

QUEEN COURT, RAINHAM, AND 'QUEEN-  
DOWN, HARTLIP.

BY H. G. FAUSSETT-OSBORNE.

By her charter dated 5 July, 1 Edward I. [1273], Queen Eleanor [widow of Henry III.] granted and confirmed "to God and the Hospital of St. Katharine at London without the Tower of London," and to the master and brethren there serving God, and to their successors, all her lands, etc., in Renham and Hertlepe in the county of Kent, and at Roed in the county of Hertford. Hence these lands became known as Queen Court, Queendown and Queenbury respectively.

St. Katharine's Hospital was founded in 1148 by Queen Matilda, wife of Stephen, and refounded by Queen Eleanor. It remained on its original site near the Tower of London till 1825, when the great church and all other buildings standing on eleven acres of ground were demolished in order to provide accommodation for St. Katharine's Docks, and the present royal chapel of St. Katharine (with houses for the master, brothers and sisters) was built in Regent's Park.

QUEEN COURT. By the courtesy of the Rev. Severne Majendie, Warden of St. Katharine's, I have had access to the leases preserved there. The earliest is dated 4 and 5 Philip and Mary, and is of the "manor called Quene Courte, and the messuage called Beryngrave wythe all the lands, medowes, leeses, mershes and pastures, rents, services, advantages of Courte and all other the appurt<sup>s</sup> sett lyeing and being in the pshe. of Raynham or ells where wythyn the county of Kent to the same manor and messuage in anywyse appert<sup>s</sup> or belonging except and to the said master . . . reserved all the woods and underwoods of the said manor

and messuage and the mill of the same manor, and also all man<sup>r</sup> of greete ffishes and wrecks taken upon and in the said waters theryn, and all man<sup>r</sup> of swannes bredyng in and about the same.”

There follows a long series of leases for lives until the freehold was in 1899 purchased by Mr. J. A. Walter of Berengrave and his sisters.

The estate comprises some 485 acres of arable pasture and marshland. Roughly speaking about 60 acres are bounded on the north by the London Road at its junction with Berengrave Lane, some 170 acres lie east and west of Berengrave Lane. The site of the old water-mill [which has long since disappeared] is beside Rainham Creek at the end of a little lane a few hundred yards east of Bloor's Place, and the remainder of the property in Rainham parish consists of Motne Hills and the marshland between Motne Hills and Otterham Creek. There are also about 36 acres in Upchurch and Lower Halstow on the east side of Otterham Creek (a few hundred yards west of Ham Green).

With the exception of Berengrave and some 30 acres, the whole property was resold by Mr. Walter and his sisters to various purchasers in 1900, and about 56 acres of fruit and arable land, including the old Queen Court Barn, were again sold in 1920, in small lots.

QUEENDOWN. There is a quaint tradition which erroneously connects the name with Queen Elizabeth. I give it in the words of my informant, Mr. Henry Hales of Hartlip, who was born in 1843:—

“My father was born at ‘The Cradles’ [a cottage below Queendown Warren]. My grandmother told me that there was a burglary there in Queen Elizabeth's time. The burglars killed all the inmates except one boy, who slipped into the ash-hole under the large oven in the kitchen and hid there. He afterwards escaped and gave information. The men were captured and were sentenced, and chained together to starve to death in the old lime-kiln. Queen Elizabeth was interested in the case, and came down and

granted them a farthing loaf each to prolong their misery ; and that is why it is called Queendown Warren."

That this tradition is based upon an actual occurrence is proved by the following extract from an old manuscript book : "Henry Howell and his wife were murdered at Queendown, and ye house burned down by three Irish men on fryday ye 28th of december being innocents' day 1632."

It is sad that the picturesque details about Queen Elizabeth must be rejected, as she died nearly 30 years before the date of the tragedy.

The name "Quenedowne" appears in a Survey dated 26 Henry VIII.

The earliest lease in my possession was granted in the sixth year of Elizabeth to John Osborne of Hertclepe, gent., for 99 years from the determination of a lease made to him in the twenty-seventh year of Henry VIII. This John Osborne was an Auditor of the Exchequer in the reign of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth.

The property was afterwards leased to the owners of the Hartlip Place estate under a series of leases for lives, and finally the freehold was purchased in 1876. It consists of 35 acres of pasture and 14 of woodland.

Hasted [II., 539] says that "Queendown was for many years a noted Warren for rabbits, but it has been disused as such for many years past."

The first mention I find of the word "Warren" is a memorandum of Edward Osborne, dated 1621, in which he refers to the "Warren House" (now called "The Cradles"). In 1642 the rent for this house and farm included "52 couple of conyes sweet and cleane and of the best of the game yeerly."

Edward's son John has left a long manuscript beginning : "M<sup>r</sup> Adolphus Speede, his cornu copia<sup>2</sup> secured by me this 12<sup>th</sup> day of May 1653. That I know where to take 500 acres of land for 8<sup>s</sup> ye ac. wthin 15 miles of London w<sup>ch</sup> being stored w<sup>th</sup> 20 rabbets ye ac. highly bred, 16 of them being breeders according to direction, will in all pbability afford either of them 12 rabbets at 3 litters, being I have known

those so bred that one rab<sup>t</sup> hath brought 9 at one litter, sometimes 10, comonly 11, and hath brought them up very well and fat, and in a Lord's ground I have known ye like increase, besides those of my owne whereof I have had sufficient expience. Admit 16 rab<sup>ts</sup> will either of them bring 10 at 3 litters, they came to 160: for which after 6 weekes of age I know a Poulterer that giveth 8<sup>d</sup> ye rab<sup>t</sup>; and constantly till Mich; and some Poulterers more after Mich, wch may be then sold for betweene 1<sup>s</sup> and 1<sup>s</sup> 8<sup>d</sup> ye rab<sup>t</sup>; admit then but at 8<sup>d</sup> ye rab<sup>t</sup> all ye yeare, 160 rab<sup>ts</sup> come to 5<sup>ll</sup> 6<sup>s</sup> 8<sup>d</sup> ye ac.," etc., etc., etc.

John Osborne's own comment is short and to the point: "These notions are since proved to be of little value for ye most part."

Queendown Warren House is the old Yauger Manor House, which stood beside Yauger Farm until 1841, when it was taken down and re-erected at Queendown Warren by William Bland of Hartlip Place.

The letters G and F on the jambs of the old fire-place in the dining-room are the initials of Gilbert Fremlin, who owned Yauger Farm from 1558 to 1573.



QUEEN DOWN WARREN, HARTLIP  
formerly Yauger Manor House, as re-erected by the late William Bland.