

# Lost in Time



a short history of  
Morell Roding

## **Acknowledgements.**

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# 1.

## **The Beginning.**

The Rodings pose a particular problem when trying to decide which Roding is which at a time before they acquired forenames. There were some sixteen Rodings entered in the Domesday Survey, all of them just Roding or Rodinge or Roinges. For nearly 300 years scholars have attempted to work out which is which by reference to then and later ownerships, leaving Morell Roding with potentially three entries. This isn't the chronological beginning but it is a valuable reference point from which it is possible to peer back into pre-Domesday Morell Roding. The forename Morell didn't appear until well after Domesday but it is a convenient tag with which to identify the settlement.

The Saxons appeared on the Essex shores before 400AD but it was after the withdrawal of the Romans at the beginning of the 5th century that they came and settled in numbers. Word had no doubt got back to their homeland that here was a land well worth colonising. Probing along the Essex rivers they would have settled further and further inland and they must have found the broad valley of the River Roding a pleasant and desirable land. The name itself has generated much speculation, the accepted view now being that it comes from Hroda, a Saxon name, and it was the people of Hroda who settled here and also gave their name to the river.

Much of the land had doubtless been cleared by their Celtic predecessors although in Hroda's time there was still a considerable amount of the ancient forest. In the years that followed the Saxons

created a dozen or so settlements in the area and over time the boundaries of their lands would have been delineated. These boundaries formed the manors and parishes that were to last long after the Saxon kingdoms had gone.

What became Morell Roding may have originally consisted of a single settlement, its limits being more or less as Sherwood found them when he drew an estate map of Morell Roding in 1730. In extent it amounted to around 600 acres, much of it still woodland. The hall, the centre of the original manor, both geographical and political, would probably have been where Cammass Hall now stands. If the current interpretation of the Domesday Survey is correct, there was a second settlement, gifted perhaps by the lord at the time to a different owner, the abbey of Ely. And later still a farm of some 50 acres was hived off from this portion, though still owing fealty to the manor.

William Holman (c1715), Nathaniel Salmon (c1740), Philip Morant (1768) and Chisenhale-Marsh (1894) all had a crack at interpreting Domesday. Morant, following Holman, had no doubt that Morell Roding was held by Wihtgar prior to 1066 and by Richard FitzGilbert after the Conquest, becoming a part of the Honour of Clare. Another un-named Roding in Domesday was held by Saemer, a free man, on land gifted to the Abbey of Ely and taken by Eudo Dapifer after the Conquest. Morant puts this entry in Aythorpe Roding. The Chisenhale-Marsh interpretation of 1894 agreed with Morant, though it isn't known whether this was after fresh research or merely an acceptance of Morant. Salmon, writing between Holman and Morant, wasn't sure where it belonged.

The Victoria County History, whilst accepting Morant's Wihtgar interpretation of Morell Roding, suggests that Eudo Dapifer's Roding also referred to Morell Roding, i.e. that there were two Morell Roding entries. In fact the VCH version postulates a third entry, a portion of land belonging to the manor of Shellow which was in Eudo's portion of Roding. It wasn't unusual to have more than one manor or landowner in a parish, although Morell Roding might be considered rather small to have acquired three, but this is the conclusion reached by the latest interpretation (Morris 2001) which agrees with the VCH version. The VCH has yet to produce that part of the history of the County which covers the Dunmow Hundred and so it may be that there are still twists in the tale to come. Nevertheless, other evidence points clearly to the VCH interpretation.

Late in the Saxon period, around 1000AD, the lord of a Roding manor (and of several others), Leofwin, the son of Aethulf, in a fit of temper killed his mother. In penance for this dreadful deed he paid for the rebuilding of the south wall of Ely Abbey and the creation of a chapel there with an altar, plus a life-sized figure of the Virgin Mary and her Son in gold and silver and gems. He also gave two Rodings to the Abbey. It is possible that a part of Morell Roding was one of his manors and one of the two that he gave to Ely Abbey.

A manor in Morell Roding eventually came into the hands of Wisgar, or Wihtgar, on that all are agreed. This Saxon landowner was the son of Aelfric, an Essex thegn, and he had obtained an impressive portfolio of more than 100 manors. Wihtgar's chief manor was at Clare, in Suffolk, and immediately prior to the Norman

invasion Colman held the land in Morell Roding, owing fealty to Wihthgar who had meanwhile passed Clare on to his son Aluric.

If we follow the VCH reasoning Eudo Dapifer took a part of Morell Roding from the Abbey of Ely, possibly that which Leofwin had given to the Abbey, and this part was held by Saemer, a free man. There were thirteen families living on it who would have worked for Saemer who would in turn have paid rent and tithe to Ely. A small portion of Eudo's land was held by the manor of Shellow though still owing fealty to Ely. It was farmed by an un-named free man. This is the latest interpretation and so the picture is of an area of modest size with a manor hall, at perhaps Cammass Hall, another sub-manor with a free man responsible to Ely, three or four smallholdings worked by villeins, and some 20 families. Maybe 100 souls in all. Colman was at Cammass Hall, Saemer as a free man, perhaps at what became Walkers or Prowes, and there was in addition a small farm of around 50 acres belonging to Shellow which may have become Philpots. This was the situation in the last days of Saxon England.

The manorial system introduced by the Saxons was built on and formalised by the Normans. Thus the hierarchy of a manor had the lord at the top, then the villeins, then the bordars, and finally the serfs. And the manor itself might be one of several owing fealty to a chief lord or tenant-in-chief. The villeins, or villagers, would have acquired their own house and land within the manor but in exchange were still under an obligation to give some services to the lord. The bordars would have had sufficient land to feed a family and in return were required to provide labour on the demesne on specified days. The serfs were labourers who worked on, and were tied to, the manor. This system was to persist for several hundreds of years, the major

cracks probably appearing as a result of the Black Death of 1349 when the resulting shortage of labour gave more leverage to the peasants. Although the Peasants Revolt of 1381 was ruthlessly put down the threats of a return to a more stringent manorial system was impractical and so payment of rent instead of work gradually .took over.



## 2.

### **The Domesday Survey.**

This then was the situation once William had completed his conquest. Interestingly, three of William's most prominent followers, Richard FitzGilbert, Eudo FitzHubert the Dapifer and Geoffrey de Mandeville all seem to have claimed a part of a fairly insignificant Roding and all were linked by Eudo's wife and daughter. Twenty years later, in 1086, the King set out to have an inventory made of all his lands. The reason may have been fiscal for it was important to know not merely what he had but what it was worth for taxation purposes. And so the Domesday Survey was carried out.

One thing that all historians are agreed upon; following the events of 1066 the lands of the Saxon Wihtgar passed to the Norman Richard FitzGilbert. Wihtgar may not have survived the Norman invasion. As a prominent Saxon he may well have followed Harold, first to Stamford Bridge to fend off the threat from Harold Hardrada and then, if he survived the first encounter, to Hastings. Whatever his fate his lands were lost. King William parcelled out his new kingdom to his most prominent followers - his tenants in chief or chief lords. Wihtgar's lands were given to the King's cousin, Richard FitzGilbert; their common great-grandfather was Richard, Duke of Normandy. Richard and his brother Baldwin were the sons of Count Gilbert, the son of Godfrey who was Duke Richard of Normandy's illegitimate son. Richard FitzGilbert collected Wihtgar's many manors whilst his brother Baldwin was given Devon. Richard built a castle on Wihtgar's chief manor at Clare and his many acquisitions,

which stretched over several counties, became known as the Honour of Clare.

The part of Morell Roding which had been in Wihtgar's hands before the Conquest was now held by Richard FitzGilbert in demesne. Wihtgar's man, Colman, had gone. In the twenty years that had passed since 1066 the number of families on the land had diminished. In 1066 there had been 7 families; 1 villein (villager), 2 bordars (smallholders) and 4 serfs (slaves). By 1086 there was still the one villein and the two bordars but only one serf. There were 90 acres of arable land, 20 acres of meadow and woodland for 200 swine. This part of Morell Roding was valued in 1066 at £3, later it fell to £2 but by 1086 it had risen to £4.

Immediately after the Conquest Ely Abbey was out of favour. Its abbot, Thurstan, was a Saxon. Ely was surrounded by water and marshland and very difficult to conquer and so, with the aid of a local Saxon lord, Hereward, Thurstan resisted the Normans but in 1071 he was forced to submit. Thurstan died in the following year and was replaced by a Norman abbot. Although Ely may have been impregnable its many lands were not and so in 1066 the King's steward, Eudo Dapifer, took the land that had once been gifted to Ely. Ely Abbey, having failed to acknowledge William I, got nothing.

Eudo the Dapifer's family name was Eudo FitzHubert. The son of Count Hubert de Reis, he was King William's steward who looked after the ship when the King was absent. Dapifer meant steward and this is the name by which he has become remembered. He married Rose, the daughter of Richard FitzGilbert and fathered a daughter, Margaret, who married William de Mandeville. He may

also have had two sons. His chief manor after the conquest was Colchester, a rich prize, and he took much more land in addition. Eudo founded the Abbey of St John the Baptist in Colchester but he was apparently not known for his generosity and there was some difficulty in recruiting and keeping sufficient monks to keep the abbey viable. However, he did endow it with the income from all the tithes, great and small, of Morell Roding.

It must be remembered that the manor had not then acquired the name of Morell, and Morant gave the endowment as relating to Aythorpe Roding. This is curious since subsequent payments of tithes to the Abbey, recorded in the Colchester cartulary, quite clearly exclude Aythorpe Roding. Morant fudged this by stating that the endowment had not taken effect. However, it is very clear that there were payment of tithes to St Johns Abbey and that they related to Morell Roding and to Ralph and Oliver Morel. If Eudo granted the tithes then he must have been in a position to do so. The land that had years before been given by a Saxon to Ely Abbey had come into his hands, though not without protest from Ely. It is perhaps worth noting that Morell Roding was always recognized as a detached parish of Ongar Hundred whilst Aythorpe Roding was in Dunmow Hundred, as indeed was White Roding. The situation of owing allegiance to one Hundred whilst being within the bounds of another Hundred was finally regularised in 1830 when Morell Roding was transferred to the Dunmow Hundred.

By 1086 Eudo's portion was looking leaner but fitter. There were 225 acres of arable land, 19 acres of meadow and woodland for 100 swine. In 1066 there had been two ploughs, by 1086 only one. Where there had been 13 families; 9 villeins, 1 bordar and 3 serfs

there were now only seven families; 3 villeins, 3 bordars and 1 serf, and yet it was more prosperous. The 10 cattle of 1066 had increased to 25, pigs from 6 to 89, horses from 1 to 7 and sheep from 50 to 225. There were now 55 goats and 8 beehives where none had been recorded 20 years earlier. Altogether a remarkable increase in prosperity. Its value too had gone up, from £5 to £6. Thurgils held the land for Eudo but there was now another claimant. The Abbey of Ely was back in the frame.

. The Saxon abbot Thurstan had died in 1072 and Simeon, a Norman and relation of William I, was now the abbot of Ely. It was he who began the construction of the present Ely cathedral. The record in Domesday added that the abbot of Ely now claimed his land back. The abbey of Ely was no longer a pariah. The Hundred supported the abbot's claim and it seems that the claim was allowed. However, things appear not to have gone according to plan. The history of Ely records that the abbey was unable to recover all of its lands and Morell Roding's land may have been one that got away.

Eudo founded St John's Abbey in 1096, ten years after Domesday, and he endowed it with the tithes, one tenth of the produce, of Morell Roding. The endowment must have taken place between 1096, when he founded St John's abbey, and Eudo's death in 1120. Although the order had gone out to return Ely's land to the Abbey, in this case it failed. Eudo was no doubt in a position to ignore it. Incidentally, he is still remembered in Colchester today - a statue of him is in a niche in the front of the Town Hall. One wonders how many people notice it, or know who it represents. There is a postscript to all this which might or might not have had an effect on the lordship of Morell Roding and the recovery of the Ely

lands. Abbot Simeon of Ely died in 1093 at the extraordinary age for the time of 100. There was then a gap of several years before the king appointed a new abbot and when he did, in 1100, it was Richard, the son of Richard FitzGilbert of Clare!

Finally there was the small part of the manor which had been hived off to the manor of Shellow. Another prominent Norman baron, Geoffrey de Mandeville, had taken all the manors previously held by the Saxon nobleman Ansgar. Shellow accordingly fell into his hands and so he claimed this bit of Morell Roding as well. As to this third part, it consisted of 35 acres of arable land, 4 acres of meadow, and woodland for 20 swine. In 1066 it was held by 1 free man and was valued at five shillings. In 1086 it was held by William of Geoffrey de Mandeville as a part of Shellow though it was acknowledged that the land was lying in Eudo's portion. The value had doubled, to ten shillings. And like Eudo's land the abbot of Ely was putting in his claim, probably with as little effect.

Morell Roding was estimated to have covered some 600 or so acres. In 1086 the acreage of arable land and meadow was given for all the land holdings and this has proved over the centuries to have been a surprisingly accurate measure. But the woodland was a different matter. The acreage of woodland in Domesday has long been a matter for debate, for the size was expressed as the number of pigs it could sustain. This swineage must have been a rough and ready measure but if it can be assumed that, given that the Morell Roding woodland was in reasonable proximity, the proportions reflected the size, then it should be capable of being calculated with reasonable accuracy. The total arable and meadow in Domesday Morell Roding came to 393 acres which gave around 200 plus acres of woodland. If we assume that what became Morell Roding was

indeed in three parts, Eudo's woodland was assessed at 100 swine; FitzGilbert's swineage was assessed at 200 and de Mandevilles at 20. So Eudo would have had  $100/320$ ths of 200 = approx 62 acres of woodland. FitzGilbert would have had  $200/320$ ths of 200 = 125 acres, and de Mandeville would have had  $20/320$ th of 200 = 12 acres. This would put de Mandeville's farm at 51 acres, FitzGilbert's demesne at 235 acres, and the balance, Eudo's, at 306 acres; all approximations.

Domesday was the source for ascertaining the descent of the manor, and anyone researching the history of a village, parish or manor in Essex would be sure to look at Morant. Philip Morant, vicar of Aldham and St Mary-at-the-Walls, Colchester in the mid-eighteenth century, wrote the monumental *History and Antiquaries of the County of Essex* in two large volumes. It was published in 1768. He drew heavily on the work of William Holman who compiled a history of the County some 50 years earlier, and he was also aware of the work of Nathaniel Salmon who started a history some 20 years after Holman. Holman's history was never published but it exists in manuscript form. Salmon's was, but after his death. Morant and Holman give the origin of the Norman manor of Morell Roding as the land of Richard FitzGilbert and thus onwards with the Honour of Clare. But this now looks oversimplified.

Domesday tells that Colman held three virgates (90 acres) of land, 20 acres of meadow and some woodland, of Wihtgar. It says that Richard FitzGilbert held it after 1066 in demesne, i.e. the land of the manor. The same source tells that Saemer, a free man, held 244 acres plus woodland and that Eudo then held it as a manor although Ely Abbey claimed it. Morant gives as proof of his assertion that FitzGilbert was the sole owner an Inquisition Post Mortem of 1296

(24 Edward I) that followed the death of Gilbert of Clare, which mentions Morell Roding in the possessions of the Honour of Clare. There also exists an Inquisition Post Mortem that followed the death of Gilbert's son, also Gilbert of Clare, at Bannockburn in 1314.

Morant's reasoning is quite logical in so far as part of Morell Roding had indeed been acquired by the house of Clare in the form of Richard FitzGilbert. But Morant makes no mention of Eudo Dapifer, Ely Abbey, or St John's Abbey. Had he considered that FitzGilbert's land may have been only part of what became Morell Roding? His conclusion is odd because Morant also produced a history of Colchester in which St John's Abbey features prominently. He was well aware of the existence of the Colchester Cartulary of St John's Abbey. And there were several mentions of the Morells in the Cartulary and a record of 1202 specifically refers to 'Roinges Morel'. The Colchester cartulary is specific. St John's abbey was endowed with all the tithes of a Roding by its founder, Eudo Dapifer. Its records make it clear that it had the tithes of "Roinges Morel" (1202), and Ralph Morel (1205) and Oliver Morel (1272) were responsible for the payment of the tithes.

The Victoria County History has this to say on the subject:

"To distinguish, in Domesday, the various Rodings is a task of great difficulty. For Eudo's manors there we naturally turn to the Colchester Cartulary, where we find an episcopal confirmation to the abbey of the whole tithes of Fulc Dapifer in 'Roinges' Abbess, and of the whole tithe of the demesne of Ralf Morel in 'Roinges Morel' with two-thirds of the tithe of the demesne of Walter de Merc there. Walter's manor of 'Merles,' though in White Roding, adjoins Roding Morel, which is

itself now a hamlet in White Roding, so that we may fairly identify the place in the text as above. Turning to Eudo's other manor, Domesday places it in Ongar Hundred, and Roding Abbess is one of the two Rodings in that Hundred, so that its identity seems tolerably certain. And although Fulc Dapifer does not occur in Domesday we find him in the Colchester Cartulary as a knightly tenant of Eudo under Henry I. Morant, followed by Mr. Chisenhale-Marsh, assigned both the manors of Eudo to Aythorp Roding, but on what ground I do not know. His account of the parish shows no reason for this identification, and he admits that Eudo's supposed grant of its tithes 'did not take effect.' "

To summarise; the present thinking is that at the time of Domesday Morell Roding was in three parts. One part was now held by Richard FitzGilbert, one part by Eudo Dapifer though claimed by Ely Abbey, and the third, smaller part, by Geoffrey de Mandeville and also claimed by Ely Abbey. The tithes of Morell Roding, or at least part of it, were payable to St John's Abbey, Colchester, though this must have ceased when the Abbey was dissolved; they then presumably became payable to the vicar of White Roding.



### 3.

#### **The Chief Lords.**

It has already been shown how the identification of the various Roding manors has been complicated by the absence of a forename in the Domesday Book. It is not even certain that it has been comprehensively explained even now. Interpretations have changed over time.

Morant gave his version of events. He identified the two Ely Rodings as Aythorpe Roding and Margaret Roding. Morant went further and identified the entry in Domesday Book, whereby Eudo Dapifer had taken the manor held by Saemer, as Aythorpe Roding. More recent scholars have identified the Saemer/Eudo manor as Morell Roding and as one of the two Ely manors. The jury still seems to be out as to which was the other since Abbess, Aythorpe, Morell and Leaden all have a claim. However, the Victoria County History points out that the other manor was in Ongar Hundred so it was probably Abbess Roding. Margaret is definitely ruled out; it was one of Ansgar's manors which passed to Geoffrey de Mandeville. A second manor in Margaret Roding was centred on Marks Hall which in 1086 was held by Serlo de Marci of William's other steward, Hamo the Dapifer.

The reference in various deeds to the Morels holding the manor 'of the chief lords', plural, may be significant if the two chief lords in 1086 were Eudo Dapifer and Richard FitzGilbert. But what happened next? Morant mentions only FitzGilbert, who took the title of Lord of Clare and whose descendants were 'of Clare'. His

possessions became collectively known as the Honour of Clare. Morant takes the story of the Clare lordship down to Gilbert de Clare who died in 1295, and by inference to his son, also Gilbert, who was killed at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314.

The heiress to the Honour of Clare when Gilbert died on the field of battle in 1314 was his sister Elizabeth, (she founded Clare College, Cambridge in 1338), who had married John de Burgh. Their son William de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, had a daughter who married Lionel, son of Edward III. Lionel was created Duke of Clarence in recognition of the inheritance of Clare, and it seems that the Honour of Clare became vested in the Crown where it remains to this day as an appendage of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Eudo Dapifer's connection with Morell Roding is made clear in his endowments of St John's Abbey in Colchester which he founded in 1096. But it seems he never gave the land of Morell Roding to the abbey, as Leofwin may have done with Ely. The Colchester Cartulary notes that 'Eudo gave to the monks of Colchester the plenary tithes of Roding Morel' and it later notes that in 1327 in Roding Morel the monks had the plenary tithe of the demesne of Ralph Morel. This suggests that the manor got its name from Ralph Morel and that he may have been the first of his family to have been lord of the manor there. St John's Abbey only had the tithes and not the lordship.

When Eudo Dapifer died in 1120 King Henry I restored to Rose, Eudo's widow, the lands which Eudo had given her in dower including two Rodings in Essex. It may then have passed to their daughter Margaret who had married William de Mandeville. Their

son and heir was Geoffrey de Mandeville, the first Earl of Essex, and Geoffrey claimed Eudo's lands. There has been much controversy over this inheritance; whether Eudo did in fact marry the daughter of Richard FitzGilbert and whether their daughter did in fact marry William de Mandeville. It has been suggested that this lineage was concocted to legitimise Geoffrey de Mandeville's claim. What certainly did happen was that Geoffrey won, and lost, vast power and possessions.

Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, in addition to having vast estates, was appointed Constable of the Tower by King Stephen, Henry I's nephew. But the throne wasn't secure - it was also claimed by the Empress Maud, or Matilda, the daughter of Henry I. Geoffrey supported and deserted each rival in turn and in doing so increased both his power and his possessions. It was said that he surpassed all the nobles in the land in wealth and importance. Eventually he was undone; arrested by Stephen after his latest collaboration with Maud he was dispossessed of his castles at Saffron Walden and Pleshey and, surprisingly, allowed to go free. The lesson wasn't learned; he rebelled again against Stephen and was killed in battle against the King at Burwell in 1144. Presumably his estates then reverted to the Crown.

If Eudo's portion of Morell Roding was in the King's gift by 1144 then clearly it could have been disposed of to whoever was in favour at the time, even to the Honour of Clare, thus uniting the whole of the parish other than the 50 acre farm. It may be that the tithes remained for the time being payable to St John's Abbey but the tenant in chief was *de facto* the Honour of Clare.

Taking the story forward a bit, Morant records that the tenancy-in-chief of Roding Morell was acquired by the lords of Ongar Hundred and that it descended to Rivers and then Stafford. I can find no connection between Rivers and Morell Roding but the Staffords had certainly been given the lordship and Morant states that Thomas Stafford had Morell Roding in 1392. Thomas was the 3rd Earl of Stafford. Born in 1368, he married Anne Plantagenet, granddaughter of Edward III, in 1392 but died in July of the same year. She was the daughter of Edward's son Thomas and Eleanor de Bohun, heiress to vast estates, and so a lot of land could have come to the Staffords through marriage. The earldom of Essex had been granted to the de Bohuns, and Mary de Bohun, co-heiress of the de Bohuns, married Henry IV. The widowed Anne Stafford then married Thomas's brother Edmund Stafford who succeeded Thomas as lord of the manor of Morell Roding.

The Staffords rose to great prominence and were created Dukes of Buckingham, but they fell from grace when Henry Stafford, the 2nd Duke, supported the Lancastrian Henry Tudor and was executed by order of Richard III in 1483. Two years later Richard was killed at the battle of Bosworth, Henry Tudor ascended the throne as Henry VII, and Henry Stafford's son, Edward, got the title and lands back. Edward, however, fell foul of Henry VIII and was executed on Tower Hill in 1521 when the dukedom became extinct. It wasn't revived until 1623. It was in 1521 that Morell Roding was forfeited to the Crown.

So where does this leave the lordship of Morell Roding? Part had passed through the Honour of Clare and it looks as though it would have ended up at the disposal of the Crown. Eudo's part may

have passed from Eudo Dapifer through the de Mandevilles and if so it would also most probably have ended up with the Crown. The Crown may have granted it to Clare, it certainly granted it to the Staffords. Morell Roding was just a tiny part of a much larger acquisition. Thomas Stafford was also Lord of White Rodng. Incidentally, Morant states that in 1548 Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham was owner but this must be wrong, he was long since dead! There was no Duke of Buckingham between 1521 and 1623.

In 1547 the lordship of Morell Roding was granted to Richard Riche. Riche was a favourite of Henry VIII, he was Chancellor of Henry's Court of Augmentations, and as Buckingham's estates had been forfeited, Riche would have been in just the position to gain by it.

Born in 1496 he was a lawyer of the Middle Temple and in 1529 he became MP for Colchester. He was appointed Solicitor General in 1533 and three years later he became Chancellor of Henry VIII's Court of Augmentations. Raised to the peerage in 1546, he was Lord Chancellor in 1548. He acquired more than 100 manors and 50 livings and built himself a mansion on the site of Leez Priory, which he had largely demolished. He died in 1567.

There is one other name which merits consideration. Morant points to the family of de Camoys as the origin of the name of Cammass Hall but he didn't give a reference linking Morell Roding to de Camoys. It is remarkable; too, that in the very many papers in the Luther/Fane collection, with its frequent references to Morell Roding and the Morel family, there is scarcely a mention of de Camoys. I have found only one. A deed of 26 Edward III, 1353/4, mentions Oliver Morel and the feoffment of his land and tenement in Morell

Roding once held by Ralph de Camoys, Kt. This places de Camoys at before 1354, and perhaps long before 1354, but tells of little else.

John de Camies or Camoys came over with William I and was granted the manor of Flockthorpe in Norfolk and one of his sons was named Ralph. Another son, Stephen, married Mabel de Bec whose family held land in Essex. Stephen's son William married the daughter of Robert FitzHumphrey who held an estate in Toppesfield and it may have been through this alliance that the Camoys came into possession of Toppesfield. In the next generation Ralph de Camoys (b1188) held Toppesfield of the Honour of Clare plus further land in the leet of Toppesfield of the Honour of Mandeville. In 1253 he was granted free warren on his (unspecified) Essex lands. He died at Camoys Manor, Toppesfield, Essex, in 1259.

Several further generations of de Camoys were associated with Toppesfield. Ralph's son was also Ralph; in 1265 he was declared a rebel for supporting Simon de Montfort and the barons against the King. Two years later, doubtless suitably penitent, he was given a free pardon. There was yet another Ralph de Camoys who in 1320 held land at Toppesfield. There can be no doubt that it was one of this family who had held land in Morell Roding but which Ralph was it? We may never know, but one of them gave his name to Cammass Hall.

What happened after Eudo's death in 1122 is uncertain but one scenario is that Ralph de Camoys, through his connections with Toppesfield and Richard de Clare, was granted the manor of Morell Roding in so far as it pertained to the Honour of Clare. Ralph de Camoys took the original hall as his manor house, thus bestowing the

Camoy's or Cammass on the hall, and this was the situation when Ralph Morel entered the story. Maybe.

One final thought on the descent of the manor. Woodland was generally removed in favour of arable land in the centuries after Domesday. This is clearly the case with Morell Roding; the 1730 estate map shows little woodland but several arable fields with a woodland field name. But not so with the meadows. Sherwood's 1730 map shows 34 acres of fields with a meadow field name on Cammass Hall farm and all are still meadow! There is a small amount, still meadow, on Walkers Farm. Wihtgar had 18 acres of meadow as part of his holding and Eudo had 19 acres. This suggests that Wihtgar's holding in 1066 could not, as Morant implied, have encompassed the whole of Morell Roding.

## 4.

### **The Lords of the Manor.**

Here we are talking of the lords of the manor, not the chief lords from whom they held it. It is tempting to suggest that either Thorgil, who held the land for Eudo Dapifer, or Roger, who held Richard FirzGilbert's part, was the first of the Moreells. But this is fanciful. Morel does appear in Domesday, but in Norfolk not Essex (The de Camoys hailed from Flockthorpe in Norfolk - is there a connection here?). The first mention of Morell in connection with Roding seems to be in 1202. This was noted by Professor Reaney in *The Place Names of Essex*, and he discovered it in the Colchester Cartulary. Had there been an earlier reference in that work he would surely have mentioned it.

The Colchester Cartulary refers to it as Roinges Morel which sounds as though it was by then the established name. If so it is likely that the Morell family had been there for some time. The first name that has come down is that of Ralph Morel (another Ralph!), also recorded in the Colchester Cartulary, in 1205. So we can be sure that the Morell family was established at the manor early in the 13th century. There is a further mention in the Cartulary, for Sir Oliver Morell, in 1272.

The next Morel reference after 1202 is the 1205 reference to Ralph Morel in the Colchester Cartulary. There can be no doubt that it refers to him in his capacity as holding the manor of Roinges Morel, and doubtless for the payment of tithes to St John's Abbey



There is a curious record in the Rotulorum Lit. which states that in 1215 Ralph Morel's land in Roding was committed to the King's Bailee. Had he been guilty of some misdemeanour? Had the bailiff been sent in for non-payment of taxes or tithes? Professor Reaney's next reference to Morel also comes from the Colchester Cartulary. This is to Sir Oliver Morel in 1272, and no doubt his name appeared for the same reason as Ralph Morel's in 1205. We are probably two or three generations down the Morel family tree. Sir Oliver Morel also appears on two deeds dated to c1260 and c1270, witnessing grants of land in the neighbouring parish of Hatfield Broad Oak. Thus the Morels had been established since at least 1202 and perhaps earlier.

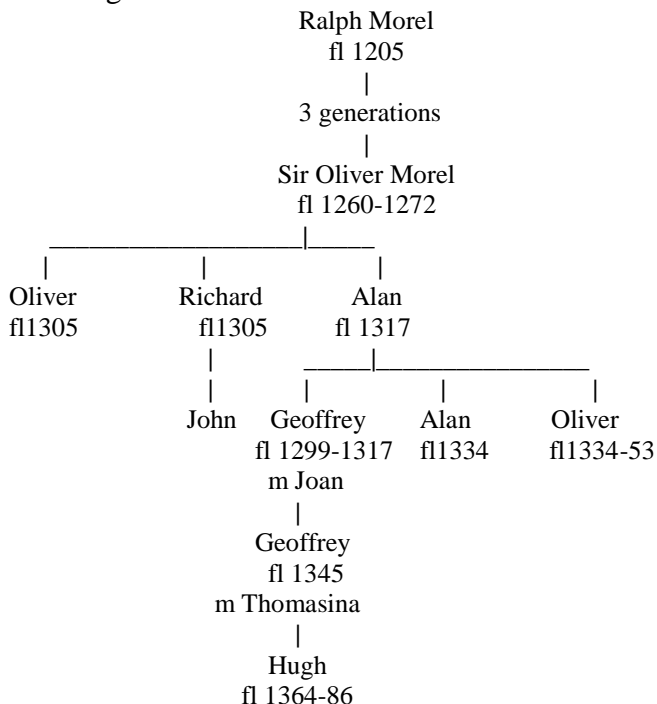
The Morels held the manor of Morell Roding under the chief lords for upwards of 150 years. By 1299 Geoffrey Morel was there. He was witness to a grant from Robert the Bruce (yes, he!) in the Bruce's capacity as Lord of Writtle to Nicholas de Barenton (Barrington) of land in Hatfield Broad Oak. Geoffrey's name crops up again in 1317 when a fine records that Alan Morel conveyed the manor of Morell Roding to Geoffrey and his wife Joan and their heirs for ever. The fine reads: "*Geoffrey Morel and Joan his wife, plaintiff. Alan Morel, deforciant. The manor of Morel. Geoffrey acknowledges the manor to be the right of deforciant as that which the deforciant has of his gift, and for this deforciant granted it to plaintiff and the heirs of their bodies, to hold of the chief lords with remainder to the right heirs of Geoffrey.*" So the descent of the manor seems to have been from Sir Oliver to Alan to Geoffrey.

The situation now gets complicated. A deed of 1305 mentions a conveyance between Richard Morel and Sir Oliver Morel. A deed

of 1334 refers to Alan, the son of Alan Morel at Walkers (a farm within Morell Roding). In 1340 a deed mentions a conveyance from John, the son of Richard Morell to Oliver, the son of Alan Morell. And in 1345 there is a fine which records:

“Thomas Prior and Joan his wife, plaintiffs. The manor of Morel. Plaintiff to hold for the life of Joan of the chief lords, with remainder to Geoffrey Morel and Thomasina his wife and the heirs of their bodies and the right heirs of Geoffrey.”

What are we to make of this? Can it be that the Morell line reads something as follows?



Suffice to say that there were many Morels holding Morell Roding between 1202 and 1374!

The Morel line, so far as the lordship of Morell Roding is concerned, drew to a close with Hugh Morel. He gets a mention in 1364 - an acquittance for 25 marks from Hugh Morel to John Prior for all his debts whatsoever. In 1373 there was an acquittance of £3.6.8d to John Prior for the release of the manor of Morell Roding and in the following year Hugh seems to have released the manor to Thomas Prior. Hugh died in 1386. I wonder if the deed of 1345 when Thomas Prior's wife Joan was to hold the manor for her life and then it was to revert to Geoffrey Morell, gives a clue as to the release of the manor. Was Joan a Morel before her marriage to Prior, and so did the manor pass to the Priors through the female Morel line?

There is one more curiosity. A tax levied in 1327 listed all the taxpayers in the County under their parish and hundred. There were Morels in Bocking, Gestingthorpe, Sible Hedingham and Gosfield. But none in the Rodings, or anywhere else in the County.

## 5.

### **The Later Lords of the Manor.**

Putting aside the intricacies and uncertainties of the Chief Lords we have the Morell family as Lords of the Manor of Morell Roding from at least as far back as 1202 and almost certainly earlier as it had acquired that name by then. They were succeeded by Thomas Prior, who may have been related to the Morells by marriage and it was he who held the manor from 1374. The Priors were a local family, a Thomas Prior was a taxpayer in Abbess Roding in 1327, and it stayed with the Prior family for more than 150 years. The Thomas of 1374 was probably succeeded by his son John, and a Richard Prior held it during the 1400s. In 1435 a fine refers to the manors of Roding Morell, High Laver and the advowson of the church of High Laver, whereby Richard and his wife Eleanor were to hold the manor of Roding Morell of the chief lords with remainder to the right heirs of Richard Prior. Richard died in 1458. In 1468 a deed refers to Andrew Prior, son of Richard Prior. Four years later there is a reference to Eleanor, the widow of Richard Prior. In 1480 Andrew Prior and his wife Mary are mentioned. Andrew died in 1507 and was succeeded by his son John. John Prior headed the list of Morell Roding taxpayers on the Lay Subsidy for 1524. It is also worth noting that there is still mention of 'the chief lords', calling to mind the division that may have existed with Eudo Dapifer and the Honour of Clare.

The Prior family continued at Morell Roding until 1530/31 when John Prior sold the manor to John Priest for a little under £200.

There are two deeds recorded, one of which might be a legal fiction, perhaps to clear a mortgage or to secure the funds. It records: *William Laxton, citizen and alderman of London, William Pratt, John Asshe, and Thomas Jeffrey, plaintiffs. John Pryor and Edith his wife and John Hall, gent. and Isobel his wife, deforcients. The manor of Roding Morell. Deforcients quitclaimed to plaintiffs and the heirs of William Laxton.* There is no further mention of William Laxton and a deed of around the same date, 4th April 1531, records the release of the manor of Morell Roding to John Priest, a grocer, of London. After his death in 1546 John Priest's wife Alice, was married again, to William Blackwell, and she held the manor until her death in 1561 when it passed to Frances, her daughter by her first husband, who had married William Bradbourne..

Hitherto, the 50 acre farm, which had at some time acquired the name of Filpots, has not featured in the descent of the manor but in 1544 John Priest leased his farm called Filpots to Roger Bird for a term of 15 years, so it seems that Priest then owned all four farms that made up the parish of Morell Roding.

In 1564 William Bradbourne and Frances his wife (nee Priest) quitclaimed the manor of Morell Roding to William Tusser, Gent. of the Middle Temple, London. Two years later Tusser sold the manor of Myles in Kelvedon Hatch to Thomas Luther of Stapleford Tawney, and a year after that he sold moieties of the manor of Morell Roding, Cammass Hall plus two farms (Prowes and Walkers), to John Collins of Little Laver and Thomas Luther.

A court roll for the manor of Morell Roding alias Cammass Hall exists for the year 1575. John Collins and Thomas Luther are

given as the joint lords of the manor, so each held a moiety. In 1577 another fine shows Robert Cook, plaintiff, and John Collins and Joan his wife as deforcients regarding a moiety of the manor which is shown as covering 3 messuages (Cammass Hall, Walkers and Prowes), 3 gardens, 3 tofts, a dovecote (no doubt the redundant chapel), 300 acres of arable land, 30 acres of meadow, 30 acres of pasture plus woodland. So Collins may have sold his moiety to Cook because in 1585 Cook sold it to Thomas Luther. Morell Roding still fell within Ongar Hundred and in the 1580s both Thomas Luther and John Collins were High Constables of the Hundred. By 1585 Thomas Luther had the lordship of the whole manor of Morell Roding and the direct ownership of the three farms - Cammass Hall, Walkers, and Prowes. From then until the death of John Luther in 1786 Morell Roding passed down from one Luther to another, and even then it continued in the family through the female line.

A Richard Luther was at Stapleford Tawney in 1516, his son William was mentioned in 1545, and Thomas Luther was probably William's son. The Luthers were lawyers, several generations being associated with Cambridge University and the Middle Temple. The first to be associated with Morell Roding, Thomas had first acquired a moiety and then the whole of the manor. He died in 1586 and his estate was shared between his sons Richard and Anthony. Anthony died first, in 1627. Richard, born in 1551 lived on to the great age for the time of 88, dying in 1639; he had attended Christs College, Cambridge (later becoming a generous benefactor to the College), and then the Middle Temple.

Richard's sons, Anthony and Thomas, followed in their father's footsteps. Both brothers were at Christs College, Cambridge

and both were admitted to the Middle Temple. Thomas married Bridget Glascock in 1622 and they had four children - Thomas, Anthony, Bridget and Mary. Thomas Junr. broke the mould, going to Pembroke College before the Middle Temple.

Richard's eldest son, Anthony, was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1603 and called to the Bar in 1617. He succeeded to the family estates on his father's death in 1639. He married Jane Armstrong and they too had four children - Richard, Gilbert, Mary and Jane. In addition to being a barrister, Anthony was a Justice of the Peace and sometime Sherriff of Essex. His son Richard, (Queen's College and Middle Temple) also became a barrister, as did his younger brother Gilbert.

So the Luther line continued. In 1701 Edward Luther was Sheriff of Essex. In 1729 Richard Luther married Charlotte Chamberlain and he was Lord of the Manor of Morell Roding until his death in 1768. His will revealed that he was then living in Boldre, some three miles south of Brockenhurst in Hampshire. He also owned a house in Bath and estates in Suffolk as well as Essex. As expected, Charlotte was the main beneficiary for her lifetime and then it all went to his son John. He gave £100 each to his grandchildren, Francis and John Fane, to buy each a ring - this is equivalent to more than £6,000 in 2009, quite a ring! Amongst many other bequests was one of £10 (£600+ today) to 'my black butler, Mark Anthony Crawford'.

Richard Luther was succeeded by his son John, born in 1739, who was at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1756. Getting his BA and

MA he too became a member of the Middle Temple. In 1762 he married Leonia Bennet and in 1763 he was elected an MP for Essex – it was reported that he spent £50,000 on his election campaign (around £3.7 million today!). He remained an MP until 1784 and died without issue in 1786. John left the bulk of his freehold estate to his nephew Francis Fane, with the remainder to his other nephew John Fane, the children of Henry Fane of Wormsley, Oxfordshire who had married his sister Charlotte. Born in 1753, Francis Fane attended Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He lived at Spetisbury in Dorset and was MP for Dorchester from 1790 to 1807. He died in 1813 at the age of 60 and was succeeded by his brother John. . John Luther had failed to mention his copyhold land in his will and so this had been shared out amongst three relatives but John Fane over a period of time bought out all the properties so that by 1815 it was once again reunited.

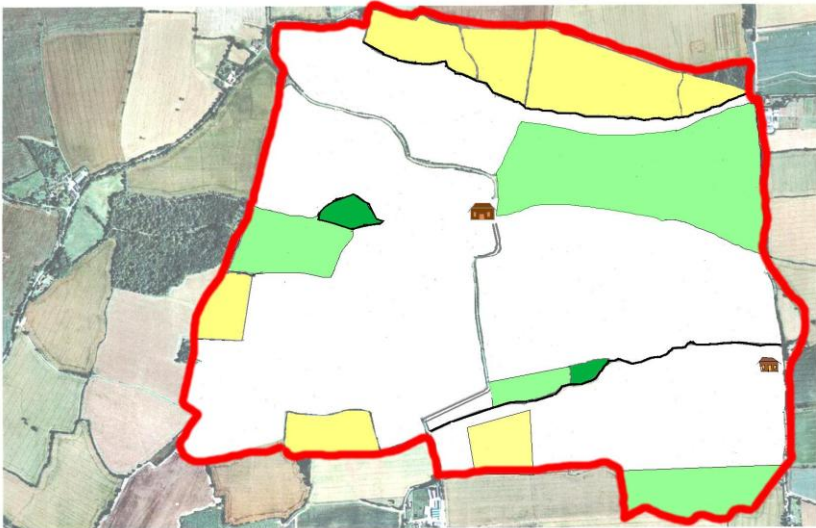
It is known that Thomas Luther held a moiety of the manor in 1575 and that he eventually bought out the other half. It can therefore be safely assumed that the Luthers held the lordship of the manor thereafter. It would follow that it then passed to the Fane family as heirs to the Luthers. Key to any tracing of the descent of the manor is the Court Rolls. Presumably they would have been held by the Fane family as successors to the Luthers. But the court rolls do not feature in the voluminous papers given by the Fane family to the Essex Record Office, nor do they appear in the Fane papers deposited with the Oxfordshire Record Office. The Manorial Documents Register in the National Archives has no records of these rolls apart from the single court roll of 1575 which is in the Essex Record Office. And correspondence with the Lukies family who succeeded the Fanes at Cammass Hall has failed to trace them. There for the time being the matter rests.



## 6.

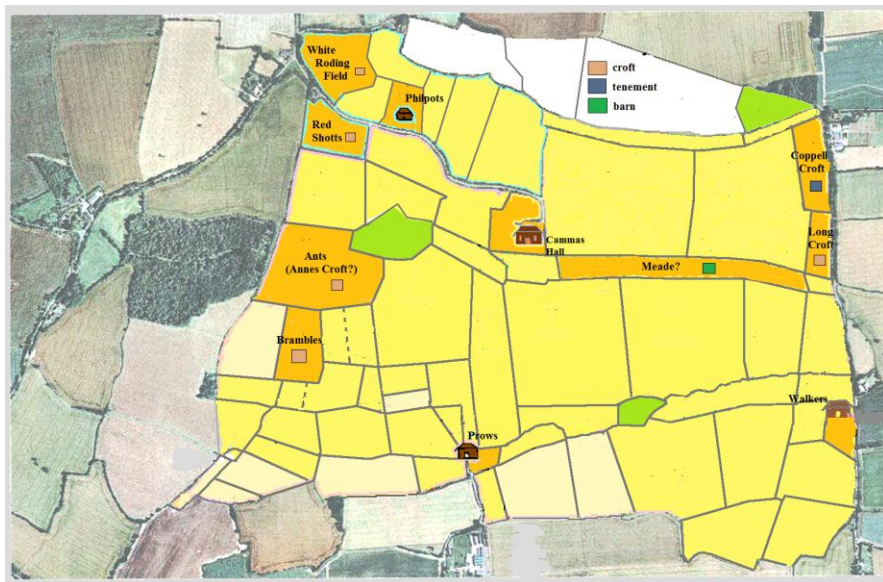
### The land.

There is no reason to doubt that the extent of the Saxon manors that became Morell Roding would have been similar to that shown on Sherwood's map of 1730. This seems to be the earliest extant map covering that area. It was drawn up for the then owner and lord of the manor, Richard Luther, "Being the whole former parish of Morell Roding". Over the centuries most of the woodland has gone, field boundaries have changed, and it is very likely that the farms that made up Morell Roding, and those abutting the manor, have lost and gained land. The land that made up the original settlements may have been something like this:



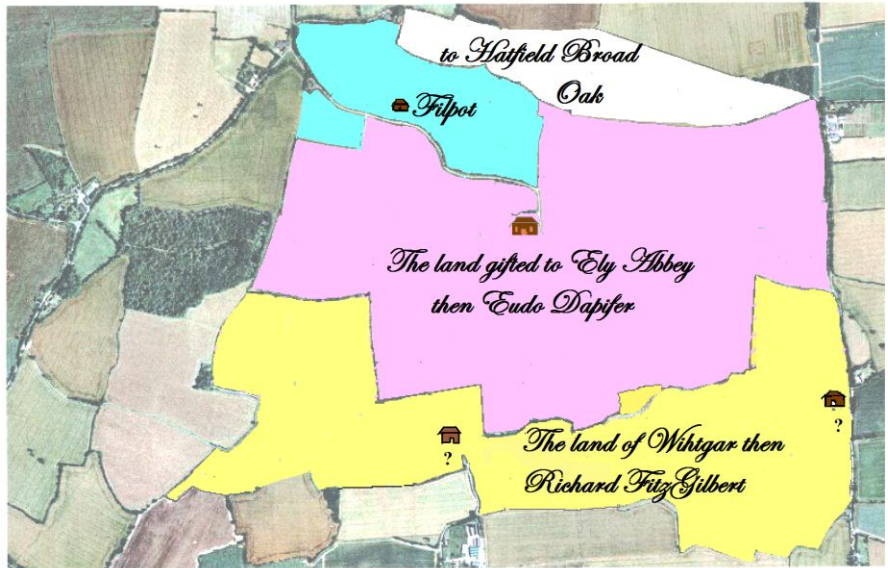
The hall of the manor would most likely have been in the centre of its land and Cammass Hall fits this nicely for one of the settlements. There would have been much more woodland; the relict patch coloured dark green to the west of Cammass Hall was probably larger, and there would have been a large area of woodland to the north and east of the hall (pale green) as suggested by the field names, Hither and Further Coppice.. The smaller patch of woodland coloured dark green in the south of the parish wasn't there in 1730 but could have been on the site of earlier, more extensive, woodland. And there was no doubt much more besides (perhaps the other pale green areas). The areas coloured yellow on the map have gone with farms outside but abutting Morell Roding, but it is easy to imagine that they may once have been included.

I have postulated that there was a second settlement in Morell Roding and on the map I suggest the site was what became Walkers Farm. A small area of around 50 acres had passed to the manor of Shellow; I suggest this was in the north east of the manor and became Philpots Farm. Two larger areas possibly found themselves with different lords as a result of a gift to Ely Abbey. Exactly where these larger parts were is a matter of conjecture. There must have been several dwellings within Morell Roding at this time. The four villagers on the two portions needed homes, but these could have been scattered over the manor - a list of tenements drawn up in 1575 is very suggestive of this. And there must have been a homestead on the 50 acre farm.



The names on the 1575 tenants list suggest other places where there may have been houses in addition to Cammass Hall, Walkers, Prows and Philpots. This list also mentions other unidentified tenements.

The preference for Walkers over Prows as a possible second manor site is discussed later. The homestead on the 50 acre farm may have been where Philpotts farmhouse was situated. By the time of the Norman Conquest one scenario is the following map:



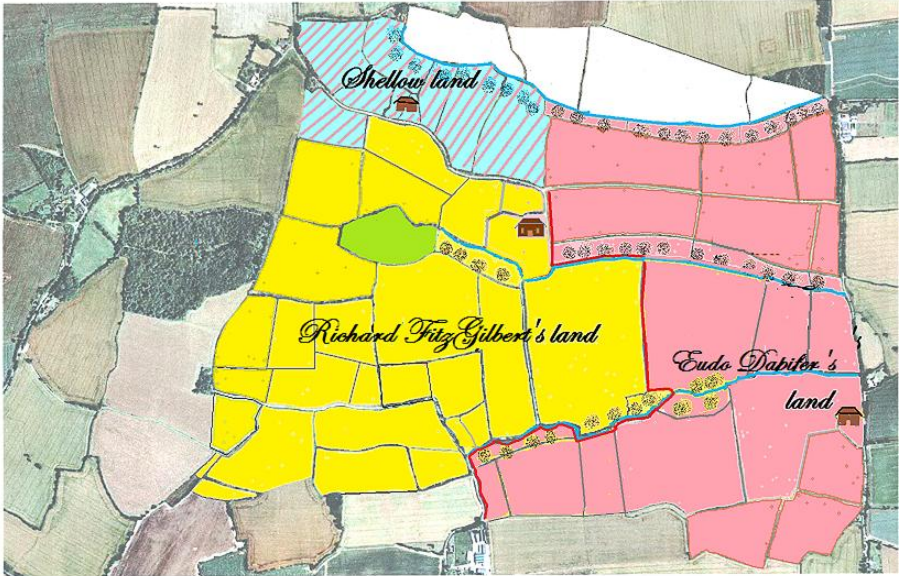
The 50 acre farm (coloured pale blue) could also have had land extending into Hatfield Broad Oak. Eudo Dapifer's manor (coloured pink) may have been the central portion around the hall; using the farms as shown on the 1730 map as a guide it would conveniently correspond to Cammass Hall farm. The FitzGilbert lands (coloured yellow) may have subsequently split up into two distinct farms, Prowes and Walkers, although they were later regarded as being a part of the manor of Morell Roding. If this is the case then the split must have been before 1334, for a deed of that year mentions Walkers. It could have arisen from the villeins on the manor acquiring further rights. Curiously there seems to be no mention of a Mr Walker on any of the early records, including the 1327 tax returns. Could Walker have become a corrupted version of Wihgar? The Morels'

ownership and lordship extended over Walkers and Prowes as well as the main part at Cammass Hall but the 50 acre farm, although within the manor, seems for long to have been owned and farmed separately.

In favour of the apportionment shown above there is no doubt that the respective sizes of Cammass Hall Farm and Walkers & Prowes do correspond remarkably well with the sizes of Eudo's and FitzGilbert's portions respectively. Further, Filpots does fit nicely into the separate 50 acre farm and Domesday does state that it was in Eudo's portion.

There are some weaknesses to this speculation. FitzGilbert had twice as much woodland as Eudo, and judging by field names the largest piece of woodland was in the north east of the parish. Also, if de Camoys was at the hall named after him, and he held it of Richard de Clare, then it was likely to have been in FitzGilbert's portion. Also, the Ongar Hundred regarded Morell Roding as a detached parish within its jurisdiction and FitzGilbert's portion was shown in Domesday as a part of Ongar Hundred while Eudo's was in Dunmow Hundred (as was White Roding). Further, Domesday gives Fitzgilbert's and Eudo's portions as having almost equal areas of meadow but the above apportionment would put three quarters of the meadow land in Eudo's portion.

There are of course other possibilities, there doesn't have to be a split which corresponds with the field patterns as they were in 1730. Another possibility might be an east-west apportionment as follows:



The above example also uses field boundaries as they were in 1730. With this scenario Thorgil, who held Eudo's portion, may have had his dwelling on the site of Walkers in the east of the parish, while FitzGilbert had Cammass Hall. This apportionment wouldn't give FitzGilbert the majority of the known woodland but it would give both parties a share of the meadows. Eudo also held land in White Roding and the Colchester Cartulary in noting the tithes payable by Ralf Morel adds "with two thirds of the demesne of Walter de Merc there", and Walter's manor in White Roding was abutting Eudo's land in Morell Roding in this example. Alas, we will probably never know the true apportionment, always assuming that it was apportioned.

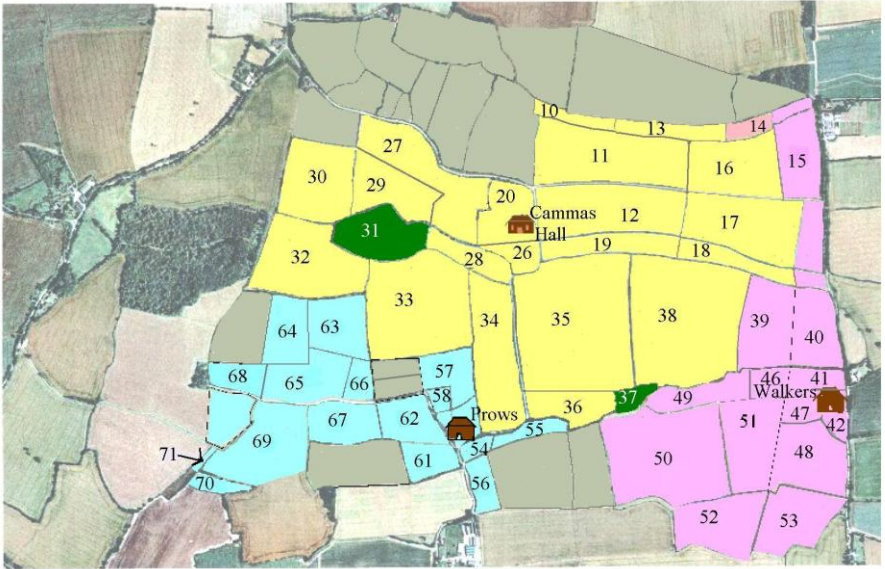
The woodland was the unanswered question. How big was it?

My guess, arrived at it by deducting the arable and meadow in 1086 from the total acreage (as it was in 1730), works well on the assumption that the parish was apportioned. If FitzGilbert held the whole of Morrell Roding then there would have been 90 acres of arable land, 20 acres of meadow, and about 500 acres of woodland. In an area where much of the land had been reclaimed for agriculture this seems excessive. And FitzGilbert's 20 acres of meadow is less than half the amount indicated in the 1730 map.

Was Walkers the site of a second pre-Norman settlement? And was this more likely than Prowes to have been the site? No evidence has been uncovered at either site to sway the argument, but the building at Walkers is older, almost certainly very much older, than was the building at Prowes. And Walkers was an established farm as early as 1331 when the manorial system was still at its height. It was by then part of the lordship of Morell Roding centred at Cammass Hall but its separate identity was already established. Unlike Prowes its name cannot be connected to a family living there - is it too fanciful to suggest a connection with Wihtgar? Prowes Farm wasn't formally given that name until very much later and was surely derived from the family of Willam Prowe.

In 1730 Richard Luther commissioned an estate map. This map, surveyed by Michael Sherwood, gives the Luther lands in Morell Roding at that date and clearly excluded Philpots which must have been in separate ownership albeit still within the manor. The map also gives the field names and acreages attached to Cammass Hall, Walkers, and Prowes.





The 1730 estate map of Cammass Hall, Prowes and Walkers. For convenience the Cammass Hall land is coloured yellow, Prowes is coloured blue, and Walkers is coloured pink.



7.  
**Cammass Hall**



Cammass Hall c1960 (above) and 2009 (below)



Dealing first with Cammass Hall, the Horwood family were for long the farmers at Cammass Hall though they may not have lived at the house. Anne Horwood of Morell Roding had died in 1575 and Thomas Horwood appeared on a court roll of the manor of Cammass Hall in that year. In her will Anne left to her son John the bed in her chamber and the bed linen, while her other son Thomas got a kettle and a brass pot. When a Thomas Horwood of Morell Roding died in 1652 he left his customary (copyhold) property to his wife Margaret and after her death it was to go to his son Thomas. His two other sons, James and John, were each to receive £100 at the age of 21. Thomas Horwood was there in 1698, and a Mr Horwood was shown as paying tithes for Mannings Farm in 1703, but by 1728 they had gone, for a deed of that year stated that the occupant of Cammass Hall was ‘formerly Thomas Horwood and now William Fuller’.

Although the Horwoods were undoubtedly around in the 1620s to 1640s it seems that they weren’t holding the lease of Cammass Hall in that period for the will of John Lord states that he was “of Cammass Hall in the hamlet of Morell Roding“. In his will Lord gave 20s to the poor of Hatfield Broad Oak “where I now live”, and to his son William Lord he left his house and land called Brodgores in Great Dunmow and Barnston.

The name of John Lord of Morell Roding crops up in the Quarter Sessions records of the 1620s and 1630s. In 1628 he was at the Sessions for defaulting in paying money imposed towards the provision of powder, match, and bullets to remain in magazine in the County of Essex. In 1631 he was summoned for jury service, and in

1639 he was again at the Quarter Sessions “to answer for rescuing Thomas Garratt committed to gaol for destroying the coppice wood of Sir Thomas Barrington Kt Bt and setting the hedge on fire in Hatfield Broad Oak“.

By 1761 Fuller had gone and the farmer was Elizabeth Stock, widow. It seems that the Stocks were in for a long stay because in 1780 the farmer was Thomas Stock, in 1797 it was Mr Willey Stock and by 1823 it was Richard Stock. Richard was farming a little over 350 acres and paying £300 a year rent. The census of 1861 reveals that Richard Stock, then aged 75, was still the farmer. He was farming 671 acres and employed 34 men and 7 boys, so it wasn't just Cammass Hall. By 1861 he had long been a widower but his son John was still living with him, and Richard had two servants in residence, the appropriately named Eliza Morrell and a 13 year old lad William Trundle. Richard Stock died in that same year.

The new farmer at Cammass Hall was Joseph Bott from Hatfield Peverel, living there with his wife Louisa and children, Charles and Percy. Joseph was still there in 1881 but by then he had less land, down from 670 acres to 375 acres and his description had changed - from farmer to farm bailiff. He died in 1900 but by then he had long left Cammass Hall. The house stood empty for a while and then around 1887 the farm was let to Nicholas Lukies from Breage in Cornwall. Nicholas hired a train to bring his family, animals, machinery and chattels from Truro to Sawbridgeworth - it is said that they walked from there to Cammass! The 1891 census shows that Nicholas was at Cammass Hall with his wife Mary Ann and their children Thomas, Frederick and Bessie. Nicholas died in 1898 aged 76 and was succeeded by his eldest son Thomas.

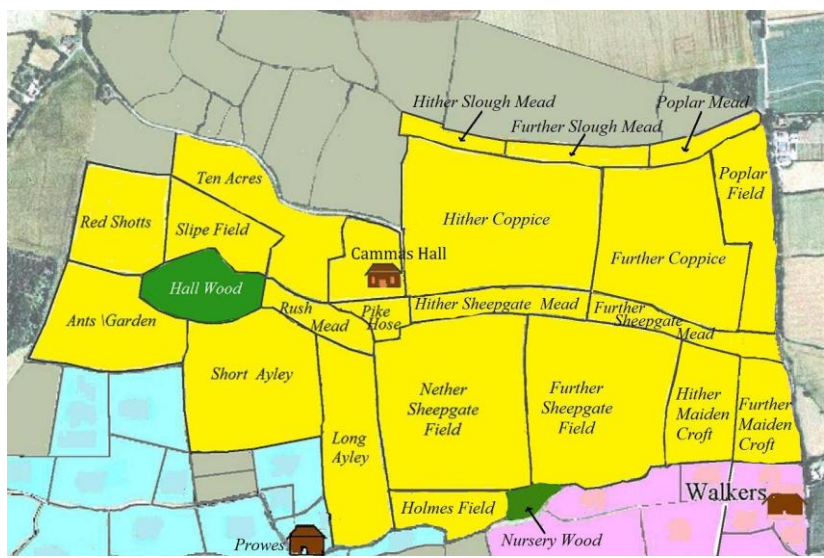
The Hall was still owned by the Fane family; in 1900 the owner was Major John Augustus Fane. It was around 1928 that Thomas Lukies bought the hall and farm, ending the Fane connection. Thomas had 4 sons and a daughter and it was his third son, John, who took on the farm after his father's death. John Lukies was well known for his public work, he served for many years on the Essex County Council. In the 1980s he obtained permission to build a bungalow nearby, Cammass Pykle, and he passed Cammass Hall on to his son, Robert Lukies. In 1998 Cammass Hall was sold but the farm land remains with Robert's son, Jonathan Lukies.

As to the land that went with Cammass Hall the 1730 map gives the part coloured yellow as going with Cammass Hall and the 1797 terrier confirms this:

10	Hither Slough Mead	28	Rush Mead
11	Hither Coppice	29	Slipe Field
12	--do--	30	Brick Field
13	Further Slough Mead	31	Hall Wood
16	Further Coppice	32	Ants Garden
17	--do--	33	Short Ailey
18	Further Sheepgate Mead	34	Long Ailey
19	Hither Sheepgate Mead	35	Nether Sheepgate Field
20	House, garden & orchard	36	Holmes Field
26	Pike Hose	37	Nursery Wood
27	Ten Acres	38	Further Sheepgate Field

There have been some changes since then. Two fields, 14 and 15 on the map, were taken from Walkers Farm and their names changed from Coppells Mead and Field to Poplars Mead and Field. Rush Mead (28) was also known as How Mead and Brick Field (30)

as Red Shotts. Coppice has also been known as Coppells, and Sheepgate as Sheepcote. The measurements have changed slightly with time, field boundaries have changed and so too have some names and the tithe award of 1840 show further changes. This was the make up of Cammass Hall Farm in 1840, a little over 370 acres.



Hither Slough Mead	3a 0r 32p	Further Slough Mead	5a 2r 35p
Poplars Mead	3 2 22	Hither Coppice	43 0 27
Further Coppice	36 2 0	Poplar Field	10 0 15
Further Sheepgate Mead	7 1 23	Hither Sheepgate Mead	8 0 4
House & garden	4 2 33	Pike Hose	6 0 31
Slupe Field	7 1 29	Ten Acres	23 1 8
Rush Mead	6 0 17	Red Shotts (Brick Fd)	15 3 23
Hall Wood	9 1 8	Ants Garden	21 3 37

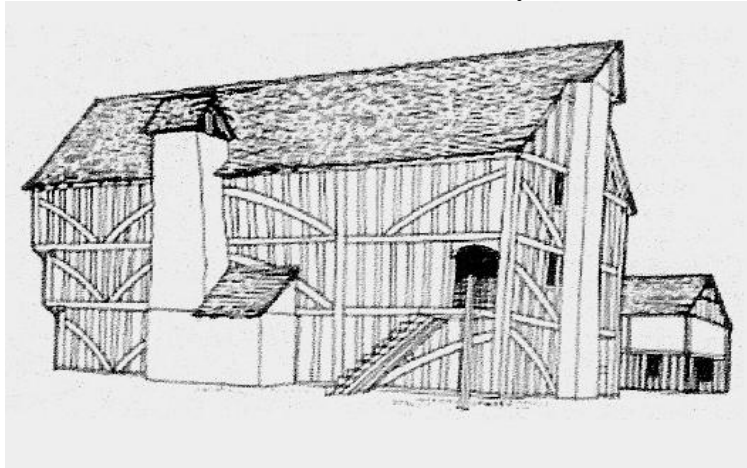
Short Ayley	28	1	16	Long Ayley	18	0	0
Nether Sheepcote Field	43	3	14	Holmes Field	5	1	31
Nursery Wood	1	2	28	Further Sheepgate Fd	38	2	25
Hither Maiden Croft	12	1	13	Further Maiden Croft	10	2	32

The house itself is of considerable interest. The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, working between 1916 and 1923, reported on Cammass Hall that it was timber framed with a tiled roof, late 16<sup>th</sup> century, on an H-shaped plan, cross wings on the E and W and a staircase wing in the N angle of the W wing. There was a chimney stack of 4 diagonal shafts. In the west wing an original fireplace with original stone jambs, an original doorway with moulded jambs and a three-centred head, and an original moulded ceiling beam. There is more to it than this.

The RCHM was working before the discovery of carbon dating and dendrochronology, and Cecil Hewitt's pioneering work on the evolution of timber joints was still in the future. Very many timber framed buildings were assigned to the 16<sup>th</sup> century - the Commission could have doubted that timber would have survived for much longer. These more recent techniques have proved many of the RCHM's findings to be wrong, spectacularly so (by around 250 years!) in the case of the great barns at Cressing Temple. And of course recent alterations have revealed hitherto hidden details. So the dating of Cammass Hall must at once be suspect and this was revealed in a paper to the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (Stenning).

There was probably some building here in pre-Norman times no trace of which survives, and there may have been several later

rebuilt. What the RCHM saw was a building that had undergone some reconstruction in the late Tudor period, including the very prominent brick chimney stack. It now appears that the central hall part of the house was reconstructed in the late 17thC incorporating a lot of the fabric of a much earlier block. The west cross wing has now been dated to the 1400s although it could not be studied in detail. The east cross wing has been studied more closely and dated to the late 14thC, say c1390, with many interesting features, not least the evidence that access to the first floor was by an external door..



Reconstruction of the east cross wing at Cammass Hall  
(IHBC David Stenning)

The RCHM also noted a two-story brick outhouse which it dated to the 17thC, and a moat, but one building which hasn't survived is the chapel. William Holman (c1720) noted the presence of a chapel which in his time had been converted to a dovecote. Morant (1768) noted that it was a timber framed building. If this is

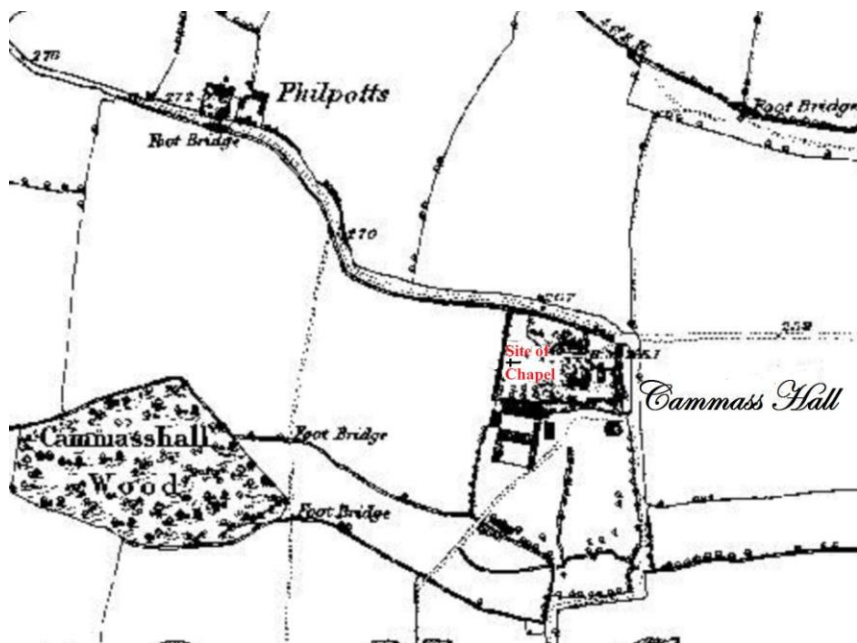
the dovecote at Cammass Hall mentioned in a Fine of 1577 then it had long since ceased to serve its original purpose. Alas, nothing else is known of it although it was stated to be at the west of the house, and the site was marked by the Ordnance Survey.

Why should there have been a chapel at Cammass Hall, and who would have been responsible for its construction? If it was a dovecote by 1577 it must predate the Luthers and probably the Priests too. It can most likely be attributed to the Morels. Perhaps a private chapel for the Morel family although their absence from the 1327 tax record suggests that they were absentee landlords. Might it be in some way connected to the peculiar status of Morell Roding? Physically situated within the boundary of White Roding, and for as far back as 1547, when the registers of that parish commenced, the church of White Roding has served Morell Roding. It was nevertheless a distinct hamlet within the Ongar Hundred while White Roding lay within Dunmow Hundred.

There is a similar situation in Margaret Roding where the manor of Marks Hall was within its boundary but was a detached part of Stondon Massey, and Marks Hall too had a chapel. The church at White Roding has Norman origins so if Morell Roding was considered a part of that parish there would be no need for a separate church, but in fact it wasn't. Morell Roding owed allegiance to Ongar Hundred and this may have been a factor in the chapel's creation. Significantly, there is no record of a graveyard associated with the chapel - were the inhabitants buried at White Roding or somewhere in the Ongar Hundred. Or was there once a graveyard of which all trace has been lost? The chapel may have been built before the arrival of the Morells, it may have been associated with the de Camoys family,



but on balance I believe the chapel was built by the Morell family and used as a place of worship for the inhabitants of the manor. With the decay of the manor and the much greater prominence of the church at White Roding, especially as the place recognized for baptisms, marriages and burials, the chapel at Cammass Hall lost its relevance.



The 1881 O.S. map showed the site of the chapel

The moat which once would have surrounded the house survives in part only, albeit an impressive part, along the south and part of the east side. Of the chapel there is now no trace. Interestingly there was once a small pasture, incorporated in later maps with 'house, garden and orchard', which was once known as Dovehouse Pightle, recalling the later days of the chapel as a dovehouse.

## 8.

### Walkers Farm.



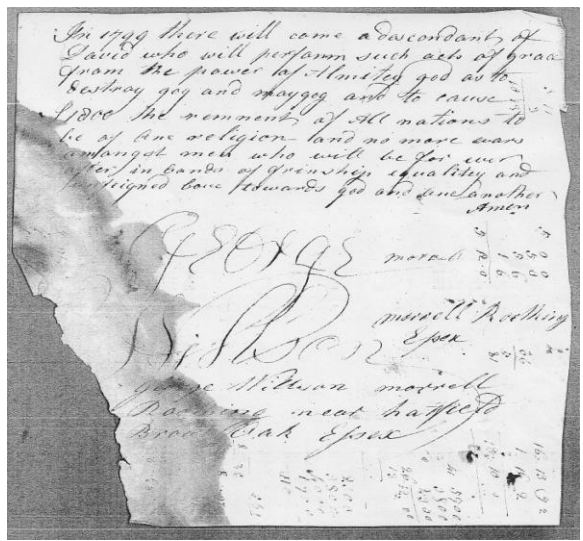
Professor Reaney was unable to give a likely origin for this name; he only takes it back to 1777. In fact it has been known as Walkers as far back as 1334 but nowhere in the various documents relating to the manor is there a clue as to its origin. There are references to Morell Roding in the Essex Feet of Fines as far back as 1317 but there is no mention of a Walker, nor does the name appear on the 1327 Lay Subsidy lists. It is tempting to relate Walker to Wihtgar, which would tie in nicely with a suggested Domesday apportionment of Morell Roding!

In 1467 William Prior leased Walkers farm to John Morse for

13 years and it seems that a John Morse (grandson perhaps?) was still there in the 1530s. Henry Tugold may have been the next farmer, to be followed by Thomas Prentice. The Luther family acquired Walkers along with Cammass Hall and by 1635 the farm was occupied by George Bush on a 21 year lease at £40 p.a. from Richard Luther; the lease included, in addition to Walkers Farm, another 24 acres called Meade End. In 1657 the lease was granted by Anthony Luther to Richard Banks and in 1698 it was held by Henry Banks. Henry had died by 1703 and his widow was living there; then their son, Henry Jnr took over. Henry Banks Jnr had been granted a lease in 1728 by Edward Luther and he was at Walkers when the estate map was drawn in 1730. A deed of 1761 mentions that Walkers was formerly occupied by Henry Banks and now by George Wilson. The Bankses must have been there for around 100 years and another lengthy family tenure commenced with the Wilsons.

George Wilson probably arrived at Walkers around 1760. And from 1780 he kept a farm book for more than 30 years. The book is a comprehensive record of all his sales and purchases, the wages paid to his workers, crop records of barley, wheat, clover, peas, etc, and a great deal of other information besides. His workers wives were regularly mentioned, being paid small sums for picking stones from the fields which were later used to put on the road. Each year he gave notice of the precise date when his corn harvest would commence - in 1782 it was Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August - and the vicar's representative was given notice to be at Walkers Farm yard between 5.00 and 7.00am to see the tithe thereof. He also entered the birth of each of his children, ten in all - George (1772), Isaac (1773), Mary (1775), Sarah (1777), Thomas (1779), John (1781), Ann (1786 - died 1799), Elizabeth (1788), Susannah (1792) and Maria (1794).

George Wilson seems to have seen himself as a bit of a prophet - in his farm book he gave a 10-year forecast from 1790 to 1800. It was somewhat wide of the mark. In 1790 he foretold that when the present Pope, Pius VI, died there would be no other elected. In 1791 there was to be a war amongst many of the European powers against France; he was aware of the French Revolution which erupted in 1789. In 1797 there would appear a Gog and Magog that would make war against all nations in the world and great destruction in the following year would thin the inhabitants. In 1799 there was to come a descendant of David who would perform such acts of Grace from the power of Almighty God as to destroy Gog and Magog, and in 1800 the remnants of all nations would be of one religion and no more wars amongst men who will live forever in bands of friendship equality and unfeigned love towards God and one another. He would have been disappointed if he were living today. He signed his prophesies with a flourish.



The 1840 title award shows the occupants as 'the executors of the late George Wilson' and a John Wilson was there in 1841. This John died in 1843 and by 1861 Sarah Wilson, then aged 75, was shown as the farmer. She was George's daughter and she died in 1866. If the census age is correct she was 82 which doesn't quite tie in with the entry in George's farm book! Sarah's sister Susannah had married Mr Grove, a surgeon (George had also noted this in his farm book - the wedding took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1818), and after his death she had gone to live with Sarah at Walkers with her two sons, Frederick and Edmund, Frederick acting as farm bailiff whilst Edmund became a miller and baker.

By 1871 Edmund was shown as the farmer at Walkers, employing 3 men on the 103 acre farm. With him was his wife Louisa, their children Caroline and Ellen, his mother Susannah, and bachelor brother Frederick. Ten years later Frederick was there, still unmarried, with a house keeper, Sarah Heard, but by 1891 the Groves had gone and Thomas Staines from Blackmore was farming there with his family. These then were the farmers who lived and worked at Walkers. The owners were rather different.

Walkers Farm had been bought from the Fane family in 1818 by William Webb of Hatfield Broad Oak, and his son, also William Webb, inherited it in 1825. William Jnr. still possessed it at the time of his death in 1881 at the age of 85 and it may have been then or shortly after that when Thomas Staines took on the lease. In 1892 the farm was sold by auction; it was noted that Staines was due to leave at Michaelmas of that year.

In 1906 a Capt. H H Neale applied for a loan to Rutherfords of

Liverpool, and Walkers Farm and the nearby Warwicks Farm in White Roding were valued as security. Clearly if he was prepared to mortgage Walkers as security for a loan then he must have been the owner. A Mr Neale was shown as the owner and occupier of Warwicks Farm on the 1901 census, which also shows that the said Mr Neale came from Liverpool. It seems very likely that Capt Neale was the son of Mr Neale and that the family then owned both Warwick's and Walkers farms. James Gunn, a farm labourer, was living at Walkers in 1901 with his family, no doubt employed by the Neales.

It may be that Thomas Staines continued to take on the lease although by 1907 Walter Matthams was living at Walkers. At some time the freehold must have passed to the Staines family because in 1918 the farm was put up for sale by the trustees of the will of Mr A Staines. Walter Matthams was still the occupant, on a yearly tenancy, and at the time of the sale he had been given notice to quit. The sale notice gives some more information about the farm but little about the house other than it was an 'old fashioned commodious farmhouse of lath and plaster with a tiled roof'. There was a detached brewhouse and bakehouse and a garden well stocked with fruit trees. The various outbuildings comprised a cart horse stable for 5 horses, chaff house, granary, 2 loose boxes, a large barn, 3 piggeries, 3 enclosed yards with sheds, a 4-bay cart lodge with a lean-to ladder shed, and a large weatherboarded and thatched implement shed. There was also a double tenement brick built cottage.

Back to the map commissioned by Richard Luther in 1730. The lands of Walkers Farm were given as follows. They appear coloured pink on the map reproduced below.

14	Coppells Mead	Meadow	3.0. 15*
15	Coppells Field	Arable	8.1. 28*
39	Hither Maiden Croft	Arable	9.2. 15**
40	Further Maiden Croft	Arable	10.1. 26**
41	Barn Field	Arable	2.2. 30
42	House & Garden		1.2. 28
43	Little Pightle	Arable	0.3. 0
44	Litle Hoppett	Pasture	1.0. 13
45	Long Croft	Arable	4.1. 27
46	Rushy Mead or Hither Mead	Meadow	2.2. 25
47	Three Acres	Arable	3.3. 0
48	Kitchen Field	Arable	14.2. 10
49	Long Mead	Meadow	6.2. 25
50	{ Further Pairton	Arable	19.3.07
	{ Little Pairton	Arable	6.0.37
51	Hither Pairton	Arable	18.2.08
52	Church Field	Arable	11.2. 0
53	Maple Field	Arable	<u>11.0.22</u>
			136.3.36

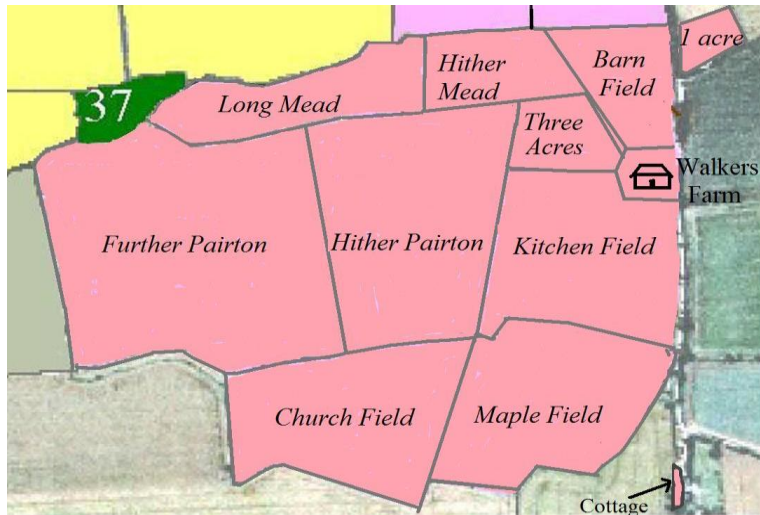
The terrier of 1797 gave the size of the farm as 136 acres, 2 rods and 25 perches, almost the same as the 1730 figure.

\* These two fields transferred to Cammass Hall and became known as Poplars Field and Poplars Mead.

\*\* These two fields were also later transferred from Walkers to Cammass Hall, reducing the size of Walkers Farm to approximately 104 acres in Morell Roding. This must have taken place after the terrier of 1797 and before the tithe map of 1840. The farm also had one acre of pasture on the east side of the road, opposite Barn Field, which was in Aythorpe Roding.

The tithe map of 1840 gave the size of Walkers as 104 acres, which would have been in line with the 1730 map less the four fields which had been transferred to Cammas Hall. A plan of the farm was drawn up for its sale in 1918. The farm was then:

Further Pairton	Arable	26.0.18
Hither Pairton	Arable	20.2.15
Long Mead	Pasture	6.3.11
Hither Mead	Pasture	3.2. 6
Three Acres	Arable	3.2.34
Barn Field	Pasture	2.2.30
House & Garden		1.1.24
Kitchen Field	Arable	14.1.31
Church Field	Arable	12.1. 4
Maple Field	Arable	11.3.37
Lane		0.1. 4
Cottage		<u>0.0.21</u>
		104.0.35
One acre pasture in Aythorpe Roding		<u>1.0. 0</u>
		105.0.35





In 1939 Walkers was occupied by Octavius Speller and his wife Gwladys, and George and Alice Speller were also on the electoral roll for Walkers in that year although they were actually living at Broadgates in Roxwell. Immediately after the War a William T Furze was in residence and by the late 1940s the farm had passed to Gilbert and Margaret Gemmill.

As to the house, The Royal Commission assigned it to the 17<sup>th</sup>C, noting only that the upper storey projected (jettied). It observed that the house was gabled, and it had an original chimney stack. More recently, the schedule of Listed Buildings puts the house as 16<sup>th</sup>C or even earlier, with 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>C extensions, with some 18<sup>th</sup>C casements and sashes. It is timber framed with pargetted plasterwork. The brick chimney stack is put at early 17<sup>th</sup>C. The following photograph gives a clearer view of the style of the building.



**9.**

**Prowes Farm.**



**The barn at Prowes Farm**



**Little Owls was once Prowes Farm cottages**

Prowes Farm had for long had common ownership with Cammass Hall. A bailiff's precept of 1575 for the manor of Cammass Hall recites:

'Edward Selme or Samon and Alice his wife, daughter and heir of Alice Prowe to be at the next Court to show by what title six crofts of land and 26 acres her ancestor Richard Prowe did sometime hold by copy of court roll by yearly rent of 23s, and tenements called Page and Lamberts which William Prowe the elder and Alice his wife and William Prowe the younger did hold by copy of court roll at 30s rent'.

In 1698 William Fuller was the tenant farmer. In 1703 he asked for his tithe payment for Prowes to be reduced from £7 to £6 because of bad years harvests. He died in 1720 and in his will he left his feather bed, the bed linen and the furniture in the chamber to his wife Elizabeth as well as £20 in money (equivalent to around £1,700 in 2009). His eldest son William was principal beneficiary receiving freehold and copyhold property in Great Dunmow as well as the occupancy of Prowes, and £100. His other son Daniel was to get £250 at the age of 21. Prowes Farm was then occupied by William Fuller Jnr. The next occupants were the Feltons.

When Robert Felton died in 1759 he left his estate to his son Robert, and Robert Jnr was in turn succeeded by his son, also Robert Felton. This Robert was born in 1761 and in 1789 he married Sally Stock and he was the tenant farmer at Prowes when a terrier was drawn up in 1797. In October 1834 an auction of the farm stock of Prowes was held by the executors of William Felton. The sale made £212, the main purchaser being Edward Parris who spent £137 at the sale, including £23 for a 5 year old roan mare called Violet. The farm had been, like Cammass Hall, in the Luther family and had likewise

passed to the Fanes. It was sold by Francis Fane in 1806 - at some time it been owned by Richard Stock, and his son John had then inherited it. By 1840 the farm was in the ownership of Edward Parris as the heir-at-law of his uncle John Stock who had died intestate and a bachelor. The 1840 tithes award shows Edward as owner and occupier, and it remained in the Parris family until the death of Edward Parris Jnr in 1899 at the age of 46. The trustees of his estate sold it in the following year to Mr Lukies.

. By 1841 the farm, with Edward Parris as owner, had John Stones, agricultural labourer, living there with his family and he was still there up to his death in 1873. James and Elizabeth Trimble then moved in with their family; James was shown as a farm bailiff - and the Trimbles were still there in 1901. By 1910 James Chilvers was farming Prowes as well as the neighbouring Nash's and Mannings Farms; in 1939 it was being farmed by Patrick Gee of Pierce Williams farm.

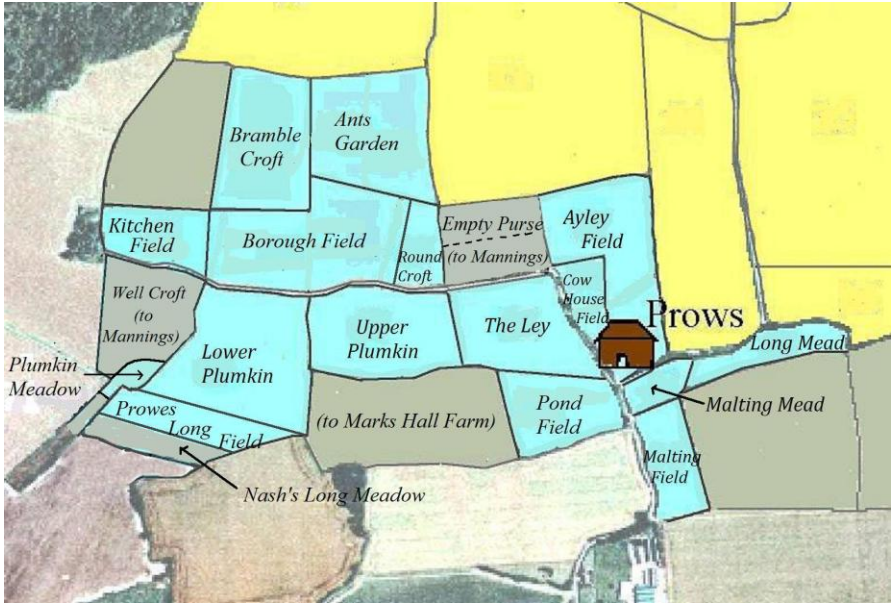
As to the lands of Prowes Farm, the map of 1730 gave it as follows:

54	Malting Mead	Meadow	1.2.18
55	Long Mead	Meadow	3.2.20
56	Malting Field	Arable	3.0. 0
57	Ayley Field	Arable	8.1.17
58	Cow House Field	Arable	1.1. 0
59	Empty Purse	Arable	3.0.10
	“	“	1.0. 0
60	House & Yard		0.1.32
61	Cart House Field	Arable	6.0.20
62	The Ley	Arable	6.1. 0

63	Ants Garden	Arable	4.3.13
63a	Little Brambly	Arable	4.0.35
64	Great Brambly	Arable	8.0.29
65	Great Burrow	Arable	8.3.18
66	Little Burrow	Arable	2.1.26
67	Great Plumkin	Arable	7.0.28
68	Kitchen Croft	Arable	6.2.10
69	Little Plumkin	Arable	5.3.31
70	Well Croft	Arable	5.0. 0
71	The Mead	Meadow	0.1.21

Mannings Farm in White Roding abuts Prowes Farm and the deeds of Mannings reveal that a small portion of that farm lay in Morrell Roding; two small fields amounting to some 5 acres called Prowes Croft and Prowes Hoppit so they may once have belonged to Prowes. These were perhaps the two parcels of land known jointly as Empty Purse on the 1840 tithe map.

By 1840 the field known as Little Brambly had merged with Ants Garden to make one larger field, and Great Brambly had become Bramble Croft. Great and Little Burrow had also merged into one large field now called Borough Field.. The five acres of Well Croft had gone to Mannings Farm as had the whole of Empty Purse, and Cart House Field had become Pond Field



### **Prowes at the time of the 1840 Tithe Award**

The terrier drawn up for Francis Fane in 1797 was likely to have been based on the estate map for most of it is identical down to the perch. The terrier gave the size of Prowes Farm at 94 acres, up from the 88 of 1730, but the tithe award of 1840 put it back to 89, made up as follows:

54	Malting Mead	Meadow	1a 2r 24p
55	Long Mead	Meadow	2 3 6
56	Malting Field	Arable	3 0 1
57	Ayley Field	Arable	9 0 12
58	Cow House Field	Arable	1 1 15

59	House & homestead		0	3	17
61	Pond Field	Meadow	6	1	23
62	The Ley	Arable	6	1	22
63	Ants Garden	Arable	10	2	0
64	Bramble Croft	Arable	8	2	15
65	Borough Field	Arable	9	3	0
66	Round Croft	Arable	1	3	0
67	Upper Plumkin	Arable	7	2	11
68	Kitchen Field	Arable	5	1	16
69	Lower Plumkin	Arable	9	2	3
70	Prows Long Field	Arable	4	0	23
71	Plumkin Mead	Meadow	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>22</u>
			89	0	10

. The sale catalogue of 1900 put it at 94 acres again so maybe Well Croft had returned to the fold.

The Royal Commission had nothing to say about the house beyond assigning it to the 17thC, and it doesn't have listed building status. This could be because it is no longer there! The 1900 sale catalogue showed the house as having 5 bedrooms, an entrance lobby, parlour, sitting room, buttery, scullery and dairy. However, today there is no trace of a farmhouse on the site. The barn is listed and dated to c1650. It is of 5 bays with a queen strut roof and framed side purlins and was converted in the late 1980s for residential use. This is now the main building on the site.

The farm cottages which stood nearby have also changed almost beyond recognition. Following many alterations and extensions they have now become a single impressive dwelling known as Little Owls.

## 10.

### Philpots Farm.



If Morell Roding is a mystery then Philpots is an enigma within a mystery. For size it fits very conveniently that part of Morell Roding which was once a detached bit of Shellow and I believe this to be the case. But what then? Philpotts Farm was always separate from the other three farms that made up Morell Roding, although it undoubtedly became a part of the manor of Morrell Roding. However, the ownership seems to have gone its own way for much of the time.

There is a tantalising record of 1353 which says that Oliver



Morel “has feoffment to John Ayleward of all his lands and tenements called Whiteheads in Morell Roding previously owned by Ralph Camoys Kt.”. What, one may ask, has this to do with Philpots? Possibly nothing. However, Whiteheads does not appear to be associated with any of the known farms or tenements in Morell Roding but there is a connection with the neighbouring Parish of Hatfield Broad Oak which Philpots abuts. The house now called Whiteheads in Hatfield Broad Oak is a building of medieval origin with a central hall and cross wings in the **north east** of the parish, near to Taverners Green (another Morell name associated with Philpots!). This is associated with the family of John Whitehead which was there in 1314. It is a long way from Philpots in Morell Roding. However, a 1782 estate map of Whiteheads Farm in Hatfield Broad Oak describes it as a farm of 109 acres in the **south east** of the parish, which puts it next to Philpots! And a collection of deeds from 1561 for Hatfield Broad Oak refer to a “messuage and lands called Whiteheads formerly Philpottes and Roberdes”. Another deed of 1586, also of Hatfield Broad Oak, refers to a farm called “Philpottes and Roberdes alias Whiteheads”. Later deeds of Philpots in Morell Roding refer to a part of the farm being in Hatfield Broad Oak. There may be a connection.

In 1472 Robert Bygood was in occupation of Philpots, probably leasing it from the owner. As has been shown, this farm was at one time owned by John Priest and it is likely that he obtained it at the same time as he acquired the other farms in Morrell Roding from the Prior family. Incidentally, the nearby Pierce Williams Farm in Hatfield Broad Oak was also owned by the Prior and then the Priest families. In 1543 John Priest leased it for 15 years to Roger Bird. A tax list of 1524 mentions Ralph Bird as a taxpayer in Morell Roding

so the family could have been there then. It is quite likely that the following inquisition related to Bird's family:

In 1615 there was an inquisition on the body of John Bird. "The jurors say that Robert Crowe of Morell Roding, labourer, on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1614, there having in his hands a hand gun charged with powder and hailshot by accident did discharge it and shot the said Bird in the lower part of the left side of his belly, giving him a mortal wound of which he died on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Pleads not guilty; by misfortune".

A list of tenants of the Manor of Cammass Hall, drawn up in 1575 states that Robert Taverner "holds one messuage, 1 garden, and 50 acres of land called Fylpots. 12d a year". In 1588 Robert Taverner was summoned to serve on the jury for the County. A Samuel Taverner was squire in Morrell Roding in 1631 when he was summoned for jury service, and a Robert Taverner of Morell Roding died sometime in the period 1621-1636 - his will was proved in the Consistory Court of London and mentions his eight daughters and no sons. The overseer of his will was Henry Banks, who may have been a member of the family that was later at Walkers Farm..

In 1722 it was recorded that the farm was owned by Mr Stock of London. It isn't clear what transactions took place in the next 40 or so years but in 1765 Richard Harris leased Philpots to Elizabeth Stock, widow, for 21 years at £50 p.a. Elizabeth Stock was already in possession but at some time prior to that date it had been occupied by Jonathan Savill. In fact a tithe record for 1703 shows that Jonathan Savill was farming Philpots in that year. The farm then extended to 80 acres in Morell Roding and Hatfield Broad Oak.

Elizabeth may well have been of the same family as Richard Stock who was farming at Cammass Hall in 1841.

At the census of 1841 two families were shown as living at Philpots. William Day, a widower, was there with his daughter Susan, aged 13, and his 10 year old son William. Also there was William Sapsford with his wife Sarah and their 3 children. Both men were agricultural labourers. It may be that one family was living in the farmhouse and the other in a nearby cottage. Twenty years later there were two different families there, Thomas and Susannah Matthews and their three children, and Richard and Jane Trundle with eight children. Richard and Jane, originally from Hatfield Broad Oak (which abuts Morell Roding) had moved there from High Roding.

The Matthews family was still at Philpots cottage in 1881 but by then Thomas and Susannah had gone and their son James, then 25, was living there with his wife Emma and two young children. There was no mention of them in 1891. Richard and Jane Trundle were still there in 1891, their large family having grown up and moved on. Richard died in 1899 at the age of 80 and Jane followed him later the same year at the age of 79. By 1901 the only family at Philpots was that of David Dellow, described as a foreman and presumably living in the farmhouse. In 1910 Arthur Thompson was shown as owner in the electoral register for that year and in 1920 Harry and Ada Woollard were living there. Bernard and Mabel Frank were shown as living there in 1939 and after WWII it was the home of John and Mary Lukies. John's parents were of course living at Cammass Hall and by 1960 John and his wife had moved into Cammass Hall and Charles and Kathleen Polkinghorne were at Philpots.

Philpots, like Prowes, had been owned by Edward Parris and after his death both farms were put up for sale in July 1900. However, the sale was cancelled and reconvened at a different venue in November 1900 without Philpots Farm.

The lands of Philpots Farm at the time of the tithe award in 1840 and the sale notice of 1900 were as follows:

		1840	1900
1	White Roding Field	Arable	
2	Five Acres	Arable	5.2. 5
3	Four Acres	Arable	4.1.38
4	The Hoppit		2. 0. 4 )
5	The House & Yard		0. 2. 5 )
6	Barn Field	Arable	3. 3.27 )
7	Eleven Acres	Arable	12.2. 0 )
8	Twelve Acres	Arable	15.0.30
9	Croppy Croft	Arable	<u>7 0 39</u>
			51.1.24
			51.3.18

The acreage had usually been referred to as 50 but as can be seen it came to just over that figure without counting White Roding Field. The 1900 sale particulars were very close to the tithe figures of 1840.

Like Walkers and Prowes the Royal Commission gave the house's origins as 17thC but with no further details. The 1900 sale notice gave little away save that it had 4 upper and 4 lower rooms and was then divided into two tenements..

## 11.

### **The People of Morell Roding.**

It can be stated with confidence that the Chief Lords of Morell Roding never lived there. As to the next layer of lordship, remarkably, the 1327 Lay Subsidy, which took place during the heyday of the Morell family's lordship, shows no Morells living nearer to Morell Roding than Bocking and Gosfield and their forenames don't correspond to the Roding lords, so where Alan and Oliver and Geoffrey lived is still a mystery. Clearly the farms which made up Morell Roding were inhabited by tenant farmers and this pattern continued through the centuries of Luther and Fane ownership. The Luthers did at least live in Essex, at Myles in Kelvedon Hatch. The Fanes came from further afield, from Lincolnshire and Oxfordshire.

Looking today at the area that was Morell Roding, with just the four farms, it is hard to envisage that it once held a substantial population. Yet before farming became mechanised it had been labour intensive and with farmland totalling in excess of 600 acres there would have been employment for several families. If we accept that Morell Roding at the time of Domesday encompassed land held by Richard FitzGilbert and Eudo Dapifer it would have held around 20 families, giving a population of maybe 100. So who were these people and where did they live?

Today there is no obvious evidence of dwellings away from the four farms. Surprisingly, there is a lack of cottages dating back, say, 150 years when a farm like Cammass Hall must have needed a

reasonable work force. There are cottages just outside the boundaries of the hamlet, for example at Needhams Green, which may have provided some labour but the early labourers would have lived somewhere on the manor and not in the neighbouring parish. Who were they?

The Poll Tax of 1377 showed that there were 19 taxpayers in Morell Roding. An estreat roll, a copy of the manor court records, of the Manor of Cammass Hall, dated 1472 lists some names:

William, son of William Prowe (no doubt Prowes Farm)

William Speller

Simon Raymond

Robert Bygood (at Philpotts)

Robert Cowshed

John Manning (probably associated with Mannings Farm, but this farm was in White Roding proper and not Morell Roding)

John Loving or Lowing

John Turner (a baker!)

Margaret Roo

William Plainer

The Lay Subsidy, a tax, was levied in 1524/5 and gives some more names. John Prior was, as expected, the most heavily taxed, paying 20 shillings of the 27/2d raised from Morell Roding. The other names were:

William Borow

Ralph Bird

Thomas Gowyer

William Ladyll

Thomas Kelsey  
Thomas Stane

A Court Roll of 1575 (the only Roll of the manor that has been traced), and a list of tenements of the manor of Cammass Hall at that date, gives more names:

William Noke held 1 croft called White Roding Croft. It was previously held by Pavely.

John Barnard

Thomas Horwood (at Cammass Hall)

John Bennolde

Thomas Pavitt (he represented Morell Roding at the Ongar Hundred Petty Sessions in 1582)

Robert Taverner held 1 messuage, 1 garden, and 50 acres of land called Fylpots

Edward Meade held 1 barn, and 26 acres of land called Meades

Thomas Brewer

Thomas, son of Robert Sabbisford, held 10 acres of land called Brambles Croft

William Speller and Joan his wife held copyhold 1 garden called Sanctuary Garden and 2 crofts of land called Shotts.

Red

Edward Selme or Salmon held 2 tenements called Page and Lamberts, which may have been associated with Prowes Farm.

John Ayleworth held 1 tenement and 18 acres of land sometime of John Morel

John Podyliver held of Court Roll 10 acres of land and 1 croft called Annes Croft

Thomas Savidge held 1 messuage and 15 acres of land by the rent of 4 chickens and certain days work.

William and Mabel Norrys held 1 messuage and 10 acres called Capelle

John Robert Snr and John Robert Jnr held 1 croft called Long Croft sometime of John Aylward

Master William Prowe (at Prowes?)

The list also gives an insight into the manorial system which had prevailed for centuries at Cammass Hall. It can be seen that these weren't farms as we see them today but pieces of land let to the tenants, formerly villeins and bordars, of the manor, for which they paid rent and, in some cases, with work.

The names of 1575 are, except for Prowe and Speller, completely different to the list of 100 years earlier, and there are a different set of names on the 1524 list. William Prowe appeared on the 1524 list under Beauchamp Roding. There are some evocative field names, out of use by 1730. Sanctuary Garden brings to mind the chapel that was once near Camass Hall. Brambles or Brambly Prowes Farm), Red Shotts (Camass Hall Farm), Capelle or Copelle (Walkers Farm) and Long Croft (Walkers Farm) continued to be used as field names, and could Annes be connected with Ants Garden (Cammass Hall Farm)? Ther William Borow of the 1524 tax list could have given his name to the fields called Great and Little Burrow.

Move on to the Hearth Tax of 1671 and only four taxpayers appear. Thomas Horwood was taxed on 6 hearths at Cammass Hall, Richard Spinks for 5 hearths, Henry Perry for 5 hearths, and John



Beard for 4 hearths. These obviously covered the four farms that made up the hamlet although it doesn't say who lived where. John Beard, with the fewest hearths may have been at the smallest farm, Philpots.

In 1699 at the Assizes John Lincoln, John Aithridge and William Aithridge, all of Morell Roding, labourers, on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1698 there stole a white wether worth 7 shillings belonging to Thomas Horwood. Witness William Horwood.

George Wilson's farm book, covering the period 1780-1810, names his farm workers:

Samuel Stiles  
James Dunmow  
John Seach  
Henry French  
Thomas Lee  
Richard Stone  
Samuel Norrington  
Aylet the gardener

In 1888 Benjamin Stokes of Morell Roding, a thatcher but of no occupation, was a pauper in Dunmow workhouse

Among the labouring classes there seems to have been very little continuity of names. The names that appear probably had ties to White Roding, Hatfield Broad Oak and some of the other Rodings. Not owning any of the land they no doubt had to go where the work was.

## 12.

### Conclusions.

It seemed at first that there was little to be said about Morell Roding for it had long been absorbed by White Roding. It had no church and could surely have been no more than a hamlet within that parish. But then as more records came to light it became clear that Morell Roding was still recognized as an entity well into the 20th century. And uncertainties began to creep in. There was no longer a complete acceptance of Morant's version of its origins. And why was it in the Hundred of Ongar when White Roding had always been in the Dunmow Hundred? How come it owed court leet to the Harlow Hundred? And if the Victoria County History was correct about a second (and third) part to Morell Roding, which part was where? Who was this Camoys fellow who gave his name to Cammass Hall, and what was his status? What became of the Court Rolls of the manor? Why was there a chapel at Cammass Hall and why did it become redundant? Was Philpots the small farm that belonged to Shellow? With each new batch of information more questions than answers appeared.

Until contradictory evidence appears I believe that the one unit became two when a part was gifted to Ely Abbey. The Saxon Wihtgar obtained the manor which was centred on Cammass Hall. The Ely portion became split when a small part was hived off to Shellow but still gave allegiance to Ely. Two free men held the Ely portions, paying rent and tithes to Ely. Wihtgar's manor was taken by Richard FitzGilbert after 1066. Ely's part, other than the Shellow portion, was grabbed by Eudo and the Shellow portion fell to Geoffrey

de Mandeville, both still claimed by Ely. Eudo put his man Thorgil in charge of his portion; Geoffrey de Mandeville put William in his part. Eudo gave the tithes of his acquisition to St John's Abbey, Colchester. It later became consolidated, probably in the King's gift. As to its being in Ongar Hundred I believe the origin is Saxon and predates Wihtgar. I suspect that the settlement had come into the hands of a Saxon lord of the Ongar Hundred and stayed that way.

At some time in this uncertain period Ralph de Camoys, of a Norfolk family, held the lordship, probably in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and pre-Morell, and gave his name to the manor. By 1200 the Morell family had arrived, probably also from Norfolk, and exercised lordship over the whole of Morell Roding whilst still owing allegiance to the chief lords. I believe it was during this period that a chapel was built at Camass Hall to serve the needs of the family there, and perhaps because the manor owed allegiance to Ongar Hundred whilst being physically within Dunmow Hundred. There is no significance in its being sited in the yard of Cammass Hall - all chapels and churches were built on manorial land. Some chapels may have become churches, that at Cammass Hall never did but who conducted the services? Was it the priest at White Roding or from somewhere in the Ongar Hundred?

The King gifted the chief lordship of the hundred of Ongar, and with it Morell Roding, to the Stafford family and after they fell disastrously from favour Henry VIII passed it to Richard Riche. These were the chief lords. So far as the lordship of the manor is concerned this passed from Morell to Prior, to Priest, to Luther and to Fane. There seems no record of it thereafter. Of course I could be completely wrong.

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### **Microfiche**

Parish Registers - White Roding  
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Land Tax returns for Ongar Hundred 1780-1829

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### **Microfilm**

T/A 369 Cartulary of St John's Abbey, Colchester

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### **Maps**

D/Dfa P4 1730 map of Morell Roding

D/CT 299 1840 tithe map White Roding inc Morell Roding

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