timber.

In Romano-British time, the most notable forest in the South of England was that called the forest of Anderida, known afterwards as the Andredsweald, which extended from Kent westward along the border-land of Sussex and Surrey, known geologically as the Wealden district, as far as the eastern parts of Hampshire. Woolmer Forest and Alice Holt may be regarded as the remnants in Hampshire of this great primeval forest.

Both Woolmer Forest and Alice Holt were formerly much more extensive than now, and we can trace other portions of this great eastern forest land of Hampshire in olden time:

Woolmer Forest appears to have undergone some considerable changes in character within historic time. It is not likely that the part which now remains was at any time a very wooded country, for it is chiefly situated on the sandy beds of the Lower Greensand age.

In parts of this area the soil is so loose that, in the dry season of the year, you sink ankle deep into the sand in walking along the country roads, as near Kingsley and Headley. Such parts of Woolmer could never have been richly wooded, but would form a natural area of indigenous heaths and gorse.

Among the earliest remains of the Hampshire part of the Forest of Anderida are the black rings still to be met with about Rotherfield and Alice Holt, which mark the sites of

the forest charcoal burners, first recorded by the late Colonel Greenwood.

In Roman time an important station appears to have existed in Woolmer Forest, for a large hoard of Roman coins was discovered in 1741, in the middle of Woolmer Pond.

Among some of the early records of Woolmer are those in the "Inquisitiones post-mortem," where the balliwick of Wolmer is mentioned early in the fourteenth century. In the 33rd Edward I. Adam de Gurdon held the bailiwick of Alice Holt and Wolvemere. This bailiff appears to have been more of an outlaw than a custodian of a royal forest. His deeds in this district are commemorated to this day by a tablet over the door of the old mill of the Bishop of Winchester's ancient manor, at Hawkley, which states that this is "Hawkley mill: Ancient mill of the Bishops of Winchester, taken from them by Sir Adam Gurdon, given back under King Edward, A.D. 1280."

The geological conditions of the timber growth over this eastern forest of Hampshire are different from those prevailing in the north or the south. Here are no Tertiary formations, the latest formation in this area being the chalk, the eastern limits of which may be seen near Alton, Selborne, and Petersfield. From beneath the chalk the Upper Greensand crops out. This, under the local name of Malm rock, has been described by Gilbert White, and may be seen well developed at Worldham, and near Selborne. From beneath the Upper Greensand the Gault crops out. This is a stiff brownish blue clay, which commonly forms the subsoil of the valleys between Alton and Petersfield. It is the geological formation on which the growth of the Alice Holt forest depends, and being a stiff clay it supports the luxuriant ash and other woods, which form so important a feature in this Holt. The Gault is the sub-stratum which holds up the water in some of the ponds of this district, such as those along the Oakhanger stream, and the pond on Petersfield heath. "Wolvemer" and Alice Holt are mentioned in the *Inquisitiones post-mortem* in the time of Edward III., and "Bentley bosc includen. in foresta de Alice Holt" is mentioned much earlier—in the 45th Henry III. In the time of Henry VI. we find Thomas Chaucer, son of the poet, and Matilda, his wife, holding the custody of Woolmer and Alice Holt, and also a

park at East Worldham. In the 7th Edward II. we find the Abbey of Waverley in Surrey, just beyond the Hampshire border, had 40 acres of inclosed woodland called Dockenfieldwood, within the Forest of Wolvemere. Lode farm, near Kingsley, and East Worldham, appears to have been the site of a royal hunting residence. Henry VIII., when Prince of Wales, is said to have been a Ranger of Woolmer, and to have often been at Lode, so as to become described as "Harry of Lode." Alice Holt and Woolmer appear, however, to have had many enemies and negligent officials, for an Inquisition was held 15th Henry VIII., "*pro domino Rege de inquirendo de vasto et de destructione in terris, et tenementis*" in Wardelham manor and park, and lands and tenements in Alysholt and Wolmer Forests. Gilbert White tells us that a perambulation of Wolmer and the Holt, made in 1635, showed that these forests were much larger than they were in his time.

In ancient days there were two areas in Hampshire quite distinct from each other, which were known as the Forest of Bere. These were situated one on the south-east, and the other on the west of Winchester. What is now known as the Forest of Bere consists of the detached portions of woodland lying to the east of Wickham, and known respectively by the names of West Walk to the north-east, and Little Creech to the east of Wickham, and The Holt, on the north of Havant Thicket. These woodlands are the shrunken remains of a much greater area that formerly covered this part of the county, and which, in mediæval time, formed the Royal Forest of Bere. All the forests in Hampshire were royal forests, but there were other very extensive woodlands known as chases. A free chase differed from a forest in not being governed by Forest law, and the franchise of a free chase was only granted to persons of the highest dignity. In Hampshire the Bishop of Winchester was by far the most important noble in mediæval time, and he possessed the franchise of a free chase on his extensive territories in this county. Waltham Chase, Hambledon Chase, and Havant Chase, all belonged to the Bishop, and extended for many miles round the Forest of Beer. Waltham Chase was more extensive than many forests. The remnant of Havant Chase is still known as

Havant Thicket, and the woodland areas round Hambledon at the present day bear witness to its ancient forest character. The southern part of the Forest of Beer was sometimes called the "Beere of Porchester," and is so described in a charter of Edward IV. to the monks of Beaulieu, granting them common of pasture in the southern part of this forest. The "Forest of Porchester" is mentioned as early as 1299, in the grant made by Edward I. to Margaret, his second queen. A hundred acres of woodland in Porchester Forest was held by Fulco le Straung and Alianora, his wife, in the 17th year of Edward II. In Anglo-Saxon time there existed in this part of Hampshire a wooded area called Wudu-Ærscœ, which was identified by the late Rev. J. Bishop, one of the earliest members of this Club; as St. Clare's Wood, near Exton, in a paper by him in the *Journal of Forestry* (Vol. v., p. 187-192). The Hormeswudu, or Homœres, of Anglo-Saxon documents, was also identified by Mr. Bishop as that wooded area which extended from Bishop's Waltham towards Cheriton, a long stretch of forest land, from which the name of "Longwood" at the present day is probably derived, and which formerly connected the Bishop's Manor of Cheriton with that of Waltham.

As late as the 13th Century the limits of the Forest of Bere reached to the boundaries of the town of Southampton, for among the MSS. of the Town Council of Southampton there is a copy of an Inquisition taken and made 38th Henry III., by twenty-four lawful men, before the King's Justice of the Forest, to that effect. In 1231 Bere Forest extended also in a south-west direction nearly to Titchfield, as is seen in the Royal Charter by which the Abbey of Titchfield was established. At the beginning of the present century about 10,000 acres, out of 16,000 acres which Beer Forest then contained, were open and subject to feed the king's deer and the commoner's cattle.

Waltham Chase, which joined Beer Forest on the west, was a district of much lawlessness for several centuries previous to the reign of George I. Gilbert White tells us that about the beginning of the last century the Waltham blacks, or deer stealers, committed such enormities that Government was forced to interfere, and passed a severe law, known as the Black Act, which comprised more felonies than

any law that was previously made. This was in the 9th George I.

At the south-east corner of Hampshire is a woodland area of considerable extent, known as Stanstead Forest, which was part of the Honour of Arundel, and belonged to the Dukes of Norfolk.

The geological conditions connected with the growth of the Forest of Bere are varied and interesting. Its ancient outlying parts on the north, towards Hambledon, were on the chalk, and the debris of the Tertiary beds, with which its more elevated parts are covered. On its southern part, an east and west irregular line drawn near Southwick marks the line where the chalk disappears beneath the unaltered Reading beds, and a similar irregular line a little further south also marks the line where the Reading beds disappear beneath the London clay. Holt Wood, near Rowland's Castle, which forms the most easterly remaining portion of Bere Forest, is on chalk, and beech is consequently the most prevailing tree. Further to the south-east, Stanstead Forest, noted at the present day for its luxuriant beach woods, is also upon the chalk. Between Southwick and the outcrop of the Chalk northwards, the characteristic rounded pebbles which mark the junction between the Lower Bagshot and the Bracklesham beds are met with, and are used partly for road metal. A geological character of this district are the outliers of the Lower Bagshot, surrounded by London clay; also in some instances outliers of the Bracklesham beds, surrounded by those of the Lower Bagshot age, features which give varied conditions for the growth of timber.

The Forest of West Beer, between Winchester and King's Somborne, was for many centuries a woodland area of considerable extent and importance. This district was known as West Forest, or Bere, near Winton. It is now entirely inclosed and dis-forested, and the only remains we have of it at the present day are some private woodlands, such as those of Ashley, some old place names, such as Sparsholt, and the name of the forest itself in "Forest of Bere Farm," and a curious piece of land called "No Man's Land," between Ashley and Sparsholt. There are several other small areas of land, called No Man's Land, in Hampshire and its borders. Such lands are, or were till lately, common lands, and their

use as such is of the most remote antiquity, dating, in all probability, from the time when forests and open common pastures were the folkland or common property of the people or nation.

The custody of the Forest of West-bere was commonly held with the Manor of Ashley, and this appears to have been for a long time in the family of the Dispensers. Hugh le Dispenser held the Manor of Ashley and the custody of the Forest of West-bere in the reign of Edward III. Adjoining the ancient limits of this forest on the South, near the line of the old Roman road from Winton to Sarum, is an extensive woodland area, known as Parnholt, which has probably always been a woodland. It belongs to the extensive parish of King's Somborne, and consequently must, in Anglo-Saxon time, have formed a part of the king's manor and forest. When King's Somborne was granted by the Crown, Parnholt appears to have gone with it; certainly this was the case when this manor became part of the Duchy of Lancaster. A free chase was granted in Parnholt, to Henry Duke of Lancaster, in the 27th Edward III. In the "*Inquisitiones ad quod damnum*" of this year, it is described as "*Parnholt bosc juxta forest de Beer, libera chacea, &c.*" An extensive hunting establishment appears to have existed at King's Somborne. As late as the reign of Elizabeth, a M.S. return relating to the Duchy of Lancaster states that, "the park containeth 200 deare and 300 old oaks."

Another of the smaller forests of Hampshire, concerning which there are many entries in the national records, is that of Buckholt. The area covered by this forest lies to the west of the Test, and between it and the county border, being bounded on the north by the picturesque escarpment of the chalk, still known as the Buckholt Hills, and on the south by the valley of Dean. This ancient woodland is commonly described as Buckholt, or Brockholt Forest, part of the Forest of Clarendon. It will be remembered that the royal manor of Clarendon; and the king's house or palace there, about two miles east of Salisbury, was a place of much importance in the time of Henry II.

The custody of Buckholt Forest was commonly attached to the Manor of Tytherley. The earliest mention I have met with concerning this connexion, is in the "*Inquisitiones*"

post-mortem," 25th Edward I., when this manor and the custody of the forest was held by Ricus de Luveraz. Many similar entries occur in these records in succeeding reigns. A still earlier record of Buckholt, in connection with the royal Manor of Broughton, occurs in Domesday Book, where an interesting entry, under Broughton, states that, "formerly the king's bailiff had the honey and the pasture belonging to the manor, and also timber for house building, but now the foresters enjoy these privileges. The honey and pasture in the king's forest are each worth 10s."

At the west of the former area of Buckholt Forest is the Manor of Norman Court, known in ancient days as King's Camp, where it is traditionally stated that the Norman Conqueror resided during that great assembly of all the tenants in chief throughout the kingdom, who swore allegiance to him for their lands in August, 1086. The Forest of Buckholt was chiefly beech wood, growing on loam and chalk, a character which the area shows at the present day. The steep slopes of the Buckholt hills still have some fine beech woods, and near Queenwood College many of the hedgerows are also formed by a cropped dwarf growth of beech. The unsuitability of chalk for the growth of fir is well illustrated at Whiteshoot Hill, where a large fir plantation is in a decaying condition. The woods round Norman Court are chiefly on a chalk subsoil, and exhibit the characteristic growth of wood.

The line of the Reading beds north of Romsey trends in a north-west direction to near Dunbridge, where it sweeps round to the west of Mottisfont, northwards as far as Pitterworth, from which it extends westward a little to the south of East and West Tytherley to the county border at West Dean. The greater variety of timber which may be seen south of this line in the woods between Mottisfont, Tytherley, and West Dean, and particularly the common occurrence of oak, are a result of this occurrence of the Reading beds and the London clay.

The geological conditions affecting the nature of the soil in the New Forest are very varied and interesting, clays, loams, sands, gravel, bog, and alluvium of varied characters and in different proportions being met with in parts of this great forest area. The oldest geological formation found in

the New Forest is the Lower Bagshot, and the most recent are those of the Osborne, or Upper Headon age. The Lower Bagshot beds are found in the west of the forest area, and form the bottoms of most of the valleys through which the streams flow towards the Avon. These beds may be seen about Hatchet Green, God's Hill enclosure, and east of Ibbesley. On the west and north of the forest are large areas of the Bracklesham and Barton beds. Large areas of the Barton beds also occur westward from Minstead, Stony Cross, Ocknell Plain, Bratley Plain, and for some way southwards. The Barton beds also stretch eastward of Minstead, and in the south-west their outcrop runs north and south to the east of Hinton. Extensive inlying areas of the Barton age also occur near Burley. Some of the forest valleys, such as Dibden bottom, appear to have Barton clay holding up the water beneath the Upper Bagshot sands. The Barton beds are found covering and alternating with the Bracklesham loams and clays in the north and west of the forest. An area of the Bracklesham extends from Turf Hill and No Man's Land, Bramshaw, eastward through Cadnam.

The Upper Bagshot sands occur over the northern part of Beaulieu Heath, and in a long stretch eastward from Ringwood to Holmsley, and thence to the north and east. Inliers of Barton clays and outliers of Upper Bagshot are met with near Burley. The Upper Bagshot outcrop appears to extend northwards from near Stone point, and west of Fawley to Mopley, Holbury, Ipers Bridge, and Flash Pond. The water courses near these places appear to have been determined by a clay bed at the bottoms of the streams. A large extent of the heath land west of Burley is on the Upper Bagshot beds, as also is that to the east and south-west of Lyndhurst. During the progress of the work in making the cuttings of the new railway from Brockenhurst to Christchurch the succession of these Upper Eocene beds could be well observed. The Headon beds overlie the Upper Bagshot over a large area south of the railway from Brockenhurst to Holmsley. Outliers of Headon beds, surrounded by Upper Bagshot, also occur west of Beaulieu, and more extensive areas of it over the west and north parts of Beaulieu Heath. The highest beds of the Headon age occur about Durn's Town to the south-west of Brockenhurst.

Overlying these various geological formations in many parts of the forest area, and particularly upon the higher ground, are very extensive beds of drift gravel, a condition which is bad for timber and bad for grass, and such as accounts for great stretches of barren heath land.

Beech and oak are the chief indigenous trees of the New Forest. The beech grows equally well on the Tertiary sandy loams of this district, as on those resting on the chalk slopes.

The New Forest bogs, which form so marked a feature on its surface at the present time, are of much geological and scientific interest. They fill up many of the forest bottoms or hollows which commonly have small streams flowing through them. Such bogs as that over most of the surface of the Bishop's Purley are in a wet season marshes and in dry season water sources. The peat which is found beneath the mud in the estuaries and creeks along the Hampshire coast bears a very strong resemblance to the peat which is now being formed in the New Forest bogs. The chief plants found in the Hampshire peat and bogs are the cotton grass (*Eriophorum*), the bulrush (*Scirpus lacustris*), various species of bog moss (*Sphagnaceæ*), heath (*Erica*), one or more species, willow herb (*Epilobium angustifolium*), sedge (*Carex*), bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*), and ferns, the common bracken (*Pteris aquilina*, *Lastrea*, *Osmunda*), and others. The chief imbedded trees found in the peat are oak, beech, birch, fir, and hazel, all of which have been identified in the Southampton peat.

The loss of forest cows and ponies in the New Forest bogs during wet seasons is a circumstance of common occurrence. These animals wander into the soft bog, and, in struggling to free themselves, often get into deeper parts of it, and become swallowed up by it. We can well understand that previously to the removal of the deer some of those forest animals were lost in this way. The excavation through the peat for the formation of the new deep-water Dock at Southampton has brought to light the remains of animals which probably died in a similar manner, the *Bos primigenius* (or primeval ox), the *Cervus elaphus* (red deer), the boar, and a small variety of horse.

The chief native forest trees and shrubs of this county appear to be the oak (2 species), beech, birch, hazel, Scotch fir, larch, ash, holly, yew, elder, spindle, buckthorn, white-

thorn, ivy, lime, maple, mountain ash, wych elm, tamarisk (near the sea), sloe, wild cherry, guelder rose, cornel, willow (several species), aspen, poplar (several species), wild rose, bramble (many varieties), raspberry, crab, furze or gorse (two species), broom, whin, butcher's broom, heath (two species), and bog myrtle.

When any part of a forest, or part of any open land was allowed to be inclosed in the middle ages it commonly became a park, and the franchise of a park was a high privilege. The earliest mention of a park we have in Hampshire is that connected with the king's forest in the Isle of Wight, which is mentioned as such in Domesday Book, where it is stated, concerning the manor of Watching-well, that "half a hide is in the king's park," and that "the meadow land is in the park." This part of Parkhurst Forest was therefore an inclosed forest area at the date of the survey, and the remaining part is named Avington Park in some of the oldest maps of the Island. Parkhurst formerly comprised about 3,000 acres, but since its inclosure about 1,100 acres. This forest is entered on some old maps as the king's forest as late as 1791. For many years before its inclosure it was nominally held by the Governor of the Island, but was really a common for the whole neighbourhood. Parkhurst forest formerly extended from the Medina to the Newtown river, and the absence of old villages in this part of the Island can be thus accounted for.

Our mediæval records contain many references to the inclosures or grants of Hampshire woodlands in addition to those already alluded to. Further examples of such grants may be seen in the Charter Rolls, as for instance in the 2 John, where mention is made of the grant of the "boscus qui vocatur, Portswood," to St. Denys' Priory. This was part of the King's forest land near Southampton, and probably extended as far westward as the Westwood, lately known as Westwood Park. Another example is that in the Charter Rolls 6 John, where mention is made of a grant to the Monks of Mucheldevera, *i.e.*, those of Hyde Abbey, who held the Manor, to inclose the wood of Mucheldevera.

The same Records tells us of some of the earliest New Forest inclosures, such as that of 60 acres of wood "bruere in valle ibem" at Slondon, in the 27-28 Henry III., and also

of 238 acres of forest land granted in the 31 Henry III., to the Monks of Beaulieu, an enlargement of their original grant, and also of a purpresture allowed to be made in 35 Henry III., by Hugo Godeshull, at Godshill, in the eastern part of the forest. The "*Inquisitiones ad quod damnum*," in a similar way give us glimpses of other old Hampshire woodlands in the middle ages, such as that of Elinge, which is mentioned in Domesday Book, and which in the 8 Edward II., is still described as "*Elinge boscus in Nova Foresta*," and was then held by Rad'us de Camoys.

Notwithstanding its extensive mediæval and modern inclosures, this county is still the forest county of England, and contains more Crown Forest land than all the other counties combined.

The Hampshire forests have helped to preserve for us much of the folk lore of past centuries, for the common rights of pasturage, pannage, turbary, estover, marl, and gravel, have all assisted in keeping the peasantry to the soil of their forefathers. The existence of many Hampshire hamlets and villages can be traced to these privileges, in connexion with the forests throughout the county. Eversley, West Beer, and Pamber appear to have been disforested earliest, and to have ceased to be royal forests for some centuries, followed by Buckholt and Chute. James I., who had no great love for Anglo-Saxon institutions, parted finally with Odiham and Kingsclere as royal domains. Woolmer, Alice Holt, and Beer forests, have been inclosed within recent years, and diminished in their ancient areas by the compensation awarded to commoners in lieu of their forest rights. Waltham and Hambledon chases have been inclosed for about a century. The only ancient royal forest remaining in something like its former extent and original condition, is that which was of latest origin, and which still bears the name of the New Forest. The origin of this forest was clearly the afforestation and enlargement of the extensive wastes in the south-west of Hampshire, by the Norman Conqueror. The origin of the other more ancient Hampshire forests carries us back to primæval time, when they were Celtic hunting grounds, or to those later days when they formed part of the sacred forest Folkland of the West Saxon settlers.