

**THE PARKS AND FORESTS OF SUSSEX,
ANCIENT AND MODERN, HISTORICAL,
ANTIQUARIAN AND DESCRIPTIVE,
WITH BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF
SOME OF THE FORMER OWNERS**

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with Biographical Notices of Some of the Former Owners by William Smith Ellis

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WILLIAM SMITH ELLIS

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Biographical Notices of some of the Former Owners.

BY

WILLIAM SMITH ELLIS, ESQ.,

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE,

*Author of the "Antiquities of Heraldry," 34 years Member of the Sussex
Archaeological Society, and Contributor to its "Collections."*

Nobis placeant ante omnia sylvæ.—(Bucolics, Eol. ii., 68.)



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PREFACE.

Sparsa coegi.

THE following pages bring together from printed books, MSS., records, and private papers and communications, what could be collected on a special subject. This has never before been attempted. Other special subjects connected with Sussex have already been treated, as the Ornithology, in Mr. Knox's charming volume; the Churches, in Mr. Hussey's work; the Rivers, by Mr. Lower, in the "Sussex Archæological Collections;" the Parliamentary History, the Botany and Geology of the County, in Horsfield's and Dallaway's Histories; whilst matters of minor interest have received attention in the volumes of the S.A.C. The Parks and Forests of the County is a fertile theme; half-a-dozen volumes might be written on them if the Public Records were explored for the purpose, but this would take years of labour. A volume on Ashdown Forest alone might be compiled from the Records of the Duchy of Lancaster in the Public Record Office.

The volume now presented to the public is chiefly a compilation, and necessarily a compilation, as most works of this and a kindred character are, and of course contains many errors of omission and commission. The more important of the Parks and Manors are treated at some length, because the labours of special previous enquirers have enabled me to do so. Others are treated more briefly, because there were no accessible materials for a fuller description; and many new places are devoid of historical or antiquarian importance. Some are treated with

perhaps unmerited brevity; this is the fault of their owners, as they have all received prospectuses of the work, and failed to send any account of their parks.

It has been suggested to me that I should give a map of the county, delineating the Parks and Forests. It is evident that several maps for different periods would be required for this purpose. If I had reproduced the maps of Saxton, Speed, and Budgen, they would be most inaccurate for their respective periods, as they all omit some of the most ancient and important Parks. For the present century, first, the Ordnance Map, and then those of Greenwood, Horsfield, Dallaway and Cartwright, exhibit pretty faithfully the Parks of the County, and most of the readers of the work possess a map of Sussex in some form.

I have indicated, I think, the sources of my information almost invariably; without the 38 volumes of the "Sussex Archæological Collections," this work could hardly have been written, or only in a very compendious or inadequate form.

My best thanks are due to the Committee of the Sussex Archæological Society for the loan of the woodcuts which illustrate the book, and to my publisher for the vignette of the title page.

The Parks and Forests of Sussex.

INTRODUCTION.

The stately homes of England
How beautiful they stand,
'Midst their tall ancestral trees
O'er all the pleasant land.

MRS. HEWANS.

THE maritime county of Sussex may vie with most counties in England for picturesque and sylvan beauty; it surpasses many in these respects, though it falls short of such counties as Devonshire, many parts of Yorkshire, and the Lake District. It cannot compare for mountains and rivers with the greater part of Wales, nor with the lofty hills, romantic valleys, and rapid streams of Yorkshire. The exquisite coast scenery of North Devon, and the soft, sunny hills and dales and picturesque shores of the southern parts of that county cannot be matched in Sussex; nor can its rapid rock-bound rivers, or the wild mountainous ranges of Dartmoor and Exmoor. But the long range of the South Downs, extending 53 miles from Beachy Head to the Hampshire border, in its undulating slopes, its rounded forms and coombes and hollows, unique for beauty, its forests and parks, remnants of the great Andred's wood that stretched across the county, together with everywhere north and eastward of the Downs, an infinitely varied breadth of purely rural and agricultural scenery, unbroken by manufacturing towns and their tall chimneys emitting clouds of smoke, and

lucid unsightly tracts given up to mining industry—all this constitutes a charm which makes Sussex a pre-eminently attractive county for residence and enjoyment of country life.

The Parks of Arundel, Goodwood, Cowdray, and Petworth in the west; of Danny, Cuckfield, Sheffield, Buckhurst, and Eridge in the weald; and of Ashburnham and many others in the east, are equalled by few in England for extent, diversity of scenery, and abundance of fine timber, and especially of oak, indigenous to a soil that has ever been celebrated for the finest specimens of this monarch of the forest. The castles and mansions, too, surrounded by these parks, may compare with most throughout England. Arundel, for grandeur and position, has no superior, except Windsor; Cowdray, and Hurstmonceaux, though in ruins, may match with Haddon or Hardwicks Hall; while the Elizabethan era has to boast of Parham, Danny, Wakehurst, Paxhill, Streat Place, and others still inhabited, and that are rivalled by few in any one county. We have nothing in the shape of monastic ruins that can reach the beauty of Tintern, Bolton, and Fountains Abbeys; but the remains of Bayham, Boxgrove, Battle, and Lewes testify to the former grandeur of those habitations of cloistered monks.

There are only four Parks in Sussex recorded in the Domesday Survey. The first, called Reredfelle (Rotherfield), belonged to the King, and is supposed to be identical with Eridge,* and appears to have been

* Eridge is probably the oldest deer park in England, with the exception of the Royal Park at Windsor, of about 2,600 acres. Lord Egerton, of Tatton's Park, at Tatton, co. Cheshire, 2,500 acres, is the largest in the country, though there are several others which nearly approach it in size, as Blenheim, Richmond in Surrey, Eastwell in Kent, Grimsthorp co. Lincoln, Thoresby in Notts, and Knowsley in Lancashire. (Shirley.)

Though large herds of deer do much harm to the neighbourhood, yet the injury to the morals of the people is of more moment than the loss of their crops. The temptation is irresistible, for most men are sportsmen by constitution, and there is such an inherent spirit for hunting in human nature as scarce any inhibitions can restrain. Hence towards the beginning of this century (18th) all this country was wild about deer stealing. Unless he was a hunter, as they affected to call themselves, no

part of the Forest of Waterdown. The second is Wiltingham (Wilting, in Hollington), which belonged to the Earl of Eu; the other two, Waltham and Waltham, belonged to the Earl Roger (de Montgomery).

Of the thirty-one parks mentioned in Domesday, eight belonged to the King. These were in the counties of Surrey and Sussex, Hants, Devon, Bucks, Gloucester, Hereford, and Salop. The Bishop of Baiieux had three parks, all in Kent; the Bishop of Winchester one, at Waltham (afterwards called Bishop's Waltham), in Hants; the church of Pershore, one in Worcestershire; and the church of St. Alban's, another near that place in the county of Hertford. The Earl of Eu had a park at Wiltingham, in Sussex; the Earl Roger four parks in Sussex, Worcester, and Southampton; Roger de Lacy one at Wibelai (Webley, co. Hereford); Hugh de Grantmesnil one at Ware, co. Herts; Peter de Valoignes one at Belintune (Benington, co. Herts); Walter Giffard one at Credinton (Long Crendon, co. Bucks); Countess Judith one at Cherteling (Kirtling, co. Camb.); the Earl of Brittany one at Burg or Borough, in the same county; Gaisfrid de Magnerville one at Enfield, co. Middx.; Hugh de Belcamp one at Stackeden (Stagsden, co. Beds); Suen of Essex had a park in the hundred of Rochford in that county; Robert Malet one at Eiam (Eye, in Suffolk); the Earl of Mortain one at Cotescia (Cossey, co. Norfolk); and Ernulf de Heding one at Risclip (Risclip, co. Middx.) (Shirley's "Deer Parks of England.")

young person was allowed to be possessed of manhood or gallantry. The Waltham blacks at length committed such enormities that Government was forced to interfere with that severe and sanguinary Act, called the Black Act (9 Geo. I., c. 22), which now comprehends more felonies than any law that was ever framed before. And therefore a late Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Hoadley), when urged to re-stock Waltham chase, refused from a motive worthy of a prelate, replying that "it had done mischief enough already." (White's "Selborne," Letter vii.)

The Royal Forest of Woolmer is a tract of land of about seven miles in length by two and a half in breadth, running nearly from north to south, and abuts on the parishes of Greatham, Rogate, and Trotton, in Sussex. It consists entirely of sand, covered with heath and fern, but it is somewhat diversified with hills and dales, *without having one standing tree in the whole extent.* (White's "Selborne," Letter vi.)

In Murray's "Handbook for Hants" (p. 245), there is an instructive note about the Afforestation of the New Forest in that county, showing that the alleged cruelty of the Conqueror in laying waste the district is unfounded or greatly exaggerated; that the story of the destruction of 52 parish churches must be mythical, as no trace or foundation of any one of them has been found. Further, that much of the New Forest had been a royal hunting ground in the Saxon times, and that the Saxon chroniclers invented stories or much exaggerated them.

Besides the parks noticed in Domesday mention is frequently made of Hayes*—derived from the Saxon, meaning literally a Hedge. They appear to differ from parks as being not intended for the permanent preservation of deer, but as a means to entrap them from the forests or woods in which they had roamed at large, in the same manner as elephants are caught at the present day in India and deer in North America. From the hayes they could be transferred to parks, securely fenced with wooden pales, whence they were hunted, when it was the pleasure of the King or owner. In pre-Norman times indeed, as we know from the laws of Canute† and Edward the Confessor, the King arrogated to himself only his own forests, and permitted his subjects to hunt in their own lands; but the Norman Conqueror assumed to himself the exclusive right of hunting, and very sparingly granted that privilege to some of his greatest nobles, both lay and clerical. For ages, indeed, the right of hunting in the Royal Forests was guarded with the utmost care; thus as late as 9 Edward III., Wm. de Montacute, who is described as "in armis strenuus, providus in conciliis, et in cunctis agendis, pronus utilis et fidelis," received for term of his life the special reward of being allowed to hunt and sport in all the King's forests, for one day during his journey to the coast. The same privilege has been more generally accorded, by the well known concession of Henry III., to the spiritual and temporal peers, as we find by the Charter of the Forest Laws. (Shirley.)‡

* The *Hais*, or Hays, noticed in the great Survey occur chiefly in Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Salop, and Cheshire. More than 70 are recorded, occurring generally in groups of two, three, four, five, and even seven. They were held by persons of all classes both in Church and State. (Shirley.)

† Whether our Saxon monarchs had any royal forests does not, I believe, appear on record, but the *Constitutiones de Foresta* of Canute are come down to us. (Gilbert White.)

‡ There are no such officers in a Chace as in a Forest, for there are neither verderors, foresters, regards nor agistors, but only keepers and woodwards. Neither are there any courts of attachments, Swainmote, or Justice seat in a Chace, all which are held and kept in forests, and those officers which are called Keepers in a Chace are called Foresters in a forest. A Forest is in its nature the highest franchise of princely pleasure, and the next to that is a liberty of a free Chace. A Chace is in one degree the same thing as a Park, only a Park is enclosed and a Chace is always open. The next in degree to a free Chace is a Park, and next unto a Park is the Franchise of a Free Warren. 'Tis not lawful for any man to make a Chace, Park, or Warren in his own freehold without the King's grant or warrant to do so. (Manwood's "Treatise of the Forest Laws," 1717, p. 147.)

A park is an enclosed chace, extending only over a man's grounds. A