

priest, presumably Richard Pearson and his curate, along with John Pye, Robert Pawling, Matthew Farrer and John Hynd went into the field and drove out nearly 400 sheep, of which 160 died. There is some confusion in the depositions of others, understandably, in the numbers of sheep involved, but also in the location of the sheep walk.

They said the sheep were taken from King's Field, maybe because they were moved there after the incident in the church. The most interesting statement was made by John Jaye, yeoman of Wantisden, aged 59, who had been servant to the Prior of Butley, and currently served Willoughby. He had known King's Field for 30 years and those who used to shack there were given lands in exchange for their rights by an ancestor of Willoughby.¹ The outcome of all this is unknown.

Willoughby was in dispute in 1545 and the following year with Edward Cleydon of Boyton and William Forth of Butley. They were about fishing rights, and need not detain us for long, although it is interesting that Thomas Spicer was accompanied by Thomas Manning, John and Robert Edmonds, John Margett, Walter Edye, John Johnson, John and William Hynde and John Buckle and others when they carried away Cleydon's boat and threatened him. Several of these men also detained Forth's stall boat, but some of them turned against Willoughby later. Cleydon probably won his case and Forth and Willoughby agreed in the High Court of Chancery not to trespass on the waters of the other.²

In 1533 Thomas Rushe, lord of the manor of Sudbourne, and the burgesses of Orford had leased their newly-built windmill to Gilbert Johnson for nine years at the rate of 46s 8d per annum.³ By 1539 Thomas was dead and his children, Anthony and Margery, were the wards of Thomas Wriothsley, later to become Lord Chancellor of England.⁴ Thus Willoughby did not have to deal with a man of the stature of Rushe to oppose his seizure of the windmill.

However the burgesses submitted a petition, part of which is illegible due to damage. They charged Willoughby with taking away their income from the windmill, along with the acre of ground it stood upon, by force at a (manor) court held in the Borough. The number of burgesses was only seven, instead of 12, and Willoughby would not permit any more to be

elected. Indeed he had openly said that they would never have burgesses again in the borough as long as he lived.⁵

In 1540 the butcher Robert Pawlyng, John Marryett a tailor, Matthew Farrer a barber, John Pye and John Edmond, burgesses of Orford, on behalf of themselves, the other burgesses and the inhabitants of the town, petitioned Thomas, Earl of Essex, that he act to prevent Willoughby from overriding the authority given them by way of charters granted by previous monarchs. They addressed him as High Chamberlain of England and Lord Privy Seal so he was Thomas Cromwell, who held the latter position between 1536 and 1540. He was created Earl of Essex and High Chamberlain by the King on 18th April 1540, only two months before his arrest on 10th June. A month later he was executed.

The petitioners claimed that King Henry had issued a writ to the recently deceased Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk whereby the burgesses of Orford were commanded to elect two of their number to attend Parliament as burgesses, which they had done, although at great cost to themselves, receiving no allowance from the King. The costs and charges were borne by them and the poor inhabitants of the town, yet Willoughby claimed that he held the whole liberties and profits in 'fee farm' from the King, and demanded payments from the inhabitants. The petitioners did not know by what title he made his claim, but had searched the records of the Court of Exchequer and Chancery, back to the time of King Edward II (reigned 1307 to 1327), and found no evidence of Willoughby's claim. They relied on charters previously granted by the present King's predecessors as their evidence for their various patents and grants.

As a result of these additional costs and the annual payments to the King, the inhabitants were now in extreme poverty and may be compelled 'to flee and utterly forsake' the town and live elsewhere in England. Such action would result in the destruction of the port and haven unless a speedy remedy was provided. They pointed out that Orford stood near the sea and many vessels, loaded with goods, and their crews, had been saved from drowning or robbery. In times of war enemies had been repelled by the inhabitants.

They asked the Earl to restore their liberties, and