

St Leonard's Church and Windmill, Winchelsea

National Trust Curatorial Internship Report

Celeste van Gent

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The site in 2016. <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/4925041>

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Part 1 - St Leonard's Church

Summary of Key Findings

St Leonard's appears to be a church dating from at least the 12th century, if not the early 11th or even 10th century. If more light can be shed on the Manor of Rameslie (see below) and the churches it contained, this will help date the church.

St. Leonard's Church did not belong to Winchelsea. It was not included in New Winchelsea as the town of Iham was formally under the jurisdiction of Hastings. Thus, technically the church should be referred to as St Leonard's Church, Iham rather than St. Leonard's Church, Winchelsea.

It seems likely that the church was defunct by 1415 when a proposed extension of the town wall would have blocked the street leading to St Leonard's Church if it had been built. The church may have been abandoned much earlier when New Winchelsea constructed its first town wall, which may or may not have hindered access to the church site.

The site is significant given its potential 11th century date, its importance as a harbour, its proximity to Hastings and the landing of William the Conqueror, and the Abbey of Fecamp as a Norman religious order. Some have speculated about the Abbey's role in the Norman Invasion, and whether Winchelsea may have been the original planned landing place.

Sources

I looked at a range of medieval, antiquarian and modern sources.

In terms of medieval archival material, I searched the charter rolls, close rolls and patent letters covering the 1270s, 1280s and 1290s during the relocation from Old Winchelsea to New Winchelsea but these do not mention St Leonard's Church, they only make references to the existing settlement of Iham.

The antiquarian sources, mainly from the 19th century, offered the most detail especially William Cooper Durant's *The History of Winchelsea* from 1850, and Thomas Walker Horsfield's *The History, Antiquities, and Topography of the County of Sussex* from 1835.

In terms of modern sources, there is a good amount of archaeological research relating to Winchelsea. However much of the historical material, at least what is available online, appears mainly to be by amateur or hobby historians which offer good starting point but do require further verification. An important secondary source, the Victoria County History, which many other sources rely on, could not be accessed online.

Given the brevity of the project, I had little time to investigate the later history of the site. I was able to compile a list of visual depictions of the Windmill.

History of St Leonard's Church

Overview

St Leonard's Church has a very long history, but very little documentation survives about the church itself.

St Leonard's Church is tied to the history of Iham and Winchelsea. The early medieval town of Old Winchelsea was originally built (date unknown) on a shingle bar on the coast. It was very vulnerable to coastal erosion, and after successive storms in the 13th century, it was relocated to New Winchelsea which was built on Iham Hill, about 3 miles inland, where St Leonard's Church already stood. St Leonard's Church belonged to the town or village of Iham, but was under the jurisdiction of Hastings and thus was not formally included within the bounds of New Winchelsea though it stood very close by. Technically it should be referred to as St Leonard's Church, Iham rather than St. Leonard's Church, Winchelsea.

There is far more documentation relating to Winchelsea, which occasionally references Iham, than to St Leonard's Church. I have organised the information and sources chronologically, from which a trajectory of the site's history can be gained.

11th and 12th centuries

The lands in which Winchelsea and St Leonard's church lie were part of the Manor of Rameslie. An approximation of the manor's lands has been mapped by a local historian.¹ The Manor of Rameslie was promised to the Abbey of Fecamp (Normandy) by Aethelred the Unready in 1014 who took shelter at the Abbey when fleeing the Danes. The transfer of land was carried out in 1017 after Aethelred's death when his widow, Emma of Normandy, married King Cnut.²

The Manor of Rameslie was said to contain five churches, of which St Leonard's may have been one.³ In 1028 more land was added to the Abbey of Fecamp's holding – the estate at Brede, to which St. Leonard's could also belong to as it sits on the edge of Rameslie and Brede but this is uncertain.⁴

The Domesday book (1081-1086) records the lands of Fecamp and the Manor of Rameslie within the Guestling (Ghestelinges) Hundred, translated by Thomas Horsfield as: "The abbot of Fescamp holds Rameslie of the king; he held it of King Edward. It was then rated at twenty hides; it is now cleared for seventeen and an half. The arable is thirty-five plough-

¹ Keith Foord, "A history of Rameslie before 1066 – a Norman key to the kingdom of England?" <http://btckstorage.blob.core.windows.net/site15733/Web%20A/A%20-%20A%20history%20of%20Rameslie%20before%201066%20-%20a%20Norman%20key%20to%20the%20kingdom%20of%20England.pdf>

² Bob Chantler, "Rother Country: A Short History and Guide to the River Rother in East Sussex, and the Towns and Villages Near to the River", p.28.

https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/rother_country/NM9QqVII7ToC?hl=en&gbpv=1
Supported by <https://hastingschronicle.net/key-events/771-1699/>

Keith Foord, "A history of Rameslie before 1066 – a Norman key to the kingdom of England?"

³ Domesday listing: <https://opendomesday.org/place/TQ9220/rye/> and Rye Castle Museum website: <http://ryemuseum.co.uk/more-on-medieval-rye/>

⁴ Search location 'Winchelsea' on the Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England (PASE) database. https://pase.ac.uk/jsp/pdb?dosp=VIEW_RECORDS&st=LOCATION_LOCAL&value=2566&level=1&lbl=Winchelsea

lands. There is one plough in the demesne, and ninety-nine villians have forty-three ploughs. *Here are five churches*, producing sixty-four shillings, one hundred salt-pans of eight pounds fifteen shillings, seven acres of meadow and a wood, yielding two hogs of pannage. In this manor a new borough is established, where are sixty-four burgesses, paying eight pounds, deduct two shillings.”⁵

St Leonard’s may have been one of these five churches. It has been suggested that the other churches were one in Rye, St Thomas and St Giles in Old Winchelsea, and one in Brede. St. Leonard’s Church may thus date from at least the 11th century.

An alternative 12th century origin for of St Leonard’s Church was also considered. The alternative possibility was derived from the Abbey of Fécamp which built many churches in the area. The Abbey constructed the Church of St Mary’s in Rye in the mid 12th century and St George’s Church in Brede was founded by the Abbot of Fécamp Henry de Sully (1140-1187) in 1180.⁶ The Abbey of Fécamp may have built the churches of All Saints and St Clement near Hastings around the same time, but it is equally unclear whether these churches already stood before the land was granted to Fécamp.⁷ The Historic England website records that All Saints was given to the Abbey of Fécamp in the early 11th century, but it is unclear whether it was part of the Manor of Rameslie and thus considered one of the pre-existing five churches.⁸

Later sources suggest Domesday also records a new town in the Manor of Rameslie as Rye or Old Winchelsea.⁹ The royal Pipe Rolls of 1131 and 1164 refer to both Old Winchelsea and Rye, and a Royal Charter of 1191 confirms liberties to both. The towns were added to the Cinque Ports in the 12th century.¹⁰

13th century

The Royal Deed of Gift of land to the Abbey of Fécamp was revoked on May 15, 1247 by Henry III who returned most of the area to the Crown. Henry III’s instruction is in the Charter Roll record that reads (but does not reference St. Leonard’s Church):

“Whereas the consideration of the safety of the realm has shown that the towns of Winchelsea and Rye, which are called the nobler members of the Cinque Ports, cannot be held by the abbot and monks of Fécamp, who are not able to fortify them, without danger to the realm in time of war, the king now revokes, by the counsel of the great men of the realm and with the good will of the said abbot and monks, the gift of the said towns with their ports and advowsons and the fourth part of the marsh of Northmareys and the rent of 3s. 9d. receivable therefrom, as expressed by the following bounds: For Winchelsea, as the sea and port surround the town up to the fee of Gestlinges...”¹¹

⁵ Thomas Walker Horsfield, *The History, Antiquities, and Topography of the County of Sussex, Volume 1* (place:printer, date), 478. The Domesday entry can be found online here: <https://opendomesday.org/place/TQ9220/rye/>

⁶ Historic England website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1190669?section=official-listing>

⁷ Keith Foord, “A history of Rameslie before 1066 – a Norman key to the kingdom of England?”

⁸ Historic England website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1353127?section=official-listing>

⁹ Chantler, “Rother Country,” 85.

¹⁰ Chantler, “Rother Country,” 85.

¹¹ Calendar of the charter rolls preserved in the Public Record Office pages 321-322. <https://archive.org/details/calendarcharter00stamgoog/page/n357/mode/2up?q=fecamp>

This source does indicate the how the coastal area was under threat and in need of fortification. Winchelsea is more frequently mentioned in the latter part of the 13th century during which it was relocated to its present site. Documentation regarding Winchelsea mentions Iham but not St. Leonard's directly. The charter rolls, close rolls and patent letters covering the 1270s, 1280s and 1290s were searched. The primary source material has been included in the appendix.

Prolonged period of stormy weather destroyed Old Winchelsea, and prompted Edward I to build New Winchelsea further from the coast on Iham Hill from 1283 onwards. St Leonard's Church already stood on Iham Hill, on a prominent mound that archaeologists have suggested can only be partially natural, and may even have prehistoric significance. The Patent Letters record that November 11, 1280, Westminster: "Commission to Ralph de Sandwyco, king's steward, to extend and buy or obtain by exchange certain lands of John de Langherst and John le Bon [Bone of Wickham] which are suitable for the new town of Winchelsea, which is to be built upon a hill called Yhamme, the old town being for the most part submerged by the sea."¹²

St Leonard's was not included within the new town's walls, as it formally belonged to Hastings and fell out of the jurisdiction of New Winchelsea.¹³ Antiquary John Leland writes that "In the Toune [Winchelsea] as withyn the walles be 2 Paroche Chirches, and there were 2 Colleges of Freres. There is a little without the Toune a Paroch Chirch: but that longith to the libertie of Hastings."¹⁴

Old Winchelsea was destroyed during a storm in 1287. The churches of St. Thomas and St Giles and Greyfriars friary, originally in Old Winchelsea, were rebuilt in New Winchelsea from 1288 onwards. The plan for St. Thomas' was 'grandiose' and may have accelerated St. Leonard's decline.¹⁵ In 1291, St Leonard's Church was valued at £4 13s.4d.¹⁶ The original source for this is referenced in the Victoria County History which I could not access, but it reflects the diminishing value of St Leonard's Church especially in relation to St Thomas which was valued at £10.13s.4d and St Giles at £6.13s.4d.¹⁷ There is a font (unknown date) in St. Thomas's and its cover is carved with the figures of St. Giles, St. Leonard and St. Thomas – the three churches in the area.¹⁸ St Thomas is partially ruined, but still in use. The ruins of Greyfriars remain. St Giles does not survive.

14th century

With a combination of royal patronage and its membership of the Confederation of Cinque Ports, the new town of Winchelsea thrived and became, during the 14th century, one of the primary ports for shipping and shipbuilding, travel and trading, fishing and wine. However, the coastal area and the towns were frequently attacked by the French during the Hundred Year's War. New Winchelsea was fortified from enemies but also probably the sea with a town wall – of which three gates survive the Strand Gate, the New Gate and Pipewell Gate. Maps clearly show St Leonard's lying outside the town walls, making it very vulnerable.

¹² <https://archive.org/details/calendarpatentr07offigoog/page/414/mode/2up?q=winchelsea> p.414

¹³ David Martin, and Barbara Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex: A Medieval Port Town* (Great Dunham: English Heritage, 2004), 5.

¹⁴ Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of England and Wales* (London: Hooper and Wigstead, 1773), 191.

¹⁵ Chantler, "Rother Country," 86.

¹⁶ Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex*, 74.

¹⁷ Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex*, 74.

¹⁸ Chantler, "Rother Country," 88.

It has been suggested that Edward I built a castle at the onset of the Hundred Year's War (1337-1453) to provide additional fortification for Winchelsea. David Martin also describes the location of a castle supposedly built by Edward I on '12 acres at the northwest corner of the [Iham] hill, immediately to the north of the church of St Leonard, Iham.'¹⁹ William Cooper Durant states, in reference to John Leland that 'there was a stronghold or castle built by the king at the northwest corner of the town, on the ten acres reserved by him.'²⁰ The castle was probably, constructed of ditches and earthen banks, and there was probably a wooden tower in the inner circular feature, which would have been a raised mound.

The coast was raided by the French seven times. Much of Rye was destroyed in a French attack in 1377 (and 1339 and 1448). The French had sacked Winchelsea in 1360 and destroyed St. Giles' Church, and again in 1380 and destroyed the Pipewell gate that was rebuilt in 1404. St Leonard's Church lying outside the town wall may have been destroyed or further ruined during these attacks.

In addition to repeated French attacks, Winchelsea as a town fell into decline as the river silted up and the harbour became inaccessible. It appears that St Leonard's was in decline well before this.

15th century onwards

In 1404, St Leonard's 'it was one of the benefices so impoverished as to be excused taxation.'²¹ An inquiry held in 1415 into the proposed line of the new town wall blocked the street leading to St Leonard's. David Martin writes that 'those streets which were to be blocked by the proposed wall were thus noted and, perhaps unsurprisingly, included the street "stretching from the church of St. Leonard in Iham". Perhaps by then St. Leonard's church was already all but redundant and the township of Iham depopulated.'²²

The lands on which St Leonard's lay were granted to the abbey of Sion, by whom the last known presentment was made in 1484.

More information survives for other Winchelsea churches - in 1413 St Giles' was badly damaged by fire, but rectors were still appointed until the 16th century when the parish was merged with St Thomas' in 1541. Its stone was repurposed in 1545 and the ruins levelled in 1790.²³

Ruins of St Leonard's Church

A deposition made in 1565 records that the church was by that date 'already thrown down, except that some parts remain defaced and despoiled.'²⁴ Antiquarian Francis Grose wrote in 1773 that of 'three churches, called St. Giles's, St. Leonard's, and St. Thomas's the apostle; of which two former, only some of the ruins remains to be seen, and of the latter, but part of

¹⁹ Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex*, 53.

²⁰ Quoted in Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex*, 53.

²¹ Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex*, 83. The original source lies in the Victoria County History.

²² Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex*, 48.

²³ Chantler, "Rother Country," 89.

²⁴ Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex*, 83.

the ancient building... yet all three were standing, as Lambard affirms, within memory, when he wrote, which was 1575.’²⁵ In 1610, the town decreed that the churchyard was to be open the commons of the town. Although certainly in ruins, the church is shown on the town map of 1763, which is not available online. Martin writes that ‘a sketch of the site made in 1794 shows a short length of the south wall then still standing virtually to full height.’²⁶ The area was very popular for artists drawn to medieval ruins during the Romantic period, including JMW Turner, and there are many sketches and engravings of Winchelsea’s existing ruins such as its town gates, the Church of St Thomas and Greyfriars. The ruins of St Leonard’s were removed in the early 19th century, perhaps in 1823, and St Leonard’s windmill was moved to the site, where it stood until blown down in the great storm of October 1987.

Local legend

Two antiquarian sources record a story about a statue of St Leonard within the old church:

‘The small parish church of St. Leonard’s is included in the liberty of Hastings. The church stood on a bold promontory stretching to the west and south-west. It was in ruins in the time of Henry VIII, and the only fragment of the edifice which remains is the east side of the tower. The image of the saint to whom the church was dedicated, formerly graced its interior. Instead of a sceptre, his holy hand grasped a vane (symbolical of the pliancy of modern saints), which, being moveable at pleasure, such persons as were desirous of a fair wind to restore to them their relatives or friends at sea, were allowed, by liberally contributing to the pecuniary necessities of the saint to set the vane in whatsoever direction they pleased; and such was the simplicity of the Winchelsea mariners, or their affectionate spouses; and such was the knavery of the priests in “by-gone” times, that the anxious relative was really led to believe that the due performance of this idle ceremony would subject the wind and the waves to his or her wishes, and secure the safe return of absent relatives.’²⁷

‘In the Church of St. Leonard was set up a picture of that saint, as the patron of the town, with a fan or vane as a sceptre in his hand; which being moveable at pleasure, such persons as desired a fair wind to bring their father, husband, or friend home, were allowed, upon making some valuable offering to the idol, to set it as they pleased, and most answerable to their desire; and such was the superstitious credulity of those times, that they believed they should have a wind speedy and prosperous according to their wishes.’²⁸

There is also a legend about St Leonard’s well: ‘Of St Leonard’s well at Winchelsea the good folks say that he who drinks will never rest till he returns to slake his thirst at its waters.’²⁹

Archaeology today

David and Barbara Martin write of the remains of St Leonard’s Church, that ‘protruding through the surface of the churchyard mound, towards the Western side, are the foundations

²⁵ Grose, *The Antiquities of England and Wales*, 194.

²⁶ Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex*, 83.

²⁷ Thomas Walker Horsfield, *The History, Antiquities, and Topography of the County of Sussex* (Baxter: Sussex Press, 1835), 483-484.

²⁸ Grose, *The Antiquities of England and Wales*, 192-193.

²⁹ Mackenzie Walcott, “St. Leonard's Well,” *Notes and Queries* Volume s2-IV, Issue 86, 22 August 1857: 145.

of the western end of the church, which appears to have had an internal width of c.5.9 metres... Where visible, the external facing is of roughly-coursed and faced sandstone blocks. Lying on lower ground to the west of the churchyard is a piece of tumbled walling.’³⁰ They have also found evidence of path made of Tilgate stone ‘paving the street which descended the hill down into the marshes from St Leonard’s church, Iham.’³¹ David Martin’s other book *Excavations in Winchelsea Sussex 1974-2000* does not mention St. Leonard’s Church.

Medieval terms

To aid future research I have listed the various spellings for Winchelsea, Iham and Rameslie. Winchelsea is variously referred to as: Winchelse, Winceleseia, Winchenesel, Winchelsay, Wenchelesee, Wynchelse, Wynchels’.

Iham is variously referred to as: Iham, Yham, Yhamme, Ihamme, Little Yham, Little Yhamme, Higham Hill, Petit Higham, Petit Iham.

Rameslie is variously referred to as: Rameslie, Rameslege, Ram(m)es(s)leagh, Hrammeslege, Ramsley.

Possibilities for future research

Further research should be undertaken to establish the boundaries of the Manors of Rameslie and Brede in order to discover which manor St Leonard’s Church was formally part of.

Search archives relating to the Abbey of Fecamp’s land holdings in the 11th-12th centuries in order to confirm whether or not St Leonard’s Church was already built before the land was transferred to the Abbey.

Investigate the seven French raids during the 14th century to see if there are any reports that note damage to Winchelsea, especially considering St Leonard’s vulnerability outside the town walls.

More research in earlier archives (pre 1000) into the town of Iham.

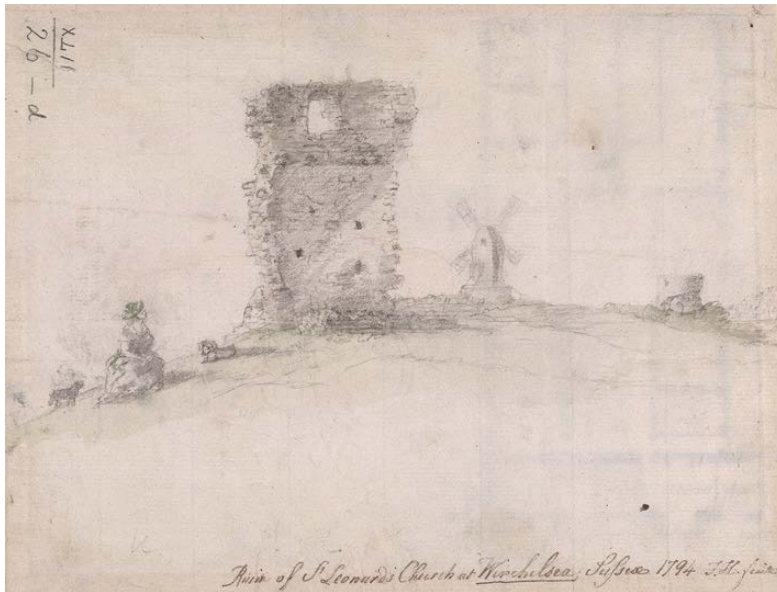
Perhaps archaeology can reveal the line of the original town wall of New Winchelsea and whether this blocked or still enabled access to St Leonard’s Church.

³⁰ Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex*, 83.

³¹ Martin, *New Winchelsea Sussex*, 35.

St Leonard's visual depictions

The only visual depiction of St Leonard's Church appears to be the sketch of its ruins from 1794.



<https://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/kinggeorge/r/003ktop00000042u026d0000.html>

Winchelsea is an old and important site and thus appears on many maps from the medieval period and beyond. Winchelsea appears on Matthew Paris's map of Britain (c.1250) and on the Gough map (c.1360) as 'wynchelsee' represented by two buildings and a spired church.



<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/matthew-paris-map-of-britain>

<https://historiacartarum.org/annotated-claudius-map/>

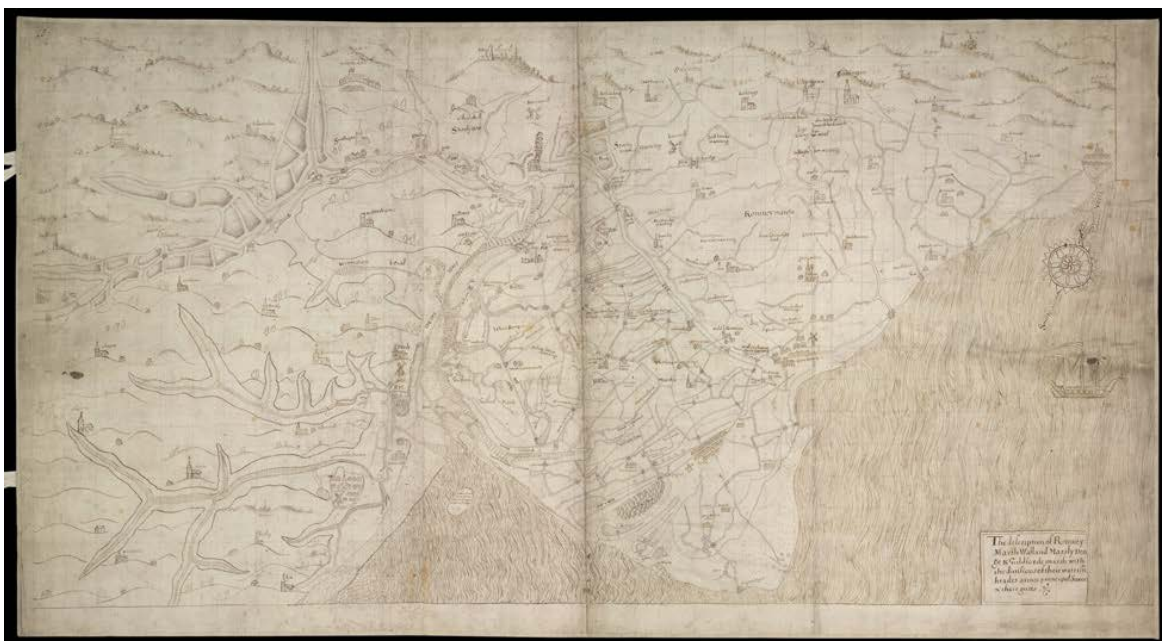


[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gough_Map#/media/File:Gough_Kaart_\(hoge_resolutie\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gough_Map#/media/File:Gough_Kaart_(hoge_resolutie).jpg)



<http://www.goughmap.org/settlements/8279/>

There is map of the Winchelsea area from 1590, it includes many churches however the online image is not of sufficient quality to search. The map is titled 'The description of Romney Marsh, Walland, Marshy, Denge and Gulforde marsh, with the divisions of their waterings, heads, armes, principal sewers and their guts.'

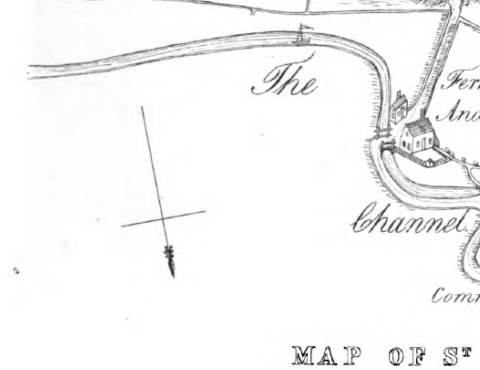


<https://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/unvbrit/t/largeimage82808.html>

A hand-drawn map of Newinchelsey, showing a river flowing through the center, with buildings and fields on either side. The title 'Newe winchelsey' is written at the top. The map is drawn on aged, yellowed paper. The river is depicted with a brown, wavy line. On the left bank, there are several rectangular buildings with red roofs and some green fields. On the right bank, there are more buildings and fields. The title 'Newe winchelsey' is written in a cursive script at the top of the map.

A map included in William Durrant's 1847 book, *History of the Town of Wincoburn*, showing the site of St. Leonard's church (plate X).

The sketch is a historical map of a portion of Wincoburn. It features a central church with a prominent steeple, surrounded by various buildings and streets. A large area on the left is labeled 'Marsh' and is depicted with wavy lines representing water or wetland. The title 'Part of the Town of Wincoburn' is written in a cursive script at the top of the sketch.



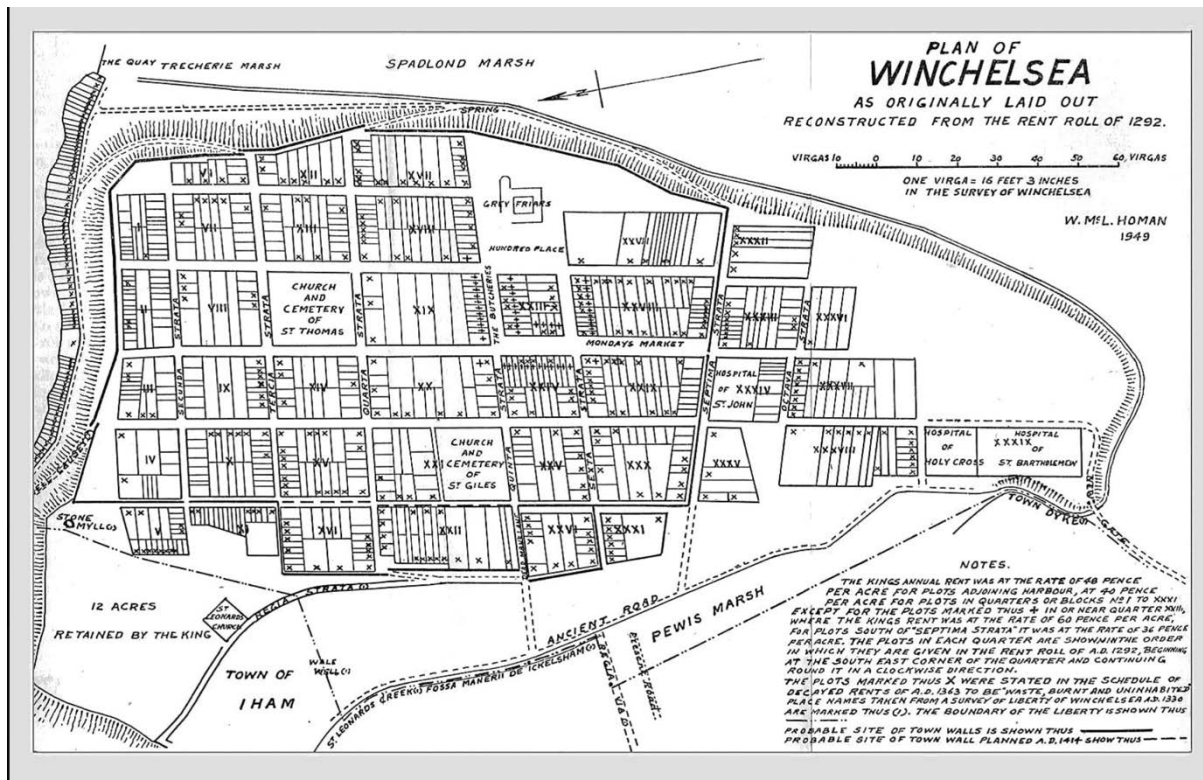
A 1910 map shows both windmill and notes the site of St Leonard's church.

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/101434989>



A modern map recreated from Rent Rolls 1292 shows the location of St Leonard's Church.

https://www.winchelsea.net/visiting/winchelsea_history.htm



A photo of the site taken in 2016. <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/4925041>



Part 2 – St Leonard's Windmill

Later history of the site

St Leonard's windmill is said to have been built sometime in the 1760s on another site about 200 metres to the north in Castle Field. It had been moved by 1823 to the site of St Leonard's Church – the ruins of which still stood in 1794, but were certainly cleared by this time.

St Leonard's Mill ceased work in 1905-1910, after which the sweeps were taken down and it gradually became derelict. It was repaired in 1935 and 1955. In early 1978, a gale left the structure badly damaged. The National Trust, which had owned the windmill since 1975, rebuilt the buck in a different shape and without the machinery (possibly in 1982). The mill was destroyed again in a great storm in October 1987. Today only the base remains, alongside some interpretation and the town's beacon that was erected for the millennium celebrations.

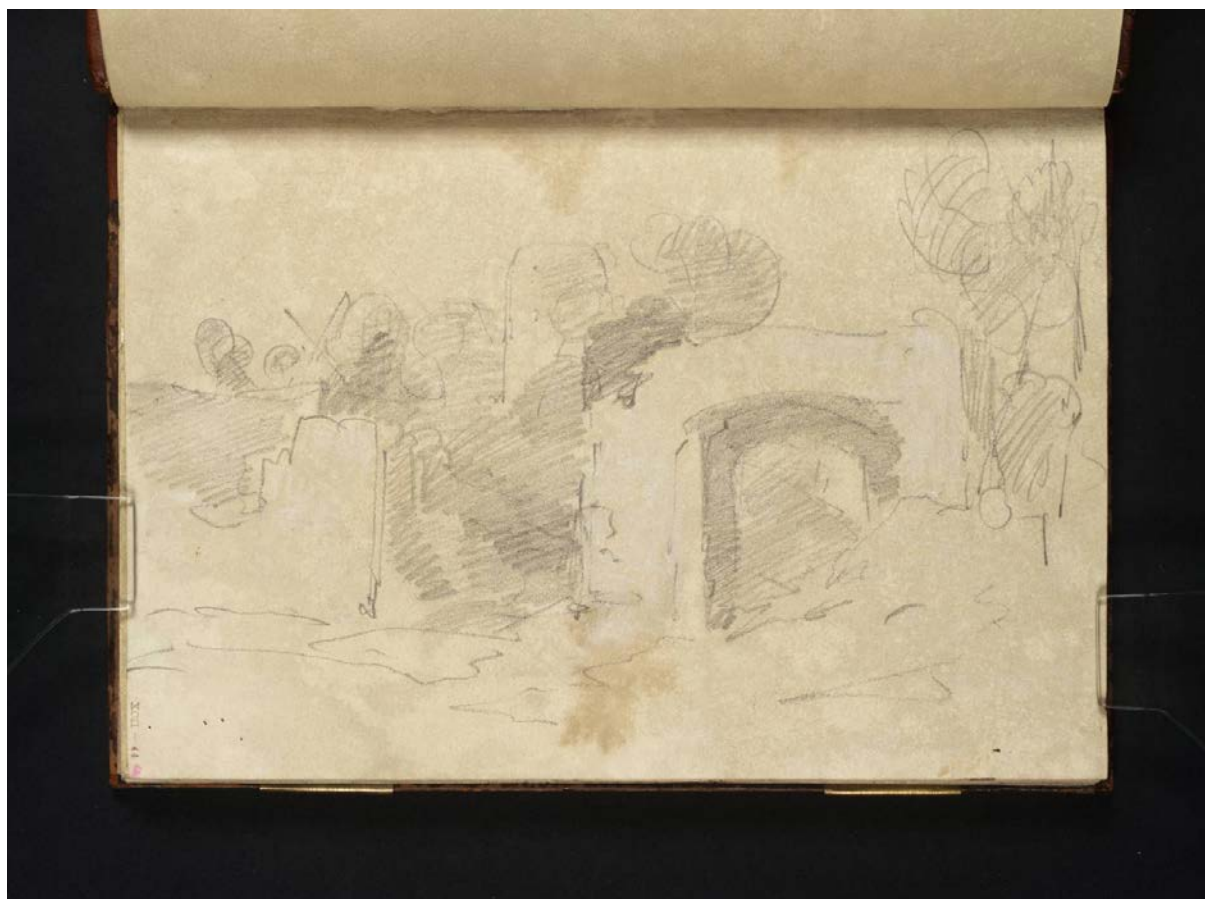
Unfortunately, due to the brevity of the project, I had little time to research the windmill in depth.

Visual depictions

Many visual depictions (93) of St. Leonard's Mill have been catalogued here (of which some have been included below: <https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/st-leonards-mill-winchelsea?page=1&sort=lastUpdated&sortDir=desc&listLimit=20>)

Sketch by JMW Turner, *The Pipewell Gate, Winchelsea* c.1806. St Leonard's Mill likely in the background on the left.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/joseph-mallord-william-turner-the-pipewell-gate-winchelsea-r1131037>



A painting of St Leonard's Mill, Winchelsea c.1890(?)

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/photograph-of-painting-of-st-leonards-mill-winchelsea>



Photograph c.1910

<https://new.millsarchive.org/mills/index/?which=2728>



Photograph c.1916.

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/windmill-winchelsea>



Photograph c.1918 or earlier.

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/winchelsea-2>



Photograph date unknown – before 1936.
<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/mill-winchelsea-3>



Photograph date unknown.
<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/winchelsea-post-mill>



Photograph by Reginald Wailes 1931.
<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/st-leonards-mill-sussex>



Photograph by H C Casserley c.1933.
<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/st-leonards-mill-winchelsea-8>



Photograph by H C Casserley c.1935.
<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/st-leonards-mill-winchelsea-9>



Photograph by Herbert Simmons 1934.
<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/winchelsea-sussex-st-leonards-mill>



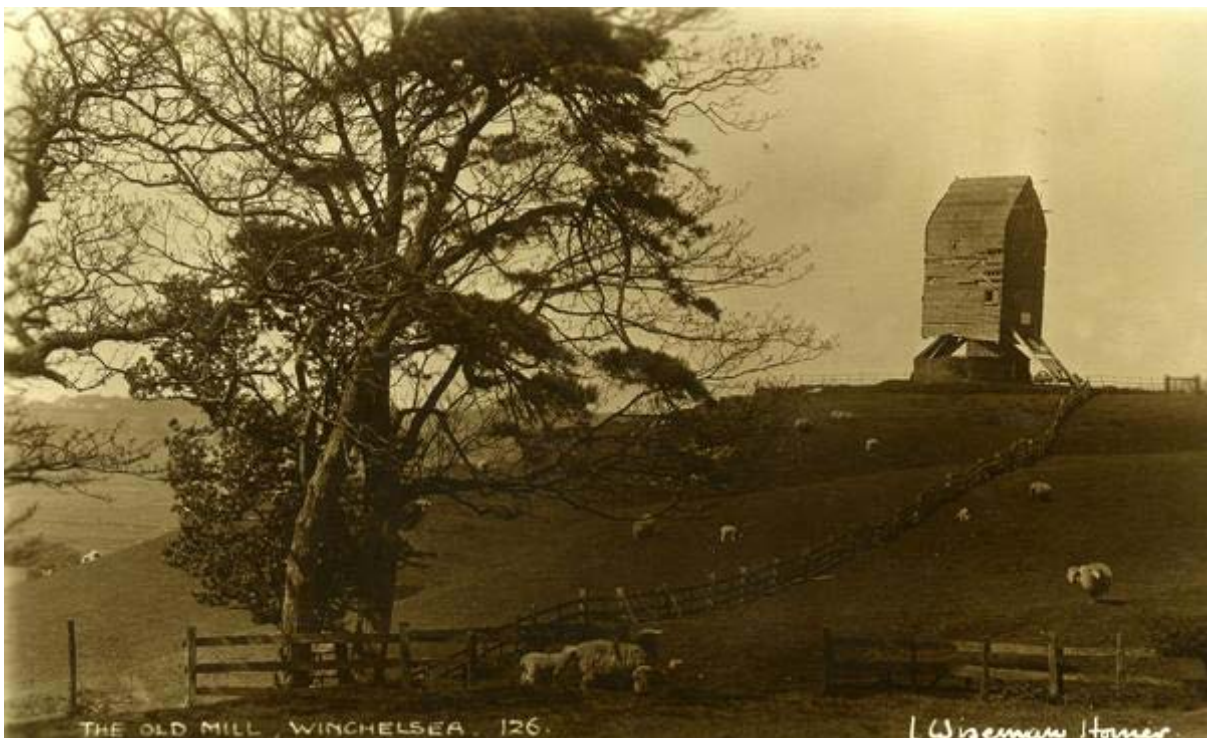
Photograph by EM Gardner c.1940-50s

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/st-leonards-mill-winchelsea-7>



Photograph c.1946 or earlier.

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/old-mill-winchelsea>



Photograph c.1949 <https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/mill-winchelsea>



Photograph c.1949 <https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/old-mill-winchelsea-2>



Photograph c.1956

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/656821926892295940/>



Photograph by John Piper c.1930-80s.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/archive/items/tga-8728-1-36-157/piper-photograph-of-st-leonards-mill-in-winchelsea-sussex>



Photograph by John Piper c.1930-80s.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/archive/items/tga-8728-1-36-155/piper-photograph-of-st-leonards-mill-in-winchelsea-sussex>



Photograph showing storm damage by Frank William Gregory 1978.

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/st-leonards-mill-winchelsea-derelict-and-sailless-with-tail-of-buck-torn-out-by-storm-7>



Photograph showing storm damage by Frank William Gregory 1978.

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/st-leonards-mill-winchelsea-derelict-and-sailless-with-tail-of-buck-torn-out-by-storm>



Photograph 1982.

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/panoramic-view-st-leonards-mill-winchelsea-4>



Photograph 1982.

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/panoramic-view-st-leonards-mill-winchelsea-3>



Photograph date unknown.

<https://catalogue.millsarchive.org/st-leonards-mill-winchelsea-3>



Photograph by Justin Brice 30 October, 1987. The collapsed ruins of St. Leonard's windmill.
<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1198232>



Photograph Remains of St Leonard's Windmill, by Justin Brice 2008.
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Appendix

Chancery roll transcriptions mentioning Winchelsea and Iham.

Calendar of the charter rolls preserved in the Public Record Office

<https://archive.org/details/calendarcharter01cunngoog>

<https://archive.org/details/calendarcharter00stamgoog/page/n357/mode/2up?q=fecamp>

A charter roll is an administrative record created by a medieval chancery that recorded all the charters issued by that office. The charter rolls contain enrolments of royal charters which were used by the Crown to grant intangible benefits, such as liberties, privileges, immunities, exemptions and peerages, as well as for grants of land.

May 15, 1247, Windsor (Henry III): “Whereas the consideration of the safety of the realm has shown that the towns of Winchelsea and Rye, which are called the nobler members of the Cinque Ports, cannot be held by the abbot and monks of Fécamp, who are not able to fortify them, without danger to the realm in time of war, the king now revokes, by the counsel of the great men of the realm and with the good will of the said abbot and monks, the gift of the said towns with their ports and advowsons and the fourth part of the marsh of Northmareys and the rent of 3s. 9d. receivable therefrom, as expressed by the following bounds :—

For Winchelsea, as the sea and port surround the town up to the fee of Gestlinges and by the bounds; and for Rye as the sea goes from the entrance of the mill-race (*molendini fluctus*) to the fee of James de Northye so that all the water on either side belongs to the said town of La Rye and thence as the king’s highway runs to the steps (*scalariam*) on the fee of Brice Palmar, and thence along a path to... Bartholomew and thence westward along the land of the hospital to Dodeswell, and thence [along] all Blikeshulde to the cross of H... and thence to Fingerline where there is a gutter (*guttera*) along the middle of the dike (*waullam*), and from that gutter along the middle of Colemershe as an old... runs up to the fee of William de Echyngeham and along that fee down to the sea.

And in exchange for the land so resumed, the king gives to the said abbot and monks the manor of Chilteham, co. Gloucester, with the hundred and the manor of Slochtre with the hundred of Salemanesbury in the same county and the manor of Navenby, co. Lincoln, to be held of the king as they held the aforesaid towns by the gift of St. Edward and the subsequent confirmations of King William and King Henry of the land of Staninges with all its appurtenances, among which were included Rye and Winchelsea.

And the said charter of King William included the following liberties, that the said abbot and monks of Fécamp should have the land of Staninges with all its appurtenances and with all laws, liberties, free customs, quittances, pleas, complaints, and causes without any disturbance or denial of any secular or judiciary power, as things pertaining to the royal treasury (*ad fiscum dominicum*), and the said land should be quit from all custom of service by land, and from all domination of or subjection to barons and princes and all others; and the said abbot and monks of Fécamp and their ministers shall have all royal liberties, custom and justice of all matters arising in their land, nor shall anyone intermeddle except by their authority, seeing that this is a royal fief (*quia hoc totum regale beneficium est*) and quit of all service; and if anyone shall presume to act against this grant, he shall forfeit 100*l.* of gold to the royal treasury.” (p.321-322)

May 11, 1252, Westminster: “Grant to the abbot and monks of Fécamp of free warren in the demesne lands of their manors of Bredde, Staninges, Wormighurst, Sontinges, Eglendon and

Bery, co. Sussex, of Chiltham and Sloustre, co. Gloucester, and of Navenby, co. Lincoln, provided that the lands are not within the king's forest.” (p.391)

September 20, Shrewsbury (Henry III): “*Inspeximus* and confirmation of a charter dated May 15, Windsor, 81 Henry III, to the following effect; whereas the consideration of the safety of the realm has shown that the towns of Winchelsea and Rye, which are called the nobler members of the Cinq Ports, cannot be held by the abbot and monks of Fécamp, who are not able to fortify them, without danger to the realm in time of war, the king now revokes, by the counsel of the great men of the realm and with the consent of the abbot and monks, the gift of the said towns with their ports and advowsons and the fourth part of the marsh of Northmareys and the rent of 3s. 9d. receivable therefrom, as expressed by the following bounds:— For Winchelsea, as the sea and port surround the town up to the fee of Gestlinges...” (p.80-81)

November 6, 1271, Westminster (Henry III): “Whereas it appears by the testimony of Stephen de Pencestre, warden of the Cinque Ports, that owing to the failure of a quay on the south side of the church of St. Thomas the Martyr of Winchelse, which has been carried away by the floods and tempests of the sea, a great part of the said church has fallen, and that both the king and the community of the said town are likely to experience irreparable loss, unless speedy provision is made for the repair of the said quay; gift to St. Thomas the Martyr, and the barons and community of Winchelse, of a strip of ground twelve feet in width from the highway adjoining the wall of the church yard of the said church on the north, and running from the east corner of the said wall to the west corner, that thereon shops may be built and rented, the rents to be applied to the maintenance of the said quay.” (p.177)

May 25, 1286, Amiens: “To John de Kirkeby and Stephen de Pencestr’. *Dedimus potestatem* to make an exchange with William de Grandison of all the lands which the said William has in the parts of Wynchels’, and to ordain on the completion of the exchange, where the barons of the said port may best live.” (p.288)

Calendar of the Close rolls preserved in the Public record office.

<https://archive.org/details/cu31924096297969/page/508/mode/2up?q=winchelse>

The Close Rolls are an administrative record created in medieval England by the royal chancery, in order to preserve a central record of all letters close issued by the chancery in the name of the Crown.

May 4, 1282, Gloucester (Edward I): “To the sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk. Order to go in person to the towns of Yarmouth, Ipswich, and Dunwich and to cause to be chosen and appointed, by the oath of men of those towns, two of the better and more faithful men of each town, for whom the townships will answer, to collect and receive the king’s new custom of wool, fells, and hides taken out of the realm, to wit half a mark for each sack, half a mark for every three hundred wool-fells, and a mark for each last of hides. The like to the constable of Dover for the custom of the town of Winchelse.” (p.154)

June 21, 1288, Westminster (Edward I): “To the sheriff of Sussex. Whereas the king has granted to the barons of Winchelse, by reason of the wreck (*periculum*) that lately came to their town by the tempests of the sea, his site and plot of land (*placea*) of Ihamme with the marsh that the king had of the gift of William de Grandisono and Isabella, his wife, except 10

acres of land that the king retains for his use, to dwell thereon and to make their town of Winchelse, and to hold at fee-ferm, so that they shall be there as free as they were previously at Winchelse and shall use and enjoy there the same liberties as they were wont to do at Winchelse by the charters of the king's progenitors and by the king's confirmation: the king orders the sheriff to cause them to have full seisin of the said site and place with the marsh, saving the rights of others and so that others shall not be prejudiced. The king when he comes to England will cause all claiming right in the same to be satisfied by him and the barons aforesaid, unless the claimants have been previously satisfied by him. Witness: Edmund, earl of Cornwall." (p.509-510)

Calendar of the patent rolls preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward I, A.D. 1272-1307. <https://archive.org/details/calendarofpatent02grea/page/700/mode/2up?q=winchelsea>
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=gri.ark:/13960/t9m35f79n&view=1up&seq=94&skin=2021>

<https://archive.org/details/calendarpatentr07offigoog/page/151/mode/2up?q=winchelsea>
The patent rolls record the issue of letters patent from the reign of King John until the present day. Known as Letters Patent. Letters Patent were issued 'open' with the Great Seal pendant attached at the foot.

July 3, 1276, Romney: "Grant, in fee simple, to Matthew de Horne of Winchelsea, of a place 100 feet by 50 feet, lying between his house in Winchelsea and the king's port there, so that the said Matthew may make a quay upon the said place for the defence of his house against inundation of the sea, and build upon in." (p.151)

March 1, 1277, Dunstable: "Presentation of Master Adam de Amundesham to the church of St. Thomas, Winchelse, in the diocese of Chichester." (p.196)

November 11, 1280, Westminster: "Commission to Ralph de Sandwyco, king's steward, to extend and buy or obtain by exchange certain lands of John de Langherst and John le Bon [Bone of Wickham] which are suitable for the new town of Winchelsea, which is to be built upon a hill called Yhamme, the old town being for the most part submerged by the sea." (p.414)

May 15, 1281, Westminster: "Presentation of Robert de Suthampton to the church of St. Giles, Wynchelse, in the diocese of Chichester." (p.433)

November 27, 1281, Westminster (Edward I): "Appointment of Stephen de Penecestre, Iter[ius] de Engolisma, and Henry le Waleys to assess certain plots of land (*placias*) at Ihamme, and to let them to the barons and goodmen of Winchelse for building; saving to the immediate lords of the aforesaid plots a reasonable extent of every acre." (p.3)

April 14, 1282 Devizes (Edward I): "Appointment of Matthew de Horne and John le Gric, barons of the port of Wynchelse, during pleasure, to the custody of the town of Wynchelse, rendering 50 marks yearly." (p.16)

March 5, 1283, Rhuddlan. Association of John de Cobeham with Stephen de Penecestre, Iterius de Engolisma and Henry le Waleys to assess certain places (*placias*) at Ihamme and to commit the same, at a certain rent according to their lawful extent, to the barons and good men of Wynchelse for building and dwelling purposes, saving to the immediate lords a

reasonable extent of every acre. Like association of Peter de Scudemor and Godfrey de Acre with the above.” (p.58-59)

April 18, 1283, Conway: “Appointment of Matthew de Horn and John le Gric, barons of the port of Wynchelse, to the custody of the town of Wynchelse at farm for one year, rendering 40 marks, formerly held by them at will for 50 marks.” (p.62)

October 13, 1283, Acton Burnell: “Appointment of Stephen de Penecestre, Henry le Waleys and Gregory de Rokesle to plan and assess the new town of Yhamme, which the king is ordering to be built there, for the barons of the town and port of Wynchelsea, which is already in great part submerged by inundations of the sea and in danger of total submersion; to plan and give directions for streets and lanes (*vicis et venellis*) necessary for the said new town, for places suitable for a market, and for two churches, one to St. Thomas, and the other to St. Giles, as there are in the aforesaid town of Wynchelsea, to assign and deliver to the said barons competent places according to the requirements of their state, and to provide and give directions concerning harbours and all other things necessary for the said town. Grant to the same barons that they be as free in the new town as in the old town of Winchelsea, and have the same free customs according to their charters.” (p.81-82)

February 28, 1286, Westminster: “Mandate to Stephen de Penecestre, warden of the Cinque Ports, to lay out lots at fixed rents for dwelling purposes a place called ‘le Kenel’ for the enlargement of the town of Wynchelese, making a return for registration in the Exchequer of the names of all the inhabitants, their tenures and rents.” (p.225)

February 13, 1290, Westminster: “Commission to Stephen de Penecestre and Roger de Lokenoure, touching the complaint of John de Britannia, earl of Richemond, that the men and tenants of the manors of Idenne and Little Yhamme, co. Sussex, refuse to do suit at his hundreds of Culspore and Gestling, as they have been accustomed to do, and to perform certain services whereby the said John had divers rents, fines, amercements and escheats; as regards the men of Idenne on the ground that the said manor is in the hands of the king, and as regards the men of Little Yham on the ground of liberties which they, with the men of Wynchelse claim by charters of the king’s progenitors.” (p.397)

February 1, 1291, Euston: “Commission to Stephen de Pencestre and William de Echingham to enquire touching the complaint by John de Britannia, early of Richmond, that whereas the men and tenants of the manors of Idenne and Little Ihamme, co Sussex have been wont to do suit at his hundreds of Gulpshire and Gestling and certain customs and services there, and he has been wont to have rents, fines, amercements and escheats from them, the men and tenants of the manor of Idenne have withdrawn the same by reason of the manor being in the king’s hands, and those of Little Ihamme by reason of the liberties which they claim to share with the men of Wenchelesee by charters of the king’s progenitors.” (p.453)